



NEWSLETTER

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Gillian Clarke's stimulating Hay lecture 'in the Company of Poets'

The 2013 'Name and Nature of Poetry' Lecture at the Hay Festival of Literature was delivered to a large audience in the splendour of the Wales Stage on Wednesday 29th May. Andrew Maund reports.

This year's Housman Lecture at Hay was given by Wales' premier woman poet, Gillian Clarke, in the splendour of the Wales Stage. To hear the voice of a poet on the name and nature of poetry was, as ever, most thought provoking and the lecture delighted the large audience who were present.

It was unfortunate that, because of a last minute change in date by the organisers at Hay, several members of the Society who had planned to attend were unable to be there and others, who had bought tickets for other events on the same day as the lecture should have taken place, were left to arrange to visit on two separate days.

Gillian Clarke was introduced by the Welsh broadcaster, Guto Harri, who began by offering warm thanks to the Society and welcoming the audience and our speaker, the National Poet of Wales, to a grey and showery Hay-on-Wye. He pointed out that both our speaker and Housman were poets of great popularity in their own lifetimes and were both poets of the countryside. From the lecture that followed, it soon became clear why Gillian Clarke is such an accomplished and popular poet.

She began by explaining that she would be broadening the discussion of poetry that lies at the heart of the lecture's title. She introduced the idea of 'A Company of Poets', which would continue to be developed throughout the lecture. For all of us who have any contact with poetry, poets keep us company, their work remaining in our mind and our memory in its entirety, as word music or song, at a deeper level than that of literacy. We listen and repeat what we hear as children, the beat and rhyme of the early verse that we hear remaining with us. The gathering of words and lines of verse into the



memory begins early and is part of our syntax. Using imagery as only a poet can, she likened this experience to "tonguing poetry like a sweet...touching it like a pebble in the pocket..."

On her own journey to Hay for the lecture, a distant view of Pen-y-Fan had recalled immediately for Clarke Housman's "land of lost content"; the "blue remembered hills" layered with time and tinged with Housman's own loss. Poets, our speaker reminded us, are those able to find the right words in the right order; it is the sequence of their words as much as the words themselves that stay in our memory. The pleasure of prose in its reading and re-reading: the pleasure of poetry is in

its music. Dead poets keep us company.

Clarke then recalled a number of lines from her own memory of poetry heard and held from that company of poets. Winters of ice and snow from her childhood are captured in the "hare limp'd trembling" of Keats' *'St Agnes' Eve'* or the melancholy "long ago" of Rossetti's deep mid-winter. The solitude of winter is perfectly described for our speaker in the "secret ministry" of Coleridge's *'Frost at Midnight'*, while the contrasting feelings of Spring are to be found in Larkin's "something almost being said" and Eliot's description of April as "the cruellest month"; no roots stirred in April 2013!

The sight of a red kite over her garden recalled Dylan Thomas' lines from *'Over St John's Hill'*, "the hawk on fire hangs still; / In a hoisted cloud," sharing with us her delight at the choice of that particular word "hoisted". She recalled too Hopkins' *'Windhover'*, "in the rolling underneath him steady air". The perfection of word choice and imagery was also celebrated in lines from the end of R.S. Thomas' *'The Cat and the Sea'*, "the cold interiors of the sea's mirror" and Ted Hughes'

opening lines from *‘October Dawn’*, “October is marigold, and yet/A glass half full of wine left out...”, those last and first lines respectively being lines to be loved as well as opening up the knowledge of the whole poem.

The audience listened with delight, not only to the ideas expressed, but also to the beauty of lines of poetry so wonderfully read by this poet; lines conjuring an image and drawing us into the company of the poets. In the age of e-mail, Clarke referred instead to ‘t-mail’, ‘time-mail’, by which the poets of earlier times communicate with us and we can communicate with them – “...if words can cross space”, she asked, “why can they not cross time?” and read us her delightful *‘T-Mail to John Keats’*.

Clarke next explored the pleasure of poetry as being centred upon the not quite understood – the physical quality of the sound and its taste on the tongue. She recalled a child’s affirmation that ‘Janitor’ was their favourite word, but urging the listener not to explain its meaning. Fighting against, as she described it, the nasty move afoot to modernise everything, she urged us not to spoil the joy of literature with a lesson; to understand, but not yet – language to be part of the body’s rhythms as Welsh, her father’s language, was to Clarke as a child.

Let poetry sing when there is only the body, not the intellect, she urged. She spoke of “walking a poem into being”, sharing the breath, the pulse and the heartbeat of the poet. She encouraged physical activity (though not ironing!) to bring out the poetry. One thought of the similarity with the creative process as described by Housman in ASL 62. In the questions that followed the lecture, Clarke countered the idea that poetry is more about the emotion than the intellect, however, by asserting that it is the words that make a poet write. She quoted R.S. Thomas, who would “pick up a pen and see what words will do.” Feelings should be put to one side, plugged into the wall like electricity to power the words and the poetry; the intellect, as judgement, comes later, considering the detail and the effect of the words and the poem.

As the first part of her lecture drew to a close, Clarke argued that children in particular should be protected from those who want them to learn as something compulsory lists of words or poems by heart, reminding her audience of David Crystal’s warning that “the learnt list is quickly lost”. Rather, poetry and language should be relished, as they were by lecturer and audience alike throughout the lecture. In questions after the lecture, she reaffirmed this point; children need to talk, to communicate, sitting around the family table and talking about different things.

Our speaker then turned to a discussion of the phenomenon that, just as our portmanteau language of English has stolen so many words from other languages, fragments of poetry from years ago are still to be found on our lips. She shared with us three lines of chance iambic pentameter, overheard in everyday life at the ’bus stop, on the television and in an invitation to refreshment,

“Diana dyes her hair, I’m sure she does.” “A deep depression moving from the west”. “I wonder, would you like a cup of tea?”

Because poetry can say so much in so short a phrase, it has become part of our common speech: in lines such as “Hope springs eternal” or her own and her husband’s reaction to a motorway matrix sign warning of “Strong winds”, by quoting “Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May”. Many Shakespearean phrases and idioms are quoted without realisation and, with an unconscious nod to Yeats, television news reports can affirm that “Peace comes dropping slow”. The finest English, she asserted during the questions that followed the lecture, is as beautiful as you need it to be. Her own education was the words of Shakespeare and she wrote using her mother-tongue – although in her case it was the tongue her own mother forced her to use, rather than Welsh. No great poet, she felt, has ever written in other than their mother tongue.

From its earliest development, poetry has a tradition of carrying news, particularly of epic events and moments of history, as well as being for entertainment. It offered our first experience of war reporting, something which can still be seen in a line like that of Brian Hanrahan, reporting a successful air mission during the Falklands conflict, “...I counted them all out and I counted them all back.”

Poetry comforted the people – its music and repetition making it memorable – and supported the state, although these days it may do the opposite. We pass on our humanity, one to another, through poetry, Clarke insisted, closing her highly enjoyable and stimulating lecture with the assertion,

“We walk, whether we know it or not, in the company of poets.”

Channels

by John Burman

(With profound apologies to A.E.H. More Poems. XXXI)

Because I chose a programme;
In fact – ‘Match of the Day’.
You bridled and I hastened
To change it right away.

A culture gulf between us,
I ‘zapped’ with a sigh.
“Oh good”, you said, “Eastenders.”
“You love this c**p” said I.

Whene’re the plasma glistens
With image laden trash,
Transfixed, we gaze distracted,
What matter, coarse or brash.

And when ‘domestics’ threaten;
Clashed channels – that’s the nub.
Do watch your damned ‘Eastenders’,
There’s ‘Sportsnight’ up the pub!

Bromsgrove Commemoration

Robin Shaw is the Society's Vice Chairman and has been a stalwart committee member for over 20 years, so it was very appropriate for one who has given so much to the Society to be chosen as Guest of the Day. However the day proved to be one of real 'Wenlock Edge' weather so the Chairman decided to postpone the speeches until all had gathered at the Council House, which was just as well since Robin had much of real interest to say.



Guest of the Day Robin Shaw (left) with Jim Page, Emily Collie (Winner of the Housman Cup), Councillor Janice Boswell (Civic Head) and Roy Thomason (Bailiff of the Court Leet.)

It had been a pleasure, he said, to work with people who had made the Housman Society one of the foremost literary societies in the land and if David Cameron wanted to see the big Society at work he should come and see what happens in the arts world in Bromsgrove. Whatever he had done for the Society he had been amply repaid by the pleasure it has given him, and in turning to poetry he said,

"Poetry is in the air of Bromsgrove and this town has been home to a number of poets who are recognised both nationally and internationally – Housman, Hill, Holden and Sally Purcell to name but four. *Three Bromsgrove Poets* celebrates three of them and though we are here to think of A.E. Housman I'd first like to say a word about Geoffrey Hill who is alive and very busy still writing. He is SIR Geoffrey Hill for he was knighted last year. He is Professor of Poetry at Oxford and his poems still draw on his affection for Bromsgrove, his 'Goldengrove'. His roots go deep here. He comes from nailing stock and the lines I am about to read are in memory of his grandmother who was disfigured as she worked in her nail shop by the whip of coiling wire."

After reading Geoffrey Hill's poem in memory of his grandmother, who was a nailmaker, Robin Shaw went on to read part of Housman's 'When summer's end is nighing'.

Summertime on Bredon

Saturday 13th July 2013 must have been one of the hottest days of the year but twelve intrepid members still turned up for the ascent of Bredon Hill.



Fortified by eating our picnic lunches in the beautiful gardens of Maurice and Beverley Juggins we set off with hats and bottles of water as essential aids. The climb to begin with was gentle but after a gate and cattle grid the hill suddenly became steeper and some began to have doubts whether they would make it. But with mutual encouragement and firm resolve all reached the summit after about an hour's walking. Rest in the shade was provided by the Tower (Parsons' Folly) built in the 18th century by John Parsons, the squire of Kemerton Court, and from here we could enjoy the stunning views over the Severn Plain with its 'coloured counties'. We enjoyed an interesting selection of poems, including 'Adlestrop' and 'This is the weather the cuckoo likes' and of course finished with A.E.H.'s



Max Hunt

Bredon Hill, which we were reminded he wrote before he knew the collection was to be called *A Shropshire Lad*.

We sailed down the hill, and even if Chairman Jim did take a tumble after slipping on a cowpat, the rest of us encountered no hazards and the tea and cake that the Juggins had waiting for us has never been so welcome.



St Laurence's Vision Project

St Laurence's is working on a long term vision for the church and consultations have been going on between the Society's committee and Joanna Layton, who is the leader of the project, about ways of commemorating and celebrating A.E. Housman. Some of the ideas are summarised below

“Oh come you home of Monday
When Ludlow market hums
And Ludlow chimes are playing
“The conquering hero comes””

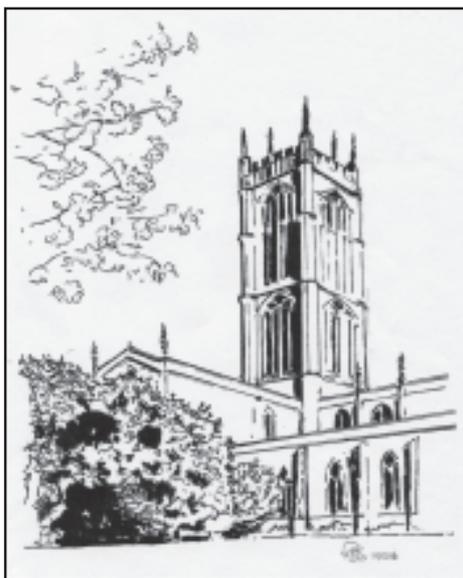
The Carillon. Ludlow market still hums; Ludlow chimes play; Ludlow bells sound; and Ludlow tower stands. The chimes, bells and tower are those of St Laurence's Church, one of England's largest and finest parish churches and the Monday chime is of course “Behold the conquering hero comes”. At present the historic carillon was decommissioned many decades ago and is now stored in the nave, more for convenience than for interpretive effect. The proposal is for it to be cleaned and conserved and it will be moved to an area in the north-west of the nave, adjacent to the north door, which leads to the Housman memorial outside.

An Engraved Glass Lobby. At present all three of the doors are difficult to leave open, except in summer, because of the draughts and debris blown in by the wind. However, closed doors can make the church seem unwelcoming and difficult to access so the proposal is to install new engraved glass doors to form a lobby to the North door, supplementing the existing nineteenth century timber door. This will enable visitors to glimpse the hills and countryside that lie beyond, thus acting as an invitation to step outside the church to appreciate the landscape, and to view the Housman memorial.

The new glass doors will be engraved with lines from Housman's poetry that refer to Shropshire, Ludlow, and specifically to the church.

The Tower. Housman's phrase “Till Ludlow tower shall fall” is amongst the most evocative in all his poetry, expressing as it does the fragility of human life being given strength through the image of the tower. In the

context of the poem, it relates particularly to what will endure in community memory of those who lost their lives in war – “the lads”. To maintain the tower the masonry needs continual repair and conservation.



Continuing the Housman Connection.

At present a page of St Laurence's guidebook is devoted to Housman, mentioning the burial-place of his ashes on the north wall, the textile sited on the south wall (created for the Shropshire Lad centenary year - 1996) and the cherry trees which have been planted in the churchyard, some of which have died. Action here includes an appropriate new publication, carrying out sensitive conservation-specific cleaning to the plaque, relocating the textile hanging to the north wall, adjacent to other Housman interpretations, and reviewing the state of the cherry trees.

New projects. Consider making a CD or DVD focusing on the Ludlow and South Shropshire connections with Housman, publishing a commemorative book drawing together critical assessments of A.E.H.'s poetry and considering the commission of a new piece of music inspired by his poetry.



The cherry tree planted by the Society

From Ludlow Rural Deanery Magazine - 1st February 1937

Some few weeks ago the Rector was asked to receive the ashes of the author of “A Shropshire Lad” for internment in Ludlow. He has chosen a place in the Old Churchyard between the two buttresses of the northwest wall of the Church. This part of the wall was in a precarious state. Under the direction of an architect it has been grouted and refaced without any cost to the parish. A tablet is to be placed against the wall before the ashes are interred. There is to be no public ceremony. It is fitting that our great Church should be allowed to perpetuate the memory of so great a scholar and poet, whose simple lines on “The Recruit” seem to be appropriate to the occasion:

Oh, come you home on Sunday
When Ludlow streets are full.....

Works Titled after Housman

Jim Page writes: In correcting recently on the internet the erroneous information in the Wikipedia article on Housman which stated that he was educated at King Edward's School, Birmingham (!), I was interested in the list that was given later in the article of books, films and plays, the titles of which have been drawn from A.E.H.'s poetry, and wondered if this was complete. And if not, would members know of any other works that could be added to this list.

Most notable of course is Tom Stoppard's 1997 play *The Invention of Love*, in which Housman is the main character.

There's this to say for blood and breath,
They give a man a taste for death

supplies the title for Peter O'Donnell's 1969 Modesty Blaise thriller, *A Taste for Death*, which is also the inspiration for P. D. James' 1986 crime novel, *A Taste for Death*, the seventh in her Adam Dalgliesh series. The title of Nicholas Blake's 1949 detective novel *Head of a Traveller* is a quotation from the parody *Fragment of a Greek Tragedy*. The last words of the poem 'On Wenlock Edge' are used by Audrey R. Langer for the title of the 1989 novel *Ashes Under Uricon*.

The Nobel Prize winning novelist Patrick White named his 1955 novel *The Tree of Man* also after a line in 'On Wenlock Edge' and Arthur C. Clarke's first novel, *Against the Fall of Night*, is taken from a work in Housman's *More Poems*. The 2009 novel *Blood's a Rover* by James Ellroy takes its title from Housman's poem *Reveille*, and a line - 'Falls the remorseful day' - from *More Poems* XVI.

How clear, how lovely bright
How beautiful to sight
Those beams of morning play

was used for the title of the last *Inspector Morse* book *The Remorseful Day* by Colin Dexter. *Blue Remembered Hills*, a television play by Dennis Potter, takes its title from 'Into My Heart an Air That Kills' from *ASL XL*, the cycle also providing the name for the James Bond film *Die Another Day*:

But since the man that runs away
Lives to die another day".

In the 1985 film 'Out of Africa' Karen 'Tanja' Blixen, played by Meryl Streep, cites poems by A.E. Housman twice. In one key scene, when she is finally invited by the male members of the country club, she gives a toast citing from

'With rue my heart is laden'

Secondly, when she gives the eulogy at Denys Finch Hatton's funeral, she recites an abbreviated version of "To an athlete dying young".

Agitate! Educate! Organise!

Elizabeth Oakley reviews Roger Smalley's recent book, 'Agitate! Educate! Organise! : Political Dissent in Westmorland from 1880-1930' published by the Cumberland and Westmorland Antiquarian and Archeological Society in 2013.



The photograph of the frail but dignified Emmeline Pankhurst being led to prison through the London streets by a burly policeman twice her size encapsulates the popular image of the Women's Suffrage Movement between 1905 and 1914. Roger Smalley's thoughtful book on Westmorland Dissent is a salutary reminder that struggles for social justice, including Suffrage, were nationwide and involved working people who had little formal education and influence of those in power. Based mainly on archival sources, the author's absorbing narrative relates how trade union activity for fairer wages and conditions, Suffrage societies and pacifism protests reached this northern agricultural county and stirred its quiet waters.

Laurence Housman's Public Speeches

As Roger Smalley points out, the evidence of many individual personal sacrifices exists though in sadly incomplete records. Such books as this are most important in revealing the range of political and social complexities in England between 1880 and 1930.

It should not be forgotten that Mrs Pankhurst began her Suffrage campaign in Manchester and that the first of Laurence Housman's many public speeches in support of Votes for Women was made in Hereford. He continued to take exhausting tours across the country to speak for causes he believed in and may have done so in Westmorland as he and his sister Clemence spent three months in the Lakes during 1917.

Housman and Hardy

During recent exploration of the theory of numbers I encountered a short monograph written by G.H. Hardy FRS (1877-1947), *A Mathematician's Apology*, originally published in July 1940. This short publication contains two references to A.E. Housman, which may not be immediately familiar to readers of the Newsletter, due to its relative obscurity. I therefore take this opportunity of sharing my discovery, if that is what is, with your readers.

The first abstract appears on pages 1 and 2 and read as follows:

The function of a mathematician is to do something to prove new theorems, to add to mathematics, and not talk about what he or other mathematicians have done. Statesmen despise publicists, painters despise art-critics, physiologists and physicists, or mathematicians have usually similar feelings:

there is no scorn more profound, or on the whole more justifiable, than that of the men who make for the men who explain. Exposition, criticism, appreciation, is work for second rate minds.

I can remember arguing this point once with one of the few serious conversations I had with Housman. Housman in his Leslie Stephen lecture *The Name and the Nature of Poetry*, had denied very emphatically that he was a 'critic'; but he had denied it in what seemed to be a singularly perverse way, and had expressed an admiration for literary criticism which startled and scandalised me.

He began with a quotation from his inaugural lecture delivered twenty-two years before:

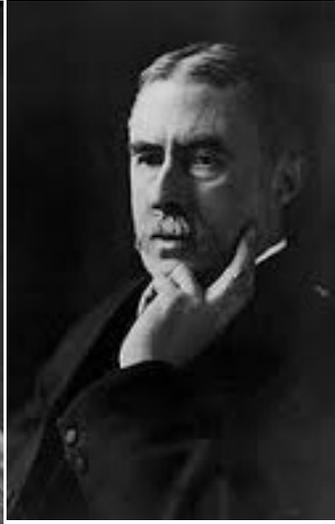
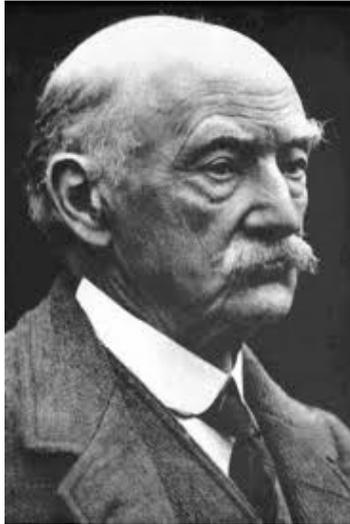
Whether the faculty of literary criticism is the best gift that Heaven has in its treasures, I cannot say; but Heaven seems to think so, for surely it is the gift most charily bestowed. Orators and poets ..., if rare in comparison with blackberries are commoner than the returns of Halley's comet: literary critics are less common.

And he had continued:

In these twenty-two years I have improved in some respects and deteriorated in others, but I have not so much improved as to become a literary critic, nor so much deteriorated as to fancy that I have become one.

It has seemed to me deplorable that a great scholar and a fine poet should write like this, and, finding myself next to

him in Hall a few weeks later, I plunged in and said so. Did he really mean what he had said to be taken seriously? Would the life of the best of critics really have seemed to him comparable with that of a scholar and a poet? We argued the question all through dinner, and I think that finally he agreed with me. I must not seem to claim a dialectical triumph over a man who can no longer contradict me, but, 'Perhaps not entirely' was in the end, his reply to the first question, and 'Perhaps no' to the second.



There may have been some doubt about Housman's feeling, and I do not wish to claim him on my side, but there is no doubt at all about the feelings of men of science, and I share them fully. If then I find myself writing, not mathematics, but 'about' mathematics, it is a confession of weakness, for which I may rightly be scorned or pitied by younger and more vigorous mathematicians. I write about mathematics because, like any other mathematician who has

passed sixty, I no longer have the freshness of mind, the energy or the patience to carry on effectively with my proper job." (pp.1 & 2.)

On page 9 Hardy makes another reference to Housman.

... It is sometimes suggested, by lawyers, or politicians or businessmen, that an academic career is one sought mainly by cautious and unambitious persons who care primarily for comfort and security. The reproach is quite misplaced. A don surrenders something, and in particular the chance of making large sums of money – it is very hard for a professor to make £2000 per year; and security of tenure is naturally one of the considerations which makes this particular surrender easy. That is not why Housman would have refused to be Lord Simon or Lord Beverbrook. He would have rejected their careers because of his ambition, because he would have scorned to be a man forgotten in twenty years.

I am inclined to support Hardy's position in respect of literary criticism, although with some hesitation, bearing in mind the excellence of the contributions made by Samuel Johnson (1709-84), William Hazlitt (1778-1830) and George Orwell (1903-1950) in this context. Very few people today could tell you much about Lord Simon and Lord Beaverbrook, and an even smaller number, I regret to say, would know anything at all about the author of *A Shropshire Lad*.

Stuart Hopkins

Early History of the Society

The Society's Annual General Meeting, held on 12th March 2013, was followed by a talk from Treasurer Max Hunt on the early days of the Society. It was a fascinating talk, liberally illustrated, and printed here is an abridged version for the membership.

The Times Literary Supplement of 5th December 1972 had the following announcement: "Mr J Hunt of Ebury House, Romsley, Worcestershire has written to us as follows:-

It has been decided to found a Housman Society, preferably based on Bromsgrove, Worcestershire, the birthplace of the brothers A.E. and Laurence and their novelist, engraver sister Clemence. Its object will be research into the life, work and genealogy of the Housman family. It would seek to found its own Journal and to collate and publish research done on the lives and work of the Housmans. Would any person interested in joining the proposed Housman Society communicate with me so that in due course they may be advised of the date place and time of the inaugural meeting."

The announcement had grown out of the somewhat unlikely association of two contrasting local figures who, five months later, were to be our Society's joint founders.



John Pugh, a well-established local solicitor, had moved into the area as a boy of seven in 1939. His parents had taken the tenancy of the Valley House in Fockbury, just renamed "Housmans" in recognition of its literary association. The young John was packed off to the prestigious Dragon School in Oxford and then, at age thirteen, came back to Bromsgrove School. After the Sixth Form he was articled to a firm of Birmingham solicitors and, like his father before him, would move smoothly on into a legal career. An occasional columnist for the *Bromsgrove Messenger*, he began in December 1971 a series of what would be five substantial articles on the Housman family reflecting an interest rooted in his early awareness of the history of the Valley House. Within days of

the first article he received a letter from my father which concluded with the exhortation "Why is there no Housman Society? — surely there are enough of us Housmaniacs to get it off the ground!"

Enter our second co-founder. Joe Hunt had lived in Romsley all his life. His father had been a labourer on the Lyttelton estates and although young Joseph had won a scholarship from the village school to Halesowen Grammar School he had to leave aged sixteen in 1929 to begin earning a wage. Within eight years he had become a "materials controller" at the Witton factory of the London Aluminium Company. In 1946 he established his own art metalwork firm in Birmingham. Its name, Max Gate Ltd, reflected a love of English literature kindled in Grammar School that he never lost.

For the next twenty years Joe lived the life of a moderately successful Birmingham industrialist but by the late 1960s, as it became evident that neither of his sons was interested in the "fancy goods" trade, he was devoting more and more time to local history and literary interests. Hence by 1971, as a lover of Housman's poetry himself, he was more than ready to respond to John Pugh's *Messenger* article.

By the early summer of 1972 the two of them were working together. John would later recall a journey to Lymington and their first meeting with N.V.H. Symons who opened for them the "Pandora's Box" of his mother's papers. This family contact and the enthusiasm of Bromsgrove School's "new dynamic headteacher", the Rev. Nick Earle, convinced them that "the time was ripe for the Society to come into being".

Enthusiastic responses to the *Literary Supplement* announcement came not only from around the country but in numbers also from the USA and Japan. And so John, Joe and the "new dynamic headteacher" began detailed planning. The inaugural meeting was set for Saturday, May 5th at Bromsgrove School and, as the following week's *Messenger* reported, "when Mr Hunt opened the meeting the library was fuller than anyone could possibly have hoped for. With support from over 100 people throughout the world — some of them leading literary personalities — the Society's future was assured."

The meeting elected John Pugh as the Society's first Chairman with Joe as Secretary and Miss Barley, the Bromsgrove Librarian, as Treasurer. N.V.H. Symons, having travelled up from Lymington specially for the event was elected President of the Society. With the Society now up and running, this first Committee was clearly determined to keep up the

momentum. John Pugh was already working on “Bromsgrove and the Housmans” which would be the Society’s first publication, and over the next eighteen months the three main strands of activity for the future were put firmly in place.

The first Newsletter (of which sadly no copy can now be found) appeared in the autumn of 1973. The second issue in February 1974 conveyed the alarming news that the Hughley Church tower was “in some danger of collapse” and that, because of prohibitive cost, repair was “not even contemplated”. Later editions would carry happier news of Society events including, in 1976, a visit by the Japanese Ambassador who was pictured at a Perry Hall reception.



Much importance was attached to the production of an academic Journal and lest there was any doubt the first issue in the Spring of 1974 declared its purpose as “the publication of critical researches related to the poetry, prose and classical scholarship of A.E. Housman and the works of his brother Laurence and sister Clemence and for the review of books concerned with the same”. Oxford academics Graham and Jennifer Speake were joint editors and these first 56 pages included contributions from A.S.F. Gow, Enoch Powell and the Warden of All Souls, John Sparrow. The Journal appeared annually from then on with equally prominent contributors and has never looked back.

The third strand of activity was to be the annual Birthday Commemoration. This was taken extremely seriously from the start and would involve visits and a formal dinner at which, as the Newsletter announcing the 1974 event declared, “dinner jackets will be worn”. Soon these early Commemorations became week-end long affairs. In 1975 the dinner was at St John’s College, Oxford with a Ludlow visit several days later. For 1976 it was a truly peripatetic exercise beginning in Ludlow on March 26th, continuing at Trinity College on April 4, when the principal speaker was Prof. E.J. Kenny, the then Kennedy Professor of Latin, and concluding the following morning with a tree planting attended by the Vice-Chancellor!

A full-dress civic procession through the centre of Ludlow was laid on for the first time in 1977 followed by choral evensong in St Laurence’s, dinner having been taken the night before at the Feathers Hotel.

Within three years of the Bromsgrove inauguration the pattern of the Society’s regular activity was, therefore, firmly

established. The members of the first Committee moved forward with remarkable confidence and membership grew. Perhaps the most notable measure of that confidence, at what might be seen as the end of the first phase of the Society’s development, was the statue project for Bromsgrove High Street.

It was in 1982, when plans for High Street “pedestrianisation” were being developed that the Society, after initial misgivings about the scale of the undertaking, set up the Housman Memorial Trust. Its task was to raise £22,000 and commission local sculptor Ken Potts to produce a piece of public art similar in style to his recently unveiled Elgar statue in Worcester. The ambitious search for patrons among the national literary and theatrical communities quickly brought startling results. The first to send a cheque was James Mason who would later be invited to unveil the statue on a date set to coincide with the 1985 Birthday Commemoration.

The letter of acceptance from his home in Switzerland early in 1984 brought delight to the organisers of the great event. But this turned to despair on the announcement of his death in hospital on July 27th. It was the Duke of Westminster (another early patron) who came to the rescue through the good offices of cricket enthusiast John Pugh – the Duke was President of Worcestershire County Cricket Club. The great day was to be March 22nd 1985. After a Council House reception a piper led the procession to the town centre where a crowd of 1500 had gathered for the unveiling. During the following lunch at the Chateau Impney John Pugh declared that A.E.H. had “returned home”.

Thus closed the opening chapter for the Society’s founders. A few months later John Pugh resigned from the Chair on his appointment as a Traffic Commissioner and Father had already ceased to be Secretary when he took on the role of Administrator at the Birmingham and Midland Institute in his so-called retirement. In a short appendix to John’s book just over ten years earlier Joe had written:- “We hope that, as time passes, Bromsgrove will be recognised as the world’s centre for Housman studies and the Housman Society as the recognised medium for the collection and dissemination of information about a uniquely gifted family.”



You may feel that in those first few years they had made a pretty good start.

Laurence and Clemence Housman: Inspiring the Suffragette Census Boycott

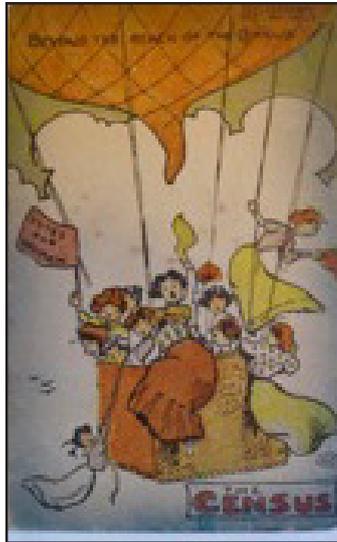
Vanishing for the Vote tells the story of what happened on census night, 2 April 1911. Asquith's Liberal government, which still denied women the vote, ordered every household to comply with its census requirements. So suffragette organizations urged women, all still unenfranchised, to boycott.

Laurence and Clemence provided the creative inspiration for this civil disobedience, he very publicly, she more privately. The idea sprang from the Women's Freedom League (WFL) and its philosophy of 'passive resistance' to unjust laws. Laurence recalled in his 1937 autobiography:

Before the Census began, I drew up a scheme of organized resistance, and offered it first to the [Pankhursts'] WSPU, which rejected it, then to the WFL, who had already, I found, started a similar scheme of their own. So with them I worked.

By spring 1911, Laurence's writings inspired many to resist. As a compelling speaker, he was in constant demand. Meanwhile, banner-maker Clemence played a crucial role in the new Women's Tax Resistance League. This small League brought vital expertise and experience to resisting the law.

Vanishing for the Vote tracks the boycott the length and breadth of England. In Kensington, Laurence hospitably opened his home to suffragette evaders. Tax-resister Clemence hid away in Dorset, inscribing her schedule 'No Vote No Census', and out-facing officials when they called. The most celebrated evader probably remains Emily Wilding Davison, hiding overnight in her Houses of Parliament cupboard.



Afterwards, Laurence optimistically estimated the number of resisters as 'many tens of thousands, amounting quite possibly to...hundred thousands'. He had to guess. We can discover. In 2009, the National Archives opened up these census schedules.

With fellow suffrage historian Elizabeth Crawford, I set to work to research the boycott. It soon became clear that even some suffragettes who might be expected to rebel, decided to comply with the census. Why?

Vanishing for the Vote includes a substantial Gazetteer, jointly compiled by Elizabeth and myself. This documents the boycott across England, county by county, borough by borough. Patterns emerge clearly: occupation,

suffrage affiliation, region. Indeed, Laurence's Kensington looks starkly different from Clemence's Dorset.

This book plunges the reader into the turbulent world of Edwardian politics, recorded in vivid detail on one dramatic night. It is based upon a wealth of brand new documentary sources, written in participants' own hand. This evidence confirms the enormously significant suffrage contribution of the 'inseparable siblings', Laurence and Clemence Housman.

Lavishly illustrated, *Vanishing for the Vote: suffrage, citizenship and the battle for the census* will be published by Manchester University Press in January 2014. <www.manchester-universitypress.co.uk>

Jill Liddington

A.E.H. and Bromsgrove School

As part of the Bromsgrove Society Summer School in July, Andrew Maund gave an illustrated lecture in which he described life at Bromsgrove School in the time of Housman and developed some personal opinions as to ways in which these childhood experiences may have influenced A.E.H.'s poetry. The lecture aimed partly to describe Housman's early life to members of the Bromsgrove Society and partly to explore possible early influences upon his poetry – very much from the point of view of a teacher and lover of literature rather than an historian. The lecture was well received and Andrew has accepted an invitation to repeat the lecture, in a revised form, at the Housman Society AGM next Spring.

'Ludlow and Teme'

This new critical edition of Gurney's song cycle, by Philip Lancaster, has attempted to resolve 'ambiguities in the original score', largely occurring from the very unusual circumstances of the work's publication. The work was submitted to the publishers, Stainer & Bell, in October 1923, by which time Gurney had been in a mental asylum for more than a year.

The 14-page Introduction by Michael Pilkington gives fascinating insights into early influences on this work, including Vaughan Williams' *On Wenlock Edge*, as well as a history of the revisions. The 'sources' section details the haphazard, and often random, events that accompanied the material survival of Gurney's creative output. £18.00 from Stainer and Bell.

The Housman Society Book Exchange

The Book Exchange has recently acquired a couple of very decent Housman collections from members but in the course of those negotiations it soon became apparent that the sellers were unaware of the simple rules under which we operate. For the benefit of all I therefore summarise the position. The Book Exchange can offer member's books through these pages and receive 10% commission on a successful sale, or The Book Exchange will buy the books outright at 50% of agreed value and settle immediately.

This facility, which is available to all members, is the easiest and most efficient means of disposing of Housman material, and will also achieve a significantly higher receipt than dealing with booksellers or auction houses. And because the Society is a registered Charity, not motivated by profit and run by its Officers at no cost to the Society, the books are able to be sold back to the membership at prices way below those seen in the antiquarian market. In the listing below you will note a first-edition set of Housman's *Manilius* offered at £800 whereas last year a dealer in the United States was offering a set in poorer condition at \$2750, or approximately £1800.

Finally I will restate that the Society has a large quantity of lower-value books which because of space restrictions are never advertised. Please email me if you have a specific requirement for any book. As always the items offered for sale are on a first-come, first-served basis irrespective of the means of contact used. All enquiries, please, to Peter Sisley at Ladywood Cottage, Baveney Wood, Cleobury Mortimer, Shropshire DY14 8HZ, by telephone on 01299 841361 or facsimile 01299 841582 or e-mail at sisley.ladywood@talk21.com

SALES LIST – SEPTEMBER 2013

Postage and Packing are additional to the prices quoted.

ALDINGTON (Richard). A.E. HOUSMAN & W.B. YEATS. The Peacocks Press, Hurst, Berkshire; 1955. First edition. 8vo. 35 pages. Blue cloth in the glassine jacket. One of 350 copies. These lectures were originally given in New York in 1938. Fine. £40

BAYLEY (John). HOUSMAN'S POEMS. Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1992. First edition. 202 pages. A critical appraisal of Housman's Poetry. Fine in a similar dust jacket. £40

BAYLEY (John). HOUSMAN'S POEMS. Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1992. First edition. 202 pages. Another copy, perhaps used for reviewing, with a number of pages showing neat underlining in ink and one page with notes made in red ink. Fine but for these additions in a very good dust jacket. £20

BRINK (C.O.). ENGLISH CLASSICAL SCHOLARSHIP. James Clarke & Co. Ltd., Cambridge, 1986. First edition. 8vo. 243 pages. Reflections on Bentley, Porson and Housman by a successor Kennedy Professor of Latin. Fine in a very good dust jacket. £25

BROWNE (Piers). AN ELEGY IN ARCADIA. An Artist's view of Housman's Poetry. Ashford Press, Southampton. 1990. Second Edition. 164 pages. Following Browne's sumptuous limited edition of *A Shropshire Lad* published by The Shorthorn Press in 1986 this book explores the influences on Housman's work from the perspective of the artist. Near fine in a very good dust jacket. £15

CARTER (John). A.E. HOUSMAN. SELECTED PROSE. Cambridge at the University Press, 1961. First edition. 12mo. 204 pages. Black cloth. Fine with a very good dust jacket. A beautiful association copy with a full-page dedication by Carter on the first free endpaper. £60

CLUCAS (Humphrey). THROUGH TIME AND PLACE TO ROAM. University of Salzburg, 1995. First edition. 8vo. 67 pages. Softcover. Nine essays on Housman. Very good indeed. £10

GOW (A.S.F.) A.E. HOUSMAN – A SKETCH. Cambridge University Press. 1936. First Edition. 8vo. 137 pages. Green cloth in the dust jacket. A delightful sketch of Housman by a fellow professor, together with a comprehensive list of his writings and indexes to his classical papers. Very good. £25

HOUSMAN (A.E.). M. MANILLII ASTRONOMICON. Five Volumes. Grant Richards, London, 1903, Grant Richards Limited, London, 1912, 1916, and 1920, The Richards Press Limited, London, 1930. 8vo. First editions. Volume One has Housman's 75 page preface followed by 103 pages of text and index. Volume Two (31) 123pp, Volume Three (28) 72pp, Volume Four (17) 130pp, Volume Five (46) 99pp. Original blue boards with the paper spine labels. Volume 1 has had the back strip and spine label professionally replaced, the substantial remains of the original spine label loosely laid in. Condition is very good indeed. A full set of these first editions is incredibly rare and is here offered at a very attractive price. £800

HOUSMAN (A.E.). A SHROPSHIRE LAD. E. Grant Richards, London, 1906. 12mo. 96pp. Off-white vellum with gilt titles to cover and spine, top edge gilt with deckled edges. Printed on laid paper that is clean and fresh. Minor scratch to front cover. With the ownership signature (1906) and bookplate of Nathaniel L. Goodrich, long-time librarian of Dartmouth College, USA. This is only the second copy I have ever seen of this edition. Very rare. Very good. £60

HOUSMAN (A.E.). A SHROPSHIRE LAD. E. Grant Richards, London, 1907. 12mo. 103 pages. Green Cloth, top edge gilt. Produced in an edition of 500 copies on hand-made paper, although without a limitation statement. Very good indeed. Extremely rare. £50

HOUSMAN (A.E.) [contributes]. GREECE AND ROME. Volume 1 Number 1. First edition. 8vo. 64pp. Paper covers. London, Oxford University Press, 1931. This inaugural issue contains, on page 62, Housman's poem *The Oracles* with a Latin translation by E.A. Barber on the facing page. Very good indeed in somewhat grubby covers. £15

HOUSMAN (A.E.). THE NAME AND NATURE OF POETRY. Cambridge University Press. 1933. First edition.

51 pages. Brown cloth. The text of the Leslie Stephen lecture which was delivered at Cambridge on the 9th May, 1933. Fine, and still in its tissue dust jacket. £30

HOUSMAN (A.E.). THE NAME AND NATURE OF POETRY. New York, Macmillan, 1933. First edition. 51 pages. Red cloth. The American first edition. Fine in a very good dust jacket showing a little wear to the spine. £25

HOUSMAN (A.E.). MORE POEMS. Jonathan Cape, London, 1936. The limited edition. Number 300 of 379 copies. 8vo. 71 pages. Quarter leather, marbled endpapers, top edge gilt. Contains a manuscript facsimile of *Tarry, delight, so seldom met*, not included in the trade edition. Corners a trifle bumped. Very good, missing the elusive dust jacket. £60

HOUSMAN (A.E.). MORE POEMS. New York, Alfred A Knopf, 1936. The first American edition. 8vo. 73pp. Blue cloth in the dust jacket. The true first edition with the priced dust jacket and the printing error 'Francis Todd'. Fine in a very good dust jacket with a little edge wear. £50

HOUSMAN (A.E.). THE COLLECTED POEMS OF A.E. HOUSMAN. First edition. 8vo. 256pp. Blue cloth, stamped in gilt. Grey dust jacket lettered in black and red. London, Jonathan Cape, 1939. The book is in fine condition, the very good and clean jacket showing some little wear, primarily at head of spine. Very scarce in this condition. £60

HOUSMAN (A.E.). THE COLLECTED POEMS OF A.E. HOUSMAN. First edition. 8vo. 256pp. Blue cloth, stamped in gilt within red frame. Grey dust jacket. New York, Henry Holt, 1940. Fine in a very good dust jacket. The true American first edition with both the book and the dust jacket marked 'first printing'. £50

HOUSMAN (A.E.). A SHROPSHIRE LAD. George Harrap, London, 1940. 8vo. 99 pages. Brown cloth with the scarce dust jacket. The first edition with the delightful woodcuts by Agnes Miller Parker. Fine in a very good jacket. £60

HOUSMAN (A.E.). A SHROPSHIRE LAD. George Harrap, London, 1940. Proof Copy. 8vo. 99pp. With the evocative wood engravings by Agnes Miller Parker. Brown paper covers endorsed 'Advance Proof Copy. Unrevised and Confidential'. An interesting and unusual survivor. £40

HOUSMAN (A.E.). A MORNING WITH THE ROYAL FAMILY. Privately printed at Christmas 1955. 12mo. 16 pages. Cream Paper covers. Very good. £20

HOUSMAN (A.E.) [contributes]. The London Magazine Volume 6 Number 6. 8vo. Paper covers. London, Heinemann, 1959. Contains Housman's poem *The Death of Socrates*, published here for the first time since its appearance in the *Bromsgrove Messenger* in 1874. Very good in good covers. £10

HOUSMAN (A.E.). BIRCH (R) [editor]. UNKIND TO UNICORNS. Silent Books, Cambridge, 1995. First edition. 47 pages. Brown cloth. Illustrated by David Harris and with an introduction by Norman Page. Selected comic verse. The limited edition of 150 copies. Fine. £30

HOUSMAN (Laurence). A.E.H. SOME POEMS, SOME LETTERS AND A PERSONAL MEMOIR BY HIS BROTHER. Jonathan Cape, London, 1937. First

edition. 8vo. 286 pages. Blue cloth. Laurence's memoir of his brother including the first printing of the additional poems. Fine in a very good dust jacket. £30

HOUSMAN (Laurence) [contributes]. ENCOUNTER MAGAZINE. VOLUME XXIX No.4. Continental Publishers, London, 1967. 8vo. 96pp. Paper covers. On pages 33-41 is printed for the first time *A.E. Housman's 'De Amicitia'*, annotated by John Carter. Very good indeed. £20

HOUSMAN SOCIETY JOURNALS. A FULL SET. 1974 – 2012. The Society is pleased to offer a full set of Journals to the membership at a fraction of the cost that would be charged on the open market. Thirty-eight issues. The condition varies from Very Good to Mint. £160

HYDER (Clyde Kenneth). A CONCORDANCE TO THE POEMS OF A.E. HOUSMAN. Peter Smith, Gloucester. Massachusetts, 1966. 133 pages. Brown Cloth. An essential reference tool. Near fine. £60

JEBB (Keith). A.E. HOUSMAN. Seren Books, Bridgend, 1992. First edition. 8vo. 147 pages. Green cloth in dust jacket. The most recent biography of Housman. Fine in a similar dust jacket. £15

NAIDITCH (P.G.). A.E. HOUSMAN AT UNIVERSITY COLLEGE. THE ELECTION OF 1892. E.J. Brill, Leiden, 1988. First edition. 261 pages. Soft covers. A monumental work. Essential reading and now very scarce. A fine copy. £60

NAIDITCH (P.G.). PROBLEMS IN THE LIFE AND WRITINGS OF A.E. HOUSMAN. Krown & Spellman, Beverly Hills, 1995. First edition. 8vo. 244 pages. Blue cloth. No dust jacket – as issued. Seventy notes, articles and reviews on Housman. In mint condition. £35

SYMONS (Katharine). MEMORIES OF A.E. HOUSMAN. Grant Mellhuish, Bath, 1936. 8 pages. Paper covers. Pamphlet written by Housman's sister extracted from the magazine of King Edward's School. Bath. Contains the first appearance of seven of Housman's comic verses. Staples rusted as usual otherwise very good. £20

ZEITLIN & VER BRUGGE. A.E. HOUSMAN. WINTER CATALOGUE 1983. Zeitlin & Ver Brugge, Los Angeles, 1983. 4to. Unpaginated. Card covers. This catalogue of 203 items is packed with interest for Housman enthusiasts. Very good indeed. £20

And finally a couple of little books of parodies of which you may be unaware.

J.D.P. (PICKLES (John D.)). REMEMBERED WITH AFFECTION. A.E.H. Obit April 1936. No publisher's imprint. No date but circa 1986. 4pp. Card. Fine. £15

ROME (G.E.). TRAVAILS WITH A SKELETON. Outpost Publications, Walton-on-Thames, 1975. 16pp. Paper covers. Fine. £15

WANTS LIST

Interesting Housman material required. Please contact Peter Sisley.

Housman's Irony

A Note from Sir Brian Young

I have been trying, without success, to recall a sentence or two of Housman's which I read at least sixty-two years ago. It goes something like this:

How would we like it if we had to read the kind of translator's English which Mr Paley [or it may be another name] inflicts upon us? It would go something like this:

I enjoin upon the entire female population, not once but twice, that there be from henceforth an entire cessation of sighing – Man is (and always has been) a creature constantly addicted to inconstancy, treading the ocean and the mainland with alternate feet.

Most of us would agree, I fancy, that this is not a wholly satisfying rendering of Shakespeare's 'Sigh no more, ladies'.

This I read in a university library, and it amused me. The John Carter 'Selected Prose' does not contain it with the other reviews and adversaria, though we do find there (p.92) some similar oddities, like,

"They cut off his ears and nostrils with the sharp brass; but he, injured in his feelings, went about enduring that calamity with a frantic mind." [attributed to Mr Buckley].

But no sign of this other one. Even Dr Butterfield cannot help, and doubts whether it is by Housman. Can anybody advise, please?

Death of Seamus Heaney

The Society joins the rest of the world in mourning the loss of Seamus Heaney. He was an honorary member of the Housman Society and his appearance at our 1996 Ludlow Weekend of Literature was a seminal event in our history. He gave a reading of his own poetry and that of A.E.H. and no one there will forget it - even though he was suffering from a terrible cold.

Tributes have been pouring in from leading politicians and literary figures and because of its Shropshire references perhaps it is appropriate to quote Simon Armitage:

"I've got lots of memories of spending time with him. I remember once being in a pub with him in Shropshire. We were both staying with mutual friends and we went to the pub at the top of Clee Hill. He was a superstar in the world of literature, but in that pub he was like a guy from the village. He just sat there in the corner chatting away - he was very comfortable among non-literary folk."

Miscellanea

● The **Ludlow Commemoration** took place on 30th April but because of scaffolding on the north wall of St Laurence's the ceremony was held in the Lady Chapel. The Very Reverend Colin Williams led the service and poems were read by Clive Jenkins and Hilary Stookey, who was over from America for a few days. Afterwards Jane Caulcott led us on an intriguing town walk which took us into areas few had seen before. A lunch in The Assembly Rooms concluded a successful day.

● The Dean of Worcester Cathedral, The Very Reverend Peter Atkinson, held another 30 hour **Poetry Reading Marathon** on 29th and 30th August in aid of the Cathedral. The Society was pleased to sponsor him and his readings from *A Shropshire Lad* were streamed live through the internet in impressive fashion.

● The Society has been invited by the Shropshire-based Southern Walking Forum to join in a **War Walk** to commemorate the period of the Great War and certain major occasions in its course, one in a series of events planned on a local level throughout the country. We are assured that any events under this project will preserve the appropriate degree of reverence. Further details will be published in the February Newsletter.

● **BOOKS ARE MY BAG** is a campaign run by M & C Saatchi that will be launched on Saturday 14th September and will last until Christmas Eve. There will be many bookshop events during the campaign, emphasising that bookshops are wonderful places to discover books and that they play a key role in their communities. Major chain bookstores and almost 700 independents are behind the campaign. Please support it!

● Dr Nicholas A.E. Kalospyros, Adjunct Professor of Classics and Literature at the University of Athens writes to say that **A.E. Housman's poetic and classical readings** have been of the greatest influence since his student years. He thought members would like to know about an article he has written 'On the Shoulders of Giants: Appraising the Criterion of divinatio in the cases of Adamance Coray and A. E. Housman'. This can be seen by Googling the first ten or so words of the title.

● Linda Hart writes to say that on **World Book Night** (23 April) she was given a copy of *The Reader* by Bernhard Schlink and was amazed to find on the inside of the back cover there was printed a poem by A.E.H. - none other than the immortal *ASL XL!*

● In the Ludlow Rural Deanery Monthly Magazine of 1st February 1937 **Laurence Housman** is thanked for a gift of 485 dollars (about £100) towards the cost of improvement of the St Laurence's churchyard.

● **Apologies** to Ann FitzGerald and Elizabeth Oakley for the misattribution of their reports on sessions in last October's Weekend. AF wrote on 'Victorian Pessimism' and EO on 'Dear Mrs Ashbee'.

The John Adams Memorial, Bromsgrove Cemetery

After being knocked down on safety grounds in 2007 the John Adams Memorial in Bromsgrove's Cemetery has been restored to its former glory. It is gratifying to see that most of the original stonework has been reused, the central column being the only major section which has needed replacement. On a new piece of stone at the base of the monument is the inscription "John Adams 1766-1858". On an original stone is the inscription "Erected by Rev. J.D. Collis M.A.; Rev. T. Housman M.A." John Day Collis was of course the Headmaster of Bromsgrove School, and Thomas Housman was the nephew of John Adams and incumbent of Catshill Church.



The restoration of the monument was a joint project of the Housman Society, the Bromsgrove Society, Avoncroft Museum and Bromsgrove District Council. Housman Society member, Jennie McGregor-Smith, was the driving force for the restoration and it was through her form-filling skills and perseverance that the Heritage Lottery Fund bid was successful. Along with members of the Bromsgrove Society and the District Council's Tree Officer she is now preparing a Cemetery Trail, A Tree Trail and a website listing the graves of many of Bromsgrove's leading citizens. The Housman Society has pledged money towards the costs of the restoration.

Who was John Adams?

John Adams (1766-1858) was born at Ashby de La Zouch

and was apprenticed to a Leicester hosier. It was in Leicester in 1788 that Adams' sister, Jane, met and married a young clergyman from Lancaster called Robert Housman. At this time the leading hosiers of Leicester were experimenting with new spinning machinery based on Arkwright's Water Frame. Major industrial disturbances in Leicester persuaded one hosier, John Coltman, to spin his yarn well away from Leicestershire. He sent his young partner, John Adams, to Worcestershire to manage the spinning frames in Bromsgrove's former cotton mill. There was no opposition to the new machinery in Bromsgrove and the mill was to employ 150 men, women and children, making John Adams the largest employer in the town. The remains of the huge millpond are still a feature of Bromsgrove's Sanders Park.

John Adams lived at Perry Hall, which now, as Housman Hall, is a sixth form boarding house for Bromsgrove School. He was the prime mover in the Bromsgrove Volunteers and used the title of Captain. When his

first wife Dorothy and infant son died in 1796, John Adams was left without an heir, so he promoted the careers of his sister Jane's three sons, John, William and Thomas Housman. The youngest, Thomas Housman, became the first Vicar of Catshill in 1838. When John Adams died in 1858, the Rev. Thomas Housman's son, Edward, by this time a Bromsgrove solicitor, moved into Perry Hall. It was here that Edward Housman's son, Alfred Edward Housman, grew up.

'A Shropshire Lad' as Locomotive Class 67

This picture, taken by Martin Hart, is of the nameplate of the locomotive Class 67, number 67012 *A Shropshire Lad* at Birmingham Moor Street on 2nd March 2012 when it was in charge of the 10.55 Birmingham Moor Street to London Marylebone Chiltern Railways passenger service. 67012 was named by schoolchildren of the Clee Hill County Primary School, Ludlow in 2008.



The origin of the Class 67 fleet lies in the takeover in 1996 of the Rail Express Systems (RES) sector of British Rail by US company Wisconsin Central, who merged it into EWS. RES principally operated trains for Royal Mail, and it was thought that a high-speed locomotive was required for the faster operation of such trains in the future. The locos were delivered from 1999, and worked on the mail trains as

intended. Unfortunately, in 2003 EWS lost their contract with Royal Mail, and ran their last mail trains in early 2004. Since then, EWS and other train operating companies e.g. DB Schenker (owners of Chiltern Railways), have been doing their best to find uses for them, with some degree of success.

Flowering of English Song

In early summer there was an extraordinary flowering of English Song in the Midlands when there were no fewer than five concerts which included settings of Housman's poetry, writes Jim Page. The fact that well over 1,000 people heard these concerts is in itself an explanation why so many people come to discover Housman through the musical settings of his work.

First up was Roderick Williams' recital with the Carducci Quartet and Tom Poster for **Malvern Concert Club** which included an impressive new cycle from Ian Venables entitled *Song of Severn*, in which the composer celebrates that great river by setting Masefield, John Drinkwater, Philip Worner and Housman himself. Masefield's 'On Malvern Hill' opened the cycle and the swirling introductory music composed to set the scene for Caractacus's battle with the Romans had echoes of 'On Wenlock Edge', so Housman's own 'How clear, how lovely bright' (dedicated to Housman committee member Jennie McGregor-Smith) was a happy choice for the second song in the cycle – its reflective mood ending with darkness and finality in the phrase 'remorseful day'.

Two days later on 4th May Mark Stone and Simon Lepper's recital for **Painswick Music Society** gave us a rare and fitting opportunity – CW Orr lived in Painswick - to hear the composer's *Seven Songs from A Shropshire Lad* – a work which they recorded very successfully last year. Written between 1927 and 1931 Orr had difficulty in finding a publisher so funded the printing of the cycle himself with the help of his friends. Housman is served well in these settings and Mark Stone delivered them with character and a nut-brown richness that was well appreciated by a large audience.

The following Sunday in **Leamington** both the Gurney and Vaughan settings were on the programme given by Nicholas Mulroy, the Fitzwilliam String Quartet and Anna Tilbrook. *Ludlow and Teme* has taken on a new life in Philip Lancaster's new edition. Small awkwardnesses have been ironed out and one is able to concentrate on the complex relationship between the songs and their texts. This was a good performance but the position from which Nicholas Mulroy sang and the Pump Room's wayward acoustics prevented this from being a first class performance. After the interval 'On Wenlock Edge' fared better and the mastery of Vaughan Williams's writing was well portrayed by the musicians as they moved from the romantic to the earthy and spiritual in this peerless cycle.

The next day in Leamington the superb Roderick Williams included three songs from John Ireland's *Land of Lost Content* cycle and captured in full the anguish, yearning and melancholy of the poems.

The real gem was left to last in this unco-ordinated flurry of Housman settings as the Finzi Friends' **Ludlow English Song Weekend** had programmed Gurney's other cycle for the same forces, *The Western Playland*, on Saturday 1 June. As far as I can discover there has been no professional performance of this work since one in Gloucester in 1990 - Gurney's centenary year – so this was a real milestone,

especially as the performance from Jonathan McGovern, the Carducci Quartet and Susie Allan was superb. The eight poems are all pervaded by a sense of loss and although the cycle has its uneven moments it was nonetheless hugely enjoyable and, once more, we are indebted to Philip Lancaster whose new edition was being used for the first time.

Audiences for all these concerts were good – 500 at Malvern, 250 at Ludlow, 200 at Painswick and probably about 150 at each of the Leamington concerts – which gives an extraordinary perspective on the way Housman's poetry is still be resonating with audiences through the musical settings.

A Parody from the Society's 2012 Autumn Weekend Competition

After Wenlock Edge

by
Elizabeth Oakley

O'er Bromsgrove town there broods recession
From Avoncroft to Lydiate Ash.
On libraries, on schools and buses
Financial storms are poised to crash.

'Twas long ago the Roman soldier
The straight, salt road from Droitwich tramped,
Through Bromsgrove up the Beacon trudging,
His curses under Lickey stamped.

As centuries of toil succeed him
An age of iron brings along
The nailers' block and anvil ringing
A furious and a woeful song.

For Masters' rates pay next to nothing
Though morn to night the forges rage.
Then tumbling trade makes hammers idle
And history turns another page.

On Bromsgrove's past and future troubles,
That bitter and unending feud
Between mankind and his creator,
The poet's statue stares unmoved.

Whose 'Blue Remembered Hills' ?

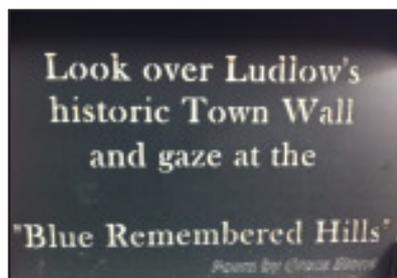
Controversy over new Toposcope in Castle Square Car Park

The wall in Ludlow's Castle Square Car Park has been crumbling for many years but in the earlier part of this year work began to rebuild it - and a very good job has been made.

However below a toposcope in the centre of the wall there is plaque on which is written:

Look over Ludlow's
historic Town Wall
and gaze at the
"Blue Remembered Hills"

Poem by Grace Stone



It transpires that there was a competition in which local residents were asked to write a poem commemorating the rebuilding of the wall and Grace Stone's poem, which starts with the lines above, was the winner.

What the Shropshire Council, who were responsible for the work, do not seem to realise is that as it stands it looks as if Grace Stone is the author of Housman's immortal phrase, making it look like a blatant piece of plagiarism from one of A.E.H.'s best known poems.

The Chairman of the Society has written to the Chief Executive of Shropshire Council and English Heritage (who were also involved in the project) objecting to Housman's immortal phrase being attributed to Grace Stone, but as yet, after four months, he has received no reply.

In Celebration of the Coming of the Dreaded Supermarkets to Ludlow

by

Roy Payne

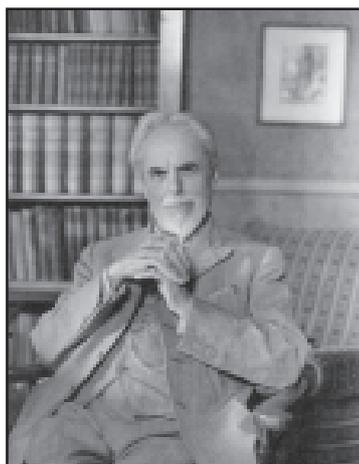
When I came last to Ludlow
In search of retail trade,
Two friends kept shop beside me -
Two grocers, both self-made.
Now Dick works long at Aldi's
And Ned works not at all,
And I stack shelves at Tesco's
From dawn till dusk doth fall.

Laurence Letter to his Uncle Denis

14th May 1929

My dear Denis,

We are sorry to hear of your disappointment over Hampshire: but it might have been a heart-breaking job to work under a set of reactionary stick-in-the-mud authorities, as I hear these were. Anyway Shrewsbury, Shewsbury, Shroosbury or Shoosbury has its compensations.



This is to tell you that, in a year or so, when education may be beginning to be an anxiety for you, I intend - if my finances hold good - to make a contribution toward the training of your offspring. There is just one proviso which may stand in the way - though I hope not, if your Uncle Basil's circumstances require brotherly assistance, he will have to

be a first charge on what I can afford. But if that does not happen, I hope to be able to let you have £50 a year while your income stays as at present, and when charges for education begin to get burdensome. If you should come into any inheritance of family money to that amount or more, I should feel released. And of course, if my public began to pay as little attention to my writings as many of my relatives do, so as to cause a decline in my income, I should have to tell you of it and attend to number one. But so long as my income keeps to about what it is now, and yours ditto, that is what you may look forward to. And if you will tell me when a move on in the educational scale is necessary, I will begin to stump up. I don't know whether Shrewsbury School takes day boys, but I suppose not until the age of 12 or 14. Meanwhile, what will the stages be? And when will they begin?

I don't know whether Gerald will continue to exercise his charm on me as he grows older - probably not; I expect it's a mere flash-in-the-pan, due to tender years and lack of knowing better! But I hope he goes on being good and serene.

Our love to you all.

Your affectionate uncle,

Laurence

(From the Society Archives)

Forthcoming Events

Sunday 22 September 2013, 6.30pm

The Housman Room, University College London

'Take Desire Away'

A dramatic presentation by Mansell David

For details see adjacent column.

Wednesday 5 March 2014, 7.30pm

80 New Road, Bromsgrove B60 2LA

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The meeting will be followed by wine and refreshments. The evening concludes with a talk from Andrew Maund on A.E. Housman's life at Bromsgrove School, in which he will relate the relevance of his school experiences to his poetry.

Thursday 20 March 2014, 4.00-6.30pm

Artrix, Slideslow Drive, Bromsgrove

SCHOOLS POETRY SPEAKING COMPETITION FINALS

Following workshops in local schools led by T.C. Peppercorn, the Education and Outreach Officer at Bromsgrove's Artrix, competing pupils from Bromsgrove's schools will speak a poem by A.E. Housman and another poem of their own choice. There are categories for Sixth Formers, Seniors and for the Middle School age group. The winner of the Housman Cup will read at the Bromsgrove Commemoration on 26 March. Support from members and participants' families is welcome. Free entry. (Note that the original date for this - 13 November - has been changed in order to accommodate some changes we are making to the competition.)

Wednesday 26 March 2014, 12.30pm

John Adams Memorial, The Cemetery, Church Road

A.E.H. BIRTHDAY COMMEMORATION

The annual ceremony will be held this year by the recently restored John Adams Memorial in the Bromsgrove Cemetery. It will be followed by a buffet lunch in Housman Hall, by kind invitation of the Headmaster of Bromsgrove School. **Julian Hunt**, whose research into John Adams' relationship with Bromsgrove has revealed much new information, will be Guest of the Day.

Wednesday 30 April 2014, 11.00am

St Laurence's, Ludlow

LUDLOW COMMEMORATION

The ceremony by the plaque on the north wall will be followed by a tour of St Laurence's in which Joanna Layton will explain the detail of the Vision Project (see page 4). The tour will be preceded by coffee and followed by lunch in The Assembly Rooms.

Week beginning 26 May 2014

The Hay Festival of Literature

THE HOUSMAN LECTURE

The Name and Nature of Poetry

Details about 2014 lecture will be announced in due course.

'Take Desire Away'

Housman Evening at UCL

The Living Literature Society brings literature past and present to life, either focusing on the theatrical performances of the literary greats in their former homes, or places associated with them – and their latest event will take place in The Housman Room at University College London on Sunday 22nd September at 6.30pm.

Shortly after Housman left UCL, the university wished to acknowledge his academic contribution by naming a room in his honour. For this evening, The Living Literature Society is privileged to host this unique theatrical event in the stunning Housman Room which is now used exclusively as a common room for senior professors.

Mansel David, who has written this absorbing one man play, draws upon poignant extracts from Housman's heartfelt letters to Moses Jackson, his Oxford friend, and readings from *A Shropshire Lad*. Housman's unrequited love for Moses Jackson and the undertones to his poetry make for a deeply moving theatrical adaptation.

Mansel David is a Welsh born actor who trained at the Bristol Old Vic and has much West End theatrical experience to his credit – including plays by Tom Stoppard, Michael Frayn and Harold Pinter.

The evening begins with a drinks reception at 6.30pm, followed by the performance at 7.30pm. Tickets cost £32.50 (with a 10% reduction for Society members). There is an option for dinner at a local restaurant afterwards (£32.50). Cheques in favour of 'Lamb B D (LLS)' to The Living Literature Society, Clarendon House, Shenley Road, Elstree, Herts WD6 1AG. Enquiries to <michael.lamb@storylinejourneys.co.uk> or 01727 825 939.

10 Cards for £10.00

Bargain Greetings Card Offer

At £1.50 each the Society's greetings cards represent exceptional value as inflation continues to rise and shops are charging up to £3.00 for cards of similar quality. But members are being offered even greater value with this mailing as any ten cards (or multiples of ten) can be ordered for £10.00 on the form which is enclosed – UK only. Ignore the prices given on the order form and just enclose a cheque payable to the 'Housman Society'. We are including postage in this price!

Published by The Housman Society, 80 New Road, Bromsgrove. The next Newsletter will be circulated in February 2014 and contributions should be sent to the Editor at the address given on page 1 by 1st February 2014.