

# The Powys Society

President: Dr. Glen Cavaliero

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## NEWSLETTER 1985/6

### NOTICE OF THE AUTUMN MEETING

The Autumn meeting of the society will take place at 2:30 pm on Saturday December 7th 1985 at LIDDON HOUSE 24 SOUTH AUDLEY STREET, LONDON W.1.

Paul Roberts will discuss THE POETRY OF JOHN COWPER POWYS .

### MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Normal College, Bangor. Sunday 1st September . 1985.

There were no matters arising from the minutes of the previous A.G.M and these were unanimously approved.

SECRETARY'S REPORT: The secretary reported that the first meeting following the conference at Exeter had taken place on December 1st 1984, when SUSAN HUXTABLE SELLY gave a long and fascinating paper on John Cowper Powys's novel WOOD AND STONE. The meeting had been advertised as taking place at Liddon House but, owing to a misunderstanding, had been transferred at the last minute to the Women's University Club, for which arrangement we also thank Susan Huxtable Selly.

The second meeting of the year took place at Liddon House on March 23rd 1985. Sadly, this was the very day on which The Times carried its obituary of our late President Prof. G. WILSON KNIGHT, who had died on March 20th. Despite the sadness cast over our meeting by so great a loss, members were fascinated to hear from ROSEMARY MANNING an account of the work of ALYSE GREGORY, which contained several extracts from little-known works. Members also had the opportunity of examining a volume of the journal of Miss Gregory.

The funeral of Prof. Wilson Knight took place some days later at the SPIRITUALIST CHURCH, EXETER. The secretary also reported that the University of Exeter would be holding a memorial celebration of Prof. Wilson Knight at 5:30 on Saturday November 2nd 1985, to be followed by a performance of TWELFTH NIGHT dedicated to his memory. Booking forms were available at the meeting.

The secretary then mentioned the successful inaugural conference of The Powys Society of North America, held at Colgate University from June 7th-9th 1985 and the publication of POWYS NOTES, their newsletter.

The secretary then apologised for the absence of a map from the conference details. Such a map had been provided by the Normal College.

**CHAIRMAN'S REPORT:** The Chairman spoke of the importance to members of the life and work of our late President. He referred to the obituary in The Times and noted the brevity of the references to J.C.P. The Chairman then spoke of his own reading of Prof. Wilson Knight's novel KLINTON TOP and read aloud to members extracts from his final correspondence with Prof. Wilson Knight, extracts which might be taken as a final message of continued hope and striving. The Chairman then referred to Wilson Knight's contribution to AUTHORS TAKE SIDES ON THE FALKLANDS WAR (Cecil Woolf), which repeats a similar message.

The Chairman then spoke of the death of ELIZABETH HARVEY, another very great loss to the society. He recounted her career and her inestimable contribution to the work of the society and the establishment of the reputation of JCP.

The Chairman then referred to the work of The Powys Society Of North America and the success of their inaugural conference.

He went on to speak of the importance of the extensive diaries of JCP and especially of the portrait they provide of PHYLLIS PLAYTER. Unfortunately there are no immediate plans for publication. Mention was also made of the British Council booklet on THE POWYS BROTHERS by R.C. Churchill and members were informed that this was still available. The attention of members was also drawn to THE QUEST FOR MERLIN (Hamish Hamilton) by NIKOLAI TOLSTOY, which refers to JCP and POEUS. Members were also informed that, in an article entitled "THE SCANDAL OF THE NOBEL PRIZE", published in the NEW YORK TIMES on September 30th 1984, GEORGE STEINER had mentioned the case of John Cowper Powys in relation to this prize.

The Chairman closed his report with a vote of thanks to our speakers, the treasurer, the secretary, Mr Ian Hughes for his initial contact with The Normal College and Belinda Humfrey for the continuing excellence of THE POWYS REVIEW.

The Chairman also informed the meeting of the decision of the committee to invite Dr. Glen Cavaliero to become our new President and of his acceptance of the invitation. It was also mentioned that Prof. Wilson Knight had left a bequest of something in the order of £1000 to the society.

The Chairman then announced that he did not intend to stand for re-election at the next A.G.M.

**TREASURER'S REPORT:** The Treasurer circulated copies of a detailed statement of the society's financial position, which indicated that the society's account was £1405.57p in credit.

The Treasurer also reported that three members had died, five had officially resigned and twenty-three had still not paid subscriptions for 1985. There were twenty-one new members.

**MATTERS ARISING:** FRANCIS FEATHER suggested that the Wilson Knight bequest be used as the basis of a reserve fund, which should aim to equal one year's income for the society. This should be deposited in a building society on a long term withdrawal basis in order to earn the highest possible income. IAN HUGHES suggested that some accounts provided high interest with instant access, provided that a minimum sum was maintained. Mr Feather proposed that the reserve fund should be so established and this was seconded by TIMOTHY HYMAN. The motion was carried unanimously.

**ELECTION OF OFFICERS:** The present officers were re-elected unanimously and the Vice Chairmanship of Timothy Hyman was re-asserted by the Chairman.

**COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP:** The precise membership of the committee was questioned. GLEN CAVALIERO said that there was no fixed number of members and that present members, in addition to the elected officers, included: Susan Huxtable Selly, Belinda Humfrey, Cicely Hill, Francis Feather and Jim Dawson. MORINE KRISSDOTTIR was then nominated for membership of the committee by Timothy Hyman. The nomination was seconded by Paul Roberts and unanimously approved by the members. James Turner and Ian Hughes were also nominated, but were unable to accept the nominations.

**VENUE OF THE 1986 CONFERENCE:** Several possible venues were suggested, including Glastonbury, Dorchester, Weymouth, Bath, Burnham-on-Sea and Millfield School, Street, Somerset. Glastonbury, Bath and Millfield seemed to be most favoured. Susan Rands undertook to investigate the possibility of using Millfield.

**BOOK SALE:** Following the A.G.M. the Annual Book Sale was conducted by Francis Feather. A very large number of books, including many rare and valuable items, had been donated by members. The sale realised a profit of £520.81p. We extend our thanks to Mr Feather and to all of the members who so kindly donated their books.

PUBLICATIONS OF INTEREST

- 1) THREE FANTASIES by John Cowper Powys (Carcenet Press). The first edition of this book sold out within two months and it has now been reprinted. Favourable reviews appeared in several papers, including The Guardian (April 11th) The Columbus Dispatch (May 5th) & The Irish Press (May 11th).
- 2) WOLF SOLENT & WEYMOUTH SANDS have received their first paperback publication in the U.S.A from Harper and Row. These editions, with introductions by Robertson Davies and James Purdy, have been very favourably received and WOLF SOLENT has also been issued by THE QUALITY BOOK OF THE MONTH CLUB.
- 3) THE V. RAGO PRESS are to publish ONE WAY OF LOVE, a previously unpublished novel by Gamel Woolsey, in 1987.
- 4) Copies of the magazine TRACT No. 27, including a fascinating article by R.B. WATSON, "T.F. POWYS: A REAPPRAISAL", are available from THE GRYPHON PRESS, 38 Prince Edwards Road, Lewes East Sussex at £1 (+20p postage). Mr Watson will be addressing the Spring meeting of the society.
- 5) THE REDCLIFFE PRESS, 49 Park St. Bristol. BS1 5NT, have re-issued nine titles by Llewelyn Powys.
- 6) Members will be sorry to hear that THE POWYS NEWSLETTER, published by the Colgate University Press, has ceased publication with the current issue (No. 6). Back numbers are, however, available from the university. It is planned that POWYS NOTES, the newsletter of The Powys Society of North America, will ultimately take the place of The Powys Newsletter, as it develops into a full-scale journal. Details are available from DENIS LANE at 1 West Place, Chappaqua, N.Y. 10514. USA.
- 7) There are plans for the re-issue of GOD'S EYES A-TWINKLE, UNCLAY and MR. TASKER'S GODS as Hogarth Press paperbacks, who recently published a new edition of MR. WESTON'S GOOD WINE. No further details are available at present.
- 8) Copies of the magazine DOCK LEAVES have been re-printed as annual volumes and are available at £5.50 (+postage) from H.G. Walters Ltd., Knowling Mead, Tenby, Dyfed, SA76 8EE. Volumes of particular interest to members are 3, 6, & 7. Volume 7 contains the special JCP issue of Spring 1956.
- 9) Cedric Hentschel writes: "WRITERS AND THEIR WORK No. 150: The section on 20th century prose in the 1984 publications catalogue of the British Council, while including both Powell and Priestley, does not list the 40-page brochure entitled THE POWYS BROTHERS, which R.C. Churchill contributed to the series in 1962. Its scope was thus summarised on the cover: 'The 150th issue in the Writers and Their Work series, the first number of which appeared in June 1950, honours a remarkable contemporary family.

The three brothers Powys considered by Mr. Churchill are John Cowper Powys, who has just attained the age of ninety, an occasion which brought him world-wide congratulation; Theodore Powys, novelist and story-teller, who died nearly ten years ago; and Llewelyn Powys, a versatile writer who was the shortest lived of the three, though perhaps the widest in his interests. The bibliography contributed by Mr. Maurice Hussey includes books by brothers and sisters of the celebrated trio.

Mr Churchill concurs with most critics that Theodore Powys was the most original of the brethren, but one of the merits of his essay is that he presents a balanced view of their diverse accomplishments.'

A recent approach to the British Council, made on the assumption that this pamphlet was no longer in print and that a revised version was long over-due (or, even better, that separate monographs on the three brothers should perhaps be commissioned) yielded a surprise. The original work is still available. It can be obtained either from the British Council (65 Davies St. London W1Y 2AA) or from Profile Books (65 Victoria St., Windsor, Berkshire, S14 1EH). The text (even the blurb we have quoted!) remains unchanged, the only up-dating being in the cover, where an eye-catching red has replaced the earlier dingy yellow. The price 2/6 in 1962, is now £1.50.

Thanks to the sponsorship of the British Council, Mr Churchill's study helped to spread the fame of the Powys family throughout the world. As one of the earliest chronicles of achievement, it deserves a place on our bookshelves, even though many enthusiasts will regret the imbalance in a presentation which allots a mere ten pages to the joint consideration of John and Llewelyn."

10) The following titles, of interest to our members, are available from THE WARREN HOUSE PRESS at 12, New Road, North Walsham, Norfolk NR28 9DF.

- a) THE END OF A GOLDEN STRING & other poems by Kenneth Hopkins - published to celebrate the poet's seventieth birthday. Edition of 250. Casebound £10.50.
- b) A WINDING SHEET OF GOLD & other poems by Laurence Powys. Edition of 250. Casebound £6.75.
- c) THE COLLECTED POEMS OF GAMEL WOOLSEY with an introduction by Glen Cavaliero and including a previously unpublished poem by John Cowper Powys. Edition of 500. Casebound £12.75.
- d) THE LETTERS OF GAMEL WOOLSEY TO LLEWELYN POWYS edited with an introduction and notes by Kenneth Hopkins. Casebound £10.50.
- e) BERTRAND RUSSELL AND GAMEL WOOLSEY by Kenneth Hopkins. Edition of 250. Paper. £2.40.
- f) GAMEL AND REX a sequence of twenty-two sonnets by Kenneth Hopkins based upon the relationship between Gamel Woolsey and Rex Hunter. Paper £2.70.
- g) BUMBORE: A Romance by Louis Wilkinson. A parody of a chapter from Rodmoor. Paper £1.05
- h) BLASPHEMY & RELIGION: A dialogue about John Cowper Powys's "Wood & Stone" and Theodore Powys's "The Soliloquy of a Hermit" by Louis U. Wilkinson. Paper. £1.05.
- i) IS MODERN MARRIAGE A FAILURE? A debate between John Cowper Powys and Bertrand Russell, with an introduction by Margaret Moran. Edition of 250. Casebound £9.75.
- j) BOOK COLLECTING FOR THE FINANCIALLY UNSTABLE an essay by Kenneth Hopkins. Paper. £2.45.
- k) ELEGY FOR ST. ANNE'S & other poems by Glen Cavaliero. Paper £3.50. Some casebound copies may still be available.

#### BOOKS WANTED:

Mr Alex Bridge, of 23 Admiralty Road, Felpham, Bognor Regis, West Sussex PO22 7DW, would be interested to hear from any member who has copies of limited or uncommon editions of the works of T.F. Powys for sale or possible exchange.

Paul Roberts, of 29 St. Mary's Road, Sale, Cheshire, M33 1SB, would be interested to hear from anyone with copies of the crime novels of Kenneth Hopkins for sale or exchange.

#### SUMMER CONFERENCE 1986:

It is likely that the 1986 conference will be held at Millfield School, Street, Somerset from August 22nd to 24th. Conference fees will be in the region of £60.

#### SUBSCRIPTIONS FOR 1986:

Subscriptions are due as from January 1st 1986. The subscription fee is still £7.50 and should be sent to the Treasurer at the above address. Prompt payment will avoid unnecessary expense and administrative complications.

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