

TWO POWYS DAYS APRIL & JULY

See Pages 2 & 3

Editorial

Our Hampstead meeting last November leads to another appearance of John Cowper's *Diaries*, always engrossing to this reader. Also reappearing is Louis Wilkinson, with another instalment from Bill Keith of his investigations into LW's fictionalising of the Powyses. Joan Lamburn was Louis's third wife, sadly ill-fated as they all were (she died suddenly at 57) but Louis appears in happier early days through Joan's lively letters to Alyse Gregory – a selection from these is made by Chris Wilkinson from his rich family archive. The French Connection thrives (can JCP really be classed as Existentialist?). *Akeing Heart* gets a review in the TLS; The Ark Press and its beautiful books are chronicled; and SPM follows the Stein trail to its (probable) conclusion. A rich haul of contributions: thank you.

KK

Ark symbol by



Ceri Richards

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Two Powys Days

Brandon, Norfolk Saturday 26th April 2014

Sonia Lewis will lead a discussion of the Norfolk chapters of *A Glastonbury Romance*: 'The Will' and 'The River'.



River Wissey, Norfolk.

The meeting will be held in the function room of the **Brandon House Hotel**, which has pleasant views on to the garden, and is conveniently located just around the corner from Brandon railway station. Brandon is an old market town on the edge of Thetford Forest and Brandon Heath.

Discussion will be followed by lunch and a visit to the village of **Northwold** situated a few miles to the north of Brandon. Northwold has strong Powys family associations – JCP's maternal grandfather, William

Cowper Johnson (sen., 1813–93), the model for Canon Crow in *A Glastonbury Romance*, was Rector of Northwold from 1880 to 1892. JCP, Littleton and Theodore often spent their summer holidays at the rectory. There are very evocative descriptions of Northwold in Littleton's *The Joy of It* and in JCP's *Autobiography*.

In his diary, for 3 to 9 August 1929, JCP also recorded a visit to his old childhood haunts in Northwold (helping to provide material for *A Glastonbury Romance*).

Littleton called Northwold 'my boyhood's *Earthly Paradise*'. JCP recalled summer holidays in Northwold and said: '... *what a life that was & how beautiful that house was*'. Our visit to Northwold will provide an opportunity to rediscover the places described by Littleton and JCP including the Rectory, the round pond in the rose garden, the Wissey, Foulden Bridge, Harrod's Mill pond, Dye's Hole and Oxborough Ferry as well as other



Harrod's Mill, Norfolk, 1900.

places of local interest such as the church of St Andrew's (which has a memorial to William Cowper Johnson sen.) and the old Manor House. If time permits some members may wish to visit nearby Methwold or Yaxham (where both William

Cowper Johnson sen. and his son with the same name, also Revd, are buried).

Welcome and coffee is at 10.30. Discussion commences at 11.00. Lunch will be served in the restaurant from 13.00 to 14.00. If you wish to stay overnight you may reserve b&b accommodation direct with the hotel.

Members visited this area in May 1999, briefly reported in Newsletter 37, while extensive related research and pedigrees will be found in 'Powys and East Anglia', by Stephen Powys Marks, in The Powys Journal XIII, 6, 8-39.



*Northwold Church and Rectory, Norfolk, from an old postcard purchased in 1960s.
Compare the present state on page 4, shewing the removal of the high range.*

Dorchester Saturday 19th July 2014

At the Dorset County Museum, Dorchester, a talk on the life, career and writings of **John Meade Falkner** (1858-1932) presented by **Kenneth Hillier**, the founder and Secretary of the **John Meade Falkner Society**. The meeting commences at 10.30 for 11.00 start. Coffee and refreshments will be available. Lunch will be from 13.00 to 14.00 at a local restaurant.

The author, poet, businessman and teacher, John Meade Falkner, spent his childhood in Dorchester and Weymouth and was closely acquainted with many of the locations associated with the Powys family, such as the South and West Walks in Dorchester, and Chesil beach, Portland, and the village of Fleet near Weymouth. Falkner's most famous novel, *Moonfleet* (1898), is set around Chesil and Fleet. Falkner was a friend of Hardy and a keen collector of medieval books and manuscripts. After a long business career in the armaments industry he was appointed senior reader in palaeography at Durham University. John Meade Falkner was also a

poet and author of topographical guides to Oxford, Berkshire and Bath. Falkner's first novel, *The Lost Stradivarius* (1895) reveals an interest in the supernatural, the occult and psychological themes that mirror many of JCP's own interests as well as popular literary tastes of the 1890s. Falkner's other novel *The Nebuly Coat* (1903) also has a Dorset setting. For more information about John Meade Falkner please visit:

< www.johnmeadefalknersociety.co.uk >

The talk will be followed by discussion, lunch and a visit to places associated with Falkner and the Powys family in Weymouth, Chesil and Abbotsbury.

Both events are free although a charge will be made for lunch which is optional. We welcome contributions towards the cost of coffee and refreshments.

Everyone is welcome to attend including non-members. If you plan to attend either event please notify Hon. Secretary Chris Thomas:

either by e-mail: < chris.d.thomas@hotmail.co.uk >

or by post: Flat D, 87 Ledbury Road, London W11 2AG.

CT



Northwold Rectory today from a coloured photograph: the original shews that the porch on the left and the roof slope over it are covered with red tiles, unlike the rest of the building which is slated. Evidently this distinction was made deliberately to mark the removal of the oversize wing nearer the church: this wing shews on early views (page 3).

Committee Nominations

Nominations are invited for **Honorary Officers** and **Members** of the Powys Society Committee to take effect from August 2014.

All paid-up members, together with honorary members, are entitled to submit nominations for the Committee. Nominations must include the name of the **Proposer** and a **Seconder** and should be submitted in writing or by e-mail, accompanied by a statement confirming the **Nominee's agreement**.

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

Nominations must be received by Hon. Secretary by **Monday 2 June 2014**. Current **Honorary Officers** of the Society are:

<i>Chairman</i>	Timothy Hyman
<i>Vice-Chairman</i>	Peter Foss
<i>Hon. Treasurer</i>	Anna Pawelko
<i>Hon. Secretary</i>	Chris Thomas

Nominations are sought for the four positions of Honorary Officers from August 2014.

Current **Members** of the Committee are:

Stephen Powys Marks, **Shelagh Powys Hancox**, **Michael Kowalewski** (Collection Manager) and **Trevor Davies**. All these will complete their three-year term of service in August 2014.

Louise de Bruin (Publications Manager and Conference organiser), **Kate Kavanagh** (*Newsletter* editor), and **Jeff Kwintner**.

Charles Lock (editor of *The Powys Journal*) serves as *ex-officio* member.

Nominations are sought for **four positions on the Committee from August 2014**.

Chris Thomas, Hon. Secretary

The Powys Society Conference, 2014
The Sherborne Hotel, Horsecastles Lane, Sherborne, Dorset

Friday 15th to Sunday 17th August

‘To Chart the Powys World’

It is exciting to look forward again to a Dorset conference, in the Powys Heartland. Our amazing organisers, Louise and Anna, have set us up in a Sherborne hotel, and some of us are hoping to visit Weymouth too. A sense of place was crucial to all three Powys brothers, even – perhaps especially – when they were away from their Dorset

roots. It was Wilson Knight who observed 'There is a tremendous amount of Ordnance Survey in John Cowper Powys.'

This said, the talks this year reach far afield. Peter Foss, who has worked for decades on Llewelyn, will be introducing us to the newly-published *Diary* of 1910, the year when the young tubercular romantic is holed up in a Davos sanatorium. Jonathan Goodwin (who has written in the *Journal* on *A Glastonbury Romance* and more recently on *The Brazen Head*) is coming over from America for his first Powys Conference; he will be exploring JCP's later far-flung yarns such as *Atlantis*. Marcella Henderson-Peal will be giving us a preliminary account of her revealing discoveries in Paris of John Cowper's contacts with Jean Wahl and other French intellectuals of the 1930s, '40s and '50s. David Gervais, who has so often presented us with new insights into T. F. Powys, has promised an evening talk. And on the Friday evening I will be recollecting one of the crucial founders of The Powys Society and an early mentor to me, the Shakespeare 'interpreter' Wilson Knight, whose pioneering study of JCP, *The Saturnian Quest*, was originally subtitled 'A Chart of the prose works of John Cowper Powys'.

I think our own quest in each of these meetings is to fill in some of the gaps in our own Powys Charts – and also, collectively, to continue to map out more fully this complex, ever-fascinating terrain.

Timothy Hyman

DRAFT PROGRAMME

Friday 15th August

- 16.00 Arrival
- 17.30 Reception
- 18.30 Dinner
- 20.00 **Timothy Hyman:** 'Remembering Wilson Knight'

Saturday 16th August

- 08.00 Breakfast
- 09.30 **Peter Foss:** 'The Conqueror Worm': Llewelyn Powys's diary for 1910
Coffee
- 11.15 **Marcella Henderson-Peal:** 'JCP and France: his reception and
reputation in the 1930s and later decades'
- 13.00 Lunch
Afternoon free – visit to **Weymouth** or guided walk to local places
associated with JCP's novel *Wolf Solent*
- 19.00 Dinner
- 20.30 **David Gervais:** 'Novellas of Theodore Francis Powys', followed by
discussion with members

Sunday 17th August

- 00.80 Breakfast
09.30 **Jonathan Goodwin:** 'Style and character in JCP's late romances'
11.00 **AGM** followed by discussion
13.00 Lunch
15.00 Departure

The Speakers

Peter Foss is Vice-Chairman of The Powys Society. He is a writer and artist and well known as an authority on Llewelyn Powys: his *A Bibliography of Llewelyn Powys* was published by the British Library and Oak Knoll Press in 2007. He has contributed many articles on Llewelyn Powys to the Society's publications and was the first editor of *The Powys Journal* in 1991. His indispensable book on Llewelyn Powys, *A Study of Llewelyn Powys: His literary Criticism and Personal Philosophy*, was published by The Edwin Mellen Press in 1991. He has since edited Llewelyn's diaries for 1903, 1908 and 1909, published by Cecil Woolf 2005–07; his edition of Llewelyn's diary for 1910, *The Conqueror Worm*, which includes many illustrations and photographs, is to be published by Cecil Woolf in August and will be launched at the Conference. Copies will be available for sale at a special introductory price.

For many years Peter has been investigating the history of Market Bosworth, its topography and links with the Battle of Bosworth. He published a history of Market Bosworth in 1983 and a book about the Battle of Bosworth, *The Field of Redemore*, in 1990. Recently Peter has been involved with the archaeological survey of the real Bosworth battlefield (see *Newsletter* 78, March 2012).

In 'The Conqueror Worm' Peter's talk will focus on the context of Llewelyn's stay at Clavadel Sanatorium in 1910, and include information about contemporary cures and treatment for tuberculosis which Llewelyn encountered, as well as a description of his fellow patients and many of the people he met in the local area.

David Gervais is Honorary Fellow of English at Reading University. He was editor for many years of *The Cambridge Quarterly* and is an authority on French literature. He has contributed many articles on French and English literature to *PN Review*, as well as on the work of artists such as Bonnard and Stanley Spencer. He is the author of *Flaubert and Henry James, A Study of Contrasts* (1979) and *Literary Englands: Versions of Englishness in Modern Writing* (1993) which includes sections on the Powyses. He has articles and reviews in *The Powys Journal*, and his *John Cowper Powys, T. S. Eliot and French Literature* is in the Cecil Woolf 'Powys Heritage' series. David has a special interest in the work of T. F. Powys.

Jonathan Goodwin is Assistant Professor of English at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette. He has specialist teaching interests in modernism, twentieth-century

and contemporary British literature, cognitive science, computational approaches to literary analysis, narrative theory, film and new media. Jonathan is co-editor of *Reading Graphs, Maps, Trees: Critical responses to Franco Moretti* (2011) and has published articles on Joyce, Olaf Stapledon and Wyndham Lewis. He is a member of the editorial board of *The Powys Journal* and has contributed articles on JCP: 'Nationalism and Re-enchantment in John Cowper Powys's *A Glastonbury Romance*' (*PJ* xvii, 2007), and 'Animated Fictions: Characters in *The Brazen Head*' (*PJ* xxiii, 2013). Jonathan is currently working on three linked projects associated with temporal imagination, cognitive science and narrative theory, and social discourse and intelligence. In his talk on *JCP's Late Romances*, Jonathan will extend some of the observations he has made about *The Brazen Head*, *Atlantis* and other works.

Marcella Henderson-Peal is an ESP (English for Special Purposes) lecturer at UPEC/Paris XII University. She is currently completing a doctoral dissertation on John Cowper Powys's literary and philosophical reception in France, researching exchanges of correspondence and conducting interviews with French philosophers who have been influenced by JCP's books and ideas. She has also carried out interviews with French translators of JCP's books such as Diane de Margarie (*Weymouth Sands / Les Sables de la Mer*). Marcella's researches and investigations have revealed an extensive range of unpublished material about JCP in France showing how seriously he was received by French intellectuals as early as the 1930s; she aims to collect all this material and preserve the documents and recorded memories in a special archive.

In 'JCP and France', Marcella will examine the relationship between JCP and French existentialist philosophy between 1937 and today, illustrated with quotations from the important exchange of correspondence between JCP and Jean Wahl and other French philosophers such as Gabriel Marcel. It may be possible to show a recently made film in which the philosopher Robert Misrahi talks about Powys and his influence.

Timothy Hyman is Chairman of The Powys Society and has contributed articles on JCP to *The Powys Journal* and *Powys Review* as well as a ground-breaking essay on JCP's philosophy of life in *Essays on John Cowper Powys*, edited by Belinda Humfrey (1972). He studied as a painter at the Slade and was elected Royal Academician (RA) in 2011. As well as nine London solo exhibitions (most recently 'The Man Inscribed with London' at Austin/Desmond Fine Art in 2009) he has shown widely and his work is in many public collections. He was artist in residence at Maggie's Cancer Caring Centres in 2011–2012. Thames & Hudson have published his monographs on *Bonnard* (1998) and *Sieneese Painting* (2003). He was lead Curator of the Tate's Stanley Spencer retrospective in 2001. The influence of JCP can be seen in his multi-character narratives and panoramas.

Timothy has been associated with The Powys Society since its beginning and was a contributor to the centenary conference in 1972. His review of *Visions and Vices*, a

collection of Wilson Knight's essays on JCP, was published in *The Powys Journal* II (1992), and his portrait of Wilson Knight called 'The House of the Interpreter' was reproduced in *Pŷ* VIII (1998). Among his contributions to conferences was his illustrated talk on *JCP*, the 'Quest for the Pictorial Equivalent' (see *Pŷ* II).

In 'Remembering Wilson Knight', a personal reminiscence, Timothy will explore Wilson Knight's 'interpretation' of JCP.

AGM 2014

This gives notice that the **Annual General Meeting of The Powys Society** will be held at 11.00 on Sunday 17th August at the Sherborne Hotel, Horsecastles Lane, Sherborne, DT9 6BB.

All members of The Powys Society are welcome to attend and participate in the AGM whether or not they are attenders at the Conference.

Chris Thomas, Hon. Secretary

Obituaries

Colin Wilson (1931–2013)

Colin Wilson, novelist, literary critic and existentialist philosopher, died in hospital on December 5th 2013 following complications caused by a stroke and pneumonia. He was 82. Colin Wilson, who achieved immediate success with the publication of his first book *The Outsider* in 1956, was a passionate admirer of JCP's major novels and a keen advocate of his work. He contributed to the centenary conference, at Churchill College, Cambridge in 1972 (See *Powys Review* I, Spring 1977) where he presented a talk called *Powys – The Depth Psychologist*. He also attended our Conference in 2002 at Millfield School, Street, and gave a talk on *Wolf Solent* called 'To Live in Two Worlds' (see report in *The Powys Journal* XXIII, 2003). A brief acknowledgement of Wilson's contribution to the recognition of JCP's literary reputation can be found in *NL* 17 (November, 1992).

Wilson was an amazingly prolific writer producing 181 books on a wide variety of subjects from the paranormal, music, archaeology, ancient civilizations and criminology to literature, philosophy, the psychology of human consciousness and studies of what Reinhold Niebuhr called 'the nature and destiny of man' (some of these published by Jeff Kwintner's Village Press), as well as novels and numerous articles, reviews and introductions to books by other authors.

In my early teens Wilson was my idol. I even sent him a fan letter which stimulated, in reply, a five-page letter describing his current writing projects and ideas. Reading Wilson's books always left me feeling giddy with intellectual excitement and I am

indebted to him for his constant inspiration. In the Preface to Wilson's novel *Man without a Shadow* (1963) I found this reference to JCP: 'The novel form confers a strange freedom on the writer. Compare, for example, the critical writings of John Cowper Powys with his best novels ... What is there to prepare you for the sweep, the power, the impact of ... *Wolf Solent* or *A Glastonbury Romance*?' This sounds simple enough but the effect on me was extraordinary. He set me off on a lifetime literary adventure and involvement with JCP's work.

Wilson was capable of penetrating analysis such as his discussion of the role of eroticism and sadism in the character of Mr Evans. This analysis attracted the attention of Wilson Knight, who in *The Saturnian Quest* referred to Wilson's 'important contacts with Powys's esoteric sexology', and in his study of JCP's *A Complex Vision* (1977, reprinted in *Visions & Vices*, 1990) referred to Wilson's theory of 'Faculty X', man's untapped powers and capacity to achieve higher states of consciousness. In his essay *Poetry and Magic* (included in *Neglected Powers*, 1971) Wilson Knight also paid a warm tribute to Colin Wilson's abilities as a critic and philosopher in terms which could easily be applied to his appreciation and advocacy of JCP: 'Among our younger philosophers, Colin Wilson has, in a succession of incisive studies, fought vigorously for a new metaphysical and religious apprehension. His approach is throughout positive, optimistic, and health giving; in his fiction he shows sympathy with the occult; and we may accordingly expect from him an ever increasing access of strength.'

Some of Colin Wilson's references to JCP can be found in *The Strength to Dream* (1962); *Man without a Shadow* (1963); *Origins of the Sexual Impulse* (1963); *The Aylesford Review*, Spring 1964 (reprinted in *Eagle and Earwig*, 1965); *The Glass Cage*, author's dedication (1966); *The Occult* (1971); *The Craft of the Novel* (1975); *Mysteries* (1978), a review of *The Saturnian Quest* (1979) reprinted in *Existential Criticism* (2009); *Beyond the Occult* (1988); *The Books in my Life* (1998); and *Dreaming to some Purpose* (2004). Wilson also produced an unpublished synopsis for an opera based on *A Glastonbury Romance*. The **Colin Wilson World** website includes obituaries by Robert Cracknell and by Wilson's bibliographer and publisher Colin Stanley, as well as a link to a comments page, *Colin Wilson RIP*.

Chris Thomas

Dante Thomas (1922–2013)

Dante Thomas (Zaccagnini), SUNY Geneseo Professor Emeritus of English, died at his home in Geneseo last October.

from Charles Lock and Chris Thomas:

Dante Thomas's *Bibliography of the Writings of John Cowper Powys 1872–1963*, with a foreword by G. Wilson Knight, appeared in 1975 from the New York publisher Paul P. Appel. A small publisher, active for about twenty-five years between, roughly, 1970

and 1995, many of Appel's titles were editions for the American market of books published in London. It is to be regretted that the *Bibliography* of JCP never found a British publisher.

Dante Thomas set out to supplement the work of Derek Langridge's *John Cowper Powys: A Record of Achievement*, published in London in 1966 (as also Lloyd Emerson Siberell's much older *Bibliography of the first editions of JCP* (1934)).

While Langridge had concentrated on identifying first editions and all reviews and reprints, he had explicitly omitted to give the 'full bibliographical description' as this 'would only obscure' the task of putting on display Powys's reputation as it had developed year by year. Langridge wrote in his Introduction: 'I have left the definitive record of first editions to another time (and perhaps another compiler).' Dante Thomas identifies himself with that other compiler, and is keen to make it clear that his is not a rival to Langridge's bibliography but, rather, completes it. Langridge himself offered assistance, as did E. E. Bissell, Gerald Pollinger and Peter Grey. The accuracy of Thomas's work is admirable, as is that of Langridge; the difference is that Langridge presents a narrative, a biography in editions and reviews, whereas Thomas presents exhaustive collations and minutely precise descriptions of the physical composition: 'spine stamped with triple gold line decoration forming six horizontal three-line bands connected by three triple-lined x's'.

The bibliography has a good index. The text is enlivened by personal touches such as a description of DTZ's visit to JCP's neighbour in Hillsdale, Albert Krick, who showed him JCP's famous writing board; also a reference to a letter from JCP to the young DTZ, in reply to an enquiry about Henry Miller's books (the letter is reproduced in *My Friend Henry Miller* by Alfred Perlès (1956, 1962) and was also published by Jeff Kwintner in 1973 as *The Genius of Henry Miller*).

Dante Thomas's thorough and detailed bibliography lives on as a distinguished and valuable aid (in the words of Wilson Knight) to John Cowper Powys's formidable achievement. The bibliography is still available and can be purchased on the internet at Amazon or the Advanced Book Exchange (ABE).

from Soren Thomas:

My father Dante Thomas passed away on October 31st. My mother and I were with him and he passed gently and peacefully at the age of 91. I asked my mother who she thought that my dad would want to see first in the next realm, and without hesitation, she said 'John Cowper Powys'.

As you must know, Dante was well versed in the works and publications of all of the Powys siblings and wrote their bibliographies in 1975. In the years after the publication of his bibliography, Dante continued avidly to collect Powys writings, and as you can imagine, he left behind a significant collection, including all of the items listed in the bibliography, many signed works, and the real gem, J.C.P.'s own signed and annotated leather-bound galley proof for *Wolf Solent*. There is so much there. (*Soren Thomas hopes to sell these either piecemeal or as a whole.*)

A note by **Paul Schacht** of the English Department at SUNY (State University, NY) Geneseo, on their website, remembers Dante Thomas as ‘soft-spoken, unassuming, gentle and generous, a much-loved teacher and a wonderful colleague. He was an insatiable reader and book-collector with an encyclopedic knowledge of the world’s literatures and a special passion for discovering great writers ignored or forgotten by the majority of scholars. He shared not only his passion for books but the books themselves, taking special delight in finding attractive editions tied to various colleagues’ interests and simply giving them away, together with an amusing or illuminating literary anecdote ... He was also a talented photographer.

Former colleagues recall his thoughtful efforts to include younger members in the academic community, and his friendship and guidance introducing many writers and books, ‘Jean Giono, Juan Rulfo, Laura Riding, Gabriella Mistral, Blaise Cendrars and Knut Hamsun, to name a few ...’ (from **Gerald Mancini**).

David Hill

David Hill, who died last summer, was a valued and appreciative member of the Society who attended several conferences since his first in 2005, of which he contributed a Personal View.

First Conference

As a member of a mere two years’ standing, I was attending my first Conference and, although the programme had been clearly set out, I was not quite sure what to expect. Not that I was new to the Powyses. JCP has been a lifelong interest, ever since I browsed as a child through *In Defence of Sensuality* and *A Glastonbury Romance*, which were on the bookshelves at home! Most of the books there, including these two, had belonged to my mother’s brother (another Jack), who had been killed on naval service in the Second World War and had obviously been a great reader with a very eclectic taste. My introductions to Theodore and Llewelyn came a little later. As a high school English teacher in western Kenya in the seventies I chose *Mr. Weston’s Good Wine* as a set text for A-level (it went down surprisingly well). At about the same time I came across *Ebony and Ivory* (appropriately enough) in a Nairobi bookshop

I arrived late on Friday in Llangollen, owing to mechanical problems with my car, just in time for the last part of the first lecture. So I missed out on the opening proceedings. It wasn’t really until the following morning that I began to feel part of the Conference, as I listened to the lectures and talked to people in the intervals and at lunch. The afternoon drew me further in, sharing the Dinas Brân experience with Kate and Patrick Kavanagh (who kindly provided the transport) and a number of others. The evening entertainment [*Player Kings*, devised by Chris Wilkinson] was highly enjoyable, taking the form of a dramatized reading of extracts portraying Oliver Wilkinson’s time at drama school and his reactions to his father and to JCP. Things really seemed to be getting into a swing, but unfortunately the next day – a

mere half day – was the end of the Conference, with an excellent final lecture on TFP's prose and the AGM followed by some discussion of place in the lives and works of the Powyses. The Conference seemed to be over almost before it had begun.

So how would I sum things up? I suppose (despite what I said in my opening sentence) that what I was hoping to find was some feeling of the *spirit* of the Powys brothers, above all of John. The spirit was not entirely missing, I felt, but the emphasis seemed to be on the academic study of the Powys's writings rather than the living experience embodied in their lives and works. I have nothing against academics; indeed I am one myself, albeit in an EFL, not a literature, department. But I would have liked there to have been more of a celebration – perhaps also a reaffirmation – of that unique Powysian vitality.

I wonder what the Powyses themselves would have thought of the Conference (or of the Society!) if they came back to life. Glad that at least some people still valued their books no doubt, but perhaps somewhat ambivalent about the actual content of the proceedings. JCP, as we were reminded at the entertainment, had a very different idea of criticism from the academic ideal. Would 'The Return of the Powyses' make a good theme for a future entertainment? Despite these misgivings, I did enjoy the Conference. The setting was idyllic, the weather balmy and the company congenial. I met some interesting people and heard some stimulating ideas. I will certainly come again.

Ray Burnham

It was sad to hear of the death of **Ray Burnham** on 21st October last. His wife Joan tells that despite Parkinson's he maintained his interest in literature and science to the end, and kept a pile of books beside him including Hardy, Walter de la Mare as well as JCP's *Maiden Castle* and *Weymouth Sands*. His favourite book by JCP was always *Wolf Solent*.

In NL 68 (November 2009) John Hodgson (then Chairman) wrote:

At the end of September, Kate Kavanagh drove Chris Thomas and me down to Great Torrington in Devon to collect a gift of Powys books kindly donated to the Society by Ray Burnham. Ray and his wife Joan welcomed us very hospitably to their book-filled house with its glorious views over the valley of the River Torridge, and we talked not just of the Powyses but Dostoevsky, T. E. Lawrence, and Trollope. Ray is a founder member of the society, but has always lived far from society events, first in the North-West of England, where he worked for many years as a mathematics lecturer, and for the last ten years in west Devon. He recalls being able to attend a meeting only once, at the Friends Meeting House in Hampstead in the 1960s. However, he has maintained a close interest in the society through its publications. We collected six carefully packed cardboard boxes of books by and about all the writing Powyses, and in expressing our thanks to Ray for his generosity to the society of which he has been a member for over forty years, we are also pleased that he has kept back for himself copies of John Cowper Powys's great Wessex novels.

John Cowper as Diarist

Hampstead meeting, 23rd November 2013

The Society has been meeting in the Friends Meeting House Hampstead, whose sober Arts and Crafts comfort is so redolent of plain living and high thinking, almost since its inception. Ten members and friends (including some newcomers) gathered in the Meeting House on 23rd November to discuss John Cowper Powys's diaries, equipped with extracts from the diary describing the same November week in between 1929 and 1940.

John Hodgson said that before the diaries were generally known, they acquired a mythic aura, and it was thought that they might be the key to unlock the secret heart of JCP's personality. Also a key to his relations with Phyllis, added Tim Hyman, another veteran of early Powys Society meetings. Yet for all their apparent uninhibitedness, they are still reticent, evasive, and indeed strange.

The discussion dwelt chiefly on the earlier diaries, the most publicly available. There are vivid descriptions of New York, which often prompt excursions and speculations of the imagination. John Cowper records going to the theatre to see the dancer 'La Argentina' – whose sister, 'La Argentinita' was the close friend of Lorca. This was during Lorca's visit to New York. Were Powys and Lorca at the same occasion?

After JCP and Phyllis Playter left Patchin Place in New York city, there were still occasional excursions from their home up-state, and regular glimpses of New York life conjure up this time: Child's restaurants (which turned vegetarian), the Brevoort hotel with its barber's shop; the newly built Empire State building. And ever present, the Depression, with challenging queues for food and the unemployed sleeping rough.

At Hillsdale, beside the detailed and sympathetic descriptions of nature and farming life (now of great interest to local historians), there are intriguing glimpses of the intellectual friends of Arthur and Gladys Ficke (JCP follows, on the whole, his principle in *Autobiography* of only saying nice things). Chris Thomas finds these set you off on quests – also the modern books they read, and newspaper reports that caught their attention.

Who were the diaries written for? They were started at Phyllis's suggestion, as replacements for the many letters to her written on JCP's lecture tours. John Cowper and Phyllis Playter discussed editing a selection for publication, and an 'unknown reader' is often invoked, as in *Autobiography*. Kate Kavanagh thought the unknown reader might be a kind of 'Recording Angel', like the 'invisible watchers' of *A Glastonbury Romance*. The diaries are in a sense a continuation of *Autobiography* ('this is what he — I — turned into')

Chris Proctor found the appearance of the handwritten pages frightening, dislocated, even disturbed, although the tectonic plates of text do follow a regular and predictable pattern, to which the reader becomes accustomed.

There was discussion of what is included and excluded. Timothy Hyman said that these are *walking* diaries. Often they do not describe John Cowper's day much beyond half past nine in the morning: perhaps their function was to fire up his day's writing. Sometimes John Cowper returned to them to describe his second afternoon walk.

Returning from walks to breakfast (with toast) and to (high) tea are regular ceremonies. Bedtimes and wakings are always recorded. Included are also John Cowper's obsessive rituals and 'rigmaroles', addressing prayers to named stones and trees and other objects, which he evidently found a burden, even if necessary for a calm conscience, as was his scrupulous letter-writing.

There are regular health reports of both himself and 'the TT', together with bedroom and bathroom descriptions unusual in diaries. The tribulations of house-keeping and Phyllis's moods may be exaggerated – perhaps in an attempt to de-fuse them.

There are many recollections of JCP's childhood, especially during the writing of *Weymouth Sands* in 1932–3, but very few of the earlier American years, just as later he seldom refers to the years at Phudd. JCP *moves on*.

Excluded is almost all description of his writing life. There is little family news. Large events are neglected in favour of small events, upsetting the usual hierarchies of experience. Timothy Hyman commented that Stanley Spencer's paintings also illustrate a similar reversal of hierarchies. This concentration on the ostensibly minor makes the task of selecting from the diaries very difficult, as choosing only what is at first sight important and interesting obscures and even distorts their character.

How are we to take John Cowper's relationship with the spirit of his dead dog? Does The Old represent all death and memory? Each morning John Cowper asks the Old's spirit whether it wishes to rise from the grave or not, and sometimes the dog responds, sometimes prefers to be left where he is – as do, KK pointed out, the dead in T. F. Powys's *Fables*.

The good humour and comedy of the diaries offer a good deal of enjoyment to the reader, as John Cowper casts his 'blunderings' and even his misfortunes in a comic light. The diaries become a kind of extension of his acting self, this time to an unidentified audience. Does this make the pleasure of a modern reader a little voyeuristic?

John Hodgson and KK

Diaries 1929–31 have been published complete in book form; mid-1934–35 in The Dorset Year, and selections up to 1939 in Petrushka and the Dancer. Transcripts of other years (made by Sally Powys) can be consulted (contact Secretary), and the 1939 original from NLW can be seen via the Powys website.

Ten Novembers

1929

Saturday, November 23, 1929 (at Patchin Place, returned from a lecture tour)

I finished John Herrmann's* Manuscript like a new water-colour method. I read it in the smoking room of the train; but I did not have any tears.

Reached New York by Sleeper at 8.30 & reached the Room at nine. The room looked especially nice because of the two new Bureaus of white bare wood & because of the new Chinese Box placed on one of these — the one in the alcove; & because P. had got the bed made & the coffee & tea 'most ready'. Perfect! Perfect. Such is perfect felicity. Felt so pleased with everything when I went down to the Privy and looked at the funny little crystals in the glass of the window there, like so many cockles and mussels & barnacles on a rock and when I listened to P. tell of all her adventures going about to Wall St with Mrs Woolsey & about her talks about Japan with the Midget and when we read our letters & I heard of P's last Suicide — for she collects these as if they were beautiful dark butterflies — that I longed for some wretched person to whom I might pour out some drops of my overbrimming cup of happiness.

After lunch at Childs I persuaded P. to walk with me & we walked all round Washington Square which we had not done for a very long time & looked at the sparrows roosting in the plane-tree & at a gilded chair in a shop and we bought Theodore's Fables at the shop & this will be, we can see, our favourite of all. Then we noted the sky of a most indescribable colour; not blue or green or grey.

Rex Hunter came and talked of Mrs Woolsey. He said she was 'a bad sport'. We visited Mrs Woolsey during this day.

* *John Herrman and wife Josephine Herbst, 'that Adam and Eve of the workshop who we love so very well'. Both published several novels in the 1930s.*

1930

Sunday 23rd November 1930 (from Phudd to NY)

Still very warm. But the T.T. was too busy to go out with me in the field today. But she looked out of the Attic window — the North window. And from that lovely field with real grass underfoot and Small Black on top of steps, I looked at my dear true love's little head held out of window and drooping as I have so often loved to see it because of weakness and thinness of neck.

Do you know I have scarcely had any time to write my book lately because of the many letters I have had to write — O such a lot — and some of 'em dull and tiresome too. At 2.45 Mr. S[teuerwald] faithfully came and I gave him 10 dollars for all his trips. Goodbye to the T.T. I said, speaking like a magician, 'Tho' your sickness is due it will not come it will not begin till I come back.'

In the train I read Faust in Anna Swanwick Bohn Library, very bad verse translation. But I liked reading it. The conversation between Mephistopheles and the Lemures about the Past and Eternal Nothingness over Faust's grave is very good. Yes I say it is 'the clock strikes the index falls', what does the 'index' mean? I want Paul Piel* to tell me.

In the train I saw the New Moon thro' Glass. The ill-luck brought by this came instantaneously for from 1.30 to 4 that night I had suffering tho' I had only 1 egg and bread and butter. The suffering was bad and I had wicked, cruel thoughts full of evil malice purely because of it. I imagined pulling Marian's grey hair and I made hideous faces as I lay tossing. This I did partly

because that she had asked Masters over the 'phone in a too casual way so it seemed to my neurotic mind. This suffering makes me very jumpy and liable to go up in the air.

* *a Patchin Place resident, sculptor and philosopher.*

1931

Monday 23rd November 1931 (Phudd)

Saw today a butterfly! This night was happy in my way & it was even more excellent than in Lulu's. Never, no! never have I got such wicked pleasure. She is a Simple Paradise, this Elemental 'of mine'. But at Midnight she fell ill — the well known Collapse. All day she has been ill but not badly so — until the night. I hoped all was going to be well but well-a-way, alack & alas! she's been very bad this Monday night especially before she took ice-water. She has now discovered that a lot of ice-water when she usually takes Malted Milk at the end is the best thing & then the Malted Milk sends her happily to sleep.

Hot, a very hot day. It was warmer even than yesterday — a warm summer day. I went my walks with nothing on but my knickerbockers & stockings and underpants & under vest and my father's grey shirt & braces — no waistcoat, no coat, no cardigan jacket. I visited the Perdita Stone & had to kiss it nine times for the Black pissed on it ere I could stop him for I generally make a detour to prevent this but my mind was occupied & I forgot. Met Albert* with the two White Horses removing a wall — the wall of the field this side of Witch's garden and throwing it down their side of Brook.

I walked further along the Rough Battlefield Hedge than I have ever done in the twilight. There was a big lemon coloured Moon — tomorrow it must be full — It gets full very quickly the moment you see it pass its Half-Moon stage. I heard men's voices down by Grotto & the noise of fowls being chased not that wild romantic call I heard there another day of a girl's voice calling cattle. How high that hedge was. The Black & I were alarmed by these rough voices and turned back when were near the orchard opposite the Grotto. The Black and I feel safer in the open country & on a high bare hill than where there are high hedges & loud voices!

The Shaver** family all arrived & came in & Mrs Shaver talked a well meaning and kind women but one for talking. She brought my beautiful pyjamas which I hope to wear when I seduce my Cimmerian Elemental. I seduce her all over again very often! That is because she is always a little girl & needs to be seduced again. The retiring Miss Shaver let the Mees*** in & the old Lady did laugh when the Mees scratched Mrs Shaver. The Mees entertained them. Later at night Mrs Krick called & told me how ill she was and how she dreaded an operation & feared to go to a surgeon. But she is a heroic & Spartan woman all the same. I like her. The T.T. told me to sleep in the Spare-Room but the Mees disturbed me and it was miserably stuffy there so I moved to the Attic which was airy and I preferred it. Saw a clouded yellow butterfly.

* *young Albert Krick, neighbour and helper.*

** *from Philmont. Mr Shaver helped Phyllis make her garden.*

*** *their white mother cat.*

1932

Wednesday 23rd November 1932 (Phudd)

A terrible cold night. 6 Above Zero. The T.T. wrote her letter and came up frozen & miserable. She cried in bed because I talked careless — like as to where we should go. O she was so pathetic. I did feel such a wave of wanting to hug her into warmth & content — poor little bird — little Awk!

Got up about Six to judge by the pale light but the clock was stopped. All the windows were Frost-pictured — such ferns & wonderful trees got somehow there drawn by the spirits of the frost. Some [of] her plants were frozen to the window leaving green patches on the pane when torn off. This is all because we have no Storm Windows yet. Worked at getting the stoves to burn high & warm. Did the things. Called the T.T. Took Black via mail to Prometheus Stone. It was a crystal-glittering morn all silver white & the sun sparkling on the river & on the icicles — like inverted mushrooms made of tinkling glass — hanging on all objects near the water.

Called the T.T. again on returning & the Good Docile girl got up & came down long ere I thought she would! I have now established the Custom of reading to T.T. after breakfast first Homer then the New Testament — the former in Greek & English the latter in Greek English & Latin. Homer was about Poseidon being told by Isis to halt his warlike activities and the other was about John the Baptist. The T.T. enjoyed her lesson like a little Princess taught by an aged Magician.

Worked at my 2nd chapter about Perdita's arrival at Weymouth. At four the T.T. went to Kricks* where she was rather unsympathetically treated about her visit to Maurice Chevalier at Great [B]arrington. She came home a bit indignant.

I took Black by Mr. Stein's Quarry after talking to Mr. Stein & Mr. Hawver** with him working on the road. They said how Fred Stein & Harvey Hawver were both now employed at some job for the winter. Saw the sun set red as blood from the top of Stein Hill & the pines in High Wood to the East looked wonderful dark green. I note how these days all the Pines & Hemlocks and white birches have suddenly become very beautiful. Thus I saw today both the Sun rise & the sunset and knelt to Him on both occasions uttering my prayer — taken from the Iliad.

I had rather troublesome discomfort under my right ribs before & worse still after tea. After tea the T.T. told me so beautifully the story of that Picture of Chevalier invented by an Armenian.*** O how well she told it. I liked it very much. It was like a fairy tale. Tonight when we opened Mail there was McDermott's cheque for \$400 — Thanks be! Discomfort after tea.

* *nearest and dearest neighbours*

** *other neighbours. Jobs were scarce.*

*** *two films starring Chevalier (with Jeanette MacDonald) came out in 1932. 'Love Me Tonight', with songs by Lorenz and Hart, was directed by Rouben Mamoulian (an Armenian) and is considered one of the greatest film musicals.*

1933

Thursday 23rd November 1933 (Phudd)

Up at 7 a.m. Another Spring Day. Still warm. Sunshine.

Mr. Scutt* came. It has begun! Everything topsy-turvy because of the new bookcase in study the new paper the new carpet — the new paint - all all all new & done over & all changed! Had to look sharp, I can tell 'ee! No No time for Prayers or Rituals or Rigmaroles. Could not even shave & yet this is my second day without shaving — such a thing I cannot remember when it last happened! Not for years & years & years — maybe not since I lived at Southwick over Pollard's Grocery as a Bachelor and met Mr. De Kantzow first!

Took the Mail enclosing Schuster's promising letter about Photography books to Berenice**. It is a chance for her! Schuster being as he says photo-minded at this juncture. There was a cloud over Ridge just like another Ridge — I wondered at it till before my gazing eyes it faded away! Saw a solitary black bird, a Starling I believe, on the top of an Apple tree

against a silvery pale Spring Sky. O how green & wet and mossy & spring-like look the soft pastures today! Was shocked to see that my favourite apple tree to the right of the road to the Spinney by the Kricks ploughed field is being dug up by its roots. A chain was round it and by its side an axe a pick & a shovel; I crossed the ditch dug round it & embraced it saying my goodbye! How passive how enduring it looked — & so like the Apple tree in our Montacute orchard that we used to climb! Doomed it is — Doomed, Doomed. And yet only yesterday I had filled my pockets with apples from it lying on the ground for my friend Sis. Mrs. Freehan called Bulls Critters, because in this land the word Bull is considered an Indecent word! Think of that! Aren't they queer these Americans? We had breakfast in the Dining Room. The T.T. said why don't we have more meals here ... so nice & fresh and free from all our usual employments & free from books — but I gave three or four reasons against it! but I think my real reason is that I do so like sitting on Horse-Hair sofa under Rousseau & near the Big Dictionaries of Greek & Latin!

I am conscious of my Side today owing to that long long walk past the Stetz & up Arthur's Lane & round by Ashgard in so warm weather! Last time I went there 'twas cold & I was not so exhausted. Damn! It makes me Hypochondriacal to feel my Side.

Had a lovely letter from Old Littleton about composing the Foster School Song*** for their banquet at the Digby Hotel. I said I must compose a song for the Harlemlville School! why not? & get Mr. Bloch**** to compose the music! We moved the couch into Dining Room but the Black is afraid to go under it. He is agitated at all this upset of the House!

Took Black to Arthur's Lane. Read after tea "The Earth Turns" by Carroll*****. My side is gradually becoming normal again. Thank the Lord!

* *local carpenter and handyman. See photograph in Petrushka and the Dancer.*

** *photographer friend who had just been staying, 'talking earnestly about Communism'. 'She wants to catch the red "inartistic" secret of America with her camera.'*

*** *Foster's Grammar, Sherborne. See NL53, letter from Terry Little.*

**** *The composer Ernest Bloch had visited the Fickes.*

***** *As The Earth Turns by Gladys Hasty Carroll, a novel of farm life in Maine (1933), filmed the following year.*

1934

Friday 23 November 1934 (38 High East St., Dorchester)

The T.T. sees Portland for the first time. She likes it greatly.

Up at 6.50. Felt my cold moved into my head where tis a trouble but not nigh as bad as I feared! The T.T. was awake when I lit her fire which is always a trial to her owing to my bad & obstinate way with a Fire. This time the bonfire of kindling seemed, because of Mr Pinfold's pestiferously huge & ungasseous lumps of blackness, to have but remote connection with the big pieces of coal above it! This agitated the T.T.!

I went to the River Frome & back, throwing a biscuit to 'Dilly' & noting a cow with a crumpled Horn lying on the grass. We had a pleasant time at breakfast & then I went to the Bank & got out Thirty Pounds 15£ each for our trip. I pray this will serve us. I shall for myself Keep Accounts. Then old Littleton came & with him we went in his car. I stopped at his request to return to the Goodden's at Upwey Walter Besant's little book on Rabelais. Saw the old man drivng but he did not see us.

Arrived at Weymouth. Stopped at No. 20 Brunswick Terrace next door to Penn House. Went to a Urinal on the Esplanade & then hurried down to the edge of the sea. Went with old

Littleton to take his car to the Garage — no! this was later in the day! Walked with him beneath High House where there was a light — No! this too was later! Set out with Mabel in the car for Portland. Went over fleet Bridge & I found a place to ‘pump-ship’ again near where we left the car. Then we had lunch — I drinking milk from my can — on Chesil Beach. It was very calm. Found some transparent stones & the T.T. took one of them to keep. Then we did go back to the car and drove up the high steep hill. The T.T. was pleased with Portland. We went to the Bill & below Pulpit Rock saw two Rock Salmon that a man had caught from the top of the rocky cliff. Jumped over two terrible crevasses. The ‘Race’ had foam. Went to Bow & Arrow Castle. The T.T. was so pleased with a group of Portland men there.

ENEMA. Two of them. Not very good.

1936

Monday 23rd November 1936 (Corwen; JCP to Weymouth)

Fog Fog Fog. Took Old as far as Mr. Simon’s Rectory. Walked all the way with the Town Crier & another man who I have many times taken for a Tramp. Walked all the way back with our Naturalist friend Mr. Thomas! Then had a happy breakfast with the T.T. & read the letters and then set out for the station. Fare to London Return £1. 4. 0. And fare to Weymouth Return curiously enough (tho’ 3 hours as against 5 hours) just the same £1. 4. 0. Travelled with a handsome lady of Corwen who has some little business of her own in Llangollen & also with Farmer the close friend of that other Farmer (a Bard of note) who hanged himself because 5 cows died & he owed £100. Then travelled to London with an officer of Gough’s Army* an enemy of Lloyd George and a friend of Haig’s; and with a young girl from Shrewsbury. The officer talked very friendly and we were happy companions.

Met by little Mrs. Oatley Bennett & drove with me through the Park; had a long happy lunch in Waterloo Station & caught the 4.30 train to Weymouth. Here I was met by Mabel and we walked along the Beach — it did thrill me to see the sea again & the clock and the spire & the statue & the Harbour Lights & hear the Shambles Fog-Horn & see the light on Portland breakwater again. Old Littleton had Dyspepsia pain & a terrible cold both in his head & Bronchial Tubes. But he was in splendid spirits & read to me out of his chapter about the Prep — very very good it was — Charmingly written. This book of his ** will be a perfectly lovely book — Both Lulu & I like it particularly. ’Tis amazing how well old Littleton is writing it & how fascinating it is. He thinks of entitling it “Yet: Another”. Not a bad title. Chapman & Hall keep writing to him about it. They are very keen on publishing it.

Then we had a nice supper together & I had tea — & I went to bed in an attic next door to Penn House and was amazed to hear that “Shambles” fog horn & the sea-moan and the sea-gulls cry all mixed together with the voice of old Littleton talking to Mabel underneath in the room below. I had two hot bottles bought by Mabel for me but I put them both on the floor — I woke up only once in the night. It was cold but I kept the window open & heard the sea — & thought of “Sophocles long ago heard it in the Aegean & it brought —” etc. etc. ! *** How like a Prayer Book Collect of “pardon & peace” these old poetic well-worn Tags sooth my bookish mind. It was heavenly sitting in the bow-window room with a big fire hearing old Littleton read his work aloud.

* *General Sir Hubert Gough, a controversial commander in WWI, a protégé of Field Marshal Haig. Later a founder-commander of the Home Guard.*

** *The Joy of It, Chapman & Hall, 1937.*

*** *from Matthew Arnold’s ‘Dover Beach’.*

1937

Tuesday 23rd November 1937 (Corwen. Gertrude staying)

The Hanleys come to tea with us. Fog & Rain — grey rain & grey Fog. Warmer a good deal!
Got up late in fact at 7.50. Out at 8.45. A quarter to Nine. Took Old to Reservoir. But I got angry with the Old for barking so furiously at the little boy who brought the paper that I hit him with my hand as hard as ever I could. He was absolutely amazed at this blow ... for as a rule I submit to all.

I saw a Hawk on the right — a pheasant on the left — & a pigeon in front. We had a very happy breakfast; & yet a sad & indignant one; for we went over with Gertrude the whole story of old Bertie's death & its cause due so largely to the war & to his broken nerves; for all his strength.

I am slowly finishing my essay on Dickens* up here while in the T.T.'s parlour Gertrude is gilding her picture (or its frame —) of Weymouth & Lodmoor. I hope the T.T. will like my Dickens essay when it's done!

Went with Gertrude up to the Reservoir & round the path up the curve of the waterfall hill. It was raining most of the time & grey mist enveloped all. Got back just as Tim Hanley arrived in such pretty wide trowsers with her fuzzy hair protruding from each side of her face! She brought a tall dark Mongolian wench with gold-bell earrings who told my character from my hand. Old James came in later bringing his Play about the Means Test for us to read. The T.T. managed this tea-party with wondrous skill & then hurried off to the Library. A Telegram or Cable from America from S. & S. wanting the essays on Dickens & Hardy to add to the Pleasures of Reading on their side of the water but not the St. Paul! Tim also brought some wood-cuts of hers; very good.

I have practically finished my Dickens. Gertrude looked so nice in her tea-party dress; Old James was silent at first but got lively and glowing as our talk progressed. He looks as if he had emerged from a trance of very hard imaginative work.

* *for* The Pleasures/ Enjoyment/ of Literature, 1938.

1939

Thursday 23rd November 1939 (Corwen)

The T.T. is deeply upset by those 2 Civil Servant officers of ours being tortured by the Nazis. She cannot endure these things. I tell her to change her pity in[to] implacable revenge.

Rain! Rain! Rain! all the night all the long night rain! soft straight quiet thin gentle wetting Rain! "growing" rain — soaking the earth & filling the little brooks.

Up at 7.20. And it was an effort to get up for I felt the little Captive Girl, who has to sleep between my sheets at night, cuddling so close to my Spine, that I could tell what a little slender piece of goods she was! But as I put on my clothes before the open window I heard a THRUSH singing as if it were spring & making me smell violets; then I saw a great Golden Bird in our lane & I said in my heart It is Rhode Island Hen of Mrs Hughes. I said "Rhode Island" but I really know nothing about the different colours of Fowls. Then all at once I told my curious heart It is a Pheasant & so it was, as I turned to get my pull-over made by Isobel for Bertie & my "cardigan" made by Merionwyn for her papa (I like to be clothed in woolen objects knitted on the laps of Virgins!) I saw it fly over the wall or rather on to the wall & then into the field of our beautiful enemy now containing a flock of Sheep which I fear — tho' I hope & try to pretend not — belong to Mr Roberts the Butcher: & then I saw a Black cat from the council Houses making her guilty and ominous way across the field towards this great Golden Bird; & then

after listening to the tune of the dripping from the roof combined with the murmur of the Dee under the great arches of the Bridge where those Salmon are at this season I went out & down & out to feed rooks & visit Old*. A great flock of rooks always await their crumbs like vultures on all the available “coigns of vantage” — how silly of them! for what would be a fine feast for three rooks is but a crumb apiece for 30! I had a intense talk with Old, for the T.T. is thinking of getting rid of his Basket which he never liked & we only got it here ... whereas his Dish & his red blanket he brought from Hillsdale & took to Down Barn & High East Street.

Then, in my heavy over coat, heavier from rain that it cannot shake off, went to where I was in sight of Grouse Gate. I have pointed out to the T.T. that this new German Weapon the Magnetic Mine or Loadstone of Destruction is prophetically spoken of in “Brangwen ferch Llyr” when Bran has to get across that river in Ireland the a vo pen bit bout river!

Certainly these atrocity stories are awful & I do think that the Nazis are undoubtedly more cruel and brutal than other races — I cannot answer why! It’s horrid to think of any helpless conquered people whether Jews or Poles or Czechs in the hands of Nazis. But as we know there is a tendency in war to exaggerate these things to a point of frenzy. For myself I think the best thing is to let these things harden our resolve & this is the good of — this is the good of such stories — our resolve to win ... this is old fashioned but —

I wrote only one letter of any interest — i.e. to J. Horst our Bath Inventor now naturally full of Inventions for the war & worried about the war & full of passionate questions. And I wrote a scrawl to Harlan (?) of New York. ENEMA. RAIN. RAIN all day. RAIN.

* *i.e. his grave; he had died in March*

1940

Saturday 23rd November 1940 (Corwen)

John Bunting’s marriage to Paulette*

The Greeks have taken Coritza! Great rejoicings in Athens! the Italians flee in rout & panic! I rejoice yes I rejoice to hear of our troops in Athens joining in the Celebrations. Evoe! Evoe! for the Greeks have taken Coritza — Where or in what country this “Coritza” may be Heaven knows. Is it perhaps in Albania? But the Greeks pursued the Italians so far that their food had to be dropped in sacks (like “manna” they said) by our air-men on their heads!

After (last night) her strange Indictment of herself (Heavens! how Gwendolin the Car Baby is crying! or, is it, I hope and pray not, little nervous Dafydd ap “Dark” Jones, for Gwendoline has much more aplomb to waste in crying than poor little Elfin David! Aye! I wish Mrs Jones would Take him up!) — last night I say the T.T. read me a passage from the Star-Maker** which is one of her favorite Books — & I am thrilled by it too — but now she is going to give it to Peter*** at Harvard, that’s the sort of thing she is always doing — like photo-ing those babies down there yesterday — little David & little Desmond Francis too — & like her sympathy just now with this Kindling-Man now dismissed by the Dolgelly Council & our Carnaf Ward & its tramps come to an end.

Is it not a queer co-incidence of luck ... I am surely the Luckiest Man in Merionethshire, if not in “Gogledd Cymru!” — that the moment when the TRAMPS cease to visit CORWEN CASUAL I should discover that new Walk in the Wood ... is not that curious & pure luck! Well I must be ready at any second for Bad Luck ... indeed for pain & worry & calamity - whv Not?

Here has Rhisiart**** just sent me (after I wrote an Unkind Attack on Roman Catholics to him) a picture of our Adored Beachcomber whose real name is I. B. Morton (Harrow & Oxford!!!) Think of Beach Comber being an Old School Tie! But I always knew he was a

Super-Sophisticated One, & a reader of Rabelais — Tis astonishing his hold on the public of the Daily Express! Rhisiart points out he is a Roman Catholic !! Well—he's got me there! I confess it! yes he has.

I got up late on purpose so as to avoid causing myself a hypochondrical mental un-ease about my HEEL by my usual walk. I got up at 8.30 ... and at 9.15 went to visit the T.T.'s garden where I looked at the French Primrose one of my favourite flowers — and at the immortal Blue Gentians from the Maiores at St Dunstan's home. I hugged Old in Kitchen & said Πολλα [*Polla*] ***** over him. Fed the Fowls & they all came. A Red sky thro' the Hedge so high! —

Then I visited the T.T.'s wonderful digging operations by the Bardic Seat & the Wall at the top. The T.T. has been what in the Frome Meadows we call a Drowner. What a pleasure it must have been — She made a Stream — dug it & dammed it.

Mrs Spencer comes [*page obscured*] Mrs Plack — the Noble Lady & bought a Pair of Boots. [*another line obscured*]

* see NL 61.

** *Star Maker is a science fiction history of the universe and its maker by Olaf Stapledon, published in 1937, an 'essay in myth-making', considered by Arthur C. Clarke to be one of the finest works of science fiction ever written.*

*** *Peter Powys Grey, son of Marian Powys.*

**** *i.e. Nicholas Ross, nicknamed by JCP after the hero of Owen Glendower.*

***** *an Homeric prayer for the dead.*

(1929 ed. A. Head (*Cecil Woolf*); 1930 ed. F. Davies (*Greymitre*); 1931 from TS (*Kwintner*); 1932–33 from TS; 1934 from *The Dorset Year*; 1936–37 from TS; 1939 from *National Library of Wales original on internet*; 1940 from NLW original.)

Chris Thomas: Return to Hampstead

It was a great pleasure to return to the Friends Meeting House, in leafy Hampstead, after an absence of three years, for a discussion of JCP's diaries. Few things seem to have changed in this part of London. As I walked up Heath Street and approached the familiar entrance gate of the venue, I recalled that there are other places nearby with Powysian associations and a connection with JCP's diaries such as the location, on the opposite side of the road, of Ford Maddox Brown's great painting, *Work* (1852–65), intended to be an illustration of Carlyle's social philosophy. Carlyle makes an appearance in JCP's diary in an entry for 8th March 1940: '*The T. T. has just read out of the Diary of Mr. Pike about his visits to Carlyle who talked very much like Theodore.*' How revealing! One would have to make a thorough search elsewhere to find anything as good as this from JCP about Theodore.

Before I came to the meeting I had been reading Coleridge's *Notebooks*. They are magnificent and in many ways they are very similar to JCP's diaries (both indulge in intense self scrutiny, diagnose their physical ailments, write wonderful descriptions of their walks, as well as produce vivid descriptions of landscapes, the weather, and the ever changing atmospheric effects of light and colour). However, Coleridge's *Notebooks* are also very different. The *Notebooks* are not diaries in the conventional

Viking, 1985). We plan to give some account of the evidently amicable disagreements over this work. There is, however, no possibility that ARP was involved in the work referred in Sackville-West's 1938 letter.

* * * *

From *Pat Quigley*

The book I'm reading is a collection of non-fiction by **Michael Moorcock**, *London Peculiar* (PM Press, 2012) and I've come across the following JCP references so far:

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Powyses continue to pop up in the writing of **A. N. Wilson** – in *The Telegraph* (6th December 2013) on writers' changing reputations & unjustly neglected authors:

it remains a source of bafflement to me that John Cowper Powys, author of A Glastonbury Romance, Maiden Castle, Wolf Solent and Weymouth Sands — four of the greatest novels ever written in any language — are not on every university syllabus, up there with Ulysses and The Brothers Karamazov. Having said that, the joy of having such literary "secret loves", of course, is that they are a bit secret ...

and in *Spectator* (7th Dec) on the delights of neat gin –

"Gin and bitters" is the tippie of Jobber Skald, the hero of one of my favourite novels (sometimes entitled Weymouth Sands) ...

la lettre powysienne, no. 26

Jacqueline Peltier's Editorial gives the theme of this edition's contents: two essays on Frances Gregg with a story by her, W. J. Keith on JCP's magic, and an interesting investigation of what actually happened when JCP met Isadora Duncan.

According to W. J. Keith, JCP's aim as magician was to exert a control over destiny, his own and that of others. But had he thought of woman's magic? JCP often stressed the importance for a woman of enjoying 'her identity as a woman to the extremest limit', as he writes in *The Art of Happiness*: 'her life is her life ...'. He then says: 'Every

by this book. One can see why. Stapledon's description of how the narrator projects himself, in his imagination, into cosmic space, looks down on planet earth, travels past distant galaxies and discovers other worlds, must have made JCP think of the author as a kindred spirit and reminded him of his own magnificent creation in, *A Glastonbury Romance*, when Mr Geard projects his human consciousness into the 'astronomical universe', penetrates etheric and stellar matter and observes the sidereal world. Perhaps it was memories of this that inspired JCP's late fantasies.

One of the most useful features of the diaries is the way they can be used to fix dates as well as to verify certain biographical facts and events. Take for instance JCP's so called 'farewell lecture' which he delivered at the Labor Temple in New York on 8th April 1932 on the subject of *The Psychology of Modern Literature* (the circumstances are described in the diary on 7th and 8th April 1932). However this was not his last lecture in America for he had one more to give locally, by invitation, on the subject of *America*, at the Methodist Episcopal Church in Harlemville on 18th May 1934: 'I gave my farewell to Columbia County in Harlemville church', he says in his diary for 18th May 1934.

Ultimately it is the secretive, mysterious and evasive nature of many of the diary entries which is most compelling. There are references in the diaries which seem stubbornly to resist interpretation, defy explanation and remain obscure. However a profound sense, throughout, of the presence of JCP's personality commands the reader's attention.

Kate Kavanagh: Happy Years

Perhaps reading any diaries can be called voyeuristic, in the sense of enjoying vicarious experience, but entering another life as dairies enable us to do can be enlarging rather than a substitute for reality. Perhaps it depends on the diarist's type of self-involvement.

The JCP diaries I have read most of are from the American years (1929–34). In this relatively peaceful time (compared with the following year fraught with family, lawsuits, prospect of bankruptcy, Phyllis's misery) events are mostly intimate and domestic. Paradoxically, John Cowper's ultra-personal account of his days reads with some of the detachment of a novel.

What is remarkable is that despite being variations on a limited number of repeated themes – at this period, these are walks, health, domestic crises, wild and garden flowers, neighbours and visitors, his delight in the TT and lament at her fluctuating moods – the diaries are almost never boring.

They can be exasperating (could he really not open a tin, or a window? Were Cape Cod firelighters not invented? What happened to those helpful vegetable pills?) but let's remember how much more difficult all practical things used to be. Finding a rat in the fridge wasn't nice, but at least they *had* a fridge, and it's hard not to think that Phyllis could have taken things a bit easier. But (in the diaries, at least) JCP is a past

master at not allowing difficulties to spoil the next move. Nature (as Wordsworth said) never betrays the heart that loves her, as his heart did. The goddess Chance may rule, but he submits. He knows his luck (and never tires of saying so). Gratitude (a rare self-compliment) is his chief virtue.

He admires and loves what is, not what isn't. Even his hatreds (of racialism and vivisection) are kept in their place. If there is anything specific he can do, he does it (like confronting Arthur Ficke over anti-semitism) but he knows his limits. He knows a good thing (like Columbia County) when he has it, and won't let false unselfishness (like giving way to Phyllis's preferred city life) destroy it. (He is after all giving her the pleasure of giving *him* pleasure – no small consideration in a marriage ...)

The middle years at Phudd (1931–33) are a particular pleasure to read, since on balance JCP seems extremely happy. He has Phyllis to himself, he sees her coping with their life and even enjoying it – especially her garden. He is writing steadily, despite interruptions. The neighbours and their way of life are a delight, and there is always someone to call on for practical help. The weather is almost never the same for two days running, the scenery subtly lovely, and there are infinite varied possibilities for walks in every direction. You long for their routine not to be interrupted, but even visitors can under-write their daily pleasures. Lulu's anguish and other family problems are safely far away, yet in contact by writing (JCP's usual form of closeness). Financial worries are not yet acute. Above all, in an American setting he can be himself, an eccentric old-fashioned writer, without further classification. You are sad when they leave, after nearly five years, knowing what difficulties lie ahead, but this happy time – despite a few snakes, even paradisaal – must surely have strengthened John Cowper's spirit for the next near-thirty years.



Maddy, Tony Atmore's Westie.

News & Notes

A retrospective exhibition in memory of **Patricia V. Dawson** (1925–2013) took place at The Gallery on the 3rd floor at Foyles bookshop (113–19 Charing Cross Road, London) from 25th February to 1st March. On display were prints, pastels and her distinctive papier-mâché reliefs. (*The Powys Review* and *Newsletters* often featured her three-dimensional interpretations of subjects from JCP novels.)

See more on < patriciavdawson.tumblr.com >

JCP's *Autobiography* (the Faber edition) is now available as a **Kindle** e-book (£17.71 from Amazon).

Robin Wood (in Canada) is working on Wikipedia, editing the entries for JCP and *Porius*. Comments are invited.

The estate of Richard Maxwell is offering to the Society a quantity of Powys material, including copies of the PSNA (Powys Society of North America) ***Powys Notes***, which Richard edited. These are full of interesting articles from the 1990s.

from **Peter Foss**

Found the NL [80] as usual very interesting ... but the picture on the front cannot be 'near Ilchester' and not on a bridge either but on the bank of a stream or an outfall or a pond. I imagine it is on the downs, and was perhaps taken the same day as the one of LIP in belted coat in *Journal* XII, page 132. (*From the clothes this does seem likely. The caption used was from Lucy Penny's collection. KK*)

Tony Atmore's beloved little dog Maddy (celebrated in his letter in NL 80) was a *Westie* (not Yorkie as ignorantly put by Editor). See *opposite*.

Conrad Vispo's Hawthorne Valley website < www.hawthornevalleyfarm.org/fep >, < <http://hvfarmscape.wordpress.com/> > recently included a Blog on the 'January Thaw' including excerpts from JCP's diaries, by Anna Duhon:

< anna@hawthornevalleyfarm.org >. The weather around Hillsdale is much more extreme but seems almost as variable as in England – JCP describes having breakfast at the open door in January, as well as snowstorms in May. It's interesting that these patterns have repeated over 80 years.

from **Chris Thomas**

Two stories by **TFP**, 'The House with the Echo' and 'No Room', are due to be published, later this year, in a major Polish literary journal called *Tekstualia*, translated into Polish by **Milosz Wojtyna**, a PhD student who is currently writing a dissertation on V. S. Pritchett and TFP called 'The Ordinary and the Short Story'. Milosz Wojtyna has also written a brief unpublished article about TFP's short stories.

A friend sends a cutting, dropped from a book, of a report on the death of JCP in the *Leicester Mercury*, 18th June 1963. With it came a postcard of a colourful 'Blumenteppeich' (flower carpet) woven by **Lise Gujer** from a design by Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, dated '1938-1950'.

From **Larry Mitchell** (provider of the remarkable photograph of TFP with Elizabeth Wade White) [see page 34 – review of *Akeing Heart*]

I was reading *Caitlin: Life with Dylan Thomas* (1986) recently and found an interesting – albeit passing – reference to TFP. It counters, to some extent, the image of DT parodying TFP. Caitlin writes:

Late at night, when we had had too much to drink, he would read to me in bed before going to sleep; not much Shakespeare (that was too heavy-going) but extracts from Dickens (for whom Dylan had a passion), T. F. Powys, Hardy, Thackeray and Lawrence. I enjoyed this because Dylan read so gently; he never boomed out loud when he was reading to me, and he read very well. (67).

What did he read to her? I seem to recall somewhere a reference to DT owning a copy of *Painted Plumage*.

Elsewhere, Andrew Lycett in *Dylan Thomas: A New Life*, (2005), writes: 'Dylan was influenced, so Glyn Jones recalled, by Caradoc Evans, T. F. Powys, and Thomas Hardy and wanted to make South Wales like Hardy's Wessex' (Chap 7, 'Epistolary Encounters'). I think the Glyn Jones statement – he was a close friend – probably comes from *The Dragon Has Two Tongues* (1968).

And JCP was an admirer:

'The most remarkable case in recent years of a universally recognised poet is **Dylan Thomas**, to whose genius as a poet I have never myself done full justice. The only two persons in the world who have forced me to do more than ordinary justice to Dylan Thomas are Doctor Edith Sitwell in her printed articles about him and Eric Barker himself in his personal letters.'

From JCP's introduction to poems of Eric Barker (1956), printed from ms in Paul Roberts's Elusive America (a much shorter version was used in Barker's book).

From **Bill Keith**: a puzzle.

On 10th February 1938, Vita Sackville-West writes to her husband Harold Nicolson from their home in Sissinghurst: 'Powys, our new architect, wants to build the courtyard wall on the same principle as the garden wall ...'. The letter is printed in Harold Nicolson's *Diaries and Letters 1930-1939*, 3 vols (London: Collins, 1966). The index reads: 'Powys, W.'. However, these cannot be references to ARP since he had died in 1936, or to any other Powys.

Stephen Powys Marks considers that Sackville-West was confusing the work referred in this 1938 letter with work which Powys did indeed do at Sissinghurst three years earlier; this work and the discussions are described in detail on six pages of Jane Brown's *Vita's Other World: A Gardening Biography of V. Sackville-West* (London:

Viking, 1985). We plan to give some account of the evidently amicable disagreements over this work. There is, however, no possibility that ARP was involved in the work referred in Sackville-West's 1938 letter.

* * * *

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woman ought to be a bride of the universe in that same mystic sense with which nuns — who with all they renounce never renounce their essential femininity — are brides of the Mystery behind the universe.’

Two extraordinary women used that prerogative to the full, Isadora Duncan and Frances Gregg. Both exerted a decisive influence. Frances, the ‘super un-feminine Feminine’, as he calls her, and the dancer Isadora. David Stimpson demonstrates the profound and enriching experience Isadora brought JCP in her unique dancing performance for his eyes only, an act which was to have important consequences. In *After My Fashion* Elise Angel is clearly a faithful evocation of Isadora, including her love for champagne!

As for Frances, we see how, throughout her correspondence with Jack, she remained ever present to the end, and how strong were the links between them. But in *The Mystic Leeway*, the book he suggested she write, she showed her fierce independence and originality. In 1937 he was to write to her: ‘Just a line to convey to you a little authentic magic of protective thought, Frances, for I do think of you so vividly sometimes & the last time your image rushed into my mind it came & went so tall & free & beautiful.’ It was no jest and Frances knew he *indeed was* a Magician.

Jacqueline Peltier, Editor

‘My head began bursting ...’

Henry Miller to Lawrence Durrell, April 1958:

... The other day I began reading *A Glastonbury Romance* by John Cowper Powys. My head began bursting as I read. No, I said to myself, it is impossible that any man can put all this — so much! — down on paper. It is super-human. And what was it stirred me so? A description of a man and a woman in a boat floating downstream. (I thought of that marvellous Japanese expression employed, I believe, to describe a certain genre of painting: “This floating world”.) Old John had caught the world by the throat. And lovingly and surely he squeezed every bit of beauty, of meaning, of purposeless purpose out of it in a few pages. Utterly phenomenal.

And old Friar John, as he calls himself, was one of my first living idols. I a lad then of about 25 and he in his forties. The first man I beheld who was possessed by his daemon. Talk such as I have never heard again in my life. Inspired talk. And now at 80 he is still inspired, still writing masterpieces, still filled with the joie de vivre, the élan vital. You mentioned Chuang-Tzu. He was old John’s great favorite. I too loved him better than Lao-Tse, I must admit.

(from *The Durrell-Miller Letters, 1935–1980*, ed. Ian S. MacNiven, 1988)

The letters between Miller and JCP (1950–59) in both directions, previously published only in French, are in the process of editing by Jacqueline Peltier, and will we hope appear later this year.

From Marcella Henderson-Peal

The French philosopher **Robert Misrahi** has kindly agreed to come to my home this afternoon for a filmed interview about JCP's philosophy and JCP's influence on his own philosophy of happiness. A nephew of mine who has studied film is coming to film the interview properly. It will be conducted in French because I don't think M. Misrahi is that conversant in English. He is also very elderly and might get tired using a foreign language. This video will be evidence of JCP's reception in France as a philosopher .

Robert Misrahi quotes JCP regularly in his books, conferences and TV or radio shows he appears on. He was a student of Vladimir Jankélévitch, a close friend of Jean Wahl's and also a 'protégé' of Sartre as a penniless student. My talk at the Conference will be about JCP and French existentialism and if the video or at least part of it can be subtitled before that, it might be worth showing it at the Conference.

I think it would be wonderful to have a Powys collection in France one day, held at IMEC near Caen where the Jean Wahl and Kenneth White papers are. There is some interest among French Powysians in bequeathing their Powysiana to a France-based collection (and before their decease, as some are elderly).

Philosophers of Happiness

Robert Misrahi, the most famous and charismatic French existentialist philosopher of his generation, was inspired by John Cowper Powys. This interest in JCP was first sparked by the pioneering philosopher Jean Wahl, in *Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale* and in talks at the *Collège de Philosophie* which in turn attracted the attention of Gabriel Marcel and Gaston Bachelard – all philosophers loosely grouped as 'existentialist' (though not of the Sartre variety – they were Sartre's professors).

In the film, which marks a historic contribution to the reception in France of JCP's ideas, Robert Misrahi explains the importance of JCP's philosophy. He develops a subtle analysis of JCP's *The Art of Happiness* and the 'ichthyan leap', with its influence on his own philosophy – Misrahi has aptly been named the philosopher of happiness – *le philosophe du bonheur*.

Robert Misrahi was born in Paris in 1926 and experienced a lot of hardship as a child. His parents were of Jewish-Turkish origin and he was granted French nationality at the age of ten. Sadly, his mother's mental health prevented her from living with her family and his father, a tailor, provided more spiritual than material support as employment was scarce. He suffered under Nazi rule in occupied France and decided not to wear the infamous yellow star. Part of his family were deported, never to return. He met Jean-Paul Sartre when he was 16: Sartre financed Misrahi's studies in philosophy and they remained close friends and worked together till Sartre's death.

Misrahi's masters at the Sorbonne were Vladimir Jankélévitch (correspondent of

Bergson), Gaston Bachelard (philosopher of science), Jean Wahl (who transformed the philosophical field in the early 20th century) and Maurice Merleau-Ponty (author of *The Phenomenology of Perception*). His PhD dissertation was on Spinoza. After teaching for several years in a lycée he secured a position at the Sorbonne which he was to hold for over thirty years. He has been Emeritus professor of ethical philosophy at the Sorbonne since 1994.

Since the 1960s, Robert Misrahi has published a number of works on Spinoza and the question of happiness (e.g. *l'être et la joie* ('being and joy'), 1997). His own philosophy is essentially focused on the issues of happiness and freedom. He is regularly invited to talks on French television and radio, and is a frequent contributor to *Les Temps modernes*, *Encyclopædia Universalis*, *Le Dictionnaire des philosophies* 'PUF'; also to *Libération* and *le Nouvel Observateur*.

Misrahi's autobiography, *La nacre et le rocher* ('shell and stone'), published in 2012, was voted best autobiography of the year by *Lire* literary magazine. In June 2012, the seminar at the *Centre culturel international* at Cerisy-la-Salle, a prestigious venue for intellectual and scholarly encounters founded in 1952, was entirely devoted to Misrahi. Its title was 'On the ethics of joy'. Robert Misrahi tirelessly broadcasts his philosophy, which is in contrast to all 20th-century philosophical trends – a fact that may remind us of John Cowper Powys's similar position. They both wish their philosophy of life to be understood by everyone.

Misrahi on Powys

Let's take another example, a contemporary of Camus little known in France but of great importance, an English writer and philosopher named John Cowper Powys. Powys's philosophy is of course somewhat light and fantastic, but there is always unity in the world he conjures up.

He is a curious case: he does not reject his catholic [i.e. anglican] upbringing, but he is an unbeliever. Might he be called a catholic atheist? He was a strange being, a great writer but truly strange. A catholic atheist but at the same time communist, though of course not belonging to the Party ...

In this unified world of his, he talks not of God but of the Primal Cause, saying that since this Primal Cause is appallingly cruel, it is up to us to react against this cruelty. And how to react against the cruelty of the Primal Cause? By a cult of happiness!

And this is interesting! We have to resist through savouring happiness and praising sensuality, not necessarily sensuality in the sexual sense, but in a wider sense: the pleasure of sight, of light, of landscapes, the beauty of the present moment. A sensuality able to seize what pleasure there is to be lived, to feel the effects of things.

As well as a number of philosophical works, the most important being *The Art of Happiness*, this writer produced his *Autobiography*, an astounding and poetic creation in which we are shown the reality of what he has meant before and expressed more or less clearly: his cult of happiness!

It is the happiness of everyday life, a poetic contemplation of the world, of people,

of the present moment. He also describes exceptional and magical moments. He has a true sense of happiness!

And this happiness, described as a poetic sensuality, is built into a kind of philosophy that in itself has not been widely recognised. For all that, Powys remains a great contemporary writer who, like Camus, is both sensitive to human suffering (he defends just causes throughout his life), a seeker for happiness and a dedicated author. It's important to remember that this sensitive man lived through the huge disasters of the 20th century, writing from the 1930s to the 1960s. He knew about the war, the problems with communism, etc. He knew about this as Camus did, but precisely because of this he knew that we can only see misfortune for what it is from the horizon of happiness that we seek and, sometimes, succeed in finding.

(From a radio dialogue included in a book by Misrahi, Enthusiasm and Joy in a time of Exasperation – with thanks to Pierrick Hamelin and MH-P.)

Even if an author is not the character he has invented, the existence of these characters and their feelings are the author's work. The joy of a creator is justified, upheld by the knowledge that in creating this work he has in effect created himself.

(Robert Misrahi, La Construction du bonheur (2012), ch.3.)

A brief note on 'existentialism'

Though initially applied to Kierkegaard's un-systematic philosophy, the term 'existentialism' was actually coined by the French Catholic philosopher Gabriel Marcel (1889–1973) in the mid-1940s. He was a close friend of Jean Wahl (1888–1974) and they also shared a great love and understanding of Anglo-Saxon literature. The term is now usually associated with Sartre but Sartre's own form of existentialism does not include either passive or intentional happiness and living for sensation.

Jean Wahl preferred the phrase *philosophie de l'existant*, 'philosophy of what is'. This particular philosophical thinking is entirely concerned with the human subject – the thinking, acting, feeling subject, a living human individual focused on concrete human experience.

At the beginning of the 20th century, a group of philosophers led by Jean Wahl, a professor at the Sorbonne, brought Kierkegaard, Bergson, Hegel, William James and Whitehead but also Heidegger to the attention of French thinkers.

Among them was Gabriel Marcel, who converted to Catholicism relatively late in life (1929). A major thread in Marcel's works was endeavouring to protect one's subjectivity from annihilation by modern materialism and modern man's technologically-driven society. (Existentialism in its early form could be understood from either an agnostic or a Christian viewpoint; it is not incompatible with the belief in God).

Gaston Bachelard (1884–1962) specialized in the philosophy of science and later developed a philosophical and literary approach to imagination. His work was very influential, with books such as *Water and Dreams: An essay on the imagination of matter*.

Real existentialism implies enjoying living in every sense.

Review

Peter Haring Judd: *The Akeing Heart*

Passionate attachments and their aftermath : Sylvia Townsend Warner,

Valentine Ackland, Elizabeth Wade White

(414 pp. CreateSpace. \$19.95. ISBN 978 1 4848 6718 1)

In 1929, Sylvia Townsend Warner spoke at a literary luncheon in a New York hotel. Her audience included a certain Elizabeth Wade White, the daughter of a rich family in Connecticut, who would, much later, write the first biography of the New England poet Anne Bradstreet. They stayed in touch, and a close friendship developed that would become a source of misery, especially but not exclusively for Warner, as she lost her partner, Valentine Ackland, to a younger woman whom she had previously advised and encouraged in her intellectual pursuits. In one sense, the affair, which took place around the beginning of the Second World War, was brief. The intimacy it forged between the lovers lasted for years, however, and it would flare up again after the war.

This episode in Warner's life, and the pain it caused her in her loyalty to the troubled Ackland, will not be unfamiliar to those who have read, say, Warner's diaries or *I'll Stand by You*, Susannah Pinney's selection of their correspondence. A member of White's family, Peter Haring Judd, supplies a new angle in *The Akeing Heart: Passionate attachments and their aftermath*. Judd's account is chiefly drawn from a substantial archive (now in the New York Public Library) of letters (including sixty from Warner, and hundreds from Ackland), poems and journals by all three women, as well as letters from a fourth party, White's companion Evelyn Holahan, seething at



T. F. Powys and Elizabeth Wade White, outside Theodore's house, Church Cottage, Mappowder in 1949.

the behaviour of Ackland, the 'Dorset Sappho'. Yet the interest of *The Akeing Heart* lies not just in its tracing of these emotional collisions, but in the alternative chronicle it presents of life in the 1930s and '40s, as these women experienced it – in their travels, their political activities (supporting the Communists in Spain), their apprehension of war's approach. 'Long threaten, long last', Warner observes of the political situation in 1938. 'If wars are like thunderstorms the next war will be a long one.' Ackland, meanwhile, makes a shocking impression on White's parents when she visits, with her necktie, masculine haircut and cigars. She had been, she later admitted, 'drunken and lecherous'. Apparently, she had made a pass at one of the maids.

This is a self-published book, which shows in minor but distracting ways, and its structure is questionable: there is too much pre-emptive quotation in the linking passages between letters, which feels like stealing the correspondents' thunder; this could have been avoided if the book had been divided instead into a long introductory essay and a discrete selection from the archive. Judd's story is an engrossing one, nonetheless, and the best of the Warner letters evince her characteristic joy in language and observation. Most moving are her efforts to retain Elizabeth's friendship while allowing the affair to take its course.

Michael Caines (TLS 10 Jan 2014, p. 26)



Lulu deciphered

In Newsletter 80, on page 43, we reproduced a dedication in a copy of the 1938 edition of Glory of Life by Llewelyn to his sister Marian. In case you found it difficult to decipher, here is a transcription.

To May / from Lulu / with his love / and a thousand / memories / Christmas 1938

Jockey, come give me thy fiddle

If ever thou mean to thrive &

May, I'll not give my fiddle

To any man alive.

If I should give my fiddle

Theyll think I've gone mad;

For many a joyful day

My fiddle and I have had.

Louis Wilkinson and the Powyses

Louis Wilkinson's acquaintance with the Powyses extended over most of their lives. Even Theodore's brief attendance in the late 1880s at the school in Aldeburgh run by Mr Wilkinson senior overlapped with Louis's own presence there, though they did not get to know each other at all well until the first few years of the twentieth century, when Wilkinson visited Theodore at Studland. We know that at this time he also met JCP through Dr Bernard O'Neill (in 1901), A.R. (Bertie) at about the same time, and Llewelyn on the latter's arrival in Cambridge in 1903. The famous first visit to Montacute took place the following year, when he encountered the parents and probably most of the rest of the family. Half a century later, in 1953, he came to live close to Mappowder, getting to know Lucy, her daughter Mary Casey, and Gerard Casey, before his own death late in 1966. Louis's influence on the family is well documented, mainly from *Swan's Milk*, *Welsh Ambassadors*, and *Seven Friends*, three of these seven being Powyses, as well as from his presentation of JCP as Jack Welsh in *The Buffoon*. In this article, I want to extend this knowledge by considering the evidence provided by his later writings.

It is an indication of Louis's debt to the three main Powys writers that he dedicated one of his own novels to each of them. *A Chaste Man* (1918) is dedicated 'To John Cowper Powys / ... *Stillabat eloquium*', which may be translated as 'he poured out eloquence'; this relates, we may assume, to JCP's talents as a lecturer in North America, which in turn led to Louis's own success lecturing there, especially during the First World War. The dedication-page of *The Lion Took Fright* (1930) reads, 'To T. F. Powys / After many years of friendship and admiration for his solitary genius', while that of *Fool's Quarter Day* (1935) is expressed as follows: 'To Llewelyn Powys / in gratitude for his gifts as friend and as writer'.

However, references extend into the texts of many of Louis's other books, most of them novels. Thus as early as p.21 of *A Chaste Man* (1918), we find a reference to a character whose surname is Burpham, later identified as Lord Burpham, an aristocrat who plays a minor but disquieting and sinister role in the action. Now Burpham is, of course, the Sussex village in which JCP settled down soon after his marriage, and we therefore recognize one of those private allusions which, though meaning nothing to most readers on first publication, would have been picked up and appreciated by a small number of favoured initiates. Another such effect is created by the epigraph reproduced on the title-page: '*So dear to Heaven is saintly chastity ...*', not identified, but quoted from John Milton's *Comus* (l.453). Readers familiar with the text of *Autobiography* may remember JCP's own quotation of the same line seventeen years later, where he glosses it as 'my habitual quotation in my lecture of Milton' (582).¹ *A Chaste Man* is an ironic title because the protagonist is tempted into marital infidelity but has too keen a sense of honour to bring it to the customary conclusion, a failure that brings misery to himself, his wife, his would-be mistress, and several others. The common quotation may reflect Wilkinson's and JCP's shared interest in

the dilemmas confronting those prompted to satisfy their impulses and caught between contradictory and even hypocritical social conventions. Here we may be reminded of one story concerning JCP's marriage: that he was so concerned with his mother's warning not to 'trifle with young women's affections' that he rushed off to propose to Margaret Lyon, though their relations had been wholly innocent. This account reached Louis from JCP (see Herbert Williams' *John Cowper Powys* (34-5)).

Llewelyn's presence, not unexpectedly, is prominent in *A Chaste Man*. In the course of the book Letty, sister of Oliver Lawrance, the chaste man in question, develops consumption, and he accompanies her to the sanatorium in St Franz, Louis's name for Davos Platz, where Cyprian Strange, first introduced as 'the handsome young man' (228) and a fellow consumptive obviously based on Llewelyn, is an inmate. Louis clearly derived much of his detail from Llewelyn's experience there from 1909 to 1912. Although, so far as I have been able to establish, he never visited Llewelyn in Switzerland at that time (he made four visits in the 1930s before Llewelyn's death), he knew the situation from Llewelyn's own letters, through his account in 'A Consumptive's Diary,' Chapter 4 of his section of *Confessions of Two Brothers*, as well as from his general acquaintance with other members of the Powys family. Seven years before the publication of Thomas Mann's *The Magic Mountain*, Louis vividly recounts the feverish love-affairs that occur between the inmates as well as documenting the daily routine of the hospital. He excellently captures the shifting situation within the day-to-day life of the sanatorium. To Cyprian Strange is assigned the most detailed account:

There's a perpetual shifting about – you'll see – in the dining room; people coming and going all the time, to and from the general table. Dramatic, you know ... You never know who will go next. They disappear; sometimes they come back, sometimes they don't ... They take them out by night, you know, when nobody's looking. Everything kept dark; so discouraging to us if it weren't. But of course we know all right. (290)

An immediate reference to a Russian patient who tried to commit suicide but eventually recovers is patently based on Llewelyn's account in *Confessions of Two Brothers* (228-56).

A page later, Cyprian is made to refer to over-energetic mountain-climbers 'showing off as daredevils, crossing glaciers'. It's difficult to believe that Louis was unaware of Llewelyn's foolhardy climb over the Furka Pass from Arosa to Davos in February 1912, which he must have heard about long before Llewelyn told it unforgettably in the final chapter of *Skin for Skin*.

Many of these connections are minor, even questionable in themselves, but cumulatively they become impressive. The following innocent-seeming quotation complicates the Wilkinson-Powys relations still further. In the final pages of *A Chaste Man*, Oliver reads a passage from the diary of the recently deceased Cyprian which contains the comment: 'I think of Pater's phrase, "sweet usage"' (333). In addition to a casual reference in *Autobiography* (467), this phrase occurs three times in

A Glastonbury Romance (72, 820, 1077 [88, 785, 1029]). More significantly for our own purposes, however, an entry in JCP's 1933 diary (reproduced in *Petrushka and the Dancer*, 137) refers to a Corwen bull's 'dalliance & sweet usage (as Lulu would say)'. It was clearly a frequent Llewelyn quotation as well, and Louis has picked it up.²

There are a number of similar quotations and allusions in subsequent novels. Thus a reference to someone called Dicky Podd [*sic*] in Louis's 1919 novel *Brute Gods* (224) seems to connect up with a whole group of Pods in JCP's work: Horace Pod in *Rodmoor* (186) at Rodmoor; Mr Pod, a sexton, in *Ducdame* (402) at Ashover; a Ben Pod in *Glastonbury* (12 [32]) who counts the carriages as they enter the rectory gates at Northwold; and a Bill Pod who has dubious relations with his 'Sussex goat', presumably at Montacute, in *Letters to Llewelyn* (I, 226). Another Ben Pod, who was 'buried a week come Thursday' is mentioned in Llewelyn's *Love and Death* (279). It seems to be a favourite Powys name for a rustic 'character'. Also, if we continue to pursue Powysian echoes, we find Alec the protagonist exclaiming, 'What a pity Christianity isn't true!' This is reminiscent of several Llewelyn remarks doubtless used in conversation before they turn up in his polemical essays and elsewhere (see my *Ultimate Things*, 55, 72ff.), while a little later he enters an Anglican order in circumstances that, while very different, conjure up Marion Linton's entering a sisterhood after breaking off her engagement to Llewelyn.

In *Mr. Amberthwaite* (1929), the name character's father wonders whether one might retain 'some pleasant sort of earth-like consciousness' after death (35), echoing Theodore's thinking, as Louis himself records later in *Seven Friends* (93) that 'the dead have some sort of consciousness, and a rather pleasant sort, under the ground'. Again, a somewhat gratuitous reference to 'sporting expeditions in the Rockies' (143) seems to be a specific allusion to Llewelyn's visit to the Rockies in 1924 at the invitation of Dr J. S. Watson of the *Dial*, which Malcolm Elwin described as 'an exploit as reckless as his crossing of the Furka Pass twelve years before' (*Life*, 161; see also Llewelyn's *Verdict of Bridlegoose*, Ch.18). There are few Powysian connections in either *Two Made Their Bed* or *Love By Accident* (both 1929), though the former contains an observation that the Celts 'were always beaten in battle' (247), a generalization by no means uncommon but one that JCP was fond of making, even before he lived in Wales himself.

But *The Lion Took Fright* (1930) contains several clear examples, emphasized by an actual quotation from Theodore. Mrs Derrick wonders whether 'clergymen were really good ... for young girls', and recalls being told that 'Mr. [T. F.] Powys apparently thought sometimes not' (124). Theodore is also suggested early in the book where a reference to a "'plus four" effect' (9) is almost certainly intended for those who will recall Theodore's famous mistake, recorded a few years later in *Welsh Ambassadors* (16), when he referred to someone 'wearing all-fours'. And again, when the mad Dr Stilham announces, 'I won't so much as enter a house where a woman rules' (57), Louis is rather wickedly appropriating a phrase which Theodore used to

him – about the JCP *ménage* – in 1907 (*Welsh* 145). As for Llewelyn, the climax of the novel seems obviously derived from the death of Walter Frantzen fully recorded in *Earth Memories*.

The later novels, *Fool's Quarter Day* (1935) and finally *The Devil in Crystal* (1944), add little, though the former reminds us of Llewelyn when another gratuitous reference introduces 'a man who ran an African farm and kept natives in order' (112–13). The same novel takes over some of Theodore's favourite authors – notably Jeremy Taylor – in describing Neil Moultrie's library (126). However, Louis's next book, *Forth, Beast!* (1946), is strewn with Powysian comments and anecdotes. This is an idiosyncratic book (not a novel in the normal sense of the word) in which Louis, in an idiosyncratic yet typical development, conducts a lengthy interview and discussion with Dexter Foothood, his own autobiographical creation in *Swan's Milk*.

We know, of course, that the relationship with Louis and JCP was a curious one because Louis thoroughly disliked his novels, and was often critical of his basic attitudes. Various comments in this book help to articulate the ways in which they were so fundamentally different. The contrast is evident in a statement of authorial intention that precedes the opening chapter: 'None of the persons in this book, whether under a real or assumed name, is fictitious; and none of the incidents is fictitious.': clearly a spoof on the standard disavowal by publishers attempting to avoid libel suits. This is the pattern followed in so many of JCP's books. One recalls *A Glastonbury Romance* and how JCP lost his royalties in damages because G. W. Hodgkinson considered himself portrayed in the character of Philip Crow. Moreover, JCP was henceforth understandably concerned about this danger, and in *Weymouth Sands* he was careful to enter a standard disclaimer in his 'Note by Author'.

Similarly, in *Forth, Beast!*, Louis refers to JCP's 'imbecilic' habit of referring to 'the common man' or 'the common or garden man': 'I can't think how Jack Powys can go on as he does ... it's the uncommon men, like Jack Powys, who are always telling the common man that they are the salt of the earth ... But what nonsense it is' (97). Here Louis also states his well-known conflicting attitude with a welcome directness: 'I may lecture on literature, but I've never been much of a reader. I don't have the time, there are nearly always other things I'd rather do. That's why I like books that can be read fairly quickly: short novels and short stories and plays, and of course, poems. Anything that's not too long' (180). No wonder he dislikes JCP's!

We already know, of course, of Louis's general position, but nowhere else is it as fully and clearly expressed as here. *All* his works, I suggest, are worth considering if we are to come to a true understanding of his lifelong fascination with the Powyses.

W. J. Kelth

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NOTES

1 For all quoted material, see the alphabetical listing in 'Works Cited'.

2 In my *Companions* to *Autobiography* and *A Glastonbury Romance*, I tentatively identified this quotation as an adaptation of 'sweet use' in Shakespeare's *All's Well that Ends Well* (IV, iv), but the reference to Lulu suggests that I was wrong. Christopher Wilkinson informs me that the phrase occurs in Act 1, Scene 2 of an unidentified play by John Fletcher published in 1621, and by George Herbert in *The Country Parson (A Priest to the Temple)*, Ch.25, first published in 1652 but written much earlier.

See also NL79 (p.31) for the note by Peter Foss on Llewelyn and Louis's *A Chaste Man*'.

Joan and Louis

Letters from Joan Lamburn to Alyse Gregory, 1941–2, a selection

With thanks to Chris Wilkinson

Joan Lamburn (1900–57) was Louis Wilkinson's fourth wife (they married in 1953); she was thus Chris Wilkinson's step-grandmother (his true grandmother having been Frances Gregg, mother of his father Oliver). Chris recalls Joan as 'great fun, very tolerant and welcoming to a teenager ... She gave me some cookery lessons. I remember her waiting patiently for a meal while I guzzled cider down in the village pub ...'

Chris continues: 'The few facts I've discovered of Joan Lamburn's life before she met Alyse Gregory read like a bald summary in a CV. She was born in 1900. Her father Frank Lamburn, the Editing Director of Pearsons, divorced her mother in 1917. After he remarried and started another family Joan seems to have lost or broken off contact. Her mother Aline's second marriage was to a painter, Walter Lister, and they moved with Joan's sister, Ruth, to Cornwall, while Joan stayed in London. She had ambitions to be a painter herself but as a safeguard studied shorthand and typing, spending most of the Twenties and Thirties in various London office jobs including the Dunlop Rubber Company and the Ministry of Health. Three years before the war she opened a summer boarding-house, Sea View, on the North Cornish coast

but after the fall of France returned to London and worked as a clerk on the American Committee for the Evacuation of Children to America, until it closed down. For most of the Forties she lived and worked in London, but settled in Dorset in 1949, first as a lodger in the artist Vera Wainwright's cottage in Mappowder, then at Dove Cottage in Hazelbury Bryan. For the rest of her life she earned a living weaving scarves, and typing manuscripts for various writers including Alec Waugh, James Stern, Baron Patrick Balfour Kinross and Sylvia Townsend Warner. She also wrote poetry and three children's books herself – *The Mushroom Pony*, *Mr. Soloski's Cats* and *The Monkey Trick*.

Joan met Louis Wilkinson in the early Thirties, and it was he who introduced her to Jewelyn Powyn's wife Alyse Gregory (1884–1967), early in 1941. The two women immediately struck up a friendship, vital to both of them, with the older and much more experienced Alyse able to counsel Joan over her often difficult relationship with Louis, while Joan – by seeking advice and by offering in return lively descriptions of the outside world – was able to wrest Alyse away from the profound depression she suffered after the loss of Jewelyn

and her bouts of loneliness out on the Dorset downs.

It is no surprise to read in Jacqueline Peltier's memoirs *A Woman at her Window* [in the Cecil Woolf 'Powys Heritage' series] that Alyse described Joan as 'my chief consolers and support' and that when Joan died suddenly in 1957 Alyse wrote in her Journal: '... my life swept once more from under me ... was it worse, I thought, than that day when I went to meet Jewelyn in London – that was all suffering anguish – this finality, emptiness ... How she slipped from us all, the old ones counting on her who was our joy and our safety.'



Joan Lamburn, at Dove Cottage, 1950s. (CW)

I was delighted to be sent a substantial collection of Joan's letters to Alyse by Lis Whitelaw in 2010. They wrote hundreds of letters to each other, sometimes at a rate of one a week. Alyse's letters to Joan, which I haven't seen, are held at Yale in the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library (boxes 40 and 41).

CW

This selection printed in the Newsletter, mainly referring to Louis, is taken from a longer selection made by Chris Wilkinson. At the start of the correspondence, Joan had taken a job, on Alyse's recommendation, as personal secretary to Rosamund Rose, a rich and strong-minded friend of Llewelyn and Alyse, at Leweston Manor outside Sherborne. (At the end of her life Alyse moved from Chydyok to a house in Devon given her by RR.)

c/o Mrs. Dunford, New Cross, Longburton, Sherborne

Oct 28th 1941

My dearest Alyse,

... Louis' visit has been a great success. Rosamund likes him enormously & of course spoilt him in the manner to which he is accustomed — spurring her cook to produce the most delicious rich supper on Sunday to which we were invited, filling his glass with the rarest port, & unobtainable German hock. From the moment I [said] he was coming ... she showed a charming solicitude decanting a bottle of port for him to drink here on Saturday evening, giving me fruit for his breakfast, offering to meet his train at Yeovil — & an equally charming, almost timid pleasure in meeting him, believing he would be alarming & finding him of course quite disarming & equally pleased at meeting her & being so royally treated ... The evening sped on wings & we left after 1 am.

At lunch on Monday he was given a very old champagne & afterwards R. disappeared into the cellar with him & there they stayed until it was time to go. He emerged with a bottle of Madeira 150 years old to take to Mappowder. I went with him as I wanted to see Mappowder & was overwhelmed when Violet asked me to stay for tea as I hadn't for one moment imagined I should meet Theodore. My knees were trembling & my cheeks burned with excitement & trepidation & pleasure — the King of Greece [*whom she had recently met*] took a very back seat. I had none of those emotions when I met him, only nervousness & curiosity mingled with pleasure. Violet urged me to go over any time & to go & stay the night at Mrs. Kelly's where Louis is staying [*a neighbouring dairy farmer whose daughter was a friend of 'Susie' (Theodora) Pozwys*] if I wanted to go for a week-end. It's only 10 miles from here, so I could walk. I left soon after 5 & the car put me down three miles from here ... I was glad to walk in the gathering dusk. I had a hot bath & went to bed very early with Grishka who must have been glad that Louis had gone, although he had made him charmingly welcome under rather difficult circumstances I should have thought — my bed was never meant for three.

This morning I arrived at the Manor to find the Daimler at the door & R. waiting to drive with me to Mappowder. Louis had phoned the night before & asked us to come over between 11 & 12 to meet John. R. said that if she hadn't met Louis & hadn't known that he would be there she would have been much too nervous to go in spite of wanting so much to meet the brothers. But the moment she was inside the cottage she was glad she had gone I am sure, although her pleasure was marred by the feeling that Mr. & Mrs. Littleton were not so pleased to see her. They had only arrived themselves about 20 minutes before & had not been told we were coming & I'm quite sure they didn't see R. in a favourable light ... We all drank the Madeira. Littleton talked to Louis as if they had met for the first time that morning, John

lumbered into a chair near R. & they huddled together like old cronies, I talked about food to Mrs. Littleton ... Of course John enchanted me, I was spellbound ...

November 8th 1941

My dearest Alyse,

... I am very pleased that John said he liked me, I wanted him to. I see "lumbering" is not the word for him but the impression he gave in that small crowded room was of awkward bulk, like a bear, he needs mountains & miles of sky. Violet was cross about the way he hugged her but it was charming. He has of course great charm. Violet I liked too for her unpretentiousness & friendliness, though I think I would find her very trying to be with or have much to do with, because she is inclined to harp on a note of resentment against her circumstances, one feels more from a desire to keep her end up than any real discontent or unhappiness, like a schoolboy who really likes his school & would defend it fiercely but grumbles about it continuously ... [see NL 79 for other descriptions of Violet]

On Friday evening an attractive man called Fisher came in to see Theodore instead of attending to his duties as M.C. at the village dance. I expect you've met the Fishers there, she's attractive too & they have 3 children & live in a very old big house in the middle of fields. I went to it on Saturday morning while Louis was with Theodore & saw the jackdaw give himself a bath in a bowl of water on the kitchen table while a black & white kitten warmed its stomach by the fire. A small girl in a scarlet jersey & a pinafore came running in to ask where the wheelbarrow was, she was helping "Miss Pearson" (a land girl) to clean out the cowshed. Her older sister had gone to the farrier with the pony to have him shod. The brother, about 14, came back from the village with some shopping but had forgotten the cigarettes so he walked back with me, across a field where a large black & white bull stood ruminating with his eyes on the horizon.

I read 'The Two Thieves' [*three stories, also 'In Good Earth' and 'God', published 1932*] in the evenings after saying goodnight to Louis & it filled me with melancholy, the pitiful helplessness of all that is gentle & kind against the offences of evil & cruelty is terrifying ... There was a little dog chained to a tree in the garden of my lodgings. He had a sack to sit on & a small box to get into but he sat bolt upright in the cold wind & every time I went to the lavatory he fixed his eyes on me, pleading to be freed, & gave little whimpers. Before reading 'The Two Thieves' I should have reasoned that he wasn't badly treated & if that was all he ever had to suffer he'd be a lucky dog, but instead it seemed like the triumph of some will power which delighted in even the smallest suffering, & chained-up dogs, trapped rabbits, caged birds, gelded horses and bereaved cows seemed to spring up all round me.

It has been a happy week-end ... We walked home at 12.30 in moonlight & I dreamt before morning a dream I've not had for years, a very happy one — that I am dancing. Before it has always been alone but last night, though it was the same dancing, like a ballerina on the very tips of my toes, skimming the ground, Louis was dancing with me like a ballet master! Swinging me into the air like a Massine or Lifar — still dressed in his brown tweed suit ...

Nov 25th 1941

My dearest Alyse,

... I went to Mappowder on Saturday ... [and] spent a happy evening at the Lodge. Susan & her playmate Pat Kelly dressed up & sang, or rather chanted — as they've no idea of tune — songs for my entertainment. To be with Theodore gives me something of the same pleasure

I get from being with Louis — a sort of nourishment — & something of the same excitement. I could very well have become a slave to Theodore as I am to Louis, but not in quite the same way! ...

Theodore was impressed by an account in the paper a few weeks ago of a soldier who went round London in a car shooting people at random — he started at Duke's Avenue, Chiswick, & shot a hunch-back setting out for his office — he was a solicitor. He also shot two women, one through the window of her house. But it was the hunch-back that touched Theodore — born crippled, struggling up & making himself a solicitor & then his hard-won life snatched from him by a madman's random shot in the street ...

Next Saturday I think I might go into Sherborne & call on Mr. and Mrs. Littleton. Since I thought so wrongly about her I would like to start again.

January 18th 1942

Dearest Alyse,

I am sitting in the bedroom at the George Hotel, Glastonbury, an enormous room with a four-poster bed at the foot of which is a 6ft oak chest full of books & boxing gloves, dolls & children's games. The walls are whitewashed between the thick oak beams. The curtains are apple green & there are two armchairs in front of a large electric fire, which demolishes sixpences by the dozen, but gives good warmth. ... I feel it is due to Louis to admit that it isn't always purgatory to stay in a hotel & I think I am halfway between his immunity to external incidental temporary discomfort and ugliness & your insistent need of privacy ... I do enjoy seeing fresh places with Louis.

Of course what I want is to live with Louis in a place that was my own, a place where we could be independent & private, where after his visits to friends or to London or on lectures he would come back, & also to go with him to fresh places, to see a cathedral or to walk in strange country. But ... that would only be possible if we pretended to be married, as Phyllis & John do, & Louis wouldn't like that. He refused to live even under the same roof in London — in separate rooms as separate people — until the bombs began to fall. I think he is afraid of my



Joam Lamburn, Cornwall, late 30s. (CW)

becoming proprietary but he has no justification for that, it is the last thing I could be if I were married ten times over & he ought to know it.

January 26 1942

When [Louis] was in Cornwall he sent Llewelyn a photograph of me. Llewelyn wrote approving & said, 'If I were you I should bind myself with her apron strings as a hedgestake is bound with honeysuckle'. It delighted me — it was the first comment called forth from any friend of Louis, & that it should come from Llewelyn made me very happy ...

Owl Cottage, Redmoor, Nr Bodmin

May 1942?

[...] I wouldn't call Louis a high-class lover because he is in a class by himself — like the bullterrier "Gloriana" my father put in the Crystal Palace Dog Show when we were children. My brother & I thought she hated being there & sat with her all day & were delighted when she was released after winning first prize in her class — being the only dog in that class ...

June 23, 1942

My dearest Alyse,

[...] I took your letter with me to London meaning to answer it there but I found no place to sit & no time for writing ... We went to tea with Ethel Mannin [1900–84, *the very successful left-wing novelist and travel writer*] on Saturday, a lovely hot day. Louis was very cross with a bus that took us miles out of our way, because when we got on & he asked the pretty young conductress if it went to Calonne Road "she seemed to acquiesce", which only shows that to Louis the acquiescence of a pretty young woman need be no more than the flicker of an eyelid ...

Louis had made a tentative arrangement to go alone to see a girl in Chelsea after tea, but we left too late & went straight to the Café Royal for dinner & then Louis said would I like to meet Crowley [*Aleister Crowley (1875–1947) whom Louis had known since 1908 and looked after till his death, and was his literary executor*] as he lived quite near, so we went along to this big house in Piccadilly where he has a furnished flat. It's really a brothel. Louis is so innocent he had seen & understood nothing on his previous visit, but the moment we entered the cheaply furnished hall with its dusty palm tree in the middle & its Lloyd Loom chairs & insolent looking porter in gold braid I knew where I was. Louis told the porter to 'ask Mr. Crowley if he could see Mr. Wilkinson & a friend'. The porter took us upstairs to the first floor, opened a door & walked in, calling out, 'Crowley? Are you there, Crowley? Mr. Wilkinson and a friend to see yer!' & then said to Louis 'Go on in, Sir'. We went into a sort of ante-chamber with a filthy uncurtained window looking on to Piccadilly, a few stuffed chairs & sofa & a table on a bare wood floor. It was growing dusk. Crowley emerged from a bedroom where he had been muttering. He seemed rather taken aback but assured Louis we hadn't disturbed him and that there was no one in the bedroom. He was dressed in flannel pyjamas & a Bedouin-like yellow silk robe from which his hands came out looking like hen's claws. He sat by the window and talked in a wheezy high-pitched voice in a tone of complaint. A mouse came out from under his chair, a very large mouse — it advanced a little & looked all round, then retired under the yellow robe again. I drew his attention to it but he made no comment. I felt I'd committed a breach of good manners, yet felt unabashed. In the fading light there was a touching dignity in the dumpy little figure by the window. He has told someone, or he has been told, that he resembles Churchill, but I thought he seemed more like Queen Victoria — an ageing, pettish,

harassed queen robbed of her happiness ... We only stayed about 50 minutes & as we went out through the hall again the porter said, "You've been very quick, sir!" A whore of the first water was coming up the steps — aged about 55. Perhaps it was the manageress coming back from a walk in the Park ...

June 26 1942

Dearest Alyse, I owe you so much! There is no one else to whom I can write in this strain, & no one else who can understand these black moods! ... I understand & entirely agree with what you say about "security" — it isn't security I want in the sense of marriage. When you said, "I think it will come to marriage in the end" I thought how awful it sounded. I didn't want it to come to that! I don't want to be labelled & taken round with Louis wherever he goes like a suitcase. If Louis had wanted to marry, if I had been as he describes "the only sort of girl I might possibly marry — a beautiful young girl keenly interested in literature" it would have meant for Louis a burden which would weigh on his spirit far more heavily than my spirit has been weighed upon by those moods you understand so well ... Sometimes I feel almost as independent of Louis as he is of me. You say he is very dependent on me but it's difficult to believe this when he makes no demands at all. His only anxiety has been that I should be available for week-end meetings, he depends on me to be within call ...

July 14 1942

My dearest Alyse,

Getting to Dorchester was finally accomplished with the aid of a baker & a butcher. We walked about three miles without a single car overtaking us, nothing but army lorries which did their best to run over us. Then just after 1 o'clock a baker's van came along & took us to Broadmayne & told us we could go on in a butcher's van that was standing outside the Compass Inn. The driver was inside the Compass Inn, so we went in & Louis asked him & he said he didn't think we could both get in the front but he'd take one of us. Then he saw Louis prick his cigarette with a safety pin & that interested him & he became more friendly & when we went out to the van & I was about to climb in, he said "Let the gov'nor get in first" so that Louis would be sitting next to him, but it was finally agreed that I should sit in the middle as my shorter legs wouldn't get tangled up with the gears & brakes ...

We caught the 4.43 to Yetminster & got a car which dropped Louis at The Farm & brought me on here, & here I am, the lovely week-end finished, another happy Chydyok memory. I felt sad at leaving you, & sad for Gertrude*, for all women going about their solitary affairs — & just a little sad myself too at the moment sitting here alone in my bedroom, though Louis is not far away. I can see him if I like to walk round to the Farm tonight & shall see him tomorrow — but women do live in a more solitary world ...

I feel as though I had been thousands of miles away from Leweston. Nothing could be more completely different ... [from] the little china figures on your bookcase, the cashmere curtain on the stairs & the overgrown geraniums, the rumpled cushions in the chairs which look as though people really sat there & talked & the books that tumble readily off the shelves into your hands — there couldn't be a greater contrast — in one there is no house-spirit, in the other it's all over the house, not only in the attic where it's supposed to dwell but fluttering round the distracted little figure in the kitchen & glowing behind the same little figure that sits so upright by the fire challenging the opinions, tastes & beliefs of her gargantuan-spirited guest. I don't believe anyone makes Louis defend himself as you do, no one troubles to search him out &

challenge him, at least no one when I've been present — nor is there anyone whose flattery is thereby more acceptable...

Owl Cottage
August 11 1942

My dearest Alyse,

... I've had an unusual letter from Louis this morning. Sometimes after parting he has written that he "felt very depressed" after we had said goodbye but this time he says "I had no idea it was going to be so absolutely bloody! I feel really miserable — it's all your fault for not being here! What a blasted damned bloody depressing blank — I feel like lead — and all unexpected, too. I knew I should miss you, of course, but didn't anticipate this depression & emptiness. Certainly I shan't do anything like living here. Well, I hope it will soon be a little more tolerable." So for once he is feeling just a little bit the way I've always felt at these times! I'm delighted ...

We had a lovely time in London — on Thursday by ourselves, going to see Charlie Chaplin in 'The Gold Rush' [Chaplin's newly edited version of 1942] & then dinner & wine we drank to you ... Afterwards we walked to Soho & went to a pub called The Swiss [*Tavern, now Compton's*]. Joan Murray & her husband & Dylan Thomas were there & had been for some time, just soaking. ...

* *Gertrude Poyys, next door to Alyse at Chydyok, kept bees and even had a glass and wood hive built in to her bedroom next to her bed. Joan wrote in a very occasional diary:*

On Sunday two swarms of bees had to be dealt with next door — they had clustered in the middle of a thorn tree & all day Gertrude & Alyse were manoeuvring to get them into boxes. They had to use smoke to get the second swarm off the tree & it was deep twilight when Alyse finally came back, hot & exhausted. We sat in her sitting-room & she spent some minutes, while Louis talked, mutely endeavouring to induce him to flick his cigarette ash into an ash-tray which she moved from place to place in the hope of its catching his eye. Finally, when all the ash was everywhere but in the tray & he was looking vaguely for somewhere to crush out the end he caught sight of her finger pointing at the ash-tray. This matter settled, Alyse began to talk, sitting very upright in her chair, candlelight falling softly round her. She looked an ageless mistress of a literary salon, sitting so still, so concentrated, her fine hair swept back, ruffles of lace at her throat, long earrings trembling in her ears. Louis was making some astounding, devastating avowal of a personal dislike or feeling or belief when she leapt to her feet, clutching at her skirts, saying, "Oh — oh! It's a bee — I can feel it buzzing — oh, dear! Excuse me, you must excuse me a moment!" She shook her petticoats, then as suddenly dropped them & clutched at the shawl on her shoulders & shook it with further gasps & murmurs, then settled herself again in her chair with a deprecatory laugh as though she had interrupted the conversation with some personal weakness — a fit of coughing or sneezing. This happened several times during the rest of the evening & our concern that she might be stung at any moment (or a bee escape & sting us) prevented my appreciating the humour of the scene. Next morning she said four bees had fallen out of her clothes when she went to bed. None of them stung her & L. laughs now whenever I remember the scene ..."

CW

'Michael Adam' and The Ark Press

The name Kim Taylor will perhaps be unfamiliar to many Powys Society members who would otherwise readily recognize the writing and publishing accomplishments of Michael Adam and 'Out of The Ark Press' – not least for two valuable contributions to the canon of Powys literature with the almost simultaneous 1973 publications of Alyse Gregory's *The Cry of a Gull* and Llewelyn Powys's letters to Gamel Woolsey, collected together and edited by Malcolm Elwin under the title of *So Wild a Thing*. Powys Society book collectors will be familiar with the quality and aesthetic beauty of these two books with their artistic wood-cut illustrations, for both bear the hallmarks of a master craftsman and amply display Kim Taylor's printing and design talents. Yet Taylor and Adam are one and the same person, and thus throughout the twenty-one year history of his Ark Press publishing imprint from 1954 to 1975, the 'genius' of Michael Adam's pseudonymous writing is complemented and given style and character by the equal 'genius' of the printing and design artistry of Kim Taylor!

The epithet of 'genius' is not accorded lightly to his accomplishments in the book design and printing industry, and his writing talents also drew praise from the great and good as a glance through some of his book reviews will attest. For example, upon picking up one of Adam's books (*The Wild Strange Place*) 'just to glance through it', Henry Miller wrote that he 'was caught, captivated, enchanted'; and of the same book he wrote to Adam, 'Who that is alive, awake and sensitive could fail to like such a book? Your way of looking at life is, I believe, the only way. I hope you have retained your wonderful vision. ... It is not only a pleasure but a blessing to be able to read such a book'; whilst the reviewer for *Books & Bookmen* magazine wrote that 'Adam at times achieves rhetoric, yet also that deeply felt fervour we associate with genius'. So who was Michael Adam/Kim Taylor – and what happened to The Ark Press?

Kim Taylor was born in India to English parents during the final years of the British Raj, in February 1919. He was sent away to boarding school in England, but by the time he was 19 he was back in India and employed as a copywriter by the advertising firm of D. J. Keymer & Co. When he turned 21 in 1940, he moved to New South Wales, Australia, to take up a two-year Arts teaching post at Tudor House School, returning to Calcutta at the end of the Second World War to work as an editor on the arts & crafts periodical, *Art in Industry*.

By the early 1950s he was back in England teaching at various secondary schools in the south when in 1953 he met Guido Morris, owner of the Latin Press at St Ives in Cornwall. Morris lost his equipment to a creditor and Taylor acquired it, finding himself, 'in the company of a small Albion press, some Bembo type and hand-made paper'. He named his venture The Ark Press and began to learn the printer's craft by printing letterheads and greeting cards.

His first completed Ark Press book in 1954 was D. H. Lawrence's essay 'Life', a copy of which caught the attention of Lawrence's bibliographer, Warren Roberts, a Professor at the University of Texas in Austin, who engaged him to design and print a



book of Lawrence's love poems under the Ark Press imprint entitled, *Look! We Have Come Through!*. This was the first publication where Taylor had used the pseudonym 'Michael Adam' – to identify the creator of the scraperboard illustrations in the book.

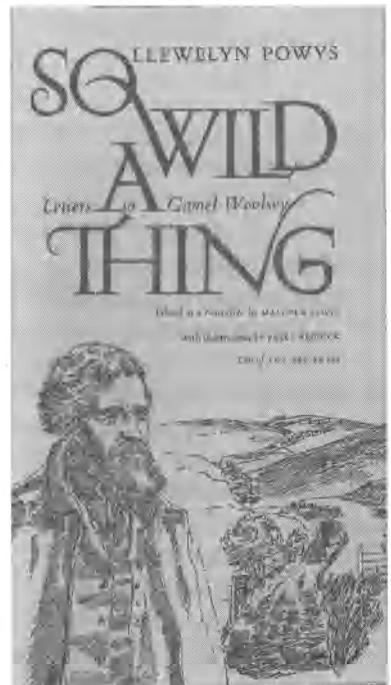
The first book to identify Michael Adam as the author was published in 1959 under the title, *'A Matter of Death & Life: An Essay in Autobiography' by Michael Adam*. With drawings by Ben Shahn, this was the first in the Ark Press series of illustrated books and became the template for future successful publications.

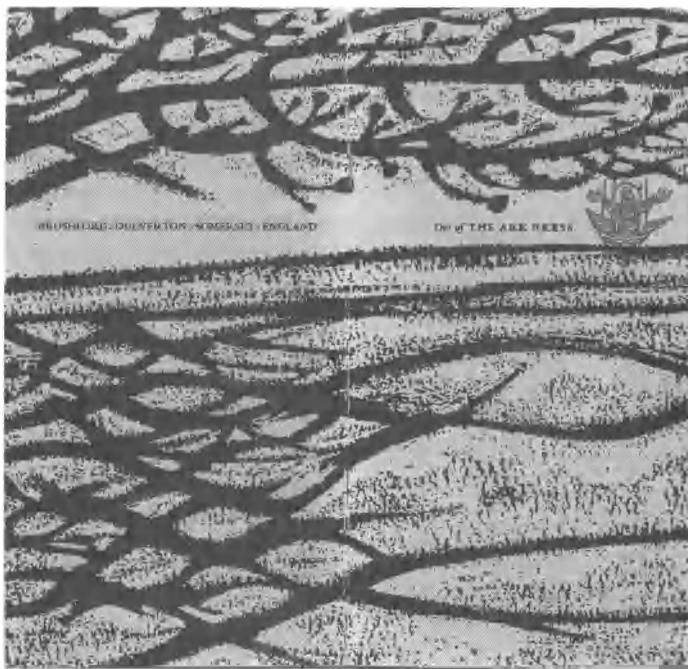
The success of Lawrence's love poems in the *'Look!'* venture led to an invitation from Harry Ransom, the University Vice-President and Director of the new Humanities Research Center, who offered Taylor the post of Consultant to the University Publications Programme, which he accepted and moved to Austin with wife Eya and their two children in the autumn of 1960. During the ten years of his tenure in Texas, Kim Taylor designed,

printed and published over one hundred books, including *'Poor Heretic: Poems by Kenneth Hopkins'* which in 1962 was named in the American Institute of Graphic Art's 'Fifty Books of the Year'. He also studied and became an expert in calligraphy, whilst teaching Book Design and Graphic and Oriental art at the University Arts Department.

Summing up Taylor's work at the University, Al Lowman wrote in *Printing Arts in Texas* (1975): '... apparently he never had a day off, or, for that matter, an off-day In design he plotted his own individualistic course. His work is readily recognizable, strongly personal and strongly stated. Nothing like it had been seen previously in Texas, nor has its like been seen since ...'.

In the summer of 1969 Taylor and his family returned to the south of England and from an Elizabethan Cottage in rural Somerset he set about 'reactivating' The Ark Press, which in his absence had published two more of his works: *The Labour of Love: One Aspect of the Autobiography of Michael Adam* (1962)





The Ark Press catalogue, cover: 32 pages, height 9.8 inches, page width 5.1, with loose price list dated 1 January 1972.

*Note that the covers for *The Cry of a Gull* and *So Wild a Thing*, as shown earlier, are in fact the front of full wrap-around designs for the dust-jackets. (SPM)*

and *Man is a Little World: The First Will & Testament of Michael Adam* (1969), along with two volumes of poems by Harold Morland with woodcuts by Robert Wyss.

Out of The Ark Press in 1970 came *The Body of God*, another collection of poems by D. H. Lawrence, selected by Michael Adam and with woodcuts by Barbara Whitehead, and then in 1973 came *The Cry of a Gull* and *So Wild a Thing*, the former with linocuts by Alan Richards, and the latter with drawings by Peter Reddick.

However, despite an excellent reputation for quality The Ark Press could not sustain economic viability, and following publication of *D. H. Lawrence & the Way of the Dandelion* compiled by Michael Adam & Frieda Lawrence in 1975, the affairs of the press were wound up. As Michael Adam later observed, 'The selling of books was not among Kim Taylor's gifts. He underpriced his books; gave them away. The Ark sank ... with little to show for it but a smile.'

Since the Ark sank in 1975, Kim Taylor's subsequent artistic buoyancy has kept his work afloat, and in 1976 Michael Adam's *Wandering in Eden: Three Ways to the East Within Us* was published by Knopf, and his *Womankind: a Celebration* by Harper in 1979. *My Wild Lone* followed in 1987 (with woodcuts by Robert Wyss) and was

published by Quay Books of Penzance, and in 1988 Kim Taylor was engaged to design a series of works in *Portuguese Literature & Culture* by the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation. The project resulted in more than twenty titles featuring Taylor's design work and calligraphy published between 1990 & 1997.

In 1996 Michael Adam wrote, 'At seventy-seven, with all book designing, teaching and writing seemingly done, Kim Taylor now turns to painting – often showing that marriage of words and images he has always wished to celebrate.' His first painting exhibition was at the Book Gallery, St Ives, in 1996, and there have since been many others elsewhere in his beloved Cornwall.

The Cry of a Gull published by The Ark Press (1973) is a selection of entries from the 1923 to 1948 journals of Alysé Gregory, edited with a Foreword & an Afterword by Michael Adam and containing 'A Tribute to Alysé Gregory' by Evelyn Hardy and linocuts by Alan Richards. The book was designed by Kim Taylor for Rosemary Manning.

So Wild a Thing published by The Ark Press (1973) is a selection of Llewelyn Powys's letters to Gamel Woolsey, edited as a narrative by Malcolm Elwin, and with drawings by Peter Reddick. A Limited Edition of 500 copies was printed by Wordens of Cornwall in Penzance, on fine paper, with book design by Kim Taylor for Malcolm & Eve Elwin.

Neil Lee-Atkin

The death of Werner Stein: a little tale, or tailpiece

Sending a copy of our last *Newsletter* as a Christmas card to one of my acquaintances of long ago, I got the final piece of my search on *Werner Stein*, so my little appropriation of the Society's property paid off.

David Webb used to be the Librarian of the Bishopsgate Institute in the City of London, now long retired. This Institute is one of those splendid educational bodies established late in Victoria's reign, with lecture halls, reference and lending libraries and so on, but also a splendid architectural landmark just north of Liverpool Street Station.

It came into my consciousness when I myself first became interested in London and its history, and that's a very long time ago indeed! For a time its huge basements, which occasionally flooded, held the storage chests for the substantial accumulation of past and current publications of the London Topographical Society of which I was Secretary for 17 years from 1967; one of my duties was to send out the Society's annual publications and deal with orders for back issues. However, I visited that Institute well before then, and that's where I met David, himself a member of the

TopSoc's Committee. When, a little before our family decided to move to Bath in 2004, I had made up my mind to dispose of my own London collection, I called on David for advice which helped me greatly with his confirmation of my collection's importance.

I explored the various ways of selling the collection, including auction, dealers, private sale, but eventually sold it to Texas A&M University's Cushing Memorial Library. Therein hangs a tale of its own, or perhaps a tailpiece. At that moment, I was in the throes of preparing the pre-press work for volume 13 of *The Powys Journal*, for which I had a rapid-fire exchange over the ether with Larry Mitchell, then Editor of the *Journal*. As an afterthought I added to one of my e-mails that I was disposing of my London collection: might Texas A&M be interested, I asked.

Larry passed this to their Librarian, Steve Smith. I had already prepared a detailed catalogue on 47 printed A4 close-typed double-column pages, plus 18 in manuscript collating in full an unique copy of *Shepherd's London* in 16 parts (issued between 1827 and 1832), together with 13 pages of offprints from the Society's journals. Steve leapt at the prospect of opening up a virtually void area in their own collections, for which they had funds available; one of the expatriate English professors teaching there confirmed the value to Texas, so primarily on the strength of my careful recording, Texas agreed to purchase my accumulation; we negotiated a price.

My first purchases for their London interest were in 1960, the first from Stanley Crowe, a celebrated specialist in topographical material in his narrow basement in Bloomsbury, in 1962, so my building up of the collection was spread over more than 40 years. With the greatest diligence I built up the most complete set possible (almost certainly unique) of the London Topographical Society's publications from the first in 1881, with all the portfolios and folders which had been issued from the very start, and a few variants. Thanks to our contact with Larry my London collection now has a good home where it was to be housed as an entity.

To return to Werner Stein, David sent me the following:

Stein died at Highgate Hospital in January 2002 aged 87. In December 1939 he married Erika Boehm, a fellow Berliner, at Marylebone Registry Office - she was a month older than him (born February 4 1914). She too died in Highgate Hospital, in September 1999, aged 85. No children have been traced. The index to electoral registers shows them moving round North London after WW2, ending up in Hornsey.

which is where later records shew him living.

This brings to an end, at least for a while, my search for 'Stein', though I would still like to find an Obituary which would have appeared early in 2002. This is not so long ago now: I shall pursue the Chartered Society of Designers again, as they must have its own journals.

Stephen Powys Marks