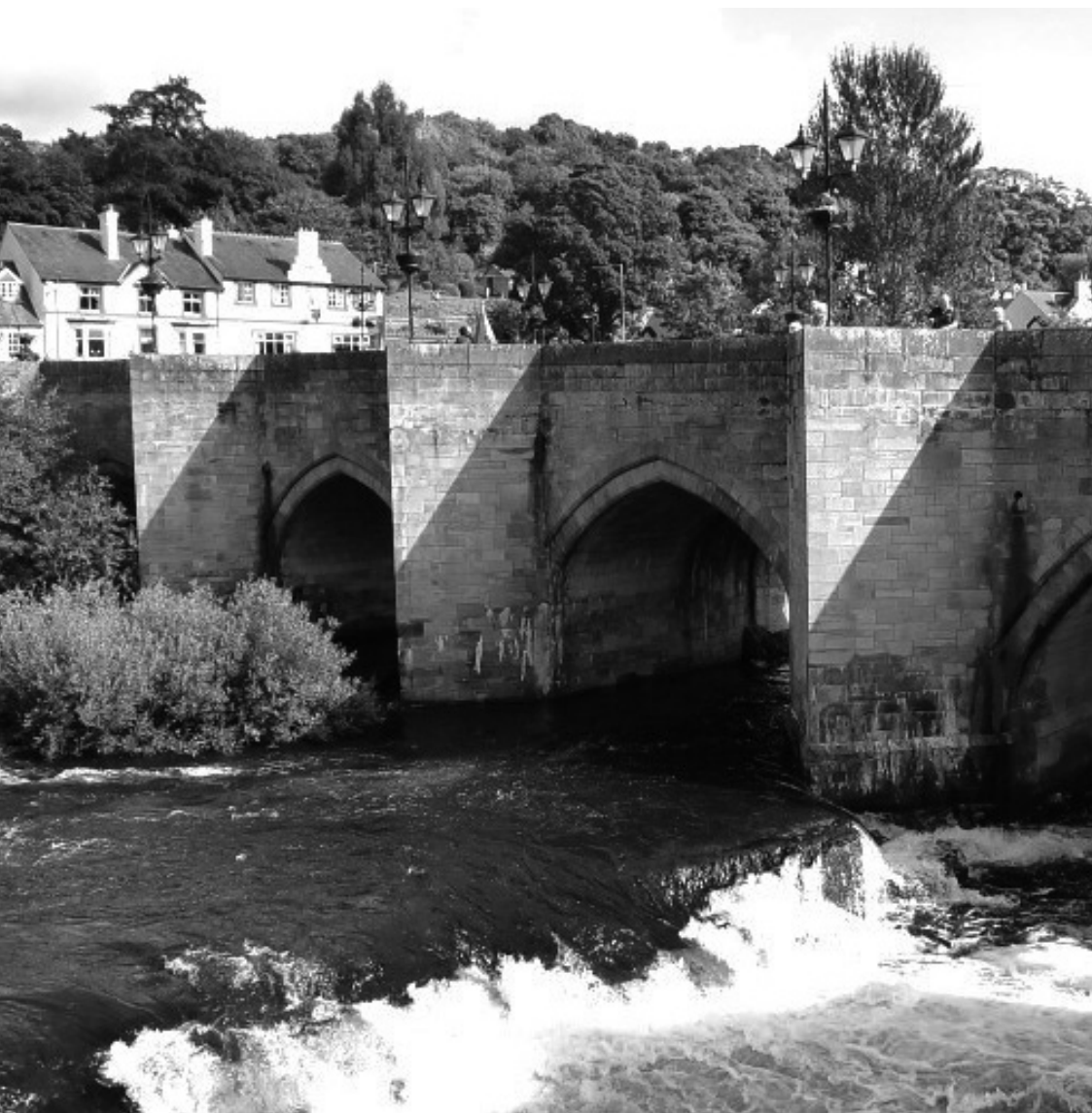


The Powys Society



Newsletter No. 114
March 2025



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The Powys Society Newsletter

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The Editors (while reserving the right to select and edit) welcome suggestions and contributions from all members. Please send contributions to both editors.

Letters of general concern to the Society will be shared with the Committee as a whole, who will act as advisers. Will anyone writing to the Editors and Committee and not wishing for publication, please make this clear.

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FRONT COVER: Llangollen Bridge. See Conference programme inside.

BACK COVER: A medieval whale, the Ashmole Bestiary, Bodleian Library mss. Ashmole 1511, early 13th century, folio 86v. A tribute to Timothy Hyman and his enthusiasm for early English illumination.

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Editorial

In this issue we preview our Spring in-person meeting. We plan to return to Dorchester and the Dorset Museum after an absence of several years for a study day looking at some of Llewelyn's Wessex essays written in the 1920s and 1930s.

We look forward to another conference in the summer in Llangollen at the ever hospitable and welcoming Hand Hotel. This year there will be a strong American presence. We are delighted to welcome two lecturers from America: Nicholas Birns and Kim Wheatley who are well known to conference goers. The conference booking form is enclosed with this Newsletter.

We report on a celebration in honour of our late President Timothy Hyman held in the John Madejski Fine Rooms at the Royal Academy in January which was also made available to a wider audience through a video live stream. We also include another personal tribute to Tim and his memory. Our back cover shows an image extracted from a medieval bestiary reminding us that at the time of his death Timothy was planning a new book on early English illumination. Timothy's e-mail messages were frequently accompanied by an example of one of his latest medieval discoveries.

Kim Wheatley writes about her recently published book: *JCP and the Afterlife of Romanticism* and reviews the first meeting of a new series of Zoom discussions focused on the women of the Powys circle. This discussion dealt with Sylvia Townsend Warner's book *English Climate - Wartime Stories*.

There is a report on the thrilling discussion of *Mr. Weston's Good Wine* held at the Old Fire Engine House in Ely in October last year. As always, this venue stimulated in depth conversation. Kate Kavanagh evokes the scene in the upstairs sitting room at the Old Fire Engine House. There are also accompanying items related to *Mr. Weston* originally published in the *Powys Review* and *Powys Journal*. One item is an extract from a letter from JCP to TFP giving his response to the novel; the other

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item is a note about the pictorial covers of *Mr. Weston* which reveals that the great Argentinian and Anglophile writer J. L Borges appears to have been an enthusiastic reader of TFP's novel – a fact hardly commented on elsewhere! By way of a tribute to Timothy Hyman we include an image of the Penguin Modern Classics edition of *Mr. Weston*, published in 1976, with its reproduction on the front cover of a detail of Stanley Spencer's painting *A Village in Heaven*. We are reminded that Timothy co-curated the 2021 Stanley Spencer retrospective at Tate Britain. TFP's stories are the subject of an article by a member who is also a retired Church of England vicar and explains how he found instructive use for TFP's writing in his sermons and addresses to his congregation.

Rhys Jones, assistant curator of manuscripts at NLW, describes the library's purchase of lots from the Mappowder Powys collection sold at auction last year. Rhys also adds a note about some other recent acquisitions by NLW of JCP's letters to Evan Roberts and Reginald Pole.

We consider a memorable event in the life of JCP's son Littleton Alfred and the first time he celebrated Holy Communion which took place at the church of St. Mary the Virgin in his home village of Burpham shortly after his ordination as a priest. There are also notes on Herbert Marks (the father of Stephen Powys Marks) and the significance of Stalbridge in the history of the Powys family.

Chris Thomas
Hon. Secretary

Our New President



John Gray

The committee is pleased to announce that we have appointed John Gray, author, broadcaster and political philosopher, to succeed Timothy Hyman as President of the Powys Society. John is a long-time member of the Society. He is a keen public advocate of the writings of Llewelyn and T. F. Powys as well as JCP and has lectured to the Society and other audiences about the Powyses on several occasions. We look forward to meeting John again in person.

Chris Thomas
Hon. Secretary

A Meeting

A meeting has been arranged to discuss some of Llewelyn Powys' West Country essays, mostly written from the mid-1920s to the mid-1930s, especially those collected in the various editions of *Earth Memories*, *Dorset Essays*, *Somerset Essays* and *A Baker's Dozen*. Members are invited to present for discussion their own choice of works by Llewelyn and give readings of their favourite passages.

The meeting will be introduced and led by Anthony Head who has edited many well-known Powys titles, including JCP's letters: *Powys to Sea Eagle* and *Letters to a Japanese Friend* and JCP's 1929 Diaries. He is also editor of a modern edition of *Earth Memories*, with an introduction by John Gray, published by Little Toller Books (2015).

Date: Saturday 31 May 2025

Venue: The Dorset Museum, High West Street, Dorchester DT1 1XA

Meeting held in the Community Space on the ground floor adjacent to the reception area.

Time: 13.00-16.00

Attendees are also invited to meet for lunch in the restaurant of the Kings Arms Hotel, 30 High East Street, Dorchester DT1 1HF

Time: 11.30-13.00

Thomas Hardy mentions the Kings Arms in *Far From the Madding Crowd*, *The Mayor of Casterbridge* and *The Woodlanders*. On the way to the Museum attendees may wish to note the plaque erected in memory of JCP at 38 High East Street.

The event is free with the exception of lunch which is optional. A contribution towards the cost of refreshments at the meeting would be appreciated.

Everyone is welcome.

If you wish to attend this meeting **please notify Hon. Secretary by Friday 11 April 2025.**

**Chris Thomas
Hon. Secretary**

The Powys Society Conference 2025
The Hand Hotel, Llangollen
Friday 15 August to Sunday 17 August
'Great Creative Nature'

This year's conference is dedicated to the memory of our late President Timothy Hyman, RA.

For this year's conference we are delighted to return to Llangollen and the hospitable Hand Hotel. The opportunity this offers to reacquaint ourselves with familiar places nearby all associated with JCP is an alluring prospect.

We all know how JCP loved to repeat quotations and phrases extracted from his favourite reading especially Shakespeare. Our conference title this year is no exception: 'Great Creative Nature' is a misquotation from Perdita's speech in *A Winter's Tale* in which Perdita refers to 'great creating nature' (Act IV, Scene, IV).

JCP adapts the phrase in *Autobiography, A Glastonbury Romance, Weymouth Sands, The Inmates*, and *Owen Glendower*. In the context of our conference the quote suggests the creative power, energy and richness of the natural world, the creativity of imagination, the great forces of creation and destruction that flow out of the First Cause, emotional exultation, love, desire and death, the ebb and flow of emotional intimacy, the mystery of man's inner psychic nature. "Great creative nature delivered the truth" JCP says in *The Inmates* and goes on: "Great creative nature has given us the power of forgetting except pain." JCP wrote sympathetically in his diary for 5 March 1930: "How good Creative Nature can be to her poor derelicts. She can be kinder than the most charitable men."

We are very pleased to welcome back to our conference JCP's biographer and past Chair of the Powys Society, **Morine Krissdóttir**, who will examine some of the very complicated and intricate issues connected with the editing of JCP's letters to Phyllis Playter. Morine promises to show how the letters reveal new information about the lives of JCP and Phyllis. **Kim Wheatley**, who is coming to the conference from America, will follow up aspects of her new book about JCP called *JCP and the Afterlife of Romanticism*, and give a lecture on JCP's interpretation of Shelley and his poetry. **Hilary Bedder** will look at the role of women in the writings of Sylvia Townsend Warner and TFP. Hilary will examine the physical and social setting of East Chaldon, and the influence that place, and the 'pastoral' exerted on both writers. This year marks the 100th anniversary of JCP's novel *Ducdame*. **Nicholas Birns**, official representative of the Powys Society in the USA, will give a lecture on the place of *Ducdame* in JCP's writing process and his evolution as a writer. *Ducdame* is replete with references to great creative nature such as 'flowering hedgerows in hot cornfields', 'quivering vibrations in the air', 'thyme scented banks' and 'cuckoo flowers in the damp margins of the fields'. The novel has an epigraph quoted from *As You Like It* and is dedicated to 'that superior man', Kwang-Tze, suggesting JCP's personal preference for a Taoist world view. Nicholas will discuss the significance of these citations as well as the characters, the 'etherealised' atmosphere, and the real places depicted in the novel. The title of Nicholas's talk directs the reader to the conclusion of the story and JCP's literary imagery: 'his love like a spear driven into the bed of a swollen river stood up visible through the driving mist... a signpost in the night, a signal, a token that would outlast his own days.'

Members are invited to enjoy a free Saturday afternoon by travelling to Corwen to revisit places that featured prominently in JCP's daily life such as Caer Drewyn, Liberty Hall, the river Dee, Llangar church, or the Gorsedd stone circle and Pen y Pigyn.

On Saturday evening **Ray Crozier** will give an informal PowerPoint presentation showing images of the Powyses' various residences in New York together with other relevant locations in and around Greenwich Village evoking the creative atmosphere of their distinctive locale.

Members may wish to bring to the conference their books for sale in the book room.

Chris Thomas
Hon. Secretary

Draft Programme

Friday 15 August

- 16.00 Arrival
17.30 Reception and Chair's welcome (**Paul Cheshire**)
18.30 Dinner
20.00 **Morine Krissdóttir**: "Jack and the Abject": editing JCP's letters to Phyllis Playter'

Saturday 16 August

- 8.00 Breakfast
9.30 **Kim Wheatley**: "'Ethereal Materialism" John Cowper Powys and Percy Bysshe Shelley'
10.45 Coffee
11.15 **Hilary Bedder**: 'East Chaldon's women in the work of Sylvia Townsend Warner and Theodore Powys: Warner's subversive eccentrics; Powys' suffering maidens.'
13.00 Lunch

Afternoon free: travel to selected places associated with JCP in Corwen including optional visits to Caer Drewyn, the River Dee and Llangar Church (where there is a seat in the churchyard marked with a dedication to JCP presented by Edeyrnion R.D.C.) or for the adventurous ascend the steep climb through oak woodland up to the Gorsedd stone circle, and to Coed Pen Y Pigyn for the great views of the Dee valley and the Berwyn mountains.

- 19.00 Dinner
20.30 **Ray Crozier**: 'At home in Bohemia: Powys dwellings in New York City': an informal PowerPoint presentation with commentary.

Sunday 17 August

- 08.00-9.30 Breakfast
9.30 **Nicholas Birns**: 'A Signpost in The Night: The Etherealised Chemistry of *Ducdame*'
10.45 Coffee
11.00 AGM
12.00 Open forum with members: discussion of subjects raised during the conference and farewell messages.
13.00 Lunch
15.00 Departure

Chris Thomas
Hon. Secretary

Conference Speakers

Morine Krissdóttir was Chair of the Powys Society from 1988 to 1997. Morine established the Powys Archive. She was curator of the Powys Society collection during the period it was located at the Dorset County Museum and produced a comprehensive and detailed inventory of our Powys holdings (now at the University of Exeter). Morine has written three books about John Cowper Powys (*JCP and the Magical Quest*, [1980]; *Descents of Memory*, [2007]; *Petrushka and the Dancer – the Diaries of John Cowper Powys, 1929-1939*, [1995]; Morine also edited with Roger Peers, *The Dorset Year – the diary of John Cowper Powys, June 1934 to June 1935*, [1998]. In 2022 Morine gave a lecture at our annual conference on the deleted chapters of *Wolf Solent* which she called ‘Editing a Volcano’. Morine has contributed many articles to the Powys Journal and the Powys Society Newsletter.

Morine is presently editing the letters of JCP to Phyllis Playter which will be the subject of her lecture. Morine says “This is a huge project which will cast new light on their lives.”

Kim Wheatley is Professor of English at William & Mary in Williamsburg, Virginia. Her book, *John Cowper Powys and the Afterlife of Romanticism: Re-imagining William Wordsworth and John Keats*, was published by Bloomsbury Academic in February 2025. (She describes the book elsewhere in *Newsletter No.114, March 2025*.) Her previous books are *Shelley and His Readers* (1999) and *Romantic Feuds* (2013). She also edited *Romantic Periodicals and Print Culture* (2003). Kim has written three separate articles on JCP, all published in *The Powys Journal* in recent years: ‘John Cowper Powys on the Genius of Charles Lamb’, “‘The Poet of Fear’: John Cowper Powys on Samuel Taylor Coleridge’, and ‘The Early Reception of *Wolf Solent*’. Her previous articles include two on Percy Bysshe Shelley, both published in the *Keats-Shelley Journal*. Her essay on early reviews of Shelley is forthcoming in *Percy Shelley in Context* (Cambridge University Press). Kim last delivered a lecture on Wordsworth and JCP at our annual conference in 2023.

Kim writes: In his essay on the Romantic poet Percy Bysshe Shelley in *Visions and Revisions* (1915), John Cowper Powys echoed the Victorian idealisation of Shelley: ‘His beautiful epicene face, his boyish figure, his unearthly sensitiveness, haunt us as we read his lines’ (p. 177). While Powys had inherited an ‘unearthly’ image of Shelley from certain Victorian admirers of the poet, he embraced (and occasionally criticised) competing versions of Shelley—unearthly, earthly, and in-between. Moreover, separating his vision of Shelley from those of the Victorians, he tended to see Shelley’s poetry as tinged with paradoxically pleasurable feelings of sorrow, sorrow that can be interpreted as nostalgia for the passing of Romanticism. I will examine Powys’ accounts of Shelley from across his long career, tracing his enduring admiration of (and intermittent scepticism about) the poet in his poems,

lectures, essays of literary appreciation (not just the one on Shelley himself), letters, and works of fiction. (I wrote in the July 2023 *Newsletter* about how JCP repurposed a book of Shelley's poetry as a gift for the family nurse and friend, Emily Clare, adding quotations and commentary.) We will see that JCP sanctioned Shelley's counter-cultural views such as his advocacy of vegetarianism and 'free love'. However, JCP's celebration of what he called Shelley's 'ethereal materialism' is complicated by his somewhat satirical treatment of his character based on Shelley, the self-proclaimed philosophical anarchist Paul Trent of *A Glastonbury Romance*.

Hilary Bedder is a lecturer at Anglia Ruskin University in Cambridge. She was a secondary school teacher for many years, but returned to study in 2016, gaining a PhD in 2023 on the use of vegetation in the work of Thomas Hardy and Olive Schreiner. She is now working on her first monograph and has had work published in *English in Africa*, and *Green Letters*. She has contributed a chapter on Thomas Hardy to a forthcoming book on historicity in the literature of the nineteenth-century, to be published by Manchester University Press. She is now working on Sylvia Townsend Warner with whom she was acquainted when they both lived in the same West Dorset village in the 1970s.

Hilary writes: My talk will consider the influence of East Chaldon and the work of Theodore Powys on Sylvia Townsend Warner's female characters across her poetry, short stories, and novels. Warner first met Theodore when she visited East Chaldon in 1922, subsequently moving to live there herself. One can trace, at least in her early work, how she draws on village life and the inhabitants of East Chaldon, as did Theodore. In particular, I want to think about Warner and Theodore's women characters. Theodore's women can largely be read as types: nubile young maidens who sexually tempt the village men or aged crones, whereas Warner's quite eccentric women are much more fully drawn. I argue that through these female characters, Warner 'politicises the pastoral' (Paul Robichaud) much more so than does Theodore. In the countryside, many of Warner's women find the opportunity to escape from restrictive social norms, and she uses them to subvert and undermine male-inscribed values of hierarchy, civilisation, and rationality. Through comparing Warner and Theodore's representation of the people of such rural communities, East Chaldon in particular, I hope to shed light on the work of both of these writers.

Nicholas Birns teaches at New York University. He served as the final editor (1995-2002) of the *Powys Notes* and spoke to the 2015 and 2018 Powys conferences. He is the author most recently of *The Literary Role of History in the Fiction of J.R.R. Tolkien* (Routledge, 2024), *Cambridge Companion to the Australian Novel* (Cambridge UP, 2023; co-edited with Louis Klee), *The Hyperlocal in Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century Literary Space* (Lexington, 2019) and *A Companion to Anthony Trollope* (McFarland, 2021). In 2024, Nicholas Birns was

named a Corresponding Fellow of the Australian Academy for the Humanities for his contribution to the study of global literature. Nicholas gave lectures at our annual conference in 2015, ‘Powys’ Radical Medievalism, *Porius* and *Owen Glendower*’; and in 2018 on ‘Close Reading the Powyses.

Nicholas writes about his lecture this year: *Ducdame* (1925), JCP’s fourth written and third published novel, can also be called the last of his first novels. *Ducdame* is an underestimated work. Its language is moving and lyrical. Its characters—the charismatic “megalomaniacal subjectivist” Rook Ashover; his vulnerable, frail brother Lexie, two very different young women in Netta Page and Nell Hastings, and Nell’s inspired, maddened husband Will—constitute an intimate ensemble that makes the novel particularly tangible and legible. Very much of its time in some ways—its titular quotation from *As You Like It* (here signalling a far deeper engagement with Shakespeare) concomitant with the trend of using famous lines as titles—it was quite unfashionable in others. As Paul Roberts noted in the *Powys Journal* in 1999, *Ducdame* was often criticized by contemporary reviews for its length—a criticism which would not have been made in the nineteenth century—and the young William Faulkner castigated it for having too many nature descriptions. Unlike Hardy’s Wessex novels (and JCP’s own *Rodmoor*) the novel refers to real places and towns, and it centres on occupants and recentres on an upper-class milieu in ways that would not have been perceived as avant-garde. Its “etherealized chemistry” hovers between the denotative and the connotative, the human and nonhuman, and (especially with the theme of Rook’s needing to produce an heir) the Victorian and modern. On the hundredth anniversary of its publication, this is an opportunity to reread and revalue this superb novel.

Raymond Crozier has pursued an academic career in psychology since obtaining his PhD from Keele University in 1974. He held chairs in psychology in Cardiff University and the University of East Anglia, and since retirement has been an honorary professor in the School of Social Sciences in Cardiff University. He is a Fellow of the British Psychological Society. He has authored five books and co-authored one, these have been translated into six languages, and edited or co-edited seven books. Ray has continued research since retirement and is currently involved in a study of children’s shyness in Norwegian schools funded by the Norwegian government along with colleagues in Oslo, Oxford and Canada. Retirement has allowed him to pursue his interests in fiction and biography and in particular the Powyses, triggered by John Cowper’s *Weymouth Sands* and his *Autobiography*. He has been a member of the Powys Society for many years and a keen visitor to many of the Powys homes, including Patchin Place on his first trip to New York in 1995. It was only after further visits to the alley that he began to investigate JCP and Phyllis Playter’s life there, and this led to an article in *The Powys Journal* in 2018, XXVIII, pp. 65-91 and eventually, the book *Patchin Place: The Powyses and Literary New*

York, published by the Sundial Press in 2022. More recently, he has become interested in their residences in Manhattan in addition to Patchin Place.

Ray writes about his presentation: The Powys connection with Patchin Place is well known, beginning with Alyse Gregory's invitation to Llewelyn at the end of 1921 to visit her at number 4, to John Cowper and Phyllis Playter moving into the upper rooms at the same address in 1924 and their eventual departure for upstate New York in 1929, finally relinquishing the rooms the following year. However, John Cowper Powys had been resident in various rooming houses and apartments in Manhattan from at least 1913. For some of the time he shared with his sister Marian, later with Llewelyn, and then with both of them. Their accommodations in the city included West 12th Street, St Luke's Place, West 21st Street, Waverly Place and Bedford Street, all quite close to each other. Marian also purchased a property at Snedens Landing, across the Hudson River.

My PowerPoint presentation aims to provide a visual record of the Powyses various addresses together with other relevant locations in and around Greenwich Village. I have collected these images from a variety of published sources. The Powyses occupied rooms in cheap dwelling houses; these properties are now extremely expensive and their architecture is much admired and is the subject of preservation campaigns. I envisage an informal presentation with commentary rather than a formal lecture.

AGM 2025

This gives notice that the AGM of the Powys Society will be held at 11.00AM on Sunday 17 August 2025 at the Hand Hotel in Llangollen. All paid up members of the Powys Society are eligible to participate in the AGM whether or not they are attending the annual conference.

Chris Thomas
Hon. Secretary

New Members

We are pleased to welcome 3 new members to the Powys Society who have joined since the last announcement published in *Newsletter* 113, November 2024. Our new members are located in Austin, Texas, USA, Ashford and Bournemouth, UK. This brings the current total membership of the Society to 253, 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

Committee Nominations 2025-2026

In accordance with rule 4.6 of the Powys Society constitution the following statement has been prepared by the Secretary giving details of vacancies and the names of Trustees willing to serve on the committee for a further period when their current term of office expires at the AGM in August 2025.

All paid up members, including honorary members, are entitled to submit nominations to the committee. Nominations must include the name of the Proposer and the Secunder (who must also be a paid up member or a honorary member). Nominations should be submitted in writing or by e-mail including a statement confirming the agreement of the nominee. If more than one nomination is submitted for any vacant position a postal ballot will be required.

Nominations should be sent to the Hon. Secretary by e-mail to chris.d.thomas@hotmail.co.uk or by post to Flat D, 87 Ledbury Road, London, W11 2AG. Nominations must be received by 1 June 2025.

Honorary Officers

Current Honorary Officers of the Powys Society committee are:

Chair and Acting Treasurer Paul Cheshire

Vice Chair David Goodway

Secretary Chris Thomas

The one-year term of these officers expires at the AGM on Sunday 17 August 2025 and therefore nominations are sought for each position. We are especially seeking nominations for the role of Treasurer.

NB: Paul Cheshire, David Goodway and Chris Thomas have indicated their willingness to be nominated to serve on the committee in their current roles for a further year.

Members of the Committee

Current members of the committee are Kate Kavanagh (*Newsletter editor emerita*), Charles Lock (*associate editor Powys Journal*) and Anna Rosic (*Joint conference organiser*) who will retire from their role on the committee at the 2025 AGM. Dawn Collins (*Social Media manager*), Marcel Bradbury and Pat Quigley have one year left to run of their three-year term of service. Louise de Bruin (*Joint conference organiser*) completes her three-year term of service in August 2025. Marcella Henderson-Peal (*Official representative of the Powys Society in France*) and Nicholas Birns (*Official representative of the Powys Society in USA*) serve as honorary members. Kevin Taylor (*Editor Powys Journal*) serves as *ex-officio* member.

Nominations are sought for 4 vacant positions for membership of the committee. NB: Kim Wheatley, Anthony Head and Mick Wood have indicated their willingness to be nominated to serve as committee members from August 2025 for three years.

Louise de Bruin has indicated her willingness to be nominated to serve for a further period of 3 years from August 2025

Chris Thomas
Hon. Secretary

Nicholas Birns
Obituary
Anthony Low 1935-2024

Anthony Low was born in 1935 and raised in Massachusetts. He did his undergraduate and graduate work at Harvard and, after a short stint in the army, held teaching positions at Seattle University and then from 1968 onward at New York University.

Tony Low was one of two professors who treated me to a special lunch in summer 1988 before my first semester of graduate school and NYU, in honour of my winning the top graduate fellowship that the university offered. I had known Tony's work on the 17th century, particularly his book *The Georgic Revolution* which had recently appeared in 1985 and received extensive reviews in academic journals. What I did not know is how widely Tony had read, including in 20th century genres such as science fiction. After it had been revealed that we had a lot of reading tastes in common, he looked at me, and said, as timorously as anybody with Tony's soft-spoken authority could utter anything. "John Cowper Powys?"

This unleashed the floodgates, since, though I had read four or five of JCP's novels, Tony had read nearly the entire oeuvre. He said that Powys seemed to him, the wisest and most nourishing of writers. At this point, he was already, or was shortly to become, the president of the Powys Society of North America.

It would be satisfying to say that I then wrote on Powys under Professor Low's direction during my graduate years, but such did not ensue. Tony became chair of the department (a position which perfectly suited him) and did not have much time for teaching, although I did take one course on Milton from him. A combination of my changing interests and the requirements of graduate school and getting a job required that I orient myself more towards canonical writers as well as postcolonial currents, though I kept up my Powys interests on the side. In addition, it became clear that my liberal politics and theoretical interests diverged from Tony's position on these matters, though we had Christian belief in common.

Tony's chief work on Powys was his essay on *Weymouth Sands* in Denis Lane's edited anthology *In the Spirit of Powys*, which remains one of the best close readings of that novel. Even after his retirement, I always hoped for a book on Powys from him, but he continued to direct his energy to the study of various aspects of the 17th century, about which he wrote about with verve, style, and tremendous erudition. He was active until the end of his life in early 2024, and is survived by his wife, Pauline,

his thirteen children, and many grandchildren. Tony had a large family to which he was very dedicated and loved his big suburban house as well as summering in the state of Maine. He was a scholar and a gentleman, and it was an honour to have him as my professor.

I think John Cowper Powys would have smiled if he knew that, 25 years after his death, in Greenwich Village just a few blocks away from where he lived for so many years, two people meeting for the first time discovered they had a shared interest in his cataclysmic creative world.

Kevin Taylor
Memorial event for Timothy Hyman (1946-2024)
at the Royal Academy

On Friday 17 January 2025 several members of the Powys Society including Paul Cheshire, John Hodgson and Kevin Taylor attended an event at the Royal Academy of Arts, Piccadilly, to commemorate Timothy Hyman, who died in September 2024 at the age of 78. Tim became an Academician there in 2011, part of his distinguished career as a painter which began with a studentship at the Slade – although his passion for art dated even earlier, and he liked to say that he peaked as an artist at the age of 11. A ‘child’s view’ of the world was important to Tim.

180 people packed into the RA’s John Madejski Fine Rooms to hear a series of eulogies. The east wall of the Rooms was dominated by Tim’s huge painting *Mid River: The Bearer*, in which the figure of John Cowper Powys doubles as a self-portrait and an allegorical St Christopher bearing the infant Christ against a London cityscape: all characteristic aspects of Tim’s style.

His younger sister, novelist Miranda Miller, spoke first and recalled Tim’s inseparability as a boy from his twin Tony, as well as his childhood fantasy that he was the Prince of Atlantis, fully expecting an Atlantean delegation to come and acknowledge him. Miranda read a moving tribute by Tim’s Indian friend Gulammohammed Sheik. Next was Gabriel Josipovici, novelist, critic and emeritus professor of literature, who stated that Tim’s vision was utopian: he believed in utopias, and could infect even his more sceptical friends with his optimism and enthusiasm for them. G.



A packed gathering on 17 January in the RA’s John Madejski Fine Rooms including work by Tim Hyman on display.



Mid River: The Bearer by Timothy Hyman (oil on canvas, 1995-98)

Wilson Knight's preoccupation with the Saturnian 'golden age' influenced him profoundly.

Other eulogists followed: Rebecca Salter, David Smith, Paul Hills and Kathryn Maple. Tim's older brother Nicholas, unable to attend for health reasons, submitted a piece read out by his grandson Mal. The microphone was handed to others who offered reminiscences: Roger Malbert, Sandy Moffat and Paul Becker. The event was compèred by Christopher Ravenscroft (brother of Tim's life-partner Judith who pre-deceased him by a year), who read a poem written in memory of Tim by Arvind Krishna Mehrotra, another Indian friend.

As the above names will indicate, and appropriately for the setting, the main emphasis of these tributes was Tim's artistic and painterly life. A common theme was the deceptive naïveté of his style, his ability to capture a child-like simplicity and delight in the world, combined at the same time with a sophisticated grasp of the mythological and (darker) psychological themes which underlay his work. Those of us who encountered Tim in a Powysian setting will recognise how these attributes transferred to his appreciation of John Cowper. His RA friends made the point that in everything he did – from his imposing physical demeanour to how he approached the curation of exhibitions; from the books he carried around in multiple 'bags' to his questioning attentiveness in conversation – Tim was concerned (like JCP) with the challenge of 'how to live well'. This he did, touching the lives of many others for the good in the process.

[Ed: A recording of the live stream event at the RA can be viewed at: https://youtube/-hS_EjnMI8]

Chris Thomas *Talking to Timothy*

My last conversation with Timothy took place at the 2024 conference. But Powys was not always the primary focus of discussion. On reflection I see this last conversation was characteristic of our discussions which were marked by strong agreement on the one hand (we both felt the inspiration of Lorenzo Lotto's remarkable image of the figure of Christ the Vine in the Suardi Chapel at Trescore Balneario in Lombardy) and at other times by passionate disagreement (we clashed over Kathleen Raine's interpretations of William Blake's art in her book *Blake and Tradition*). At the beginning of the conference, we talked for so long and so enthusiastically that I

missed our Chair's welcome speech! On this occasion we happened to be discussing Peter Brown's wonderful memoir *Journeys of the Mind*. (For a description of the book and relation to Powys see Newsletter No.112, p.21.) We both agreed about Peter Brown's historical approach, the significance he attached to the period of late antiquity and the era of early medieval art and culture as well as the wider world of Islam and the Middle East (subjects which also interested JCP). I told Timothy I was impressed by Peter Brown's account of how one of his lectures had been attended by Ernst Gombrich, who was at the time director of the Warburg Institute in the University of London, and that afterwards Gombrich had invited Brown to apply for a post at the Institute to teach seminars on ancient and medieval cosmologies (more material that would interest JCP). Timothy looked at me quizzically and I sensed he was not convinced. "Gombrich wasn't really an art historian" he said. I had studied at the Courtauld Institute and appreciated Gombrich's interpretation of Renaissance art and culture so I was disappointed by Timothy's apparently negative point of view and assertion that Gombrich was an insular scholar. I replied "of course Gombrich was more than an art historian. He was a cultural historian with an interest especially in the afterlife of the classical tradition – that's the whole point of the work that goes on at the Warburg Institute." Peter Brown's method is also Warburgian I insisted. I thought JCP could have delved into the interdisciplinary and boundary breaking Warburg system with pleasure, exploring the interplay between word and image in different cultures and societies across time and space. Frances Yates, author of studies on Renaissance hermeticism, magic and Rosicrucianism, was a Warburg scholar, who touched on subjects of relevance to JCP and who also very much influenced the direction of my own reading. On this point Timothy shared my feelings. We both wondered if JCP knew of the work of Frances Yates. I already knew that Tim was deeply influenced by Klibansky, Saxl and Panofsky's seminal Warburgian text, *Saturn and Melancholy*, first published in 1964, a classic work in intellectual history and a major interpretation of Durer's engraving Melancholia I, linking astrology, religion, philosophy, medicine, literature and art. Sometimes, if you visited Timothy at home, he might bring out his copy of Panofsky's book and proudly display it. This book and its role in Tim's life was cited in two of the eulogies at the RA event.

Whatever the level of approval or lack of consensus in any discussion with Timothy you always felt that with him you had broken down old barriers and explored some deep, rich vein of knowledge and ideas, that everything was connected (q.v. the emblem of the Warburg Institute reproduced here) and that all conversation with him was in the end purely life affirming. That seemed to me at the time a very Powysian sentiment. I felt this too when we discussed film culture (some of Tim's earliest writing was on the analysis of films such as Fellini's *8½*). We exchanged opinions about *auteurs* like Eric Rohmer, Louis Malle, Jean Pierre Melville, Fellini, Antonioni, Mizoguchi, Satyajit Ray, Ingmar Bergman, Werner Herzog, and Joseph Losey. We both admired those

old Studio Vista Movie paperback books on film directors published in the 1960s. We especially approved the writings of critics like Raymond Durnat and Robin Wood on film history. I used to enthuse about Losey's film *Accident* but Timothy disagreed and said it was full of false notes. He dismissed my admiration for *Persona* and *Devi* and said they didn't stand up to close inspection anymore! However, we agreed about Melville's *Leon Morin* and *Le Samourai* which seemed to us still very powerful. When we turned to talking about art Tim's insights and comments always inspired me to visit the latest exhibitions in London just as my energy was flagging. He re-energised my interests. We discussed JCP's writings on art and artists. Timothy was sceptical and expressed reservations. Visiting a church or cathedral with Timothy was inspirational and enlightening – I remember him pointing out relics, objects and styles I would have otherwise missed. These things show how far conversation with Timothy reached beyond Powys, went into orbit around other subjects, yet always somehow came back to Powys again – because he valued his association with the Society so much.



Warburg Institute emblem

Patchin Place

Members may wish to purchase copies of Ray Crozier's book *Patchin Place, the Powyses and literary New York*, published by the Sundial Press, direct from the author – price £15.00 plus postage. Contact Ray at ray.crozier@hotmail.com. For a brief description of the book please see the note on our website.

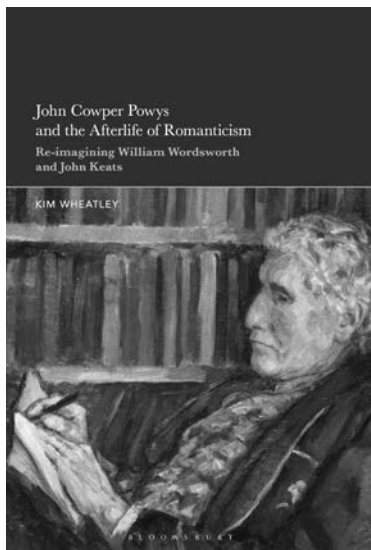
Kim Wheatley *JCP and the Afterlife of Romanticism*

[Ed: Publication of Kim's book is a major event and a very significant new contribution to Powys scholarship. Kim's book will be fully reviewed in this year's Powys Journal.]

I'm delighted to announce that my book, *John Cowper Powys and the Afterlife of Romanticism: Re-imagining William Wordsworth and John Keats*, has just been published by Bloomsbury. The book recognises Powys as a major contributor to the twentieth-century transmission of British Romanticism, especially its environmental legacy. It shows in detail how Powys recast the major themes of the Romantic poets—

especially Wordsworth—and borrowed extensively from their eloquent language. JCP called himself an “indurated romanticist ... first and last” (*Autobiography*, pp. 43-4). The word choice “romanticist” points to his role as both a performer of Romanticism and a commentator on it. I argue that JCP anticipates and augments revisionary critical approaches to the Romantics, particularly eco-critical approaches, and thus invites a fresh environmentalist criticism open to the transcendental and the supernatural. The book ranges across JCP’s oeuvre, investigating his treatment of Wordsworth and Keats in his autobiographical writings, popular philosophical books, works of literary appreciation, and throughout his novels. I see JCP as a unique figure in the inheritance of Romanticism in that he combines sense-based nature-worship, a belief in the equivalency of animate and inanimate things, and sympathy for disabled and deprived human beings, along with mystical and magical themes, into an all-encompassing ecological vision more capacious than any imagined by the Romantics themselves.

My introduction establishes the extent of Powys’ familiarity with the major Romantic poets, particularly Wordsworth, whom he called his ‘great master’ (*Autobiography*, p. 275). Chapter 1, “‘Sensations sweet’: Re-experiencing Wordsworth’s Love of Nature’, explores JCP’s treatment of bodily sensation in *Wolf Solent* and his *Autobiography*. Chapter 2, “‘Rocks and stones and trees’: Inhabiting Wordsworthian Inhumanity’, addresses JCP’s preoccupation with the continuities between human beings and mineral substances, exemplified by *Porius*. Chapter 3, “‘The still sad music of humanity’: Rewriting Wordsworthian Figures of Disability and Deprivation’, is an expanded version of the lecture I gave at the Powys Society Conference in 2023 on JCP’s rewriting of marginalised Wordsworthian figures such as the leech-gatherer and the ‘idiot boy’. Chapter 4, “‘Something far more deeply interfused’: Re-envisioning Wordsworthian Transcendence’, discusses forms of sublimity in *A Glastonbury Romance*, *Weymouth Sands*, *Owen Glendower* and *Maiden Castle*. Chapter 5, “‘Cloud on cloud’: Reworking the Keatsian Supernatural’, traces JCP’s versions of the fallen Titan Saturn of Keats’s *Hyperion*, from *Lucifer* via *Porius* to the late fantasies. Powys’ expansive vision of what counts as nature—extending to ‘other dimensions’ (*Autobiography*, p. 652) and the realm of the supernatural—demands an enlargement of the purview of environmentally-minded criticism to accommodate other-worldly imaginings.



Cover of *JCP and the Afterlife of Romanticism*

If you go to the webpage for my book and scroll all the way down and click on the arrows, you can see endorsements by Robert Caserio, David Goodway and Charles Lock. <https://www.bloomsbury.com/us/john-cowper-powys-and-the-afterlife-of-romanticism-9798765119426/>

Kate Kavanagh

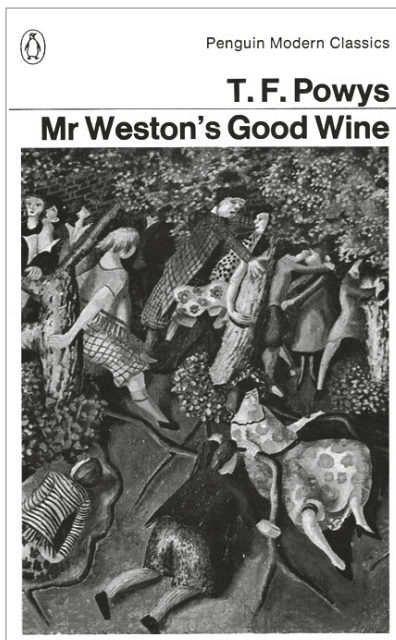
Discussion of Mr Weston's Good Wine in Ely, 19 October 2024

Ely is undoubtedly a special place, with its elegant Cathedral towers seen for miles, rising from the flat landscape. The Cathedral's history is rich and varied though not always savory, as attested by the headless statues in the Lady Chapel smashed by Puritans in the 16th century (these are now replaced as attention-drawers by a life-size statue of a blonde Virgin Mary, dressed in bright blue with arms raised.) The amazingly long and seemingly narrow cathedral nave, from the entrance to the famous central Octagon (rebuilt after its collapse in 1322), is bordered by a procession of round arches that give an unusually enclosed and intimate feeling. Many films (we are told) have been sited here.

A number of Powys meetings have been held in view of the Cathedral, in an upstairs room of the nearby and excellent Old Fire Engine restaurant. These are organised by Sonia Lewis, a fine potter who lives a few miles away, and are always much enjoyed. For me, an ideal occasion -- a dozen intelligent people with a common interest.

This time the subject was Theodore Powys' allegorical novel *Mr Weston's Good Wine*, his most often reprinted and admired work. Marcel Bradbury introduced, mentioning connections with *Mrs Dalloway* and with Einstein's view of Time (Time being a controlling theme in the book). We talked about the simplicity of the setting (would TF have seen it as an example of any society?) about JCP's opinion of it (expressed in a letter read by Kevin Taylor), and about TFP's own attitude to religion.

The title is said to have come from Jane Austen, but the world of TF's book could hardly be more different — unless it could be said that both authors depict a self-enclosed society. TFP's world, supposedly in the 1920s when the book was written, could have been not far from reality in the time of the Powys grandparents, and



A Village in Heaven by Stanley Spencer, 1937, cover of Penguin edition of Mr Weston, 1976

possibly a bartender, a landlord, a kind vicar, frisky teenage girls and young men only interested in drink and sex, may not greatly change.

There is a motor car (a concession to the 1920s), the Ford van in which the supposed wine merchant comes to view his customers, but it does not take long for the reader to realise who the fatherly tradesman, and his handsome light-footed assistant—and the lion they keep behind a curtain in the back — really are.

TF takes us into his confidence, with witty comments on the ways of country people and straight-faced presentations of Mr Weston's motives and actions — often with sly references to his “book”. Archangel Michael, who knows humanity more personally, and can change shape as required, fills in the gaps for his employer.

Not everyone enjoys this mannered allegorical style, which relies on the reader's knowing co-operation, and some may find its version of the Almighty with its both hard and soft lines — hard on cruelty and self-deception, tolerant of innocence (and ignorance?) and any kind of love — too easy, or a bit too partial (though Mr W does make it clear that simple humanity is only one of his interests).

My own involvement with the book was shaped by making it into a possible radio play, about 20 years ago. It was admired but not broadcast, but with Patrick we read it in a group at a Powys conference (in 2011) with some notable performances — among them Richard Graves as Mr Weston, PJK as the sad vicar. (I was Mrs Vosper, cackling.) [*See NLS 64 and 74*]

JCP on Mr. Weston's Good Wine

An extract from a letter included in an article in the *Powys Review*, No.2, Winter 1977, entitled: John Cowper Powys in America to T. F. Powys: Letters 1923-1929, pp.71-72.

[1928]

THE KEENAN HOTEL SYSTEM MILWAUKEE, WIS.

Feb 28.

I read aloud every word of Mr Weston's Good Wine my dear with extraordinary satisfaction. In my choice I put it with Mockery Gap and The Left Leg as my three favourite ones of your works. What a peculiar and never-before projected humour springs up out of the earth when I read these books of yours! When Mr Vosper and Mr Grunter and Mr Bunce and the dealer and the squire talk together in that tavern under those two pictures and when the clock stops and Mr Weston comes in that is what pleases me and what I call imagination. I only wish you'd mentioned at the end that Mr. Vosper learnt from tasting the good wine to load a cart of hay—but so no doubt he did tho' you forgot to refer to it. Seeing that grave opened certainly had its

effect on those farmers' sons and Mrs Vosper died as those people don't always die; but Mr Weston usually delays his appearance except now and then! But Luke Bird is a good character. I am glad you brought him into this book again for I have always thought him one of your best inventions and how glad I was when Mr Grobie was given the dark wine to drink and what a good touch it is that Mr Weston himself looks forward to drinking that particular wine! I don't so much like the wife of Mr Grobie and her geese but no one can like everything in a book like this. There are passages that are perfect though. When those old women talk at their doorways and when Mr Grunter talks; "Everyone likes his own" or something like that; it was about the lost boot; and when Mr. Grunter says "Where life bides death is not; and where death bides life is not."

I think the whole book is more under control than some of your other works more at a distance from your actual sufferings and miseries and more mellow. In fact it has not got so much of the kind of thing in it that has a tendency to excite my own particular wickedness!—nor has it so much of that terrible hopeless ghastly feeling (like Nietzsche's "loathing!") which you have put into some of your sadder books when your own nerves had been outraged beyond enduring. Some people might say that you had removed yourself back from this world of your creation—back further and further so that the things & people are seen through an atmosphere of distance where terrible things have a little lost their bite & sting— and that while this book is better "art" it is not so realistic in its grasp of nature—but I do not say this; because your sense of the things that are horrible become so often in the other books almost too much to bear whereas here they are softened a little and toned down by this distance to wh. I refer. Everything is more mellow & treated with a sort of maturity of lightness letting down the reader—& the sinner too, God bless me! more easily than heretofore. It is a difference that I have found elsewhere and, not to flatter you, my dear, have found in very formidable quarters—such, for example; for let me go to the highest wits of all, in "The Brothers Karamazov" and in "The Winter's Tale".

It is extraordinary how you give the feeling of nature and of country life by a hundred very small delicate touches (I don't know how!) so that there falls on a person that sense of having lived in these places for years. Lulu liked so much (& indeed so did I) the Dorchester tradesmen looking out between the hung-up trowsers & saying "There's the town-hall . . . there's the church . . . but where are the girls?"

But I liked (so very especially well) that discourse upon twilight and then the fall of night how everything looks different and is different when the candles are lit. The book is certainly more under control more artful more rounded off and polished up and moulded into shape than anything you've ever done & I refuse to allow that it is inferior to any of them just because there's that "smoothness & temperance" in it which Hamlet praises so highly. God! my dear how all these other English writers—your friends—have been influenced by your peculiar manner! On all sides it can be

detected. But here in this book is the “thing itself” what no one but T.F.P. can do! It is a mystery how you project this strange world of humour and mystery out of the recesses of your mind. It goes to prove what I always maintained that there’s no such thing as outward fixed-up unchangeable Reality. All comes from individual minds!— Individual minds together create the world for us and every Individual genius has the power to change this combined world into quite a different one: and then bewitch us into it! Well, my dear, I do hope this book will bring you in not only glory but money. And I beg you not to consider the “cycle” closed. Why! Now that you have used your art to push back a little the bitterness of so many things & so much of your secret sufferings a whole world of mellow humorous creations of queer characters talking to each other with this country background emerges as a potentiality.

J. Lawrence Mitchell
Covering Mr. Weston

[Ed: This article was originally published in the *Powys Journal*, Vol. 16, 2006, pp.80-82]

Conventional wisdom has it that you cannot judge a book by its cover. Yet that should not mean that we ignore the way a book is presented; for the cover of a book whether a paperback or a hardback in dustjacket may reveal a good deal about a publisher’s hopes for a book and even about the author’s reputation. It would be odd for example to find a full page photograph such as JCP’s on the dust jacket of *A Glastonbury Romance* (1933) or TFP’s on that of *Captain Patch* (1935) - until the author was well established.

Charles Prentice, an editor of impeccable taste, was not shy about suggesting to TFP that a pictorial dust jacket and a selection of wood engravings might improve the sales prospects of *Black Bryony* (1923) after the sluggish performance of *The Left Leg* (1923). But the nervousness about the subject of *Mr. Weston’s Good Wine* (1927) that caused Knopf to decline the book and Chatto & Windus to issue it in a high priced (fifteen shillings) limited edition also seems to have yielded a binding of black buckram and a disappointingly plain dust jacket. It was not until the Penguin Modern Classics edition in 1976 that a pictorial cover ever adorned the novel – a detail from Stanley Spencer’s ‘A Village in Heaven’ (1937). This was an inspired choice, given the singular ways Powys and Spencer transformed the inhabitants of their respective villages, Chaldon and Cookham. When Chatto & Windus began reissuing *Mr. Weston* in an octavo edition between 1960 and 1975 (not the cheap Phoenix edition), their approach had shifted markedly. They selected one of George Charlton’s original illustrations for the dust jacket – the one in which Mr Weston shows the evil Mumby brothers his ‘good wine’ in the unlikely guise of the ‘rotted corpse’ of Ada Kiddle.

Foreign language editions of *Mr. Weston* give us some inkling of how the book was received and interpreted abroad. Camillo Pellizzi's *il buon vino del Signor Weston* was first published in 1948 but it is the second edition of 1976 that, as Hugh Clayton notes, that offers a colour illustration striking in its fidelity to the author's scattered hints about Mr. Weston's appearance. Although Henri Fluchere's French translation *Le bon vin de M. Weston* (1950) first appeared in the staid workaday paper covers of Gallimard, after serial publication in *La Nouvelle Revue Francaise*, later impressions were more adventurous in their typography. The dust jacket of a Finnish translation (1977) is rather restrained and depends on contrasting colours and typefaces with its crucial 'wiinia' ('wine') set off in red Gothic letters against the black caps of the rest on tasteful grey green paper. But the German (1969) and the Spanish (1988) editions of the novel are as colourful and effective in their way as the second Italian edition.

The Spanish edition *El buen vino del senor Weston* was issued as part of a series of 'Narrative fantasticas' alongside works by Franz Kafka, Stanislaw Lem, H.P. Lovecraft and George MacDonald. It includes a blurb by Jorge Luis Borges in which he notes that little by little the wine merchant instils in us the conviction that he is God and draws attention to a central and notably modernist feature: the action takes place on a single night in which time has stopped. His selection of TFP's preferred writers is somewhat strange – Montaigne and Rabelais fit, but one would expect Bunyan and the Bible rather than Richardson and Scott. Was he confusing TFP with JCP? The attractive multi coloured cover showing Mr Weston's Ford car on a country road may seem vaguely familiar to some – as it should because it is an (unacknowledged) imitation of Eric Ravilious' *Wiltshire Landscape* (1937) which was used for the 1984 Hogarth Press paperback.

The cover of the cleverly designed German edition is credited to Herman Schelbert. It focuses upon the central image of the 'good wine' and thus depicts a goblet full of red wine within which Mr Weston's Ford car ('Lieferwagen' or delivery van) is encapsulated perhaps as a reflection.

John Owen

Using the stories of T. F. Powys in the Pulpit

I first met T. F. Powys' writings when I was studying for an English degree. An enthusiastic lecturer introduced some of Powys' stories into a seminar as an example of a writer whose works, he said, would repay careful attention. He commended Powys' use of allegory and fable, his debt to the King James' Bible and to John Bunyan, together with more modern influences, including Freud and Nietzsche. So contagious was the lecturer's enthusiasm, that it seemed a natural step that I should write an extended essay on T. F. Powys as part of my degree. Nearly 50 years later, I still have the essay: *'Whimsicality and Originality in the Works of T F Powys'*.

Re-reading it now, alongside a copy of H. Coombes' 1960 study on TFP,¹ shows me how reliant it was on the latter. But for all that, it does reveal what was to become a lasting fascination with the strange and wondrous stories which emanated from East Chaldon and Mappowder in the first half of the twentieth century.

When I prepared for ordination at Theological College, in the late 1970s, my daily walk into the Cathedral Close at Salisbury took me past Beach's Bookshop on the corner of the High Street, then housed in a timbered fourteenth century building. To my delight, I found there a signed copy of 'Fables'² which I purchased and devoured in preference to purchasing Bultmann's New Testament Theology which was also available in the SPCK shop across the road. All of the fables spoke to me, as an impressionable young ordinand, but it was 'Mr Pim and the Holy Crumb' which made the greatest impression. The simplicity of the story's language, combined with the rural setting of early morning Holy Communion in Madder's village church and the early admission that Mr Pim, the church clerk, didn't have the least idea what the ceremony was about, was intriguing. I was one of those being prepared for the church's ministry: it was to be my job to tell people what Holy Communion was all about, but I had already discovered that the learned divines whom we studied didn't agree amongst themselves. Powys and his siblings would no doubt have heard pulpit explanations from their father at Montacute Church in the late 1800s, when the mystery of eating the Body and Blood of Christ was expounded. The Reverend Charles Powys probably followed the teachings of the High Church Tractarian movement, which was in the ascendant in the decades of his long incumbency at Montacute. One can still get a flavour of the attitudes which were prominent in those years from Percy Dearmer's 'The Parson's Handbook', published in 1899.³ Dearmer wrote his manual for the guidance of the parson in parochial life. Chapter VI is devoted to the conduct of the priest at Holy Communion, including the reverent consumption of the left-over bread and wine after the distribution to the people. *'The priest consumes what remains of the Sacrament of the Body; he then carefully wipes the paten with his finger, holding it over the chalice. Without any more inclinations he drinks what remains in the chalice.'*⁴

Theodore's father, who was vicar of Montacute from 1885 to 1918, would almost certainly have followed such meticulous guidance at his own services in the parish church. Theodore, in 'Mr Pim and the Holy Crumb' takes a piece of orthodox belief and practice prominent in that period and subjects it to his quizzical, detached and witty gaze. The fable ends, deliciously, with Mr Pim giving the nod to *'a little mouse, with a pert, prying look, {who} crept out from under the altar and devoured the Holy Crumb.'*

When I started as a curate in a Kent parish, I began to occasionally introduce reference to some of Theodore's writings in my sermons. Later, when I lived in Dorset and Wiltshire parishes, the Powys reference had greater local traction and

from there it was possible to develop points illustrative of bigger themes. ‘Mr Pim and the Holy Crumb’ was an obvious candidate, since it plays mischievously with the notion of what ‘eating God’ might actually mean in the ritual of Holy Communion. Other stories from *Fables* provided a rich source of suitable material on broad and inclusive religious themes: the transience of life (‘The Withered Leaf and the Green’), the foibles of humankind, and the cruelty which sometimes lurks beneath the surface of things. Mr Bonnet, for example, in ‘The Hat and the Rope’ is an illustrative character who fitted in neatly to some sermon contexts. His vanity and escapism are considerable and he prides himself in his verbal dexterity, in order to avoid facing his own mortality. He calls to mind Henry Thoreau’s observation that *‘the mass of men lead lives of quiet desperation’*.⁵

There were Powys references that I *didn’t* make from the pulpit. The bitterness and cruelty found in the monstrous Mr Tasker⁶ is not enhancing of life, and the whimsy



Pulpit in Montacute church. Photo by John Owen

of some of Powys’ earlier writing can overwhelm.⁷ *Unclay*⁸ with John Death and his mission in Little Dodder, a medieval trope, is not an easy theme for a church congregation today. Perhaps surprisingly in view of its subject matter, I didn’t reference ‘*Mr Weston’s Good Wine*’⁹ which I felt needed more explanation time than was available in a homily. Then there are other T. F. Powys’ works that might have leant themselves to a pulpit mention, but I didn’t attempt it. One of these is ‘The Corpse and the Flea’ (*Fables*) in which Mr Johnston breathes again as he lies in his coffin in his bedroom in Madder,

prior to his funeral the following day. He listens to the conversations of the insects around him, including the flea of the story’s title, and he reflects on all that he will miss in life as he prepares to leave it. It’s a tale which might easily tip into morbidity, but Powys makes of it a life enhancing story. Mr Johnson is reconciled with his own death and is comforted by the little flea, whose final whispered words to Mr Johnson recall those of Jesus: *I will be with you always*.¹⁰

I retired recently from full time ministry and my wife and I moved to south Somerset, just a few miles from Montacute. One afternoon I went to visit St Catherine’s Church in the village, and there in the building is the unusual brass pulpit, mounted on a Devonshire stone base, which was given to the church in 1860. It was

from this pulpit that Theodore's father would have preached his sermons. It was a quiet weekday when I visited the church and as I stood in the pulpit, looking onto the unoccupied pews in front of me, I thought of the countless sermons preached there during C. F. Powys' long incumbency, and of the eloquence subsequently bequeathed to Theodore and his siblings in their adult lives.

Notes:

1. *T. F. Powys*, Harry Coombes, Barrie & Rockliff, 1960
2. *Fables*, Chatto & Windus, 1929
3. *The Parson's Handbook*, 1899, republished 2009, Dodo Press
4. *Ibid* p 94
5. *Walden or; Life in the Woods*, Ticknor & Fields, 1854
6. *Mr Tasker's Gods*, 1925, republished Trigon Press, 1977
7. For example, Powys' first novel, *Black Bryony*, Alfred A. Knopf, 1923
8. *Unclay*, Chatto & Windus, 1931
9. *Mr Weston's Good Wine*, Chatto & Windus, 1929
10. Matthew 28.20

Kim Wheatley

**Reading Powyses Zoom discussion of Sylvia Townsend Warner's
*English Climate***

On 19th November 2024, seven members of the Reading Powyses Facebook Group from both sides of the Atlantic met on Zoom for a discussion of Sylvia Townsend Warner's *English Climate: Wartime Stories*. The participants were **Dawn Collins**, **Chris Michaelides**, **Janice Gregory**, **Peter Crow**, **Kevin Taylor**, **Mark Foss**, and **Kim Wheatley**. (Page numbers below refer to the Persephone Books edition.)

This was the first of a planned series of discussions of books by women members of the Powys circle. Dawn led the discussion, commenting that the dates next to the stories correspond to key dates of World War II, such as the D-Day landings of June 1944. Sylvia Townsend Warner met T. F. Powys in 1923 and first met her lover Valentine Ackland in TFP's garden. The Preface to the Persephone edition says that in 1927, Warner began a study of TFP. Like the Powyses, Warner seems under-recognised as a writer. Many of the stories in this collection were first published in *The New Yorker*. Kim suggested that the stories were written with an American audience in mind, bringing the war to life for American readers. The stories frequently refer to specific war-time preoccupations such as evacuees, military leaves, bomb threats, fuel and food rationing, the Home Guard (shades of 'Dad's Army'), and changing women's roles and social mores. We all enjoyed the stories, which at once make fun of and celebrate the eccentricities of the English, especially the well-meaning middle classes.

Several of the stories explicitly express sympathy for women (in contrast with some of the works of TFP). For example in 'The Trumpet Shall Sound', about family tensions at a funeral, from the point of view of one of the characters: 'If you'd got to be a woman, it was better to be an old-fashioned woman, with plenty of work to keep your mind off it' (p.62). And in 'England, Home and Beauty,' about a group of women learning to use a machine gun: 'Which was one of the comforts ... about being a woman. One had to turn one's hand to anything, almost' (p.100). The story 'Sweethearts and Wives', about a household of three women and four children, offers a sympathetic and comical treatment of bonds between women in the absence of their husbands during war-time.



Sylvia Townsend Warner

Warner has a Jane Austen-like awareness of social class. In 'Noah's Ark', a story about two evacuee children's preoccupation with exotic zoo animals, the deferential attitude of their host Mrs Purefoy to Mrs Temple, lady of the manor, is part of the fun.

War-time tragedies are mentioned only in passing, as in the line 'War had taken her three brothers' (p.98). The settings in the south of England feel insular, with only occasional mentions of Europe and Africa that acknowledge a wider world elsewhere. In 'The Mothers', a schoolmistress is chastised for telling children about 'the bombing of Warsaw, and the shooting of Polish civilians' as well as 'German concentration camps and the persecution of the Jews' (pp. 88-89). One mother complains, 'I suppose she thinks she owns the war' (p. 90).

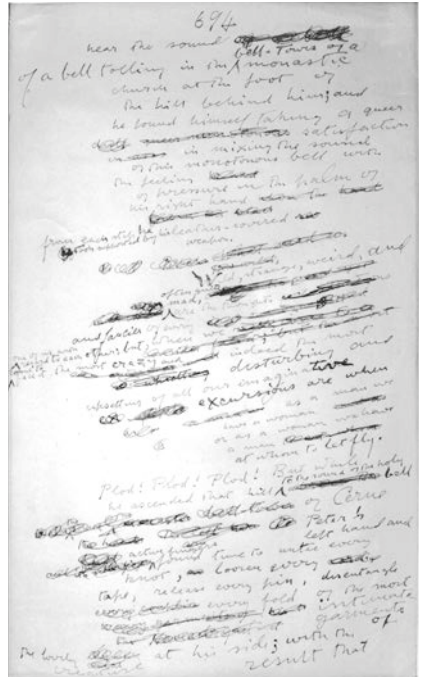
Some of the stories focus on the effect on the war on people's houses: 'The Water and the Wine', about an old lady visiting her childhood home, and 'Rainbow Villa', about billeted soldiers rendering a house uninhabitable. 'Mutton's Only House', in which an older woman shows chance-met strangers around the house her father designed, gives a rather mocking account of young military men's appreciation for architecture.

We admired the precision and concision of Warner's writing, her ear for dialogue and her wonderful sense of humour. Some of the stories end with a cynical or enigmatic twist. Kevin observed that the opening and closing sentences of the stories

are masterful. Several of the stories are very funny, including ‘Scorched Earth Policy’, about a retired couple busy with ‘saving and conserving and piecemeal prudence’ who fantasise about destroying all their possessions to prevent them from falling into enemy hands (p.80). These stories deserve to be more widely known.

Chris Thomas
A single mss page of The Brazen Head

On a visit to the Dorset Museum in Dorchester in September last year I was accom-panied by Tony Head. During the time we looked at some examples of the museum’s Powys holdings under the guidance of the Museum interim Director of Collections, Elizabeth Selby, Tony came across a photographic copy of a manuscript page which appeared to have been extracted from *The Brazen Head*. Closer inspection revealed that the page was an extract from the chapter in *The Brazen Head* titled “The Cerne Giant” (p. 289). Tony examined JCP’s script and told me the page relates to the scene “in which Peter Peregrinus and Lilith of Lost Towers, each the secret seducer of the other for their own private purposes and satisfactions, ascend Giant Hill and consummate their mutual lust on a certain part of the Giant himself! JCP must have had fun writing this one.” We could not find any explanation or accompanying documentation explaining why this copy had been made, who had made it, or why it was left detached in the museum. The copy of the mss page is reproduced here.



Mss page from *The Brazen Head*.
Dorset Museum

Chris Thomas
Moss and Lichen

Members may be interested to read two pages quoting JCP on moss and lichen in *A Glastonbury Romance* and *Autobiography*. These quotations can be found in a new book about the biology and beauty of mosses and lichens. See: *Moss and Lichen* by Elizabeth Lawson published by Reaktion Books in November 2024.

News and Notes

From Chris Thomas:

Timothy Hyman and Ian Fleming-Williams

In 1998 Timothy wrote an obituary for the artist, author and teacher Ian Fleming-Williams, 1914-1998, who was the art master at Charterhouse when Timothy was a student there in the early 1960s. The obituary appeared in *The Independent*, 1 April 1998. Some of the things important to Timothy in his own life can be traced to his association with his mentor and later friend, Ian Fleming-Williams. "...it was from Fleming-Williams that I first heard of Sieneese painting; in his home that I first saw a Bonnard; it was he who first put into my hands a novel by John Cowper Powys and it was he who first asked me, at 17, to deliver a full-scale lecture (on Goya). These are still the focal points of my life." These words were quoted by Timothy's friend David Smith at the RA celebration of his life and work. Thanks also to Richard Graves for directing my attention to Timothy's obituary of Fleming-Williams.

The Magic Mountain and Llewelyn Powys

I was interested to read a letter from Lesley Chamberlain in the TLS (20 & 27 December 2024) about the centenary of Thomas Mann's *The Magic Mountain*. Lesley Chamberlain describes the setting of the novel in a place that is part sanatorium and part hotel noting the connection to Mann's novella *Death in Venice* with its associated theme of a culture in decline, sickness, and diseased love. I was reminded of course that Peter Foss has written very well about the resemblance between *The Magic Mountain* and Llewelyn's descriptions of life in a sanatorium in his diary for 1910 (see *The Conqueror Worm*, Powys Press, 2015).

On a related theme Charles Lock has also noted Sally Shuttleworth's new study of literature and Alpine sanatoria, which includes reference to Llewelyn and is due to be published soon by OUP. Sally Shuttleworth is Professor of English literature and Fellow of St. Anne's College, Oxford.

Praise from unlikely quarters for A Glastonbury Romance

Charles Lock noticed an interesting article in the on-line American journal *First Things*, April 2017, called From A Vanished Library by David Bentley Hart, author and Fellow of Notre Dame Institute for Advanced Study, USA.

(See: <https://www.firstthings.com/article/2017/04/from-a-vanished-library>).

The author writes about his enormous eclectic collection of thousands of books which, like an old-fashioned connoisseur and Victorian gentleman, he amassed over some 40 years but which he was forced to liquidate. He recommends some of his favourite books including AGR which he describes: gigantic, the best of Powys's insane, Romantic, mystical, pagan, Nietzschean, pantheist novels; rude, *indelicate*, and occasionally febrile; and yet wholly British and domestic, in a "long-walk-in-the-afternoon-followed-by-tea-and-toast-in-the-cottage" sort of way."

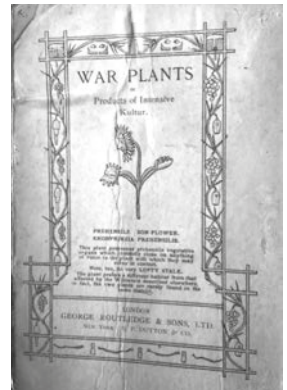
Alan Devoe

In Newsletter No.78, March 2014, pp. 25-31, we published a transcript of Alan Devoe's article about JCP at Phudd Bottom. Alan Devoe had acquired Phudd Bottom when JCP returned to England in 1934. It is worth mentioning that this is a fuller transcript than the transcription of the same article that was published in the bibliography of the writings of JCP compiled by Dante Thomas in 1975, pp. 168-172. Importantly the transcription in the Newsletter includes the date of publication of the original article (14 February 1935) as well as the full name of the newspaper in which it appeared (*The Courier*) which is lacking in Dante Thomas's bibliography.

War Plants

We have reproduced here a page extracted from *War Plants or products of Intensive Kultur*, by C.H. Claude Woodhouse, published by George Routledge in 1915. This book was presented to Gertrude in 1916 by two friends E.D and M.M. Who are these people?

Amanda Powys owns the original copy of Gertrude's book, the aesthetic appearance of which must have impressed Gertrude and appealed to her horticultural and painterly interests. Gertrude's gift is discussed in *Women, Literature and the Arts of the Countryside in Early 20th century England* by Judith W. Page and Elise L. Smith, CUP, 2021, and is also cited in other books on the First World War.



War Plants. Amanda Powys Collection

The Powys Eisteddfod in Corwen

Amanda Powys has sent this evocative photo of Corwen, looking very busy and showing the town as JCP and Phyllis knew it in the 1930s. The name of 'Powys' in the banner of course does not refer to JCP but reflects the town's connection with the region of Powys. Corwen is now in the county of Denbighshire. JCP often refers to Corwen located in Merionethshire.

In 2023 the Powys Eisteddfod returned to Edeyrnion. To coincide with this event the Corwen museum organised an exhibition celebrating the relationship between Corwen and the Powys Eisteddfod. Mike Wyeth at the Corwen museum sent this additional information: "One of our stewards who is connected with the Powys Eisteddfod advises that the picture was taken at the



Corwen and the Powys Eisteddfod. Amanda Powys Collection

time of the 1936 Powys event. This is a regional as opposed to the National Event.

It was based in the Old Pavilion, now demolished, which was located behind the chapel which houses the museum.” This article has some additional information: <https://www.dailypost.co.uk/news/north-wales-news/one-wales-most-prestigious-eisteddfodau-2859483>

From Amanda Powys:

The Powys Bookshop in Hastings

The Powys Bookshop in Hastings was run by Francis, TFP’s son and his business partner and close family friend Graham Boycott. The bookshop was located at 6 St. Mary’s Terrace and also at George Street. This photo shows Sally, wife of Francis Powys outside the bookshop in St. Mary’s Terrace about 1951 or 1952.



Sally Powys outside, the Powys Bookshop, Hastings 1950/1951. Amanda Powys Collection

From Nicholas Birns:

Edwin Frank

Edwin Frank’s new book *Stranger than Fiction* (Vintage 2024) on the 20th century novel mentions JCP and lists *Porius* though this is not included in one of the main chapters. Edwin Frank surveys key works that he believes defined the twentieth century novel. Edwin Frank is the editorial director of the New York Review of Books classics series and the author of *Smoke Train, Poems 1984-2013* and *Unknown Masterpieces* (2003).

[Ed: Dawn Collins notes there are films of interviews with Edwin Frank talking about *Stranger Than Fiction* on YouTube]

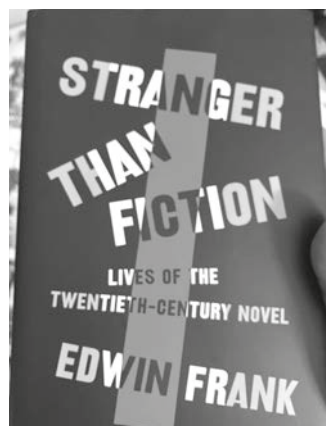
From Yvonne Solomon:

Moilliet and Powys families

I have an interest in our shared family history. The Rev. Charles Francis Powys (1843-1923) was the grandson of John Lewis Moilliet (1770-1845). John Lewis Moilliet is my 4x great grandfather, through his son



Graham Boycott and Francis Powys on Hastings beach in the 1950s. Amanda Powys Collection



Cover Stranger Than Fiction by Edwin Frank

James Moilliet (1806-1878). I have been putting together a history of the Moilliet family over the last couple of years, now running to over 300 pages. This has been sourced from the many family letters and documents lodged in archives and with family descendants. In fact, some of my material probably originally came from the Powys family. My ‘book’ is not for publication but just for distribution among interested family members.

From Pat Quigley:

JCP and ‘space fiction’

Some thoughts in response to the article by Andrew Bailes on “JCP and the New Wave of British Science Fiction” (Newsletter 113): John Cowper, considering his antipathy to science, would probably have bridled if the term “science fiction” was applied to his books; I think he preferred “space fiction.” The critic John Clute describes Powys’ books from *The Inmates* onward as “fabulations.” (www.sf-encyclopaedia.com). [CT notes: JCP described his book *Up and Out* as “a sort of Mythical Skit on the Space-adventure Tales of today’s fashion” (letter to Louis Wilkinson, 8 February 1956).] John Cowper had more than a passing relationship with two writers who wrote imaginative fiction before genre boundaries were firmly established. He corresponded for over two decades with John Davys Beresford (1873 – 1947), a writer whose reputation has languished beneath those of HG Wells and Olaf Stapledon, but is now undergoing a revival. [CT notes: JCP declared he was thrilled by Stapledon’s *The Star Maker*.] John Cowper was also familiar with the author of the first book-length study of the Powys brothers, Richard Heron Ward, another unjustly neglected writer, whose first novel, *The Sun Shall Rise* (1935) depicts a near-future Britain under Fascist rule. Part of the appeal of John Cowper’s writings is that he overrides literary conventions and categories, a practise shared with the New Wave SF writers of the 1960s in the magazine, *New Worlds* edited by Michael Moorcock. The best of these was JG Ballard whose protagonist in his novel, *The Drowned World* (1962), shares many characteristics and obsessions of the typical Powysian hero. As the Earth heats up the sea levels rise and cities are inundated. Instead of flight, Dr Robert Kerans embraces the catastrophe as an opportunity to explore buried layers of the mind and new levels of perception. The depiction of his interior world recalls the trance states of Wolf Solent, John Geard, Owen Glendower and Porius.

Rhys M Jones **Mappowder Powys Collection at NLW**

[Rhys Jones is Assistant Curator of Manuscripts at the National Library of Wales]

As noticed in previous Newsletters (Nos 110-112, November 2023-July 2024) the Mappowder Powys Collection was sold at auction by Dominic Winter on 14 December 2023. Four of the fifteen lots were purchased by the National Library of



Part of the contents of the Mappowder Powys Collection in files at NLW



Part of the Mappowder Powys Collection in conservation boxes at NLW

Wales, Aberystwyth. Three of these, lots 682-684, have now been catalogued under the title The Mappowder Powys Collection (available at <https://archives.library.wales/index.php/the-mappowder-powys-collection>).

The collection includes a number of early poems and other literary manuscripts of John Cowper Powys, sermons of the Rev. C. F. Powys, manuscript and typescript drafts of Mary Casey's novel *The Kingfisher's Wing* (1987) and papers of other family members, but by far the greater part of the archive, over seven thousand items in total, comprises correspondence.

There are some fifteen hundred general family letters, the majority addressed to Lucy Penny (166 to her from John and 185 from Phyllis Playter for instance). However the largest group is the correspondence of Lucy with her daughter Mary Casey; there are some 2400 letters to Lucy from Mary and nearly 1200 from Mary to Lucy (mostly 1945-1978). Much of this correspondence is in the form of air letters, the result of Mary and Gerald Casey settling in Kenya from 1947. The letters came to us housed in seventeen shoe boxes. They have now been rehoused in bespoke (if rather nondescript) archival boxes.

The albums of Powys family photographs purchased alongside the papers (lot 685) have been catalogued separately as part of the Library's Photographic Collection (https://darganfod.llyfrgell.cymru/permalink/44WHELFL_NLW/6kpfmq/alma995087203002419).

The Mappowder collection complements the large group of manuscripts and papers (139 volumes and 63 boxes) relating to John Cowper Powys, Phyllis Playter and the Powys family already at the National Library of Wales, including 660 of Lucy's letters to John (<https://archives.library.wales/index.php/john-cowper-powys-papers-2>).

Meanwhile the Library continues to add to our Powys holdings. We have recently acquired several other groups of papers of John Cowper Powys, including 122 letters,

1938-1962, to his friend Evan Roberts, Llandderfel (supplementing those already here), and eight letters, 1946-1948, to Reginald Pole. These should become available over the next few months.

Chris Thomas

Littleton Alfred Powys' first celebration of Holy Communion

We have reproduced here the remarkable survival of a piece of ephemera but which clearly marked a hugely important event in the life and religious career of JCP's son, Littleton Alfred Powys (1902-1954). That this fragile document has been preserved for so many years bears testimony to its personal and paramount relevance for Littleton.

Littleton was ordained priest in 1928, according to Crockford's Clerical Directory (the Shirburnian Society however has him ordained in 1927). Littleton was appointed assistant priest and curate at St. Eanswythe in Folkestone where he remained until 1930. Littleton had received his training for the priesthood in the Anglo Catholic tradition at St. Stephen's House in Oxford.

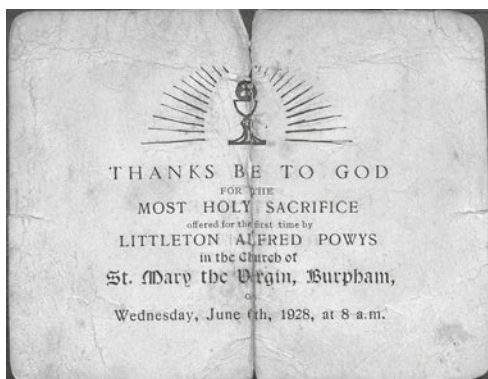
The item we have reproduced is a special card inviting friends, colleagues and family to attend Littleton's first act of celebrating Holy Communion as an ordained priest on 6 June 1928. Notably the event took place in the twelfth century church of St. Mary the Virgin in the village of Burpham in West Sussex where Littleton had grown up. At this time the vicar of St. Mary's was Tickner Edwardes, a friend of JCP who is described in *Autobiography*. It seems very likely that Tickner Edwardes offered his church to help Littleton officiate at his first Communion out of friendship with JCP and convenience for those situated in the Arundel area.

I was intrigued by this Mass card with its clear Catholic or High Church affiliation and wondered if it was common practice in the Church of England to produce such a thing at this time. I consulted one of our members who is a retired C of E priest who replied: "That's a fascinating card. Yes, it would have been accepted practice in the C of E for a Mass card to have been circulated, and their use, as you say, was to send particularly to clerical friends and family so they could attend the first Communion. It's still done even today, but less so, since Holy Communion is no longer such a central service in the C of E. I had something similar in the 1980s. The usual practice was for a man to be made a Deacon by the Bishop in the church a year before his priesting, since unless a person is priested he can't conduct Holy Communion. I see the Old Shirburnian Society website says that Littleton 'was ordained a priest in 1927'. If that's right, I think strictly it means he was made a Deacon that year and then priested the following year in 1928. So there might have been some arrangement whereby Littleton continued studying at St Stephen's, was made a Deacon, and then went on to his first training parish the year after. The wording on the card is telling - very Anglo Catholic, with a Sacrifice understanding of what is happening at Holy

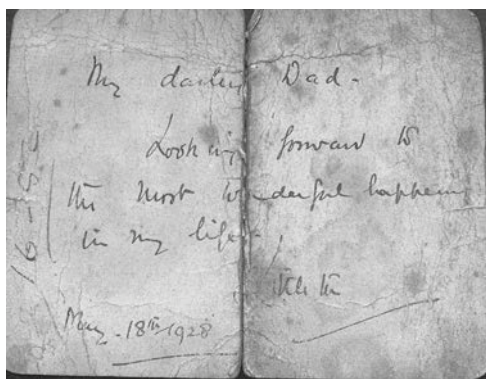
Communion. Close to Roman Catholic doctrine too, so not surprising he was already heading in that direction. St Stephen's still trains people in the Anglo Catholic tradition of priesthood (and used to be referred to as one of the 'spiky colleges' because of its rituals!) I've heard the expression used by incumbent clergy about 'offering an altar' to newly ordained priests and clergy friends including retired clergy."

It's worth noting that Littleton Alfred's act of Holy Communion was scheduled to take place at 8am! No doubt this would have been followed by a special parish breakfast.

Clearly Littleton held the sacrifice of Eucharist as a moment of great significance in his life. This was his first job as a priest. Littleton wrote to his father on 18 May 1928: "My dearest Dad Looking forward to the most wonderful happening in my life." (see the letter reproduced here.)



Littleton Alfred's invitation to his first Communion. Amanda Powys Collection



Letter from Littleton Alfred to JCP. Amanda Powys Collection

Littleton's father would no doubt have been proud but perhaps baffled by his son's intense commitment to his role in the Church of England! At the time of Littleton Alfred's celebration of Holy Communion in June 1928, JCP was in America focusing on the state of his new novel. In early May 1928 JCP sent the manuscript of *Wolf Solent* to Simon and Schuster.

Today Burpham no longer has a full-time vicar. They're currently advertising for a house for a duty priest to look after it and they are still keen to have Eucharists and ceremonial. Tickner Edwardes relinquished his role as vicar in 1935 and died in 1944.

For Tickner Edwardes and Burpham see NL 107.

For details and references to Littleton Alfred see NL34, July 1998, p.20, NL59, Nov 2006, p.32, NL 60, March 2007, p.14, NL 70 July 2010, p.49 and *Powys Journal* 2023 in a note to a letter from JCP to Glen Cavaliero, p.204.

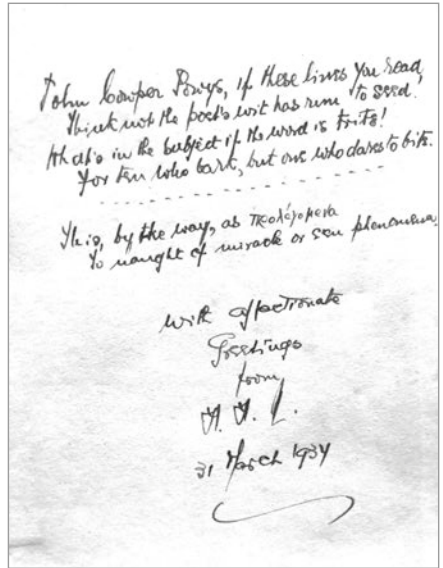
Chris Thomas
Herbert Henry Marks

Amongst the many Powys papers, documents and books inherited by Amanda Powys there is a book inscribed for JCP by Herbert Henry Marks (1896-1972), the father of the late Stephen Powys Marks. The inscription is reproduced here and provides good evidence of the close relationship between JCP and Herbert Marks. JCP was clearly impressed by Herbert's accomplishments and literary endeavours. The inscribed item has been extracted from a copy of Herbert's book of poems called *Pastoral or Virtue Required*, first published in 1935, the second and last book published by the Gemini Press which had been established in 1933 by Herbert Marks, the poet Ida Graves and the artist and wood engraver Blair Hughes-Stanton (1902-1981) who provided four wood engraving illustrations for a limited edition of 100 copies.

B.H-S was an important wood engraver of the early twentieth century, known especially for his fine lines, the erotic nature of his illustrations and his belief in the fusion of artist and writer. B.H-S illustrated books by T.E. Lawrence, D.H. Lawrence, Samuel Butler, and Milton as well as the Holy Bible and for limited edition presses such as the Gemini Press, the Cresset Press, the Golden Cockerel Press, and the Gregynog Press where he worked alongside Agnes Miller Parker who would later illustrate JCP's *Lucifer*. In 1930 when Herbert Marks and his first wife, Ida Graves, separated (they were married in 1922), B.H-S commenced an affair with Ida. Ida was associated with the circle around Leonard and Virginia Woolf; her book of poetry, *The China Cupboard* was published by the Hogarth Press in 1929. Herbert married Isobel Powys in 1930.

Herbert Marks was by profession an accountant but had literary leanings and published several volumes of poetry, usually focusing on religious themes beginning with *Pastoral* and including *Pax Obligato*, 1937, *The Calf of Gold*, 1948, *Trial and Error*, a play in verse, 1951, and *Orpheus*, a play in verse, 1952.

Herbert also held radical political and social views; his communist sympathies must have attracted him to JCP who indicated in his letters and diary how much he liked him. JCP wrote to Emma Goldman about Herbert on 30 March 1937 and said "He's a Hebrew...and has very liberal notions..." JCP said in a letter to Louis



*Inscription by H.H. Marks, dedication to
JCP. Amanda Powys Collection*

Wilkinson dated 20 May 1944 that he is “a very decent chap, has become a very excellent lecturer on Russia and as leftist as anyone.”

In his diary for 13 October 1934 JCP wrote: “Herbert is a great worshipper of Dostoevsky and Nietzsche. He has a very interesting countenance and the TT thinks he has a dark passionate, deep nature beyond what appears.” Herbert was a skilful linguist who translated a key work on Dostoevsky, *Dostoevsky der Dichter* by Julius Maeier Graefe (1926), which he entitled *Dostoevsky the man and his work* (1928), published by Routledge. Herbert lent a copy of the book to JCP.

JCP must have been pleased when Herbert declared his interest in TFP’s *Mr. Weston’s Good Wine*: “the most important book of our era.” (JCP diary 14/10/1934)

Herbert also gave JCP significant practical help with his tax affairs and advised him about his handling of the famous libel case over *A Glastonbury Romance*.

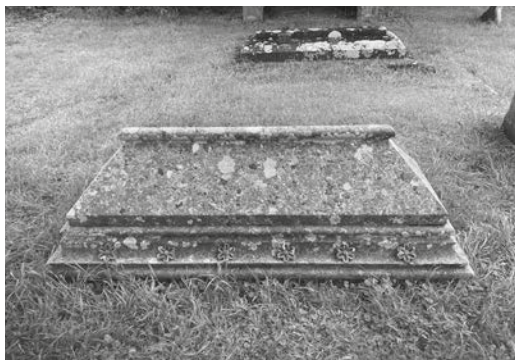
There is more information about Herbert Marks in the obituary of Stephen Powys Marks by Susan Rands in the *Powys Journal*, 2021.

Chris Thomas *Buried at Stalbridge*

The village of Stalbridge in Dorset is the subject of two essays by Llewelyn, *Out of the Past* and *Stalbridge Rectory*. Stalbridge had special significance for the Powys family for it was here that the Powys grandfather Littleton Charles Powys (1790-1872) was Rector from 1837 to 1867.

In May 1927 Llewelyn and his wife Alyse made a visit to Stalbridge. During his visit Llewelyn met several old women who could recall his grandfather and whose memories he incorporated in his essay *Out of the Past* (first published in the *Atlantic Monthly*, March 1928, and reprinted in *Earth Memories* 1934). Llewelyn’s visit to Stalbridge also inspired his essay ‘*Stalbridge Rectory*’ which was first published in the *London Mercury*, February 1935 (See *A Bibliography of Llewelyn Powys*, by Peter J. Foss, 2007, p.42; p.181.) ‘*Stalbridge Rectory*’ was reprinted in *Dorset Essays*, 1935; *Llewelyn Powys: A Selection from his writings*, 1952; and *Somerset and Dorset Essays*, 1957.

Littleton and his wife Amelia are buried in the churchyard of St. Mary’s but their simple single stone covered tomb has become so covered over by lichen it is impossible to read the whole of the carved dedication. A few letters however are faintly visible.



*Tomb of Littleton Charles Powys and Amelia Powys.
Photo by Louise de Bruin*

I contacted the Dorset Online Parish Clerk who was able to give me the words of the full inscription which is recorded here as well as a photograph showing the present condition of the tomb as supplied by Louise de Bruin. The dedication reads:

In the hope of Christ, here lieth the body of the Rev. Littleton Charles Powys. B.D. for thirty years rector of this parish. He gave up his charge July 4th, and he died at Bradford Abbas February 11th 1872 aged 81 years.

In the blessed hope here resteth the body of Amelia the wife of the Revd. Littleton Charles Powys. She was born 18th September 1802 and died at Weymouth 4th March 1890, and was married in May 1828 to Samuel KNIGHT Esq. Of Milton Hall Cambridgeshire who died 2nd. June 1829, and on the 18th. April 1835 she was married to the Rev. Littleton Charles POWYS. "Even so come Lord Jesus."

There is a memorial plaque inside the church dedicated to JCP's "rich bearded uncle", Littleton Albert Powys (1840-1879), who died of cholera at Kandahar (see the accompanying illustration here.) The dedication reads:

In affectionate memory of Littleton Albert Powys Brevet Major in H.M. in 59th Regiment eldest son of Littleton Charles Powys (who was for thirty years the beloved rector of this parish) born July 27th 1840 died August 6th 1879 while on active service of cholera. At Candahar. Deeply regretted by officers and men. Be strong and of a good courage: neither be thou dismayed: for the Lord thy God is with thee, whithersoever thou goest. Joshua Pt of v.9.



Plaque dedication to Littleton Albert Powys, Stalbridge.

afternoon at our conference in 2024 Charles Lock read to members an excerpt from Llewelyn's essay Stalbridge Rectory skipping and skimming from the paragraph beginning 'But there are more intimate scripts' to 'the very gates of the Celestial City!' And thereafter continuously from 'In these days when the hazard of life...' to the end of the essay.

See NL70 for brief news item about Stalbridge.

JCP mentions Stalbridge several times in his work. Stalbridge appears in *Ducdame*. In *A Glastonbury Romance* Stalbridge is referenced fleetingly as a place near Templecombe. In *Owen Glendower* Benedict Nichols is described as rector of Stalbridge whilst in *Wolf Solent* the name survives in the character of Mr Stalbridge, the waiter at the Lovelace hotel and later beggar.

On a visit to Stalbridge and the parish church of St. Mary's on Saturday

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The Powys Review: some single issues available. Please send enquiries to Hon. Secretary.

Ultimate Things: Christianity, Myth and the Powyses, by W.J. Keith (2013) £10.00

The Powys Brothers, Reading of Selections from the Writings of John Cowper Powys, T.F. Powys and Llewelyn Powys (double cassette, 1999) NOW ONLY £2 to cover postage.

John Cowper Powys

Verses on the Sad Occasion of the Death of Tippoo Tib, 1897 (1988) French fold £1.00

The Art of Forgetting the Unpleasant and other Essays, newly edited by David Goodway £5.50

John Cowper Powys on Thomas Hardy, A Selection of his Writings, with Introduction by Glen Cavaliero (2006) £4.50

John Cowper Powys and the Soul, by H.W. Fawkner (2010) £10.00

John Cowper Powys and the Elements, A Phenomenological Study of Maiden Castle, by H.W. Fawkner (2015) £10.00

Powys and Lord Jim, the correspondence between James Hanley and John Cowper Powys, 1929–1965, edited by Chris Gostick £10.00

JCP's novels: A Glastonbury Romance, Maiden Castle, Owen Glendower, Porius, Weymouth Sands and Wolf Solent are now available from Amazon as e-books. Also available as e-books are *The Brothers Powys* by Richard Graves and *Recollections of the Powys Brothers*, edited by Belinda Humfrey. To order please see link in the Online bookshop on our website.

T.F. Powys

Soliloquies of a Hermit (first published in 1916; new edition, 1993) £8.00

A.R. Powys

The English House, with portrait by Gertrude M. Powys (1929; new edition, 1992) £3.50

Llewelyn Powys

The Conqueror Worm, Llewelyn Powys: A Consumptive's Diary, 1910, ed. Peter J. Foss (2015) £10.00

Recalled to Life, Llewelyn Powys: A Consumptive's Diary, 1911, ed. Peter J. Foss (2016) £10.00

Philippa Powys

Driftwood and other poems (49 poems, 8 hitherto unpublished), with portrait by Gertrude M. Powys (1992) £5.00

Mary Casey

A Net in Water, A Selection from the Journals (1994) £8.50

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