

## Editorial

At a time of recession, when many literary societies are losing members and the world of publishing is becoming ever more constrained, it is pleasing to see that the Powys Society is not only growing but extending into new and exciting areas.

1991 has seen not only an extremely successful Conference at Kingston Maurward, but also the establishment of a Powys display at Montacute House and a very popular exhibition of Powys materials at the Dorset County Museum. Linked to the exhibition was the publication by the Dorset Natural History and Archaeological Society of *The Powys Family in Dorset*, a pamphlet by Charles Lock based upon original research for his forthcoming biography of John Cowper Powys.

The Society itself has also been active in the field of publishing, having launched the magnificent *Powys Journal*, 152 pages of unpublished Powys material, scholarly essays and review articles. The *Journal* is a major advance for the Society and one which will be valued by all of those with an interest in Powys studies, whether members of the Society or not.

At the same time, the Society published a series of four postcards featuring photographs of Theodore, Llewelyn, John Cowper and the whole Powys family, as well as Alan Howe's *Powys Checklist*, a thorough guide to the publications of each member of the family which will rapidly become indispensable to readers, collectors and students.

Meanwhile, in addition to those forthcoming books already announced in the *Newsletter*, Gerald Pollinger, literary agent for the Powys family, reports that B.B.C television has shown interest in producing *Weymouth Sands* in 1993, while Central Television are considering the possibility of a film of *Wolf Solent* and the film options for *A Glastonbury Romance* and *After My Fashion* have been renewed.

German editions of *Wolf Solent* and *A Glastonbury Romance* are promised, as are French editions of *Glastonbury*, *Three Fantasies* and J.C.P.'s *Letters to Henry Miller*.

Further titles in the Brynmill Press T.F.Powys series are *The Two Thieves* (1992) and *Selected Early Works* (1993), while the complete edition of *Fables* is to be published by Rigby and Lewis on December 20th of this year.

1993 will also see the publication of selections from the first ten diaries of John Cowper Powys, edited by Morine Krissdottir, the correspondence between J.C.P. and Theodore Dreiser, edited by Charles Lock, and Charles' J.C.P. biography.

Meanwhile, what we hope may become a series of lectures at Montacute was inaugurated this year by our President, Glen Cavaliero, and that indefatigable Powysian, Sven Erik Täckmark has prompted still further exhibitions, lectures and publications in Sweden.

Further details of many of these activities will be given elsewhere in the *Newsletter*. Members may recall that in the July *Newsletter* I asked which books they would most

like to see reprinted. An interesting list emerged from the replies, including:

T.F.Powys: *Mark Only*, *Captain Patch* and *Innocent Birds*.

J.C.Powys: *In Spite Of* and the complete edition of *A Glastonbury Romance*.

Llewelyn Powys: *Love and Death* and *The Life and Times of Anthony à Wood*.

With so much activity in the field of Powys studies, members may, at last, stand some chance of seeing their favourite books back in print.

Paul Roberts.

LIST OF PUBLICATIONS IN STOCK: PAGE 21. BOOKS FOR SALE ON CENTRE PAGES.
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## *The 1991 Conference at Kingston Maurward*

The conference this year began, in typically Powysian fashion, before itself. On the Friday evening members were invited to a reception and viewing of an exhibition at the Dorchester Museum. Fastidiously arranged by Frank Kibblewhite and Louise de Bruin, this display gave an enlightening view of the multifarious talents and interests of the Powys family. Charles Lock then gave a crisp and lucid talk "The Powys Family in Dorset" to a large audience.

The conference properly commenced on the Saturday with a welcoming reception followed by the first lecture, Jeremy Hooker's thoughtful comparison of *Maiden Castle* and *The Mayor of Casterbridge*. The Chairman then officially launched the new *Journal* – an exciting moment in the Society's history.

This year we tried the experiment of opening the lectures to the public. The Sunday talks would have given non-Powysians some interesting if oblique insights into this family. Angela Pitt began what we hope will be a continuing examination of that disturbing and talented writer, Philippa Powys. John Williams delivered a dense and provocative paper on "Theodore Powys and The Devil" and this was followed by the graceful and lyrical "Wessex Epiphanies" by Furze Swann. The late afternoon A.G.M. was, mercifully, a light-hearted and short affair. Sunday evening was devoted to a Forum entitled "The Powyses in Dorchester". Chaired by Frank Kibblewhite, the three speakers were Roger Peers, Charles Lock and Judith Stinton.

On the Monday morning Michael Everest led us gently and easily into ancient pathways in a lecture entitled "Wessex Ley Lines". Paul Roberts, as always fluent and articulate, ended the programme of lectures with his talk "The Particular Genius of Llewelyn Powys".

Members then scattered for a free afternoon, some to walk in the magnificent grounds of Kingston Maurward, some to Chaldon, some to the Dorchester Museum Powys exhibition, some to see the new Powys display in the gazebo of Montacute House. A special treat was a short informal film of the Powyses, narrated with grace by Mrs Sally Powys. The last evening was celebrated with readings by Bob Carrington and

Robert Timlin from the 1932 and 1933 *Diaries* on the creating of *Weymouth Sands*.

The Booksale, organized and conducted in their inimitable style by Frank and Louise, was a great success, bringing the Society a much needed £516.

This was a particularly serene and happy conference: a nice combination of beloved rituals and innovative approaches; of old friends and new members meeting and enjoying the place and the company.

**Morine Krissdottir**

### *Future Conference Details*

Members will be pleased to learn that the following arrangements have been made for the 1992 and 1993 conferences:

**1992:** to be held at Cirencester Agricultural College between August 29th and September 1st;

**1993:** to be held at Kingston Maurward Agricultural College between August 21st and August 24th.

The subject of the 1992 conference is to be:

**The Powys Woman: 'The Realm of The Imaginary'.**

### *Committee News*

Since the last issue of the *Newsletter*, two committee meetings have been held, at Kingston Maurward on August 4th and at the home of Timothy Hyman on October 19th.

Griffin Beale reports as follows on the Annual General Meeting held on August 4th: "The Minutes of the 1990 A.G.M. were read by the Secretary. The Minutes were accepted and there were no matters arising.

The Secretary's report was given to the A.G.M. The Secretary reported on all the Committee meetings that had been held during 1990 and 1991 and gave a brief report on membership. There were now 283 members and of these 116 paid their subscriptions by standing order and 22 members covenanted their subscriptions to the Society.

The Treasurer's report was given by Stephen Powys Marks. The Accounts for 1990 had already been published in the July 1991 *Newsletter*. An explanation of the Accounts was given. The Accounts revealed an acceptable state of affairs. The Treasurer reported that the annual book sale earlier that day had raised a total of £516.

The Chairman noted in her annual remarks that 1990 had been a year of almost too much excitement for the Powys Society. The main event was the decision to launch the Society's own *Journal*. The first issue was published and distributed in August 1991. Another "first" for the Society was the publication of Alan Howe's *Checklist*, written to assist readers new to the Powyses. Another project conceived of in 1990 has also reached completion. The Powyses are always in need of "publicity" and Montacute House seemed the perfect venue to mount a display. Members Eve and John Batten, Bev

Craven and Sarah Linden joined forces and not only persuaded the National Trust to give them space in the garden gazebo, but they designed the stands, composed the text, chose the photographs and mounted the material. It is a very professional job and should attract much attention to the Powyses. An impressive, albeit more temporary exhibition has been mounted at the Dorchester Museum after months of planning by Frank Kibblewhite and Louise de Bruin. It may mark the beginning of a productive and useful relationship with the Museum which can only benefit the reputation of the Powyses. Another resource has opened up in Montacute. A new member, Leslie Harrison, has arranged for the Society to use the ample and convenient facilities of the Baptist Church as we have need of them. Its first use will be a public lecture by our President, Glen Cavaliero, in October of this year. On a less happy note, the Chairman made a special appeal to members to pay their subscriptions promptly and to contribute generously to the Society's finances.

The following election of officers was made:

*Chairman:* Morine Krissdottir

*Vice-Chairman:* Timothy Hyman

*Hon. Secretary:* Griffin Beale

*Hon. Treasurer:* Stephen Powys Marks

The following were elected to the *Committee*:

John Batten, Louise de Bruin, Bev Craven, Michael Everest, Peter Foss,  
Frank Kibblewhite and Paul Roberts.

Stephen Allen was again appointed *Auditor*.

There was a discussion about the continuing difficulty of keeping Powys books in print.

There being no other business, the meeting closed."

A further meeting of the Committee was held on October 19th 1991 at which several important initiatives were proposed.

Bearing in mind that the annual subscription has remained unchanged for several years now despite increasing costs, it was decided that, subject to ratification by the 1992 AGM, the subscription should be increased to £15, as from January 1993. It was also agreed that the Society should encourage members to make gifts and bequests and further details of this are published elsewhere in the *Newsletter*.

Much discussion has taken place recently about the need to establish a permanent Powys collection in collaboration with a museum able to offer suitable facilities. It was, therefore, decided that a sub-committee should be set up to investigate the possibilities. This would be a major and long-term project for the Society and could not be undertaken without considerable thought. The membership of the sub-committee will be as follows:

*Chairman:* Morine Krissdottir

*Secretary:* John Batten

*Members:* Stephen Powys Marks, Frank Kibblewhite and Paul Roberts.

Further details will be published in future issues of the *Newsletter*.

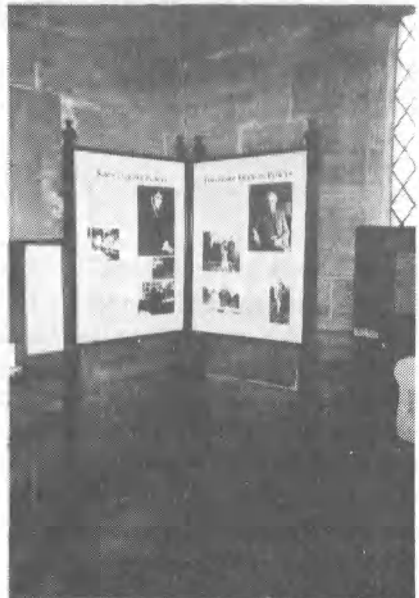
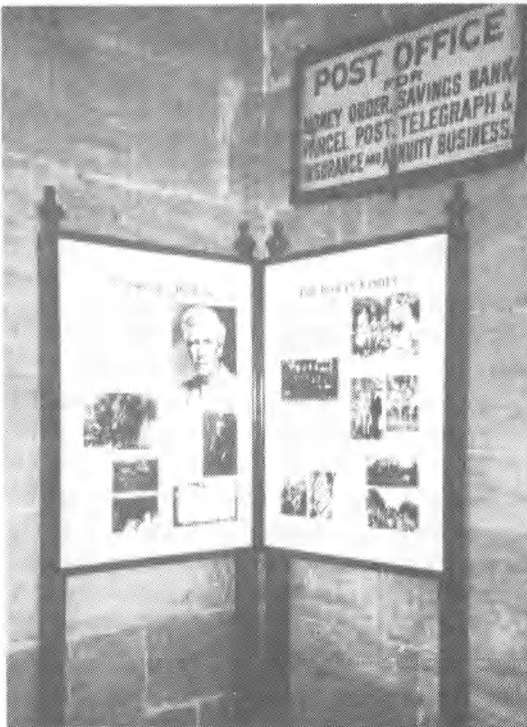
## *An Exhibition at Montacute House*

Last year 70,000 people visited Montacute House. Probably half that number went to the Gazebo to see a Village Exhibition which contained only oblique references to individual Powys brothers. Recently it was generously agreed that we might make good the omissions.

We have set out to portray Montacute's most remarkable family in an interesting factual way by use of photographs and linking text, boldly but tastefully presented on panels dispersed among other items of local interest. This Powys display is unique in two respects. First, it gives prominence to A.R.P., acknowledging his role in saving Montacute House for the nation. Second, it is, we hope, established as a permanent exhibit which will, year after year, be seen by many thousands of tourists.

Although there must be an infinite number of paths leading to the pleasures of appreciating the Powys family, none could have a more picturesque beginning than that stately summer-house, set in a tranquil corner of a garden they knew so well.

**Sarah Linden  
Bev Craven  
John Batten**



*The gazebo panels: left, Llewelyn & Family; right, J.C.P. & T.F.P. (See also page 20.)*

## *A Memorial Service for Sir Angus Wilson*

The Memorial Service for Sir Angus Wilson was held on September 25th at St. James's, Piccadilly. It was a heart-warming occasion, joyous, without melancholy. The restored Wren church may have been packed with artistic and literary celebrities such as Stephen Spender, Harold Pinter, Antonia Fraser, Michael Holroyd and Frank Muir, but it was the presence of Angus Wilson himself which predominated, being evoked with loving particularity in Margaret Drabble's beautifully judged and delivered tribute. Among his many qualities she mentioned his encouragement of younger writers and his championship of John Cowper Powys, a reference which revealed his biographer's endorsement of that particular enthusiasm. The opening reading was given by Angus Wilson's friend Tony Garrett, whom some Powys Society members will remember as coming with him to the Buxton conference in 1976. Ian McKellen contributed readings of W.H. Auden's poem, "The Novelist", and, with breathtaking rightness, of Shakespeare's sonnet CXVI. The whole service was an inspiring Goodbye and Thank You to a fine novelist and critic, whom The Powys Society is proud to remember as its first President.

**Glen Cavaliero**

## *Obituaries*

In this issue of the Newsletter we pay tribute to two long-standing members of The Powys Society, Norman Hopkin and Victor Foss.

### **Norman Maynard Hopkin 1912-1991**

Norman (Nat to his friends) Hopkin was a member of The Powys Society from its inception until his death on May 1st 1991. He attended many of the early meetings of the Society which were held in Hampstead.

Norman Hopkin was born in the City of Westminster on January 1st 1912, the son of a veterinary surgeon. His mother's family, the Maynards, farmed in Hampshire and it was during Norman's childhood that he acquired his life-long love of country life. He was educated at Clayesmore School and it was during this period that his political views were formed (described by his widow, Sheila, as "left of left") from which he never departed. In 1935 he graduated from Imperial College, London, obtaining an Honours B.Sc. degree in metallurgy. The following year he became an Associate of the Royal Institute of Chemistry. A research metallurgist by occupation, Norman worked for Johnson Matthey until 1972. In 1967 he won Johnson Matthey's Gold Medal for the

most original research work to be published that year.

Norman had a son and daughter by his first marriage. Following his wife's death in 1956, he married Sheila in 1957, settling first in Hampstead and finally moving to Oxford in 1973.

For much of his life Norman Hopkin was devoted to the Powys brothers, particularly John, and made several visits to J.C.P. in Wales. He also corresponded with John and with Phyllis Playter after J.C.P.'s death.

In memory of her husband, Mrs. Hopkin has generously given the Society her late husband's collection of Powys books, photographs and letters.

**Griffin Beale**

**V. W. Foss**

1914–1991

The death occurred in February at the age of 77 of Society member Victor William Foss of Cottingham, Northants.

A member since 1976, Mr Foss, a graduate of London University, was professionally a mathematician, being latterly Head of the Mathematics Department at Corby Grammar School, but he was also widely read in English and American literature. He was drawn to the Society by an interest in the writings of John Cowper Powys.

Mr Foss was also a keen student of music and an accomplished classical pianist.

**P. Foss**

### *The Powys Society at Montacute*

It was a great privilege to welcome the Society to what was clearly an historic event – their first meeting in the village of Montacute. The occasion was a lecture by Dr. Glen Cavaliero on “Thomas Hardy and the Powys Brothers”, given in the Baptist Schoolroom on Saturday, 12th October, at 7.30 p.m. It is surprising that it has taken so long for The Powys Society to reach the home of the Powys family, but we trust that this will be the beginning of many more such events in the future.

Dr. Cavaliero's subject was an appropriate one, for an old admission ticket has revealed that a lecture on Thomas Hardy was given at Montacute by one John Cowper Powys at 3 p.m. on 3rd September, probably in the year 1911. Eighty years later, the subject was celebrated again, but this time in relation to the three writing Powys brothers themselves. Dr. Cavaliero gave a fascinating and wide-ranging lecture, drawing out parallels and contrasts between Hardy's novels and those of John Cowper Powys, and the influence of Hardy on Llewelyn Powys and, to a lesser extent, on the writings of T.F. Powys.

The lecture was well supported, with an attendance of around 50. At the close, Dr.Cavaliero asked for questions and a number of interesting points were discussed.

The evening ended with tea, coffee and biscuits being served.

Dare we hope that this lecture will become an annual event at Montacute?

**Leslie Harrison**

*Pastor – Montacute Baptist Church*

*In the first of an occasional series, John Batten considers sites of particular interest in the writings of Llewelyn Powys and compares their present state to that in which Llewelyn would have known them.*

### *A Montacute Field Revisited*

No member of the Powys family had a deeper or more enduring love of Montacute than Llewelyn. In his essay “A Montacute Field”, he tells how, in exile, he would picture “... through the swift agency of the inmost eye ... every sloping contour of a certain historical field. The name of that large romantic field is Witcombe.” More than fifty years after his death his vibrant detailed recollections of that valley ring as true as on the day they were written.

If Witcombe is approached from its northern end, the steep slopes of what the Powys children called the Battle Field are seen to fall into the more gentle, undulating contours of a broad sheep pasture, ringed with woods and untouched by the plough in living memory. The faint, thought-provoking outlines of plague-stricken dwellings are still visible on a plateau on its western slope and although the name Bride’s Mead has faded from the local vocabulary, the swampy area where Emily gathered pussy willows still offers its Easter harvest. It is still from “this veritable vale of springtime” that one is most likely to hear the early calls of the cuckoo and there that the first swallows skim the sheep-cropped turf.

Llewelyn speculated that Witcombe’s wild hellebores and short-stemmed daffodils might be survivals from the gardens of the deserted hamlet. Through the years, intensive grazing by the Abbey Farm sheep has almost eliminated the Lenten lily, but Ted the local shepherd could show you, only a short distance from the footpath track, hellebores which have, to his certain knowledge, persisted for over thirty years.

In his imagination, Llewelyn peopled the valley path with Cluniac monks returning to the Abbey and Thomas Shoel, the Montacute poet, who was a carrier by trade. Today it is popular with locals and visitors, who could encounter there the Liberal Democrat leader on a keep-fit jog. I never walk in Witcombe without recalling Llewelyn’s essay “The Sea! The Sea! The Sea!” How easily one can imagine him, striding through the early April dew beside his grown-up brother Littleton at the beginning of their



memorable walk to Seatown by way of Lewesdon Hill, a distance of at least sixteen miles.

Witcombe has been spared the harsh changes much agricultural land has undergone since the second World War and in its pastoral peace offers no hint of recent turmoil. The Abbey farmer, pressed by current trends, made application to turn this secluded valley into a golf course. Bride's Mead might have been dredged to provide a water hazard, the plague hamlet buried beneath bunkers and the "mild-eyed" Abbey sheep replaced by lawn mowers and electric buggies. Montacute folk rose as one to protest against this violation of their heritage. The planners responded by refusing consent on such grounds as: historical interest, inadequate access and outstanding natural beauty. They did not say, because I suspect they didn't know, that Witcombe remains as unspoilt today as it was in the recollection of the sick, exiled Llewelyn Powys and testifies to the artistic insight and journalistic accuracy of one of his finest essays. Long may it be so.

**John Batten**

*Members will be interested to read the following article, which appeared in the October 11th 1991 issue of The Cambrian News.*

### *Novel Discovery Marks First Edition*

A long lost novel by John Cowper Powys – ranked by many scholars as one of the greatest authors of the 20th century – is featured in the first volume of a new Lampeter-based journal.

Launched this summer, *The Powys Journal* includes excerpts from two versions of Powys's *Edeyrnion*, which give an insight into his reaction to Wales, Welsh mythology and the Welsh language.

Set against the background of war-torn Britain, the novel has been described as a "remarkable revelation" of the author's state of mind between the writing of his two epic Welsh novels *Owen Glendower* (1940) and *Porius* (1951)

In the opening chapter of the first version, he writes: "The Welsh ... in every psychic sense are as occult, ingrown and introverted as if their Archdruid were the grand Lama of Tibet.

"In no country west of the Bosphorus, or north of the Mediterranean, is the strain of aboriginal blood, of blood that isn't Celtic or Teutonic, or even Aryan, more of a dominant influence upon the habits, feelings and instincts of the existing inhabitants, than in Wales."

Published by The Powys Society, the 152-page journal aims to provide a forum for current research into the writings of the Powys brothers – John Cowper, Theodore Francis and Llewelyn – and print previously unpublished material in the form of novels,

stories, essays and poems.

It will include reviews of works by and about the brothers and their circle of friends, as well as biographical memorabilia, diaries, letters and rare photographic material.

The society – which attracts scholars and non-academics from all over the world – was founded in 1967 to “establish the true literary status of the Powys family through promotion and discussion of their works”.

It also publishes three newsletters a year, holds conferences and exhibitions and organises walks in areas associated with the Powys family.

Edited in Lampeter, copies of the journal are available from the society’s publication manager, Stephen Powys Marks, Hamilton’s, Kilmersdon, near Bath, Somerset, BA3 5TE (price £6.80 including postage and packing).

John Jenkins

### *The View from France* Recent French Publications Reviewed

*Mrs Moggs va voir la mer* by Theodore F. Powys : Hatier, Collection Terre Etrangère, Paris 1990. Tr. P.Reumaux.

*Les Montagnes de la Lune* by J.C.Powys : Minerve, Domaine Etranger, Paris 1991. Tr. M.Tran Van Khai.

*Wood and Stone* by J.C Powys: Phébus, Paris 1991. Tr. P.Reumaux.

This year in France has seen the shelves gain the companionship of three new translations from the Powyses, one from Theodore Powys, two from J.C Powys.

Chronologically, *Mrs Moggs va voir le mer et autres contes de la colline de Madder* (for such is the complete title of the collection of five short stories by Theodore) is the first. It was published in September '90 and comprises “Les simples” (“Abraham Men”, from *The Left Leg*), “Le jupon rouge” (“The Red Petticoat”, from *Rosie Plum*), “Le diable et l’hirondelle” (“The Devil and the Good Deed”, from *Rosie Plum*), “Mrs Moggs va voir la mer” (“The Beautiful Sea”, from *Rosie Plum*) and “La jambe gauche” (“The Left Leg”). The stories were chosen and translated by Patrick Reumaux who has already given us *Bruit & Silence* (*Mr.Tasker’s Gods*) and *Mr.Bugby fait peur aux Oiseaux* (*Innocent Birds*) a few years ago and has the greatest admiration for Theodore whom he prefers of the three brothers, as he told the writer of these lines. The translation, fluid and elegant, manages to keep Theodore’s peculiar conciseness effective and has received considerable attention in no less than seven newspapers, ranging from *Le Monde* and *Le Quotidien de Paris* to *La Croix*, including *Le Magazine littéraire* (monthly) and *Le Nouveau Politis* (weekly). Most of the critics were struck by the deceptive simplicity of Theodore’s style, the cruelty of his vision, the contrast between the apparent drowsiness of his villages and the ever present Evil lurking therein, the

poetical transfiguration of reality, the anguish underlying all his work. The stories are published in a new department in Hatier, "Terre Etrangère", together with a volume of letters and poems by Emily Dickinson, *Autoportrait au roitelet*, and *La Belle Dame (The Lovely Lady)* by D.H.Lawrence. Patrick Reumaux, who apart from his great activity as a translator is a writer and poet, is at the head of this department.

*Les Montagnes de la Lune (The Mountains of the Moon)* was published by Editions Minerve in the spring of 1991. They had already published another work by John Cowper Powys, *Tout ou Rien (All or Nothing)* in 1988. The book, handsomely produced, has a cover representing a detail from a painting by Gustave Moreau, "Orphée mort", a mysterious foreground of ancient mountains in sombre hues of russet and dark green, standing out against a blue and gold sky. Among the many facets of J.C.P.'s vision, such as we may discover them in French, it is fitting that this "lunar love-story" should find its place, next to the *Autobiography*, the *Romances* and the *Essays*. We know the importance G.Wilson Knight gave to these last productions and how he saw in them the spiritual involvement J.C.P. never ceased to show. In *Visions and Vices* G.Wilson Knight wrote that: "... in the last stories, a children's fairy-tale manner is fused with space-fiction to bear on the deepest problems of Powys's life and work." (p.127)

I am happy to say that it has been excellently translated by Michelle Tran Van Khai, who had already given us *Apologie des Sens (In Defence of Sensuality)* in 1975 and has, since then, always kept in touch with Powysian matters. (I would almost go so far as to think that the French language has given a translucent light to the text and has improved the overall effect!). The narration is cut into paragraphs slightly differently and more frequently than in the original text, which concurs to give it lightness, and a list of thirty-six *Dramatis Personae* is provided, going from "Horlt, seigneur de Zed" to "Blob, bâton de Rorlt" and including the two worms, Nero's fiddle string and its companions, Woom o' Rim and Kitty, "l'étoile du soir". The Foreword, taken from an essay by G.Wilson Knight, "Cosmic Correspondences", published in the T.L.S. in 1957 and taken up in *Neglected Powers*, is translated by François Xavier Jaujard, another of our dedicated Powysians, who is head of the "Domaine Etranger" department at Editions Minerve.

Finally we come to the last book – J.C.P.'s very first – recently translated, *Wood and Stone*. The cover of this thick and handsome volume shows the grey stones of Stonehenge against a white sky. The original title was retained by Patrick Reumaux, again translator, who explains in a note that the French *Bois et Pierre* would have weakened the tension and gloom of the Saxon words. This is a highly hypothetical point indeed and some critics do not agree. Michel Gresset for instance wrote that if we followed the logic of the argument we would have to abstain from translating any title at all. We have to admit that translating always implies a loss.<sup>1</sup> But keeping the original title because of its melody might seem a dubious argument for the average French-speaking reader. P.Reumaux wrote an introduction entitled "Nous, les Powys", part of which is based on Louis Wilkinson's reminiscences, *Welsh Ambassadors*. In a few pages we are given a concise but vivid description of the formidable Powys dinner table and of each of the three brothers, including Llewelyn, still quite unknown in France. (I may as

well reveal that *Skin for Skin* is presently being translated and will be published in the Autumn.) This is important since we have in the novel the first attempt J.C.P. makes of a kind of autobiography, with the two recognisable “brothers Andersen”. Reumaux remarks, interestingly I think, that whereas John Cowper and Theodore are the heterodox priests of the invisible, the fair Llewelyn is to become priest of the visible.

The novel, with its obvious connection to Hardy, should find a vast audience among the public and, so far, has sold very well. It received considerable attention and was unanimously praised in Parisian as well as local newspapers.<sup>2</sup> Michel Gresset in *La Quinzaine littéraire* – a highly-rated literary magazine, published twice a month – underlines the fact that J.C.P. has from the very first managed to place the most perverse of his phantasms under a certain light which dims the strictly sexual and even the human elements so that the book is bathed in a diffuse atmosphere of general acceptance of all human perversities. Diane de Margerie, in *Le Figaro Littéraire*, reminds us of the strong symbolic elements of *Wood and Stone*, written not long after the death of the mother, and has been particularly struck by the violent and sexual correspondences between the landscape and the people, and by the strong personal elements J.C.P. put in this first novel. And, in *Le Monde des Livres*, Christine Jordis, who has recently written an interesting essay<sup>3</sup> bearing on contemporary English women novelists, including Sylvia Townsend Warner, is also impressed by the power of the world described in *Wood and Stone*, in which it is impossible to separate the analysis of the destiny of the people from the evocation of nature: a world where only those who belong to the realm of stone triumph, whereas the pariahs, the weak are exiled and slowly conquered by madness.

A last word about the translation: *Wood and Stone* makes pleasant reading in French, but it is a pity that P.Reumaux sometimes got confused over the topography, particularly in the chapter concerning Weymouth, where there are some mistakes concerning the Osmington White Horse on the hills, the White Nore and the Nothe. Nevertheless, the evocation of Weymouth, as seen through the eyes of Luke Andersen, remains as fascinating as ever in French, with “la courbe de la baie” and “la tour de l’Horloge du Jubilé” and “la haute flèche de l’église Saint-Jean”, almost as evocative as

“The boats, the sands, the esplanade  
The laughing crowd”

of Thomas Hardy.<sup>4</sup>

**Jacqueline Peltier**

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> See for instance George Steiner in *After Babel*, Oxford University Press, 1975, chapter 5 on the problems involved in translating.

<sup>2</sup> It is one of the 80 books *Le Monde des Livres* recommends for its summer selection.

<sup>3</sup> *De petits enfers varies*. Seuil, 1989.

<sup>4</sup> “At a seaside town in 1869”.

## *The Letters to Henry Miller* a revised and enlarged edition

*Nordine Haddad has for some time been preparing a new French edition of the correspondence between John Cowper Powys and Henry Miller, to be published as Correspondance privée (1950–1963) by Criterion (11 rue Duguay-Trouin 75006 Paris). Here she gives an account of her work as translator and editor.*

In 1975, the *Letters to Henry Miller* from John Cowper Powys were published under the aegis of the defunct Village Press. A protean, unclassifiable, eccentric correspondence, relieved of standards which govern the genre, a fraternal “paean” as a last dying dance on the edge of the abyss. Light-heartedly, the old nonagenarian bard keeps turning over his past, affronts, fears, taboos and totems in it. Fifty frantic unbridled letters, which also rank among the most guileless ever written by the Welshman.

It was no easy task to render in French the sprawling “rascally old-style” which characterizes these letters. Digression, breaking up, tireless dismemberment, embedding, underlining, spate of interjections, ... in short, the kind of extempore preachifying – almost grammatically poetic – which inevitably earned the old “Man of the Mountain” the fervent and lasting enthusiasm of all and sundry.

The idea of publishing the letters from the Eagle of Big Sur, in addition to the Powys letters, originated with Pierre-Guillaume de Roux, my publisher. Much to our surprise, we were fortunate enough to lay hands on forty-four unpublished letters from the American. These exude and share, though in a much less characteristic or more conventional manner, the same unbounded faith in friendship and spiritual brotherhood, the same need to lay bare one’s soul. Miller takes an age to praise the one he considered his “Master” in it. “Your letters are the tonic I need,” he writes, enraptured by this “circular or serpentine (Daedalian) hand-writing which is unique, heart-warming, and always in the key of Ut-majeur” [29/7/1950] ... “How could I ever dream, as a young man of 27 or 28, when ‘sitting at your feet’, that you would one day give me your full-hearted approbation?” [6/6/1950]

The French (critical) edition will include unpublished photographs, notably a photo of the “mobile” (the “Heavenly bells with Hebraic inscriptions”) conceived by Eve Miller for John and Phyllis. The annexed section of the book will contain several texts, among which a letter (unpublished) from Attorney G.G.Olshausen of San Francisco to J.C.P. about the “Tropics”.

To conclude, here is a letter from Miller, the last one (to Phyllis, after John’s death):

“Dear Phyllis Playter – I knew John was at the end of his days and was glad to learn that he passed away quickly. That he had been singing too shortly before he closed his eyes was wonderful to hear. Almost like Blake’s passing. How like dear Friar John! I should feel sad, but I don’t. Wherever he is I am sure he is radiating peace and joy. To drag on one’s life when one’s powers have gone would bring comfort to no one. Bless his name! Henry Miller.”

**Nordine Haddad**

## *Powys in German-Speaking Countries* Some Recent Developments and a Bibliography

Since my last report on Powysian matters in German-speaking countries<sup>1</sup> there has been a curious development, a strange tangle of hopes and fallacies, of failures and successes. When in 1980 I sent a prose piece on Powys to our most renowned literary magazine *Akzente*, the editor, a poet named Michael Krüger, thought it was too eccentric, but added that he was a great admirer of John Cowper Powys and couldn't I edit a special issue on this writer? The Powys issue appeared in 1981 – with documents by Hermann Hesse, Max Brod, Hans-Henny Jahn,<sup>2</sup> Simone de Beauvoir, Henry Miller, Rolf Italiaander and Wolfgang Kehr,<sup>3</sup> with George Steiner's essay on reading Powys, as well as excerpts from *Porius* and *Autobiography*. *Akzente* 28 was well received and gained a place on the monthly list of critics' recommendations (SWF-Bestenliste). But then there was a lull and nothing notable happened until the summer of 1985. Suddenly, within a week or two, some five publishers or editors knocked at my door saying they had been intrigued by *Akzente* four years ago and would like to discuss possibilities of publishing Powys. Zsolnay Verlag (Vienna) reprinted their 1930 translation of *Wolf Solent* and this book became a success. It stayed on the list of recommended books for three months, was reviewed widely (in *Die Zeit* for example) and portraits of Powys appeared in literary magazines. Powys began to be talked about by *cognoscenti*, as he was in the thirties, when Elias Canetti, Alma Mahler-Werfel, Max Brod and Hermann Hesse inaugurated a secret Powys cult. At the same time, a new Swiss publisher (of Pessoa, Mandelstam and Wole Soyinka), Ammann, wanted to celebrate his first five years in business by bringing out a German edition of *100 Best Books*, which also included a conversation with the Swiss author Peter Bichsel on books and reading. A small publisher from Bavaria, Kirchheim, then announced that he would publish *Autobiography* in 1987 and everybody was delighted. Yet this was the first signal of the strange undercurrent of mishaps in the Powys business, with editors being sent to Coventry and translations being rejected or repeated. Even as I write there is no sign that *Autobiography* will achieve its metamorphosis into a German edition. To continue on a discordant note, Zsolnay publishers bought a packet of eight Powys titles, had two or three translations (*Ducdame* by Wieland Grommes, *Glastonbury* by Wilhelm Gauger) done and then sold the whole thing again while the first editor in charge retired and the next was fired. Similar things happened at Goldmann Verlag, Munich, who commissioned translations of *In Defence of Sensuality*, *The Art of Happiness* and *The Art of Growing Old*. The editor was sacked and the translations are still floating in the literary atmosphere like *eidola* awaiting their materialisation, a phenomenon probably related to Powys's planetary psychology. It seems that this author, as soon as he touches German soil, is apt to create confusion, chaos and polarization, quite in keeping with his shamanistic charlatanism.

But to return to more hopeful signs. Several magazines and journals began to present Powys, e.g. *das nachtcafé*, *Horen*, *Schreibheft* and *Flugasche*. The latter, based in Stuttgart, produced a special issue, which included articles on Blaenau Ffestiniog, Powys in Germany and on *Wolf Solent*, while *Inklings Yearbook* now regularly carries reviews and articles concerning the Powys brothers. In 1989, Junius Verlag, a publisher of politics and philosophy in Hamburg, produced an edition of *The Meaning of Culture*, entitled *Kultur als Lebenskunst*, which, however, received very little attention. My own book of short stories written in the spirit of John Cowper Powys had a title that in itself was enough to rebuff readers: *Blaenau Ffestiniog*.

In the academic field, Powys has still not gained much of a reputation. The industry is still too preoccupied with the sanctified authorities and allows too little space for individualistic explorations, though this may be changing. Apart from my thesis on "Nature and Subjectivity in Powys", there is only Wilhelm Gauger from the Freie Universität Berlin who has indefatigably drawn attention to the Powyses<sup>4</sup> in scholarly articles. He has always endeavoured to place his works in a modern literary and theoretical context, such as metafiction, utopian thought, parapsychology, and by comparing him to Le Guin, T.H.White, Charles Williams, Joyce and Graves.

The latest news, however, is that Hanser Verlag, one of our most renowned literary publishers, now headed by the aforementioned Michael Krüger, is venturing on a Powys edition, hopefully starting with *A Glastonbury Romance* in 1992/3. Hanser happens to be the publisher of Elias Canetti, one of our greatest and most secret Powysians, who was one of the earliest admirers in the thirties and who visited Blaenau Ffestiniog not long ago. Thus the circle seems to be closing. But let's hope that this time it'll be more than a circle, let's hope we are in for a Powysian spiral in this part of the world.

**Elmar Schenkel**

P.S. Fifteen minutes after completing this survey I had word from Kirchheim that he will be publishing *Autobiography* in January 1992, this time definitely! Touch wood.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> "John Cowper Powys: The Literary Reception in Germany", *The Powys Review* 4 (1978/79), 79–81. See also my extended version in *Plein Chant* 42/43 (1988/89), 45–51.

<sup>2</sup> 1894–1959, German novelist, playwright, philosopher, who was an early admirer of Powys and, as President of the Hamburg Academy, was responsible for awarding him the Hamburg Plaque in 1957.

<sup>3</sup> Kehr wrote the first German dissertation on J.C.P. and visited him at Corwen; Italiaander (1913–1991), writer and ethnologist, who brought the Hamburg Plaque to Blaenau Ffestiniog. For both visits, see *The Powys Review* 14 (1984).

<sup>4</sup> As to T.F.Powys, there is very little interest here as yet. The translation of *Mr. Weston's Good Wine* in 1969 went largely unnoticed, but there is a Christian publisher from Moers, Brendow, who is considering the possibilities of T.F.P. in Germany. The interest in Llewelyn is even less or non-existing. (*Bibliography overleaf*)

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## *News From Sweden*

That indefatigable Powysian, Sven Erik Täckmark, writes:

It may interest the members of our Society to learn that the J.C.P. exhibition at Uppsala University library, lasting from November 6th 1990 to February 20th 1991, is just being dispatched to the University library in Gothenburg. This latest exhibition will be opened on November 8th at 2 o'clock and will go on until the end of January 1992.

On the opening day, Charles Lock is to hold a seminar for twelve doctoral students and this will be followed by a discussion between Charles Lock and Harold Fawcner on the last chapter of *A Glastonbury Romance*.

Charles will then go on to lecture at the universities in Stockholm, Uppsala, Lund and Umeå - the latter a fairly young and most progressive seat of learning. Between Lund in the south and Umeå in the north there is a distance of eight hundred English miles !!

Greetings from us all, Charles, and good luck.

Your old buddy,

Sven Erik Täckmark.

The exhibition will then move on to Stockholm University on the 9th of March 1992 and will be on display for a month. On the day of its opening, Ingemar Algulin will hold a public lecture on J.C.P. at the University.

In a further bulletin, the inexhaustible Sven reports that:

*Studiekamraten*, one of Sweden's oldest cultural magazines, was started in 1917 by a WEA group of workers. Until 1960 it was published by *Bibliotekstjänst* (The National Library Service), a most important organ, among other things, for their brief reviews of new books, directed to the many hundreds of libraries throughout Sweden. As *Bibliotekstjänst* found the magazine not remunerative enough, it was privately taken over by Mr. Thomas Nydahl, cultural editor and writer. Mr. Nydahl's intention is to publish five numbers a year from the 1st of January 1992. He will receive £8000 a year from the Swedish Arts Council for the printing and distribution of the magazine. His hope is that the contributors will provide their articles without payment.

As Mr. Nydahl is a great admirer of John Cowper Powys he will, therefore, devote a whole Spring number to J.C.P., which will amount to about fifty pages, containing articles by, for example, Glen Cavaliero, Cedric Hentschel, Margaret Drabble (I hope), Paul Roberts, Charles Lock, Jacqueline Peltier and an introduction from myself. Swedish contributors will include, among others, Ingemar Algulin, Carl-Erik af Geijerstam and Göran Borge (a well-known writer). Coeckelbergh's publishing firm will also let Mr. Nydahl publish any extract he likes from the Swedish translation of *Autobiography*, which will be available in connec-

tion with the J.C.P. exhibition on March 9th 1992 at Stockholm University library.

Although all texts in that issue of *Studiekamraten* will be in Swedish, it should be an essential contribution – at least here – to the knowledge of Brother John.

I am quite sure that members of the Society will share my amazement at, and deep gratitude for, the tireless campaign which Sven Erik has waged on behalf of J.C.P. If Sweden does not become the most Powys conscious nation in the world, it will not be due to any lack of effort on the part of “Erik The Red”. Perhaps we should establish him in residence in Britain!

PR

### *Profile — Jacqueline Peltier*

Born near Paris in 1939 of the unlikely encounter between a Catholic young lady from the extreme West of Brittany and a Jewish expatriate from the Baltic sea. To both I owe a great deal, in spite – or perhaps because – of their marked differences or even opposition, including tolerance and a desire to understand and love people with all their idiosyncracies.

Studies in French Lycées except for one meaningful year at a Catholic boarding-school in Weymouth when I was twelve. My main interests were in languages, French, English and Spanish (plus some moderate notions of Russian) and in painting, but I was uniformly bored by most of the scientific subjects taught at school, which I regret now for I would have liked to understand something of astrophysics.

In 1961 I married a life-long friend, Max, who is of English and French descent. We have three children, Isabelle, 29, Jean-François, 27 and Valérie, 22.

The two lasting influences in my life are Proust whom I first read when I was 17 and John Cowper Powys, to me quite unknown up to 1975, although I had read English at university for a number of years, and whom I “discovered” at a Book Fair in Nice, where I was living at the time, through the enticing form of the Rivers Press edition of *Weymouth Sands*. I still remember my first impression of reading it, of being completely “bowled over”, puzzled and dazzled at the same time, and even now I still feel as though the Weymouth of my youth and “his” Weymouth blended magically into a place beyond reality.

Jacqueline Peltier

## *A Study of Llewelyn Powys* His Literary and Personal Philosophy

Enclosed with this *Newsletter* is a leaflet advertising Peter Foss's study of Llewelyn Powys; this was originally his dissertation presented for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the University of Wales, and is shortly to be published by the Edwin Mellen Press. The normal price is £39.95, for sale mainly to libraries and institutions, but members of The Powys Society are invited to order the book on a **pre-publication offer of £20** on the enclosed order form.

Peter wants members to know that the book will be a bound, hardback reproduction of the 400-page typescript, about 9" by 7", and will contain the most comprehensive bibliography of Llewelyn Powys's work, including material about him, so far available.

The book will be reviewed in detail in due course.

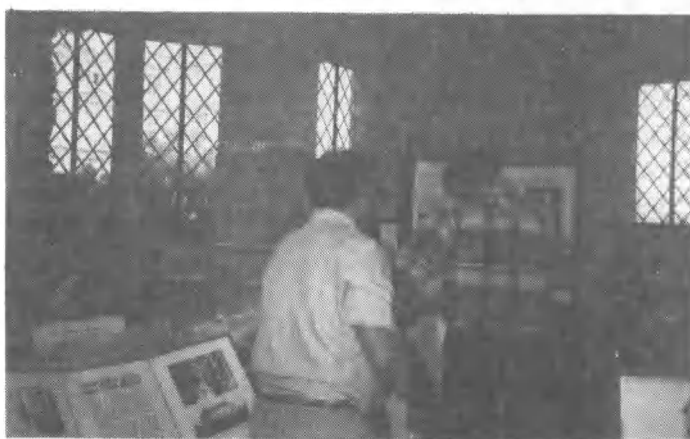
### *Gifts and Bequests*

The Norman Hopkin bequest was a very welcome one. The Society's funds are always stretched and members could greatly assist the Society in its declared aim of achieving public recognition of the Powyses by making gifts of books, money etc. during their lifetimes. Alternatively, members may wish to make provision for the Society in their wills. The Secretary, Griffin Beale, would be happy to answer any questions about gifts or bequests.

**Morine Krissdottir**

### *Books for Sale: Powys Brothers & Kenneth Hopkins*

Another leaflet, bound in in the centre, lists books by and about the Powys family, and others by, or published by, Kenneth Hopkins, which have been given to the Society to sell to raise funds, so all proceeds will benefit the Society. Rather than wait for the Book Sale next August, it was thought better to give the whole membership an opportunity to buy from this very interesting list. So, please respond and help your Society.



*Two more views of the Montacute gazebo display (see page 5).*