Editorial

This is the twenty-fifth issue of the *Newsletter* that I have edited since March 1989 and, sadly, it will be my last. It is time now for new ideas and fresh perspectives, and who better to provide these than John Batten, who has already demonstrated his devotion to both the Powys family and the Society over many years? John will be standing down from his position as Honorary Secretary at this year's Annual General Meeting and I was delighted when the Society's Committee took the opportunity to invite him to edit the *Newsletter* – and more delighted still when he accepted.

It is only when I look back at my first *Newsletter*, a pale wraith of a thing compared to the sturdy creature it has become, that I realise quite how far the Society and its publications have developed since the 1980s. Those seventeen typewritten pages, containing probably a quarter of the current content, recorded our efforts to achieve charitable status, the first Society Walk at East Chaldon and Naomi Mitchison's London lecture on her friendship with the Powys brothers. There were also details of that year's conference, which was held at Sussex University and had the title *The Powyses in the 90s*. Indeed, it was at that conference that I proposed the establishment of a Powys collection and research centre, a development which has come immeasurably closer over the past year or two and which will take another huge step forward with the opening of the Literary Gallery at the Dorset County Museum on July 17th this year.

It does, indeed, seem the right time to hand over the final floppy disk.

I am proud to have been part of the growth and development of the *Newsletter*, but it could not have become what it is today without the encouragement and

---

ON OTHER PAGES

The Powys Society Conference 3
Subscriptions 4
The Chairman's report for 1996 5
Visit to the Amoco rig 6
The Confessions of a Sceptic 8
The Society's Publications 14
The Henry Williamson Society 14
First Encounters: Penelope Shuttle, Christopher Thomas 15
Reviews 19
Two Unrecorded Poems by J.C.P. 21
'To Miss Dorothy Powys' 22
The 'Victoria' 25
The Hamadryad and the Demon 27
Of Hamadryads, trees, and Druids 40
The Treasurer's report 41
Accounts for 1996 42
Book and Media News 44

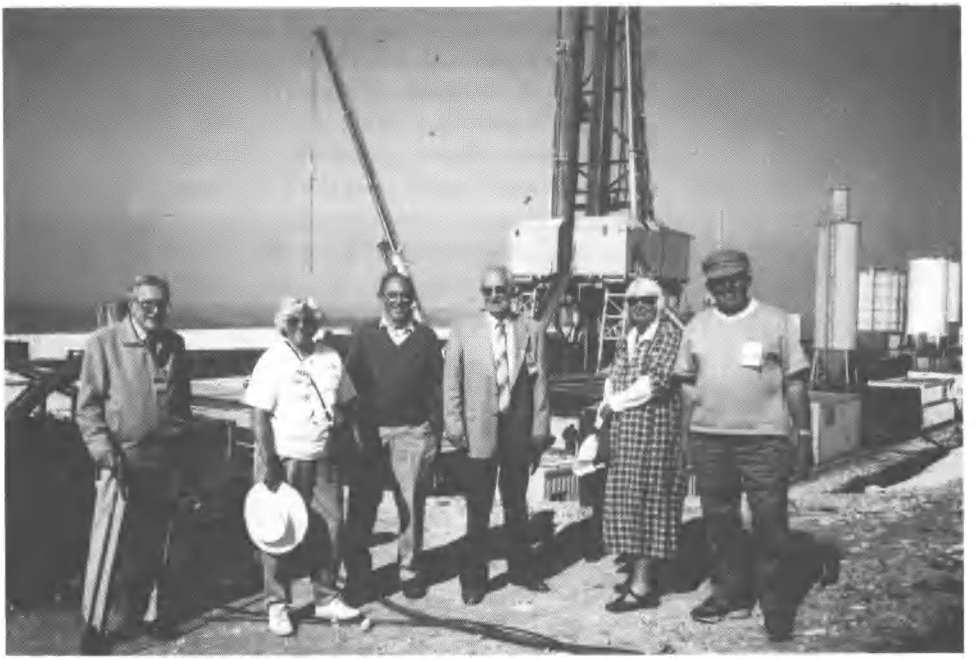
support of those who have so generously given up their time to write the articles. Most especially, I must thank Stephen Powys Marks, who is entirely responsible for the technical developments and has also saved me on many occasions from blunders which *ought* to make an English teacher blush! But Stephen has also been an active contributor, as his work in the current issue demonstrates. I have particularly enjoyed reading Stephen's account of the *Victoria* family magazine and look forward to his future explorations of the relationship between Alfred de Kantzow and the Powys family.

There are many others I should thank, but special mention must also be made of Griffin Beale and Robin Patterson, who have made so much fascinating archive material available to the Society and have enriched the Newsletter immeasurably.

Finally, a word of thanks to all those who have taken the trouble over the years to write to me about the *Newsletter*. Their encouragement has been sustaining.

Now I can hardly wait for the November issue!

Paul Roberts



Leslie Harrison, Eve Batten, John Batten, John Cornelius, Phyllis Warr, Reg Warr
Where are they, and what are they doing? *See page 6*

The Powys Society Conference 1997

Kingston Maurward College of Agriculture, Dorchester
August 23rd–26th

We regret that there have had to be changes in the outline programme published in the April Newsletter. *It is still not too late to book for all or any part of the programme, so long as you do not require accommodation at the College.*

Conference Programme

Saturday, 23 August

12.30 Officers' Meeting
2.00 Committee Meeting
4.00 onwards Arrival of participants
5.45 Dinner
7.30 **Roger Peers** *The Flavour of Dorchester 1934–1935*
Reception and launch of *The Dorset Year* (A coach will be available to and from the Dorset County Museum for this event.)

Sunday, 24 August

9.15 **Jeremy Hooker** *Writers in a Landscape*
11.00 **Charles Lock** *On T. F. Powys's Fables*
12.30 Lunch
2.00 **Harald Fawkner, Pia Posti and Peter Samuelsson**
–4.30 *Phenomenological Commentary on the Fiction of John Cowper Powys*
(A tea interval will be provided during this session.)
6.30 Dinner
8.00 **Oliver and Chris Wilkinson, Kate and P. J. Kavanagh**
The Powys Clowns: A Reading

Monday, 25 August

9.15 **Morine Krissdóttir** *The Diary of a Man Who Walks*
11.00 **Jacqueline and Max Peltier, Tony Hallett and Chris Gostick**
Powys on the Internet
12.30 Lunch
Free afternoon **Judith Stinton** will be available to guide members around the Powys bay of the new Literary Gallery
4.00 **The Annual General Meeting of The Powys Society** (p.t.o.)
5.45 Dinner
7.00 Coach departs for **East Chaldon Walk-About**
Church, Sailor's Return, Llewelyn's Stone (if you wish), a belated birthday toast to Llewelyn and some readings

Tuesday, 26 August

Breakfast and departure

The Annual General Meeting of The Powys Society

to be held at Kingston Maurward College of Agriculture, Dorchester
on Monday August 25th 1997 at 4 pm

AGENDA

1 Minutes of the last A.G.M. (1996)
2 Matters arising from the minutes
3 Secretary's report
4 Treasurer's report
5 Chairman's remarks
6 Appointment of Officers (no other nominations received)

Chairman	Paul Roberts
Vice-Chairman	Griffin Beale
Secretary	Chris Gostick
Treasurer	Stephen Powys Marks

7 Appointment of Committee Members (no other nominations received)
Bev Craven
John Batten
Christopher Wilkinson
Judith Stinton
Timothy Hyman
John Powys
John Williams
8 Appointment of Auditor
Stephen Allen
9 The setting up of a Trust for The Powys Collection
10 The time and place of the next Conference
11 Any other business

There will be the usual BOOK SALE at the Conference.
PLEASE bring as many books as you can to give us,
preferably with Powys connections or associations.

Subscriptions

Most members have now paid their subscriptions, as a result first, of the good number who, very helpfully, pay by standing order, and secondly as a result of the response to reminders which went out with the last *Newsletter*. Thank you !

Just a reminder: the annual subscription, covering the calendar year, is £13.50 for UK members and £16 for those overseas, with a student rate of £6.

Chairman's Report for the Calendar Year 1996

In February 1996 I told the Committee that is was my intention to stand down as Chairman after the 1997 A.G.M. This is therefore my last report as required within the terms of the Society's charitable status. The Officers and Committee are constantly seeking new ways of serving our members and the cultural and educational aims of The Powys Society. 1996 saw several new initiatives undertaken, some of which did not come to fruition until the following year.

The Executive Committee met four times, and the Publications Committee twice, sitting for one of these meetings with the Executive Committee. During the year Louise de Bruin, Peter Foss and Frank Kibblewhite stood down from the Committee, to which they had given distinguished service, Peter and Louise editing *The Powys Journal* with distinction, and Frank making a major contribution to the Society's exhibitions. They were replaced by Chris Gostick, Judith Stinton and John Powys.

During the year John Williams was appointed Editor of *The Powys Journal* and Charles Lock Contributing Editor. *Newsletters*, edited by Paul Roberts, were published in April, July and November, and *The Powys Journal* vol.vi in August. A revised edition of the *Powys Checklist and Readers' Guide* was published by the Society, as was *The Ideal Ringmaster*, an essay by Paul Roberts on Arnold Shaw. The Committee also agreed, in principle, to publish John Cowper Powys's 1934–35 Diary, edited and annotated by Morine Krissdóttir and Roger Peers, under the imprint of The Powys Press. This is a major publishing event in which the editors, supported by Bev Craven, Sarah Linden and Stephen Powys Marks, are breaking new ground for the Society.

At the end of 1995 an overwhelming majority of those members who voted by postal ballot, opted to adopt a new constitution which would offer all members a voice in the election of Officers and Committee. The framing and implementation of the new provisions has involved a great deal of work by the Committee, and I am particularly grateful to Stephen Powys Marks for his contribution. We have also endeavoured to enable members of the Society to organise their own formal and informal groups at a regional or local level. Chris Gostick has been willing to coordinate these activities, but it has been difficult to find local organisers. We have, however, published a list of members, by regions, which we hope will lead to more informal contacts across the Society. The Committee has for some time been aware of the potential of the Internet as a global means of publicising the achievements of the Powys family and the activities of the Society. By November there were at least five Internet pages carrying Powys information, several of which were contributed by individual members of our Society. The Committee, wishing to add further weight to this good work, agreed that Chris Gostick would set up an 'official' Powys Society web-site. It is hoped that these

developments will increase both the scope of the Society and the participation of its membership.

The Powys Collection has continued to occupy a great deal of my time. I have liaised with Judith Stinton in ensuring that material has been available from the Collection to make the Powys bay of the new Literary Gallery at the Dorset County Museum interesting and attractive to both the *cognoscenti* and the casual visitor. During the year an appeal to members, supplemented by a sum from Society funds, enabled us to make a donation of £1,000 towards the cost of the Gallery. More recently much time has been spent on applications for grants toward the cost of conserving the more fragile manuscript material in the Collection. We have yet to see whether these are successful. The Society is grateful to the Dorset County Museum for making expertise and resources available to further the care of the Collection.

Finally, I would like to thank the Officers and Committee and a great many other members who have encouraged and supported the work of the Society during what I have found to be a challenging, but I hope constructive, ten-year period.

Morine Krissdóttir

Members Visit the Amoco Rig

Early in May the Amoco Project Director invited me to organise a small party of Society members to visit the West Chaldon site. On the day of the General Election half-a-dozen of us dined together at The Sailor's Return and were taken from there by mini-bus to Down Barn. At the security check-point we were carefully counted and our names noted. Having disembarked within the compound we were ushered to a small cabin where we were briefed by Neil Carson, the Project Director, but before that began there was a questionnaire for each of us to complete. I found this a little disconcerting, because *Name*, *Address*, *Next of Kin*, were followed by: *Destination*? Being too timid to tempt Providence with false optimism I wrote 'Uncertain'.

Having had the background of the exploration explained we were invited to ask questions, all of which, one has to say, were answered with great tact and apparent frankness. Readers may be interested in a brief account of some of this dialogue.

Q. Why have you sited your rig on the top of a hill?

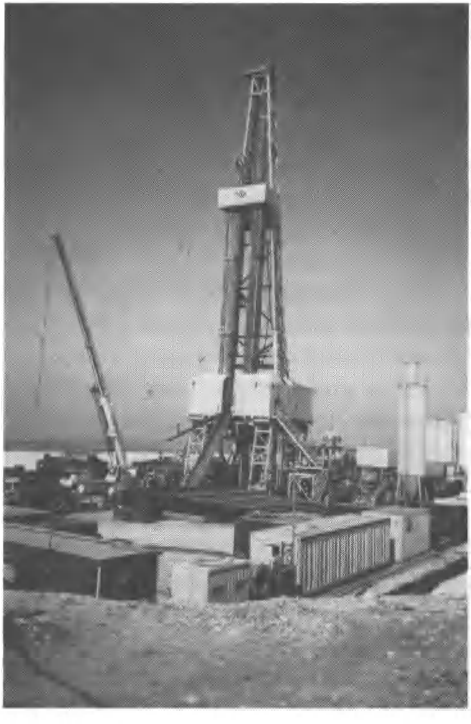
A. This was not the cheapest option, but it was the one recommended by the environmental groups consulted. A site in a valley will always be visible from surrounding hills, but if oil is found, once the rig is dismantled the compound will be completely hidden behind its high earth embankment.

Q. Is there not an underwater nature reserve off this stretch of coast?

A. Yes, and this was the reason for not drilling from a platform off shore. The drill is at this moment about half a mile below the surface and a mile out to sea. The technology involved makes it impossible for any oil to be spilled at sea.

Q. If you find oil, where will it be processed?

A. We do not know, but there is absolutely no question of it being processed anywhere within many miles of this locality. Existing planning regulations would not allow it. This is not an urgent issue. If commercially viable quantities of oil are discovered the well can be plugged and left until provision for transportation and processing has been made.



Q. Is it a fact that if circumstances justify it, several wells could be sunk from within your compound and that each would involve the use of a derrick? If that is the case, might the rig not be offending the landscape for years to come?

A. We may drill up to seven wells and each drilling operation would be similar to the present one.

Our discussion over, we were asked to dress up in hard hats, safety glasses and non-slip boots before beginning the tour. Having climbed a steep ladder onto the platform we watched a gang of German engineers coupling lengths of pipe into the line at the end of which a diamond-toothed bit was grinding its way towards the oil-bearing rock. We were told how it is possible to guide its course and visited the cabin where core samples are analysed.

It was an interesting visit. I only hope Amoco will take as much care of the environment as it does of its visitors, of which there have already been more than five hundred.

Early in June I went back to West Chaldon and walked past the drilling site in the direction of Ringstead. There was the crane, still feeding great lengths of pipe into the maw of the monolith and I wondered at what point the pipeline actually passed beneath my feet. When I reached East Chaldon the news was that the latest Amoco bulletin said that some difficulties had been encountered and drilling would not be completed until the end of June.

John Batten

The Confessions of a Sceptic

[*The following review of* Confessions of Two Brothers *was published in* The Occult Review *in May 1916 (pp. 278–84) and is the work of its editor, Ralph Shirley, who was, of course, cousin to John Cowper and Llewelyn Powys. Contemporary reviews of the book have proved extremely elusive and, having appeared in an English magazine, this piece must surely be unique. The family connection gives an added interest and will more than justify its publication in the* Newsletter. *Those not familiar with* Confessions of Two Brothers *will, perhaps, be surprised at some of the philosophical opinions quoted in the review, since they appear to flatly contradict all that we have come to understand by the term Powysian. Perhaps that only indicates the need for more extensive study of this dark and fascinating book, the original manuscript of which forms part of The Powys Society Collection at the Dorset County Museum. It is also interesting to wonder whether the title of Ralph Shirley's review might have influenced John Cowper Powys in choosing* The Religion of a Sceptic *as the title of a later book.*]

There are, perhaps, not more than seven or eight books of confessions that are worth reading. The reason of this I take to be that, whereas a person who writes his confessions should presumably be an egoist, in the large majority of cases the egoist is an intolerable bore. In fact, so boring is the average egoist, that one is driven rather to wonder how it is that confessions (or books of self-revelation) are not inevitably and invariably tedious. But this is certainly not the case in the present, nor in a number of other noteworthy instances. Some may find St. Augustine's tedious, but they will hardly find Rousseau's otherwise than absorbing. Then again, there are the confessions of Pepys. Half the charm of these doubtless lies in the fact that Pepys was a man of transparent candour, and that he wrote without any view to publication. Had he written deliberately for the public, Pepys' Diary could never have been of half the interest that it actually is. Of the other books of intimate self-revelation which have found permanent place in the world's literature, it is sufficient to mention Goethe's *Wahrheit und Dichtung*, the *Journal Intime* of Amiel, and the Journal of Marie Bashkirtseff. Last, but not least, there is the case of Strindberg and his *Confession of a Fool*, and other autobiographical works. There are, of course, many beside these, such as the autobiography of Mme de Guyon, which appeal to a limited circle and from a certain standpoint; but I am now alluding to those which have commanded a world-wide audience. It is true that many writers have made confessions in an indirect sort of way. They have half revealed and half concealed themselves under the guise of fiction, but the definite attempt to lay bare a man's fundamental characteristics is quite another matter. The book before me is entitled *The Confessions of Two Brothers*, but it is not really this at all; it is the confessions of John Cowper Powys, and a brief diary by his brother which hardly seems as if it should have found a place within the same binding. The title of the

book, in fact, reminds one rather of the old joke about Liddell and Scott's Lexicon –

Two men wrote a dictionary, Liddell and Scott.

Scott wrote a dictionary, Liddell did not.

The confessions of John Cowper Powys are in the nature of a subtle intellectual self-dissection. The fascination of them lies in the fact that they are, as far as it is possible for the author to make them so, the candid self-revelation of a singularly brilliant though wayward intellect – an intellect that is in essential revolt against the world as at present constituted, and of a judgment dominated to an extraordinary extent by temperament rather than by reason. Sceptic though he is, Mr Powys differs *in toto* from the ordinary sceptic, through the very fact that in his final decision in matters of opinion he never allows himself to be guided by his reason. In all the vital issues of life, where any definite conclusion in reached, we feel that the deciding factor in his opinion, if opinion we can call it, is temperament, and temperament alone. We feel instinctively that if a truth were disagreeable to him he would reject it unhesitatingly, in spite of the evidence in its favour. He demands for his beliefs an element of the picturesque, and the dramatic, and where this is lacking he will repudiate all proofs, however scientific, and all revelations, however divine. And yet his receptivity and open-mindedness incline him to toy with the beliefs that his temperament will ultimately compel him to reject. What appeals to him in life is its mysterious background – the fact that it is an insoluble riddle – a riddle which he resents all efforts alike of religion or of science to attempt to solve. He congratulates himself that religion and science are in this alike foredoomed to failure.

> At the bottom of my mind [he says] I discern a destructive and inevitable assumption that no theory of the universe which anybody has ever had or will conceivably ever have, can possibly be true. As for the popular Hegelian idea of progressive evolutionary truth, I despise and deride it. The ultimate secret is as far off now as it was in the time of Herakleitos, and I have a suspicion that all who do not confess this are either knaves or fools.

He sees the grim figure of Destiny, unalterable and implacable, behind all the phenomena of existence. 'I do not [he says] think that I can possibly exaggerate the constant presence with me of a steady, invincible, mechanic force, pushing me forward from point to point, from stage to stage, and giving me no loophole of escape.'

He feels that he is himself just part of the eternal mechanism, and his 'arrogant heart no more than a small clockwork fragment of the great timepiece of everlasting necessity.' 'This huge mill-wheel of irreversible, inevitable order,' as he again describes it, appears to him neither benignant nor malign. Here, as usual, our author's temperament dominates his reason. He, in fact, admits it himself. '"Why not benignant?" my reader may exclaim. Well, there we touch

again that inveterate prejudice I feel against a world ruled by Providence. If I could get to the bottom of this prejudice I should indeed get to the bottom of myself.' And he adds, in a sort of attempt at self-justification, 'there is that in me – and it is no mere superficial perversity – which demands an element of cold, unconscious, sublime fatality in the texture of things.' Here, as elsewhere, we get the appeal of the dramatic sense vitiating judgments which should obviously be founded on some more evidential basis. Mr Powys does not say so in so many words, but he practically admits that, as he views it, art, the supremest art, demands this gaunt, grim figure of Destiny in the background. This art is part and parcel of his temperament, and demands satisfaction, even if, in obtaining it, he must do violence to his reason. Thus, when he wishes to prove to us that death is, in all human probability, the end of all things, he does not, as most people would do, attempt to demolish the evidence of an after life, he does not attack the accumulated facts of the Psychical Research Society or hold up to ridicule the conclusions arrived at in Frederick Myers' great work on *Human Personality*. All such evidence is contemptuously brushed aside. He appeals instead to his own literary sense, and his appreciation of what is poetically fitting. 'The dignity of death [he says], is absolutely spoiled for me by easy, arrogant hopes of joyful resurrections. Even the great Buddhistic theory of successive incarnations seems to me *less poetical* than the finality touched with the remote, just articulated chance of something else, of the tragic Pagan, *Ave atque Vale*!' It is characteristic of Powys, though his attitude towards the other life is entirely sceptical, that he will never quite shut the door. That remote possibility of 'something else', what vague, indefinite vistas it suggests to the imagination! And yet there lurks behind the picture the old grim figure of Destiny, unmistakably hinting that whatever fond hopes we may cherish on the subject, are, after all, nothing but illusion.

Our author admits that he himself once doubted this eternal reign of order in the universe; but he has been forced to recognize the absurdity of the alternative of cosmic anarchy. All Nature, indeed, cries out against it.

> Pluralism is a pleasant theory to play with, and perhaps has its place, but I must confess that the indissoluble unity of the world of which we form a part is borne in upon me as an axiomatic necessity of my consciousness. The universe may have all manner of layers and levels of divergent life; its fluctuating waves of being may ebb and flow through incredibly varied spheres; but one cannot formulate in thought any gaps or blank spaces there, not connected by some sort of delicate ethereal medium. The universe must remain a universe while our mind remains our mind. To call it a 'multiverse' is to use language which makes language impossible.

In the same manner he confesses to a belief in the rationality of the cosmic scheme. 'There must [he says] be processes, sequences, harmonics, and laws in nature binding all things together. Otherwise no kind of science would be possible.' But, we ask in some bewilderment, if this is the case, how can it be that

there is no such thing as purpose in the universe? It seems, in fact, almost like a contradiction in terms to talk of processes, sequences, and laws, in an aimless and purposeless scheme. Are we to take it that these laws are accidents inherent in matter and lead no whither? Apparently we must assume this if we agree with Mr Powys; but if they are accidents, how can they be laws? The fact is, as it seems to me, our author has advanced half way from his original standpoint as an intellectual Anarchist. He has got as far as to admit the absurdity of denying the reign of law and order throughout the cosmos, but he has not gone far enough to realise all that his altered standpoint involves. It is open to him, if he likes, from his materialistic position, to deny the beneficent purpose of the universe; but he cannot deny purpose of some sort without contradicting his own premises.

I have called Mr Powys' standpoint materialistic, but even here he shows a desire to qualify his confession of faith. His bent is, he says, towards what is roughly called Materialism. 'I say [he adds] "roughly" because I am not ignorant of the metaphysical and psychological dilemmas implicit in any rigidly monotheistic system.' He will, indeed, grant us, if we like, that the materialistic hypothesis which he adopts tentatively and with qualifications, may be a delusion as complete as his own previous faith in the gospel of anarchy; 'but [he observes] this does not in the least imply that *we* shall have a life after death, or that there is a God, whether personal or immanent, in the least concerned with *us*.' 'There are [he adds, this time with quite blatant cynicism], very likely gods and demi-gods innumerable, in life's teeming planes of existence; but their own pleasures and their own annoyances are quite sufficient to fill up their time.' And this, in fact, we shall find, if we are sufficiently interested in Mr Powys' self-revelations, to pursue the study of his self-analysis, is precisely the case with Mr Powys himself. Our author has, in fact, followed a time-honoured example. The witty cynic observed that man had made his God after his own likeness. But Mr Powys has been the first to point out to us that what has been done hitherto in a single instance, can equally well be effected in the gross, and instead of being content to make one god after his own image, he has created for us gods and demi-gods innumerable, and every one of them without exception a replica of John Cowper Powys.

Our author, then, to sum up, as already stated, is dominated by his temperament, and his temperament impels him irresistibly, according to his own admissions, towards fatalism on the one hand, and scepticism on the other. By scepticism, I mean a tendency to disbelieve in all the spiritual side of life, and, as a consequence, in any other existence beyond the present. In his subtle self-analysis he makes a great point of the fact that the spiritual side does not enter at all into the composition of his individuality. 'I do not feel [he says] as though I had permitted such instincts to perish in me through lack of cultivation. I do not feel as though they had atrophied from disuse. I feel as though they had never been there. I certainly cannot remember them, though I can remember very vividly

certain disgustingly hypocritical attempts I made at various times to pretend to myself that they were there.'

On the other side we have, as already stated, our author's frank avowal of his belief in what appears to me the very baldest and falsest form of fatalism.

> We may use what, in our necessary illusion, we call our "free will" to the utmost extent. We may struggle, we have a right to struggle passionately, to change our nature; but our nature will never really be moved one hair's breadth from what has been determined for it, and every one of our vaunted new thoughts and new emotions has really been inevitable from the beginning. If we struggle desperately to "improve" or change, that very "will to struggle" was what the universal destiny implied in us; and if we do not struggle, that atrophy and inertia also was what the universe intended.

It is scarcely necessary to point out what this attitude of mind must eventually lead to on the part of its votaries. We have only to consider the case of the nations which have adopted it as their creed. We have only to look at the present condition of the crumbling Turkish Empire to realize the ultimate issues implicit in that single word of doom "Kismet!" It means, in short, retrogression and dissipation of energy. For the individual, in its ultimate implications, it is the "back to the brute" philosophy of life. For the world, if universally adopted, it would involve the return to chaos and anarchy. Holding these views (or would it not be more correct to say, experiencing these emotions?) it is not unnatural that our author should realize their narrowing outlook on the aims and objects of life. 'Why make a fuss [he asks] when all at the last is equal?' In a sort of half-hearted way he professes himself a Hedonist. 'I suppose [he says] that ultimately I pursue pleasure, and pleasure alone, as the chief end of my cults and activities.' 'According to my philosophy [he adds] it were wisdom to balance one sensation against another, and to connect them all reasonably and intelligently, like precious beads upon the silver cord of my self-consciousness. My doctrine is that I should let nothing pass, and abstract the lovely quintessence and delicate pungent flavour from every single one of my common hours.' He admits, however, that he is not successful in achieving this.

Mr Powys, indeed – and it is characteristic of his entire attitude – regards every other human being as equally a pleasure-seeker with himself. 'I suspect them all [he says] of living ultimately for nothing but pleasure, even as I do. They may talk of duty, and self-culture, and the service of humanity, and the Will of God. I seem to wave aside all of that, and perceive under every mask the old eternal pressure of the life-lust.'

But if Mr Powys is a pleasure-seeker, he is certainly not so in the most usual acceptation of the term. He states, in fact, that he is the very opposite of a sybarite. 'I am naturally [he says] an ingrained ascetic, with lapses into luxuriousness. What is called "comfort" has very little claim upon me. Many of my most

exquisite sensations demand discomfort as their appropriate accompaniment.' A man, in reality, finds his greatest happiness (not pleasure) in pursuing those aims and objects in which his greatest interest lies. In short, 'where the treasure is, there will the heart be also.' This happiness may be spiritual, it may be emotional, it may be material. The miser's happiness is to accumulate money: the spendthrift's to spend it; and, in despite of our author's scepticism, the greatest happiness of a certain few is found in the service of humanity. Mr Powys, even in the pursuit of the aims of his life, is not oblivious of the fact that, according to his own philosophy, nothing really is of anything but temporary consequence, and therefore he is prone frequently to take the line of least resistance, even if this involves the sacrifice of the objects which he pursues. There is nothing of the zealot about him. In the pursuit of sensations he is the dilettante. He advocates an epicurianism which he does not practise. He loves, in his own words, 'to dally with the more gracious aspects of religion.' He experiences a 'curious thrill at the idea of the person of our Saviour.' What appeals to him in Nature is the magic of her fleeting and evasive charm, 'the whole wonder and beauty of which is on the surface.' He 'believes everything and – nothing, and passes from sensation to sensation like a moth from bush to bush.'

The truth is that Mr Powys' outlook on the deeper problems of life is of a purely negative character. His mental attitude is founded, not on any definite convictions that he possesses, but on a revolt against beliefs to which, in early life, he was taught to subscribe. Others who have been brought up like him have sought and found a more satisfactory basis for their theory of existence. Unlike them, our author has never stepped outside the wreck and ruin of his childhood's faiths. From the midst of the shattered remnants and debris of what was once a life-giving religion, he looks forth and watches, with an amused sardonic smile, the busy builders of the temples destined to enshrine the faiths of the New Time; faiths built on a sounder foundation than tradition, or than temperament alone, but which find the justification of their existence in their appeal alike to the reason and the emotions, and in their capacity for ministering to the spiritual needs of a race of man which has outgrown the swaddling clothes of the anthropomorphic age.

The riddle of life is to be solved neither by the intellect nor by the emotions independently of each other. Life is the great Initiator, and the key to the mystery lies within man himself. Spiritual insight into the nature of things comes only to the soul which, neither eager for pleasure nor resentful of pain, steps boldly forward and embraces life, with all it has to bring of joy or sorrow, and by the aid of the awakened spiritual will pierces the veil of illusion which isolates the individuality from the other 'Divine fragments' that, like himself, are seeking to break the bonds which hold them bound within the prison house of self.

Ralph Shirley

The Society's Publications

Our publication programme for 1997 includes, of course, *The Powys Journal*, under the editorship of our new Editor, John Williams. The seventh volume is well in hand and will have gone to the printer before you get this *Newsletter*. It includes, as usual, several papers which were given at last year's Conference, but much more besides, with a wealth of illustrations; several of these, early sketches of Montacute and other places by A. R. Powys, have not been seen before. It will be ready in time for distribution at the Conference, but those who are not paid up will need to pay their subscriptions to get it.

Our most ambitious publishing project, *The Dorset Year*, has occupied many of us for a great deal of time. It is very much hoped that it will be ready to give out at the Conference to those who have ordered copies (those who have paid for postage will get a refund). If you have not ordered one, you will still be able to purchase a copy at the full price of £25, and there may be a few specials at £55.

Our list of publications is getting so long that we are now preparing a new larger combined list and order form, which should also be ready at the Conference; this will be sent out with the new *Journal* and with *The Dorset Year*.

The Henry Williamson Society

Henry Williamson (1895–1977) was a soldier, naturalist, journalist, broadcaster, farmer, visionary and, above all, a writer.

He was the author of over fifty books and many articles, including: *The Flax of Dream* tetralogy, *Tarka the Otter*, *Salar the Salmon*, *The Patriot's Progress*, *A Chronicle of Ancient Sunlight* (fifteen volumes).

The Henry Williamson Society was formed in 1980 and has an ever widening membership throughout the world. Its stated aim is:

> to encourage interest in, and a deeper understanding of, the life and work of Henry Williamson.

Meetings are held twice a year in the spring and autumn, whilst the Society's *Journal* publishes articles and correspondence on a wide variety of aspects of Henry Williamson's life and work. The Society also has a thriving publication programme.

For further information please contact the Membership Secretary:
Mrs Margaret Murphy, 16 Doran Drive, Redhill, Surrey RH1 6AX

This piece is published as part of a reciprocal arrangement with The Henry Willamson Society, *which will publish details of* The Powys Society *in its* Journal.

First Encounters

Following the contributions from Christiane Poussier and Stephen Carroll in *Newsletter* 30, we continue our series in which members of the Society describe their introductions to the world of the Powyses. We begin with an evocative piece from the novelist and poet Penelope Shuttle, winner of both the Greenwood Prize and the Eric Gregory Award, whose work includes collections such as *Adventures With My Horse* (1986) and *Taxing the Rain* (1992). This is followed by a piece from Christopher Thomas, which demonstrates that the power of Powysian magic extends far beyond this hemisphere.

John Cowper Powys

As a child of about seven or eight, I used to walk home from school via two quiet tree-lined roads, Rookery Road and Acacia Avenue, in Staines, Middlesex. I would select fallen leaves that particularly interested me – leaves of a special exuberance or silvan melancholy – and place them in tribute at the feet of various trees. This gave me deep satisfaction, a feeling of connection with and communication with nature. It is that same instinctively-sacramental feeling which recurs to me now, in contact with nature over forty years later, and has all through my life. Often it happens, if I am lucky, when I'm writing. It is a particularly deep-sourced and abundant sensation – when self and world merge and transcend their usual unremarked moods and routines. It is, I think, what J. C. Powys called, in his novel *Wolf Solent*, his mythology. It was and is my mythology. I'd also call it Powysian Zen.

I suppose I was about 14 or 15 when I came upon *Wolf Solent* in the old library at Staines opposite the Regal Cinema, on the Staines side of the bridge, and only a step away from the street where my grandfather had his first shop, a bike shop, not long before the first world war. In *Wolf Solent* I discovered validation for that rather odd childhood act. By then I had forgotten my leaf worship. But reading this revelatory novel by J. C. Powys returned it to me as a special memory and gave shape to my instinctive act, when I celebrated release from social order at school and a return to one's real self in the safe custody of nature. I felt understood!

In that library I found three other books which helped me through difficult adolescent times. Like *Wolf Solent* these books acted as bridges for me to cross into a life where I too would be a writer also, at least able to add my own stitch to the tapestry of all-books. These books were poems by Witter Bynner, American poet and translator from the Chinese, the long novel sequence *Pilgrimage* by Dorothy Richardson, and *The Time of the Assassins*, essays (on Rimbaud etc.) by Henry Miller. The last two of these writers were connected to J. C. Powys. He greatly admired and wrote a short book on Dorothy Richardson, and was a strong adherent of her work. He was a correspondent of Miller's. And though Witter

Bynner's poetry is very different to Powys's own poems, there seems to me to be an affinity between these two writers, in that they so powerfully seek out, define and transmit the reality of being as they experience it. And it seemed to me, in the old library in Staines, that these other writers had been conjured up for me by J. C. Powys.

But of these four writers, it was Powys who directly affected the course of my life.

In *Wolf Solent* I found a response to landscape and nature and life so close to my own experience that it made me want to live in the West Country. A short holiday with my aunt in North Devon emphasized my strong feelings of affinity for the place. When I was 22, I moved to Frome in Somerset. At that time, with its steep streets and mysterious houses, its surrounding hills, its river and its inns, it was a very Powysian town. Does it still remain so? There, in 1969 I felt I was living in one of his novels. Soon after I moved to Frome I visited a friend in West Penwith in Cornwall where I met my husband-to-be, Peter Redgrove. Soon I moved to Falmouth in Cornwall to be with Peter, further west than J. C. Powys's native territory, but with an atmosphere and a power of locale that make it very much a cousin of Dorset and even more so a cousin of the Wales of Powys. So I think of J. C. Powys as a match-maker, by drawing me to the West Country.

I regret very much that I never tried to make contact with J. C. Powys. He seemed far beyond such a simple and mundane process as a fan letter. Now of course I realize that I should have made contact, that all writers welcome (more or less!) contact and feedback. Recently I read *Petrushka and the Dancer*, extracts from Powys' journals. And I felt even closer to this extraordinary sensibility. I admire him saying that he wrote a diary because doing so was so difficult! Yes, it is a big regret that I invented, out of my own inhibition, a Powys who was unapproachable, for I'm sure he was not.

It is sad that his novels are still not adequately appreciated, and that he has not been accorded the notice he merits. His novels are regional but universal. He is like a mountain so huge and high that paradoxically he becomes invisible to the literary world. His bigness is perhaps the reason that our current culture of popular conservatism has not been able to deal with his vast and redemptive contribution to our century's struggle to give articulation to what it means to be human.

My childhood offerings of leaves at the base of tree trunks, in the little mossy green hollows of the roots, return to my mental landscape again and again; and it is John Cowper Powys who presides over this deepening in memory of an enduring sensuous reality.

He is a writer, a troubled, ecstatic and profound enactor of human drama, of such energy that to read him is reason enough to have been alive.

Penelope Shuttle

A Quest for John Cowper Powys in New Zealand

Discovering John Cowper Powys has been a unique experience. I can think of no other writer who has had such a profound influence on me. Reflecting on this I can easily understand why. The reasons are all associated with nostalgia and 'the spirit of place'.

I moved to New Zealand in the early 1960s but found it difficult to assimilate with my new surroundings because, in my mind, I was always returning to certain favourite English scenes and landscapes. I could find little consolation for the sense of isolation I felt in a strange and alien landscape. That is until I discovered J.C.P!

Quite by chance I came across a brief reference to 'the sweep, the power, the impact', of the best novels of John Cowper Powys, in the preface to Colin Wilson's *Man Without A Shadow*. Wilson's passing remarks suggested a writer of some significance and great interest and I wondered therefore why I had never heard of him and why my English teacher at school seemed to be so vague about his work and reputation. (It was clear in fact that he had probably never read any of his books.) Wilson's allusion was enough to ignite a passion in me to read everything I could by this unknown writer. This was to prove not such an easy task in 1960s New Zealand where in Auckland there were few second-hand book dealers. At about the same time I also found another of Wilson's novels, *The Glass Cage*, which has a dedication to J.C.P. and which also encouraged me to continue the search.

As an impressionable teenager, reading Powys for the first time, I was awestruck by the power of the writing and astonished by his ecstatic and rhapsodic prose style. Moreover I felt an immediate sense of empathy and identification and was deeply moved by Powys's description of *Wolf Solent* as 'a book of nostalgia, written in a foreign country, with the pen of a traveller and the inkblood of his home'. Furthermore when he says that living in the U.S.A. made him 'more and more intensely aware of the hills and valleys, the trees and various flowers, the lanes and hedges and ponds and ditches of the country around Sherborne', I instinctively knew exactly what he meant. Powys's vertiginous mix of rich, romantic prose and his philosophy of sensuality and elementalism both emancipated and sustained me. All this I now realize had a cathartic and therapeutic effect on me and helped to transform my childish neuroses and anxieties into a more creative and imaginative way of life.

J.C.P.'s novels became the catalyst of my longing to return to Europe. My favourite books were *A Glastonbury Romance*, *Wolf Solent* and the *Autobiography*. I carried copies of them with me everywhere, even to school and read them at every available moment. There were many times when I would run home from school, eager to enter again the world of Blacksod and Ramsgard, which seemed so much more real than my own home in Takapuna and the dreary daily grind of

lessons, games and N.Z. history! I used to take *A Glastonbury Romance* with me to the beach and whilst my contemporaries were busy riding the surf I would, perversely, sit by myself in the hot sun and project myself back to Powys's England. I would pathetically trace with my finger in a map all the places he mentions, repeating their names silently to myself like magical incantations as though trying to conjure them into existence on the other side of the world!

I returned to England in 1973 and promised myself two pilgrimages. The first seemed to be the fulfilment of a dream – to relive Wolf's journey by train to Sherborne. The second would be a visit to Blaenau Ffestiniog. In fact I'd been there several times before as a child in the 1950s with my father to visit family friends (a nice synchronistic link). Our friends were now living in Anglesey and of course the first thing I wanted to know was if they had ever met J.C.P. As Raymond Garlick has observed, very few people at that time in the town were aware of his achievement. Sure enough our friends had never heard of Powys but they told me they did remember frequently observing a very striking and elderly gentleman with a heavy walking stick, who they assumed might have been a poet, because he looked so unusual. Of course this had to be J.C.P.! I told them all about the Powys family and they agreed to drive me down to Blaenau the next day so I could see J.C.P.'s house. They knew exactly where to find Waterloo.

As I stood outside No. 1 Waterloo, I wondered if Phyllis Playter still lived there or if I might summon the courage to knock on the door and introduce myself. In retrospect I'm somewhat amazed at my presumption. But I was in the grip of an obsession and having come half way across the world on a pilgrimage I was driven by a hunger to get closer to the real J.C.P. I could not do otherwise! As it was I needn't have worried. Ms Playter warmly welcomed us and set about making tea. Once inside the house I noticed the floor was everywhere scattered with copies of the *T.L.S.* and other literary papers and magazines. I wondered how the presence and character of J.C.P. must have filled the tiny space of this little house. As we talked Ms Playter would periodically dart upstairs to retrieve copies of J.C.P.'s books which she gave me to examine. I will never forget that warm spring afternoon and the great courtesy Ms Playter extended to three complete strangers. I left Waterloo in a daze, aware that somehow I had touched something of the spirit of Henry Miller's 'Immortal Bard' in his den.

Over thirty years ago Providence led me to the work of John Cowper Powys and still today he is my inspiration and mentor.

Christopher Thomas

Reviews

'I Am Myself Alone': Solitude and Transcendence in John Cowper Powys
by Janina Nordius.
Göteborg, Sweden: Acta Universitatis Gothoburgensis, 1997.
pp. 243. Paperback, ISBN 91 7346 304 3. Price unknown.

Janina Nordius' study of John Cowper Powys is Volume 67 in the distinguished Gothenburg Studies in English series founded in 1952 by Frank Behre to publish the work of the members of the English Department of Gothenburg University.

Nordius begins her book by stating that the 'aim of this study is to examine John Cowper Powys's fictional inquiry into solitude and to show how this inquiry constitutes an integral structure in all his major novels.' In particular, she examines *Wolf Solent*, *A Glastonbury Romance*, *Weymouth Sands*, *Maiden Castle*, *Owen Glendower* and *Porius* in the context of the philosophy which Powys developed in the writing of *In Defence of Sensuality* and *A Philosophy of Solitude*, both of which were written in the period of his most intense artistic development between 1930 and 1933, just before returning to Britain.

'Solitude' in the sense that Nordius and Powys use it, is, or can be made to be, a source of happiness. Being alone is not the negative experience it is conventionally assumed to be; it is, as Powys tells us again and again, both in the works already mentioned and in books such as *The Art of Happiness*, the natural and normal state of human experience and the 'I Am I' can be the source of happiness once we accept this and develop the art of 'transcendental solitude', which Janina Nordius describes as 'an experience of being transported out of ordinary, quotidian reality'. This is a state which can be achieved (it has to be actively sought) when the individual, or the Powys character in a novel, is absorbed in solitary contemplation.

Yet such a philosophy brings with it that moral dilemma with which Powys struggled in the first of his great novels: to what extent is the individual entitled to enjoy such happiness, when it is obtained by such self-absorption? Is it selfish to find happiness in solitude? And, if it is, can such happiness be justified?

But perhaps such questions can only be asked by the neophyte of Powysian solitude, since in mastering the art the very 'self' is transcended, as Powys himself describes it in his essay 'My Philosophy Up-To-Date, As Influenced By Living in Wales' in *Obstinate Cymric*:

> I've found that the wisest way is to regard myself in the depths of my heart as a very small and weak insect or a very unassuming and harmless worm. You can fall no lower in what I call your life-illusion if you take [this] line ...
>
> The grand beauty of this life-illusion of being weak and small and insignificant is that it saves you from wasting your time in ambition, in the ridiculous folly of a career, in the absurd struggle to be heard of, to be

known, to be famous, to arrive at becoming that swollen-headed and idiotic monster whom the newspapers call "a great man"...

[I] make a fairly constant practice of living in the *first* place for my own pleasurable sensations and in the *second* place ... for the pleasurable sensations of other people. (*Obstinate Cymric*, 138)

But that was Powys in the mid 1940s. Janina Nordius considers him either side of that point in 1934 when he described in *Autobiography* 'the two main currents of his life as "first the gradual discovering and the gradual strengthening of my inmost identity ... and second the magic trick of losing myself in the continuity of the human generations".' (*Autobiography*, 651–2)

This is a major contribution to Powys scholarship, one which tackles issues central to the importance of John Cowper Powys as a reinterpreter of human experience. Each of the novels referred to has a chapter devoted to it and is explored with penetrating insight.

Readers without access to a university library may find the book difficult to obtain, but they should not be put off from trying, for it is a book which no serious student of John Cowper Powys can afford to ignore.

Paul Roberts

Steeple On A Hill, poems by Glen Cavaliero

Horam: Tartarus Press, 1997. pp. 57.
Hardback. ISBN 1 872621 23 6. £8.99

Although we are generally more familiar with Glen Cavaliero the critic, through his books on the rural and the supernatural traditions in English fiction and his studies of John Cowper Powys, E. M. Forster and Charles Williams, he is also an accomplished poet and *Steeple On A Hill* is his fourth collection.

Written over a period of thirty years, the poems focus on the poet's reactions to the landscapes he knows most intimately from the Lake District to Ireland, and especially those in which he has experienced that quality of the numinous which, when it arises, tells us that we are in a place of special significance. That Cavaliero acknowledges the influence of Arthur Machen, John Cowper Powys and David Jones will give an indication of the spiritual territory covered here, or rather the perspective from which this territory is viewed: yet he is no mere disciple.

This is poetry in which the reader 'earns his view with sweat' ('Wetherlam Work'); poetry with which the reader has to grapple, just as the poet has struggled for a vision of meaningful interaction between landscape and man through the palimpsest of scenery. Yet, intellectually demanding though it is, Cavaliero's expression of spiritual awareness is rooted in the concrete, in boots on turf, hands on stone and a harebell nodding 'beside twelve tons of rock' ('Deluge').

These are poems to return to, to live with, and to ponder.

(*Copies will be on sale at the Society's Conference.*) **P.R.**

Two Unrecorded Poems

The following two poems by John Cowper Powys do not appear in any of the Powys bibliographies and we therefore take pleasure in publishing them in the *Newsletter* as part of our continuing effort to bring unknown or forgotten works to the attention of enthusiasts and scholars. I am grateful to Griffin Beale and Robin Patterson for sending me copies of the poems. **P.R.**

The Soul's Protest

Drag on O Life thy labour'd chariot wheels!
Clutch close thy victims, O remorseless Death:
Sleep on ye Gods! the Spirit's glorious breath
That once wrought soul from clay unbridled reels
Thro' the dead spaces of the homeless sky —
Old time hath now his triumph; and Decay
Reigns as Death's regent. Night doth follow Day —
Year leads to year — there is no voice will cry
The new world's prelude — yet in Death's despite
In face of madness and black cowled despair
I still assert God's Love and Truth and Beauty
I still can see thro' darkness a great light,
Feel thro' earth's clouds freedom of Heaven's air
See Heav'n itself in might of human duty.

[*published in* The Shirburnian *xvii, no clxxxi, July 1896, p.27*]

Stoke Wood

WOODS are life's roots. No minute tendril here
But holds the cisterns of the world in fee;
As weeds, in shore-caves, imperturbably
Watch, till the punctual tide doth re-appear —
Who in this place but meets delicious Fear
Pan's herald? Here we sink, as in a Sea,
Into earth's inmost wells of mystery,
Gulfs perilous and unplumb'd fathoms sheer.
Into earth's wells we sink; where life breeds death,
Death life. The humid stillness of this spot,
Its lichens and its leaves, its moss and mould,
Its holiness, its indrawn beathless breath,
Whisper the key-word of the cosmic plot;
Though men pass by, and must not hear it told.

[*published in* The Occult Review, *September 1911, p.148*]

To Miss Dorothy Powys

On her Likeness to the Poet Shelley

WHAT is this Ariel face
Of pure ethereal grace?
In Memory's cave I trace
A Poet's phantom mien;
And Shelley is fulfilled,
Restored and re-instilled,
So occult Nature willed,
In features feminine.

She came a transient gleam,
An evanescent dream;
Yet she to me did seem
A spirit ray'd and star'd —
As filmy as the cloud
By Shelley's spells endowed
And so to her I bowed
As if she were the bard.

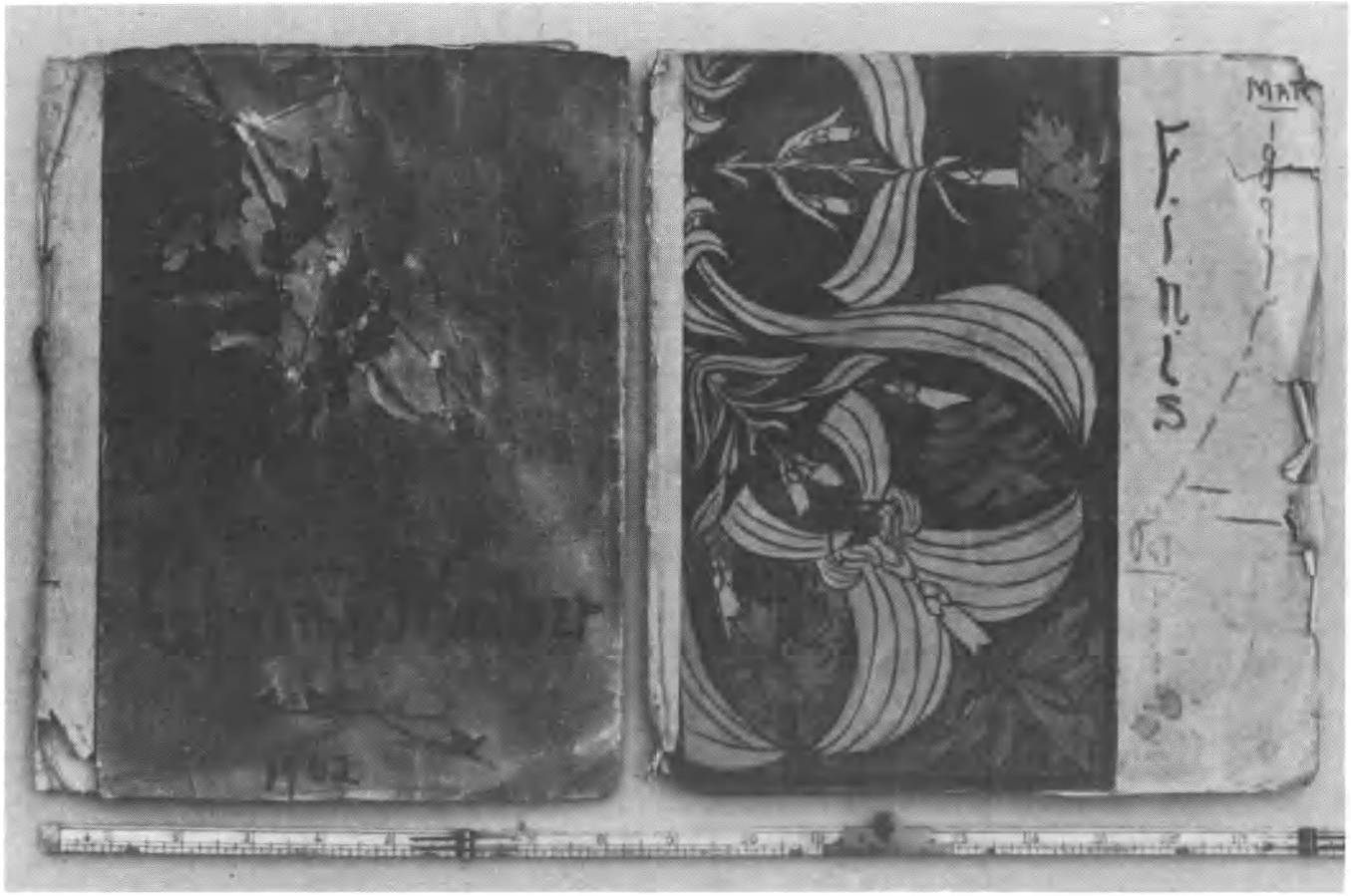
And I can not forget,
And it pursues me yet,
That in her frame are set
The opals faded long,
That somewhere 'neath the skies
On earth doth re-arise
In new and sweet disguise
Our Nightingale of song!

Alfred de Kantzow

'Nobody else has ever spoken to me of Alfred de Kantzow! of whom I do think with enormous reverence and who was just as you say the first friend I made after I left home to earn my living. The second friend was your Dad Annesley who gave me the wisest advice Ive ever had in my life — to go and lecture in America.'

John Cowper Powys to Evelyn Powys, sister of Dorothy Powys, December 17th 1958

Alfred de Kantzow (b.?1820s, d.?) published two collections of poetry, *Ultima Verba* (1902) and *Noctis Susurri* (1906); both contained this poem addressed to Dorothy Powys, whose 'Victoria' magazine is the subject of the following article.



The 'Victoria' magazine: covers for Christmas 1902 and the last number, 1905 (with scale in inches)

Please insert DATES. 92

Xmas No:	Received	Forwarded.
Mrs Tomys	Dec: 27th	Dec: 30th
Mrs Hamlen	Dec: 31st 1902	Jan 1st 1903
Miss Jarrett	Jan 2. 1903.	— 4th 1903.
J.C. Tomys Esq:	July 5th	July 6th
Mrs Farrar	Jan: 8th	Jan: 15th (Shillingthorpe also)
A.R. Tomys Esq:	Jan. 17.	Jan 18.
Mrs Shapleton	Already secu.	Forward to next address.
Miss Holmes	Jan. 19th	Jan 26th
Miss E. White	January 26th	January 28th
Miss Thorp		

To the Editor

The 'Victoria'

From 1897 till 1905, Dorothy Mary Powys (August 2nd 1882–1956), edited and circulated (*see left*) a magazine called the 'Victoria'. Two numbers are known to exist: the earlier is entitled 'Christmas Number 1902' (110 pp., cover 11″ x 8½″), the latter 'Finis Mar 1897 – – – Oct 1905' (65 pp., cover 10½″ x 9½″). These were entirely handwritten by herself and the numerous contributors, who wrote under *noms de plume;* there are several paintings and drawings, and decorative covers (*see page 23*). The pages vary considerably in shape and type, being, presumably, whatever the individual contributors had available. There was just one copy of each issue. One painting contributed by A. R. Powys has also survived on its own.

In the front of each of the two surviving issues there is a list of nine or ten names and addresses; both lists start with 'Mrs Powys', that is Dorothy's mother, Jessie Powys (née Mapleton), Meanwood Vicarage, Leeds, and include Jessie's mother, Mrs [Mary] Mapleton (née Sparrow), of Shillingthorpe Hall, Stamford, Lincs. Also on one or other of the lists are J. C. Powys Esq. (at Bankside Cottage, Burpham), A. R. Powys Esq. (c/o of T. H. Lyon Esq., 118 High Street, Kensington, London), Miss M. [Marian] Powys (Montacute Vicarage), and L. [Llewelyn] Powys Esq. (Corpus College [*sic*], Cambridge).

In March 1897 Dorothy was fourteen and a half years old,[1] and we can only speculate as to the nature of the early numbers, who contributed to them, to whom they were circulated, and indeed how the magazine started. It is certain, however, that the inclusion of Montacute Powyses can have occurred only after Dorothy's father, Revd Annesley Powys, Vicar of Meanwood, had noticed that John Cowper Powys was lecturing in Leeds and invited him to Meanwood (then a village outside Leeds), thus first establishing a link between two distant branches of the Powys family; J.C.P. had given a course of six lectures for Cambridge University in Leeds in the Lent term (i.e. the Easter term) 1902.[2] From this invitation sprang the meeting and eventual marriage of Dorothy and A. R. Powys, fifth cousins (not sixth or seventh, as is sometimes stated[3]), on May 20th 1905.[4] Thus, Dorothy completed the last number after her marriage; her editorial 'Farewell' is reproduced below.

How often the magazine was prepared and sent round is unknown, but the labour of procuring and assembling the contributions must have been considerable, and is witness to a remarkable initiative. In an earlier notice of the magazine,[5] my mother has suggested that it was a monthly, but I do not believe this can have been so.

The two most significant, and by far the most sophisticated, contributions in the surviving issues are a short story by Roderick Mawr [J.C.P.] entitled 'The Hamadryad and the Demon', and a shorter story by Heraclitus [T.F.P.] entitled 'The Child Queen'. The first of these stories is illustrated with three sketches by J.C.P. Both are in the number for Christmas 1902. J.C.P. has chosen his *nom*

de plume no doubt to recall the ninth-century king of north Wales, Rhodri Mawr [the Great], from whom his father used to say the family was descended.

Although both stories have been printed in *The Powys Newsletter* from Colgate University, no apology is made for making a new (and more accurate) transcription of one of them for the members of this Society, since more than twenty-five years have passed, and there must be very few members of this Society who even then had an opportunity to read it. Readers will recognise the elements of ritual which became such a feature of J.C.P.'s own way of life, and will be entertained by his own comments, signed 'R.M.', printed on the back cover of this *Newsletter*. One can well understand the somewhat startled reactions of 'Cordelia', 'P.P.', 'The Griffin', and 'O.H.S.' to this 'strange' story in a family magazine.

The text, almost devoid of divisions into paragraphs, has had these added, and a few minor corrections of spelling and punctuation have also been made.

But first, Dorothy's own Envoi, signed with her own *nom de plume*:

"Editor of the Victoria" / (Sir Roger) / Nov: 1905

Farewell

Invisible, came Time and Memory through a wood
Silent beneath the autumn trees they stood
Watching three children toss the leaves in play —
Pastime, Pleasure, Mirth were they
And old Time said . . .
. . . "Even as those leaves shall they be soon
Unrecollected, dead." . . .
But Memory laughed —
. . . "Ah no, it is not so,
The friendship their union has brought
Will live & glow." . . .

In friendship from these
many pages caught,
Farewell my friends in work
But not in thought.

Dorothy was presented with a 'beautiful little striking clock in recognition of her faithful and able work as Editor for eight & a half years. ...We remember with affection the early efforts of the contributors to the Victoria. The Editor has always been a leading spirit in all childish plays & games. We feel regret in parting with the "Victoria", but we know changes must come, & we look with courage and hopefulness to the future, remembering that we are all children still, under a Guiding Hand. ...'

Stephen Powys Marks

[1] Dorothy was the eldest of the six children of Annesley and Jessie Powys; the others were Evelyn (1884–1963), Marjorie (d. 1964), Sylvia (d. 1960), Davie (?1891–1968), and Geoffrey (1897–1917), a casualty of the First World War. Dorothy's only child was Isobel, my mother; of the others, only Marjorie married (William Best) and had four children.

[2] *John Cowper Powys, A Record of Achievement*, by Derek Langridge (London: The Library Association, 1966), 22.

[3] For example, in my own article in *The Powys Review* 10 (1981/82), 'A. R. Powys: A sketch of his life and work', 51.

[4] In September 1902 John Cowper Powys wrote an entertaining and teasing letter to A. R. Powys on the rapidity of the latter's approaches to Dorothy, when he had been staying with Dorothy's grandmother at Shillingthorpe Hall. Their engagement was announced in September 1904; there are letters about it from his father, from his brother Littleton, himself just recently married, and from Louis Wilkinson, a family friend.

These, and many other letters to and from A.R.P., were read at the Society's Conference in 1988 and were published for the Society in 1990 in a 32-page booklet entitled *In Honour of Isobel: A Reading of Family Letters*. Another letter quoted in this collection is one from J.C.P. in 1958; this refers to Alfred de Kantzow, the author of the poem dedicated to Dorothy and printed earlier in this *Newsletter*. (This booklet is available from the Treasurer for £2.35 UK, £2.70 abroad, postfree, payable to The Powys Society).

[5] 'The Powys Family Magazine', by Isobel Powys Marks, *The Powys Newsletter* 1, ed. R. L. Blackmore (Hamilton, New York, USA: Colgate University Press, 1970), [4]. This issue includes a transcript of 'The Hamadryad and the Demon'. Issue 2 (1971) includes 'The Child Queen'.

The Hama Dryad and The Demon *

Once upon a time a young man called by the good name of Richard Lovel lived in an ancient Cathedral city. He was a Roman Catholic but he lived in a strange dark-browed house of most curious appearance called the Jew's House, over the dusky entrance of which weird hieroglyphics, symbolic of the mysterious rites of forgotten creeds, or drawn from the ruined porticoes of buried temples, twined and twisted themselves like dark serpents. Shadowy steps, like those leading into the mouth of a sepulchre, led under this sinister archway, to whose corners heavy cobwebs and dust adhered in accumulated layers of uncleanness, darkening the smoke-stains darker yet with a webbed and fibrous gloom; until (where the eye was lost in thick obscurity) the imagination pictured moving, amid bats and owls, shapes, forms and lineaments no more human or normal than the abode they lived in was clear tothe light of day. By the side of this archway, jutting out upon the street, was a low narrow window full of bric-a-brac and ancient china; for (to confess the truth) the Christian inhabitants of this Hebrew dwelling made their living by selling curios and antiquities.

* *'Of Hamadryads, trees, and Druids': see note on page 40.*

The town in which this house was situated was built upon the side of a hill on the summit of which rose the towers of the Cathedral. Far and wide round the outskirts of the town stretched a desolate and level plain, its vast expanse unbroken to the horizon, save where solitary poplars, rising out of the mist like masts of submerged ships, waved and beckoned to one another with phantom gestures. Along the silent hedges of this vast plain creep at twilight and dawn mysterious processions of pale ghosts — feeble shades, bodiless wraiths forming and re-forming in perpetual flux and clinging to drooping willows and weedy stakes and the tall reeds that sway there by the stagnant brooks. When the sun is up these evanescent vapours vanish and are forgotten only to gather together again their dispersed hosts, when once more the mists rise from the earth and the shadows of evening fall.

The town itself is a world of toil and smoke. Bitter tears might be shed there and no-one see them, bright cheeks might grow thin there and no-one heed them, young children might pine, die and be buried there and only the wind from the fens wail for them and only the mist from the fens visit their graves. Great chimneys pour out volumes of swarthy smoke over the lower-built roofs, furnaces roar and smoulder like gasping monsters and, round the iron forges they feed with molten metal, bound Ixion-like to revolving wheels hundreds of human beings work, until the fire scorches their brain and the iron enters into their soul. And over all this, calm and still — its buttresses and pinnacles its arches, battlements, and towers, bare to the pure sky — rises the Gothic Church.

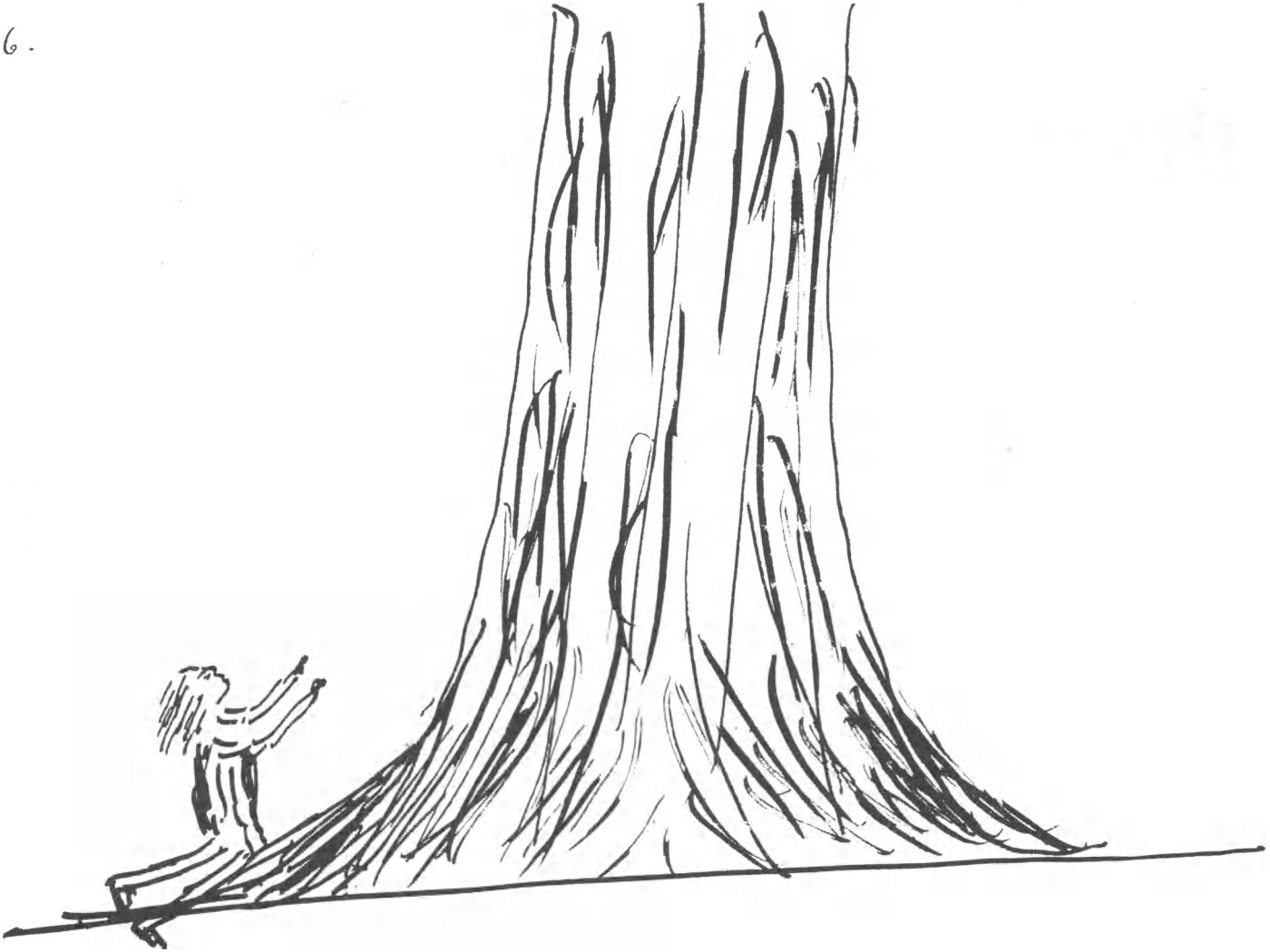
On a certain Saturday afternoon the youth whose history we are concerned with was standing at the door of the Jew's House gazing intently at a tree which overhung the opposite wall. Presently his father the bric-a-brac shopman came up to him. "Now Richard I want you to help me with my accounts." "Presently, Father; I must watch the sun upon the branches of that tree a little longer first." Then his elder brother came up to him. "Come Richard I want you to go with me to the Town Hall. The Bishop of Tammany is going to speak on the Education Bill." "Presently, brother. I must watch the sun upon the branches of that tree a little longer first." Then his younger brother came up to him. "Come Richard I want you to come rat-catching with me in Beggar's Field." "Presently, brother. I must watch the sun upon the branches of that tree a little longer first." When the Father and Brothers were together they said to one another, "He is growing sillier and more ridiculous every day. He stares at every tree he passes. We saw him the other morning throw his arms round the young ash at the bottom of the garden and if he did not kiss the senseless thing — Heaven knows what he did do! He is certainly going crazy. We shall soon have to support a crazy relation."

As soon as they were gone, Richard approached the tree at which he had been gazing and reaching down a handful of cool leaves pressed them together in the palms of his hands, so gently, however, as not to break or tear a single leaf. This

ritual over, he composed his features which had for the moment worn almost an ecstatic look, and began slowly to descend the narrow street and make his way in the direction of the open country. He soon left the town behind him and following a lonely lane overgrown with grass, where the cart ruts looked so ancient that they might have been caused by the passing of the chariots of the legionaries of Caesar. There was a stagnant ditch on one side of the lane overhung with weeping willows whose silvery branches bowed their foreheads into the muddy water as though they had been waiting hundreds of years for some deliverer who never came. At length the path led to the verge of a wood and there abruptly terminated. The youth however did not pause. Opening a heavy moss-covered gate amd heeding not the cries of magpies and jays who flapped round him as tho' they had never seen man before, he passed into the undergrowth. He had notadvanced far, ere, with a wild exclamation of excitement, he leapt forward into an open clearing and fell down at the foot of a great Beech Tree, embracing with this arms its mossy roots. Prone and still he lay while over his head the birds twittered and the squirrels full of whimsical wrath, hissed, gurgled and chattered down at him with a noise resembling a fairy-carriage crackling over dry twigs, while little sparks flash from its wheels. Timid wood-mice moved to and fro under the dead leaves and peeped out at him with bright brown eyes. Rabbits emerging from the brushwood, stood quaintly up on their hind legs to look at him and scampered on with a knowing thud upon the ground. Thus several hours passed away until the golden light, flung in long level rays through the tawny tracery of hazels, proved the approach of sunset. Gradually this golden light faded and soft purple hues fell on the silver trunk of the Beech while the red rim of the sun glared like a blood-stained eyelid through the branches. The birds' twittering began to die down amid the leafy shadows and the cool breath of night like a deep re-assuring whisper floated over the world.

Suddenly, swift as a dream, something glided forth from the tree above him and slid down upon the ground at his side. What can this be this strange beautiful being, with so brown a skin and such delicately slender limbs? Is it a mortal maiden? Ah no! Something weird about the look it casts upon its lover proves it a creature not born of woman. Strange indeed is the expression in its eyes. It might almost have seemed as though, only half conscious and weighted with the listless apathy of centuries of blind vegetable life it still groped blindly forward through obscure aeons of past growth towards the full realization of the present hour. Its look had the pathos of the inarticulate, the tragic desire of the soulless. It seems as though its spirit were looking out through an immense avenue of past experiences, in the entanglements of which it had been caught and could not escape.

When she stood by his side and stretched out her arms towards him this creature of the woods was indeed a wonder to see. Her skin was of a rich amber brown, as though layer upon layer of the sun's warm mystic writing had been



imprinted upon her delicate flesh, purified for the reception of such sweet impresses by a thousand rains and dews. Her body had come to be a kind of palimpsest of the ways of Nature scored over and over with the finger marks of Storm and Silence, of Night and Day, and wearing in every line curve and contour the patient signature of the earth-gods. Her arms and legs, noticeably long in proportion to the size of her body, and in them something almost pathetically slender, and their outline, though moulded into a grace which gave a sensitive unbounded pleasure, suggested, when seen in certain lights and shades, the boughs of the tree from which she came. Just as a golden tint mingled with the brown of her body, so a reminiscence of soft green shadow lurked about the waving of her hazel-coloured hair. Her lips red as autumn berries and full of the drowsy warmth of rain-scented woodland banks, her eyes like shadowy pools of amber-tinted water, her low forehead and small oval chin, all partook of the freedom and purity of the untrodden woods — all in all, from the crown of her bare head to the sole of her bare foot she was a bride fit for the gods.

"Have you been happy, my own, since last I saw you?" said Richard when their long embrace was over. A little murmuring sigh, like a small breeze among the blossoms of a wild rose, shook the breast of the hamadryad. "Is love happiness, then, with you?" she asked. He glanced enquiringly into her shadowy face. "You have made my life worth living to me" he said. "When I am dreary or hopeless and the grey streets and commonplace weariness of human beings and the brutal flippancy of convention grow intolerable — then I think suddenly of you and behold! all is different. The grey becomes gold and the flatness of things seems perforated with profound gulfs and broken with long avenues of feeling." "Ah! but with me it is different," the poor hamadryad answered, sighing a deep sigh, "Your life is active — mine is passive. Year after year I have grown with my sister-tree, feeling its sorrows and joying in its joys; but now, since this new thing hascome to me, my peace of mind is gone and the quietness has flown away from my heart like a fledged bird that leaves its nest." Speaking thus, the gentle creature pressed her hands to her bosom, as though to ease the pain of a void there which nothing could fill.

Then Richard knew for the first time what he had done in making the hamadryad love him. "O Sweetheart," he said, " perhaps, after all, it would have been better if we had never met!" "Not so," she answered kissing his forehead, "Love to the human being is Spirit. Love to the animals and birds is Satisfaction of desire. Love to the Tree is Death. But though I die and pass where last year's leaves are gathered and last year's blossoms are treasured up — that is to say, though I pass into absolute oblivion and entire forgetfulness it is worth while to have loved! O plants and mosses!" (here she broke into a strange chant, such [as] we hear when the wind is low) "O deep-rooted trees and silent under-growth of briar and hazel! O lichens and ferns, O rushes and feathery grasses! This is the message I bring you — "It is worth while to love even though ye die for it!" "

Richard bowed his head. He felt shamed and unworthy in the presence of this elemental passion. When at length he dared to look again into her face its wild beauty terrified him. "This beauty" he thought "is not the beauty of human goodness. It is some thing so far down into the root of things that it has passed beyond Good and Evil. I can neither understand its meaning nor reward its devotion."

The hamadryad laid a gentle hand on his arm — a less wild beauty inspired her — her large eyes were dim with tears. "O my love" whispered Richard "I would keep you with me always." "That cannot be" said she mournfully "for I have no soul." "But I have prayed to the Blessed Virgin to intercede to God for you. God is omnipotent. He can give you a Soul." "God?" said the poor Tree Dweller; "God? Who is God? I know the wind and the rain; I know the cool dews and the sweet Sun; I know the floating clouds and the bright silver moon — but I know not God. I have seen — though it is long ago now — I have seen Satyrs dancing in this wood. The bark of my tree has been stained with the wine of their feasts — they have fed upon its beech-nuts and slept in its shade. And I have seen **Him**" — here she lowered her voice to a whisper — "The great one, the wise one, the dreaded one, the god of all the woods! I saw him pass one night in the moonlight, horned and hoofed like a Goat and bearded like a Satyr, but playing, O! so sweetly and sadly on his flute, that I wept to hear him." " My god has been called the great Pan and he has called us his Sheep," answered her Lover. But she only repeated "I know him not — I have no soul — I know him not —"

For a long while the two poor creatures — the youth and the Tree-Dweller — stood side by side with clasped hands. Then with a sudden impulse, possessed by the irresistible violence of love, they folded one another in their arms and clung together as though neither heaven nor earth could separate them. The last remnants of sunset died out in the sky, the owls began to hoot in the far-off valleys, the bats began to circle from glade to glade, little querulous sounds and stirrings in the dark told where small creatures gathered themselves to sleep or awoke frightened, and above all night like a great black sea rolled its waves over their heads and swallowed them up — trees, birds, beasts and lovers — in a transitory but complete oblivion.

Not only ancient woods but ancient cities have their supernatural inhabitants. In the roof of the Cathedral Choir of this town, above a wonderfully carved pillar and not far from the high altar, lived a Demon. War carried on with the easily triumphant angels and saints — a thousand against one — who surrounded him, had for the last six hundred years soured his disposition and made mockery of his second nature, so that even when he loved he could not help mocking. He knew that his soul was lost and nothing that he could do could make any difference and this idea made him reckless, defiant and desperate — but sometimes he remembered the pure celestial delights of the heavenly palace from which he fell; and, of

all the delights, what he remembered with most bitter and anguished wistfulness, were his games with thelittle angels in the nursery of Heaven.

In a certain street not so far from the Cathedral lived a little girl called Rachel Rye. Her mother was neither poor nor rich and belonged to the Sect called The Only Ones and used to take Rachel to a chapel in a suburban row built of grey stones and yellow brick. Now Rachel was a little girl with certain peculiarities and she preferred playing with a very curious doll she possessed, to going to the chapel of The Only Ones.

On the same afternoon when the events happened which I have just narrated Rachel was sitting on the stone step at the door of her house playing with her doll. The peculiarity about this doll was that instead of wearing clothes in the ordinary manner it had a hard leather skin drawn over it and its ears and eyes and mouth were the ears and eyes and mouth of a **Demon**. Little Rachel hugged and petted this peculiar toy, stroking its long Satyr ears, following the creases of its puckered forehead and making pretence of putting her dainty fingers into its open mouth. "Mine is a good Demon" she used to say to herself. "His naughtiness is nicer than other people's goodness. Besides; he has nobody but me to love him, and he must feel lonely, sitting up there in the Choir with the angels." (For this Demon was indeed the famous Demon of the Cathedral and one of the sights of the town.)

Presently Rachel's mother looked out of the door and called to her, "Come in, come in, you naughty child and help me getting your father's tea." "Presently, mother! Only first I must give Dolly his afternoon sleep." Then her elder sister looked out, "I say! Rachel! I want you to run down to the shop for me and get some caramels." "Presently, sister! Only first I must give Dolly his afternoon sleep."Then her younger sister looked out, "Why wont you play houses with me, Rachel? I am so tired of playing by myself." "Presently, sister! Only first I must give Dolly his afternoon sleep." Inside the house the Mother and sisters said among themselves "She grows more naughty and queer every day. Her head is certainly turned. She will come to no good, Lord bless us! and we shall all die in the Work House!" But when she was quite alone the little girl kissed and hugged the Demon more passionately than ever. "What dear little ears he has" she said to herself.

After a little while she jumped to her feet, looked cautiously round to see that no one was observing her and ran off at full pace in the direction of the Cathedral. Arrived at the West Gate of the great building she pushed the massive oak door inwards with all her little strength and entered the nave. Warm red light fell through the painted windows, and, high up above her head, clerestorey and triforium threw down upon the carved columns and arches soft opalescent glimmerings like those thrown by the sun upon the shell-strewn floor of some deep ocean cavern. The child paused when she reached the immense oak screen above which towered the organ — a wondrous throne of music — and tried

nervously with her little hand to unlock the gate into the choir. It refused her admittance. In vain she pushed and pulled with all her little might. The door was obdurately fastened. She looked despairingly to the right. A great round window, red as a rose, glared down angrily on her. She looked despairingly to the left. A great rond window blue as a turquoise glared angrily down on her. Every moment she expected the organ above her head to thunder out an indignant question as to what she did in this holy place.

Suddenly she observed a tall thin gentleman in black emerging from a similar door to the one she stood by. She ran up to him. "O Sir! please let me through. I have no money but I do want to see the Angel Choir!" The tall gentleman, who was indeed a great Divine, and was very fond of little girls, patted her head and smiled at her. "Come with me" he said.

She followed him and soon found herself beneath the immense pillar and carved roof which overshadow the high altar. "This hole was made" her conductor said, pointing to a curious indent in the masonry of the floor, "by pilgrims' knees; and that odd-looking and fiendish Imp — My dear Child! what is the matter with you? Are you ill?" Little Rachel certainly seemed ill for she sank down on the stone floor and was seized with a fit of violent shuddering — "Dear me! Dear me! what shall I do?" exclaimed the poor Ecclesiastic, "this is a very awkward predicament. This is a most unfortunate event — Let me see — let me see — Lie quiet my dear a little longer and I will fetch some water — some water." So saying and with a vague idea of Vestry water-bottles in his head he hurried off towards a side aisle.

As soon as he was out of sight Rachel rose upon her knees just where the piety of so many generations had worn the stones; she clasped her hands together and looked up towards the capital of the pillar above her with an appealing longing glance in her hazel eyes. There — looking down upon his votary, with one leg clasped across the other and a hideous leer of triumph in his eyes — was the living original of the Demon Doll. There he was — drawing the child towards him with exulting enchantment, mocking even as he drew her, as he had mocked so often so many worshippers at that holy shrine. "Poor Demon" Rachel whispered, "Come down and love me." She had hardly spoken when a change came over the marble figure. Its form dilated — its eyes rolled — its face became convulsed — Good Heavens! What is this? The Lincoln Demon is coming down from his pillar!

When the dignitary returned he found the little girl prostrate on the pavement & quite unconscious. He emptied the vestry water-bottle on her face. It produced no effect. He chafed her hands and patted her cheeks but she did not move. At length he lifted her in his arms and carried her, past the shrine of the little Saint Hugh, to the door by which they had entered.

About three weeks after the events I have narrated the young man Richard Lovel and the young girl Rachel Rye were engaged in deep conversation on the steps

outside the Town Hall. For several days had these two been friends. They had been brought together by a happy chance and the similarity of their fate made them sympathetic. "My father is going to send me to London unless I give up going to the Wood" said Richard. "My mother is going to send me to Edinburgh unless I give up going to the Cathedral" said Rachel. "What shall we do?" The poor things looked piteously at one another. The strange obsessions that possessed their lives seemed too dear to be given up and yet they shrank horror-struck from the idea of exile.

Suddenly Rachel spoke "We will go to the Minister" she said, "He may help us." The Reverend Thomas had not hitherto presented himself to her mind exactly in the light of a sympathetic consoler but she felt herself growing desperate. "But I am a Catholic" said Richard. "Never mind; if I go, you must come." So they went together. They found the Rev Thomas in his study writing a sermon.

"What do you want?" he enquired. The two young creatures tried to explain that one of them was in love with a Demon and the other with a Hamadryad. The Minister laughed outright. "Come, come, young people" he said "this will not do. I am not going to believe that — But seriously," he continued "I must warn you against Superstition. In the Bible we have revealed to us all we need to know about the invisible world and to give way to Superstition is a sin. We must use our reason in these things and our Reason tells us that what we cannot see probably does not exist — that is, I mean, unless it is mentioned in the Bible — and of the Bible everyone has a right to his private judgement. In old days people were very superstitious: they let themselves be ruled by Priests — now we are wiser —" Here the Minister rang the bell. "Show these young people downstairs, Maria," he said "and if you like (this was addressed to Rachel) you can come to my Sunday afternoon class; and if you like (this was addressed to Richard) you can come to my Thursday Evening sermon."

The next time the friends met they again discussed their terrible dilemma. "Life is becoming intolerable" said he. "I cannot bear it any longer" said she. "I see my Hamadryad's form in every tree the wind blows upon", said Richard. "I see my Demon's face in every window in the street", said Rachel. "To love as we do is very bitter" they cried together. "I cannot bear to think that my poor Demon has a lost soul" sighed Rachel. "They say my Hamadryad has never had a soul at all" groaned Richard. "What shall we do?"

"Good Heavens!" exclaimed the young man suddenly, "What a fool I am! We must go to the Priest." "But I am a Protestant" said she. "Never mind, I cannot go without you." And so they went together. They found Father Boniface reading his Breviary by the fire. "Pax Vobiscum my children" said he gravely, rising to his feet and offering them each a chair. Then, going to a small ebony cupboard behind an ivory Crucifix, he presented them with a piece of cake and a glass of wine. "Take your time and speak quietly" he said "and be sure to tell me

everything. The Church is very stern to those who keep back part when they ought to give the whole."

And so as well as they could they told him the story of the Demon and the Hamadryad. Father Boniface looked very grave indeed. "This is a serious thing" he said "It seems to me that your souls are in danger. The Church teaches that such things exist and we know from the Lives of the Saints that many holy men have been assaulted by evil spirits who have attacked them in Deserts, in Caves, by the sea shore, as well as in holy buildings and sometimes, as in your case my daughter, in the Church itself." Then he made them tell him the story again very slowly. When they had finished he made a long pause. At last he said speaking solemnly and gravely "Meet me my son in your wood at half past five tomorrow — and meet me, my daughter, in your Cathedral at half past six on the same evening. Now farewell and may the Blessed St Anthony of Padua protect us all!" He took them himself to the door and so dismissed them.

At a quarter past five Richard was in the well known wood. He rushed to his beloved tree and flung himself beneath it. A presentiment of evil came upon him and he wished now that he had not made the appointment with the Priest. "They are going to separate us" he cried, "they are going to separate us — but I shall love no one all my life as I have loved you." The Priest came while he was still muttering to himself beneath the tree. "The Pagan gods are not yet quite dead" Father Boniface thought, "not yet quite dead — but the word has gone forth, and the Church will destroy them." Thus thinking and without permitting the young man to see what he was about to do he suddenly made the sign of the Cross and sprinkled the tree with holy water from a small philtre.

Richard gave a piteous cry, "my love! my love! you have killed my love!" Desperately he broke from the priest who tried to restrain him and flung his arms round the trunk of the tree. "Give her back to me, O give her back to me!" he moaned. But the only answer he got was the sighing of the wind as it shook the leaves and the plaintive cry of some far away bird. "She was an evil spirit" said the Priest raising his hand as though he were about to utter a curse. "She was an evil spirit and I have sent her to her own place. I have already exorcised the fairies and pixies the hobgoblins gnomes and elves — and may my soul be forgotten if I do not exorcise the Demon of the Cathedral himself! Weep on! Weep on! my son. This paroxysm will soon pass and you will bless me for what I have done." Saying this the Priest turned slowly from the tree and walked away.

"O my love! my love " cried the poor youth when he was alone. "You were to me all the warmth of the earth and all the coolness of her dews; the wild desire of the forest found a voice in you — you were the silent unfolding of hidden mosses — you were the whispering of reeds by remote waters — you were the falling of the golden foliage into the brown mould and the rising of the sap when the year is young. No stir of unseen winds in shadowy places, but your glance expressed its secret and the wavering colour of your eyes caught its perilous charm. Men and

women talk of love, but, ah! you alone knew the madness of it and the sweetness, the glory of it and the desperate pain! Your love was the storm sobbing in the darkness — your love was the silver Moon floating cloudless through the open sky. At your touch the life of plants and mosses and wondrous-coloured lichen flowed through my blood. Human love is a household thing, cabined and confined; but the wild blood-stains upon the leaves of the wood-orchis are the tokens of your passion and the dark moisture of the roots of the wood anemones is the remnant of your tears. O my love, my love; I have lost you; I feel that I have lost you! But the day that returns my body to the mould will be the day that I forget your kisses and the night when you are not with me in my dreams will be the night when all dreams are over!"

A little while later and the priest was standing in the Cathedral Choir. Straight to the Demon's Pillar he walked, little Rachel clinging to his arm. Straight towards the Demon he walked carrying a silver philtre carved with precious symbols and full of holy water. Then with a wave of his hand he flung into the air the water from his chalice so that some drops should fall upon the Demon's foot. As soon as the holy water had touched the stone figure both the priest and the child were aware of a strange mocking laugh high up among the shadows. "Good God! this child is indeed lost!" exclaimed the Priest involuntarily, "this must have been Apollyon himself!"

Then did a voice answer from the recesses of the roof such as no living being is likely to hear again nor those two likely to forget, "She alone of all creatures on the earth, above the earth or under the earth, has had pity on the lost!" Then the little Rachel began lamentably to cry "O you have driven away my demon! he is gone for ever — I know he is gone — and my doll will be dead, dead, dead! O my heart is broken!" "Farewell daughter" said the Priest in a grave sad tone "It were sin in me any longer to listen to such laments. I greatly fear for your unhappy soul. Pray Heaven you may live to bless me for what I have done."

When he had left her the child moaned still, "They called my demon wicked but I know he was not wicked, he was only very, very unhappy. My poor demon! I was the only one who loved him. Even God did not love him. The thoughts he put into me were not wicked thoughts but wild, sweet, exciting thoughts. O how dreary seems now to me the grey and yellow chapel and the voice of Mr Thomas! I shall not be able to bear it, I know I shall not — O! O! O! I wish I were dead!"

For many weeks after these events the worthy Bric-a-brac Shopkeeper was kept in terror for his son's sanity and little Rachel's mother prayed fervently in the Chapel of The Only Ones for her daughter's life.

At length the two friends — both pale and thin with suffering (for each had cried in their delirium "bring Rachel to me" — "bring Richard to me" — "he (or she) alone understands") — met on the steps of the Town Hall. "They have killed my Hamadryad" said Richard — "They have driven away my demon" said Rachel

— "Life without Love is like Death to me," groaned Richard — "I have nobody to hug and kiss me now," sobbed Rachel — "O what shall we do? What shall we do?" they cried together.

Suddenly Richard rose to his feet. The smoke of the town floated round them and wrapt them in its dense fumes. The roar of the street — its wagons and carriages, its workmen and fops, its smiling tradesmen and stern mechanics, its good and its evil rumours — rolled by them with reverberations and monotones and discordant hum — far below them they could see the great level fens stretching away to the horizon — grey — vast — and desolate — and above them, beyond the roofs, rose the towers of the Cathedral. But neither of the two saw or heard these things.

"You are not like the rest" he cried "you have daring and desire and pity — you have a wild, free heart. You must be my Hamadryad now!" and he leant down to her little upturned face and kissed her on the lips. "You are not like the rest" she answered "you have daring and desire and pity; you have a wild, free heart. You must be my Demon now!" And they sank into one another's arms and wept in silence.

The End.

Roderick Mawr -

Of Hamadryads, trees, and Druids

'Hamadryad' (spelled by J.C.P. as two words in his title, but elsewhere as one) is the nymph or spirit of a tree which dies when the tree dies. It is a Greek word, *Ἁμαδρυάδες*, with two components: *ἅμα* and *δρῦς*. *ἅμα* means 'at the same time' or 'together with'; *δρῦς*, *δρυός*, means originally 'tree', then particular kinds of tree, then commonly the oak; it is cognate with another Greek word *δόρυ*, also meaning 'tree' (and other derived meanings such as 'stem', 'spear'). *δρῦς* is related to the Sanskrit stem *dru–*, and *δόρυ* to the Sanskrit *daru*, 'piece of wood', and *taru*, 'tree'; all, including 'tree' itself, are related forms.

The special interest of the two-syllable forms is that there is a Welsh word 'derw' which means 'oak'; the Welsh and the Classical forms are derived from the same Indo-European root-word. 'Derw' is a collective noun (like 'sheep' in English), with a singulative form 'derwen' ('oak tree'), formed from 'derw' and the suffix '–en' (= 'un', 'one' in Welsh, pronounced 'een'). (A 'singulative' is a singular noun formed from the plural, a feature of several Celtic languages.) Another collective word of interest to us is 'coed', 'wood' as in a collection of trees, with a singulative 'coeden', 'tree'; so we have '7 Cae Coed' (J.C.P's address in Corwen), that is 'field of /by/near the wood'. Several other Welsh words form their singulative with the suffix –yn (also = 'un'), for example 'plant' ('children'), 'plentyn' ('child').

Another intriguing possible connection is the name 'Druid', for which the Welsh word is 'derwydd'; the termination –ydd signifies the person connected with something, so it seems that the Druids may be 'tree people' or 'oak people'; they certainly had sacred groves where they performed their rites, including human sacrifice. ?? Druid = Dryad !!

Treasurer's Report for 1996

The accounts for 1996 are set out on the next two pages, and have been approved by the Society's Auditor, Stephen Allen; once again I am most grateful to him for his advice and his work.

There has been a very small drop in our paid-up membership to 287 (1995, 295); 160 subscriptions were paid by standing order and 31 of these were paid under deeds of covenant, which brought in £172. Our total subscription income, including the tax refunds on the covenants and subscriptions for 1995 paid in 1996, amounted to £4,346 (1995, £4,424); this represents 66% of our total income of £6,546. Net income from our own publications was £885 (£884), which was usefully supplemented by commission received on sales of other publishers' books at the Conference (£243). Donations, which included sums received (£707) for passing on to the Dorset County Museum for the new Literary Gallery, amounted to £1,014 (£1,077).

As before, the largest part of out expenditure has gone on our regular publications, *The Powys Journal* and three numbers of the *Newsletter*; the net cost of producing these, including distribution, was £3,908 (£4,183). This represents 89.9% of our subscription income, just within our target of 90%. Our total expenditure on publication work, including copies of *The Powys Journal* added to stock, the second edition of the *Powys Checklist*, *The Ideal Ringmaster* and the cassette of 'Ghosts on the Roof', but excluding postage costs, was £4,377 (£4,200). Our largest other single item of expenditure was our own donation of £1,000 to the Dorset County Museum, to which members had contributed £707. As in previous years, the value of stock pre-dating the year has been written down by £664 (£817); the effect of this is that while we had a reasonable excess of income over expenditure (£397; 1995, £442), there was a paper loss of £267 (£379) which has been carried into the Statement of Funds. Our net worth at the end of the year was £6,981 (£7,249), of which £2,790 (£2,657) was represented by the value of stock at the end of the year. There has, therefore, been a small drop (entirely due to the writing down of stock) in our net worth of £268 and in our cash resources of £401. In spite of these the Society's financial health at the end of 1996 was, in my opinion, good.

Stephen Powys Marks

Auditor's Report to the Members of The Powys Society

I have audited the financial statements in accordance with approved Auditing Standards. In my opinion the financial statements give a true and fair view of the charity's affairs at 31st December 1996 and of the deficit for the year then ended and comply with the Companies Act 1985. *J. S. Allen, Chartered Accountant, 16th May 1997*

THE POWYS SOCIETY

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 1996

Income [1]			£	£	*1995*
subscriptions	for 1996 (287) [2]		4,050.15		
	tax refund on covenants, 1996		171.51		
	for 1995 paid in 1996 (9)		121.50	**4,343.16**	*4,424*
donations	Conference book sale (donated books)		111.25		
	for Dorset County Museum Literary Gallery		706.71		
	other [3]		195.90	**1,013.86**	*1,077*
publication sales	stock publications	1,287.85			
(excluding	*less* cost of publications sold	402.70	885.15		
postage)	commission on sales (Cecil Woolf books)		243.03		
	Montacute gazebo sales		11.56		
	net income		1139.74	**1,139.74**	*884*
Conference	fees received		2,743.40		
	expenses		2,887.89		
	deficit (5.2%; 1995: *surplus*)		–144.49	**–144.49**	*216*
Grey Powys Books, sales in 1995				**–**	*1,357*
interest on bank accounts (paid gross)				**193.85**	*250*
				£ 6,546.12	*£ 8,208*

Expenditure [1]		£	£	*1995*
The Powys Journal VI (1996),[4] cost of 296 members', complimentary and copyright copies [5]		2,027.41		
cost of distribution		318.89	**2,346.30**	*2,578*
The Powys Journal IV & V, cost of supplying 12 copies to late subscribers			**49.22**	*28*
newsletters (3 in 1996), including cost of distribution (£448.19) [5]			**1,561.42**	*1,605*
Powys Checklist, complimentary copies to new members			**7.00**	*8*
restoration of G.M.P. mask of Katie Powys (1995: restoration of pictures)			**202.44**	*1,872*
donation to Dorset County Museum for Literary Gallery (1995: G.M.P. exhib.)			**1,000.00**	*797*
Powys Collection at Dorset County Museum			**90.00**	*25*
stationery and photocopying (including *Newsletter* offprint at Conference)			**122.63**	*214*
tape recorder repair (1995)			**–**	*37*
computer supplies (1995: repair)			**58.75**	*42*
advertisement in TLS (1995)			**–**	*114*
Dorset Year advance expenditure (1995: general publication expenditure)			**124.12**	*41*
card and flowers for 100th birthday of Mary Barham Johnson (1995)			**–**	*27*
overestimate in 1994 accounts of tax refund due for 1994 (1995)			**–**	*9*
bank charge (1995)			**–**	*1*
officers' expenses and committee travel			**587.01**	*368*
			6,148.89	*7,766*
excess of income over expenditure		397.23	**397.23**	*442*
writing down of stock [6]		–664.35	**£ 6,546.12**	*£ 8,208*
excess of income *less* writing down of stock *carried to Statement of Funds*		–267.12		

Auditor's report – see previous page

THE POWYS SOCIETY

STATEMENT OF FUNDS

I *General fund* [7]		£	£	*1995*
funds at January 1st 1996			**3,880.11**	*4,255*
excess of income over expenditure *less* writing down of stock			**–267.12**	*–375*
funds at December 31st 1996			**3,612.99**	*3,880*
represented by:				
stock of *The Powys Journal, The Powys Review,* and books at cost at January 1st 1996		2,657.41		*3,267*
add cost of stock publications, including *The Powys Journal* VI surplus to distribution [8]		1,236.44		*500*
less cost of publications sold	402.70			
The Powys Journal IV/V to late subscribers	30.00			
complimentary *Checklist* to new members	7.00			
writing down of stock [6]	664.35	–1,104.05		*–1,110*
value of stock at December 31st 1996 [9]		2,789.80	**2,789.80**	*2,657*
cash at bank at December 31st 1996 [10]			**1,640.67**	*1,003*
sums due to the Society (1995)			**–**	*330*
			4,430.47	*3,990*
less subscriptions received in advance (30; 1995, 7)			**–433.81**	*–110*
creditors			**–383.67**	*–*
			£ 3,612.99	*£ 3,880*

II *The Wilson Knight benefactors' fund* [7, 11]	£	*1,995*
funds at January 1st 1996	**3,368.49**	*3,368*
transfers to/from General fund	**–**	*–*
funds at December 31st 1996	**£ 3,368.49**	*£ 3,368*
represented by cash in deposit account	**£ 3,368.49**	*£ 3,368*

NOTES

1 Cash turnover: total receipts, £11,514.72; total payments, £10,876.69, of which £1,236.44, relating to the cost of publications (*see* note 8), is carried forward in the General Fund. Other adjustments, relating to cost of publications sold etc., subscriptions paid in advance for 1997, and sums owing to or owed by the Society, give excess of *Income* over *Expenditure* for the year (before writing down of stock) of £397.23, all as shown in the accounts.

2 This figure comprises 280 (160 by standing order) paid in 1996 (£3,940.55) and 7 paid in advance in 1995 (£109.60).

3 'Other donations' includes the cost of *Newsletter* offprint at the Conference and computer toner cartridges.

4 Gross cost £2,537.41, *less* advertisement fee £60 = net cost £2,477.41, *less* cost of copies taken into stock at run-on cost £450 = £2027.41.

5 Total net cost of producing and supplying *The Powys Journal* VI (£2,346.30) & 3 newletters (£1,581.42 *less* £20 fee for insert = £1,561.42): £3,907.72 = 89.97% of 1996 subscriptions, including arrears for 1995 and tax refund for 1996.

6 This is arrived at by writing down the value of stock at January 1st 1996 by 25%; new stock in 1996 is not affected.

7 General fund £3,612.99 + Benefactors' fund £3,368.49 = Society's net worth at December 31st 1996 £6981.48 (1995: £7,249).

8 Undistributed copies of *The Powys Journal* VI, £450; *Powys Checklist* 2nd ed., £199.77; *The Ideal Ringmaster* 277.65; 'Ghosts on the Roof', £309.02 = £1,236.44.

9 No value is attached to stock which has not involved cost to the Society.

10 Current account £49.26 + deposit account £4,959.90 = £5,009.16, *less* Benefactors' fund £3,368.49 = £1,640.67.

11 All interest has been retained in the General fund.

Stephen Powys Marks, Treasurer

Book and Media News

Herbert Williams' eagerly awaited biography *John Cowper Powys* is to be published by Seren Books in their Border Lines series at the beginning of August. Copies will be available for sale at the Society's Annual Conference.

Herbert is also due to broadcast a radio programme about John Cowper Powys on BBC Radio Wales on July 29th. The programme, to be called 'The Lonely Giant', will be broadcast from 7.03 to 7.33 pm and will include both readings and interviews with those who knew J.C.P., including Oliver Wilkinson, Glen Cavaliero and Isobel Powys Marks, who recalls her first visit to the Montacute Vicarage as a child. This is definitely a programme not to be missed.

*****

Frameworks Multimedia Limited, a Bristol-based production company, plans to make a short film for HTV, based on John Cowper Powys's relationship with landscape. The film will focus on *A Glastonbury Romance* and further details will be published as they become available.

*****

Following a successful local exhibition, Neil Lee has sold out of copies of his poetry collection *Derbyshire Born and Bred*, which we reviewed in the April *Newsletter*. Neil has now been invited, as Chairman of the Derbyshire Writers' Guild, to organise an exhibition in October to celebrate locally born poets. Naturally, J.C.P. will be a major presence.

*****

Robin Patterson, that indefatigable explorer of the dustier recesses of microfilm stores, has unearthed a science fiction short story by Gamel Woolsey. Called 'The Star of Double Darkness', this strange tale appeared in the 18 June 1955 issue of *The Saturday Evening Post* on pages 34–5 and 125–7. It has been suggested that Woolsey's late science fiction was an influence on J.C.P.'s later work, but it had always been assumed that the stories were unpublished.

Sic! (Again)

It was with great interest that I recently read a photocopy of a review entitled 'A Successor To Hardy' in the May 1930 issue of the magazine *The Reflex* (pages 79–80), which Robin Patterson had sent me. It was all about a book called *Wolf Silent*. That is, I suppose, marginally better than the other possibility, *Wilf Solent*!

P.R.

A. R. Powys sketch, 1899

Montacute Abbey a doorway