

## Editorial

John Cowper rules once again, with another instalment of the late letters to Louis (1958 – the year in which our chairman Glen appears on the scene, a mystery man to the letters' later editor Robert Lancaster). Three of our distinguished members contribute essays; and it's hoped that the fairly detailed accounts of our agreeable (and, usually, agreeing), and thought-provoking, meetings will bring their flavour to those who missed them. We look forward to Street in August – doubtless (after its appearance at the Olympics) with a record number of pilgrims to the Tor.

### Chairman's Report, 2011–2012

Looking back over my first year as Chairman, I want to thank many of you for relieving me of so many potentially burdensome responsibilities. I am especially grateful to Chris Thomas for so often stepping in to keep the show on the road, but I also want to thank our Conference organisers, our Editors at work on *Journal* and *Newsletter*, our Webmaster, our Collections curator and a big international cast and network of Powysians of all kinds.

This year The Powys Society welcomed twelve new members, from places as far apart as the United States and Switzerland, indicating we are continuing to reach out. Increasingly it is the Society's website where many new members find us, and we need your help to keep it refreshed. We are still mostly failing to attract a new generation of younger Powys readers, and if the Society is to flourish in the coming decade, we must now reach them.

Meetings were held in Ely and in Dorchester in the first half of 2012. I joined in

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the meeting at Ely in March, led by our President, Glen Cavaliero, who joyfully inspired us with his insights into the 'Mathrafal' chapter of *Owen Glendower*. The novel is not often selected for discussion, but it sparked a lively and rewarding engagement with the character of Owen, including JCP's theories about the Welsh People. Many thanks to Sonia Lewis for proposing the topic, and finding such an attractive venue at the Old Fire Engine House. We hope to return there again. Our annual Powys Study Day, held at the Dorset County Museum in Dorchester in June, and guided by Chris Thomas, provided an opportunity for members to read and discuss their favourite passages from any Powys book. This proved to be a successful and stimulating approach, enabling members to share their personal experiences and discoveries. The format seems to work well.

Our Conference this year includes talks on JCP, Llewelyn and Theodore, and will take us from the local to the multiversal, from religion and philosophy to the mundane world of village life. In a change to one of the Conference talks, we will hear about JCP in a European context, and about his reception by French philosophers such as Jean Wahl, in the 1930s. This opens up many possibilities for future research. We have organised a visit, on Saturday afternoon, to Montacute where the present owners of the Vicarage and Powys home have kindly offered to guide us round the house and gardens.

In June we received surprising news of a large collection of letters from JCP to his son, Littleton Alfred, previously unknown to us all. The estimate at the Salisbury auction room was around £200, and with some misgivings we decided to bid on behalf of the Collection – but in fact the bidding reached £4,000. We would be very grateful if any member can offer information about this important material, its current ownership and accessibility for study.

Good news has reached us from USA – a local librarian and historian of Hillsdale (NY) plans to organise an exhibition about JCP's life and work which will

also celebrate his time at Phudd Bottom. The exhibition will be shown in the new Hillsdale Community Library in September. I am delighted to hear that the Society has been able to help with this and that members have donated materials for the exhibition which we hope will inspire new local interest in the Powyses.

High Resolution images of Gertrude's paintings are now displayed on the website 'Your Paintings' (sponsored by the BBC). Looking at a small selection of her



*Ely lunch: Chris Thomas, Sonia Lewis  
and Tim Hyman.*

oil paintings (the originals are in the Powys Society Collection at the Dorset County Museum) her integrity and seriousness as an artist is very evident. (See *News and Notes* for details.)

I would like to encourage all members to help get involved with our ongoing project to transcribe JCP's diary for the year 1940 – 'adopting' a day or a week. You can do this by getting in touch with Chris Thomas, our Secretary, who will send you more information. In the meantime you can see digitised copies of JCP's diary for 1939 on the website of the National Library of Wales at:

<http://www.llgc.org.uk/index.php?id=5430>

Our longer term project for a picture book of The Powys Family suffered a setback when the scheme's proposer and chief Editor, Peter Foss, had to withdraw due to pressure of other work. We are now embarking on a narrower remit – a 'Pictorial Biography' of John Cowper Powys. The first step will be to gather together a digital archive of photographs and other imagery. My hunch is that several members do possess material that we may never have seen: we would be most grateful they are willing to share any such images – ideally in the form of High Resolution scans, to be sent to Chris Thomas. We also need the help of savvy volunteers to scan relevant material in the Society's Collection.

I have to report the loss to the Society of our long-established member Graham Carey (see the tribute in this issue of the *Newsletter*) a familiar attender at many conferences.

I would like to extend my personal sympathy to Jeremy Bird, our publications expert, whose wife has died after a long illness.

**Timothy Hyman**

### *Hon. Treasurer's Report for 2011*

The accounts for 2011 are set out on page 52: they have been approved by the Society's Honorary Auditor, Jane Roberts of Hills and Burgess Accountants, Leighton Buzzard, and the Society is most grateful to her for her work and advice on behalf of the Society.

The paid-up membership for 2011 was 290 members. It is still important that members do all within their power to encourage those interested in the work of the Powys family to join the Society.

Our total subscription income for 2011 was £3,754.52.

The cost of producing the *Journal* in 2011 was £2,710.53, and the *Newsletters* £2,821.91, making a total of £5,532.44, which was a large increase on the figures for 2010 of £3,894.

The cost of the two Day Meetings in Dorchester and Brighton in 2011 amounted to £367.30.

**Anna Pawelko**

## Committee Nominations 2012–2013

The following Honorary Officers have been nominated and have agreed to stand:

	<i>Nomination</i>	<i>Proposer</i>	<i>Seconder</i>
<i>Chairman</i>	<b>Timothy Hyman</b>	John Hodgson	Peter Lazare
<i>Vice-Chairman</i>	<b>Peter Foss</b>	Tony Head	Raymond Cox
<i>Hon. Secretary</i>	<b>Chris Thomas</b>	Chris Wilkinson	Frank Kibblewhite
<i>Hon. Treasurer</i>	<b>Anna Pawelko</b>	Jacqueline Peltier	Tim Blanchard

For the Committee, the following have been nominated by Society members and have agreed to stand:

<i>Nomination</i>	<i>Proposer</i>	<i>Seconder</i>
<b>Jeff Kwintner</b>	Robert Carrington	Sonia Lewis
<b>Kate Kavanagh</b> (NL ed.)	Marcella Henderso-Peal	Julia Matthews

If approved at AGM, the Committee, from August 2012, will consist of those names above and **Louise de Bruin** (Conference organiser and publication manager who has one year to serve of current term of office), **Stephen Powys Marks**, **Michael Kowalewski** (Collection Manager), **Trevor Davies** and **Shelagh Powys Hancox** (who all have two years to run of current term of office). **Charles Lock** (Editor of *Powys Journal*) serves as *ex-officio* member.

All members of The Powys Society are invited to submit new nominations for service on the committee at any time during the course of the forthcoming year until 23 June 2013.

## AGM 2012

The Annual General Meeting of The Powys Society will be held at the Wessex Hotel, High Street, Street, near Glastonbury, BA16 0EF, at 11.00am, on Sunday 19 August 2012. All members of The Powys Society are welcome to participate in the meeting whether or not they are attending the Conference.

### AGENDA

- 1 Minutes of AGM 2011 as published in *Newsletter* 74, November 2011 and matters arising.
- 2 Nominations of Honorary Officers and members of The Powys Society Committee for the period 2012/2013.
- 3 Report of Hon. Treasurer and presentation of annual accounts for year ending 31 December 2011.
- 4 Report of Powys Society Collection Manager.
- 5 Report of Hon. Secretary.
- 6 Chairman's Report as published in *Newsletter* 76, July 2012.
- 7 Date and venue of annual conference 2013.
- 8 AOB

**Chris Thomas, Hon. Secretary**

*The Powys Society Annual Conference, 2012*  
*The Wessex Hotel, Street*  
*Friday 17th August – Sunday 20th August*

**MANY VOICES, MANY WORLDS'**

**Programme**

*Friday 17th August*

- 16.00 Arrival  
17.30 Reception  
18.30 Dinner  
20.00 **Michael Kowalewski: 'John Cowper Powys: The Sacred, the Secular and the Sexual'**

*Saturday 18th August*

- 08.00 Breakfast  
09.30 **Arjen Mulder: 'Into the world and back again'** (on Llewelyn Powys)  
Coffee  
11.15 **Marcella Henderson-Peal: Work in progress on John Cowper Powys, an invitation to jump into French philosopher Jean Wahl's circle : missing links and chain reactions**  
12.45 Lunch  
Afternoon free – visit to **Montacute** and guided tour of the Vicarage  
19.00 Dinner  
20.00 A reading of John Cowper Powys's 1922 play ***Paddock Calls***

*Sunday 19th August*

- 08.00 Breakfast  
09.30 **Michael Caines: 'A holiday with Theo (and his publisher)'**  
Coffee  
11.00 **AGM**  
12.00 **Larry Mitchell: 'The Powys Collection, the Cushing Memorial Library and Archives at Texas A&M University, followed by discussion on TFP**  
13.00 Lunch  
15.00 Departure

*For details of all speakers please refer to Newsletter 75, March 2012.*

**Websites and e-mail addresses: Please note that for consistency these are generally shewn between angle brackets <>.**

## Graham Carey (1932–2012)

In the late 1950s there was a regular written correspondence between Fosse Cottage in Malmesbury and Bridge Cottage in Eastbury. The former was home to Graham Carey, then a romantic young artist in his thirties, whilst in the latter lived Helen Thomas, widow of the poet Edward Thomas. Graham would visit Helen over several years, reporting and chronicling with photographs the sad changes to Adlestrop, sharing news about family, friends and art in Berkshire and Wiltshire. She would congratulate him on getting his art exhibited.



Helen wished Graham well in 1965 upon hearing of his appointment as an art teacher in Bingley, Yorkshire, warning him to beware of the 'people addicted to money in towns'.

With lengthening hair, the young artist became a sixties radical, campaigning against nuclear power and for peace, feminism and human rights. Often impatient with others, he rejected the general chit-chat of the college staff room, always trying to turn the conversation to serious subjects such as world peace and nuclear disarmament. In 1977, frustrated with the increasingly utilitarian approach taken to education, he co-authored *Proposal for a New College*. The fact that many would call this a utopian work is now a measure of how tainted with material gain the education of the young has become.

Graham returned to the Christian faith in his maturity, worshipping at the little Anglo-Catholic church of St Wilfred's, in the village of Gilstead, even further up the valley side from his Bingley home.

He joined The Powys Society in the 1980s. Regular conference-goers will remember him with a mix of fondness and exasperation. Many will remember the interventions of his strong, warm, melodious voice in meetings and AGMs. Who will forget the 2009 Llangollen AGM and his dogged insistence, in the teeth of so much opposition, that his idea to invite Rowan Williams as a conference speaker should be heard and discussed?

In the end Graham lived out his own version of a Powysian life – a mixture of Theodore and John. He lived alone in a home with walls covered with his art, political posters, photographs of family, friends and literary heroes. The floors and every other flat surface were strewn with books, pamphlets and leaflets. In many respects, his home was his final work of art. His letters to friends would rival the thrilling effect of any written by John Cowper, being a microcosm of his house, cornucopias of quick-scrawled writing, press cuttings and photographs, with nearly as much written on the outside of the envelope as contained within.

Helen Thomas need not have worried for Graham. He never succumbed to

money, campaigning instead in support of the Occupy Movement and his own version of a new monasticism until the day he died. This was on 12th June and he was buried in Bingley cemetery on the 20th June, after a music-filled memorial service in the Gilstead church he loved. Kate, his two daughters, relatives and friends filled the pews. He will not be forgotten by those whose lives he touched.

**John Dunn**

## *The Collection: Curator's Report*

Louise de Bruin has kindly offered to take on some of the curatorship responsibilities and have independent access to the key. Jon Murden was happy to comply with this. Louise was able to meet Marcella Henderson-Peal who was looking for letters between JCP and his son for her Sorbonne PhD on JCP. I copied the letters we have and sent them to her.

I received an email from Michael Jeffrey, the auctioneer from Salisbury, whom we were able to meet and to see the late letters from JCP to his son and his son's carer that were offered for sale (*see Chairman's Report*).

I was approached by Jay Rohrlach in the USA over an exhibition to be held in Hillsdale, NY, of JCP. I forwarded the e-mail to the Committee and Chris and others were able at very short notice to provide Jay with some material. He also joined our Society, which is very welcome.

I have continued copying and sending Alyse's journals to Janice Gregory, who has reimbursed all the costs, but it has been a laborious process.

The issue of physical curation has not been resolved. Louise and I visited the Writer's Gallery to see what it would involve but we were not able to meet with anyone from the Museum. It should be discussed at our meeting with the DCM.

West Dorset Council are trying to get grant money to transform the Shire Hall into a Heritage Centre. This could have implications for us especially about displaying the physical memorabilia and paintings. The DCM is involved in this and we should discuss this also with them.

On the subject of housing the Collection, we still need to meet with Jon Murden to find out what the DCM view of the Collection is and fulfill the Agreement condition for a ten-yearly meeting. I have come round to the thought that from their point of view they have not got a good deal, as they carry the burden of responsibility and costs while the collection as such does not attract large numbers of visitors who pay the (admittedly stiff) museum charge, by which success is measured in these times. On the other hand, the conditions in which the Collection is kept are not ideal for researchers. These issues are probably best discussed at the AGM in Street.

**Michael Kowalewski**

## *Ely Meeting, 31st March 2012*

This was an exceptionally happy event, organised by Sonia Lewis and presided over by our President, Glen Cavaliero. Fifteen people in total sat round the agreeable sittingroom of the Old Fire Engine House restaurant, in view of the Cathedral (one present said that if they had to spend their last days in one room, this would be it). Beside the usual suspects it was especially good to have with us Rob Stepney, valiant re-publisher of *Owen Glendower* in 2001 (as recounted in *Newsletters* 44 and 45), and Phyl Lowry, god-daughter of JCP and Phyllis Playter, daughter of Lucy Hollington, formerly Evans, known as ‘Betty’, their friend and housekeeper at Corwen (see *Newsletter* 55). Phyl as a Welsh-speaker proved a useful help with pronunciations. Bill Keith’s excellently helpful booklet on Aspects of *Owen Glendower* was available.

Our subject was the ‘Mathrafal’ chapter of *Owen Glendower* and Glen applauded this choice (Sonia’s). ‘Mathrafal’ [‘MathRAval’] was the concluding chapter in the first volume of the original U.S. two-volume 1941 edition. It provides a pivotal shift from the previous Rhisiart-centered chapters and leads to the second, more action-led, part, both centered and revolving round Owen himself.

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**Glen Cavaliero** began his talk with JCP’s diary entry for 25th June 1937, describing an idyllic excursion in Littleton’s car to the Mathrafal site – the word itself an enchantment. Glen himself visited it in 1959 before calling at 1 Waterloo – oddly, he recalls JCP’s enthusiasm at hearing this but no details of the actual site.



*Glen Cavaliero and Belinda Humfrey.*

*Owen Glendower* is about the creation of a myth, leading to the apotheosis of the final chapter. In the romantic tradition, it justifies Powys’s moulding of history into a new creation. But is this legitimate? The character of Owen, romantically, has its ambiguous side, emphasised in this chapter. His exploits are balanced by a passive acceptance akin to JCP’s own. His near-supernatural experiences are balanced by the scepticism of Rhisiart, another kind of romantic. These tensions provide the patterns in the novel. Ironically, positive actions are often obliquely prompted (as the idea of disarming the Derfel-ites by abducting Efa comes from Rhys Gethin, the man of action).

The ending of the chapter, with Broch’s witch-wife ‘turning the wheel’ and cursing what Owen (the Owen of action) is doing, is, typically, melodrama undercut by personal



details. Thus Owen, at the height of his acclamation as Prince, hopes the throne won't break with the weight of armour; or the intrusive gnats, later, distract from the siege of Worcester. Here, it is Owen's rescuing of a rotten log from the doom-laden waterwheel. We may see this tendency as Powys's corrective to Victorian romanticism – to Scott, to the Pre-Raphaelites. (We should remember that in 1900 JCP was already 28.)

There are no indicated 'breaks' in this chapter, but it falls into four scenes. It opens almost as a new novel, and what we see in Owen's private 'magician's chamber' is realistic, verging on the comic, with homely domestic details, as he lies in bed thinking about poetry, and combs his forked beard. His prayers, his vision of his guiding soul, his smashing of the magic crystal, share this reality. The action that follows, the crowded Proclamation, takes place off-stage or in Owen's mind, leading to the beauty and tenderness of the ride to Mathrafal, alone with the two young people, Rhisiart and Efa. The concluding section at the mill with the giant Broch, his elvish wife and their three daughters, brings an element of fairytale along with a return to realism in the bright kitchen, before the dark ending with the occult moonlit powers of Morg (her name recalling the witch Morgan le Fay).

The chapter contains other contrasts and dualities. Owen affirms his lack of shame for 'everything I find I am', as if controlled by a separate soul (super-ego?), yet he prays for mystery. His affinity is for old poetry with its race-memories and tales of *tyngned* (fate), yet he regrets perhaps having slighted his new poet. He (or his author) brings in childhood memories – his stronger brother carrying him, his father urging him to jump a stream – together with darker images from his own adult past and the Derfel-cult. He is resigned (as his fate – 'blood and ashes') to destroying the happy town-fair at Ruthin, and he recalls his admired friend Oldcastle (the original Falstaff) with his humorous (Rabelaisian) philosophy, the gospel of laughter.

Glen praised the lovely description of the ride to Mathrafal as great prose, lyrical in sound and sense. It takes its time, conveying dignity, equilibrium and peace, the sense of continuity with the myths of Wales and its old inhabitants, an affirmation of the present in the past. 'The Past is the Eternal'. With the gaol scene, it is one of the high points of the book.

*Owen Glendower* is a book to re-read, as we look forward and back. With the turning of the wheel, the duality in Owen ('what I find I am' and 'blood and ashes') looks forward to his ironic failure to conquer Worcester. The visionary ride to Mathrafal prefigures the final chapter of Owen's death and survival.

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**Discussion** continued after lunch, all contributing. Among points raised were:

The time-honoured disagreement over the opening sentence – does the anachronistic mention of Don Quixote put off a new reader? Or establish a rapport with the author? Or place Rhisiart effectively as 'quixotic' – a rash champion? – It directs interest to Griffin, one of the best-described heroes of the book. [PJK]

Phyl Lowry (in support of the theory that the formidable Morg, wife of Brock,

might be in part based on Phyllis) recounted her mother's description of a confrontation between an equally formidable Phyllis with the local butcher.

Rob Stepney described reading the 'Comet' chapter and looking up to see a real comet – the kind of coincidence that JCP seems often to induce. He also recalled Phyllis's suggestion of issuing *OG* as a serial (as Victorians did) to be sold on station bookstalls.

Tim Hyman wondered if Owen's fits or out-of-body experiences (twice in this chapter, and in others) could be JCP's own experience (possibly epilepsy). Moments of vision, as with Julius Caesar? Or 'stupid being' bringing unexpected connections. JCP's other characters with access to the superhuman (Geard, Urien) are all of middle or later age, like Owen.



*John Hodgson and Rob Stepney.*

Glen praised the minor characters that come and go – such as the goose boy in Rhisiart's walk with Tegolin to meet Glyndwr, recalled later. David Gervais found a Homeric quality in this. JCP characters all live in a larger world than in other novels, with side-tracks as in life. KK enjoyed the Powys family memories woven in – Owen carried by his brother, fearing to jump a stream, rescuing a stick from the millstream. (It's a *rotten* log he saves – is this significant? [DG] But with a plant growing on it [Marcella H-P]. Sonia noted how children's vision is always important with JCP: they notice details. They are extensions into wider history [Chris T.]

[TH] Is there input from Spanish Civil War? (*OG* finished in 1939).

[RS] Definitely – he first read *OG* just after the history of Spanish war by Hugh Thomas, and was struck by similarities.

[JH] A time of new weapons – the longbow (as air bombing was).

[DG] A glamorizing of Wales – but no Owen Glendower in Spain. Owen is a national redeemer, this gives uplift to his character. This not in Scott.

[Belinda Humfrey] Rob Roy? There are always national heroes.

[PL] Powys was anxious to assert his Welshness.

[DG] There is a *class* hero in Philip Sparrow. Difficult to present a strong national leader in fascist 1938.

[BH] But Owen is a *good* leader. He founds universities (but destroys himself as they all do).

[JH] Owen is a *lost cause*, and these are always heroic. But is JCP *using* Welsh

mythology to prove anything? He brings in other concerns – vivisection – unconnected.

[PL] His descriptions of landscape – Dinas Bran, mountains – is perfect.

[DG] Continuing Welshness requires nostalgia.

[CT] A lot in the book comes from Rhys, one of his sources – the old gods, serpent rituals etc.

[DG] Owen is aware of this, looks back but defines his present position with clergy, and so on.

[JH] The religious debates seem Victorian. Also the botanising.

[PL] Rhisiart's view of Owen changes, from heroic to critical.

[GC] But we always sympathise with Rhisiart.

[GC] *OG* is the *grandest* of JCP novels.

[CT] But the realistic elements are the most fulfilling.

[DG] The grandeur is heroic, the mythic different. Historical novels need facts, in most of them the mythic element is rare.

[TH] It's Humans against mythology.

[TH] JCP's Welshness ... Was he considered an honorary Welshman?

[RS] Welsh nationalists – enthusiasts for the real Glendower – aren't interested.

[DG] There's wishful Welshness – Edward Thomas a prime example.

[TH] And David Jones.

[GC] And the James Hanley stories set in Wales .....

**KK, from notes**

## Your Society Needs You

The Committee is urgently seeking  
more helpers with our publishing  
and printing activities.

Anyone with knowledge of desk-  
top publishing who would like to  
be involved, please get in touch  
with Chris Thomas.

*typeset in Albertus*

## Dorchester, 9th June 2012

This was another successful informal meeting. About 16 people (this always seems a good number), gathered round the big table in the DCM library (more agreeable than the old schoolroom now turned into a tea room). The scheme, devised by Chris Thomas, was for anyone to read a favourite Powys passage and say why they liked it.

John Hodgson kicked off with *The Art of Happiness* (philosophical books are easier for dipping), and demonstrated the art of Googling JCP's frequent quotations from the 'compost heap' of references he carried in his head (for instance identifying the Matthew Arnold sonnet on Bethnal Green).

**Stephen Powys Marks** passed round some late editions of TFP stories with subtle variations in the printing, shewing that using a special paper for a special edition resulted on this occasion in an inferior impression.

**Julia Matthews** read the passage on celandines, and the sunflowers on his iron fireplace, from *Soliloquies of a Hermit*.

**David Gervais** – reminding us that Professor Leavis saw TF's stories as what all fiction ought to be, 'moral fables' – read from 'God' (in which God appears as a top hat).

**Michael Kowalewski** followed this with more from TFP, reading the moving end of *The Only Penitent* (God is presented as both evil and good).

**Anna Pawelko** changed the scene with the chapter in *Weymouth Sands* when Larry Zed invites Perdita up to his Lodmoor loft – expressing the idea of 'cerebral eroticism' as perfected by JCP.

**Simon Corfield**, new to the Society, then read from his research on the letters of Aleister Crowley to Louis Wilkinson, with their rather wistful mentions of JCP, of whom he was perhaps envious, since JCP had been through a stage of occultism and got it out of his system. (NL 54 describes the Foyles lunch when JCP 'exorcised' the creepy Crowley by buying him a bottle of wine). In one of his letters to Louis Wilkinson JCP states that he refuses to be drawn into the Crowley circle declaring '*Jack cocks a snook at the old Master*'.

**Kate Kavanagh** read from the end of *Pleasures of Literature*, on the essential survival of books.

After lunch, as **Frank Kibblewhite** unfortunately was again unable to give his talk owing to his mother's illness, the meeting continued.

**Jerry Bird** described his upbringing among the Plymouth Brethren, leading to his discovery of Hardy and agnosticism, and on to JCP and Paganism. He read the scene in *The Brazen Head* when Peleg and Lil Umbra pray to the Moon, and gave (by request) a helpful account of the differences between Paganism as a religion (finding spiritual values in the Earth) and New-Age beliefs (basically of self-help, and connections with Eastern mysticism). He also read from 'Natural Worship' in LIP's *Earth Memories*.

**Chris Thomas**: One of my favourite books is *Wolf Solent* – this is the novel that

introduced me to the Powyses when I was living in far away New Zealand and for me it perfectly symbolises the familiar Powysian theme of the relationship between character and landscape and the intensified inner world of man and nature. JCP's description of the drive from Ramsgard to Kings Barton in chapter 2 of *Wolf Solent* was my chosen reading. The passage rises to an ecstatic crescendo where the landscape, seen as the essence of greenness, begins to transform Wolf's psychic life.

**Kate Kavanagh** concluded the meeting by reading the end of *The Art of Growing Old*, countered by JH with a list of youth's distractions from the same book.

After tea a small group of members visited the Powys Society Collection and later, led by Jerry Bird, walked around the remains of the Iron Age hill fort called Poundbury Camp, on the outskirts of Dorchester. Jerry pointed out the Roman aqueduct that snakes far into the distance. Poundbury Camp of course also has strong Powysian connections for it was here that JCP also often walked when he lived in Dorchester in 1934–35, to view the landscape below which he associated with the setting of *Ducdame*. He also refers to it several times in *Maiden Castle*, describing its 'turfy ramparts' and its link, in the novel, to the ancient civilization of the mound builders of *Mai-Dun*.

CT, KK



*The Library, Dorset County Museum.*

## News and Notes

Our deep sympathy is with **Jerry Bird** on the loss of his wife Diana. Jerry took on the formatting of the *Journal* and we hope he will be able to continue this.

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A tribute by John Dunn to **Graham Carey**, who died suddenly in June, is on page 6. Earlier this year Graham wrote that good homes were sought for a number of his books ('from 50s and 60s, much loved, much thumbled and important') including a lot of historic *London Magazines*. He also wanted to recommend *Nietzsche's Dancers: Isadora Duncan and Martha Graham and the Revaluation of Christian Dancers* by Kimere L. Lamothe (2006).

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**Charles Lock** writes: I have been invited to give a plenary lecture at the International **Iris Murdoch Conference** to be held at the University of Kingston (-on-Thames) in **September**. The subject is 'Loose baggy monsters' and my topic is the **influence of JCP on Iris M.** Powys publications will be on sale.

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Tim Blanchard reports 'a nice piece in the *Australian Financial Review*, of all places, on **Anne Powys** (grand-daughter of Will Powys) and her work on the Masai Mara'.

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**Gertrude Powys's** paintings are now posted on the BBC 'Your Paintings' website by the Public Catalogue Foundation. There are several different ways to view the paintings – for instance searching by location (DCM) or browsing artist's name on the home page. This is the link to the slide show:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/arts/yourpaintings/artists/gertrude-mary-powys>

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Peter Tolhurst's *With Magic in my Eyes: West Country Literary Landscapes* (Fairfield books 2011, with excellent photographs) has a section on the Powys family, with special on-site attention to JCP's *Wood and Stone*.

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An account of **Llewelyn's** *amitié amoureuse* with Lorna Wishart, famous free spirit and *femme fatale* (later beloved of Laurie Lee) is in *The Rare and the Beautiful: The Lives of the Garmans* by Cressida Connolly (4th Estate, 2004). His letters to her, quoted at length in the book, continued from 1932 to 1939.

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**Peter Foss** was interviewed by Michael Portillo for an ITV programme called 'Britain's Secret Treasures' – to go out in 2nd week of July. It is in collaboration with BM and Portable Antiquities Scheme, and the snippet treats of the Bosworth board badge found on the battlefield. PF's name is now duly inscribed on an information board at the Battlefield Centre as the person who identified the place 27 years ago.

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A piece by KK on **Mr Weston** (in a 'dusting off the classics' series) appeared in Spring number of *The Episcopal New Yorker*.

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A copy of 'The Lady' (11th May 2012) includes a brief question and answer column with **Bernard Cornwell** OBE (author of novels about rifleman Richard Sharpe in the Napoleonic Wars):

"Q: What is your favourite book? A: *Wolf Solent* by John Cowper Powys, which is a strange choice (he was a strange man), but I came to it at a vulnerable time (adolescence) and it has stayed with me ever since". On 'Desert Island Discs' in 2004 Bernard Cornwell selected *A Glastonbury Romance* for his favourite castaway book.

★ ★ ★ ★

[from **Jonas Aagaard**] I've just discovered that Theodora Scutt's *A Cuckoo in the Powys Nest* plays a significant part in one of the (short) short stories of the prizewinning collection *Milli Trjáanna* (Among the Trees) by the Icelandic author Gyrðir Eliasson. *A Cuckoo in the Powys Nest* is not referred to directly by title, but in the story 'The Black Dog' it is told that the protagonist has brought with him on his stay at an inn (in Iceland) a volume of memoirs by the foster-daughter of the English writer T. F. Powys, after which the reader is briefly informed about the eccentricity of T. F. as well as the oddity of his brother John Cowper.

★ ★ ★ ★

[from Peter Foss] The exhibition catalogue of **Graham Sutherland's** landscapes on paper at the Museum of Modern Art, Oxford (in March 2012), includes an essay by its curator, George Shaw, containing a long quotation from JCP's *Autobiography*. [Chris Thomas adds:] Sutherland, in his early career in the 1920s, often visited the area around Arundel and Burpham on sketching tours, and produced an etching of 'The Black Rabbit' pub opposite JCP's village.

★ ★ ★ ★

*la lettre powysienne* 23 (spring 2012) contains another essay on 'The Ridge', this time by **John Dunn**; 'Theodore Powys's God' by **W. J. Keith**; and 'Theodore Powys, Ironist' by **Frank Kermode** (part I of the article in *The Welsh Review*, 1947). There are also interesting notes on articles and translations of TFP in France in the 20s and 30s.

★ ★ ★ ★

A booklet by Jacqueline Peltier, **Guillaume Apollinaire: Poet of War and Peace** is a new addition to Cecil Woolf's 'War Poets' series of monographs.

★ ★ ★ ★

We await with interest a promised article by **Cecil Woolf** on **George Lewin**, friend and helper (as book-dealer) to JCP at Corwen during WW2. A character based on him is in JCP's unfinished novel *Edeyrnion* (see article by Peter Foss in *The Powys Journal* I, 45–50).

★ ★ ★ ★

Neil Lee-Atkin, aka Tom Bates, confirms that the annual Dandelion Fellowship gathering and the **Llewelyn Birthday Walk** WILL go ahead as normal this year – with no restrictions being placed on access to the cliff-top walks by the Olympic security people (as was previously feared). We will meet as usual for lunch at *The Sailor's Return* in East Chaldon village at noon on Monday August 13th, and the walk

will commence around 1.30pm. Five of us are driving down on the Friday and staying at the George Hotel in Weymouth over the weekend, and intend exploring the White Nose and Coastguard's Cottages on Saturday and Sunday. Anyone interested in exploring Llewelyn's old haunts is welcome to join us, and can contact me for arrangements either by telephone on 01673-860535 or by e-mail at

<tombates@sky.com >

See also below.

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Meanwhile Shock! Horror! **The Sailor's Return** hit the headlines (March 2012) ... **'Mice infested Sailor's Return pub fined.** The owners of a Dorset pub infested with mice have been fined £6,000 for breaking food hygiene regulations. Environmental health officers from Purbeck District Council inspected the Sailor's Return in East Chaldon in February after an anonymous tip off. A council spokesman said: "Live and dead mice were observed along with vast amounts of droppings". Pub Solutions South West Limited pleaded guilty at Bournemouth Crown Court on six counts.' *The Sailor's Return* was voluntarily closed so that it could be made safe. It is now run by new owners.

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### ***Llewelyn and Mr Martin***

Neil Lee-Atkin reports that **Gerald Redman**, a Somerset book dealer, member of the Dandelion Fellowship and The Powys Society, recently found two original letters of Llewelyn Powys in a copy of *Welsh Ambassadors*. These are addressed to 'Mr Martin', identified in Peter Foss's *Bibliography* as E. W. Martin, author of *The Heritage of the West* (1938, foreword by LIP) and of articles about Llewelyn, one (in *Exmoor Review* 26, 1985) quoting these letters. Both letters have a characteristic LIP trace of a sting (when writing to strangers), the first (probably December 1935), from Chydyok:

Dear Mr Martin [*note at top* The Welsh Ambassadors to be out in the New Year]

Thank you very much for your letter. I have had to give up reading and writing because of a fresh attack from my disorder. I saw both your little reviews, and both contained simple sentences of great beauty and discernation and Miss Gregory agreed with me. I could have wished them longer. With best wishes for the season,

Yours sincerely, Llewelyn Powys.

The later letter from Clavadel, Davos-Platz, is dated August 12th, [1938], answering Martin's request for the Foreword. Martin edited a periodical, *The New Spirit*.

Dear Mr Martin

I know very well how difficult it is for a man of letters to come by his meat honestly and for this reason I am complying with your request though I hardly think I am a suitable person for you to approach considering that I have never seen you or heard you speak and that even our correspondence has not always left in my mind a happy impression. I hope, however, you will have every success in your new venture; and that it will not interfere in any way with your more serious work. Yours sincerely, Llewelyn Powys.



PS. I did not care for the commercial note conveyed in the words Your work will, of course, be mentioned [?welcomed] any more [than] I liked being asked to affix the letters of any University degree to my name, as it is a practice I have at no time in my life made use of.

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### *Juanita*

**Juanita Casey**, whose visit to JCP in 1957 is described in the letters to Louis Wilkinson (in the last *NL*), writes that she was delighted to be reminded of this event from her past.

‘... My husband then [Sven Berlin] was one of the St Ives artists and we’d come up to Bala & I took the little steam train to Ffestiniog to try & see John Cowper. He has written of the visit so you know of his reaction, bless him! Just as he said. I saw the sticks in the hall & remember thinking here is a magician with a doppelgänger he may or may not know. I had a feeling, as the wealth of words flowed over us, of an enchanter who nevertheless stood back and watched his effect on you ...’

Her autobiography *Azerbaijan* (a collector’s item) and poems are available from Millerford Press <millersford@btconnect.com>

In the next *Newsletter* we hope to print some of her lively recollections of the Powyses. For a taste, on Theodore:

I never thought of him except in the way you were extra careful with a Meissen figure; any hint of a troublesome emotion, yours or his, was enough for Theodore to fade into the nearest gap in the hedgerows. He was evasively shadowy to the point of being his own shadow and the very few times I felt a sideways twinkle from his searching for omens among stones in the road, it was no more than a momentary shaft of light escaping the cloud of his own Madder Hill. It had the tweak of surprise when, turning over a tiny, intricately carved, Netsuke of a monk, you discover the face hidden inside the cowl is that of a cunningly smiling mole ...

## *Review*

### John Hodgson: The Outsider’s Vantage Point

*The Outsider-Writer, vol. 1: Colin Wilson, Albert Camus, ‘Walking’ John Stewart, John Cowper Powys, Fernando Pessoa, Carlo Emilio Gadda*, by Adam Daly  
Paupers’ Press, Nottingham, 2012. paperback xxxiii+361 pp.

ISBN 978-0-9568663-0-1. £16.95.

Adam Daly has written a book of literary appreciation in a similar spirit to John Cowper Powys, a testimonial to enjoyment rather than an exercise in analysis. His book is combative, ‘akin to a declaration of war’. And the author sees himself ‘as being on a kind of very unreligious mission on behalf of Outsider-Writers’. The book is the first in a series of ‘Colin

Wilson Studies': Wilson's immensely successful *The Outsider* first articulated the particular position and vantage point of the intellectual outsider in English letters. Conference-goers will remember his remarkable talk at the John Cowper Powys centenary conference in Cambridge in 1972, which we had an opportunity to hear again at Millfield in 2002.

In an exuberant, wide-ranging foreword, Paul Newman lists the 'hashish dreamers, defiant recluses, mazed mystics, destructivists, suicidalists, and occultists' who go to form 'an enchanting, alternative canon for every university shelf, a Great Tradition for outcasts.'

Some of these figures are more marginal than others: 'Walking' John Stewart, the friend of De Quincey who is reputed to have walked from Madras to London, and expounded an original system of natural philosophy, is thought to have exerted a considerable influence on Wordsworth. Camus's reputation seems assured. But all of these writers tackle the solitudes of human nature.

The author devotes eighty pages of his book to John Cowper Powys, 'Bard, poet, novelist, philosopher, mystic, magician, visionary, nature-worshipper, Pan-luster, and sadistic fantasist'. He describes Powys as a genuine outsider writer despite his considerable commercial success and critical reputation, and discusses at length *In Defence of Sensuality*, *Wolf Solent*, and *Porius*.

Daly describes discovering *In Defence of Sensuality* in a Hampstead bookstore as a teenager, and confesses, 'it still stands out as one of the most remarkable, mind-expanding texts I ever read during my formative years'. He sees Powys's 'ichthyosaurus-ego' as 'each and every person's inner outsider', and admires Powys's assault on the 'gregarious elements of our modern life', while considering that he was able to follow his personal philosophy thanks to his 'exceptionally eccentric circumstances and conditions of life', and 'because he was surrounded by people – not least his long-suffering wife – who tolerated his exasperating egoism sans limit, since they adored and revered the man for his undoubted talent and largesse'.

The author devotes particular attention to *Wolf Solent*, which he states is 'like a companion-text for me', and 'a true oddity and mighty tribute to the inveterate strangeness of the lonely English Soul or Spirit'. He contrasts the inwardness of *Wolf Solent* with the Tolstoyan, panoramic quality of *A Glastonbury Romance*, but dwells at greatest length on *Porius*, as Powys's 'ultimate shadowy cult-book, one of the most complete microcosmic reflections or portraits of the human macrocosm ever achieved'. Throughout Powys's fiction, the author detects, alongside ruminative visions of natures, 'reserves of wrath' of obscure and non-human origin. Daly's Powys is first and foremost a philosopher rather than a creator of narratives, 'a Bible for an unnameable religion, testing the mettle of faithlessness in the furnace-core of agnostic despair'.

After this stirring chapter on Powys, the book's temperature cools as Daly turns to the intricate multiple selves of Fernando Pessoa, and the iconoclastic philosophies of the 'untranslatable' Carlo Emilio Gadda.

A second volume is promised, in which Daly examines Robert Walser, Edmond Jabes, Blaise Cendrars, and Lionel Britton.

*The Outsider-Writer* is published in an edition of 100 copies, and can be obtained from Paupers' Press, 37 Quayside Close, Trent Bridge, Nottingham NG2 3BP, or consult

<[www.pauperspress.com](http://www.pauperspress.com)>

## John Gray

### *Every Green Thing*

It is hard to know what has made me a lifelong reader of John Cowper Powys, but perhaps the fact that he was one of three very different brothers who shared a common impulse may be part of the explanation. Like many people I read John Cowper first, but it was not long before I fell under the spell of Theodore, whose



*Mr. Weston's Good Wine* (1927) was still being read when I came across it towards the end of the Sixties. Presented with the lapidary finality one finds in inscriptions in country graveyards, Theodore's allegory tells how Mr Weston and his assistant Michael arrive in the village of Folly Down, selling wine – the light wine that gives pleasure, the heavy dark wine that brings peace – and then vanish into smoke. Reading the book in my late teens I thought it a perfect inversion of conventional religion, showing how a faith that promised eternal life could be reframed as one in which redemption comes in the form of everlasting death.

Some years passed before I immersed myself in Llewelyn, never as widely read a writer. While always acknowledging a saving element of poetry in religion, Llewelyn was a passionate atheist who maintained that Christianity had repressed much of the pleasure in life. It was not Llewelyn's polemics against religion that appealed to me – Theodore's parable seemed to me then, as it does today, far more devastating. Rather, it was Llewelyn's vivid stories of how – while suffering from recurrent attacks of the tuberculosis that would eventually kill him – he enjoyed an adventurous career, working as a farmer in Africa, following his brother John to try and make a living as a lecturer in America and travelling to the Middle East and the Caribbean in pursuit of health and interesting sensations. Ever on the brink of life-threatening illness, Llewelyn hated the very idea of death. Yet he managed to turn that fear and revulsion into an exultant embrace of life.

Running through all three writers is the attempt to fashion a practical philosophy that has left behind the hopes embodied in religion. The sons of a man who for more than thirty years was vicar at Montacute in Somerset, each of the brothers had his own distinctive way of leaving the faith of his father. If I like John Cowper best – as most of the time I do – it is because his abiding scepticism about all kinds of belief and disbelief appeals more than Theodore's melancholy paganism or Llewelyn's dogmatic Lucretian certainty. Of course John Cowper was a novelist (and in a small but not insignificant way a poet) rather than a philosopher. But he regarded his writings as propaganda for a particular vision of human life that I find compelling and refreshingly original. Not only the many self-help books he wrote for money – such as his delightful short volume on *The Art of Forgetting the Unpleasant* (1928) – but also his works of fiction were vehicles promoting this distinctive view of things.

The central figures in John Cowper Powys's novels inhabit a landscape that is as

much a protagonist in the story as they are themselves. Weymouth is more of a presence in *Weymouth Sands* (1934) than any of the gallery of misfits that makes up the cast of human players. Not the actual Dorset coastal resort that a visitor would have encountered in the Thirties, of course – it is an ‘occult Weymouth’, Powys tells us at the start of the book, a place distilled from impressions of the place he had accumulated over many years from childhood onwards.

Powys resembles Proust in his intense focus on the central role of sensation and memory in our lives; but unlike Proust the sensations he cherishes most are those that are gathered out of doors. Whereas Proust’s world is one of rooms and boulevards, the backdrop against which Powys’s characters enact their lives is not a human construction – it is the sky, the sea and the wind. Even Weymouth, which was certainly built by human beings, seems in the novel to have a life of its own that is independent of its architects. As in Hardy’s Wessex novels, so in the Wessex novels of John Cowper Powys – *Wolf Solent* (1929), *A Glastonbury Romance* (1933), *Weymouth Sands* and *Maiden Castle* (1936) – an imagined place shapes the lives of the characters regardless of their desires or dreams.

In his Study of Thomas Hardy, D. H. Lawrence wrote of ‘a constant revelation in Hardy’s novels: that there exists a great background, vital and vivid, which matters more than the people who move upon it’. Such was Egdon Heath, ‘the great self-preservation scheme in which we must all live’ and against which any kind of individual self-assertion could only be futile and disastrous. Powys also saw humans as tiny figures moving about in a vast incomprehensible landscape, but for him the upshot was not – as it was for Lawrence – tragedy, but a kind of dogged delight in the world of which humans are such a small part. At times this willed enjoyment rises to the level of an epiphany, as when Powys’s Wolf Solent watches the sun go down:

The result of this complete extinction of the sunset was that the world became a world in which every green thing upon its surface received a five-fold addition to its greenness. It was as if an enormous green tidal wave, composed of a substance more translucent than water, had flowed over the whole earth; or rather as if some diaphanous essence of all the greenness created by long days of rain has evaporated during this one noon, only to fall down, with the approach of twilight, in a cold dark emerald-coloured dew. (*Wolf Solent*, chapter 2)

Finding something of the numinous in the diurnal round, Powys did not despair of the small human world. His response was acceptance, a mix of resolute enjoyment and stoical resignation. It is not by chance that the story of his alter-ego Solent, who finds himself stuck in a web of complex relationships and unfulfilled desires, ends with him having a cup of tea.

The view of things that John Cowper Powys championed could hardly be less fashionable today, for it offers no hope that humans can transform their lives. Instead, Powys has his characters re-envision the world in which they find themselves. What he was describing was a non-religious version of the contemplative life, but for him contemplation was not in the least other-worldly – the search for peace in some realm

of the spirit. For him the life of contemplation meant perpetual inner warfare, an incessant struggle to snatch sensations of earthly beauty from the jaws of time. Set in provincial England somewhere between late Victorian times and the interwar years in which they were written, these novels are galleries of brilliant impressions, which have not dated. While the countryside that Powys loved has vanished, the mingling of outward sensation with the inner flux of memory and desire that he portrays in his characters is everyone's experience.

Powys was a dauntingly prolific author, producing not only many minor works but also that vast epic of the Welsh dark ages *Porius* (1951), which I have never been able to finish. He was also one of the twentieth century's great diarists, recording for several decades his everyday impressions and eccentricities. (A selection from the diaries covering some of the most eventful years in Powys's life can be found in *Petrushka and the Dancer: The Diaries of John Cowper Powys, 1920–1939*, selected and edited by Powys's biographer Morine Krissdóttir (1995).) With its unique combination of candour and concealment, Powys's *Autobiography* (1934) must be one of the great confessional memoirs of all time. But for me the core of Powys's work will always be the Wessex novels, since it is in these re-imaginings of the landscape he knew best that his vision of life is most powerfully conveyed.

John Cowper Powys spent much of his life preaching a practical philosophy in which practical life is not very important. A charismatic figure whose lectures electrified audiences across America, he used his position as a sort of secular hedge-priest to try to convert his audiences to a life of sensation. In his *Autobiography* he described himself as a disciple of Pyrrho, the founder of Greek scepticism, and there is some truth in the description. For a sceptic nothing can be known of the nature of things; but the world of the senses remains an undeniable given. Powys did not promote the life of contemplation by marshalling a succession of arguments. He did not believe (any more than I do) that argumentation can change the way people live. Instead he chose to illustrate what such a life might be like, showing fictional figures – often versions of himself – fumbling their way towards acceptance. Along the way he produced some of the most life-enhancing literature in the English language.

*This article first appeared in Slightly Foxed Issue 33 (Spring 2012). The title is from Wolf Solent, chapter 2.*

*John Gray's talk at the Blue Boar lecture theatre in a well-hidden corner of Christchurch, Oxford, followed the line of this article in Slightly Foxed magazine, sponsors of the talk\* – part of their series on so-called 'forgotten' writers ('unforgotten' might be a more accurate term?). 45 or more people were there on a wonderfully fine day, seemingly divided into those knowing little about Powyses (Gray fans) and the already converted. Free newsletters were snapped up.*

\* Slightly Foxed asks: "Do you carry elderly Penguins in your pockets? Do you fondle fine bindings? Do books furnish your room? If so, we think you will enjoy Slightly Foxed, the lively and elegant quarterly that unearths books of lasting interest, old and new." For more information please visit: <[www.foxedquarterly.com](http://www.foxedquarterly.com)>

JCP reviews *The Buffoon* (by Louis Marlow) – in 1919

Among a large cache of unordered and miscellaneous papers relating to Louis Wilkinson sent to me by Chris Wilkinson, Louis's grandson, there is a Powysian item which seems to me of considerable significance. Published in the *San Francisco Bulletin* on 6th September 1919, it is a somewhat belated review by JCP of *The Buffoon* (1916), entitled 'Charles Lamb's Pen is Needed to Review Wilkinson's "Buffoon".'

Louis Wilkinson, as we know, maintained an *odi-et-amō* relationship with JCP in that he generally disliked his fiction but highly respected, and was always close friends with, the man. In addition, he was generally on good terms with most of the great Powys generation. But his public criticism of JCP's work and ways often aroused the ire of JCP's siblings, notably Littleton and Llewelyn. *The Buffoon* is a classic instance with its parody-portrait of JCP as Jack Welsh. Llewelyn, in a particularly violent response, condemned the book as 'valueless'. He registered this objection even on the dust-jacket blurb of *Swan's Milk* (London: Faber and Faber, 1934): 'I personally resent several of Mr. Marlow's references to my own family and was "deeply hurt" by his malicious misrepresentation of my brother John.' And in another letter [to Louis] written in 1922 from California, he had gone even further: 'Since I have been over here I have come to realize how vast and remorseless a campaign you opened against Jack: of course you damaged his reputation in every possible way.'<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, JCP himself accepted the portrait of Jack Welsh, at least in public,<sup>2</sup> as affectionate parody and a good joke. Their friendship was never interrupted. But this hitherto unregarded review of 1919, three years after *The Buffoon's* appearance, complicated the situation considerably.

There is no need to reproduce the review in full, since stylistically it is sometimes over-flowery, and at other times decidedly casual and prolix. Not only does it contain several no-longer-clear phrases and references, but it employs various formal devices (such as the invocation of Charles Lamb) that tend to distract when they should illuminate. I shall, however, quote freely from those parts of the review that focus directly on the book's primary concerns. It proves particularly interesting for the private meanings and covert allusions that lie just below its surface – and these I hope to reveal.

First of all, JCP gives no specific hint that he is a friend of the author, or even that he is aware of himself as the model for Jack Welsh. He poses instead as an objective reviewer, yet readers 'in the know' will readily pick up clues totally missed by the uninitiated. He begins with the deceptive claim that Louis Wilkinson sets his characters 'upon a Fancy-stage which has no point of contact with the bitter realities of life'. This theatrical image leads smoothly into a reference to 'the fantastic gestures of the "puppets" dallying". Educated readers were probably expected to pick up the Hamlet quotation, but few would be likely to recognize that it is also the title of Louis's first novel, published back in 1905. Soon after, we encounter another

quotation from the same scene in *Hamlet*, one that was later to become a favourite for JCP, since it recurs in his subsequent work: 'Marry, this is miching-mallecho ... this means mischief.' *Hamlet* is explaining the dumb-show in the play-within-the-play which he later calls 'The Mouse-trap'. Here JCP also means mischief but, unlike *Hamlet*, in a kindly, witty, and highly sophisticated way. All these quotations occur in *Hamlet*'s comments during the 'play-within-the-play' (III.ii).

The next reference, I must admit, remains speculative, yet it is highly intriguing. Not long after the passage just quoted, Edward Raynes, who is technically the central figure (and bears some notable resemblances to Louis himself), is described as a 'honeysuckle villain' and then 'rogue' – another Shakespearean phrase, this time close to the beginning of 2 *Henry IV* (II.i), applied to Falstaff by the hostess of the Boar's Head Tavern. JCP cites it again in *Autobiography*<sup>3</sup> in reference to Louis and Llewelyn, and it was subsequently taken over by Chris Wilkinson for the title of his excellent article on the friendship between the two in the 1999 *Powys Journal* (and the dramatised reading derived from it). Now there is no record of its being employed elsewhere in the earlier years of that friendship, but JCP's quoting of the phrase here, where it fits so well into this pattern of undercover allusions, can hardly in my view be dismissed as a mere coincidence.

Apart from continual references to members of the Powys circle, *The Buffoon* also contains a brief satiric portrait, under the name of Raoul Root, of Ezra Pound, who was beginning to attract literary attention by that time; it also includes a less easily recognizable presentation of the poet H.D. (Hilda Doolittle) in the guise of Eunice Dinwiddie. An astute student of the current London literary scene might well recognize these. Yet an odd aspect of Louis's book, so often seen as a *roman à clef*, is the fact that, so far as the Powyses are concerned, although the text is littered with references to Theodore, Bertie, and several others, even 'Lulu', these were all unknown to the vast majority of contemporary readers. JCP himself had written virtually nothing until *Wood and Stone*, published in the previous year, while his and Llewelyn's *Confessions of Two Brothers* appeared in the same year as *The Buffoon* (both from minor publishers and in the United States only). Neither of these had caused much of a stir, and in any case little would be known about their writers' personal characteristics. However, JCP had acquired a considerable reputation as a lecturer in North America, and to a lesser extent in England. It is doubtless significant, then, that the first mention of Jack Welsh in *The Buffoon* is immediately followed by the explanation: 'He lectures, you know.'

In his review, JCP provides a considerable list of Jack Welsh incidents, and although I select – and so over-emphasize – those that are most obvious for modern readers, there can be no possible doubt that he was totally aware of Louis's intention:

... Jack Welsh swallowing raw eggs ... Jack Welsh making love 'after his fashion' to Ethelle the wanderer ... Jack Welsh exciting his brother-in-law Reggie to a pitch of nervous frenzy, is a figure so engaging and so comic, that we regret that the man is only a figment of a pleasant writer's fecund brain.

How he must have enjoyed writing that, knowing that Louis and anyone else who knew them well enough would relish the rich, private comedy!

He remains insistent that such persons as Edward Raynes and Jack Welsh 'must not be taken "*au pied du lettre*"'. Instead, they 'must be enjoyed for what they are, the irresistible mountebanks in a prewar comedy of European or Europeanized English manners'. Moreover, he insists that '*The Buffoon* is at its raciest and naughtiest, and consequently at its best, where Jack Welsh enters.' Personally, I am convinced that this is correct; certainly for Powysians, the book is at its most lively whenever he is present. Yet JCP's claim conveys far more to those who appreciate the full extent of what is going on beneath the surface. Basically, he is neatly overturning Louis's satiric intention by suggesting that the text is unwittingly playing him a compliment – and Louis, who rarely held grudges, would doubtless have been amused and have granted him his joke. A few lines later, JCP adds to the effect by arguing that

the whole audience at Louis Wilkinson's Theatre of Pre-War Comedy join with the author in breaking the spell at the end and returning to 'real life' before the fall of the curtain. For the fine reserved pathos of the death of poor Welsh is nothing less than this. Philosophic fooling has come full circle.

JCP's review is certainly not a masterpiece in itself; indeed, there are clear examples within it of inexperience and even of a certain immaturity. But its capacity to work on two levels, and to express hidden meanings that would never be suspected by the average reader of its time, displays a kind of mastery that, with the gift of hindsight, we can recognize as the anticipation of a remarkable literary future.

*This article is made possible by the extraordinary generosity of Chris Wilkinson in placing at my disposal a vast collection of material relating to his grandfather (Louis Wilkinson) and JCP. He has also been extremely helpful in tracking down the answers to my queries with remarkable speed and diligence. I would like to express publicly here my deep gratitude. W. J. K.*

1 Louis Marlow, *Welsh Ambassadors* (London: Chapman and Hall, 1934), 251, 263.

2 As Chris Wilkinson reminds me, Oliver Marlow Wilkinson, son of Louis and father of Chris, reports that, 'the first time Jack read of himself as "Jack Welsh", he sat under a tree to earth his hatred'. See *Jack & Frances: The Letters of John Cowper Powys to Frances Gregg*. Volume One (ed. Oliver Marlow Wilkinson assisted by Chris Wilkinson. London: Cecil Woolf, 1994), 204, n1.

3 John Cowper Powys, *Autobiography* (1934; London: Macdonald, 1967, 164).

*Patricia Dawson no longer has space  
for some of her Powys-related sculptures.*

*Anyone interested in finding a home for them please contact her:  
701 Raleigh House, Dolphin Square, London SW1V 3NR.*

*telephone 020 7798 8127.*

*typeset in Pepita*



John Cowper Powys and Speculative Realism  
A Breath of Fresh Air for Powysians

There is metaphysical depth, indeed a sort of ultimate Buddhist clairvoyance, in accepting the fact that the blue pansy next to the fountain actually is a blue pansy; that the green bus opposite the parish church actually is a green bus. The bottom line is this: it is very philosophical to be naïve. Conversely, intricate intellectual sophistication is not philosophical.

John Cowper Powys was always devastatingly naïve. That is why his philosophic profundity is so authentic, solid, and enduring. He took hold of a faded pink gatepost and proclaimed –This is the Absolute! That boldness creates for him a place among great thinkers. In contrast, the trillions of academic mice who have spent half a century nibbling on runaway signs and fizzy language-displacements are precisely not great thinkers.

Naively object-directed realism has recently become a recognized philosophic movement—Speculative Realism. It is not a dry outlook; for it is precisely when objects are taken seriously as objects (rather than as oscillating signs, problematical meanings, or epistemological difficulties) that they automatically come alluringly alive as things animated by surreal inner energies. Speculative Realism is most clearly presented in the latter half of Graham Harman's little book *Towards Speculative Realism* (Zero Books, 2010) and in the first half of the companion-text *The Quadruple Object* (2011). Harman frees us from the idealization of doubt and insecurity that has held humanists captive ever since the 'linguistic turn' made professors of literature place their bets on the supposed 'indeterminacy' of language as a clue to the nature of reality in general and to literary works of art in particular.

The memorable event of first encountering Harman's texts happened earlier this year at the point when I was busy completing my next book, *John Cowper Powys and the Five Elements*. There I discuss *Maiden Castle* in terms of Air, Water, Earth, and Fire; but also in terms of a fifth element—Flora. Chancing to open *Homer and the Aether*, I was subsequently struck by the astonishing fact that Powys and Harman have viewpoints that often are intellectually and rhetorically identical. I am not implying some sort of 'influence'. On the contrary, I am calling attention to ways in which a thinker in the days of modernism and a thinker in the days of postmodernism resist the whole twentieth-century set-up for exactly the same reasons.

In the opening pages of *Homer and the Aether* I was glad to discover not only a credo that is identical to the one recently forwarded by Harman's mystical realism, but also support for two notions that I had spent a year working into my typescript for *John Cowper Powys and the Five Elements*. The first notion is that the idea of the elements is intertwined with the idea of vegetation—justifying my proposal that floral reality is fundamental enough in Powys to be considered as an element *per se*. The second notion is that this elemental touch given to flowers in *Maiden Castle* is Wordsworthian.

We learn in the preface to *Homer and the Aether* that Wordsworth was John Cowper's 'favourite poet'; we learn in the first pages of the first chapter that, for the benefit of Homer, the shining Aether intends to move 'through the elements of air and water' in order to animate the 'the vegetable world of plants and trees and mosses and ferns and reeds and grasses and lichens'. In *John Cowper Powys and the Five Elements* I discuss each of the classical four elements; and then I use two little Wordsworthian flower-poems—in order to show that the attention that John Cowper gives to tiny flowers in *Maiden Castle* is part of a floral emphasis that in the last analysis is even more elemental-fundamental than anything Air, Water, Earth, or Fire ever could hope to accomplish.

Flowers have souls. They have souls because objects have souls. The assertion made by Graham Harman in *Toward Speculative Realism* that objects have souls has to do with a phenomenon noticed by poets and children—that even stones have receptivity, exhibit specific forms of personal, individualized responsiveness. *Homer and the Aether* keeps speaking about 'inward responses' on-going in plants and stones. This is not a twentieth-century standpoint. It is a prehistoric outlook currently paying a visit to the twenty-first century.

Concomitantly astronomy is dealing with dark matter and dark energy, forces in astronomical space making possible the Powysian 'inner responses' that each star needs in order to be an object in a galaxy; that each galaxy needs in order to be an object in a galaxy-cluster; and that each galaxy-cluster needs in order to be an object in the universe. Yes there are gigantic stellar filaments between one galaxy and another—but what would a galaxy be without the object star; and what would a galaxy-cluster be without the object galaxy?

A flower suddenly drenched by a downpour or a stone suddenly warmed by a ray of sunlight exhibits 'inward responses' that are closer at hand. With their naïve realism, philosophical Neanderthaloids need to consolidate poetic object-appreciation by relinquishing what Graham Harman calls naïve relationalism. As some folks may have noticed, relationalism is making the world less human, not more. The paradox is that humans who are held captive by the on-going urge to interpret life as a network of 'relationships' have forsaken their humanity; while connectivity-defiant humans who are held philosophically captive by poetic objects have not. (The word 'relationship' did not even exist in the days of Shakespeare and the King James Bible.) An object exceeds all possible relations to it, whereas a relation is relational only. If, as Harman suggests, space is the site of a non-relation between objects, it is easier to understand why the current craze for constant relationalism is depriving us of space itself. Where connectivity rules, objects get vaporized into an infinitely interconnected field of so-called relations.

John Cowper knew that objects have a life of their own, each one with a soul capable of an immediate inner response. A beam of light skidding off the coloured shininess of a billiard ball is aware of a presence deflecting it, a soul responding to it. Humanists cannot deal with that. But things will change.

## John Cowper Powys to Louis Umfreville Wilkinson, 1958.

*Edited by Louis Wilkinson (... indicating omissions). Some notes amended, with a few extras from the unpublished edition by Robert V. Lancaster (RVL). See NL 75, p. 15, 'Colloquy of the Ancients' for introduction to the Letters [KK]*

*All letters are from 1, Waterloo, Blaenau Ffestiniog*

January 4th, 1958

Aye! but I do so like this letter of yours, my dear — I can't remember a letter of yours that I liked better — certainly none from anyone else except Lulu. But then I forget so absurdly! I may very likely have had letters in old days from old Littleton and my son Littleton and Bernie and "the Catholic" and Tom Jones that I liked as well ... But, speaking of the Day of Judgment I can imagine a famous Clown cocking a snook at the Archangel who came to announce it, as he scabbled up out of his grave. The word "grave" makes me think of what you said about Robert Graves. I just can't read the chap and that's the long and short of it. He's Irish, isn't he? How different not only from Yeats but from Padraic Colum and James Joyce. Well, I won't write about him but I can tell you every word you say goes down and has a good effect.

I am very very very nearly at the end of my gnome-like or elephant-like bumping-stumping stamping-tramping attempt to eulogize the Iliad [Homer and the Aether, *published 1959*] but it will be easier when I come to write the preface which you may think of me beginning to write in a day or two —

What a triumph for the oldest of all Professions for Ladies, the nice way Jesus always behaved to Mary Magdalene. Now that my sex instinct is dead — it died when I was 80 and I well remember its death — I wish I could draw à la Aubrey Beardsley in the Yellow Book a picture of its dying and of myself giving it funeral honours — I would dearly like to write a book called In Praise of Prostitutes or God Bless All Bitches or The Best Women Are Whores. I can so well remember how there was one who used me just as if I was her doting great-uncle and tried to teach me Noughts & Crosses. Then there was the one in London who by nature was the most unselfish, modest, kind, well-meaning girl I've ever known, but who had to put pads on her little bottom to make it look more enticing. She took me to see the grave of Dan Leno [*famous 19th-century clown*] for whom we both had a curious fondness. And I took her down to Brighton with her child-nieces and nothing could have been more proper than our behaviour all the time, and I've rarely seen a girl enjoying herself more than on this occasion when whoredom was forgot. [LW: JCP was never a "client", in the usual sense, of any prostitute, but her friend.] You were the one who said I was like De Quincey and that was his experience. His whore in London went out one day and spent all her week's earnings in buying him a bottle of the most expensive wine that could be bought. She did this when she found that he was very ill and it saved his life, but in vain did he try to find her again. He lost her forever.

... What would Theodore say\* if that Ring of yours — the most characteristic thing about you except your forehead, yes, hair & spectacles — by some accident was lost? I've had to send such a special Photo of me, O so special, by a Special London Photographer called Allan Chapelow; to Japan for a Japanese edition of my little Pontifical Book called the Meaning of Culture [*translated by*] a Professor in Tokio.

Well, wherever you read this scrawl, in suburb, country, or town, utter a blessing from me as

if from Merlin to the nearest approach to a bitch that you see from where you are at the moment.

With love from us both,  
your old Jack in-and-out

\* *LW: T.F.Powys remembered this ring when my father (head of the school TFP and Louis attended) wore it. JCP often speaks of those who have died as though they were living, especially of his brothers. It was more than four years since T. F. Powys's death.*

January 16th, 1958

... I am simply hiding up from my one eye as I lie on my couch a big heap of still unanswered Xmas cards. In old days a card was a card, but today they are so constructed as to conceal quite lengthy letters! I lie under the weight of "The White Goddess" [by Robert Graves], the erudition in which I find awfully interesting, quite apart from who erudites ....

But my good news is that I have finished my book on the Iliad and my Preface to it. So now I can send the end of it to Gwyneth Anderson who will type it under old Redwood's classical oversight. So now, my dear, I am free to start a new story of my very own about which I have been thinking for quite a while while pretending to be wholly absorbed in Homer — Pretending to whom? I'd find it hard to say! It would be hard to say as it wd. have been to Theodore to name the box where he kept "me money", when the Tax Collector might come any moment!

But what Harvey [his publisher] will think of this Homer book — ? My sister May or Marian is coming here in March, she says, along with Lucy's [his youngest sister, nearly eighteen years younger than he] daughter Mary. She speaks of walking with Will [his youngest brother, in British East Africa (Kenya)] among Lions and Cheetahs, so she isn't quite crippled, & Will's eyes are better for he can shoot at Lions and Cheetahs — whatever Cheetahs are!

Love from us both –  
your old one  
J.

January 25th, 1958

I am so interested in what you tell me about your being exactly the same age on Feb 7 as your Father was when he died. Jesus! but he was lucky in his death; kneeling in church before the Service started. I wonder what Theodore said when he first heard about that. Think of your uncles writing to your mother as if his death were untimely, considering all that she was saved and he was saved by a death so easy and sudden and quick!

I wish I could remember the exact ages of my mother and father when they died. I must be older than both of them were, and I think older than all four of my grandparents. If I am destined to feel very much as I feel now in body and mind for the next 5 years I wouldn't at all object to living to 90! It all depends on how I feel; but of course it depends too a hell of a lot on how Phyllis feels; if she got ill and didn't get well soon or felt an unhappiness of some sort she couldn't shake off, I should be faced with the hell of a dilemma. I wouldn't any longer enjoy my life, so I would for that reason prefer to be dead, but on the other hand I should feel that it would be mean and cowardly and a scurvy trick to desert her when she most needed her old companion, even if I couldn't do anything except be there.

What a perfect girl this one you tell me of must be! I can see her expression when you spoke of being perhaps later on too disabled to go on living at Dove Cottage [*LW: and proposed, in that*

event, living with her and her husband]. Yes indeed! I can well imagine the offence some girls would take at that.

No, my dear! I'll tell you the exact reason why I always put my address at the back [of envelopes] ! It's because I never can believe that anyone would know my handwriting to be mine. It's funny I should feel like that; for I would know your handwriting at once; but it's got itself somehow lodged in my doddipole of a skull that if I don't say who it is on the back my correspondent wouldn't know who it was — and might throw the letter unopened into the fire or waste basket. O yes! and Phyllis has just been telling me the same thing as you say, that I must write the address low down on the envelope and not at the top where the postmark has to come. [LW: he has continued to address envelopes in this way.]

I am so struck by what you quote from Swinburne [*condemning Browning and Tennyson and praising the Marquis de Sade*]. I do not yet understand why I have never been able to do justice to Swinburne while I could go on now reciting from Tennyson till bedtime!

\* ... With Gertrude [*his eldest sister*] I had some of the happiest weeks of my life in Rome and Venice.

Yes, I remember well getting a letter from England when I was lecturing in America, from an English lady telling me I ought to be castrated for the immorality of my books. [LW: in my last letter I had mentioned that, after the publication of the First Series of Poems and Ballads, Swinburne had received a letter threatening him with castration.] It gave me a very unpleasant shock, for I've always dreaded castration since I read how Saturn was persuaded by his mother Gaia the Earth to castrate Ouranos with a flint saw she lent him for the purpose so as to stop Ouranos from begetting on her so many monsters. I think, in the cutting out, Ouranos' seed fell into the sea and Aphrodite was born from it.

Love from us both always while not yet in his grave  
your old J.C.P.

\* after discussing their respective tendencies to masturbation (LW nil, JCP 100% until aged 80), sadism (only cutting up those worms at Northwold) and incest: "My incestuous tendency was too mild to be called vicious, but I had it for all my sisters except Gertrude" ... (from R. V. Lancaster edition of original letters)

January 31st, 1958

No, you never told me before about either your Peeping Tom or your Telephone Gent. They both terrify me. I do pray the Police catch both of them & put them in Prison till they have learnt to give up their Tricks ... [LW: this refers to local misbehaviours by a voyeur and an abuser of telephone facilities. They ceased fairly soon, the misdemeanants (or misdemeanant) not having been detected.]

I return this splendid tribute to Oliver [LW: praise in a local paper of my son's work as Drama Director in the Oxford District.] Aye! but it does indeed hit the nail ...

The Publicity Editor of Heinemann has sent me at the request of the author — Mr Gilbert Phelps — a book called "The Centenarians", a sort of fantasy novel about an imaginary Palace in Germany or Hungary or Bosnia or Herzegovina bequeathed by an American Millionaire to the Gerontological Society. These old fellows — the one on the Book's cover resembles Father Time with his Scythe — are always quarrelling about their love-affairs of years and years and years ago, and finally a pair of lovers climb up the precipice leading to this "Casa" or "Palace", and this invasion produces various odd effects. Phyllis will post this Book to you if you don't mind sending it on ... I long to know what you think of this tale. For myself I find it very

difficult to follow — to understand exactly what is happening!

I love your eloquent discourse on Swinburne. And I am very thankful to know that he loved Edgar Allan Poe whom I worship as I was taught to do by Thomas Hardy who adored him, especially “Ulalume”. Yes, those “Sapphics” of Swinburne are among my favourite of all poems. But, apart from them, I greatly prefer Tennyson, but I would put Swinburne above Browning and I would put Matthew Arnold above them both.

“What voices are these in the still night air?

What lights in the Court? What stops on the stair? \*

O yes, and his lines about fatal Necessity. “O is it that some Power — Too great and strong Even for themselves to conquer or beguile, Sweeps earth and heaven and men and gods along Like the broad volume of the insurgent Nile, And the great Powers we serve themselves must be Slaves of a tyrannous Necessity!” \*\*

Do you know what Phyllis has done? Cut my hair quite short! And now I am wearing her father’s little black skull-cap, like the one Uncle Mowbray’s Father used to wear. Yes, old Mowbray Donne, who was Queen Victoria’s Chamberlain, is the only man I’ve ever seen in a little black velvet cap.

No, I had no idea that I had a recognizable handwriting! I know you have; but I only O so vaguely recall Bernie’s or “the Catholic”’s, and I found a letter from Tom Jones [*friend from old times in Liverpool*] the other day and I should never have known it except for the contents & the “Tom” at the end.

[*drawing of his hair-cutting and of himself in a skullcap.*]

They sent me “Vogue” but I felt no great envy of any of the old gents.

always your old John o’dreams, “unpregnant of his cause”

\* *Matthew Arnold: ‘Tristram and Iseult’.*

\*\* *Matthew Arnold: ‘Mycerinus’.* The first lines of the verse are ‘Or is it that some Force, too wise, too strong, Even for yourselves to conquer or beguile ...’

February 12th, 1958

My dear, do you still ever smoke Cigars? The only person I ever knew well who smoked Cigars was Ralph Shirley; but both Phyllis and I have a vague idea that you also do so now & again. Do tell us, because, if so, we have a big box of Cigars sent us by an old correspondent of ours who has sent us all sorts of wonderful presents. His name is Robert Mayoralgo of Manila, Philippines. He has just sent us a box of Cigars for which we had to pay such a huge sum to the Post Office via the London Customs Office that at first we refused it, but on after-thoughts it seemed rude and ungrateful to do so, so we paid the Customs Duty and accepted it. If you ever smoke cigars nowadays do let us know and we will send you this precious box at once.

You sure have been taking the devil of a lot of trouble, my dear, over these [1935–56] letters ...

I’ve just been reading Lulu’s “Verdict of Bridlegoose” with Phyllis. Ye gods! but it’s an exciting book — and wonderfully written. I don’t believe Lulu has half enough honour for his writings yet. His description of people & situations — such as a party given by Dreiser — beat anything I’ve written and anything Theodore’s written. But it’ll come, it’ll come! It took years for people to realize the superiority of Emily over the other Brontës — and years for D.H. Lawrence to be recognized as far superior to that other Lawrence — tho’ he was no relation — of what I call “the Seven Pillars of Bloody Conceit”. Tho’ I’ve never read a line of it & never shall.

My new very youthful Portuguese correspondent has sent us a Beethoven Record for our Hi-Fi Musical Box.

Today is a day of heavenly Sunshine after several days of heavy rain. Last night rain was frightening. It felt as if it was coming thro' the ceiling! But today blue sky & white clouds and the wind suddenly due West.

Phyllis is out or she'd join me in love —  
always your old

Jackaquackaline

PS [*in separate envelope*] I meant to put this into my letter but I forgot to. Forget! Forget! Forget! I don't pray half hard enough to Mnemosyne the Mother of all the Nine Muses ..... This letter is from Bernie's Jill [*Bernie O'Neills adopted daughter*] & I recall so well holding her on my knees at one of Belle's [*Mrs O'Neill's*] parties. I have corresponded steadily with her for a long while & I like her very much.

February 25th, 1958

[*Drawing of a sickle moon behind twigs with the words 'η σελήνη 'η σελήνη(O moon)! ]*

I've never seen the Moon before with the tips and tops of branches in front of it. But here as I lie on my couch by the window and look up to the North West corner of Black Space where the Moon is visible I see a three-quarter moon or half-moon with the twigs of our Sycamore in front of it ...

O yes I am so thrilled by what you say about the Cigars [*LW: received*] ...

What do the Portuguese use for "Senor" or "Mr" or "Monsieur" or "Signor"? Is it "Senhor"? My young Portuguese Correspondent is Luis Bonito Ribeiro — O I like him so much! He's 24, he told me. I agree with the author of Robinson Crusoe who makes all the Portuguese he meets perfectly charming people.

I enclose an [*advance*] notice about the Letters. It is excellent of you, my dear, to do all the laborious work on them. This Liverpool Post Reviewer says you live in North Wales. I wonder where he got that idea. Your "devoted friend" [*quoted from the notice*] on his side thinks you are a wonder (wherever you live) to take all this trouble.

I must really write a line to Kenneth Hopkins to congratulate him on the notices his book on the Satirists has had.

Bed time for J.C.P. — 10.55 p.m. So may all the world sleep well, especially Louis Umfraville [*sic*] and Luis Ribero!

March 4th, 1958

We are all exited here about the coming of Marian tomorrow. She leaves London with a driver discovered by that excellent Herbert Marks, for whom I've got a particular liking ...

Phyllis thinks your letting of that Annex to your Cottage to that excellent Cook under the conditions you describe is absolutely fair and a very good arrangement indeed. So you have her imprimatur — the imprimatur of the old Kansan Middle West ... She wants you to know that she has got one of your bottles of Burgundy left wherewith to entertain Marian.

... The book I'm now absorbed in and doting on is a Biography told by the most entertaining and intelligent gossip of a lady who ever wrote a biography. O! ladies write biographies much better than men do, I think. But they aren't so good at autobiographies. Why? — I think because they forget themselves so completely in their surroundings and we never forget ourselves quite so utterly!

O my dear I'm thrilled to think you may meet the Queen Mother in June [*LW: at a reading at the Royal Society of Literature*]. I do so admire that lady. She rejected the Prince's offer at first, but the wise Queen Mary made him go a second time — & that time she agreed. An old friend of Theodore's always said the Bowes-Lyons, descended from Charlemagne, were the best of all our aristocracy. My son too had a fondness for her ... \*

That book that is now fascinating me is the Life of Jules Verne by Marguerite Allotta de la Föye who is some relative of his.

I would be scared of that Monster in Glamis Castle. I have strong ideas of my own as to the origin of that Horror!

Yes, Cousin Alice [*née Shirley*] was married to the [*Rev. Linton*] Rector of Shirley and her daughter Marion Linton, with whom Lulu was in love, became a Nun, and my son, then a priest, could only speak to her thro' a grating ....

Well, no more [*blank*] margins, so I say good night.

always yr old J.C.P.

*\*tho' he criticised her hats! But that's part of her niceness. She didn't worry about how she looked. (RVL.)*

March 11th, 1958

Yes, my dear, I note these two important points.

1st. You might have been Electrocuted in your Bath.

2nd. That Electric Heaters etc etc all over the house should be examined by Electricians every year regularly.

[3rd. *Danger of Touching Immersion Heaters under certain conditions.*] I thought we had an Immersion Heater but it may have been at Corwen, or as we say in Welsh "yng Nghorwen" ... [*followed by a diversion about 'those wonderful little tabs or stickers sent from California by Phyllis's half-brother George Playter — RVL*]

I am always so pleased when our Katie writes that she has been to tea with you. She writes so happily always about it.

Well, my dear, I forgot to give your message to May [*Marian*]. But you are bound to see her when she's in Dorset. She had one exciting story to tell us after another and I am such a lover of exciting stories, especially the kind she tells, that to me it's as if I were listening to someone reading "Ivanhoe" to me for the first time! O I remember watching the clock in the drawing room at Montacute when Aunt Dora was reading to me, and the big hand was moving towards Seven o'clock when it was time for me to go to bed.

I can see that clock now. It was, I think, a French or a Swiss-French clock. What's become of it now I don't know. Perhaps Marian — I mean May — would. Oh! here's Phyllis come in from shopping and I told her I'd forgotten to give May your message and she said that I did. I had forgotten that I had not forgotten! Heavens, I surely am a vexing & annoying correspondent! ... It is true, as I am always saying, that I am in my Second-Childhood, but no one will believe it. Because I am such a born Actor that I act the part of what it called — how I hate that word — hate it! hate it! — a knowledgeable person.

Love from us Both — your always

Jack of All Trades — John o' Dreams —

April 3rd, 1958

It has just occurred to me to wonder whether my reluctance to think of Cousin Alice as



"Lady" was due to a rebuke she gave me when we first spoke, in Oxford where I was staying with her mother, about her brother being an Earl. I must have expressed some clumsy kind of pleasure different from what I have always considered a very clever telegram of congratulation I sent to Walter [*Earl Ferrers*] from Montacute, "Le roi est mort. Vive le roi!" I remember so well when [*with Margaret my wife— RVL*] I went to visit them in London how Walter met us at the station and how when one of their maids spoke to one of their children as "Lady" the children all exclaimed with excited delight, "It's begun! It's begun!"

O yes, I think I've always lived from the start as if in a Fairy Tale. That's why I always like Scott better than Dickens. I don't believe I did justice to Dickens till I was much older. Whenever I stayed with a school-boy friend there wd. be his Daddy reading Dickens aloud! But the book I loved to listen to was not "Oliver Twist" but "Ivanhoe". I remember vividly the thrill at Montacute I got once when I pretended to myself that I was the Queen of the Fairies and went up & down stairs & passages turning the handle of one of those tiny musical boxes. I remember clearly once in the school yard at Wildy's House at Sherborne looking at the [Stars] & deciding to be a poet just before there was an invasion of the yard by "townees" when one of us was sent to fetch Jenkins, the strongest boy in the school, to come & fight the Townees. We never regarded Day Boys as proper School-Boys. They were half-cads and half the proper thing!

I recall in Chicago how old Littleton's brother-in-law's wife said that her Doctor told her that the most important thing to keep a person well and happy was to have a Good Forgettorry

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O how thrilled Theodore would be if he could hear your praise of Susan [*Theodora*] – her improvement in every way ...

I have just now from my couch at this window been watching the sun slowly descending, blazing with light thro' the thick white flakes of a flurry of Snow and also thro' the branches of the elm tree ...

[*drawing of himself (with a piece of paper saying 'Well my dear') watching the sun*]

My "Iliad" has just reached the Office, I hear from John Foster White — such a decent chap! I've got a lot of very nice friends, both male & female, with the surname "White", also a lot with the surname "Williams". Both those surnames are lucky to me.

Think of Marian being back home again — O I do long for her first letter from home! I am so glad you got on so well with her ...

your old scatter-brained

Johannes Scarrabeus

April 23rd, 1958

O my dear I am so thrilled by your article on Theodore [*for the Aylesford Review*]. It is very good. I had not realized that he was so much older than you [*six years*] ... I forget everything nowadays — It has really begun to be comical, this forgetting of mine! ... But there's one thing I don't forget, my dear, and that is the trouble you have taken with this Index [*to the 1935–56 Letters*]. I think it is an extraordinary evidence of something in you — something — something — for which if there is a word I've forgotten it. I had a nice letter from Harvey the other day and he spoke of the 9th of May as the "Target" they were aiming at as the Publication day of the Letters ...

Well, I have reached page 100 in my foolcap MSS of my new Story which is not a Romance but more like Up and Out, only it is one story, not two. I think I shall call it "All or Nothing".

It's what you might call a metaphysical fairy-tale, only it's about the Sun this time, not the Moon!

Good luck and so says Phyllis, wherever you are.  
yr old J.C.P.

April 27th, 1958

... My dead best Corwen friend was a boy who was an epileptic — I once saw him having a fit in our lane — but he was so subtle and intelligent — like a little Dostoevsky!

I will go on with this tomorrow because I want to write at least a page of my new story before I go down to go to bed at ten. Phyllis never comes to bed till two a.m. I get up at 7 a.m. and walk for 20 minutes up the hill under the Waterfall before breakfast ... [*LW: his early morning walk used to last two hours. It shortened by degrees as the years went on.*] My new story is about a Fountain called "Bubble and Squeak" which is another title I thought of, but I think on the whole I prefer "All or Nothing". I am now describing one of the chief characters in it who is a Falling Star or a Meteorite.

The only signs of Spring I have seen so far here are Daffodils in a Garden below the big Waterfall and the Great Wheel, and Chestnut Trees out in the Squire's Garden called Tan y Manod Hall, and one of the Trees I look at out of my Window from my Window-Couch, a Sycamore which is now in bud. The big Ash Tree — what the Scandinavian Mythology calls "yggdrasill", the Ash Tree of the Universe — is not yet in bud. That is the Tree I see to the South from my window-couch.

I have got a new correspondent and I like her very much & she is very attracted to Phyllis whom she finds an exciting and mysterious character which shows her intelligence. Her name is Olwen Caradoc Evans and she is a Mrs and also a very energetic lecturer. She has hired from the National Trust a wonderful old building to live in and she has lived there for 5 years already and gives teas and sells books and all sorts of things. Her house is called Tu Hwnt ir Bont \*... She does so well what all Welsh people want to do, namely impress visitors without committing themselves to anything! I am quite longing for the next time this Olwen "drops in" ... I lecture her and she lectures me & between us we make a fine row.

How odd it is that the Onion-sellers from Brittany get on so well with the Welsh and talk to them in Breton and yet they are in character and appearance and ways totally different.

Love from us both  
your old

J.C.P.

\* 'which means "Towards the Bridge" and the bridge was built by Inigo Jones'. (RVL)

May 7th, 1958

I love to think of your talking French with the Breton Onion-Sellers. I have often longed to be able to do that, for we've had them come here & had them often in Corwen.

Today has been the last of 3 very agitating days — all over now, thanks be to my "Trinity" which leaves God out and consists of old Jewish Jehovah and the Spirit of my Mother or her "aura", if there is (as I so obstinately insist) no survival of any kind at all — and Pallas Athene. Yes! all over now — but our very nice neighbour Mr Roberts has died of this Silicosis, the lung trouble our slate miners suffer from as the result of little specks of slate-dust. Phyllis has just been to and just come back from his Funeral in the church. Here they do not allow any women to attend the Burial in the churchyard or cemetery. I suppose because in old days their

wailing was too disturbing to the men lowering the coffin into the ground & filling up the hole. I remember my father holding back my Uncle Cowper, her only son, from jumping into my grandmother's grave. I could well follow his grief at losing her for I was her pet, and as I write this word I have only to glance over my left arm to see my photo of her in her white shawl and armchair. I used to boast "Grandmother likes reading to me because I'm so intelligent!"

Yes, I'll call, as you advise, my new book "All or Nothing" and not "Bubble and Squeak"! By the way, I was so thrilled to see these Letters for which you've made an Index announced for sale as already published in Heffer's list ... I like Heffer's of Petty Cury in Cambridge ... Think of an Index to one man's letters to another man! It would seem more possible if one were Madame Récamier and the other Madame de Stael! ...

Isn't "Buddug" [*Budding*?] a queer lady's name? But that was the Welsh original of Boadicea!

Phyllis says our Vicar read the Funeral Service very well and she says the Welsh Hymn sounded infinitely better than the English one.

May 13th, 1958

My dear, we are more & more impressed by the Introduction, by the Notes on most of the pages & above all by the Index to these Letters from the Knave of Hearts to the King of Hearts. I am more proud of this Book than of any ever published as per by me! Do tell me when next you write whether you too are pleased by the Blue colour wh. delights Phyllis — who was reading and laughing most of yesterday over its pages — and by the golden letters on that Black Band inside the outer Cover, and by the blue binding. I had such a nice letter from Harvey praising it and also praising "Homer & the Aether". So at this moment old Post-Prestor John feels mighty proud of himself!

Herbert Marks has lent me such an interesting and fascinating book translated from the French, called "The Keys of St Peter", about every detail of the Vatican as it is now — yes! every possible detail! — Heavens! if old Kruschoff reads it with any care he'll begin to know what the Russians are up against! My only fault with it is that I don't feel as if it is quite fair to my favourite religious potentate now living, Pius XII. However — He can put up with a lot.

Well — So long! By the way, I wonder what "so long" really means? Does it mean "It's a long time since we met"? No! it can't, because it's not "ave", it's "yale".

yrs

J.C.P.

*'But P and I are wondering to whom, to whom, to whom, to whom, to send this Book of Revelations by John the Devil.'* (RVL)

May 17th, 1958

[O no. my dear, I don't think that note about Jewishness matters in the very least! The people it would really annoy if one of them observed it would be] ... Orthodox Jews [*for they*] are much more horrified at the idea of a Jew having Gentile blood than any Gentile is at the idea of having Jewish blood.

O my dear but the book we've got now — lent by old Herbert and sent by his son whom I took a terrific fancy to and who hovered round every book in my bookshelves just like Boswell transformed by the Witch of Endor into a Hair-Streak Butterfly! — Phyllis has decided to buy it, it's such a good book, and when we own a copy we'll lend it to you to read — "The Keys of St Peter" and it's by a Frenchman called Parfitte if I've got it correct — but forgive me if I don't

get up to make sure [*Peyrefitte*] ... It reveals every single secret of the Vatican! And it is not at all unfriendly to my admired Holy Father Pius XII. But it makes you realize — by St Ann and Santa Maria it does! — what the Kremlin is up against.

I confess to having myself “a sneaking fondness”, as we say, for Krutchoff whom I always call The Pig, for he has exactly that kind of animal cunning in his eye! I like him as much as I hate Nasser. O I hope he’ll outwit Nasser — I think he will — altogether! Nasser’s profile is like this [*drawing*] whereas K’s is like this [*drawing*].

Yes, Augustus John told us about what went wrong over his picture of Theodore. I am so glad he re-painted it & that it’s safe in that Museum [*LW: the Royal Academy*] or whatever it is ..... He sent us as a present such a huge Vessel of Olive Oil from wherever it is where Olive Oil is at its best.

Why, at this very moment, 4.45 p.m., you are entertaining Katie at tea. I had such a fascinating and discerning letter from her this morning ...

Phyllis specially wishes me to tell you how greatly pleased she is with the Book of Letters and she is quite as amazed as I am, my dear, over this extraordinary effort, and skill too, you put into the whole business of this book ... How you do these things is a complete mystery to me, they are just the things I couldn’t, couldn’t, couldn’t, couldn’t do!

I am interested to hear about Isobel [*Powys Marks*]’s friend Elizabeth [*Harvey*] — isn’t it odd that so many nice girls are called Elizabeth? — reviewing our book.

Yrs until that substitute for Eternity we call Nothingness rocks my coffin like the waves on Chesil Beach —

J

May 22nd 1958

Yes, my dear, Phyllis agrees with you. She says no orthodox Jew would mind in the least my boasting proudly that I have Jewish blood. And exactly the same thing is true of my feelings about the Iberians or Berbers in North Africa from whom I like to think of myself as being descended. It surely would be impossible for a white race, an ancient white race, in North Africa living among Black people for thousands of years, not to have some Black blood! ...

I admire Enid Starkie most of all the literary ladies of our country — more even than Dame Edith Sitwell whom I regard as the most inspired and intellectual of her family.

Yes, I feel just as you do about Katie. I can write to her and talk to her more naturally and freely than with any other woman I know except Phyllis.

Our letters are bound to give some jolts in all directions. They’d be mighty dull letters if they didn’t. Well, I must get on with my new story. But O it’s such a comfort to me that Macdonalds — or Harvey, rather — like my Homer book.

I wouldn’t mind boasting to the Ku Klux Klan that I’m proud to think I have Nigger blood as well as Jewish blood!

ever your old one & so says she.

We are sending you that book about the Vatican to read.

May 30th, 1958

My dear, I do apologize! It’s my old age — I blame everything on that! But that is really and truly what it is. I get mixed up in my mind and everything gets mixed up. It must be awful for poor Phyllis! She is (as Hardy used to say of himself) “feeling her age”, but she has to bear the brunt. I have discovered that ladies, old or young, can’t make themselves cook for themselves

alone. That's why I compel Phyllis to go to the Hotel and get a good meal. You see, my diet demands no cooking at all, not so much as a boiled egg! For I swallow my 3 eggs a day raw, as I drink my two bottles of milk neat. And eat my bread with nothing on it. It's the tea-cups full of soft sugar, I believe, that keep me going. Sugar is the most vital of all things. I guess that's why all kids have such a mania for sweets.

No! as you say, I got all that Jewish business hopelessly confused; so, as you also say, we'll let it go! No, my dear, don't you send me any reviews. I don't want any — I've got too old for reviews — I've outgrown reviews! ...

I must write a polite line shortly to Gabriel Marcel of Plon's for supervising the publication of Marie Canavaggia's translation of Iobber Skald, otherwise Weymouth Sands.

I am so glad you agree with me about Enid Starkie. I think she is a perfect darling. I think of her daily when I glance at my book-shelf and see that huge Littré French-French Dictionary in 4 folios. I could never have translated Rabelais without that. [*LW: Dr Enid Starkie was responsible for his acquisition of this Dictionary.*] And now the remainder of my Rabelais can be bought from the Bodley Head at two bob apiece. If I were the reader and not the author how thrilled I'd be to get Rabelais for two bob!

I had a visit from my cousin David Powys, Isobel's uncle, who is a terrific photographer and rushes about the world on his bicycle, photographing, photographing, photographing!

always your old dotty J.C.P.

June 9th, 1958

I am so thrilled by the reception of our Letters. Oliver [*Wilkinson*] is absolutely right in dividing the glory 50 per cent Louis and 50 per cent John. For without your Introduction and Notes and Index it couldn't have been a published book at all.

The thing Phyllis and I are busy about now is this translation into French of Iobber Skald and its publication in Paris with a Preface by Jean Wahl of the Sorbonne. When I saw that word at the end of a letter from Prof. Wahl you bet I was thrilled for it made me at once think of Rabelais. You know we were brought up as children to regard ourselves as descended from Sir Thomas More, and the Picture of him and all his family round him by one of those great Painters has always been in my shaky memory. And I recall how in Rabelais the Englishman who comes over to debate with Pantagruel or Gargantua was clearly Sir Thomas More, nor shall I ever forget More's jest at the end when, with his head on the Block, he was waiting for the axe to fall and he said "Wait just a second, please, till I arrange my beard, for it has not committed treason" ...

Nor shall I ever forget a furious quarrel I had with Siegfried Sassoon when I began boasting about being descended from More. Whether I shouted at him "Shut up, you — —!" — I wish I could remember just what I said to him and what he said to me! Did he say "Hold your bloody tongue, you blasted Welshman!"

I have got half-way through a divinely devilish book by Elizabeth Goudge, called "The White Witch". We've got it out of this Library so I can't send it to you, but there's an adorable old parson in it called Hawthyn, and the White Witch whose name is Froniga — isn't that a nice name? — lived near a real historic Black Witch of whom I've heard for many a year — Mother Shipton ... I wonder if my favourite boyhood's author after the Brothers Grimm and Sir Walter Scott, namely Harrison Ainsworth, brings her into The Lancashire Witches? His own home was in Lancashire, so maybe he did, And I am now as thrilled by Witches as I was at 14.

I want now to persuade Eric Harvey, if I can, to publish a Life of my great-grandfather

"Johnny of Norfolk", the friend of Cowper & of Hailey, by the daughter of my old cousin Katie Donne.

Our French girl-friend Marie Canavaggia whose father came from Corsica and who has translated "Weymouth Sands" under the title of Les Sables de la Mer, so fell in love with the sea-shore described in this book that we are now all trying to remember the Inn on the Harbour so that she can come there with her sister Renée who is an astronomer — yes, an astronomer.

Phyllis is out but she joins me in Spirit when I say that we owe this book of Letters, which is making such a hit, entirely to you. [LW: to me John!]

J.C.P

June 23rd, 1958

I began this on June 19th ... There's certainly some sport & pleasure in feeling as if you & I were a pair of fellow-dramatists like Beaumont & Fletcher of which I bought the Folio in Gloucester when my son & his mother [*Margaret*] were both living, & very wisely she [*Margaret*] made him read thro' the folio like an actor & actress, he reading the man's parts & she the woman's, where there were suitable opposites. My son was fatally restless and this kept him at her side. After her death his restlessness became irrepressable, and he only lasted for about a couple of years. He went on his motor-cycle all round England, Wales, Scotland until the crash came from the damned thing; of which he died. Not at once, but of that horrible death where all your muscles die one after another. He got on wonderfully with Phyllis and when he knew he was dying he got a Baptist friend to drive him out to Corwen where Phyllis fed him with a silver spoon and I read poetry to him. He hadn't many days left.

I expect I've told you all this before. That's where I'm getting to be a trial to everybody, especially to Phyllis, for all day I keep asking her "What did Louis say in his letter?" "What did Malcolm say in his letter?" "What did Katie say in her letter?" "What did that man — I forget his name — tell us I had to write to?" ...

I have just heard from Faith [*A. R. Powys's second wife*] & her letter contains a reply to a question of mine about her royal blood. She is descended from "Prinny", otherwise the Prince Regent and later George IV. I had had a rather vexed letter from Faith ... But I told her I was so fond of her, especially for a certain way she hangs her head.

We had yesterday a visit from Elizabeth Douglas Reid and her husband Mr Sharland, a very nice man; she has written a book of verses in my own vein against Vivisection, which is — Anti-Vivisection I mean is — Phyllis's & my only real important Cause. She is going to act her "Disease" act by herself all the way thro' the Edinburgh Festival. Her face is extraordinarily impressive. Today we are having a visit for 2 or 3 days from Bernie O'Neill's Jill, now a mother of grown up daughters ... I well recall hugging her on my knees when she was a child in that familiar room of Bernie's and Belle's. How well I recall Theodore's remark when Belle was staying with him (at Studland, I think it was) — "Woming's place is in the kitching, Belle!" Forgive me, spirit of Theodore, if I've emphasized those "ings" too much.

Well, my dear, good luck for now —  
your old Jack Straw

June 28th, 1958

I am so thrilled by this Card of yours of the Cro-Magnon man! ... I find that Antiquity,

Archaeology, and anything about the very beginnings of life on this planet interest me now more than anything else.

Please give my love to Margaret and to J and to J and to B [*LW: initials of my grandchildren with whose father and mother I was staying*], but I take it that Christopher's summer holiday doesn't begin till the end of July. O how well I recall Frances's [*LW: my first wife's*] anxiety that I should like J better than J! This makes me think about the eccentricities of their Grandmother. My Norwich Grandmother was more important to me — far, far, far, O far! — than any other lady in the world — I won't say more than my mother, but I think it's the fierce prejudice I've got against my mother's father that enhances my immemorial devotion to her mother. But of course it was very much because she read to me, read to me my favourite books.

Last night — but O do give my extra love to Oliver because it suddenly comes over me how I adored him as a child and how proud I was when once he ran when he was very little to meet me. I've got a mania for babies and toddlers now ... O yes! I know there's a weird mysterious link between very small children and very old men and women. It's just as if they came very fresh from the Heart of the Universe and I was rejoicing to go back to the Heart of the Universe — I prefer the word "heart" to the word "womb".

Now my instinct is, the moment I meet Oliver, to hug him & kiss, and then I am tickled by his beard! But I do rejoice, tell him, to hear praises of his Play [*"How Can We Save Father"*] from every direction.

Last night I listened to Ezra Pound on Phyllis's new Radio which is much smaller but much louder than the one she had before and I don't like it as much as her Hi-Fi for which she now collects Records. I make her play for me on her Hi-Fi that old Sousa's "Stars & Stripes" which I associate with Tom Jones, for I used to listen to it in that [*Liverpool*] Café where he loved to go & where I used to wait for him.

Your Letters, our Letters, my Letters, the Letters have had a hell of a lot of praise not only in the papers but in letters from O such a lot of people!

What a voice Ezra Pound has! So had Dylan Thomas when he read his poems. I would love to have arranged a debate on poetry between Dylan & Ezra! I remember so well when we came over from New York to Southampton with Ezra, and I also remember having such a nice supper with his parents in Philadelphia. I've always got on top notch with famous poets' parents! I remember going to New York with W. B. Yeats's Father. He was a darling old chap and earned his living in New York simply by his talk at dinner-parties — yes, earned his living by just being himself! And now Alfred Noyes is dead. Some nice person I've liked seems to die every day. Well, good luck to them in the Elysian Fields!

Here's [*enclosed*] the sort of Baby I like. Give this picture to Margaret. It was wonderful to hear Jill Olson [*Bernie's Jill*] go on & on talking about "Daddy". O yes and she had a lot to say about your grown up daughter in America — yes, about Deirdre.

My next story [*"All or Nothing"*] is proving very exciting to me. Its hero and heroine are twins called John o'Dreams and Jilly Tewky — this word "Tewky" — τευχῆ — means "competence".

ever your ancient Incompetence  
Jack the See-Saw

July 8th, 1958

8 p.m. & all outside is now fog — what in Welsh is called "Niwl", mixed with the still heavier sort that is called "Tarth".

Well! the Plaque incident is over and Herr Rolf Italiaander will be flying back from London to Hamburg tonight or tomorrow. \*The Plaque was in a little square box so we shan't have to hang it up. Last night a Rev. Cavaliero who is an Anglican clergyman who teaches Theology in one of our Cathedral Colleges came in here and he sat in one armchair while Mr Italiaander sat in the other, and so seductive was the Reverend Cavaliero that Italiaander and Phyllis and I listened spell-bound for two hours while he [Italiaander] told of his adventures alone and unarmed and riding a motor-cycle through the whole of Africa. He [GC] is a short "stocky" man with a square head and coal-black straight hair, whereas Italiaander is very tall. I lay on my back on my couch and Phyllis sat in the golden "Louis Quinze" chair out of Norfolk, and then the autobiography of Herr Italiaander went on till nearly a quarter to twelve, and then I cried out, "I hope these gentlemen, Phyllis, won't find the North Western Hotel closed for the night and have to sleep on the Mountain!"

[drawing of "The Reverend Cavaliero all ears to listen and Rolf Italiaander all autobiographical intensity to touch our hearts".]

My picture is quite unfair to Glen Cavaliero and also to Rolf Italiaander \*\*... I am glad it is all over ...

Another photograph by an emissary from Liverpool was taken outside our door in a very curious scene, for I hugged the Plaque like a Dead Sea Scroll and all the ladies of the neighbourhood crowded round to see the fun. In the heart of the confusion I saw a Baby in the arms of its mother waving to me and clearly crying "O what fools these grown up normalities are! but you and I understand each other —"

[drawing of the scene]

May old Jewish Jehovah and the Olympian Pallas Athene guard you, my dear —  
your old J.C.P.

\* LW: he was awarded the Plaque of the Free Academy of Arts in Hamburg for the year 1957 "in recognition of his outstanding services to Literature and Philosophy". Herr Italiaander made the formal presentation at J.C.P.'s home. J.C.P. is the first English writer to receive this award.

\*\* 'who addressed his remarks to the Clergyman in the opposite chair' (RVL)

July 19th, 1958

O my dear! What Phyllis & I have gone thro' and are still going thro'! That Hamburg affair was no sooner over than everybody we know wrote letters which I had, in decency, to acknowledge, and everybody began to come.

I have just seen out of this window the flags and symbols and signs and Girlie-Pirlies and Boy-Hoys and [?Scout] -Masters in what I understand are called "Floats", namely huge lorries or wagons filled with Boys & girls dressed up and waving flags. This is today the Welsh Carnival!

We have got Gamel Wolsey [sic], the wife of Gerald Brenan who lives near Malaga, staying in our North Western Hotel run by that excellent Mrs Roberts. She and Phyllis are, I hope after a decent lunch, down town or over the hills & far away.

Augustus John or his friend or his daughter sent us a photo of his portrait of Theodore which I thought he told us had been spoilt [LW: this portrait was in the Royal Academy of 1958]. We have propt it against one of my Book-Shelves and O! it is such a comfort to me to see its massive expression, immoveable in all this hurlyburly — as Horace says, "impavidum ferient ruinae", impervious while the world goes to rack & ruin!

Gamel was brought to us by Bertrand Russell whom I dragged up to my room & planted in



the arm-chair opposite me where I lectured him for half an hour on his face which I admire far the most of all the faces of famous men or un-famous men — I have a mania for his face. It has all the qualities that my nurse Maria Brocklehurst taught me about, and I've never forgotten her lessons in Phenology, or is it Phrenology? I must be awfully snobbish for I was absolutely terrified of his coming here — the first earl after our Walter Shirley I've ever spoken to. But all my snobbishness vanished in my inborn tendency to lecture, and there before me was my favourite of all human faces with all the qualities in it, good and great, that I was taught by my nurse to look for. So he had just to listen to an extravagant eulogy of his own phizz! I told him that my worst subject had always been Maths, and he recalled the quotation from *The Tempest* \* with which he had finished his argument, anti-marriage against my argument pro-marriage, in our debate in New York. He told Gamel that he had once debated with Lulu too. He described Lulu's ways so well to Gamel ... O yes! and his wife (I think his 4th) sat in the chair at the foot of my couch and was so nice and quiet and wise and gentle all the time. Gamel says she is the best, far the best wife he's ever had and that she came from New England. Few wives would have let a chap like me go on jawing their husband on every feature of his face for so long.

... Our Squire John Vaughan came to see us and asked Gamel and Phyllis to come to supper with him. His sister was away and they have no servant so he had to get the supper himself which both Phyllis & Gamel say he did with exquisite care ...

Love from us both & Gamel too  
ever your old devoted J.

\* *no sign of this in the printed report* [KK]

30th July, 1958

Yes, "Blinie" is the way I always pronounce our town ... Bertrand Russell is really a perfect angel ... I am so interested in what you say about the Jovian countenance of his elder brother giving lectures in undergraduates' rooms when you were at Cambridge.

Heavens no, my dear, the very last thing I would do is to envy you! What an absurd conclusion [*drawn by a broadcast debate on his 1935-56 Letters*]. It would be as if I envied the Labours of Hercules, especially having to fetch the Dog Cerberus from the Entrance to Hades! "Wonder at with awe" is the word, not "envy"! Aye, my dear! But how exciting is what you say about your hearing Laurence Housman lecture on his own experience [*LW: very many years ago*] before the "British Society for the Study of Sex Psychology".

O I am so glad that Prof Wilson Knight of Leeds who shares with his brother a lovely old house in Exeter did such fine justice to you [*in a review of the Letters*] ...

It is most interesting to me to hear what you do about teasing, annoying, presumptuous, impudent, abusive letters — just not answer! The only really abusive letter I've ever has was that one when I still lived in New York, from England from a lady who said I ought to be castrated!

Think of that boy wanting you to teach him and his friends Crowleian Occultism! That word "doyen" is a funny word. Do tell me what it actually means? The letters I get are almost all from people I know. I am always rather excited when I get one from a complete stranger ...

My old cousin Catherine [*"Katie" Donne*] has had to stop dictating her unequalled letters to me, for she has had flu and laryngitis. I do so want her to live to be a 100, and she may yet, for she is better — blind and deaf, but not dumb.

Someone who saw that picture of Theodore by Augustus John wrote to me how it dominated

the room where it was.

\* I am thankful to say that Phyllis's bronchial cough is a little better, but will she get any rest till Winter comes? It's rest she wants to cure this cough.

May [*my two favourite deities, old Jewish Jehovah and Greek*] Pallas Athene born out of the head of Zeus after he swallowed her mother, give you a good August –

With love from us both –

J.C.P. & P.P.

\* *I am so interested, my dear, to hear about Lucy's Mary and Gerard Casey driving you to see Katie. Nothing plesases me more than Katie's fondness for and admiration of you.*' (RVL)

August 7th, 1958

O my dear but this is great news you've appointed Kenneth Hopkins as your Literary Executor, for his honesty, hard work, and concentration on his job, and his great gifts as an overseer of any literary business are very unusual. I have great respect for him. He is a good man and does good things. What a comfort that he suggested it himself, so he would never for a tiny second let it flash across his mind that it had been put upon him! [LW: !!] ... Don't 'ee bother to write till you're safe home in Dove Cottage again, but then both Phyllis & I wd. dearly love to hear of your impressions as you were on the move in town.

Think of the élan vital of Swinburne's work being lessened by the reading of Sadistic Books! [LW: *suggested by references to Swinburne as voweur in a recent broadcast of which I had told him.*] ... [followed by discussion of his own sadistic reading 'I remember getting sadistic delight from my first book, Wood and Stone ...' (RVL)]

Well, Ta! Ta! as the girls say — It's a wonderfully summer day here, blazing sun & blue sky & we both send our blessing.

John [*the Ex-Sadist*] hard at work.

Aye! but I did enjoy that page in your letter about Swinburne at Lord Houghton's reciting verse on that same topic — and how an interruption came of a rather different kind! [LW: *by the butler announcing "Prayers, my Lord!" This incident also came into the broadcast.*] You did describe Swinburne's voice so well & the whole scene —

The Drawing of me in Augustus John's Book of Drawings is the one we liked best of those he did of me when he was here. [LW: *this drawing appears as the frontispiece to the Letters.*]

August 18th, 1958

... But what a thing you tell me about that boy who resolved to be a Catholic Monk when he was 14 and all to the grief of his mother who longs for Grand-Children. Really & truly the ironic cruelties of life make me more & more certain every day that Jesus on the Cross came to know that this "God" who had "forsaken" him didn't exist and that to believe he did was the mistake of his life ...

I do so like to think of your meeting Vyvyan Holland [*son of O. W.*] again & his beautifully mannered son with a look of Oscar about his face. But I am sure he couldn't be quite as good-mannered and considerate as Oliver's son whom I saw here. How do you explain there being so many Forged Letters of Oscar? Because of an intensely growing tendency for all newspapers, printers, reporters, book-sellers, magazine writers to enjoy anything about homosexuality? ...

What a book-collector Lord Houghton must have been! His name was Milne, wasn't it? Didn't he come into Hardy's life when Hardy got old? Didn't he drive him about? Monckton Milne, wasn't it? How very interesting about the ways of a real Masochist. And all that you say

about Swinburne and the effect of the study of Sadism upon him is full of interest to me. By the way, did you know that Shelley's heart was buried at Bournemouth? Bournemouth of all places! To think of Shelley's heart at Bournemouth!

... Ever your old and almost fabulous John o'Dreams

29th August 1958

Hurrah! I love to think we're related ... and I love to think of your old ancestress having a sister married to Sir Thomas Littleton. No, I am sure the Lyttletons are no relations of ours though I got to know a very nice old lady with that "y" who behaved once so kindly to my [prostitute] friend Lily and used to look after her when I was away ... [LW: "*Sir Thomas Littleton*" was suspected as a copying mistake for "*Sir Thomas Lyttleton*" as later reference to published records showed that it was.] I've long ago decided that, a second to old maids (like King Numa's Egeria), tarts & whores are the nicest and most affectionate and least selfish of all ladies.

... I always think I am rather like James I in some ways [*in the way I slobber*] — though I have not a speck of homo-ism in me. I am an obsessed girl-lover ... O yes I am entirely all right financially ...

Our [wonderful] French [girl-]friends [*the sisters Canavaggia*] whose Dad, like Bonaparte, came from Corsica, are coming soon to Weymouth for a fortnight. They are coming by steamer from Jersey. How well all my life since we left Shirley Vicarage have I known that Weymouth Harbour with its Jersey steamers! We don't know yet just where they will find a lodging nor whether they will go to see Theodore's grave in Mappowder because Marie is now translating his "Unclay". I don't know whether they may think of visiting you at Hazelbury Bryan. But they intend to visit us here before they go back to Paris. Marie Canavaggia is such a passionate and perfect translator that she has got absorbed in Weymouth scenery and harbour and Bay and Portland and everything! I wonder if perhaps she will want to see Mappowder?

We've just had a visit from Mrs Olwen Caradoc Evans a beautiful lady with whom both Phyllis and myself are in love. She has just bought a house called Cartref Melys — "Sweet Home".

your old lucky Jack

September 8th, 1958

Phyllis & I are so grateful to you for being so nice about our French girls ... Their address in Weymouth puzzles me — I had no idea there was such a street as Weymouth Bay Avenue but that is what they call it and they say their landlady, Mrs English, is very nice to them. 33 Weymouth Bay Avenue. We've just heard from them that they spent the day at Portland Bill and Chesil Beach.

... This Avenue must be somewhere behind Brunswick Terrace and Penn House where our grandmother lived so long and where we all used to go from childhood. I can remember my mother in Penn House showing me how Lulu's Baby Skull had not closed over. I mean there was a place where you could see the skin moving as he breathed, and there was no bone! It was in Penn House I first heard the word "ennui" and I well remember walking up and down saying very proudly "I am suffering from ennui — sick of everything!" and there was a Bath-chair man just outside who was a great friend of our Uncle Littleton and had been with him in the Afghan War.

Did I tell you that our only living Moilliet in this country, Major Trevor Moilliet, had died and has a funeral in Bath? ... He had some kind of a Tube in his lungs that made his voice

startling and shocking ... I sent him letters from Moilliets in Geneva, for, as Lulu discovered, we have a lot of Moilliet cousins in Switzerland ...

How the devil Marie and Renée Canavaggia are going to stand the long journey to see us here in Blaenau heaven knows! Today it has rained nearly all day long. Will writes from Kenya that he and his now married daughter and both his sons are all enchanted with our Book of Letters & read nothing else!

The Visitors we have increase and increase. We had a whole family from — O I won't bother you with it all! But we do thank you, my dear, for your interest in our French girls. It's awfully good of you to offer to take them in.

ever your old John, and P. she do say the same.

September 13th, 1958

Good News! Phyllis has just seen Mrs Roberts and she says she has got those rooms for you, and Phyllis told her she need not write to you as we would write and tell you that the rooms are waiting for you all right. She happened to be having her own lunch there today.

We heard today from the Canavaggias that they were going to Mappowder today [*to see his sister Lucy*]; so at this very moment you may be meeting them! We are greatly looking forward to seeing you & your friend Tony Bland ... I notice a good omen — that Saturday is Full Moon! O no, you aren't a "Visitor", my dear!

ever your old John.

September 20th, 1958

If you cannot be ready for your meal before 8 o'clock you must get it on your way because by that time the Cook and the Staff leave the Hotel or will have left the Hotel. This is the news that Phyllis has just brought to me from having lunch there. She talked to Mrs Roberts about it and the above words were what Mrs Roberts the proprietress said to her.

The French girls, Marie & Renée, were so delighted with you and your hospitality to them. Poor girls! They had to start for Weymouth this morning at 7.5 a.m. Both Phyllis and I love those girls. We [certainly?] have decided that of all girls French ones are the nicest.

We are longing to see you and your friend.

always your old John.

Come and see us if and when you feel inclined on Saturday morning; but we shall expect to see you after lunch and that you will stay to have tea with us ...

October 2nd, 1958

I was so delighted to have those messages [*LW: from Oliver and his family, with whom I was staying*] ... Think of Roly nearly five and going to school every day!

Aye but my dear, we did both of us so like Tony Bland and are so glad you brought him — or rather he brought you [*driving from Dorset*]. [*Aye! but*] We had a lovely time and we blame ourselves for not bringing out the Plaque in its white box! I'm so thankful it doesn't have to be hung up. [*LW: I had written that I was sorry I had forgotten to ask him to show me the Plaque.*]

\* ... On my word I do think Oliver was lucky to find Margaret. She sure has brought up your grandchildren perfectly! I do envy you so having grandchildren — but there it is! It was my influence that made my son a Catholic so I've only myself to blame.

Always your old one & this brings Phyllis's love too.

John

\* '[and] greetings to that Paragon of good manners, Christopher ... the most considerate and thoughtful heart of any boy I've ever seen!' (RVL)

October 30th, 1958

I am so thrilled to be able to study at leisure these pictures of my favourite famous girl in the Kingdom [*Dr Enid Starkie*]. I always think of her whenever I turn my head as I lie on my back at this window and look at the four great folios of Littré's French-French Dictionary which I should never have possessed but for her and without which I could never have written my book on Rabelais which comes near to being my favourite of all my writings ... I shall never forget that drawing by Jean Cocteau of her leading him in his Oxford gown along the street which those darling French girls made him draw when they told him of my deep admiration for her.

Aye! but we are having a regular procession of Visitors. Far the most interesting has been Jean Wahl of the Sorbonne who is lecturing at Bangor and Aberystwyth. I wish I could draw his face for you. There is something Voltairean about it, but it is gentler, more nervous, more feminine. Then there is a gent called Kynaston who lives in Bath and has written a long autobiography which I am begging him, after studying it, to turn into a Novel — and a gent from Holland Park in London called Mr Owlett who is coming on Nov 3, and if I am not wrong in my memory — but it is awful, my dear, to feel your memory failing so completely, and it is much worse for poor Phyllis! — Mr Owlett has written an essay on Life comparing Nature to a Wheel going round and round and round and round —

Ah! there I see, at exactly 5.15 p.m., the electric lights! beginning on the mountain on this terrific water-electric job they are doing — pumping water up to the peaks of our Moelwyn Mountain Range and pumping water down — up and down, up and down — the mountain torrents being used to give electricity to everything in this neighbourhood. The torrent brings the water down and electricity pumps it up clear to the lake at the top. And if the torrent doesn't bring enough water down the electricity pumps more up.

But I do so love to think of your friendship with Enid Starkie ...

Your old doddipoll Jack "while this machine is to him".

November 5th, 1958

Guy Fawkes Day

All Phyllis and I will see of Bonfires and Fireworks will be what we have already seen from this window, one red bonfire & one red rocket!

My dear, I do so like this letter of yours ... That true sentence about Lucy sailing "on an even keel" — and Katie's power of not listening [*to what certain men's voices say*] acquired by her power, learnt in the past, of not hearing her Father's sermons though they were entering her ears! Then about that "Bryanston Miscellany" produced by Mr Victor Bonham Carter that has an article by you on us but which costs £10.10.06 ... Our present Visitor with a room at the Queen's Hotel, Mr Owlett, knew personally more of our writers than I know by their writings.

ever your Old One & P. sends her love —

J.C.P. & P.P.

November 12th, 1958

O how I do agree with Lady Harris about the Indians of India! I hate them as much as I hate George Bernard Shaw, that Irish Bully with a Yorkshire name ...

I do wish Oliver had not got a beard! I always want to hug him and kiss him just as I did when he was 3 or 4, but his Beard intervenes!

[drawing to illustrate this intervention]

I am so delighted to hear that this wise and nice Lady Harris is a Frieda. I associate that name with D. H. Lawrence's wife ... I think we've got one of my remnant Rabelais books somewhere if no other copy can be found. [LW: *Lady Harris had written to me from Kashmir asking how she could buy a copy of J.C.P.'s Rabelais.*] We bought a lot of them. I was so proud when a copy was deposited in the Rabelais Museum in his village near the little river Vienne. Was it you who went there once with Theodore? [It was Bernard O'Neill who visited Chinon with Theodore (in 1904).] I seem to recall a pang of jealousy in connection with that place though I've quite forgotten its name. I do so like all you tell me about Lady Harris. Think of her standing up to old Crowley!

How I do love these Photos taken by your friend Anthony Bland! You look so much more of an exciting person than I do — you look like a shy Prince visiting a bumptious old local historian. But I shall always love those two Pictures.

Well, I won't invade the Margins of this letter tonight.  
always your affectionate J. C. P.

November 22nd, 1958

Well, we've had the devil of a time today, getting some essential work done at the back of this little half-house, and then at the critical moment of the man's leaving I failed to pay him promptly as he deserved to be paid and thus bring the matter to a happy end and a conclusive end. God! I am hopeless at business transactions.

O I wish I had old Priestley's gift! We had Jacquetta Hawkes [*Mrs J. B. Priestley*] here and I told her that my one and sole Cause was anti-Vivisection, and she told me her Father was the kindest of men and a Vivisectionist in Cambridge where she had been brought up.

Yes, I'm the most extreme opposite of a Mimic that ever was born, tho' one of my favourite of all poets is Edgar Allan Poe, and Poe writes

"Mimes in the form of God on high  
Mutter and mumble low,  
And hither and thither fly,  
Blind puppets they that come and go  
At bidding of vast Formless Things  
That move the scenery to and fro  
And flap from out their Condor wings  
Invisible woe!" \*

No! as you say, my admired Henry Irving couldn't play the Mimic — we can't imagine him doing so.

O but I love Oliver's word about modern discoveries, especially through telescopes and microscopes, being like the Day-Dream of a Tadpole. \*\* My point of view about these ultimate mysteries is very like what Lazarus's would have been when he first heard Jesus call "Lazarus! Arise!" I want to enjoy what I can and I want to accept the whole bloody business but I don't want to have to make any effort! ...

No, I won't consult William Blake and shall I tell you why? because tho' I was brought up on his verses I hate him now for his clownish ingratitude to Hayley that Squire poet near Bognor

who was so good to Blake as he was also to Cowper. And yet Blake said of him “Hayley was begotten by his Mother on his Father”.

That’s a good idea of yours for Oliver to trim his beard into an Imperial Beard — that is a small thick pointed one, isn’t it? Why is it called an “Imperial” I wonder? Did the Austrian Habsburgs in Vienna trim their beards so? But I do entirely understand his desire to escape shaving by growing a beard. That’s what I’d like to do myself! Tho’ Phyllis shaves me with an Electric Razor. Blake always pictured God with a beard. I would like to have forced Aubrey Beardsley in the Yellow Book to draw the Holy Dove hovering on its wings as it shaves Jehovah with a Safety Razor ...

I’ve just been reading a paper-book Life of Mr Lear. What is the origin of the word “Limerick”? “There was an old man of Dundee Who was terribly teased by a Bee, When they said ‘Does it Buzz?’ He replied, ‘Yes, it does. It’s a regular brute of a Bee.”

Always your old John who gave a Bottle to Crowley to become Johannes the Holy. \*\*\*

\* Poe: from ‘The Conqueror Worm’

\*\* LW: *what my son said was exactly the opposite to this; that the astronomical discoveries recently outlined in a broadcast made most human thought seem like the day-dream of a tadpole.*

\*\*\* JCP describes meeting Crowley and buying him wine at the Foyles lunch on 11th April, 1935 ( see The Dorset Year and NL 54, p.22)

December 2nd, 1958

Aye, my dear! I sure am a fool [LW: *for the misunderstanding in the last letter*]. But I do like this letter of yours. I am particularly tickled by that saying of Andrew Wordsworth’s great-Aunt — “Uncle William? Well, I could never think much about him — I don’t want to — for — do you know, my dear boy, he was — well! — he almost was — a pantheist.” And that cry of Matthew Arnold’s — “What a set!” I might have thought of that when at 13 I read “Frankenstein” by Shelley’s second wife and told the story to my grandmother’s Cook Charlotte when I was at Penn House and Charlotte fainted with horror and I had to carry her up the beach and into the house. And I love your Radley tale of how you fumbled at that Gate and confessed your inability to deal with gates when that angry master was coaching the Rowing Eight.

Your advice is excellent about having a sort of printed reply to exhausting letter-writers. But I did once actually have a card printed to that effect. But it so infuriated one of my worst persecutors that it came back to me all scribbled over with what might be described as Witch’s curses that I really funk'd doing it any more. I’m funny in those things. I’m scared of some stroke of bad luck befalling me after the sort of curse that correspondent gave me!

After Xmas when next year begins with January which is my favourite of all months because I hate leaves, which is queer because Phyllis’s name in ancient Greek means a leaf — But I do love to see the boughs and twigs of trees bare, entirely bare, against the sky ...

O by the way I’ve had a letter from Mr Neville Braybrooke of London S.W.3 who is collecting a Book of what he calls “Juvenilia” by which he means queer and quaint things uttered when they were young by people who in later life have become well known. He says when they were under 21 !! — but I write and tell him it should be under ten or twelve because most writers have quite grown up when they are 21, and Keats died when he was 24. But a collection of sayings & poems of people like Irving and Shaw and Joyce and so on when they were under twelve would be very amusing. What do you think? I even said “Make it under 15 or 16” ...

I do glory in your account of Imperial Beards! I bet you are right in what you say. It’s

wonderful that you can force yourself to be tidy. Guess what Phyllis did to me last Sunday — She cut my hair! So now when it's cold in our house I wear a little Black Cap ... just like what Uncle Mowbray Donne's Father wore who was Victoria's Lord Chamberlain.

Yrs ever

Johnny Jack John

December 8th, 1958

... O but I am all for "girl" pronounced "gurl". Yes, I remember Gertrude saying "gairl" [*'God in heaven but to think I lapsed into yours ever ...'* (RVL)]

Phyllis hasn't yet raked up my "Knight of the Festoon", a prose story to send to Neville Braybrooke ...

God! but you would have liked our Elsa from London who gave me those two ancient Greek coins. Her hair is light gold, straight, and very very long. When Phyllis took her to see John Vaughan he nearly fainted with astonishment, for she was more beautiful than any girl he had ever seen. And I feel the same. Her daughter is now as tall as she is and the two of them go off together across Europe, like two girl-friends out for a lark. She must be fabulously rich ...

What's your favourite number? 4 is mine — what Walt Whitman calles The Square Deific. I've just been reading in a letter from a Professor in Georgia, U. S. A. great praise of your book "The Buffoon" which enchants both him and his wife. He has been reading it aloud to his wife.

yrs always

John o'Lantern the Fourth

December 13th, 1958

... I'd like to read that now — by Knatchbull Hugesson about Witches & Milestones & Finger-Posts that you loved so as a child.

O yes, you were entirely right to mention Katie Donne, now Catherine for she feels too old at 95 to be a Katie any more.\* Here is what she says on a card I got yesterday. I am so touched by it, for that "insignificant me" does so sound like what some little girl not yet of the "age of consent" might say. "Thank you very much for your letter and enclosure. I am now waiting to hear from the gentleman with the foreign name. I will let you know the results. Fancy insignificant me coming into the limelight after more than fifty years. I may be able to help him." I quite can't get, I mean I do not follow at all, what my darling old lady means by her "more than fifty years" ... Her husband was one of the 3 sons of my great-grandfather "Johnny of Norfolk" ... I expect I told you how Aunt Martha Patteson left a big sum of money to us eleven children which my mother spent on buying us Games — Tennis, Backgammon, Battledore and Shuttlecock, Croquet, Draughts and Chess.

Thank you, my dear, for that cutting about Solitude where "little me" don't certainly come off badly! [*LW: a review of a book about Solitude, expressing preference, with illustrative quotations, for J.C.P.'s treatment of that condition in A Philosophy of Solitude.*] ... I do so greatly like this photo of us together taken by your friend. But Heavens! I look different now with my hair cut quite short.

Well ... may old Jehovah guard you! We both send our love.

always your old John [*the Fool*].

\* *LW: Professor Shapiro, engaged in writing on John Donne, had enquired from me about the poet's direct descendants, and I had replied that Mrs Barham Johnson (née Catherine Donne) was directly descended.*



December 21st, 1958

Just think, my dear, of your being 77 on the 17th! Well, "I never!" as the girls say. "Goodness Gracious!" as Aunt Kate, otherwise Mrs Mowbray Donne, would say.

... O but I am so glad that Eric Harvey wrote that to you about the Letters. \* Well! I tell you as I tell everybody that I owe this to your editing and indexing. I am certainly getting praise about them from all over the world! But this word from Eric Harvey is the best praise the book can have.

... Katie was certainly my Father's favourite daughter, though she couldn't bear his ecclesiastical black coat when she saw it approaching! My copy of that picture of Theodore by Augustus John is now balanced on my bookshelf with his back to two big black volumes of an American Encyclopaedia or something of that kind, and this picture certainly bears out what you say [*about the original in the Royal Academy*], for I find it a bit awe-inspiring.

... O my dear I do indeed pray that Oliver will be able to do something with Katie's Play. [*LW: a romantic and tragic Play in verse written some time ago.*] That would indeed be a triumph for us all and I shall go on praying very seriously to one Deity after another, some masculine and some feminine, that it will be brought about ...

Most interesting it is to me, to learn about those 3 ladies for whom you have an instinctive dislike. I don't think I've got an instinctive dislike for any female old or young, but for men I have it, for several both living and dead ... \*\*

always your old scatter-Brain

J. C. P.

\* '*the best book published in England in 1958*'.

\*\* '*O I have today just had a letter from Juanita ... a blessing from them all with a special love to our Doll Olwen.*'



### *A Camp Library designed by A. R. Powys*

A. R. Powys, serving in France with the 4th Yorks Regiment, was taken prisoner on March 23rd 1918, and was released from Camp in Mainz after the German surrender in November 1918. His extraordinary journey home was set down in a letter which he sent to his daughter Isobel as he knew he would be seeing his wife, Dorothy, first. (See *Homeward Journey, 1918, a letter*, by A. R. Powys, privately printed to celebrate Isobel's eightieth birthday in 1986.) The letter, written in pencil on thin YMCA paper is dated 27th November 1918 on board S. S. Porto, Hook of Holland.

Among the letters sent home before his capture were two to Llewelyn, one dated November 1917; these have been printed in the Society's *Newsletter* 12, pp.10-12, with some harrowing accounts of conditions in the trenches or behind the lines.

At least for officers, conditions could not have been too bad towards the end of the

## *The Journals of Caroline Powys ~ the CD*

When I gave my talk about Caroline's *Journals* to the 2010 Conference in Street I said I would be depositing an electronic copy of the finished work in the Society's Collection (see report in *The Powys Journal* XXI,183-201). This has now been done with a CD. A copy has also been deposited with the British Library (where the manuscripts are kept) and with the National Library of Wales.

A limited number of copies has been made; a few have already been given away, and I would be happy to supply copies to others who would be interested. Although I do not want any payment (it would make no noticeable impact on my own outlay over the eleven years of the project!), a donation to The Powys Society would be appreciated, say £20.

The contents of the CD are shewn in the Summary printed opposite.

Please write to  
Stephen Powys Marks, 23 Cleveland Walk, Bath BA2 6JW.

*Typeset in Palatino, as used in these documents.*

War: for example, ARP had access to, and time to use, materials to prepare a finely drawn and coloured 'STUDY FOR A CAMP LIBRARY' designed in the Arts and Crafts tradition; this is signed 'A.R.POWYS. MAINZ SEPT 1918'. It is this drawing which is shewn, reduced and in black and white, on the back cover.

The drawing, on cartridge paper 11.5 by 17 inches, and a companion sheet of details, his letter to Isobel, the official reports of capture and various papers relating to ARP's war service, and other wartime pictures are in my possession, in addition to this rather relaxed off-duty pose.

**Stephen Powys Marks**

*A. R. Powys in uniform  
but obviously taking it easy, c.1916.*



## The Journals of Caroline Powys, née Girle (1738–1817)

Summary of CONTENTS of this CD [full version on file [A]]

[A] CONTENTS. <[A] C.Powys README>

[B] THE TRANSCRIPTION: A TECHNICAL NOTE.  
<[B] C.Powys Journals>

[C] “The Journals of Caroline Girle — Mrs Philip Lybbe Powys”,  
by Stephen Powys Marks in *The Powys Journal* 12 (2002); superseded to  
a small degree by item [B]. <[C] PJ SPM on CP>

[D] “Powys Family Connections 1600–1900, A Bar Chart”,  
compiled by Stephen Powys Marks, 2000–2001, amended 2010.  
<[D] Powys bar ch 2010>

[E] folder of 14 files of TRANSCRIPTS of 14 MS volumes in the  
British Library, Add. Mss. 42160–42173. For material not already  
published, the copyright belongs to Mr Timothy Powys-Lybbe: he has  
agreed to the present work. <[E] C.Powys transcripts>

[F] folder of 4 SCANS from *Passages from the Diaries of Mrs. Philip  
Lybbe Powys*, ed. Emily J. Climençon (1899); published text of 4 tours  
for which the manuscripts are missing. <[F] C.Powys tour scans>

[G]. 12 SCANS of handwriting. <[G] C.Powys handwriting>

[H] TALK to Friends of the Survey of Old Bath, April 23rd 2010:  
“Caroline Powys, her Journals and her Visits to Bath”.  
<[H] Caroline TALK 1>

[Ha] folder of 2 documents relating to file [H].  
<[Ha] documents for [H]>

[J] TALK to The Powys Society, August 21st 2010, “Caroline  
Powys and her Journals”. <[J] Caroline TALK 2>

[Ja] folder of 4 documents relating to [J]. <[Ja] documents for [J]>

[K] MAP shewing location of Hardwick House, Oxfordshire, and  
of Fawley. <[K] local map>

*These documents, prepared over the period 2001 to 2012, were finally  
prepared for limited circulation in January 2012.*

2012 © Copyright in items [A], [B], [C], [D], [H], [J] and [K]  
and in the transcripts in item [E] belongs to

**Stephen Powys Marks, 23 Cleveland Walk, Bath BA2 6JW**

# THE POWYS SOCIETY

## INCOME AND EXPENDITURE FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST DECEMBER 2011

<b>INCOME <sup>1</sup></b>		£	£
Subscriptions	For 2010 ( 290 Members)	£ 3,754.52	£ 3,754.5
Donations	Conference book sales	£ 175.00	
	Postage	£ 18.47	£ 181.4
Publication sales		£ 416.37	£ 416.3
Conference	Registration fees	£ 7,181.18	
	less £308 refunds	£ 308.00	
	less £390 expenses	£ 390.00	
	less Hand Hotel, Llangollen	£ 6,879.30	£ (416.1)
Other	Bank interest	£ 13.77	
	Unidentified deposits	£ 1,023.78	£ 1,037.5
			<b>£ 4,983.7</b>
<b>EXPENDITURE <sup>1</sup></b>			
Powys Journal	Cost of printing	£ 2,169.81	
	Typesetting	£ 540.72	£ 2,710.5
Powys Newsletters 72-74	Printing costs	£ 2,026.84	
	Cost of distribution	£ 795.07	£ 2,821.9
Day Meetings	Dorchester, May 2011	£ 132.00	
	Chairman's expenses, Dorchester	£ 157.30	
	Brighton Meeting	£ 78.00	£ 367.3
Administrative Costs	Web-site hosting and maintenance	£ 86.47	£ 86.4
Expenses	Curator's expenses	£ 231.65	
	Secretary's expenses	£ 1,268.20	
	Committee expenses	£ 384.25	
	Other officer's expenses	£ 464.57	£ 2,348.6
Other Expenditure			
Subscription	Alliance of Literary Societies	£ 15.00	
Unidentified drawing		£ 39.00	
Bank commission	Overdraft fee	£ 90.00	
Bank charge	interest	£ 27.41	£ 171.4
			<b>£ 8,506.2</b>
<b>EXCESS OF EXPENDITURE OVER INCOME</b>			<b>£ 3,522.5</b>

## STATEMENT OF FUNDS AS AT 31ST DECEMBER 2011

Cash at bank 31st December 2011	£ 21,537.0
Community Account £3,735.50, Instant saver £786.63, Business saver £17,014.875	

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Cash turnover in 2011: total receipts £12,553.85, Total payments £16,083.59

Anna Pawelko, Hon Treasurer