

NEWSLETTER

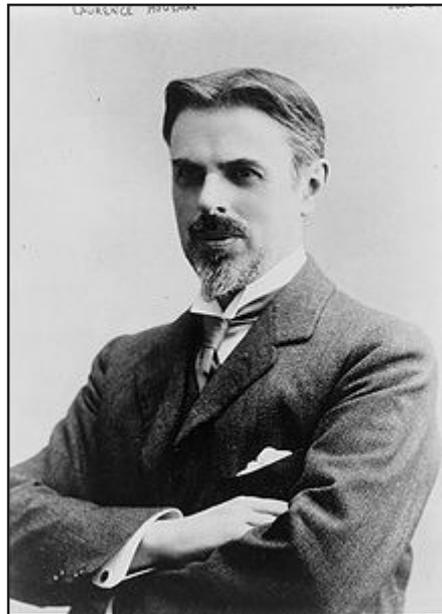
February 2014

No. 39 Editor: Andrew Maund, 57 Marlborough Avenue, Bromsgrove, Worcs B60 2PH
E-mail Address: a_maund@o2.co.uk Website: www.housman-society.co.uk

Plans to Celebrate the 150th Anniversary of Laurence's Birth take shape

Laurence Housman's fame has never achieved that of his more famous elder brother but, as plans to mark the 150th anniversary of his birth on 18th July 1865 gather pace – see news items later in this issue – a long overdue reassessment of his reputation and place in history could be due. A summary of the life of the 'Younger Brother' reminds us of the extraordinary diversity of his interests.

After his time at Bromsgrove School, Laurence went with his sister Clemence to study art at the Lambeth School of Art and the Royal College of Art in London and first worked as a book illustrator with London publishers, illustrating works by George Meredith, Jonas Lie, Christina Rossetti, Jane Barlow's and his sister's *Werewolf* (1896) in an intricate Art Nouveau style. During this period he also wrote and published several volumes of poetry and a number of hymns and carols, but when his eyesight began to fail, he turned more and more to writing. His first literary success came in 1900 with the novel *An Englishwoman's Love-letters* which created quite a scandal when it was published anonymously.



Laurence held what for the time were controversial political views and with his socialist and pacifist beliefs he joint-founded the Men's League for Women's Suffrage in 1907. He was also a member of the British Society for the Study of Sex Psychology and the Order of Chaeronea. In 1909 with his sister Clemence he founded the Suffrage Atelier, an arts and crafts society that worked closely with the Women's Social and Political Union and Women's Freedom League. They encouraged non-professional artists to submit work, and paid them a small percentage of the profits.

Housmans Bookshop was opened in 1945 in his honour by the Peace Pledge Union, of which he was a sponsor.

He then turned to drama with *Bethlehem* in 1902 and it was as a playwright that he is probably best remembered. In 1934 *Victoria Regina* was an unexpected success and saw Laurence's financial circumstances improve dramatically as a result of productions with starry casts in both London and New York. But battles with the Lord Chamberlain over portraying living royalty on the stage caused him problems until censorship was relaxed in 1937.

Laurence Housman was a prolific writer with around a hundred published works to his name and his output covered all kinds of literature from socialist and pacifist pamphlets to children's fairy tales such as *A Farm in Fairyland* and fantasy stories with Christian undertones for adults. His autobiography *The Unexpected Years* was published in 1937, and his volume *A.E.H.*, published in the same year, contained some new poems, some letters, and a valuable *Memoir* of his brother. He also edited *More Poems*, a book that contained a further forty-eight of his brother's posthumous poems.

With his sister Clemence he moved to Street in 1924, drawn towards the Quakers by their 'spiritual liberty' and befriended by Roger and Sarah Clark, who built a house for them, 'Longmeadow', on part of their orchard. For some years Laurence took an active part in the Glastonbury Festival which Rutland Boughton had started in the inauspicious year of 1914. There was no festival in the following three years but it was revived in 1918 and ran till 1927 when Boughton pulled out. Laurence's declining years must have been sad for him as too many of the leaders of thought had passed on and many of the causes for which he had fought had either been achieved or had ceased to be relevant. Clemence, who had certainly carried out his mother's dying wishes and 'looked after little Laurence', died in 1954. Laurence followed on 21st February 1959 and, after flirting with many religions, he had finally joined the Society of Friends, and was buried in the Quaker burial ground in the High Street, very close to the factory that his benefactor Roger Clark had guided for so many years.

Retracing Laurence's 1903 Walk

Jill Liddington, whose book 'Vanishing for the Vote' will be published in March, outlines her plans for re-enacting part of the Hereford to London walk that Laurence Housman undertook in 1903.

I thought I knew about Laurence's life in the 1900s. After all, I had read Elizabeth's Oakley's *Inseparable Siblings: a Portrait of Clemence & Laurence Housman*, Laurence's own autobiography and his inspiring propaganda in the suffragette press. And I had consulted Street Library's rich cache of Clemence's letters home to her brother in Kensington, vividly evoking her census evasion down in Dorset

Yet until I attended the Housman Weekend in 2012, I had little idea that Laurence had walked from Hereford to London in 1903. I was entranced by the 'Dear Mrs Ashbee' performance given by Celia Jones and Pamela Marshall, based upon his witty correspondence to Janet Ashbee - particularly his letters written on the tramp.

This enticing vision of Laurence's long-distance walk caught my imagination. Then last July I did a lengthy sponsored walk myself, from West Yorkshire down to London, raising £3,500 for the British Thyroid Foundation.

Laurence's elegantly gossipy tone

After I returned home, my feet kept itching to go walking again. Could I retrace Laurence's 1903 route? In October, I visited King's College Archive at Cambridge to read the Ashbee correspondence, and was entranced by Laurence's elegantly gossipy tone as he railed against speed, modernity and 'careering about in motor-cars'.

Determined to follow his walk, I approached the Housman Society: Jim Page responded encouragingly. Gradually the plan for a sponsored walk this summer took shape. But what charity would be closest to Laurence's heart: internationalist compassion or literary need? When Bob and Elizabeth Oakley suggested Book Aid I knew immediately this was an inspired choice.

Rather than starting in Hereford, the walk will depart from Bromsgrove on Friday 11 July, immediately after the Bromsgrove Society Summer School. Jim Page will start the walkers off with goodwill cheer. Laurence left frustratingly few clues about his exact route. We will nevertheless follow him slowly eastwards to Stratford, then south to the Ashbees's Chipping Camden, then stroll down through the heart of the Cotswolds to Oxford and the Thames Path.

Overnight Hospitality Offers?

My experience of last summer's walk was that considerable planning is required. So this *Newsletter* gives just advance notice. Nearer Easter, the walk will take shape: members living near the route will receive a letter inviting them to support locally (e.g. offer overnight hospitality to a walker).

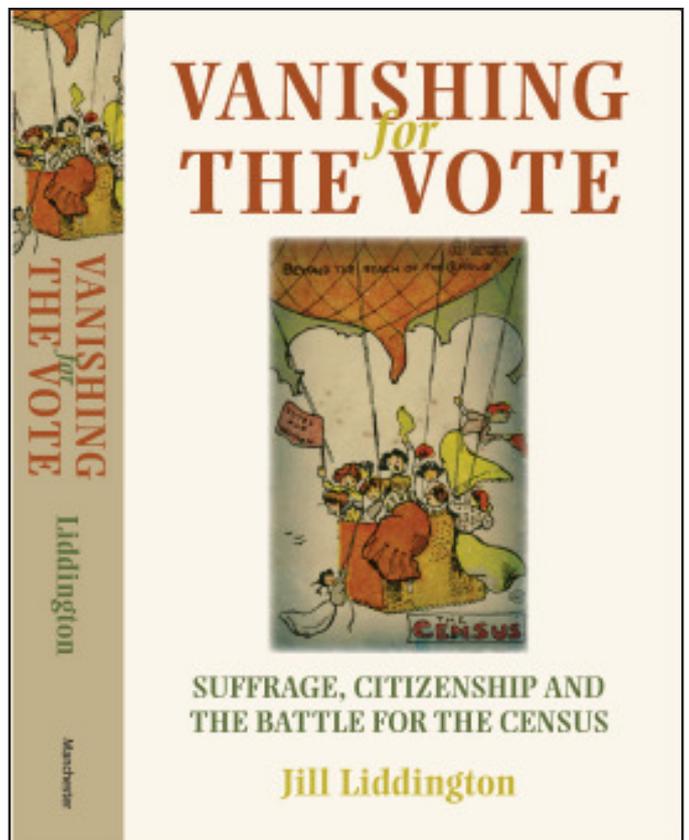
Full details of dates and footpaths will become available on

www.jliddington.org.uk after Easter. Members and their friends will be invited to join the walk for an hour, a day, an evening. Or along the route to enjoy a 'Dear Mrs Ashbee' performance or other readings from Laurence's writings.

'Books Change Lives'

To find out about how 'Books Change Lives', please go to www.bookaid.org We hope to be able to fund-raise for Book Aid's Children's Corners in public libraries appeal. Meanwhile, please pencil Laurence Housman's 1903 walk into your July diary. I look forward to meeting you then!

'Inseparable Siblings' is still available from the Society at £10.00 plus £2.50 postage. Orders to Sonia French, 18 College Road, Bromsgrove B60 2NE.



Published on 6 March 2014, *Vanishing for the Vote: suffrage, citizenship and the battle for the census*, celebrates Laurence and Clemence Housman's creative inspiration of the 1911 census boycott: civil disobedience by voteless women.

Paperback and Kindle both £16.99.

● See page 15 for details of Jill Liddington's talk on **Boycott of the 1911 Census** at the Bromsgrove Society Summer School.

The Growth of a Garden

With the Society's application submitted to English Heritage to list The Elbow Room at Longmeadow it is timely to reproduce this article written by Laurence Housman for the Spring issue of 'The Countryman' in 1938.

ANYONE who has made a garden out of a bare tract of field, and has planned and planted it, and then years later, when the planning and the planting have come to growth, has looked at the complete results, may well ask himself at the end of it, 'How did my garden grow?' – not merely in the growth of its plants and foliage, but in its attainment of the endearing individuality which, in the course of years, has come about, and made itself familiar to the owner of it.



Longmeadow in the 1930s

It is a fact well known to writers that often, when they start on a plot, they put something into it for which at the time they do not know the reason, and which afterwards becomes important. Sometimes it is an unthought-out touch, on which eventually the development of the plot hinges; and one wonders, was there in the subconscious mind a prophetic sense of what would be needed later, of which at the time of writing the author was unaware?

Something of the same sort happens in the planning of a garden, making one think that there is something working in the human mind, comparable to verbal inspiration.

T. E. Brown, the poet, writing of his garden, says that it makes him quite sure of the existence of God. 'Tis very sure,' he says, 'God walks in mine.' That statement no doubt referred mainly to the delectableness of it, when, as he says, 'the eve is cool'. But a similar conviction goes also with the planning of it; and though my own garden is a very simple one, and not a large one, it may not be uninteresting to record, for those interested in the planning of gardens, how some of my own planning came about.

I had taken an 'eligible site' in the corner of a field, and on that site of three-quarters of an acre I had, almost at haphazard, marked out the spot where the house was to stand. The house was built in my absence. I only came to see it when it was completed. The very position of the house started the planning of the garden; but what started it still more was a heap of refuse which the builders, in digging the foundations, had dumped in a place of their own choosing. That heap of refuse was inconveniently large for removing. I accepted it, and on it piled up a bank for the planting of shrubs and trees. It lay between the house and the road, and its position (decided not by me, but by the builders) decided also the boundaries of the lawn, the direction of two of the

paths, one straight, the other curving, and also the location (exactly right) of a screening hedge, running out from a chimney-breast toward the bank, to provide a delectable corner facing south, for afternoon tea.

With the placing of the lawn and its southward aspect, looking out over a beautiful field, crowned with elms, came the further consideration how best to possess that field and make it one's own, not as the proprietor, but as the beholder: and a sunk fence was the natural solution. And so, along

the southward border of the lawn, a sunk fence was dug, for its full length from end to end; and out of it came more refuse. As removal of that also would have been a difficulty, it was piled to make a further bank between the lawn and the road; thus, fortuitously, my garden was provided with two of its main features – two banks, the second one so high that four stone steps lead up to the top of it, and there along the inside of the hedge, a paved path from which one can look down delightfully to the road below with a sense of superiority which is curiously satisfying.

Then, as to the planning of the garden on the side of the house away from the road, there was a bay window, demanding a vista; and so, by an imposed choice, a broad path was run to the far end of the garden, almost, but not quite, central to its breadth. Straightway upon that, another outlook over the field was required, and another sunk fence was made, and other small piles of refuse provided for the



The Elbow Room in 2013

rudiments of a low embankment for rockplants.

I was so enamoured with the result that I was tempted to extend the sunk fence along the whole of the two sides, east and south. Luckily I had not enough money to pay for the labour, so instead, I planted a beech hedge. Comparative poverty impelled me to that alternative; but the result was perfect. The effect of the two sunk fences is greatly enhanced by the stretch of intervening hedge.

Subsidiary portions of the planning followed, and in every instance turns and corners were decided for me by things which were there before. A couple of ash trees in the hedge on the northern side decided where a seat was to be placed, and where a cross path was to run.

In all these things one felt that the planning of the garden had been shared by an unseen presence, the Garden-God. But intervention, divine or otherwise, became most marked when I started laying my own crazy pavements. I had any number of broken shapes of stone, provided by the strata underlying the shallow soil, and with these piled beside me, I started to pave. I had then a very dear old Quaker friend, since dead, who believed firmly in the divine intervention which I have suggested. After a week of work at my crazy pavement I said to her, 'Either there is no such thing as divine intervention, or else divine intervention enters into everything'. The reason for my saying this was that the pieces which came to hand and which fitted far exceeded in fitness the law of average; the coincidences came too thick and fast for me to count.



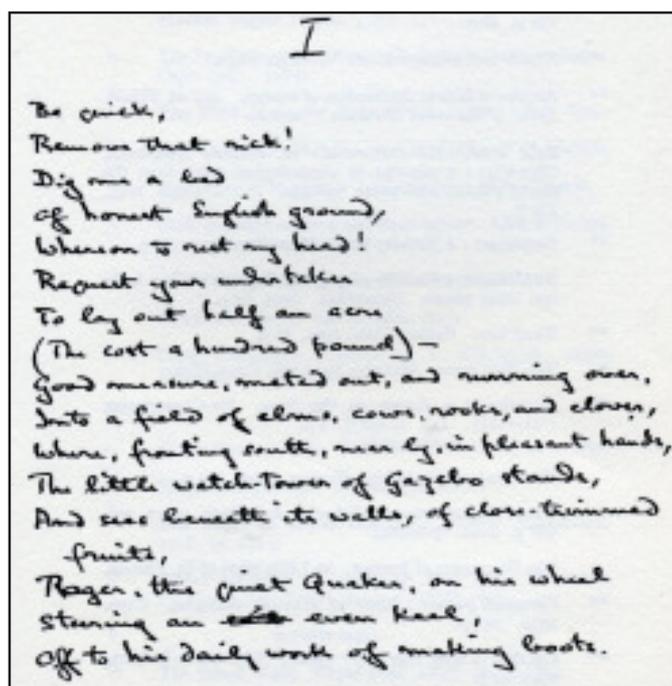
Detail from the front of Longmeadow

over to one who was my better; and she, with similar accompaniments of intervention such as I have described, has made it a garden as delightful and satisfying, not perhaps as anyone might wish, but anyway as we happen to wish ourselves.

Laurence and Street Library

To mark the centenary of Laurence Housman's birth in 1965 Roger and Sarah Clark presented to Street Library a catalogue of its collection of books, manuscripts and drawings, which was drawn up by Ivor Kemp for the Trustees of the library. It did not claim to be exhaustive but gives an indication of the extent of the collection. The Society has a few spare copies which we are happy to send to anyone interested. Ivor Kemp gave this assessment of Laurence in his introduction:

Laurence Housman has been called 'so brilliantly versatile that there is hardly a field of letters which he has left untried and unadorned.' Versatile he most certainly was, and distinguished not only as a writer, but as an artist and social reformer also. His literary output was immense, and his place in English literature would probably have been more significant had he permitted himself time to polish one work before launching into the next. Housman was conscious of this when, in a scene imagining his own death-bed, he causes himself to say: 'My brother used to say that I wrote faster than he could read. He wrote two books of poems – better than all mine put together.' Nonetheless, though Laurence was inclined to regard himself merely as 'the brother of the Shropshire Lad', he was very much more than that.

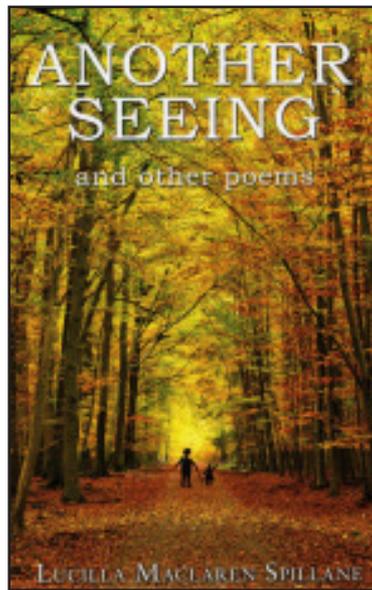


A sample of Laurence's handwriting from the Street Library catalogue

Poetry from an Unfamiliar Direction

Andrew Maund reviews “*Another Seeing and Other Poems*”, a book of poetry by member Lucilla Maclaren Spillane, currently living in Kilmactranny in Ireland.

Lucilla Maclaren Spillane’s collection of poetry, “*Another Seeing and Other Poems*” echoes the complex mix of influences, including Housman, that formed her own literary education and brings with it myriad references to the hardships that were part of that learning. She writes from personal experience with extraordinarily moving effect; poems such as *The Careless Neurologist* and *Seizures* betray a poignant but whimsical viewpoint wrought from her own suffering. Yet it also develops an engaging sense of the delight and wonder that are to be found in the world around us and in its representation in poetry. Poetry sees the familiar from an unfamiliar direction and the title poem of the collection makes it clear that this is our poet’s vision too.



more effectively than in *Around a Canyon’s Bend*, although this poem also shows the Celtic influence in its link to the magic and mystery of woods and forests, also to be found in *Sestina of the Forest of Shin* and the totally engaging freedom of *The Top of the World*. By contrast, that natural voice is also to be found in the poems that deal with the sordid horror of modern life, particularly in the tragedy of *A Mother’s Life Lost*.

All great literature is in some way self-reflexive, and we find this in *Poem Building* and *The Pathway*, where the craft of writing poetry is disguised in the apparently organic growth from the “ant’s nest” of the mind, which sees thoughts “spill onto paper. / A line is born”. In *The Pathway* in particular, once again all the senses have their part to

Robert Frost wrote that poetry is, “never a put-up job... It begins as a lump in the throat, a sense of wrong, a homesickness, a loneliness.” All of these features are to be found in Maclaren Spillane’s poetry; for example the empathy for the disabled and the celebration of the other gifts that they possess is clear in *Another Seeing*, in the choice of the blind man to reply to the child’s open-eyed vision of the natural world. In his turn, the blind man hears, smells and touches the leaves and encourages us all as readers to use “ears, nose and hand” as we “know another seeing and knowing.” The repetition of that verb “to know” reveals for us what the poet can share: knowledge and understanding, earned through fearsome experience but continuing, as the participle form makes clear.

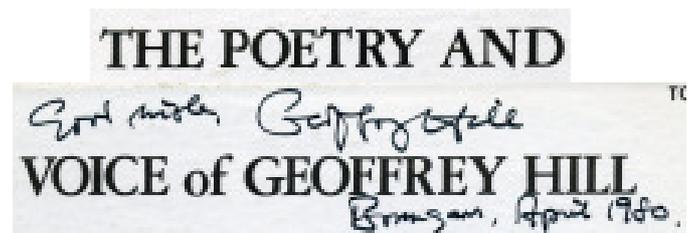
This poem, as others, is written as a dialogue and in this we find another comparison between Maclaren Spillane and Frost. Both use the tension in the apparent contradiction of the freedom of natural speech and its presentation in a poetic, metrical form. According to Frost, “the self-imposed restrictions of meter in form and of coherence in content” work to a poet’s advantage; they liberate him from the experimentalist’s burden – the perpetual search for new forms and alternative structures. This is certainly true of Maclaren Spillane’s poetry; her use of the triplet form, for instance, explores in a familiar form both childish pleasure and awe and the deeper insight that adult perception brings. Throughout the poetry we also find a joy in the sound of words themselves, particularly in *A Celtic Odyssey* and *Autumn Berries*, and even in the magic of a single repeated word or phrase in poems such as *Flying Over Wisconsin* and *Scuttling Spiders*.

Her poetry captures the sound and rhythm of the natural voice most effectively. Nowhere is this natural voice captured

play, leading us to “a place we learn to hope for, / where no mortals ever go.” Seldom has the experience of reading poetry been portrayed with such apparent simplicity, yet with such profound insight.

Another pathway features in what is my own particular favourite from this collection, the exquisitely poised *Listening for Silence*. This is another poem of apparent contradiction in its title, but which, like so many other of Maclaren Spillane’s poems, also contains extraordinary beauty. It appeals once again to the full range of senses and captures the convergence of the natural world and man’s influence upon it, which is so much a part of all the writing, where the faintest of signs “tells where Man has been”. The range of poetic styles, registers and tones in this collection is extraordinary, but every page is a new delight.

Another Seeing and Other Poems by Lucilla Maclaren Spillane. Matador - £9.99. ISBN 978-1-78306-069-6.



Bromsgrove Bargain

Caedmon issued an LP of Geoffrey Hill’s poetry in 1979 (that included *Mercian Hymns I-XXX*). This autographed copy was bought at a local charity shop at a bargain price!

Why Read Housman?

Some thoughts on his poetry

Darrell Sutton explains the reasons he finds delight and enjoyment in the writings of A. E. Housman.

Poetry is an art form. We do well to recognise it as such. Much more so now since the procedure for interpreting and analysing the “art” is not a step below the designation, “scientific.” In the hands of gifted persons a reader can find his or herself dancing atop mountains, traipsing narrow trails or he or she may be carried into the spectacular miniature worlds envisioned by conceptually broadminded poets. Verbal artists like these are rare, though. From time to time a generation yields a few vocal performers whose oracular bent spills over on to the page. This may be one of the reasons so many persons delighted in and continue to relish the exceptional tastes of *A Shropshire Lad* and *Last Poems* and the posthumously published, *More Poems*.

Housman could write of sensual love in other than sensual ways because he could conceptualise love in graceful language. There was nothing abstract about his intangible ideas. In his world lovers died: they were swallowed by the grave. But not before the reader learned that two people lying together produce more heat than two people lying apart. Note the language of the below poem.

Last Poems XXVI

The half-moon westers low, my love,
And the wind brings up the rain;
And wide apart lie we, my love,
And seas between the twain.

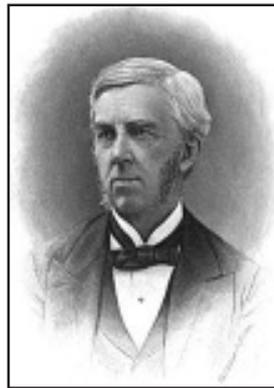
I know not if it rains, my love,
In the land where you do lie;
And oh, so sound you sleep, my love,
You know no more than I.

One finds in the above verses descriptions of the moon, wind, rain and seas. It is not obvious if the much-loved is nearby; nor is the distance between them known. Yet the lover seems to be a foreigner to the “land” or abode of the beloved. This is emphasized strikingly by the phrase “I know not.” Of what distant homeland could one speak in which rainfall is uncertain? One knows not if this is a brief infatuation, brought on by a first-sight attraction, or, if it hints at a longer, intense relationship which is not irreconcilable, yet imposes upon them a separation, and has them dwelling apart in deserted places that lack the precipitation of affection and intimacy.

Is the beloved deceased or sleeping; or is there a more allusive connection to the beloved’s affairs in a world of dreams: sound asleep, but busied by the activities in reverie? This is a deeply personal poem. The instances of “my love” prove

it. So clear in its arrangement; the words are too broad to be confined. One wonders if the beloved has taken ill and is unable to recall the visage of his or her lover. “You know no more than I” may imply some form of mental incapacity. It hurts, but it is true and there is nothing the poet can do about it. So he puts down his pen. The alliteration with ‘l’ is sharp; the use of ‘w’ in the four words, “wester”, “wind”, “wide” and “where” tells a story of its own, speaking of the movement of the wind from the west, eastward in its all-embracing expanse. It is inescapable wherever one lives.

The poems in which themes of unity are ensconced portray characters in vivid ways, until the reader tumbles line after line downward into the world of separated lovers and friends. Although uncomplicated in their unusual forms Housman did not struggle at the limits of sensibility and technique. No irremediable disparity of maturity can be seen in the contrasts of *A Shropshire Lad* or *Last Poems*.



Oliver Wendell Holmes

Wherefore the first reason I put forward for reading him is simple: a somber passion and a distinct sobriety are evoked in the reading aloud of Housman’s poetry. He was a man of his times. And in the pre-technology worlds of him and his contemporaries there do seem to be those who saw life and described it in graver terms. Oliver Wendell Holmes (1809-1894)¹ wrote the kind of verse which, likewise appears to have been soaked in those grim waters from which

Housman retrieved many of his own. Of the 48 lines in *To My Readers*, Holmes says in lines 33-36:

Caged in the poet’s lonely heart,
Love wastes unheard its tenderest tone;
The soul that sings must dwell apart,
Its inward melodies unknown,

Earlier in line five Holmes speaks of “those ruder songs.” He clearly understood the bardic elements of poetry: sung in moments of revelry, tranquility, or in moments when one’s pulsating heart ails. Reading it aloud, with good timing, the lines above could have been written by Housman or a host of other poets of the nineteenth century. The earnest core of the poems of that day may not brighten the corner where you presently dwell. But for readers in old and New England they portrayed themes that resonated in many hearts.

All poetry is not so. Poems are published in massive amounts

today. Slim and thick volumes of verse harass innocent bystanders daily while they loiter around books stands. There are actors and actresses, homemakers, musicians and even politicians who find ways to publish their amateur ideas for a waiting public. To say ‘amateur’ indeed sounds harsh, but it is not as bad as it seems, for an amateur is devoted to his or her subject. The existing line drawn between professional and amateur production is no longer as pronounced as it was in the pre-internet world. Today’s writer and reader are subjective to the extreme, one’s imagination is under great strain in the attempt to parse and understand the covert meanings deposited in all this mishmash of ambiguity.

Truth to tell, the skilful reader, whose mind has been trained to read slowly and carefully,² will find a certain amount of ease and enjoyment in Housman’s verse. As with Oliver Wendell Holmes, there is seriousness in his storied dramas, coercing all who long to be led along these sober pathways to find a resting place, to join in and march in step. Few, though, would feel the need to imitate the ancient Hebrew and complain that Housman’s way is too hard.³ His verse was still light enough to be consumed in ample portions. Reclining in an open field or by a window with book in-hand for an hour, a day or a week would pay dividends not easy to reap from reading other volumes. What is it that comes to mind as you meditate on *More Poems* XXVII where Housman declares

To stand up straight and tread the turning mill,
To lie flat and know nothing and be still,
Are the two trades of man; and which is worse
I know not, but I know that both are ill.

Insightful? – Yes. Do we uncover here a fleeting moment’s commentary on human life? – Maybe. But note the gravity as it builds line by line. ‘To live and toil or die and spoil, are two painful human vocations.’ Housman enquires whether a slog-weary life is any better than a cadaver’s stupour. His reasoning suggests both are linked to infirmity. These are un-amazing statements of his, and the verses overshadow the corpus of material he wrote and have been widely interpreted in various ways. The interpretations have not all been positive. Ezra Pound (1885-1972) was a sharp critic of Housman’s poems. As did others, he pointedly parodied Housman in his poem *Mr. Housman’s message*.

O woe, woe
People are born and die,
We all shall be dead pretty soon
Therefore let us act as if we were
Dead already...

Rambling on for another 10 lines, this *opuscule* is a dreadfully dour composition, emphasising the prophetic use of the term “woe” excessively. The idea of Housman shouting at the world with lamentable cries of ‘death’ needs reconfiguration. It looms large in many deliberations. It ought to be replaced by Kingsley Amis’ more subtle 1962 psalm *A.E.H.* To me Pound’s poem is more revealing of the critic than it is

Housman. It may not be confirmable to avow that Pound suffered vaguely in early years from the malady which later thoroughly afflicted his mind; but it is safe to pronounce the poem was made miserable by his judgments. Parody should strike a certain chord and leave the auditor with a specific tune, one which the parodied person would utter or sing. Pound’s poem displaces Housman’s voice and inserts his own in its place. Thus Housman was silenced.

With the unending faces of Housman expressing themselves through the verses of prolific humans, many of them being perceptive in their own way, one yearns to read Housman in a personal and intimate way: to gain a feel for the man, for his humanity, his scholarship and of how he understood his role as an artist. Housman is worth reading, if for no other reason than the opportunity to peer through his eyes at a seemingly diseased, Victorian world, and for that reason too, his verses still affect me favourably.

NOTES

1. He was the son of Calvinist minister Abiel Holmes (1767-1837) who was pastor of the First Church of Cambridge for 37 years and published the first attempt at an history of the American nation with his *Annals of America* (rev. ed. 1829). Oliver’s early environment was permeated by an evangelical sentiment he grew to disdain. He attended Philips Academy, Andover. He lost more of his Calvinist upbringing in the halls of Harvard (class of ‘1929’) then later he shuffled his feet between his love for poetry and his desire to be a lawyer at Dane Law school until he finally found his footing in a lengthy but distinguished medical career.
2. Alfred believed in his ability to compose and criticise poetry and said as much in a letter to his brother Laurence (see Burnett, *Letters*, p.80) in which Alfred, the poet/classical scholar, alludes to his interpretative skills and refers to himself as “such a prodigy of intelligence and good will...” This may be a bit of sarcasm.
3. I refer to the Biblical illustration of Israel’s repeated complaints to Moses in the wilderness of the difficulty of the journey to The Promised Land; cf. Ex. 15.24; 16.3; 17.3 et cetera.



Darrell Sutton

Darrell Sutton is an American Pastor and Biblicalist living in the state of Nebraska who enjoys writing about all aspects of the poetry and the classical papers of A.E. Housman. He is the Director of Semitica Language Academy for Exceptional Youth – a private tutorial, in which he offers instruction on classical languages, including Hebrew, Syriac, Arabic and ANE literature.

Vice President Nick Earle Dies

We are sad to record that the Reverend Nick Earle (1926-2014) has died. He was, with F.C. Horwood and C. Stafford Northcote, one of the first three Vice Presidents when The Housman Society was founded in 1973. As Headmaster of Bromsgrove School he was very supportive of the Society in its early days and maintained an active interest during his retirement in Dulwich. Those who went on the Society visit to Trinity College, Cambridge (N.F.E.'s alma mater) in 2002 will remember the precision and insight with which he conducted us on the tour of the college.

Fourteen years as Head of Bromsgrove School

In his 14 years as Headmaster of Bromsgrove School Nick transformed the School by introducing co-education and overseeing the smooth assimilation of girls into the School from the age of 8. There were major changes to boarding with Houses in the town brought onto the Campus and substantial development took place near the South Gate. The first purpose-built house for day and boarding girls was opened in 1981 and the sports facilities took a great leap forward with the building of the first sports hall and a new indoor heated swimming pool. Nick achieved a double first in Maths and Theology at Cambridge and the raising of academic standards at the school was always top of his agenda. He was an eloquent speaker and formidable preacher.

After Bromsgrove he returned Dulwich and taught some Mathematics and Philosophy at The College. He was an active member of the St Faith's team, which provides a wide range of educational, social and cultural activities for the residents of Dulwich and neighbouring parishes. At the funeral service there on 18th January his daughter Harriet captured the essence of her father in an address of much celebration and wit. She opened her address with the words, " 'Speak up, look up, shut up' – these were Dad's advice to me when I was speaking in public...." It must have struck a chord with many of his former pupils present at the funeral for there used to be a "Nick Earle Test" before anyone at the School was allowed to read in Chapel!

'What's Wrong with the Church?'

She told of Nick's time as a young curate in Bristol, New York and Whitechapel. In 1961 he wrote a Penguin Special *What's Wrong with the Church?*, and a *Study of the Church of England*, 'by a young Priest who asks whether the C. of E. in the 1960s is out-dated and living in the past'. He wrote other books on Logic and Maths and spoke at Speaker's Corner and on 'Thought for the Day'.

Our condolences go to his widow Ann and children Titus, Harriet and Charlotte.

Un P'tit Gars du Shropshire Recours au Poème

Writing from France Delia Morris tells us about 'Recours au poème', an online poetry magazine devoted entirely to poets and poetry including translations. It seems that Housman is at last becoming recognised and there will be another small edition of a choice of poems in the 'La Découverte collection' (yellow cover, cheap price) with an introduction by an unknown poet.

1887 – ASL I

(translated by André Ughetto)

De la Clef jusqu'au ciel le flambeau brille,
Clair l'ont vu les comtés,
Au nord et au sud revient le signal
Des flambeaux ranimés.

Regarde à gauche, à droite, les monts illuminés,
Entre eux s'allument les vallons,
Car c'est ce soir depuis cinquante ans
Que Dieu protège la Reine.

Lors, quand la flamme qu'ils ne voient pas s'exalte
Au-dessus du sol qu'ils foulaient,
Frères, souvenons-nous de nos amis
Qui ont remis leur œuvre à Dieu.

Vers les ciels sous lesquels se tissèrent leurs cœurs,
Vers les champs qui élevèrent leur courage,
Les sauveurs ne rentreront pas ce soir :
Eux-mêmes ne purent se sauver.

L'aube pointe en Asie sur les pierres tombales
Où se lisent des noms du Shropshire ;
Et le Nil étale sa crue
Près des morts que la Severn vit naître.

En temps de paix nous honorons par champs et villes
La Reine qu'ils servirent à la guerre,
Et par monts et vaux brûlons les flambeaux
Sur la terre pour laquelle ils périrent.

«Dieu garde la Reine», vivants nous chantons,
Et de cime en cime on l'entend ;
Avec nos voix vos voix résonnent,
Frères du Cinquante-troisième Régiment.

Oh, Dieu la gardera, soyez sans crainte :
Si vous restez hommes tels que naguère,
Si vos fils valent ceux de vos pères,
Oui, Dieu la Reine gardera.

The links to the site are as follows.

<<http://www.recoursapoeme.fr/>>

<<http://www.recoursapoeme.fr/alfred-edward-housman/1887>>

<<http://www.recoursapoeme.fr/po%C3%A8tes/alfred-edward-housman>>

David Edgar to give 'Name and Nature' Lecture

We are delighted to announce that the playwright David Edgar will be giving the Hay *Name and Nature of Poetry* Lecture on Wednesday 26 May when he will be exploring the poetry of plays, with illustrations ranging from Shakespeare to Sheridan, from Caryl Churchill and Howard Brenton to Oscar Wilde and Brian Friel.



David Edgar has had more than sixty of his plays published and performed on stage, radio and television around the world, making him one of the most prolific dramatists of the post-1960s generation in Great Britain. He was resident playwright at the

Birmingham Repertory Theatre in 1974-5 and has been a board member with them since 1985.

His plays include *Destiny*, *Nicholas Nickleby*, *Pentecost* and *Written on the Heart* for the RSC, and *The Shape of the Table*, *Albert Speer* and *Playing with Fire* for the National Theatre.

He has enjoyed a long-term association with the Royal Shakespeare Company since 1976, beginning with his play *Destiny*. He was the company's literary consultant from 1984 to 1988 and his plays have been directed by Trevor Nunn for the RSC and Peter Hall for the National Theatre.

Plays Performed Worldwide

His works have been performed worldwide and he has edited a book by playwrights on the art of play writing. His first operatic libretto, *The Bridge*, was performed as part of the Covent Garden Festival in 1998 and he is president of the Writers Guild of Great Britain, and a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature.

He founded Britain's first postgraduate course in playwriting studies at the University of Birmingham in 1989 and is the author of *How Plays Work*.

Housman's Latin Translations

A correspondent recently wrote via our website asking the following question:

I seem to remember (from seeing Stoppard's play some years' ago) that Housman made translations from Latin writers but I can't seem to find which translations he made. Whenever I've happened to see a translation of say Ovid or Virgil it's been translated by someone else. Have Housman's translations been published, do you know, or did he just translate a few poems for his own pleasure? (I had a copy of the programme from the Stoppard play and it showed comparisons of a translation of a poem from the Latin and Housman's was very lovely but the other one, supposedly from the same text, wasn't.)

This was passed on to David Butterfield to answer and this was his reply:

Dear Ms Wood,

Thank you for your query. Although Housman was extremely interested in translations of the ancient classics, and read (and reviewed) very many of them, his own published translations were limited to a very small number of texts. Only four translations were published – all as part of a larger collection – and only one of them is from the Latin, the rest being from the Greek:

Diffugere Nives (a translation of Horace *Odes* IV.7), first published in *The Quarto* for 1897 (p.95); reprinted in *The Trinity Magazine* III.2 for 1922 (p.37), *More Poems* of 1936 (V) and *Collected Poems* of 1939 (p.163).

In *Odes from the Greek Dramatists* (London, 1890), edited by Housman's friend Alfred W. Pollard, three translations by Housman are printed: from Aeschylus' *Seven Against Thebes* (16 lines, p.15); from Sophocles' *Oedipus Coloneus* (42 lines, pp.85-7); and from Euripides' *Alcestis* (44 lines, pp.109-11).

There survive in Housman's lecture notes (in Cambridge University Library) brief translations from various parts of Greek and, in particular, Latin authors (Lucan, Juvenal, Catullus, Martial, Plautus) but these were intended for exegesis and not for publication.

The Wrong Hardy

Too many members to name pointed out that the left-hand photograph in Stuart Hopkins' article on Housman and Hardy (September 2013 Newsletter, p.6) was in fact of Thomas Hardy not G H Hardy! Many apologies to both gentlemen and to members for the mistake, which was the editor's not the author's!

The Housman Society Book Exchange

Many commentators have stated over the years that A.E. Housman was one of those very rare and special individuals who achieved absolute prominence in two very different disciplines. Without doubt he was the greatest Latinist of the 19th and 20th Centuries and, at the end of his life, he was the world's most popular living poet.

Personally, *continues Peter Sisley*, I have always thought that he had another string to his bow for his prose writings always have the ability to send a shiver down my spine or put a smile on my face. And so when I recently discovered an article by Alan Massie in a 1980's *Daily Telegraph* which accorded with my thoughts I felt that I had to share a flavour of it in the Newsletter - "Yet, by chance, nature had endowed Housman with a third faculty of genius; he wrote English prose with an authority, euphony and wit unequalled in this century. Indeed I cannot think of anyone save Burke whose prose affords such delight irrespective of subject." In the current offerings of the Book Exchange may I suggest that thirty such delightful examples of Housman's *Selected Prose* as edited by John Carter is a treat not to be missed?

In the last Newsletter an extremely rare set of the first editions of Housman's editing of Manilius found a happy home with a Society member, which was for me the culmination of a seven year quest to obtain these five volumes which were published between 1903 and 1930. As I doubt that I have the discipline and energy to devote another seven years in duplicating this trick we are offering our remaining stock of individual first editions of Manilius at heavily discounted prices in the hope that it will assist members to complete their own runs of these rarities.

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 – many in the £5 to £10 range.

As always the items offered for sale on these pages 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 on telephone number 01299 841361 or facsimile 01299 841582 or e-mail at sisley.ladywood@talk21.com

SALES LIST – FEBRUARY 2014

Postage and Packing are additional to the prices quoted.

CARTER (John) and SCOTT (Joseph) CATALOGUE ON AN EXHIBITION ON THE CENTENARY OF HIS BIRTH. University College, London, 1959. First edition. 8vo. 35 pages. Green paper covers. Contains a preface by Carter and a biographical Introduction by Scott. A rare catalogue. Small spot to front cover therefore almost very good. £40

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. £30

CARTER (John), SPARROW (John) and WHITE (William). A.E. HOUSMAN – A BIBLIOGRAPHY. St. Paul's Bibliographies, Godalming, 1982. 8vo. 94 pages. An updated, revised and considerably enlarged version of the 1952 first edition. Fine. £25

FRASER (Claud Lovat). SIXTY-THREE UNPUBLISHED DESIGNS. The First Edition Club, London, No date (but 1924). First edition. 16mo. Unpaginated. These designs, intended for an illustrated edition of *A Shropshire Lad*, were rejected by Housman [I should look a fool if I allowed the book to appear with these decorations]. Holbrook Jackson relates the full story in his introduction. One of 500 numbered copies. Cloth backed pattern boards in a design by Fraser. Very good but for intrusive dedication.

together with

HOUSMAN (A.E.). A SHROPSHIRE LAD. The Hayloft Press, Birmingham, 1995. Landscape 8vo. 78 pages. With an introduction by Kelsey Thornton and illustrations by Claud Lovat Fraser. These 1920 decorations by Fraser here appear for the first and only time with the poems for which they were intended. One of 450 copies. Mint. £80

HABER (Tom Burns). THIRTY HOUSMAN LETTERS TO WITTER BYNNER. Alfred A. Knopf, New York, 1957. First edition. 8vo. Preface plus 36 pages. Beautiful decorative boards. Bynner was Poetry Editor of *McClures Magazine* which published extracts from *A Shropshire Lad* in the early years of the 20th Century. One of 700 copies. Fine. £45

HAWKINS (Maude M.). A.E. HOUSMAN: MAN BEHIND A MASK. Henry Regnery Company, Chicago, 1958. First edition (not published in the U.K.). 292 pages. The author's writing style and tendency to assumption has resulted in this book being regarded as an unreliable biography but Hawkins did spend much time with Laurence Housman in the book's preparation. Very good in similar dust jacket. £20

HOUSMAN (A.E.). M. MANILII ASTRONOMICON LIBER TERTIVS. Grant Richards Ltd., London, 1916. First edition. 8vo. 28 pages of introduction followed by 69 pages of text. Original blue boards with paper spine label. Extremely rare. Very good. £100

HOUSMAN (A.E.). M. MANILII ASTRONOMICON LIBER QVARTVS. Grant Richards Ltd., London, 1920. First edition. 8vo. 17 pages of introduction followed by 130 pages of text. Original blue boards with paper spine label. Extremely rare. Very good. £100

HOUSMAN (A.E.). LAST POEMS. Grant Richards Limited, London, 1922. First edition. 79 pages. Blue cloth in the cream dust jacket. The true first edition with the missing punctuation on page 52 which so annoyed Housman and led to his accusation that bibliophiles were "an idiotic class". Very good in the very good and scarce dust jacket showing minimal wear. £50

HOUSMAN (A.E.). M. MANILII ASTRONOMICON LIBER QVINTVS. The Richards Press, London, 1930. First edition. 8vo. 46 pages of introduction followed by 199 pages of text. Original blue boards with paper spine label. Extremely rare. Very good. £100

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

HOUSMAN (A.E.). THE CONFINES OF CRITICISM. THE CAMBRIDGE INAUGURAL 1911. Cambridge at the University Press, 1969. First edition. 12mo. 54 pages. Notes by John Carter. Green cloth in the dust jacket. Fine. £25

HOUSMAN (A.E.). A SHROPSHIRE LAD. The Tern Press, Market Drayton, 1990. 4to. Unpaginated. Green cloth covers. A beautiful limited edition, number 150 of 225 copies with wood engravings by Nicholas Parry of the Press. Fine, with the bookplates of Housman collector P.B. Morris. £65

HOUSMAN (A.E.). A SHROPSHIRE LAD. The Chantry Press, Leominster, 1991. 8vo. Unpaginated. Quarter leather. With an introduction by Norman Page and illustrations by Alison Dunworth. Number 17 of 50 copies. Fine, with the bookplate of Housman collector P.B. Morris. £50

HOUSMAN (Laurence). ALFRED EDWARD HOUSMAN'S "DE AMICITIA". The Little Rabbit Book Company, London, 1976. First edition. 8vo. 39pp. Laurence Housman's account of one aspect of his brother's life, written soon after Alfred's death and deposited at the British Museum in 1942, with the injunction that it remained sealed for twenty-five years. First published in Encounter Magazine in 1967, this unauthorised volume remains the only edition of the text in book form. A beautifully produced publication. One of 200 numbered copies. In fine condition.

together with

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. £85

HOUSMAN SOCIETY JOURNAL VOLUME ONE. Turner and Devereaux, London, 1974. Paper Covers. 56 pages. In fine condition other than the staples have rusted. Extremely rare. £20

HOUSMAN SOCIETY JOURNAL VOLUME TWO. Turner and Devereaux, London, 1975. Paper Covers. 63 pages. In fine condition other than the staples have rusted. Extremely rare. £20

HOUSMAN SOCIETY JOURNALS. A FULL SET. 1974 – 2013. 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-nine issues. The condition varies from Very Good to Mint. £180

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

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

LEGGETT (B.J.). THE POETIC ART OF A.E. HOUSMAN. University of Nebraska Press, 1978. First edition. 8vo. 161pp. Dark Green cloth. A study of the theory of Housman's poetry. Fine in a similar dust jacket. £30

MAAS (Henry). THE LETTERS OF A.E. HOUSMAN. Rupert Hart-Davis, London, 1971. First edition. 8vo. 458 pages. Red cloth with dust jacket. Very good indeed. £30

PUGH (John). BROMSGROVE AND THE HOUSMANS. The Housman Society, Bromsgrove, 1974. 178 pages plus 84 pages of appendix. First edition. Number 99 of 100 copies. Signed by the author. Mint in mint dust jacket. £80

ROBERTSON (Stephen). THE SHROPSHIRE RACKET. Sheed and Ward, London, 1937. First edition. 12mo. 76 pages. Brown cloth. Housman parodies, illustrated by Thomas Derrick. Very good condition in similar dust jacket. £25

ROME (G.E.). TRAVAILS WITH A SKELETON. THE LITERARY REMAINS OF ALFRED CODLIN. 16 pages. Paper covers. Housman parodies. The introduction invites the reader to decipher, if he can, the message contained within. Outpost Publications, Walton-on-Thames, 1975. Fine. £15

SKUTSCH (Otto). ALFRED EDWARD HOUSMAN 1859 – 1936. The University of London, The Athlone Press, 1960. First edition. 14pp. Blue paper wrappers. The text of an address delivered at University College to celebrate the anniversary of Housman's birth. Very good. £20

WITHERS (Percy). A BURIED LIFE. Jonathan Cape, London, 1940. First edition. 133 pages. Blue cloth missing the dust jacket. Withers first met Housman in 1917 at Cambridge and this book records their association over the next twenty years. This book, rare in its own right, contains a manuscript dedication by the author. £60

WANTS LIST

The Housman Society Newsletters recommenced in February 1998 with issue number 7 after a gap of 19 years. Does anyone have issues 1 to 6? Name your price. Please contact Peter Sisley if you can help.

“Highly Important Sale” of the late Mrs Housman in 1883

In researching a book she is writing on Finstall (a village on the outskirts of Bromsgrove) Jennie McGregor-Smith came upon particulars of a sale of “Highly-important Small Freehold Estates and Lands” to be held on Wednesday June 13th 1883 at The Golden Cross Hotel, Bromsgrove at “four for five o’clock in the afternoon”. Mr Cotton had been favoured with instructions from the Representatives of the late Mrs Housman.

MR. COTTON
Has been favoured with instructions from the REPRESENTATIVES of the late MRS. HOUSMAN,
TO SELL THESE ESTATES BY AUCTION.

She was the widow of Reverend Thomas Housman, Vicar of Catshill, whom she had married in 1822, Thomas having died in 1870. There were ten Lots in Fockbury, Yarnold Lane, Finch End and Stoke Cross and Yielding Tree in Chaddesley Corbett.

Lot 1 included “All that sound and elevated CORNER PLECK of rich old TURF LAND, known as ‘Waterson’s Close’, situate at the junction of the Roads near ‘The Clock House’, bounded by lands of J.F. Rotton, Esq., and the Public Roads, and containing 1A. 3R, 19P or thereabouts.”

Lot 5 and 6 in Yarnold Lane “commanded extensive and magnificent views of the surrounding countryside”.

The whole sale comprised over 210 acres.



*‘From yon far country’ by Sarah Morgans
Triptych in Bromsgrove School’s Hospitality Suite*

Miscellanea

- Housman Society members Julian Hunt and Andrew Maund will be presenting sessions on **William Shenstone, Poet and Landscape Gardener** on 8 July at the Bromsgrove Society’s Summer School. Jill Liddington is speaking about Laurence Housman and the **Boycott of the 1911 Census** on 10 July. Also see details of her re-enacting of Laurence Housman’s walk on page 2.

- The Society has put in an application to English Heritage for the **listing of Laurence Housman’s Elbow Room** at his Street home, Longmeadow, and plans are afoot for a Blue Plaque to be placed on Longmeadow, his home in Street for the last 35 years of his life.

- A forthcoming exhibition at the De La Warr Pavilion in Bexhill is entitled ***I Cheer a Dead Man’s Sweetheart*** and is an exploration of painting in Britain today, presenting the recent work of twenty-one living artists whose practices span six decades. It will open on Saturday 15 March and run to Sunday 29 June 2014. Interestingly the following explanation of the title is given: “*I Cheer a Dead Man’s Sweetheart* is taken from *Is My Team Ploughing*, one of sixty-three poems in *The Shropshire Lad* by A. E. Housman. It is an allegory for the unsentimentally eclectic nature of contemporary painting practice. The poem is a conversation between a dead man and his still living friend who is now with the girlfriend he left behind. First published in 1896, *A Shropshire Lad* became very popular during World War One.”

- The **renovations at Housman Hall** have been continuing apace and are now moving into a new phase during which pupils will be moving into the first newly built wing after the February half term. After that, one of the old wings will be demolished and the second new wing built in its place; this is due to be completed by October 2014. In recent weeks the builders, while constructing the crane pad at Housman Hall, have discovered old flagstones buried a metre below ground level in front of the listed wall. Work has stopped and Archaeology Worcestershire are going to come and see if there is any significance to the find.

- The Living Literature Society presented the one man show, ***Take Desire Away***, in the Housman Room at UCL on 22 September. With some simple props and readings from Housman’s letters and poetry Mansell David, whose physical likeness to A.E.H. was strong, created an immediate rapport with the audience. The story he told centred on Housman’s friendship with Moses Jackson, and in exploring the subtexts of this through the poems published after his death a moving portrayal of the dilemmas Housman faced was drawn.

- The **photographs in this Newsletter** do not reproduced very well but, if you look at them on the internet (through our website) they look very good in colour.

Unveiling of the Restored John Adams Memorial

Just 155 years after the John Adams Memorial had been erected, some fifty people who had been involved in one way or another gathered on 1st November to celebrate its restoration.

The committee driving this project was made up of representatives from many Bromsgrove organisations and Chairman of the group, Jim Page, thanked them all for their part in completing this project successfully. But the person without whom the whole restoration would not have



*Jennie McGregor-Smith with Helen Jones, Civic
Head of Bromsgrove Council*

happened is Jennie McGregor-Smith and her skills in form-filling and general perseverance had been impressive indeed.

To mark the occasion she planted a tree to commemorate this occasion. Not any old tree but a Golden Dawyck Beech, which is a small deciduous tree with bright golden-yellow young foliage that becomes yellow-green in summer and yellow and brown in autumn.

In thanking The Heritage Lottery Fund for its generous grant which made the whole project possible Jim Page remarked what an amazing organisation it was and how the difference it has made to this country's heritage is inestimable.

The project will be completed later this year when there will be a Tree Trail and Cemetery Walk which will take visitors on a tour of the many interesting trees in the cemetery and of graves of Bromsgrovians who made their mark on the town.

Works titled after Housman

*Following the piece on page 5 of the September 2013
Newsletter Humphrey Clucas writes:*

"I refer to Jim Page's request in the last Newsletter for book, film and play titles drawn from A.E.H., in addition to those on the Wikipedia list. I have on my shelves two cricket books by Dudley Carew: *England Over* (1927) and *To The Wicket* (1946). Each contains as epigraph the lines from which its title is taken; unfortunately, *To The Wicket* states that those lines are from *The Shropshire Lad* – in spite of the fact that my copy is of the 'Revised and Reprinted' edition of 1950, the second such revision. Both books are very readable – if county cricket of yesteryear is your thing.

There also is *To the Wood No More* by Ernest Raymond, a novel published in 1954. Of course it's one letter short, and my other reservation is that the epigraph is not A.E.H. but 'Nous n'irons plus aux bois, les lauriers sont coupés.' The 'Wood' of the title is St John's Wood, home of Lords Cricket ground, and there's a cricket chapter which, with the title, drew me to the book in the first place. The chapter concerns a county game between Middlesex and Gloucestershire; the year can be established, from internal evidence, as 1907. I looked up the real Middlesex-Gloucestershire game for that year; though the novel mentions some of the players who took part, it includes others who did not, and the real game bears little resemblance to the fictional one, which features the juvenile lead as a fast bowler.

Dudley Carew also published two A.E.H.-titled novels: *The Son of Grief* (1936) and *The Taken Town* (1947). The first I read years ago, though I do not possess a copy; of the second I know nothing. Is it improper to mention my own *Through Time and Place to Roam* (1995), a copy of which is advertised in your last Book Exchange list?"

Two Limericks from Roy Payne

A.E. Housman's lugubrious verse
Causes serious poets to curse.
For its range is so slight;
Its rhymes rather trite,
And it's popular which is far worse!



To Housman's memorial stone
Comes a young Shropshire lad on his own,
To escape Ludlow fair;
Breathe a far purer air;
And chat on his portable phone.

A Building, a Stone, a Name, a Field and a Farmer

Bromsgrove resident John Arrand, who is researching the life of Isaiah Burnell, Bromsgrove School's Director of Music from 1907 to 1932, contributes this piece after finding some strange discrepancies in the wording of Housman's inscription on Kyteless – and of the spelling of that name.

The Building is of course, the one in Bromsgrove School that is known as Kyteless. As we approach 8th June 2014, the centenary of The Building's official opening, I reflect on a couple of enigmas from its history.

The Stone

The Stone is the Foundation Stone of the Building. Following my request for an English translation of the inscription Jim Page introduced me to an apparent paradox. Jeremy Bourne writing in the Housman Society Journal Vol 20 (1994) says: "A curious anomaly has emerged in a Latin dedication drawn up by A.E.H. In 1913, he was invited, in his capacity of Professor of Latin and distinguished Old Boy, to write the dedication for the foundation stone of the soon-to-be-opened academic block at Bromsgrove School, known as Kyteless.



The report of the ceremony in "The Bromsgrovian" says: "At the time the only sign of building operations was the foundation stone standing upon a small brick pedestal a few feet above the ground. The excavations to receive the foundations had not been begun, and indeed were hardly even marked out". The report reproduces all 5 verses of Hartley's poem that were sung at the ceremony but does not contain any mention of an inscription upon The Stone,

neither does it mention Housman.

It seems very strange that the report should reproduce in full 30 lines of a poem by the relatively "ordinary" Old Bromsgrovian Hartley, yet totally ignore a mere six lines of Inscription written by the eminent Bromsgrovian Professor Housman, carved upon the focal point of the ceremony. My interpretation of all of the above is that there is no paradox. At the time of the ceremony, there was no inscription. The Stone was not ready, neither were the foundations and the ceremony was no more than just a gesture. The inscription was added later when the appropriate holes had been dug in the ground and by which time Lyttelton was dead.

The Name, the Field and the Farmer

The plaque on the wall of The Building says "Mr Kyteless farmed all of the land.....". Consequently I was confused when, upon reading in the *Bromsgrove Messenger* the account of the opening ceremony, I noticed that the spelling, Kiteless, was different. This different spelling also appears in early editions of "The Bromsgrovian". The local paper of the time reports that the Council is discussing proposals for expansion of the School and its effect on footpaths. They refer to "paths through Kiteless", "the field called Kiteless", "footpaths in Kiteless" and "the field known as Kiteless".

In the light of this, it seems likely that The Building was named after The Field. In 1926 a Bromsgrove resident asked about the origin of the quaint name "Kiteless". Of several plausible suggestions, none mentioned a Farmer. It is of course still possible that The Field was named after The Farmer, in which case he would have been Mr Kiteless. It therefore seems that the plaque is incorrect when it refers to Mr Kyteless. The "new" spelling seems to originate, probably as a typographical error, in a letter from the School to Bromsgrove Council in 1927. If it were up to me – which it isn't and it's not my business – I think that I'd try to revert to the original spelling. But sometimes I'm a pedantic old devil.....



In quoting the words on the plaque in *Bromsgrove School Through Four Centuries*, H.E.M. Icely goes on to say, "The death of many another of that day's company was not long after to be mourned."

The translation reads: "This foundation stone of a house destined to remain for many centuries of men was placed on June 20th 1913 by Alfred Lyttelton whom mortality snatched from his friends, family and fatherland after fifteen days."

How could Professor Housman have known that the Hon. Alfred Lyttelton was to die fifteen days AFTER the ceremony of laying this foundation stone? There is a curious paradox here.

My Interpretation

Lyttelton went to Eton and Cambridge so presumably he knew Latin. To my mind it seems highly unlikely that he would have, without demur, laid a stone that predicted his death a couple of weeks hence.

Variety in Housman-inspired Events

From folksong in Bromsgrove to art song in Ludlow there is a rich variety of events being promoted this summer

In Bromsgrove.....

Folksinger Polly Bolton, broadcaster Michael Collie and Housman Cup winner Emily Collie will be giving a portrait of A.E. Housman through his poetry, letters and folksong settings as part of the Bromsgrove Festival on Sunday 6 July at Artrix in Bromsgrove. Under the title '**A Bromsgrove Lad**' the programme will explain how A.E.H. did not come from Shropshire and never lived there, yet from his early years as a teenager he was drawn to the Shropshire hills that were so visible on the western horizon, and as the sadnesses that beset his life increased, Shropshire became his 'land of lost content'.

Polly Bolton created quite a stir in 1996 when her Band issued a CD in which she sang music that two of her colleagues, John Shepherd and Steve Dunachie, had written setting Housman's poetry as folksongs. The effectiveness of these were immediately realised and it will be a real pleasure to be able to hear these again.

In Housman Hall.....

Housman Society members Julian Hunt, Andrew Maund, Elizabeth Oakley and Jill Liddington will be active at the **Bromsgrove Society's Summer School** next July. Julian Hunt and Andrew Maund will be presenting a day on William Shenstone, Poet and Landscape Gardener on 8 July. Jill Liddington and Elizabeth Oakley participate in a day on 'Women's Suffrage in Bromsgrove' on 10th July. Jill will be speaking about Laurence Housman and the Suffragette Boycott of the 1911 Census in the morning and is followed by Elizabeth talking on " 'Separate Spheres' versus 'Votes for Women'. Other topics in this three day event include 'Bromsgrove and the Great War', and 'Bromsgrove and the Gunpowder Plot'.

In Gerrards Cross.....

Gerrards Cross Summer School is a well organised affair now in its 20th year and Julian Hunt will be running a course on A.E. Housman on **Thursday 7 August 2014** at the Memorial Centre. By examining the contradictions in A.E.H.'s life – the leading classical scholar of his day, yet better known as the author of 'A Shropshire Lad', a perfect evocation of lost love and a vanishing English landscape, Julian Hunt will explain even to those familiar with his 'blue remembered hills' that Housman was born and raised not in Shropshire, but in Bromsgrove in Worcestershire.

This course shows how the poet was shaped by the early death of his mother, the financial failure of his father, and above all, by his hopeless attachment to a fellow student at Oxford.

In Ludlow.....

Stephen Varcoe's 'Soldiers Marching all to die' programme is eagerly anticipated as he has been one of Britain's foremost baritones for over thirty years and in recent years has made a speciality of Weekends at his home in Suffolk when themed subjects have attracted both student and mature singers from far and wide. He has over 150 CDs to his name and his recordings of English Song in the early days of the CD set a standard for successive interpreters to follow.

His concert in **St Laurence's, Ludlow on Monday, 16 June 2014**, will commemorate the centenary of the Great War, and will perform a programme of song featuring settings of A.E. Housman by Butterworth, Bax, Somervell, Moeran and Armstrong Gibbs, plus settings of Rupert Brooke and Siegfried Sassoon by Moeran, Gurney, Britten and Grainger. Stephen Varcoe will be accompanied by Christina Lawrie.



TICKETS: £14 central front nave unreserved; £10 rear nave unreserved. Tickets available in advance from 1 April 2014. Please send an s.a.e. and cheque for the relevant amount (stating numbers of tickets required for front or rear nave) made payable to "Ludlow PCC Arts" to: The Ticket Secretary, Arts@St Laurence, The Parish Office, 2 College Street, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1AN

Further information from Ludlow based Housman Society member Jane Allsopp-Caulcott: admin@janeallsopp.co.uk

In Much Wenlock.....

The Much Wenlock Poetry Festival has an evening in the Methodist Church, King Street on **26th April 2014** devoted to '**Shropshire War Poets**': A.E. Housman, Wilfred Owen & Mary Webb to mark the centenary of the start of the First World War. Gladys Mary Coles interweaves the lives of the three poets with their war poetry. She brings new and fascinating insights into their links with each other and with Shropshire. Sam Gray of the Wilfred Owen Association reads the poetry of Housman and Owen.

The Festival runs from Friday 25th to Sunday 27th April and has a packed programme of over 80 events.

Forthcoming Events

Tuesday 11 March 2014, 7.30pm

PLEASE NOTE CHANGE OF DATE

80 New Road, Bromsgrove B60 2LA

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The meeting - Notice is enclosed with this mailing - 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. *Please indicate on the enclosed form, or e-mail <jimpage@btinternet.com>, if you intend coming.*

Thursday 20 March 2014, 4.00-6.30pm

Artrix, Slideslow Drive (off A38), Bromsgrove B60 1AX

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 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.*

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 Bromsgrove School's Old Chapel, 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. *Please indicate on the form if you intend coming.*

Saturday 26th April 2014 1.30pm

Methodist Church, King Street, Much Wenlock TF13 6BL

SHROPSHIRE WAR POETS

Marking the centenary of the start of World War I, Gladys Mary Coles interweaves the lives of A.E. Housman, Wilfred Owen and Mary Webb with their war poetry. She brings new and fascinating insights into their links with each other and with Shropshire. Part of the Much Wenlock Poetry Festival.

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 which was outlined in the September Newsletter. The tour will be preceded by coffee and followed by lunch in The Assembly Rooms. *Please indicate on the form if you intend coming.*

Wednesday 28 May 2014, 5.30pm

The Hay Festival of Literature

THE HOUSMAN LECTURE

The Name and Nature of Poetry

David Edgar

With illustrations ranging from Shakespeare to Sheridan, from Caryl Churchill and Howard Brenton to Oscar Wilde and Brian Friel, playwright David Edgar explores the poetry of plays. The lecture will be followed by a supper – pay on the day – in the Sponsors marquee, to which members are cordially invited. *Please indicate on the form if you intend coming.*

Monday, 16 June 2014. 7.30pm

St Laurence's, Ludlow

STEPHEN VARCOE

Accompanied by Christina Lawrie the celebrated baritone commemorates the centenary of the Great War with a programme of song featuring Housman settings by Butterworth, Bax, Somervell, Moeran and Armstrong Gibbs and settings of Rupert Brooke and Siegfried Sassoon by Moeran, Gurney, Britten and Grainger. *See page 15 for booking details.*

Sunday 6 July 2014, 7.30pm

Artrix, Slideslow Drive (off A38), Bromsgrove B60 1AX

A.E. HOUSMAN – A BROMSGROVE LAD

Promoted by The Housman Society as part of Bromsgrove Festival
Polly Bolton and her Band with Michael Collie (narrator) and Emily Collie (reader) tell the Housman story from a Bromsgrove perspective. Tickets £10.00 (Students £3.00) from Artrix Box Office - 01527 577330 or via Artrix website.

Thursday 10 July 2014

Housman Hall, Kidderminster Road, Bromsgrove 10.00am

WOMAN'S SUFFRAGE

Jill Liddington and Elizabeth Oakley participate in a day on 'Woman's Suffrage in Bromsgrove' as part of **Bromsgrove Society's Summer School**. Elizabeth will be talking at 10.00am on "'Separate Spheres' versus 'Votes for Women'" and Jill will follow at 11.35 talking about Laurence Housman and the Suffragette Boycott of the 1911 Census.

Thursday 7 August 2014

Memorial Centre, Gerrards Cross

AN INTRODUCTION TO A.E. HOUSMAN

Julian Hunt will be running a course on A.E. Housman at the well organised Gerrards Cross Summer School, now in its 20th year. Lunch, lively company and a limit of 25 students. Full details will appear on the Gerrards Cross Summer School website: www.gerrardscrosssummerschool.co.uk

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