

Editorial

In order to mark the recent appearance of *Mock's Curse*, a collection of nineteen previously unpublished stories, the focus of this issue of the *Newsletter* is very much on T. F. Powys. This in itself is pleasing, since we try, over time, to ensure that the *Newsletter* presents a balanced view of all members of the Powys family, but it has also given us the opportunity to welcome several new contributors, including Elaine and Barrie Mencher, directors of The Brynmill Press, and David Gervais, Honorary Fellow in English at the University of Reading. Dr Gervais will, incidentally, be publishing a much longer essay on T. F. Powys in the journal *English* during 1996.

Although Theodore may, on this occasion, stand at the front of our attention, we have not neglected the other members of the family. Theodora Scutt has followed her earlier piece on Katie Powys with a beautiful and illuminating essay on Gertrude, an essay which makes a fitting prelude to the exhibition of her paintings which is to be shown at this year's Conference. The exhibition (which includes some recently restored works) has been arranged by Frank Kibblewhite, who is also giving a lecture on Gertrude at its opening.

Stephen Powys Marks, drawing upon his own collection of family papers, has assembled a fascinating account of Charles Francis Powys, his elder brother Littleton Albert Powys, and their elder half-sister Philippa Knight in their infancy which, among other things, shows how early in life some of the abiding characteristics of 'The Powys Father' were established.

In addition, we have an interview with Frances Kingshott, who recalls the Powys household in Burpham (extracts from a previously unpublished *Blank Verse Autobiography* written by John Cowper Powys in his twenties will be printed soon). One thing which makes the study of the Powys family so rewarding, apart from the intrinsic value of their work, is the wealth of material which remains to be explored, published and discussed – enough to keep both the *Journal* and the *Newsletter* amply supplied for many years to come.

Also published with this edition of the *Newsletter* is an index to the first twenty-five issues. This valuable aid has been compiled with infinite patience and meticulous care by Stephen Powys Marks, to whom we offer sincere thanks.

Beyond the *Newsletter*, the activities of the Society are thriving. *The Powys Journal* volume v is now in the final stages of production and promises to equal the remarkable achievements of the first four issues. That a society such as ours is able to produce an annual journal of this quality and stature is surely something in which we can all take pride.

Details of the Annual Conference, published in this issue, promise an exciting event, and remember, it is still not too late to book your place for the whole

conference, a single lecture or any combination of events. Bookings should be made with John Batten, whose address appears inside the front cover.

Sadly, the John Cowper Powys Day at Swansea had to be postponed until a date in November yet to be announced. Details will be sent to members when available and we would urge everyone to attend.

The importance of the Powys family is gradually being recognised outside the Society too. Not only did the *Times Literary Supplement* of 19 May 1995 devote its front cover to a portrait of John Cowper Powys, but Professor John Bayley gave a long and stimulating review of *Petrushka and the Dancer* and the volume of letters to Frances Gregg published last year by Cecil Woolf. A slightly more obscure publication, *Report: The Journal of the Association of Teachers and Lecturers* devoted a page in its April 1995 issue to an interview with Chris Woodhead, the Chief Inspector of Schools and head of the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted), in which he described at length the importance of *Wolf Solent* in his intellectual development. It was, he says, the book which 'fired [his] life-long love of literature.' He goes on to say that:

I do think English teachers should recognise that great literature should be made accessible to all young people. Books do not have to be directly relevant to children's lives. Cowper Powys had no real connection with the life I was leading as a boy but I was still captivated by his work.

What a pity, then, that he did not take the opportunity, when head of the Schools Curriculum and Assessment Authority, to introduce *Wolf Solent* into the lists of National Curriculum texts.

Ours is an active, dynamic society, its membership higher than it has ever been. Larger print-runs of our publications are required, more members wish to take part in activities. That, in turn, of course, means more work for everyone, but it is exciting work. Why not become involved?

Paul Roberts

Petrushka and the Dancer

The editor of *Petrushka and the Dancer*, Dr Morine Krissdóttir, would like overseas members to know that the diary selections, as well as being published by The Carcanet Press in England, have also been published by The Alyscamps Press in Europe (35 rue de l'Espérance, 75013 Paris, France); by St Martin's Press in America (Scholarly and Reference Division, 257 Park Avenue South, New York, NY 10010); and are distributed in Canada by McClelland & Stewart Publishers, Toronto.

T. F. Powys
'A Medium Clearer Than Water or Crystal'

Why isn't T. F. Powys more widely known than he is? The question is worth asking because it is rare to meet anyone who has read him who does not think of him as a complete original, but common to come across readers who have not read him at all. He has this much in common with his best known character, Mr Weston.

The Powys family themselves were in no doubt about Theodore from the start. In John Cowper's generous words:

In our family we have long known him as the most formidable and most original among us and have been accustomed to note every one of his peculiarities with curiosity and awe. 'He writes', says one of his Irish reviewers, 'as if no one had ever written before', and it is easy to see how little the current tricks and affectations of modern literature have affected him.¹

This is unequivocal and might seem to suggest why T. F. Powys is not better known than he is. He kept his own times at arms' length. But this is negative and John Cowper's view of his brother is nothing if not positive:

... the startling purity of his style – like a medium clearer than water or crystal – makes it possible for him to deal with those bed-rock 'essential candours' of the human Tragi-Comedy, with their grim humour and terrible pity, which the sophisticated rhetoric of most of us covers with 'words, words, words'.²

Writers whose language is this pure often take years to come into their own. Witness William Blake. Powys himself, right from the *Soliloquies of a Hermit*, wrote consciously against the grain of his times (what else was his choice of living in a Dorset village?) and, perhaps, against the grain of literature itself. In an early letter (26 January 1906), he quotes Dr Johnson's surmise that 'mankind may come, in time, to write all aphoristically' and remarks:

I cannot see the use of many words, nothing [?] should be used except in narrative only to begin thought. It is man's conceit that has made him explain so much.³

Hence the untrammelled nakedness of his own prose. But the first point to make is that he was never simply a sport, a *lusus naturae* among writers, for all his apparent oddity. Yeats too thought that there was 'credit in walking naked', Lawrence sought for a 'hard, rocky directness of statement' and Eliot for a 'condition of complete simplicity'. If Powys differed from his great contemporaries he also resembled them.

In some ways Powys was one of the most accessible writers of the 1920s. He might be compared with E. M. Forster, except that, unlike him, Forster was obviously trying to be engaging, tipping us the wink, keeping us in the know. Mr Wilcox, for instance, is ironised into cardboard. We see Forster pulling the

strings. He is half-novelist but half-essayist, a sort of Modernist Charles Lamb. Powys is quite different. We are all the time conscious that there is a narrator in his work – his stories are all beautifully *told* – but it is a much more formidable narrator whose charm has bite, aloof and quizzical, slyly assuming the functions of an unpredictable God, a God we can never really understand. Powys would have known very well what George Eliot meant when she said how hard it was to have to pretend to be omniscient. In his later years Powys regularly attended his Mappowder church but none of his family or friends could offer a full explanation of why he did so.⁴ I believe that he liked to savour the suspense of wondering whether God was present there or not. It is this suspense which makes his fiction so compelling: a source of meditation but also a generator of excitement. Unlike Forster's donnish narrator, Powys's has no existence outside the tale being told. His comments on characters ('naughty', 'pious', and so on) are so tongue-in-cheek that they seem even more quizzical than are the passages where he refrains from comment. Always, he retreats into that flickering sense of amusement at human nature. If he had to depict a Mr Casaubon (and the unworldly vicar is one of his stock characters) he would have found him funnier than George Eliot did, though no less serious. He may be drawn to characters who are drawn to God but we never forget that two of his favourite writers (less unlike one another than meets the eye) were Rabelais and Jane Austen. His metaphysics did not exclude comedy.

The last thing this deep vein of irony encourages in us is any sense of knowingness about Powys's characters. It points instead to the wonder and mystery of human (and divine) behaviour, to the things we can never know. This is why we must never patronise his characters as country bumpkins. As with the mystic, his language, even at its most impish, plays on the edge of language, focused on silence. Personality is only ever a means to this. Hence his sudden turns and escapes from the dogmatic, the way his fiction keeps us on the alert. There is never any simple transaction of meaning from narrator to reader; we can never say what Mr Weston is, even when we suspect it. Meaning is a floating, polyvalent thing. As Nietzsche would have said, 'all facts are interpretations'.

All this might well be said of Joyce too, of course, but there is a further dimension to Powys's world, the way it guides us through a (fairly constant) range of quotations and allusions, most of them religious or Biblical in character. In having Mr Weston keep a lion in his Ford van Powys makes his world continuous with the world of the Bible in a way that Leopold Bloom's world is not continuous with Homer's Greece. This is what I mean by its being accessible: there is something, however transmogrified, for it to be accessible to. Before we have consulted our copy of Thornton's *Allusions in 'Ulysses'* what strikes us is rather a sort of poetry of the inaccessible: the myth short-circuits itself. Powys, on the other hand, has no need of a scholarly midwife. Even when we miss a Biblical allusion we pick up the Biblical cadence. This does not mean that he relied inertly

on a conventional body of Christian myth. He was as ready to re-write it as Lawrence was in *The Man Who Died*. Christianity, for him, was both present and remote; he partook of it without exactly participating in it. Mr Weston has never been inside a church and his creator's religion owed as much to what he learned inside the village inn. Both places offered him a way of talking about the eternal verities, both provided a kind of imaginative clay for him to play with and shape as he saw fit. If he wants to turn Death into a character the fables are there to enable him to do so. The accent, however, falls on death rather than on the fables themselves.

It is possible, therefore, to see Powys as something of a modernist himself, with something in him of the Joyce who made use of Homer and the Eliot who drew on Frazer and the Vedas. But Powys's frame of reference is also the index of a continuity in English culture which, for these other modernists, is broken and fragmented. Take the figure of the country parson which was as important to him as it was to George Eliot or, even, George Herbert. Hardy had removed it from his Wessex but Powys reinstated it. Through this constant figure, as through Bunyan or William Law or the numerous Biblical echoes, Powys implies a continuous cultural present in which the narrator assumes that the reader still lives, in spite of the twentieth century. Though religious doubt may still be a strong feature of this world it is not the specific, historical doubt of the Victorians but something more timeless, as appropriate to the Thebaid as to modern Dorset. God was as interesting to Powys if He didn't exist as if He did. It was not for nothing that he read Nietzsche so closely.⁵ This is why he has no need of notions like Eliot's 'dissociation of sensibility' – notions variously echoed in Yeats and Lawrence too – to explain his predicament. There is simply the Fall that governs the terrestrial world as it has always done.

We think of Powys's world as timeless in spite of the fact that it is clearly rooted in the rural Dorset of the turn of the century. Life *sub specie aeternitatis* rather than as historical process. To say this is not to play down his powers of observation, one of the most obvious things to celebrate him for. A sense of eschatology did not, for instance, preclude a keen sense of class. For the poor in his work life is always hard, subject to the same unchanging evils: Fate, the weather and the rich. Few writers are so devastating on the subject of the desire for property (*The Market Bell*, *The Left Leg* etc.). This is why we should never sentimentalise Powys's world as a cosy refuge from the so-called 'real world'. Few of its denizens are safe from predators. When Dylan Thomas tried to pretend the contrary, in *Early One Morning*, he simply revealed his own sentimentality in *Under Milk Wood*. Madder and Dodder are not picture villages like Llareggub. If their world is pastoral it is also 'red in tooth and claw' (e.g. *Mr. Tasker's Gods*). Its real function is not that of idyll but to reveal the basic rhythms of life and death which the civilisation of the combustion engine has tried to hide. It is possible, though ironical, to see how his fictional world might all the same seem open to the charge of fostering in its

readers a certain nostalgia, as if that modern world either did not exist or could be reduced to the relatively unthreatening form of Lord Bullman's motor car. Aren't Luke Bird and Tamar Grobe deliberately conceived at a tangent to the twentieth century? Where do they fit in the world of Gerald Crich or Eliot's 'young man carbuncular' or the sex-obsessed Leopold Bloom? These questions seem to me to be off the point. In asking them, one at once sees that Powys's inviting accessibility is a kind of trap. What it seems to evade is really there all the time, boiled down to its essentials and stripped of adventitious realism. Far from offering an escape, Powys's world is often a way of exposing us to terrors (as in his great story *The Only Penitent*). I can think of nothing in Joyce which expresses the terror of evil as powerfully as Mr Bromby in *The Market Bell*. The pastoral merely serves to tighten the screws. The simplistic may also be frightening. If Bunyan and Law are there too, that is because they are so badly needed to console us for what happens.

One can describe *Mr. Weston's Good Wine* as a great novel because the novel is such a flexible, capacious form but it perhaps makes more sense to group it with *Gulliver's Travels* or *Candide* than with *Jane Eyre* and *Middlemarch*. Realism, though there, is less essential to its effects. Neither is it really a novel of character, though there are vivid characters in it. We do not follow so curiously the shapes the characters' lives take, as we do Jane's or Dorothea's, because, in a sense, we already foresee what they will be. They are each of them exemplary. We know that the Mumbys are bullies, that the drinkers and talkers will drink and talk, that Luke Bird is innocent. What we are asked to think about is not character but bullying, talking, drinking and innocence. This does not make the people mere sticks, as Powys's brilliant impersonation of rustic speech, his feel for the fantasies behind it, go to show. But psychology is not an end in itself. Meditation matters as much as impersonation. As with Jane Austen, character always embodies some more general thought. This in itself may explain why T. F. Powys has never been as popular as D. H. Lawrence or even his brother John Cowper. He is not interested in personality and it has sometimes seemed as if the modern reader were interested in little else.

One sign of this is that Powys never attempts to do things which lie outside his range, unlike both the other novelists just mentioned. He always has his own measure. He knows where he stands and he stands there four-square. (One understands his love of Dr Johnson). Hence the simplicity with which he lays out the human heart in his fiction: there is none of what Lawrence called 'Hamletizing'. In this he differs from John Cowper, which explains why readers who like one of the brothers often fail to take to the other. John Cowper, as his great *Autobiography* makes so clear, was driven to self-examination by an appalled fascination with self, never quite sure what he would discover in his own psyche next. Thus his characters often feel like impromptu self-explanations, speculative probings into something that eluded him. He invented them in order to understand himself better. One thinks back to Montaigne and Rousseau. Turgenev

once said that the heart of man is like 'a dark forest' and it is for his uncanny feeling for that darkness that we value John Cowper. His people are dark even to themselves, in their most secret thoughts. To such darkness Theodore brings a light, albeit an equivocal one, with the jesting of John Death, the tolling of the market bell and, of course, Mr Weston who himself carries a lamp. John Cowper sees into, Theodore sees through. The former derives from Dostoevski out of Thomas Hardy, the latter from Jane Austen.

Anyone who has taught the nineteenth century novel will have been told by students that certain novels are good because one can 'identify' with their characters – especially with characters like Jane Eyre, Tess and Fabrice del Dongo. That is how we would like to see ourselves in adversity and we have a craving to get inside another person's skin. To Henry James this was of the very essence of fiction and it was exemplified by Balzac:

He at all events robustly loved the sense of another explored, assumed, assimilated identity – enjoyed it as the hand enjoys the glove when the glove ideally fits. My image indeed is loose; for what he liked was absolutely to get into the constituted consciousness, into all the clothes, gloves and whatever else, into the very skin and bones, of the habited, featured, coloured, articulated form of life that he desired to present.⁶

That is how we most often think of the novelist and it clearly fails to cover the case of T. F. Powys. We cannot 'identify' with his characters as we can, in one way or another, with Paul Morel and Stephen Dedalus, Mrs Ramsay and Marcel. He never puts himself directly into his novels as the creators of these characters do, not even into the narrator of them. Identifying simply isn't the point.

John Cowper himself was well aware of this as he makes clear in a long, unpublished letter in the Bissell Collection sent from Milwaukee on 28 February 1928 – congratulating Theodore on *Mr. Weston's Good Wine*:

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!

'Control' is an apt word and one that we would be unlikely to apply to John Cowper himself. It is, though, a part of his own genius that he sees so quickly and finely the importance of his brother's masterpiece, foreign as it must have felt to him, and it would be wrong to repay this generosity with invidious comparisons between the two of them. *A Glastonbury Romance* was as much beyond Theodore as *Mr. Weston* was beyond John. Nonetheless, it is important to dispose of the old *canard* that John is a 'major' writer who shows Theodore to be a 'minor' one (a view often expressed by Richard Perceval Graves⁷). No one could call a writer as voluminous as John Cowper 'minor' but that is hardly the point. It depends on what one wants. *A Glastonbury Romance* is perhaps a great book without being a great novel. James, for one, would have thought it a 'loose, baggy monster',

spilling over in all directions at once. When the vessel is full, John goes on pouring. Theodore fills his fictions to the brim but then he always knows when to stop: nothing is spilt. In his work, his conception finds its perfect shape. This is why he is a great short-story writer. He knew how to say everything in eight pages, which may sometimes be harder to do than to say it in eight hundred. John Cowper can write superbly well but sometimes even his finest descriptions turn into redundant words. He can add but not cut. Theodore, by contrast, knows just how many words his medium will stand. This is rarer among our best novelists than one might suppose, perhaps because the novel form naturally runs more to elaboration than concision. Scott, Dickens, George Eliot and Hardy all out-run themselves as John Cowper does. This is why I believe that, in the end, the case for Theodore's uniqueness should rest on the aesthetic quality of his fiction.

It will be apparent that, in this context, 'aesthetic' refers to what is said and not just to the clarity with which it is said. Nor do I wish to imply that form in his novels is merely a matter of literary mechanics, something painstakingly constructed. James found that *Madame Bovary* was redeemed by its formal perfection and this is no doubt true, though we can now see from Flaubert's drafts how that form could be far from spontaneous and natural.⁸ It was Jane Austen, not Flaubert, who seemed to him to write as a bird sings, with 'her narrow unconscious perfection of form'. Powys may seem the same to us though that is partly because his drafts, his 'visions and revisions', remain unpublished. Even so, he is a different sort of writer from the Flaubert of the *Trois Contes*. Where Flaubert, and many another novelist, tends naturally towards description T. F. Powys always concentrates his attention (and his form) on the development of an action. This explains why he can dispense with psychology.

In so far as his fiction concerns psychology it is through embodying it as a series of actions. This comes out again and again in the very welcome addition to the canon of *Mock's Curse*.⁹ In each story, once the chain of events has been unravelled, everything has been said. No elaboration is possible. Whether we see this as a concentration of thought or a perfection of form scarcely matters. We are struck, either way, by a bracing freedom from the usual endless speculativeness of fiction as a form. Take 'Mock's Curse' itself, a simple rural anecdote yet a work of Blakean penetration. The tale hinges on the disturbing fact that the last word of the Old Testament is the word 'curse'. Two brothers who live together fall out over the same woman. As James Mock leads the woman away his brother John curses him 'in the name of God'. In time John pulls his house down and sets off as a beggar with only one possession, his spade. He longs for James's forgiveness. Gradually his sorrow eats away at him until, one day, he comes to a pleasant farmhouse:

John Mock looked into the garden. The garden had never been dug. Though the house was so tidy the garden was utterly neglected. John Mock trembled. He knew the garden was his brother's. He went in to dig.

He made the motions of digging, but when he looked at the earth he had not moved it. So John Mock laughed. The farmer heard the laugh, and coming into the garden he found a dying man lying there.

The farmer was James Mock. He carried John into the house, and laid him upon a couch.

John looked earnestly at his brother. Then he smiled. Mock's curse was not written there. He begged for his spade, and in it he saw his own face.

Mock's Curse was gone.

There is a Tolstoyan simplicity about this moment of recognition, as well as a hint of Blake's poem 'A Poison Tree'. To explain the meaning one has to confront the action and the effect of the action depends upon how it is told. The tale, in its unpretending way, concentrates on action in the way great dramatists like Racine and Ibsen do. Like Phèdre crying 'Dieux! que ne suis-je assise à l'ombre des forêts' John Mock comes face to face with his own dark heart. Only when pared down to such bare essentials can that heart be redeemed. This is art but we need not call it psychology.

If I had to choose a single example to clinch this argument, after so many generalities, it would be the late novella *The Only Penitent*. It is one of Powys's most powerful pieces of writing, though one hardly expects that from the leisurely, humorous way in which it begins. Mr Hayhoe, the vicar of Maids Madder and one of Powys's innocents, feels oppressed by all the sin in the world that no one seems to repent of. He decides to offer the solace of a confessional in his church, after Sunday services. Predictably, no one comes to it, though there is much village gossip about its unorthodoxy. So far the tone is comic, even whimsical, sustained with the familiar Powys jokes about God. Despite the grim subject, the mood is relaxed and genial. Then, after several weeks, a penitent does come to Mr Hayhoe, the itinerant tinker Mr Jar, so often seen in silhouette on Madder Hill. Mr Jar is one of Powys's God-figures and he has come to confess nothing less than his creation of the world. He asks the priest's forgiveness for having done this to man. To call this a parable might suggest that it is schematic – a metaphysical paradox – but in fact the final scene is worked out in loving detail. In this process, the tale changes dramatically, from the nearly facetious to the solemn and awesome. Yet we are aware of no join or seam as the one tone changes into the other. Sublimity seems a natural consequence of the deceptive simplicity of the opening. The import of Mr Jar slowly dawns on us but there is no feeling of Powys gearing himself up for a big effect. I doubt whether brief quotation can illustrate this but I will try, even so, because the achievement is essentially that of a great prose style and reminds us how crucial the control of language is to any successful fiction. I quote from the final pages:

'Who are you?' asked Mr. Hayhoe, whose own voice sounded strange to him.

'I am the Only Penitent,' replied Jar. 'I have come to confess my sin to you.'

'Can I give you absolution?' asked Mr. Hayhoe, in a low tone.

'You can,' replied Jar, 'for only by the forgiveness of man can I be saved.'

'Can that be so?' asked Mr. Hayhoe.

'He who forgives a sin, loves the sinner,' answered Jar. 'By love, all is forgiven.'

'Dare I love you?' asked Mr. Hayhoe.

Jar bowed his head.

'I crucified my son,' he said. Mr. Hayhoe was silent.

"Twas I who created every terror in the earth, the rack, the plague, all despair, all torment. I am the one who rips up the women with child, every foul rape is mine act, all pain and all evil are created by me. Can you love me now?"

Mr. Hayhoe looked through the open vestry door, and saw Priscilla still kneeling.

'You have not told all,' he said. 'You have not spoken of the joy and love that a woman can give'

'I destroy all men with a sword,' said Jar. 'I cast them down into the pit, they become nothing.'

'Hold!' cried Mr. Hayhoe. 'Is that last word true?'

'It is,' answered Jar.

'Then, in the name of Man,' said Mr. Hayhoe boldly, 'I forgive your sin; pardon and deliver you from all your evil; confirm and strengthen you in all goodness, and bring you to everlasting death.'

As ever, Powys has an instinct for the right ending. The tale leaves us in single-minded contemplation of its final moment.

One last word. I have tried to show why T. F. Powys ought to be more widely known but, in the pages of this *Newsletter*, I may hope to be speaking to the converted. I should therefore make it plain that my case ultimately depends on a more general assent. It has been the fate of both John Cowper and Theodore Powys to have seemed to appeal to a coterie or *chapelle* of sympathetic hearers. I do not know whether there really is such a thing as a Powys cult (or two cults) but I am not writing for one. If either brother ultimately matters it is because he belongs to a long tradition, just as Dickens or Hardy do, and not merely as literary phoenixes. We see this, in Theodore's case, when we see his work, for all its originality, as an integral part of the English literature of his times.

David Gervais

Notes

¹ From the 'Foreword' by J. C. Powys to an unidentified work by T. F. Powys, a copy of which is in the Dorchester library. For this and other quotations from unpublished materials I am indebted to Mrs Elaine Mencher for access to the T. F. Powys archive which she has collected on behalf of The Brynmill Press Ltd.

² *ibid.*

³ From a covering letter from T. F. Powys to Mrs Stracey, accompanying an exercise book containing seven poems. This letter forms part of the Bissell Collection.

⁴ See H. Coombes, *T. F. Powys* (Barrie and Rockliff, 1960).

⁵ Powys had a copy of *Also Sprach Zarathustra* in his library. He also possessed *The Brothers Karamazov*. I am grateful to Mrs Elaine Mencher for a list of Powys's books in the Bissell Collection. The books are now part of The Powys Society Collection in the Dorset County Museum.

⁶ Henry James, *The Critical Muse: Selected Literary Criticism* (Penguin, 1987), 425.

⁷ See Graves's *The Brothers Powys* (Oxford University Press, 1984), *passim*.

⁸ See *Madame Bovary: Nouvelle Version Précédée des Scénarios Inédits*, ed. Jean Pommier & Gabrielle Leleu (1949). In this connection it should be stressed that Powys too made several drafts before arriving at his final text. It is only the absence of full editions of his work that makes us overlook this. See, for instance, *The Only Penitent*, which is discussed later.

⁹ *Mock's Curse: Nineteen Stories*, ed. Elaine & Barrie Mencher (Brynmill, 1995). The ongoing Brynmill edition of T. F. Powys is playing a vital part in making his work better known.

The Brynmill Press

The Brynmill Press was founded in 1970 by Ian Robinson and David Sims, then lecturers at the University College of Swansea, to publish books of high intellectual quality but written in non-specialist language – the thought being that the national culture had splintered into a Babel of mutually uncomprehending jargons and that each of these had lost its relation to the humane centre. The books published included, for instance, Rush Rhees's edition of Ludwig Wittgenstein's remarks on Frazer's *The Golden Bough*. Difficult as some of Wittgenstein's thoughts may be, they are not couched in some hermetic jargon, but represent the workings of a distinguished mind on and through the common language.

By the 1990s the Brynmill list contained some fifty titles, including pamphlets, poetry, fiction, literary criticism, theology and philosophy by known, well-known and virtually unknown writers.

The present writer had read *Mr. Weston's Good Wine* while at school in the early '50s and enjoyed the humour, vitality and, above all, the surprising presence of God in a novel so full of twentieth-century paradox and ironic subtlety. But it was with the general policy of the Press that he was involved for some years before its managerial restructuring in 1993.

The policy on future publications remains, for the present, focused on T. F. Powys. Naturally, as an established writer it is easier for such an under-manned and under-financed firm as ours not to lose, in this way, what few assets it has, whilst at the same time redeeming to some extent the relative neglect into which

such a great writer has fallen since the '20s; yet it must be said that throughout his long career as a university teacher, the critic F. R. Leavis continued to recommend the works of T. F. Powys to his students.

The joint editorship of *Mock's Curse* expresses the combined effort of the two remaining Brynmill directors; but the direction of my own editorial energy and skill (such as it is) is certainly due to the drive, conviction and extensive Theodorian knowledge of Ian Robinson and of my wife.

M. B. Mencher

Publishing T. F. Powys

Paul Roberts has kindly asked us to tell you how we, The Brynmill Press, first became interested in T. F. Powys, what he means to us and how we came to publish his work.

Speaking for myself, it all began in 1974 when we were spending a week with our friend Ian Robinson at his house in Brynmill Road, Swansea. My favourite author at the time was D. H. Lawrence. On Ian's bookshelves I noticed the lovely title *God's Eyes A-Twinkle* by T. F. Powys and, deeply intrigued by the very first words in the book, I began to read voraciously. This anthology of stories both long and short changed my life forever; for I began to see the world through the author's eyes. I was over-joyed, moved, deeply amused, bewildered – terrified. Here was writing which, like the finest music, spoke directly to the soul. It filled the heart with love and catapulted the soul heavenwards. What more could a creator do for humanity!

To quote from T. F. P.'s novel *Unclay*: 'In every good book a light shines that compels the reader to be joyful.'

Here was a major author of rare genius, absolutely unique and of whom the English tradition could be truly proud. But how *dare* anyone write about *God* like that! God eaten by a mouse, as a crumb in 'Mr. Pim and the Holy Crumb'; God brought to everlasting death by the angelic clergyman in *The Only Penitent*; yet God the merciful, the loving and the lovable in 'The Key of the Field', and God the awesome, avenging punisher-of-the-wicked in 'The Left Leg'. Such honesty about man's varying feelings towards his Creator was terrifying indeed.

T. F. P. became my favourite author and I plunged joyfully into all the published works I could lay hands on: his writing is such a wonderful combination of love for humanity and a deeply amusing irony directed against its evil doings. His language combines apparently simple, courteous words which shock and delight by the irony they spring on one without warning, and the language of sheer poetry. Take, for instance, this bit from 'Only the Devil':

Mr. Dottery was busy reading a history book he had written himself. He

wished to refresh his memory as to what the kings of England did when they were short of money. He informed himself that they robbed, murdered, taxed unjustly, and seized from the fatherless and the widows their last farthing.

Or, as a sample of the sort of prose which I find hard to distinguish from poetry, take this quotation from 'Darkness and Nathaniel':

Nathaniel sat upon a low stool; he stretched out his arms over the bare table and laid his forehead against the cold wood. Nathaniel shivered in the darkness.

In this ill hour despair came to him, creeping like a snake along the muddy lanes, and, entering the cottage by a crack in the wall, coiled itself around the heart of Nathaniel as he leaned over the table. Nathaniel saw himself now as an old man, entirely foresaken and miserable, who had all his life cheated himself into believing that Light was his friend.

As soon as Nathaniel Crew knew himself and knew what he was, a presence entered the room. Darkness was come.

Nathaniel travailed in spirit. He sadly lamented his case in moving words; his soul leaned upon death and his heart floated in a pool of the blackest melancholy.

Now, I won't maintain that T. F. P. always makes comfortable reading. He has a way of expressing human sin which makes me, at least, feel pretty guilty. I try to improve, but ...

It wasn't until 1983, when I read the newly-published Graves biography of the Powys brothers, that I became aware that several novels by T. F. P. remained unpublished. Such a situation seemed intolerable.

The next year, opportunely, I suddenly received a 'phone call from Kenneth Hopkins, offering to reply to some queries of mine which the Secretary of The Powys Society had passed on to him to deal with. This led to a delightful series of visits to tea in the North Walsham bungalow, where Kenneth told us all about the Powyses and The Powys Society. He talked enthusiastically about his wonderful collection of books and would send me home each time with a bundle of precious volumes, some on loan and some as gifts. He also lent me photocopies of a number of manuscripts of then unpublished stories by T. F. P., some of which are among the finest he wrote and are contained in the new Brynmill volume, *Mock's Curse*. Some of those photocopies were faulty, with the odd page missing, bottom lines cut off, or the right or left margins missing, but in later years Francis Feather, who owned the original manuscripts, most generously provided us with complete copies, for which we shall be everlastingly grateful.

In 1986, hoping to be able to read unpublished T. F. P. manuscripts, I told Ian Robinson I was going to visit Francis Powys and Theodora Scutt in Dorset. He said (having some time ago had sight of the novel for one day while examining a doctoral dissertation, and finding it good) 'Ask Francis Powys where *The Market*

Bell is', and told me it had always been his dream to publish a complete T. F. Powys edition. Thus began not only rewarding friendships with Francis and Sally Powys and Theodora, but the Brynmill Powys Series itself. In 1987 Francis, with John Powys's help, found the typescript of *The Market Bell* at 'Restfield' and posted it to me with permission to publish whatever we wished that was free of other publishers' rights. A few months later the typescript of *Cottage Shadows* arrived in the post, sent by Francis – I had never even heard of it before. This is a rather simplified version of what actually happened, and it is in this fashion that I must continue, otherwise I'd have to write a book – and I am incapable of that, being no sort of writer whatsoever.

It was during 1989, when we were still working on *The Market Bell*, that Mr E. E. Bissell most generously allowed us to borrow and photocopy his large collection of unpublished T. F. P. material, including that superb drawing of the author by William Roberts which I thought would make a fine frontispiece, but which became part of the dustjacket of Brynmill's first two T. F. P. publications. I had no peace of mind till the precious cargo was returned by Securicor to Mr Bissell.

Reading through this new material led to my contacting the Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center in Texas, because the first page – and therefore the title – of one of the finest items in the Bissell Collection, a short story in manuscript, was missing. Ian had given me a rough list of the Texas items made by a research student of his and I checked through just in case one of the titles might be a likely one. Yes, surely this must be it: a typescript of 'The Two Chairs'. The H. R. C. very kindly provided a copy of the first page – and it tallied. Oh, joy! They even, later on, sent me photocopies of all their T. F. P. catalogue index-cards.

The only unpublished items which Mr Bissell did not let me take away the first time were a number of rough drafts, because he thought they were quite illegible. Having glimpsed one of them and been able to read a little I managed to persuade him to let me borrow them later on. When they arrived I set about deciphering those of which I had no other version. As my normal daily work was done at the piano, this task could only be done during meals. It was not ideal for the digestion, for there were times when I would get quite breathless as Powys's very original ideas came surfacing through to the light. Over the months I managed to identify some items without titles and to decipher ninety-odd per cent of each of the unpublished items, and Mr Bissell filled in the remaining gaps for me. I wasn't always sure I was reading correctly, yet I knew such remarkable notions could not possibly be coming out of *my* head, and it was a wonderful experience to be in contact with such an amazing fertility of original ideas. Perhaps you will understand my doubts as to the correctness of my readings when I explain that not only does the handwriting at first glance look illegible but, because it was meant only for the author's use, many of the words are incomplete and many of the plural s's are omitted.

You probably know that T. F. P. usually wrote several versions of a story or novel. Sometimes a short story would become a novel, or a long story a short one. It would be revised so that every word, like every note in fine music, is meaningful and perfectly placed. It is marvellous to see how even odd words or phrases, altered here and there, change the mere ordinary into living art.

Take, for example, just the first sentence of that poem of a story 'The Mother of the World' in the volume *Mock's Curse*, which starts with an old man on the way to his wife's funeral. The rough draft begins: 'On the way to the Church John Topp felt that she was still near to him.'

That sounds quite ordinary and matter-of-fact; but the later manuscript changes the first word 'On' to 'All', and we have: 'All the way to the Church John Topp felt that she was still near to him.' You see how the first version has a pert, skipping rhythm: 'On the way/to the Church/ John Topp/ ...' whereas the second one, with the natural stress on All, slows down the pace to one of quiet, mournful sadness, that seems to isolate John Topp in his new state of grief. Typically, T. F. P. manages to state the main theme of the story in the first sentence, and the sadness is felt as directly as though heard in a minor key in music.

Through time I obtained copies of the early novels, but they were disappointing. You would never believe how, in an effort to be clear, T. F. P. was, in one novel, repetitive, long-winded and tiresome, and in others he was rhapsodic, and another reads more like a stage-setting for a play. The irony had not yet developed, nor the economy of expression, though some of his preoccupations were there. Only years of hard work, perseverance and creative self-criticism could have produced the T. F. Powys we know and love. Yet among his early works, obviously experimenting with different forms before finding his true means of expression, there are short rhapsodic pieces about God and nature and humanity which are quite moving. The earlier genres also include essays, plays, poems, semi-autobiographical works and dialogues about every book in the Bible.

It wasn't until I could get to Texas that we could begin to publish any volumes of short stories, because not only were there many new titles in the H. R. C., but the various versions of T. F. P.'s works were scattered through the different collections and comparison and selection of final versions was needed. In April 1994 Barrie and I spent a month in the H. R. C. While Barrie collated our Bissell and Feather versions with the Texas ones, I surveyed the complete collection except for the Bible dialogues, for which no time remained. This yielded forty-five new stories for our collection and more to come. Many titles on the Texas list were deceptive. For instance I found that a short story was a play, or an unpublished one was an early version of a published one with a changed title. I was also able to identify a number of untitled items and some fragments. I found that two plays, one in England and one in Texas, both thought to be complete, were two parts of the same play. Furthermore, the version of one of the early novels of which we had been sent a copy was the wrong one. Two versions had got

mixed up at some time, so that only the last three exercise books of the fifteen were the latest version. We await the arrival of the correct one.

Well, I found so many things, so I had better stop here. Finally, I had to teach myself to use a computer, in order to put everything onto a proper database. I must confess that at one point I took the thing back to the suppliers and asked them to take it back because it was ruling my life!

Brynmill's next publication will be *The Sixpenny Strumpet*. We are sorry it has been so long arriving, but Ian Robinson has been working on it and his work is well worth waiting for.

Our deeply felt thanks go to Francis Powys, Theodora Scutt, Mr E. E. Bissell, Francis Feather, Gerald Pollinger and the Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center, Texas.

Elaine Mencher

Review

Mock's Curse: Nineteen Stories by T. F. Powys.

The Brynmill Press, Denton. 1995. 213pp. Casebound.

ISBN 0 907839 58 4. £16.00

Mock's Curse is a collection of nineteen hitherto unpublished stories by T. F. Powys. The book provides a characteristic range of Theodorian moods, from sombre reflections upon mortality and the general unpleasantness of people in a world obsessed by material possessions, to light comedy and even near farce. There are no fresh insights to be gained into Powys from this collection, though in a number of cases there is further evidence of his consummate artistry as an exponent of the short story genre. He was able to pace his tale-telling with such a sure touch, and he does so to particular effect here in 'Two Chairs' and 'the Widow'. Powys's dialect writing invariably gives rise to argument over its accuracy and effectiveness, but in the following example from 'Two Chairs', it is possible to see how the rhythms established carry the passage forward, and how it is then held back by a near repetition as Jacob Moss tires in his search for his wife, 'she do walk tired':

'Has a woman been seen hereabouts, who do wear one of they dresses with little spots and flowers and whose shoes be sixes?' And then he would add with a deep sigh, 'I do not mind the hat she did wear.' Even if the one he stopped was in a hurry, Jacob would always say, 'She did leave a poor drunken man for his wicked ways and did go a-travelling, and she do walk tired.'

Well she might have walked tired, for ten years were now gone since Jacob Moss passed this way and that, always moving on. (98)

These stories contain a fine array of vintage Powysian names. Names were always of great importance to Powys, and even in a story as slight as 'Dora Pine', he manages to create an aura around the name in question. Dora is a saintly housekeeper abused by those she works for. At the beginning of the story she stands her ground against a robber who duly promises to mend his ways. Dora eventually becomes too old and ill to work and is dispatched to the workhouse. It is the simplicity with which Powys juxtaposes 'pauper' and 'Pine' in the last two sentences that establishes the dramatic effect with such a characteristically light touch.

When the carriage stopped at the workhouse gates, the man whom Jacky had thought so easy to gull, rode by. But, upon seeing Dora, he reined in his horse and looked at her curiously.

'Is your name Dora Pine?' he asked.

'Yes,' she answered.

'I have kept my promise,' he said, in a low tone, and then turning to Mr. Biles, he asked, 'What are you doing with her here?'

'My duty,' replied Mr. Biles, in his surly manner. 'I am taking her to the house; she is a pauper.'

'Excuse me,' said the stranger. 'She is Dora Pine.' (68)

T. F. Powys stories frequently indicate their author's debt to his reading, and the stories in *Mock's Curse* have their fair share of literary allusions, used generally to establish an ironic gap between the world of learned, literary reflection, and the rural manners recorded in the stories. Mr Pompey, a lowly dissenting preacher, sets his heart upon becoming the new Parish Clerk. The summoning up of Boswell and Dr Johnson is thus a wonderfully resonant way of beginning the tale:

Dr. Johnson lowered his head, his mouth opened widely, and he looked glum, when Boswell observed slyly, 'Sir, if you had taken to the law, you might have been Lord Chancellor!' (17)

Powys's asides are always interesting, and we have two particularly important instances in *Mock's Curse*. The first is at the beginning of the title story, the second comes at the beginning of 'The Widow'. 'Mock's Curse' is a wonderfully weird Powysian tale which charts the changing relationship between two brothers after their mother dies. The prologue of it highlights Powys's refusal to compromise; at issue for him is the means whereby life, judged in the Old Testament as a 'curse', may be transformed into a blessing. For Powys, the Old Testament view of life may only be redeemed if the New Testament is read and understood properly; and for Powys that will never happen while 'the polite language of modern times' predominates. Modernity is greed, egoism and selfishness, 'The blessed hope of the New Testament lies not in the will to power, but in the utter renunciation of all vaunted selfhood'. (9)

In this we see what Powys's ambitions for his stories were, a stark contrast to

the limitations of the stage upon which he chose to work, yet not (especially not for a devotee of Jane Austen) a contradiction. At the beginning of 'The Widow' he writes:

In story telling everything is permitted, one may creep like a fly along the ceiling of a bedroom and see all that goes on below ... A star ninety-nine light years away can be heard telling droll stories about its creator. Even the little dog Trap cannot hunt rats in a dream without some lousy mumper of a story telling thief hearing all that he is up to. (169)

Light as many of these stories are, read together they confirm by the way their themes overlap and mingle, the profound seriousness of Powys's intent.

It is, I think, unfortunate that the editors appear to have decided to be utterly loyal to the manuscripts they have transferred into print. Some tidying up of Powys's punctuation, some minor editing to correct the occasionally unpolished sentence, an editorial decision on what to do with the rogue upper case that hops disconcertingly through the drafts, all this would have been taken care of in the normal run of things had the stories been published in Theodore Powys's lifetime. So why not now? Had the appropriate action been taken here the reader would have been better served, as would the reputation of T. F. Powys.

John Williams

Remembering Llewelyn

There has been a good deal of interest in the suggestion that members might meet at the Sailor's Return and drink to Llewelyn on his birthday. It seems sensible to keep arrangements as simple and flexible as possible and I hope the following will fit in with everybody's plans.

Meet at the Sailor's Return, East Chaldon, between 12.00 and 12.30 on Sunday 13 August.

We will drink a toast to Llewelyn's memory at 1 o'clock, after which, those who wish to walk to the stone will do so. Janet Pollock has very kindly offered to welcome us as we pass Chydyok and there will be an opportunity to peep inside. As it happens, Mrs Cobb, at Beth Car, is selling tea and coffee in aid of the village hall in the morning between eleven and twelve. So there is an opportunity to pay homage to Llewelyn and visit two Powys homes. I hope you will join us.

John Batten

The Powys Society Annual Weekend Conference
Kingston Maurward, Dorchester, August 19–22 1995

‘Telling Lives’: The Art of Biography

Saturday 19 August Arrival from 2pm

5.45 Dinner

7.00 **Private view** of the Gertrude Powys Exhibition,
Dorset County Museum

7.30 **Frank Kibblewhite** *Gertrude Powys: Pillar and Painter*

8.30 **Reception**

Sunday 20 August

8.00 Breakfast

9.15 **Michael Ballin** *The Multi-Layered Self: Technique of Self Representation in the Autobiography*

10.30 Coffee

11.00 **John Williams** *T. F. Powys: A Strengthening Antidote*

12.45 Lunch

2.00 **Morine Krissdóttir** *Design and Truth*

3.15 Tea

4.00 **Sven Erik Täckmark** *My Life With John Cowper Powys*

6.30 Dinner

7.45 **Oliver and Christopher Wilkinson** *Ghosts on the Roof: Readings from the 1939 Diary of John Cowper Powys*

Monday 21 August

8.00 Breakfast

9.15 **Charles Lock** *The End of Evidence: Literary Biography and the Rhetoric of Revelation*

10.30 Coffee

11.00 **Herbert Williams** *Film as Biography*

12.45 Lunch

Free Afternoon and Committee Meeting

5.00 **Annual General Meeting**

6.30 Dinner

7.45 **Sylvia Townsend Warner: A Celebratory Evening**

Tuesday 22 August

8.00 Breakfast and Departure.

There will be a **book sale** at the Conference, so please bring as many books as you can (preferably with Powys connections) to donate.

It is still not too late to book a place for the whole or any part of this Conference programme. Write to John Batten for details.

Chairman's Report

The Charity Commission requires a report by the Chairman for each calendar year. The following is a summary of the activities of the Society for 1994. The Chair's report at the 1995 Annual General Meeting in August will include an update of events in 1995.

The Annual General Meeting was held in August 1994, and the officers and Committee re-elected by a unanimous vote. As well as many informal meetings of the officers, the Committee of the Society met three times, in February, August and December. The Publication Committee also met three times. The following initiatives were discussed, approved and carried out.

1 A membership survey and questionnaire was devised, distributed and analysed. A satisfactory response from members elicited much useful information. The results were discussed at the 1994 Conference and a summary published in the November *Newsletter*. This time-consuming task was carried through primarily by the Secretary, John Batten and the Vice Chairman, Paul Roberts.

2 The Peter Powys Grey Collection of Gertrude Powys paintings was bought by the Society as the foundation of a Gertrude Powys Collection. Professional conservation was carried out and a public exhibition has been arranged at the Dorset County Museum, opening in August 1995.

3 The Peter Powys Grey Collection of Powys books was also purchased. Some were retained for the Powys Centre, but the Committee decided that since members often find it difficult to obtain out-of-print Powys books, they would be put to best use by being sold to members. The response was enthusiastic.

4 The Bissell Gift was transported to and deposited in the Powys Room at the Dorset County Museum. Sorting and preliminary cataloguing was carried on throughout 1994 by volunteers, although much remains to be done. The museum is installing a data-base system and eventually a more detailed catalogue will be available on this, with possible internet connections with other collections around the world.

5 Also in connection with the Powys Centre, the Advisory Committee on Gifts and Bequests met on 23 August to discuss new acquisitions, future plans for the housing of literary collections, possible grants for archival preservation and storage etc.

6 The Dorset County Museum is planning a new 'Literary Gallery' and the officers and Committee have spent considerable time and effort insuring that the Powyses and their circle are appropriately represented. The Gallery presents an important opportunity for public education in regard to the Powys family.

7 The Publication Committee was also busy in 1994. As well as overseeing the publication of the annual *Journal*, edited by Peter Foss and Louise de Bruin and the tri-annual *Newsletter*, edited by Paul Roberts, they published *The Quiet Man of Dorset* by Francis Powys and *A Net In Water: A Selection from the Journals of Mary*

Casey, edited by Judith Lang and Louise de Bruin. The expert typographical work on these publications is done by Stephen Powys Marks, the Society's Treasurer. The Publications Committee also approved an Advisory Board and refereed status for *The Powys Journal*.

Each year more events are arranged and carried through with great success by the hard work of many. As well as the annual three-day Conference, there were:

8 A Weymouth-Portland weekend in June, of walks and readings arranged by John and Eve Batten. It attracted many newer members, as well as enthusiastic long-standing members.

9 The Annual Montacute Lecture was held on 19 November, with a talk by Oliver Holt about Littleton Charles Powys. This event is always well attended by local people and fills an important public educative function.

10 The permanent small exhibition and pamphlets about the Powys family, designed by Bev Craven and maintained by John Batten, in the gazebo of Montacute House gives an initial introduction to the many visitors of this National Trust property.

The day-to-day duties of the Chairman, Vice Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer are too numerous to mention. Suffice to say their voluntary labours are in the service of the primary object of the Society: the public education and recognition of the Powyses and their circle.

Morine Krissdóttir

The Election of Officers and Committee Members

At the Annual General Meeting during the forthcoming Annual Conference I shall as usual be putting forward the names of those Society members who are offering their services for the coming year, to act as its officers and to serve on the committee. I am happy to report that all the current serving members have declared their willingness to stand for a further year. I do so in association with John Batten, Cicely Hill and Mary Warden, to all of whom my thanks.

<i>Chairman</i>	Morine Krissdóttir
<i>Vice-Chairman</i>	Paul Roberts
<i>Secretary</i>	John Batten
<i>Treasurer</i>	Stephen Powys Marks
<i>Committee</i>	Griffin Beale, Louise de Bruin, Bev Craven, Peter Foss, Timothy Hyman, Frank Kibblewhite, John Williams

I take this opportunity also to pay a heartfelt and admiring tribute to the dedication which the officers and committee bring both individually and collectively to the Society. The work they do is varied, and frequently arduous and time-consuming. For example – organising the conference programme and organising the accommodation; editing the *Journal* and the *Newsletter*; arranging exhibi-

tions, walks and other activities; overseeing the publications of The Powys Press; contacting members and non-members on Society business; organising publicity; eliciting ideas and following them up; attending meetings. This work is not confined to committee members alone; the Society depends on all its members, since it is not possible in the nature of things that the same people can be expected to do the same jobs, year in and year out. The remarkable expansion of the Society's undertakings in recent years has engendered an increase in membership, and I would urge others to consider what they may have to contribute in the coming years to the activities set in train. I might add that, having been engaged in the Society's affairs for the past twenty-five years, I can testify to the enrichment of one's life such involvement can bring, both in friendship and in mental stimulus. Hard work it may be, but the reward is there.

Glen Cavaliero, President of The Powys Society

Gertrude

It seems to me, looking back across the years, that both Gertrude and her younger sister Katie, whom she cared for, led deeply tragic lives – perhaps not so much Katie, for so passionate and bewildered a soul was bound to make heavy weather of the voyage of life; but certainly Gertrude, who, without Katie, would certainly have made a much greater mark as an artist, might well have married and would have enjoyed a full social life. I don't for one moment think that she considered herself a tragic figure – she had chosen her own course, the course of sisterly duty, love and compassion. But someone had to keep an eye on Katie, to say the least, and no one else was suitable or even offering, except Willie in Kenya. However, not only could Katie not cope with his way of life (the very lively social side, I believe, not the farming) but she was very homesick indeed and only too thankful to get home to Dorset – Kenya isn't everyone's cup of tea. And that brought her back to Gertrude at Chydyok, whence she'd started.

Chydyok is a very long mile from East Chaldon village, up a track that to this day isn't much fun, being both steep and stony for most of its length; having then no electricity and no telephone and no neighbours at all. I believe the water supply, save for the rainwater barrels, was imperfect also. Gertrude had spent most of her life either at Montacute Vicarage where, as her father's 'right-hand man', she must have been very far from idle, or at Greenhill Terrace in Weymouth where taking care of an active but senile father must also have kept her pretty busy. In both places she was too busy to learn much of housework even had the necessity been there. She was used to servants, and good ones. Chydyok farmhouse, now surplus to the requirements of the estate, was a complete contrast. The lack of electricity and hot-and-cold running water was

not likely to trouble Gertrude, who had never known either. But not many people like housework and if one genuinely doesn't know how to go about it, one likes it a great deal less and it is even more tiring. In addition, it is torture to be forced by dire necessity to do one thing when one's soul is aching with the need to do another; and Gertrude was only less committed to her painting than she was to her sister. I don't know how long it took her to find someone in East Chaldon who would go up twice a week or so to do the rough work and the washing, but until she did life must have been very difficult. It must have resolved itself fairly soon, however, for Theodore knew and was much liked by everyone in the village, and Gertrude herself rapidly became very well-liked and respected. Then, too, work meant money, which most families in the village were much in need of.

Gertrude had none too much of it herself. When she made a blue hooded cloak to keep off the rain (causing her sister-in-law to nickname her 'The Wise Old Goat' from Mary Tourtel's children's strip story about Rupert Bear in the current *Daily Mail*) she did so because she could not spare the money for a good raincoat. When she wore her skirts to the knee and called down more snorts from Violet, who wore hers to the ankle, it was for the same reason: she couldn't afford the extra three or four yards of material – at least, it was certainly for that reason to start with, but Gertrude quickly realised how practical it was to wear skirts that didn't drag in the long grass and mire of the track. She never wore trousers, the ultimate in practicality, save when working with her bees. Nearly everything the sisters wore was home-made. Gertrude knitted a lot (and I believe she hated it) and knitted well, even at one time experimenting with a knitting machine. Katie, most fortunately, was an absolutely first-class gardener, and made what must have been a fairly hopeless slope of chalk into a very fertile vegetable-and-fruit garden. I don't think they ever needed to buy vegetables or soft fruit. Katie's few apple trees were her only failure, but apples are not hard to come by. They did not have fowls because of the heavy population of foxes, but Violet and Theodore always had more eggs than we needed. It was only after we left for Mappowder, I fancy, that Chydyk needed to buy eggs. There was always a plenitude of wild fruit and mushrooms on the Downs. Gertrude made jams and jellies, she dried and pickled mushrooms, and even walked to Lulworth for samphire for pickling. She gave us some once, and Violet said, 'Silly nonsense!' and threw it out after one taste. I must admit that pickled samphire isn't a patch on fresh, but it's not at all bad, and fresh samphire simply doesn't travel. She would make mead too, from the residue of the honey; although neither Gertrude nor anyone else could match Joyce Gill, Theodore's friend, in making mead.

The bees must have been a great consolation to Gertrude. She was intensely interested in them and thought and felt about them as I would feel about a herd of cows – all individuals, yet all part of the beloved, valued and valuable main herd. Some of them made a nest in the framework of the house itself, between the

ceiling of the larder and the floor of Gertrude's bedroom. Of course she knew they were there, because of the sound and the smell of the honey; but she only realised how many there were and how long they had been in residence when the weight of the honey brought the larder ceiling down, making an incredible mess and breaking valuable china as well as jars of preserves. Gertrude, I fancy, paid for the repair herself, partly because she needed it done better and more promptly than her landlord would have done it, but mainly from a sense of honour – they were her bees. Also she didn't want them killed, and without the whole front and part of the east wall of the house being re-pointed, which the estate was most unlikely to do, they couldn't be stopped from coming in. The estate would have insisted on having them poisoned to prevent further damage. Gertrude and her friend the local bee-master (and sweep and carpenter), Mr Miller, put their heads together and one of them came up with the idea of a glass and wood hive directly above the old nest, which brought it beside Gertrude's bed. It was a splendid idea; she used the flat glass top as a bedside table, the bees took no notice at all of her books and morning cups of tea, and she said that their soft continual murmur soothed her off to sleep as nothing else ever had or could. There was usually a bee or two wandering around the room, but this troubled Gertrude not at all. I don't doubt that she considered them as friendly presences and talked, perhaps even discussed, with them. She was a countrywoman and knew all about 'telling the bees', a custom that I guess is still in use in places where one would hardly expect it.

Gertrude, too, was somewhat lonely, I fear; company of the sort that she was used to 'seldom came abune the pass'. And although her favourite brother lived within easy walking distance, I don't think she had any illusions as to the sincerity of the welcome her sister-in-law would give her, nor any intention of trying that welcome too far. I believe she was on excellent terms with her other sister-in-law, Alyse Gregory, who was next door, but Alyse, poor lady, had sorrows of her own and was rather needing support than able to give it. Gertrude, for most of her life, stood alone.

I forget how many beehives she had. I doubt if it was more than half a dozen and I don't think she ever sold any honey; but the combs made welcome presents that she didn't have to buy, and such honey as she could extract or have extracted saved money on sugar. She always insisted that another bonus was their stings – which, she said, were very good for her rheumatism. I believe this is true, although why Gertrude of all people should have rheumatism I can't imagine. She was healthy, active, and ate sensibly. However, she was less than happy, and that always does harm.

Another economy she practised drew more snorts of derision from Theodore's wife. She baked a good deal of her own bread. Home-made is always cheaper than boughten, but in this case economy was not the point, and Violet really should have been able to see that. The baker doesn't exist who is going to drive up to

Chydyok. Bread certainly did arrive, I believe, on the gallant old shoulders of the postwoman, Mrs Lucas, but not enough of it, and not all the time. It was simply not feasible for Gertrude to walk every day to the village, because of the weather and sheer lack of time. Some weeks she was lucky to get to church on Sundays. She had to have the means and the skill to make her own bread or they might be without for some days. I must say that the idea of carrying from Chaldon to Chydyok enough flour for a worthwhile baking is appalling. Yet many fairly heavy or large goods arrived at Chydyok that I never troubled to find out about – coal for instance; and oil for the lamps; Katie's seed potatoes; the pea- and bean-sticks; faggots and logs for the fire. Of course, a great many of these things travelled up in Mr Brodie's carts, behind his horses. Indeed while horses were the normal means of conveyance Gertrude was not in much trouble. Doubtless, she had to pay for the carriage but it would certainly be less than the hire, today, of a Land Rover or a tractor and trailer. But 'every mickle makes a muckle', and on top of that would come the rent, little enough, I dare say, by today's standard, but a considerable sum by prices as they then were. After many years the landlord was persuaded to bring electricity to the homestead, but I rather think that when the telephone was installed Gertrude paid for that herself – possibly with help from her brothers. The telephone really was a necessity, as the sisters had no transport and no neighbours, and an accident might always happen. Then too, after Daddy's illness, she wanted to be more readily accessible to him, and we had a telephone at Beth Car. We never had one at Mappowder, but Gertrude could ring the shop or the Rectory, both close to us there and in daily touch, for news if she feared things were not quite right.

But for a painter and a lover of beauty Chydyok did have, and still would have, its compensations. It has a magnificent view to the north and east – Gertrude said that every night she would look over the thirty miles to Bulbarrow lights, the red lights on the huge radio masts, now long gone, and wish us 'Goodnight' as we slept below the hill. The continual movement of light and shadow and the changing of the seasons make Chydyok valley itself a lovely sight. One only has to walk up onto the Warren, behind the house, to see a view from Hengistbury Head to Golden Cap that can't be surpassed. Gertrude asserted that in clear weather she could see France. Most of the Powyses, the blue-eyed ones especially, had magnificent long sight, but I suspect that what she really saw was a mirage in the sky – which would be France right enough, just as the reflection in the mirror is one's own face. Of course the Channel Islands might 'rise up' before rain. Alas, I never knew Chydyok well enough to find out. One thing Gertrude certainly did see – even though she was not believed – was the fire and smoke on the day Studland Bay was set afire to find out if an invasion from Germany could be stopped by setting the sea alight with burning oil. The village was nearly burned down, for the fools (and that was most of the generals involved) hadn't taken account of the strong south-west breeze. The oil burned very nicely, thank you,

on the water – and the wind carried the flames and smoke inland. I believe it was an outgoing tide that prevented disaster.

Gertrude did not need to look far for beauty; she only had to watch the seasons. Most of the Downs in her day were grass and gorse, grass for all the soft shades of yellow-green, and gorse for dark, dark green, spangled over with gold for most of the year. ‘When gorse is out of flower’, said Alyse, quoting Llewelyn, who had been repeating a very old country saying, ‘kissing is out of season’. The bushes were so solid with golden blooms that the gorse coverts looked like great heaps of new guineas and scent hung on the air for miles. Foxes, badgers, rabbits and hares abounded and were often seen; skylarks rose and fell continually as if using their song as a thread to climb up and down on. In the dew and after fog, the Downs shimmered with silver spiders’ webs, and ships, mostly in my recollection the great, grim, grey destroyers, passed in the Channel. About every five years, the gorse was ‘fired’ to prevent its getting out of hand, and vast blackened acres lay waste. Dead sheep and other animals were not an uncommon sight. As transport to the nearest pack of hounds was all but impossible, and as pets’ food manufacturers did not exist, if a farmer lost a beast he would have his men hitch it to trace-harness and a horse would pull it to the nearest disused chalkpit. There, in time, the foxes, crows and ravens (Chydyok had two pairs nearby) would dispose of it, which was at least a natural way of doing things, better, Gertrude would say, than today’s unrealistic over-cleanliness. She would take her sketchbook out onto Bats Head, and sit there with the gulls for company, while she sketched the eastern coastline. It is odd, now I come to think of it, that she either never made or that I have never seen a painting of her’s facing west – towards Portland. And yet that view is beautiful too. It might be at its best in the early morning though, and in the early morning Gertrude had precious little time to spare.

To a horseman, or the driver of a Land Rover, there is nothing in the least alarming about the Chydyok track. But Gertrude did not care for horses and even if she had been able to drive, could not possibly have afforded a vehicle. Some of the track is extremely steep, and most of it is rough and very flinty, with little or no shelter on a windy day. But Gertrude really enjoyed walking – and I remember when I was a little kid seeing her coming, swinging down the ‘short cut’ to Beth Car, with her long, slow-seeming stride – and up to a point this was well enough. Mr Brodie, the farming tenant for at least half the time of the sisters’ lives at Chydyok, ran Highland cattle on the Downs. He usually kept them on the Warren, between Chydyok and the sea, with the sheep in the valley between Chydyok and the village. When he changed them about it didn’t matter, as he ran an Aberdeen Angus bull with the cows. It is difficult to find a nasty Angus, and Mr Brodie’s were especially friendly. Gertrude usually stopped to speak to them, and I think she gave one of them the occasional toffee. But then Mr Brodie retired, and Mr Mackintosh took over the tenancy. Mr Mackintosh preferred Herefords,

and, like other mistaken people, he tended to breed for looks and beef only, forgetting the temperament. The day of the tractor and car had arrived. People no longer needed to walk the countryside, and so, to some extent, temperament in a bull did not matter so much. Gertrude, walking down to the village, found herself on several occasions, confronted by some very ugly customers. When, at Mappowder, the Kelly's little Shorthorn bull got loose, Gertrude told Violet that if necessary she would have stopped him by opening her parasol in his face. Although she said it with (as near as possible for a tall and dignified elderly woman) the flippancy and grin of a boastful schoolboy, so that Violet thought she was – well, telling tall tales – she was merely describing what she had recently, and successfully, done with a much bigger and nastier bull. Not that the Shorthorn wasn't nasty enough, with his short pointed little horns. But in those days Herefords of both sexes had long, gracefully curved, very pointed white horns. The breed generally is not nasty, but the splendid beast Mr Mackintosh had proudly bought was, and he made Gertrude's life nasty too. She always carried a parasol, an umbrella or a walking stick, but she very often had some heavy shopping on her other arm. She was courageous, cool and resourceful, but even had she been twenty years younger and a good runner (which good walkers seldom are) the situation was neither pleasant nor safe. The bull was only too often between her and the village. And as she loved to walk on the Warren, things were not all that much better when he was put on that. This sorry state of affairs went on for quite a time – at least a year, I fancy. But Gertrude wasn't the only person that bull had it in for; he was busy making poor old Mrs Lucas's life a misery too. I never knew the old post woman's extra round, but I imagine she came up past Chydyok and then walked along the Warren to the White Nose cottages. Somewhere along her route that bull always caught up with her. She was every bit as brave as Gertrude and she would have been ashamed, as would Gertrude, to complain. Eventually, I believe, one of her customers in the White Nose cottages did it for her, with some force. The bull was removed. In all fairness, one could not too much blame Mr Mackintosh who, after all, was a stockman and had simply bought the finest bull he could afford. The brute was perfect save in his temper. He had to be replaced, naturally. The new beast, although not friendly, was at least not aggressive. Gertrude Powys and Mrs Lucas went their ways unmolested.

I never heard what Katie thought of Mr Mackintosh's bulls. As she didn't do the shopping and she always had more time than her elder sister, I suspect she may have been quite pleased to have a good reason to walk a longer way round on her visits to the village.

In looks, I have never seen Gertrude's equal. She was surprisingly unphotogenic, although I have seen one snapshot of a young Gertrude, standing in one of the valleys near Chydyok with Bernie O'Neill, facing the sun and the wind, with her head high, and laughter and courage in her eyes. But it is not usual

for a camera to catch expression, and people who have only seen Gertrude's photograph probably think of her face as 'icily regular, splendidly null.' But it was not so. Gertrude was tall and big-boned, she stood straight as a lance in rest and walked with the long steady step of a natural walker – or of a Roman legionary, perhaps. She had a great deal of long, thick, silky hair, which I can only recollect as silver-white; and she usually wore it in an enormous flat ring on the crown of her head. Often she didn't wear a hat, and then the downland wind would blow some of this lovely hair loose about her face, which had good regular features and a very clear, surprisingly unlined skin, somewhat tanned by the weather and never with much colour. Her eyebrows were grey and level, and her eyes were light blue, direct and clear and fearless. Like her brother Theodore, she seldom laughed, but unlike him she smiled genuinely fairly often, and now and then she would give a quite devilish grin common to them both. Interest, anxiety, enthusiasm, and, alas! at times, resignation and resolve, as well as humour, all in turns lit and shadowed the face that in photographs looks so classic and so dull. One could, as a caption to one of those photos, write 'Stern Daughter of the Voice of God'! But a small child, watching the living face and with its head stuffed full of Greek mythology, thought that Aunt Gertrude looked rather like Pallas Athene.

One did not mention that to Violet, of course; she would have been instantly and lastingly angry. It took me years to realise that my adoptive mother's deep dislike of Theodore's family was caused by jealousy; and years more still to realise the sorrow that this must have caused the brother and sister who had always been and still were so much to each other. Chydyok, by the 'short cut', is a scant mile from Beth Car, and a good walker such as Gertrude could have visited us easily and often. But not only was she no fool. She had in full those extra powers that come inevitably from a solitary life, and she knew well that the fulsome welcome always given by her sister-in-law was false – 'put on', Violet herself would say. So, weather permitting, she only came to tea on Sundays. Unfortunately Gertrude's genuine dislike of very small children and especially spoilt ones, such as I was, gave Violet an equally genuine reason for objecting to the Sunday visits, although she never succeeded in stopping them. Sometimes Theodore would walk up to Chydyok, and very occasionally we would meet Gertrude on the Downs, but it was unnecessarily awkward, and cannot have increased Gertrude's happiness.

I have often thought that that happiness must have hung on a thread – the thread of the very considerable beauty all around her spun up with Katie's equally fragile happiness. For Katie's success with that awkward garden undoubtedly did give her much happiness for brief but frequent moments. Gertrude achieved something of the same kind with the house, which, north facing and rather dark (back-sundered, as we say in Dorset), presented a pretty problem to someone needing a house that combined practicality with graciousness and beauty – and

yet she contrived it. The kitchen, which faced roughly south east and was quite light, became a kitchen-living room. The sisters would have had to be rich indeed, even in those days, to afford the enormous amount of coal that the range, if used for cooking, would consume, so Gertrude cooked on a paraffin stove and lit the range in the evenings to sit by. There was no sink; she washed up in a bowl on the kitchen table, but did it so matter-of-factly that one didn't realise the awkwardness of it. There was a dresser and some very pretty china, books and a rocking chair, and quite often one of Gertrude's seven-toed cats. The cooking stove kept the room warm during the day, and the view across the track to the big barton of brick and flint, about a stone's throw away, wasn't the worst in the world by any means. The other room Gertrude made into a sitting room. It had two windows, but one faced north east. The view from that was incomparable but there was never any sun. The other faced south and the hillside was within ten feet. I have never seen the sun through it. But by the time Gertrude had finished with the room, it was most pleasant: light, elegant and comfortable. Upstairs there were two big bedrooms, Gertrude's and Katie's, and two very small ones. They all gave the impression of light, although only Katie's room actually saw any sun. Gertrude's room was bare, spare, entirely elegant and smelled, as the whole house did, of honey and potpourri. It looked very reminiscent of its owner, giving one the strong impression that behind the mask of impersonal elegance something was hidden – a maze? a Minotaur? a goddess? Katie's room was lined with books, the carpet was red, the hangings of the four-poster were red, the Hammer and Sickle of Katie's mistaken belief hung over the bed and there was a good fireplace. This was just as well, as Katie, when she was occasionally ill, gave way entirely and might be in bed, or at least unable to go downstairs, for many days, poor Gertrude climbing those same stairs a hundred times a day with food, firing, slop buckets and cups of tea. It was absolutely Katie's room: I doubt if Gertrude had much hand in it. But Katie had an instinctive elegance of her own. Her room did not let the others down. The two small rooms were totally functional, the guest rooms, but they too had elegance and charm, even the very dark one, which was partly used as a store room. The house did Gertrude great credit and she must have taken pleasure from her achievement. I hope so; I hope so.

The joke about the bees and her rheumatism is the nearest I have ever known Gertrude come to complaining of illness. She may have said more to Theodore – only Theodore and her God ever really knew Gertrude. Without a doubt she must often have been very tired, mentally as well as physically. But she never said so. Only one day she said something to me that stayed in my mind, and after a long while formed a picture of a soul in chains, making what happiness it could out of such material as came its way. A woman had thrown herself to death off Swyre Head. Some time after this, looking away into the distance beyond me, Gertrude said:

'Her name was the same as mine: Gertrude Mary. I felt, you know, Susie, that

as that Gertrude Mary threw herself off the cliff, perhaps in some way she has saved this one from doing so.'

I was in my teens then, on one of my short visits to Chydyok from Mappowder, and neither sensitive nor caring much about the human race. But I knew that those were not the words of a happy or contented person. Gertrude's brother Littleton was a great one for the poet Adam Lindsay Gordon:

Life is mostly froth and bubble;

Two things stand like stone:

Kindness in another's trouble

Courage in one's own.

After our move to Mappowder, there was a time when it was impossible for Gertrude and Theodore to meet. Mappowder had no bus service and neither Gertrude nor Theodore could afford a taxi for her from Chaldon, or even Dorchester. Now and then a visiting friend would drive Gertrude to Mappowder for lunch or tea, and once Katie came. Violet had given her such a 'bad press' that I stayed all day on one half or the other of Styles Farm, making myself more or less useful, and didn't see her at all. Luckily, this was exactly what Katie would have done in my place, so her feelings were not hurt. I must admit that her wild, extravagant gestures and expressions, coupled with her discordant voice, were very embarrassing to a child used mostly to the graceful motions and pleasing sounds made by cattle and horses.

After the war the bus service to Dorchester was resumed, and so about twice a year Gertrude would come to stay for a few days at Mappowder – not with us, of course, for we only had two bedrooms. Theodore, using Violet as his not very willing agent, would hire a room in the Kellys' quite large farmhouse about a hundred yards down the road. I fancy Mrs Kelly gave Gertrude her breakfast, but she had all her other meals with us, and accompanied Theodore on his morning and evening walks, while I kept more or less out of the way. Violet, dressed in her best and very stiff and starched up, acted exactly like the superior parlour-maid that she intended not to be. She and Gertrude had absolutely nothing in common, and, alas! as Gertrude had no interest in livestock and I was deeply interested in that and little else save history, I hadn't much in common with her either. But I doubt if this troubled her; she had come to see her brother, after all, not Violet or me.

She was always very kind towards me, and usually brought me some small present – drawing paper or a second-hand book. Once, on a stay a little longer than usual, she said she would show me how to make a Bushes Home like the one Daddy had when a child. We went three days running to Mr Fisher's Cockrow Copse and she did make one, rather a good one, in a clump of hazel bushes. Of course, I never used it; I was much too busy playing at being a real farm labourer, and also, as a child, I was too frightened of the supernatural to go alone to that strange copse. But Gertrude, I hope, never knew this, and I honestly appreciated

her efforts to amuse and befriend a lonely child.

She died very suddenly when I was in my late teens, leaving me a gold and diamond ring that I had often seen her wear, and a small paper bag full of beautiful and quite valuable lace. 'Couldn't she have left you something better than that!' said Violet. But on that bag, into which she had packed the lace in a hurry, knowing that her time was running unexpectedly out, she had written in a scrawling, failing hand, 'Keep. Susie' She had remembered a girl who was nothing to her, no kin and scarcely known; and I remember this and shall remember.

Theodora G. Scutt

To Winter

from a letter to Mother
from Lulu at his Prep, aged 11

Merry it is in good Pitt wood
When the Blackbird & thrush are singing
And the skaters clink by
And the voices reply
And the woodcutter's axe is ringing.

Sad it is when it rains all day
And nobody knows quite what to say.
And we all feel angry we dont know why
And you have too often a mournful eye.

These lines by Llewelyn Powys were copied into The Caddisworm, a Montacute miscellany which was started in 1897 and maintained by Gertrude Powys.

An Interview with Frances Kingshott

On Sunday 16 October 1994, Mr and Mrs Brooks once again invited me to tea in order to meet Frances, daughter of Fan, the older sister from whom Lily Brooks took over duties in the Powys household when Fan left to get married. Despite Frances' insistence that she didn't think she could tell me anything very useful, I spent a very enjoyable and informative couple of hours taking notes: her comments were sharp, lively and showed a very wry wit.

Frances Margaret Kingshott was born in Burpham 21 March 1915, being the daughter of Fanny and William Kingshott, who had worked at nearby Wepham Farm. When old enough, Frances worked locally in service for a Mrs Hare for many years, but during the war was in the Land Army. Afterwards, she returned and worked again for Mrs Hare and then as a cook for a maternity hospital in Rustington, before leaving Burpham finally in 1956.

She has many childhood memories of Burpham and members of the Powys family, but her first clear memory is of rolling down the station steps in Arundel as her father, dressed in army uniform, tried to save her. She attended the village school, which building (long gone) was divided into two rooms, the 'Infants' and the 'Big Room', the easier to accommodate the thirty pupils aged between five and fourteen. After school, she was free to roam and play in the village, but the town of Arundel, just three miles away, was reserved for special outings.

Living in Burpham, as described by John Cowper Powys in his *Autobiography*, does appear to have been very much an idyllic retreat, and Frances doesn't contradict this, commenting that, because it was somewhat isolated from the outside world, people tended to be healthy and there were no serious epidemics. Frances recalls only outbreaks of whooping cough and chicken-pox in the school.



Margaret Powys & Littleton Alfred



Margaret Powys & Littleton Alfred

However, she does remember being very upset and frightened when a cousin died of appendicitis in 1921.

There was a happier occasion in 1926, when her aunt and two cousins came to visit from Canada (you may recall from my previous article that this was Lily's sister Mary, or 'Poll') and they stayed through spring and summer, May until September. Frances was amazed to learn that a railway journey eastwards from Saskatchewan could take three days.

Local celebrities recalled by Frances include the well-known vicar and author, Tickner Edwardes,* who prepared her for confirmation, and Lady Johnston, a friend of the Powyses, always accompanied by her pet dog.

Mrs Powys herself occasionally asked her and her brother Bert (who was to become a well-known member of two local councils in later years) to tea and would draw pictures to entertain and amuse them both in the dining-room. Afterwards they were allowed to play in the garden, where there was a peach tree. Margaret Powys was always very kind and looked cheerful with her hair drawn back and accompanied by her dog, Whiskers. She also had a pony named Punch, but her first pony had been called Billy. Frances loved to stay in the house because of the atmosphere and once or twice John Cowper Powys himself, 'Jack', was home. She remembers him as a flamboyant character, waving his arms around and reciting Shakespeare! She also remembers when Arnold Bennett came to visit, but has no recollection of any visit by Thomas Hardy.

Having already understood that Burpham was off the beaten track, I was not surprised to learn that there was just one car, belonging to Peppering Farm, and one telephone at the village shop. The car would double as a taxi when required and Frances remembers earning a penny occasionally for delivering telephone messages. However, the quiet, rustic picture changed once more when Frances said that she had a bicycle from the age of eight or nine – 'Everyone did!' – and used to pedal it rapidly all over the village and its outskirts, unsupervised. Furthermore, in our safety-conscious age, it is strange to picture Frances as a young child going



Littleton Alfred Powys

upstairs to bed holding a candle – again, as everyone did – there being no lighting or heating in the upstairs rooms of houses in those days.

Frances then told of a very special Powys connection. It was agreed that Littleton Alfred Powys, despite being only fourteen or so, would be her godfather. He took the rôle very seriously, and in later years always came to visit her when he was at home. 'He was a good-looking young man and very popular in the village, very friendly, and always the same, giving presents at Christmas and birthdays. He was very kind and close to his mother.' The last time Frances saw Littleton was on a trip to Bath, at which time he looked very ill and was in a wheelchair. He couldn't do very much, not even smoke. He said to Frances, 'There must be something the matter with me, I can't get my hand up to my face.' Sadly, this was not long before he died.

After more general discussion, I thanked Frances for the interview and then left, feeling pleased to have met a lady of such forthright character. Thanks must also be given once again to Mr and Mrs C. R. Brooks for kindly arranging this interview.

Jeff Meddle

* Revd. Tickner Edwardes was vicar of Burpham from 1927 to 1935, although he had lived in the village for many years before taking holy orders. His novel *Tansy* was made into a popular film starring Alma Taylor in 1921 and was filmed partly on location on the Downs near Burpham. In addition to several novels, he wrote *The Lore of the Honey Bee*, which remains a minor classic. J. C. P. writes in his *Autobiography*, 'I always liked Mr Edwardes uncommonly well.' A photograph of Tickner Edwardes, together with a number of interesting photographs of Burpham, appears in *Arundel and the Arun Valley in Old Photographs*, edited by John Godfrey and published by Alan Sutton, Stroud, 1990. P.R.

The Selected Letters of Dorothy Richardson

A copy of *Windows on Modernism: Selected Letters of Dorothy Richardson*, edited by Dr Gloria Fromm and published by the prestigious University of Georgia Press, was received too late to review in this issue of the *Newsletter*, but we hope to review it in the November issue. A preliminary reading reveals that this huge book of letters, with its wide-ranging, erudite introduction by Fromm, the world authority on Richardson, will be one of great interest to Powys Society members. It includes Richardson's letters to John Cowper Powys and to Phyllis Playter, beginning in June 1929, when J. C. P. first contacted her. The last brief card to him in 1952 was one of the last letters she wrote. Included also are some of John Cowper Powys's best letters to her. Together with the photocopies which Dr Fromm left me, this book constitutes the essential correspondence between two remarkable writers.

Morine Krissdóttir

The Faun

John Cowper Powys

With wistful face, as though forlorn
Of something dimly understood
Thro' the wet bushes rose the Faun
and issued from the underwood —

“ You’ve lost ” cried all the leaves and mould
When round he turned his troubled gaze —
“ You’ve lost the secret, sure and old,
“ You’ve lost the clue to Nature’s ways —

“ The feel of rain, the sense of light
“ The motions of the dusk and dawn
“ These only mitigate the night
“ To which all things at last are borne —

“ Man has some cause to leave behind
“ Freedom and Pleasure, rain & dew —
“ With God and Future Life to find —
“ But no such hope can comfort you —

“ What can you have in place of Earth ?
“ What can you gain to match the Sun ?
“ Return O wandering child of mirth !
“ Back to the woods, O wistful one ! ”

At this the poor Faun answered slow
“ All these I leave and ask for naught —
“ Let sun and rain and pleasure go —
“ Let God be still beyond my thought —

“ The thing I faintly feel is such
“ I can afford all else to lose —
“ The Pleasures of the Earth are much —
“ God may be more — ’Tis Love I choose — ”

This poem, with the same title as one printed in Poems 1899 but quite different from it, has recently come to light among papers which belonged to A. R. Powys, and appears not to have been printed before.

Recollections of Little Children

Amelia Powys

Among the papers of Amelia Powys* in my possession are 'A Christian Remembrancer' for 1842 and a later notebook, both with writings in her hand. These have, I believe, passed down from Amelia to her son, Revd C. F. Powys, to Gertrude M. Powys, and then to Lucy Penny (née Powys), with other material kept by Mary Cowper Powys both before and after her marriage.

The notebook is a small ordinary stiff-bound pocket notebook, 7 by 4½ inches, and has been started at both ends; in each case the heading (shown below in italics) is inside the cover. From the front, on 21 pages, are recollections of her three children when very young, while at the back (3 pages) are notes mainly relating to the adult Littleton Albert Powys (27.7.1840–1879; 'L.A.P.' or 'L.A.' in Amelia's notes). 'P.' is Philippa Knight, later Shirley (4.8.1829–1902), and 'C.' is Charles Francis Powys (1.2.1843–1923).

'A Christian Remembrancer' is a smaller book, 4¾ by 3 inches, and comprises a main section, originally consisting of daily texts interleaved with blank pages, preceded and followed by missionary accounts and other religious material and references. The daily texts have been removed, together with the dates, but the blank leaves remain, and on several of them are a few diary entries, short observations, and sketches of Littleton Albert which appear to be contemporary, unlike the notebook which is a later compilation, in some part drawing on the 'Remembrancer', so that there is a little duplication. Tentative dates can be supplied by noting the location of the writing within the section of blank leaves. A small page pasted into the notebook is identical in size and kind to the blank leaves of the 'Remembrancer'; it refers to C. F. Powys and comes either from the volume noted here or from some later similar one which I have not seen.

The whole of the writing in the notebook and the relevant entries on the diary pages of the 'Remembrancer' are reproduced below. Punctuation and spelling have not been altered.

Stephen Powys Marks

The notebook

[FRONT]

Private

Family dates &c. Recollections of little children

1833 Jan^y 20th

Little P. beginning to learn to read – Looking at Pictures on Sunday, first of Our Saviour receiving little children then of a Lamb with these words from

* *Amelia Powys* 'Emily' (1802–1890), née Moilliet, m. 1828 Samuel Knight (d. 1829), m. 1838 Littleton Charles Powys (1790–1872), Rector of Stalbridge (1837–67).

Isaiah – “He was brought as a Lamb to the slaughter” She seemed much touched & said “Mama If the soldiers came to kill me, I would let them & I would not run away” – I believe the dear child meant that she wished to imitate the conduct of Jesus to be like Him.

Jan^y 29th

The nurse went to the Lecture – Before her little prayer she said to me “Mama Jesus calls good little children lambs” – “Yes do you wish to be one of His lambs & to love Him” The child looking up with a sweet expression said “Yes dear Mama”

On Christmas Day – Several of the poor people had dinner – Of her own accord she came and asked leave to give them each a shilling of her own money given her by her Grandpapa – I asked if she preferred this to buying herself playthings. She said so, & each poor woman came into her nursery to receive her little gift which made the dear child very happy –

May 1841. The dear child had a fever from which she mercifully recovered

1837. Sunday Jan^y 8th Clifton

She was taken to hear M^r Hensman’s Sermon to children and was much interested, spoke of it after she was in bed to me, repeating part of it & then asked if I had observed a ray of sunshine which came in at the Church window shining over the Clergyman’s head & seemed to rest upon the Commandments & Lord’s Prayer upon the wall of the Church, she said she thought God had made the bright light shine on purpose on the clergyman’s head & upon His Commandments & His Prayer, in order to point to them to make us good – She had endeavoured during part of the service to call my attention to this light (without speaking) but I had not understood her signs.

Jan^y 1834. Began to learn to write could count to 100 without a mistake when 5 years old –

Little P. was observed to go under the table before dinner. It was found out at last that the reason was in order to say a little grace of her own she had learnt out of one of her books.

She loved the Evening hymn & likes M. to repeat it 3 times over when she is in bed. One night Mimmy left her to find another hymn book on her return she said “Mimmy I have been saying the Lord’s Prayer & I think I said it with my heart for all the time is was so full of love.”

1840 At Stalbridge Rectory

Feb^y 23^d Church on fire – seen first from Gallery window on Saturday 22^d Feb^y Gallery & Organ burnt. Fire put out by 2 o’clock in the morning by great exertions of Rev^d John Patteson Curate, the Rector from home –

17th April. House on fire Gold Street (M^r Morris) on Good Friday during the morning Service, fire extended to 3 houses, thatched roofs – all the Pumps

drained – Service stopped help needed.

May 1st. Fire opposite Rectory at M^r Davis Chemist shop – Put out soon –

June 29th. Family left the Rectory to go to Hamstead in the Handsworth Parish [near Birmingham]

July 27th L.A.P. born at 10 o'clock morning – Baptised at home by

L. C. P. [father] Afterwards Christened in Handsworth Church by Rev^d

D. N. Walton Sept 10th?

Went to Clevedon on way home

17th September arrived at Clevedon

21, 22, 23, 24. L.A.P. very ill

26 D^r Pritchard for him, in great danger, very little hope of life.

Jane Haskett nurse came, better

Oct 16th Left Clevedon for Stalbridge Rectory Church bells ringing

Nov^r 21st L.A. noticing & admiring flowers

27th First tooth appeared.

1841. L.A. pointing out letter O in books at 10 months. Delights in looking at pictures, always laughs at one of a Monkey –

July 27th 1841. Could call his father Dad Could stand up against a chair imitates the attitude of the infant Samuel when looking at the picture or the sound of animals in looking at their pictures always lovingly remembers his Nurse Jane though he seldom sees her – His birth-day kept by the first School treat at Stalbridge Rectory and a little Bazaar in the Garden for the Church Missionary Society, which gained about £12. –

He knows his fathers step in the passage & calls Dad & when told said Papa August 3.

Aug^t Walks pushing a chair before him & says up, up to be taken up. Likes to look at the minute hand of the watch moving – & brings out his top to make believe the top looks at it.

Walked alone at 16 months – when he wants his Sister to blow soap bubbles for him, he goes to the place where the Pipe &c is kept & says to her Ta Ta He calls her Titter, ta, Titter for thank you Sister – When he went out with Donkey, he wanted me to notice his long ears, by pulling his own. Dec^r 1841.

Makes believe to read the letters outside the National School when passing it. When wishing to come into the room he taps with his brush saying “Mama ope”

Very affectionate to me, holds his dear little arms tight round my neck then touches my face & says Mama Mama in a sweet tone of voice, & shows great delight in seeing me again if absent out of the room longer than usual. At times he looks very thoughtful – This Evening Sunday Dec^r 26 he was looking very thoughtfully at the Moon – I wished he could speak to tell me his thoughts – I said to him I wonder what you are thinking of Who do you think put the Moon up there. He answered “Titter” for Sister. [several lines

obliterated] looks up to his dear Sister & sees her blow soap bubbles and do things which appear very wonderful to him.

L.A. About four years old seeing his little Brother who called himself Ba for Baby, looking at the Moon before going to bed the child a little more than two years old said, "Tell Ba what man did make Moon"? After being told of the Creation L.A. was asked to repeat to his Brother the first Baby Hymn beginning

God made the flowers , the Moon the trees

and He made me

When I am good He always sees

And he loves me &c &c

L.A. changed it of his own accord & putting his arms round his little Brother & kissing him He said "And God loves Ba." instead of saying "And He loves me." His little Brother was crawling on the carpet one Evening & picked up something which was making him cough & uneasy – L.A. & I tried to find out what it was as there were little bits of cork left on the carpet & L.A. picked up a bit – I said I hoped he had not swallowed that – L.A. sat thinking a few minutes very still – Then burst into tears The children were called to supper but nothing could appease L.A.'s grief, the tears rolled down his cheeks, he intreated his nurse to go for the Doctor & ask him to bring a Stomach Pump for fear the cork should hurt his Brother – I tried to comfort him by thinking it was only a crumb of bread he might have swallowed but the poor little boy was in great distress for his Brother who was eating his supper quite unconscious why he cried, when at last a thought seemed to strike the dear Boy and he said stopping his crying "But God can make Charley well, God can take care of Charley" and the thought quieted & comforted him – His love for his Brother, his earnestness to have every thing possible done for him, and then his trust in his Heavenly Father, all gives the greatest Hope for the dear Boy's future good – L.A. nearly three years old begged to have the window shutters opened when he was going to say his Evening Prayer with his Mother – Why? because he thought God would not hear him so well – He said he wished I could show him God, I want to see God" – Being told that after death those who are very good might see God, He answered "Then let us all die together & go to Heaven" – He had four pence a week allowed him when older, & he put it by to help to rebuild the tower of Abberley Church which wanted repair "lest it should fall & hurt his Sister" he said –

Little C. his Brother was very fond of building Churches with his little wooden bricks in the nursery, and after taking great pains over one, when he found his Brother was returning from school & in his high spirits would knock it down, he pulled it down himself before he came that he might not be tempted to be angry with his brother – He always loved hymns & Bible stories and very early began to collect for the Church Missionary Society he amused his nurse by

wanting to talk to a poor man to persuade him to go to the night school to learn to read what was good.

He had great delight in flowers & brought the first violets primroses & wild flowers out of the lanes in his walks – His little heart seemed full of thankfulness to the Giver of these simple blessings – He was allowed four pence a week and one day it was proposed that he should get something he would like to have, but he held his little piece of money tight in his hand & when I asked him he told me he had determined to give it to the Church Missionary Collections. ~~He early began to collect for this Society with much interest~~ [words crossed out] he was a most faithful trustworthy child – When his Brother was away he would not meddle with his playthings, as he could not ask his leave – He was not quick in learning, but liked to understand what he had to learn – When he was quite young he wished he might be a Clergyman if he lived, particularly one day he expressed the wish after reading our Saviours words Matthew IX.37.38.

This child has been & is, a great Blessing to his Mother and to many many others. He saved his money often to give to the poor old people who came now & then to have a dinner at the Rectory.

L.A had as a Baby a Noah's ark given to him, he liked to compare the animals with the pictures in Bewick – he broke one of the arms of Noahs wife & always said "poor poor" when he saw it, he was asked who broke it, & touched his own cheek meaning he did it for he touched his cheek when wishing to speak of himself before he could speak – When he saw a picture of a Church he made a pretty little sound imitating the bells, to show he knew what the picture was – Little C always loved good & heavenly thoughts, Bible stories, & hymns – When his Mother was ill & unable to attend to him one Good Friday his nurse found him alone in the nursery praying a little hymn kneeling at a chair, some of the words were "Dearest Jesus make me thine

Bid They Spirit on me shine
Take my weak & sinful heart
Let it not from Thee depart."

[blank page, followed by text in a different hand]

Copy

"Charley at 3 years old, does not speak plain, is very very affectionate – delights to give – is eager & earnest in what he does – he loves flowers & sheep & lambs & what belongs to the country; his favourite plays are, imagining himself a sheep & having two little lambs to take care of – Imagining himself a plant of mignimette [*sic*],* being planted, watered etc. Making & baking bread, cakes etc.

* The word 'mignonette' evidently appealed to C.F.P.: there is a small crayon sketch, with a note on the back in Amelia's hand: 'The Mignonette / Charley's Ship / April 9th 1851'.

He is imaginative & full of fun – dearly loves his brother & all his friends – only knows 2 or 3 of his letters. He can repeat very indistinctly verses of hymns – & calls himself still Ba, for Baby. He says in his hymn instead of ‘I will love God who is so good, He gives me life & clothes etc “Ba will love God who is so good, He gives Ba life & clothes & food.” He delighted to give the poor women each a little packet of cocoa on his birthday.

Littleton Albert thinks more of the future Charley enjoys the present moment.”

[small sheet of text in AP’s hand pasted in]

Charley at four years old cannot speak plain, knows his letters – can repeat a few little hymns – when first waking often says one, & his nurse heard him say it in his sleep. he seems to wish to be good – he told me one day that he loved Jesus – he likes to give away – & to distribute his sugar plums – he is a happy little fellow & shows his pleasure with his hands & jumps for joy

[AT BACK OF NOTEBOOK] *Dates, family remembrances*

[page 1] L.A.P first sailed for India Whitsunday June 12th not quite 19 years old [i.e. 1859]

Psalm CXXI,

C.F.P. was eighth Senior Optime at Cambridge on [1866]

[bracketing indicates these lines from page 3 to be read next]

August 22^d 1875

Received Holy Communion with my dearest L.A.P. in St John’s Church

[page 2] Jan^y 28th 1879

Heard from Colonel Lake that dear L.A.P. is gazetted Brevet Major –

Write to him L.A.P. “Quetta Field Force”

his letter came in 4 weeks

Feb^y 22^d letter from L.A.P. on his first arriving at Candahar –

This day last year, sad parting with dearest L.A.P.

He generally wrote home every week

14th Jan^y 1879 – 59th Regiment entered Candahar –

On their way had a days march of 32 miles –

The sad sad news came by Telegram

While in charge of Cholera Camp, doing all in his power in self denial & kindness for the Sufferers he was taken himself to his Home above, August 6th 1879

Dear touching letters received from him for some time afterwards

[page 3] Though taken from our loving sight

He lives in Heavenly Glory bright,

His warm brave heart enlarged & clear

In Jesu's likeness to appear,
No sin nor sorrow to destroy
The calm of that most holy joy –

from 'A Christian Remembrancer' (1842)

[? January] Baby much pleased with his Noah's Ark & likes to compare the animals with the pictures in Bewick – He saw a picture of a Church & made me understand that he knew what it was by imitating the bells – he does not like strangers & cries at them but very affect^{le} to his friends – took him in the Donkey Chair which he likes, & when at M^{rs} Bridges he was carried by his nurse to see the Church & had the pleasure of hearing the clock strike – he likes to examine all over what is shown to him – he broke one of the arms from Noah's wife & always says poor poor when he sees it – & if I ask who broke it he touches his cheek – he always touches his cheek when he wishes to speak of himself as he has not yet called himself by any name – he says Mamma with a touching tone of voice – he calls his Papa "Pa – & for sister he says "Titter", for Betsy "Dattie" for Mary "Tat" which is his name for sewing – Miss Scott "Pop" the housemaid something like "Sweep" on account of her brushes – Sometimes he looks very thoughtful & at others is extremely merry – He delights in bells, & imitates the sound of the church bells on Sunday Mrg.

[? early March] Baby's great fancy now is for Baskets – he takes his little Basket & makes believe it is a Kettle w^h he calls Cook & pretends to pour water saying Cook, cook, pour, pour – he has shells for tea cups & points out which cup is for Papa, Mamma, Titter, Pop.

[? late April] for the first time this morning his throatlike Croup, anxious Mr Fookes said it proceeded from teething
Baby had a better night

with me, learns some new word almost every day –

[? beginning of May] Baby lies down on the floor & says "Pick up Babee" he likes to play at putting a chessman in a dessert basin of water & calls him Capⁿ Cook, sailing –

[? early May] Baby's great interest now is in pumps. he takes the dining room sofa pillow & makes believe it is a pump & amuses himself a long time with it by making believe to pump & to pour the water – there is a pump being made in the garden.

[? mid-May] Baby sometimes calls himself "itty boy bue" for little boy blue – knew all his large letters at one year & 9 months

[? late July – sketch of standing baby, reproduced opposite]

[? end of July] Baby boy has little boots put on when he walks out so he said to me "Mamma cant walk out, Mamma no boots" –

[? mid-September – unfinished sketch of baby's head, reproduced opposite]

[? late September] Baby Boy did not like much to ride the donkeys at first but going with his sister soon reconciled him – & he enjoys them now – When the tide was coming in he called out very loud to the sea “pour, pour, pour”. a fat lady stopped to look at him, so he ran up to her with a stick in his hand & said “Pop” to make believe to shoot her which made her laugh – he was riding in my Donkey chair & we met a Quaker lady riding in another he called out to me “that funny Girl!” – his sister has taught him to say ‘mercie’ for thank you & “s’il vous plait” When he sees a crab on the shore he says all the signs of the Zodiac to it “the ram the bull the heavenly twins &c &c because the crab is mentioned in those lines –

[? end of December – half-length sketch of small boy, reproduced below]



The sketch of Littleton Albert Powys reproduced on the back of the Newsletter is also by Amelia Powys, and shows him aged perhaps four or five.

Letters to the Editor

from Jonathan Wood

I am prompted to write to you by the piece in the latest *Newsletter* by Michael Skaife d'Ingerthorpe about references to the Powys circle.

I have recently found one which may possibly be new to people, taken from the pages of *The Henry Williamson Society Journal* No.3, May 1981. A now leading member of the Williamson Society wrote an article 'A First Meeting with Henry Williamson', recounting the occasion which took place at Georgeham Ox's Cross in North Devon in 1968. On page nine of the article there is a reference to John Cowper Powys, (reproduced below) and the esteem that Williamson held him in as a novelist. 'He died about three weeks ago', is clearly wrong by some five years (is it Williamson's mistake or that of John Gregory's memory?), but nevertheless it is a nice little complimentary aside from another unusual, powerful and under-rated novelist.

The passage reads as follows:

'Not even Francis Thompson's essay on Shelley?' he persisted. He got up and looked through the bookcase over the bed. 'No, I haven't got it here. How about John Cowper Powys?'

No again.

'He died about three weeks ago, one of the most under-rated and finest writers in the country. He was a genius, but the critics ignored him. They go for people like Iris Murdoch, all the modern stuff.'

Jonathan Wood

from Jeremy Robinson

On a recent trip to one of the meccas for all things to do with the Powys family, Dorset, I visited Longman's bookshop in Dorchester. Here one finds one of the greatest concentrations of works in print and on sale by the Powys family. To take one of the Powyses, John Cowper Powys, I was struck by the lack of fiction available. There is only *Wolf Solent*, in the Penguin Twentieth Century Classics edition, but no others. True, there is *Porius*, from Colgate University Press, but this is £43.00. And there is *Maiden Castle*, by the University of Wales Press, but this is £29.95. There were some books of poetry, some essays, but hardly any of the major works. If one walks up High Street West, to Dorset County Library, one finds shelves full of Powys's fiction and major works. It's a treasure trove of Powysiana – *but nearly every major work by J. C. Powys is out of print.*

What John Cowper Powys really needs to make him popular and widely read and widely discussed is to have his novels published by a mainstream publisher, so they are readily – and cheaply – available in bookshops throughout the world. It's no good having J. C. Powys's major fiction published in expensive academic

editions. Another central John Cowper Powys book, the amazing *Autobiography*, has come out in a new edition (1994) from Colgate University Press. A handsome reprint of the 1967 Macdonald edition, the Colgate *Autobiography* is priced ridiculously high for a paperback at £19.95.

If one looks at The Powys Society's *Powys Checklist* (1991) one sees that after the Macdonald editions of the 50s and 60s, Powys's fiction has only been reprinted by The Village Press in 1974–5. Since then, despite the welcome interventions of Picador, there have been too few editions of Powys's fiction: the fiction remains out of print. It is not enough to rely on finding Powys in second-hand and specialist shops. I do not advocate marketing Powys in the same way as a blockbuster or 'airport fiction' brand name – although Powys does contain some of the 'epic sweep', large cast and sense of melodrama of this sort of fiction.

Dickens did not become popular through expensive hardback editions of his fiction. John Cowper Powys needs to be vastly commercialised. He needs to be widely read, and it is the fiction that is central to the reputations of authors such as Dickens, Hardy, Joyce, Woolf, Lawrence. It is the major fiction of writers that most critics discuss, that becomes the foundation of critical and popular success. What the leading fans in the U.K., America and elsewhere need to do, if they do anything, is to get the major fiction of John Cowper and the other Powyses published by a big-name publisher. There should be, at least, *Wolf Solent*, *A Glastonbury Romance*, *Weymouth Sands*, *Maiden Castle*, *Owen Glendower*, *Porius*, *Wood and Stone*, *Ducdame*, *The Brazen Head* and others continuously in print, continually on the bookshelves.

Jeremy Robinson

[Whilst agreeing with many of Jeremy Robinson's sentiments, I do feel that it is a little unfair to refer to the efforts of Picador merely as an 'intervention'. Although we all regret the fact that the Picador editions are now out-of-print, their's really was a rather heroic effort, reprinting almost all of the major works and publishing *After My Fashion* for the first time. Whilst we might wish for the Powyses to be taken on by a major publisher, wishing is not enough. In a recent letter, Tim Bates, Commissioning Editor for the various Penguin Classics series pointed out that fewer than five hundred copies of *Wolf Solent* were sold every year. Against that background we need to come up with a clear strategy to attract the large publishers and their large audiences. Perhaps other members may have concrete suggestions as to how this might be achieved. P.R.]

New Publications in 1995

Volume v of *The Powys Journal* is well in hand and on course to be ready for distribution at the AGM late in August and will be given or sent out to all paid-up members of the Society (see the note on subscriptions on page 56), as full of good things as ever. An index has been prepared for the five volumes, and will be given away with all copies of the latest volume.

We have one other publication ready for printing which will also be available at the AGM. It is an index prepared by our President, Glen Cavaliero, to the *Letters of John Cowper Powys to his Brother Llewelyn*, published by the Village Press in 1975 in two volumes covering the years 1902–1939. The index will provide the vital key to this most important collection of letters of J. C. P. Copies will cost £1.50, and can be purchased post free from Stephen Powys Marks.

The list of publications on the inside cover of the *Newsletter* will be revised.

Book News

New catalogues of books by and about the Powys family and their circle are now available from both Joan Stevens, of 'Rosslyn House', High Street, Yoxford, Suffolk IP17 3EP, and The New Age Poetry Press at 6 Chapel Croft, Elton, Derbyshire (send s.a.e).

Henry Bristow of Ringwood have recently published their Catalogue 319 of manuscripts, autograph letters and historical documents. The catalogue contains a number of letters and other autograph materials by John Cowper Powys and Phyllis Playter, including a postcard sent jointly by Powys and Henry Miller (£120). Copies of the catalogue can be obtained from Henry Bristow, 2 Linden Gardens, Ringwood, Hants BH24 1HG.

Raymond Garlick has published a fine essay, 'Mr Powys and Miss Playter' in the April/May 1995 issue of *Planet: The Welsh Internationalist*. Copies may be obtained from P.O. Box 44, Aberystwyth, Dyfed SY23 5BS.

Frances Gregg's autobiographical book *The Mystic Leeway*, edited by Ben Jones, is very shortly to be published by the Carleton University Press. Copies may be ordered for \$29.95 (casebound) and \$19.95 (paperback) from Carleton University Press, 160 Paterson Hall, Carleton University, 1125 Colonel By Drive, Ottawa, Ontario K16 5B6, Canada. There will be a United Kingdom and European distributor and details of these, together with appropriate price details, will be published as soon as they are available. It is hoped to review the book in the next issue of the *Newsletter*.

Paul Roberts

Treasurer's Report for 1994

The accounts for 1994, shown on the next two pages, have been approved by the Society's Auditor. Once more, our paid-up membership has increased, though modestly, to 289 (1993, 281), of whom almost half (141) paid by standing order. Including the tax refund on covenants due for the year and the payment of 1993 subscriptions, our subscription income comes to the record figure of £4,183 (1993, £3,299); this represents 63% of our much increased income of £6,648 (£5,399), with net income from sales of our own publications amounting to £1,188 (£1,293). We also had valuable income from the sale of Elizabeth Muntz' sketch of T. F. P. and books donated for the book sale, a small surplus on the Conference, and a small net contribution from the sale of those Grey Powys Books which were paid for in 1994 (a considerable amount has come in this year). Donations, including the value of copies of *A Net in Water* given to us, amounted to £1,311 (£2,012).

As usual, the largest part of our expenditure went on our regular publications, *The Powys Journal* and three numbers of the *Newsletter*; the net cost of providing these to members, including distribution, was £3,577 (£3,073), representing 85.5% of the total subscription income (target 90%). The cost of undistributed copies of the *Journal* and the cost of producing *The Quiet Man of Dorset*, together £533, is not shown under expenditure but added to the value of stock in the General Fund, so that total expenditure on publications, excluding all distribution costs, is in the region of £3,400. The largest other item of expenditure was the purchase and transport from America of pictures by G. M. Powys which had belonged to Peter Powys Grey (£1,278); these have been added to the Society's collection housed in the Dorset County Museum. Bearing in mind the lower proportion of sales to stock than in the previous year, I have written down the value of Society's stock dating from before 1994 to give it a more realistic proportion of the Society's worth. The effect of this is that while we have a significant excess of income over expenditure as shown (£579; 1993, £432), the writing down turns this into a paper loss of £457, which is carried into the Statement of Funds which shows our worth at the year-end as £4,255 (£4,712).

Notwithstanding the drop in our worth from last year, which reflects a more realistic value of the stock, I am satisfied that we are in good financial health. I would like to thank our Auditor, Stephen Allen, for his advice on the matter of determining a value for our publications, and for his help to the Society in carrying out his audit.

Stephen Powys Marks

Auditor's Report to the Members of the Powys Society

I have audited the financial statements in accordance with approved Auditing Standards. In my opinion the financial statements give a true and fair view of the charity's affairs at 31st December 1994 and of the surplus for the year then ended and comply with the Companies Acts 1985.

J. S. Allen, Chartered Accountant, 5th April 1995

THE POWYS SOCIETY

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 1994

<i>Income</i> ¹		£	£	1993
subscriptions	for 1994 (289) ²	3,991.39		
	tax refund due for 1994 ³	135.50		
	for 1993 paid in 1994 (5)	<u>56.00</u>	4,182.89	3,299
donations ⁴	conference auction sale (donated books)	243.05		
	sale of donated T. F. Powys portrait	261.02		
	other	<u>116.89</u>	620.96	479
publication sales	stock publications	1,531.85		
(excluding	less cost of publications sold	<u>344.30</u>	1,187.55	
postage)	commission on sales	217.27		
	Montacute gazebo leaflets etc.	<u>52.91</u>		
	net income	<u>1,457.73</u>	1,457.73	1,383
conference	fees received	5,480.10		
	expenses	<u>5,301.94</u>		
	surplus (3.25%)	<u>178.16</u>	178.16	176
Grey Powys Books, sales in 1994 (excluding postage) ⁵		2,451.71		
	less purchase, transport from USA, etc. ⁶	<u>2,376.34</u>		
	net income	<u>75.37</u>	75.37	—
interest (gross)			133.39	<u>162</u>
			£ 6,648.50	£ 5,499

<i>Expenditure</i> ¹		£	£	1992
<i>The Powys Journal</i> IV (1994), ⁷ cost of 317 members' & complimentary copies ⁸		1,893.02		
	cost of distribution	<u>283.61</u>	2,176.63	1,894
<i>The Powys Journal</i> III (1993), cost of supplying 7 copies to late subscribers			24.10	42
newsletters (3 in 1994), including distribution ⁸			1,400.01	1,179
<i>Powys Checklist</i> , complimentary copies to new members			17.50	16
purchase of G. M. Powys pictures formerly belonging to Peter Powys Grey ⁹			1,278.40	—
Powys Collection at Dorset County Museum (shelving etc.)			274.43	—
stationery and photocopying (1993: bookmark)			228.78	103
recording equipment (1993: cassettes)			46.55	9
questionnaire expenses			71.60	—
general publication expenditure			29.28	—
Feather Collection, expenses of repatriation from Zimbabwe, less donation			—	503
'Writers in a Landscape' exhibition at Dorset County Museum			—	957
subscription to Alliance of Literary Societies			—	10
officers' expenses and committee travel			521.97	<u>354</u>
			6,069.25	5,067
excess of income over expenditure	579.25		579.25	<u>432</u>
writing down of stock ¹⁰	<u>-1,036.75</u>		£ 6,648.50	£ 5,499
excess of income less writing down	<u>-457.50</u>			
carried to Statement of Funds				

Auditor's report — see previous page

THE POWYS SOCIETY

STATEMENT OF FUNDS

I <i>General fund</i> ¹¹	£	£	1993
funds at January 1st 1994		4,712.42	4,280
excess of income over expenditure <i>less</i> writing down		<u>-457.50</u>	<u>432</u>
funds at December 31st 1994		<u><u>4,254.92</u></u>	<u><u>4,712</u></u>
represented by:			
stock of <i>The Powys Journal</i> , <i>The Powys Review</i> , and books at cost at January 1st 1994	4,147.01		2,681
add cost of purchases and publications, including <i>The Powys Journal</i> IV surplus to distribution ¹²	532.83		2,336
less cost of publications sold	344.30		
<i>The Powys Journal</i> III to late subscribers	14.00		
complimentary <i>Checklist</i> to new members	17.50		
writing down of stock ¹⁰	<u>1,036.75</u>	<u>-1,412.55</u>	<u>-870</u>
value of stock at December 31st 1994 ¹³	<u>3,267.29</u>	3,267.29	4,147
cash at bank at December 31st 1994 ¹⁴		1,132.64	694
sums due to the Society, including tax refund due		<u>185.50</u>	<u>16</u>
		4,585.43	4,857
less creditors	137.27		
subscriptions received in advance (1994, 14; 1993, 10)	<u>193.24</u>	<u>-330.51</u>	<u>-145</u>
		£ <u><u>4,254.92</u></u>	£ <u><u>4,712</u></u>
II <i>The Wilson Knight benefactors' fund</i> ^{11, 15}			
		£	1,993
funds at January 1st 1994		3,368.49	3,368
transfers to/from General fund		-	-
funds at December 31st 1994		£ <u><u>3,368.49</u></u>	£ <u><u>3,368</u></u>
represented by cash in deposit account		£ <u><u>3,368.49</u></u>	£ <u><u>3,368</u></u>

NOTES

- 1 Cash turnover: total receipts, £20,039.71; total payments, £19,709.68, of which £532.83, relating to the cost of purchases and publications (see note 10), is carried forward in the General Fund. Other adjustments, relating to cost of publications sold etc., subscriptions paid in advance for 1994 and 1995, creditors, and sums owing to the Society, give excess of *Income over Expenditure* for the year of £443.75, all as shown in the accounts.
- 2 This figure comprises 279 (141 by standing order) paid in 1994 (£3861.43) and 10 paid in advance in 1993 (£129.96).
- 3 Tax on covenanted subscriptions paid in 1994 will be reclaimed in 1995.
- 4 Total donations: £620.96 (as listed) unallocated + cost of part stock of *A Net in Water*, £690 = £1,310.96 (1993, £2,012).
- 5 This income represents about two-thirds of the value of invoices sent out, the remainder to be paid in 1995.
- 6 This includes purchase of books, £2,000, and printing of catalogue issued with *Newsletter* 23, £157.77.
- 7 Gross cost £2,343.02, less advertisement fee £50 = net cost £2,293.02, less cost of copies taken into stock at run-on cost £400 = £1,893.02.
- 8 Total net cost of producing and supplying *The Powys Journal* IV (£2,176.63) & 3 newsletters (£1,400.01): £3,576.64 = 89.6% of 1994 subscriptions or 85.5% of 1994 subscriptions with arrears for 1993 and tax refund for 1994.
- 9 Purchase, £1,000; transport from USA and insurance, £278.40.
- 10 This is arrived at by writing down the value of stock at January 1st 1994 by 25%; new stock in 1994 is not affected.
- 11 General fund £4,119.42 + Benefactors' fund £3,368.49 = Society's net worth at December 31st 1994 £7,487.91.
- 12 Undistributed copies of *The Powys Journal* IV, £400; *The Quiet Man of Dorset*, £132.83; = £532.83.
- 13 No value is attached to stock which has not involved cost to the Society.
- 14 Current account £191.85 + deposit account £4,309.28 = £4,501.13, less Benefactors' fund £3,368.49 = £1,132.64.
- 15 Interest has been retained in the General fund.

Stephen Powys Marks, Treasurer