



# NEWSLETTER

September 2012

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## Michael Berkeley on 'The Music of Loss' at the Hay Festival

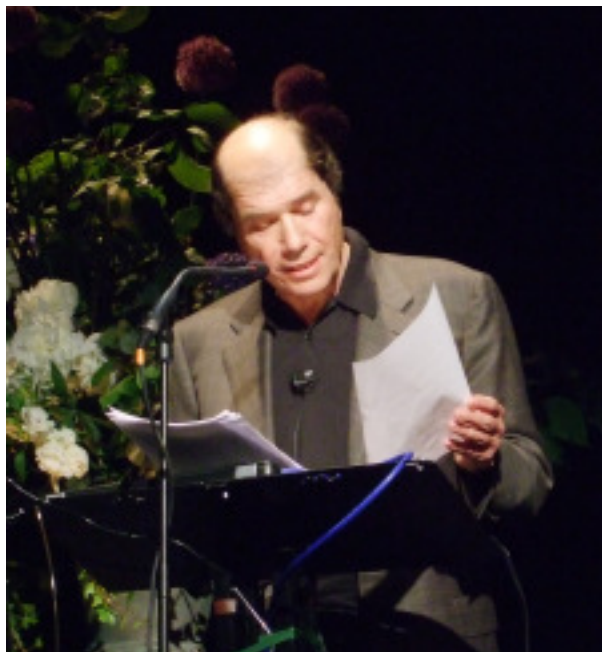
*Andrew Maund reports on Michael Berkeley's Name and Nature of Poetry lecture given at this year's Hay Festival of Literature on 6th June.*

Our lecturer this year is best known by many for his Radio 3 programme, *Private Passions* – described by Ian McEwan as “...the best programme on radio.” This proved very apt, since there was much in this moving and thought-provoking lecture about passion. Indeed, Michael Berkeley explained as he began that the subject of his lecture would be love and loss and gave it the subtitle, ‘The Music of Loss’ – a powerful description of Housman’s work.

After recalling Housman’s own disclaimer from the 1933 original lecture that he would have to posit ideas with a degree of certainty, our lecturer struck a comparison between Housman and his own father, Lennox Berkeley, who was, he suggested, a Housman-like character. His father’s work and his life would continue to feature elsewhere in the lecture.

Berkeley then spoke of a recurring dream, common to many of us; this consisted of a sense of never quite arriving. Like Sisyphus, the yearning for completion was never satisfied. He suggested that there was something in human nature that made it destined to constant restlessness and a yearning for the unattainable. He quoted Woody Allen’s assertion that “...to love is to suffer...” and remarked that, while animals act rather than think about acting, as human beings we are riddled with contradictions and tortured with thought.

For some, religion is the answer, in part, for this restlessness. For others it is the creative and performing arts – an “unknowingness” or the irritant that produces the pearl. With reference to other writers, Berkeley portrayed Housman’s creative engine as fuelled by the emotional turmoil which



resulted from the contrast of his quiet but muscular intellect and his powerful, yearning emotions.

Berkeley reminded us that the Greek word “mania” has been developed in English to describe just the sort of obsession felt by Housman. In the dual life of the scholar poet, the Classical skeleton supported the Romantic flesh. Like the prisoners emerging into the light in Beethoven’s *Fidelio*, the revelation of life is the climax towards which so much art aims, but it almost always has a quality of abstraction, be it through meditation, dance or music.

But, Berkeley asserted, no creative artist is truly innovative, just as

there is no such thing as total silence from which sound might then emerge. He reminded us how recording technicians always record “atmosphere”, the natural silence of the space in which the recording is to be made. Silence is crucial, like space in a theatre; silence and space represent possibility. He then established the key difference, in his mind, between words and music. Words anchor us: music leaves us floating free.

It is clear to Berkeley from most of the choices made by his guests on *Private Passions* that our reasons for such choices are often fundamentally cathartic, relating the suffering of others to ourselves at a safe distance. Music and poetry give us an insight, a clue as to why we are here: a form of communion. In relative health, we choose to consider the abyss. Music provides an insight into the inner psyche and the emotional history. Berkeley reminded us that, with *Private Passions*, the focus is primarily upon the music, differentiating it from *Desert Island Discs*, which is more obviously a life story.

Turning specifically to Housman, Berkeley next suggested

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that A.E.H. suffered from an emotional “lack” rather than a “loss”; these two forms of suffering are worlds apart. He then read, quite beautifully, MP XXXI, “Because I liked you better”, and followed this with his father’s musical setting of the poem, referring to his father’s loss of his lover, Benjamin Britten. He continued to give a fascinating insight into the question of musical settings, quoting Ian Venables’ description of the simplicity of Housman as “a trap” and reminding us that Britten avoided setting any of Housman’s poetry to



*Michael Berkeley and Clive Fieth in conversation at supper after the lecture*

music. He considered his own and his father’s settings of such poems as *LP V, Grenadier*, exploring the subversion of the emotion that the poems and their subsequent settings represent. Poetry, he explained, leaves space for the composer. With reference to other musical settings, Berkeley then referred to those of Auden’s poetry and the way in which it was the mood, not the meaning of the poetry which was the focus of the transition into music; it was not possible, he said, to use both meaning and mood. All four of the Lennox Housman settings are about pain, parting and loss, but he reminded us again of his assertion that Housman suffered more lack than loss – except for the loss of his brother Herbert as a victim of the Boer War.

Traumatic loss is very different from the feelings of the jilted lover. Returning to *Grenadier*, Berkeley considered its “savage irony”, referring to the disarming, folk-like melody that modulates “thirteen pence a day” in his own musical setting. He compared the poem to Hardy’s *Drummer Hodge*, referring to the barely restrained fury in both poems. He then widened the reference to consider Britten’s *War Requiem*, fusing the words of the Latin Mass with those of Owen’s poetry.

Turning to our present age and contemporary context, Berkeley considered the iconic status granted to those who die young; death itself seems to become the achievement, in a case such as that of Princess Diana, for instance. We live in an age of instant gratification, a busy world which leaves us ever more frantic and robs us of the time to stop and contemplate, but that takes away our context.

Considering the importance of context, Berkeley then suggested that, while the works of minor writers can be great in themselves, we are poorer without them also because they allow us to see the magnitude of greater writers. One of the most important lessons he has learned from *Private Passions* is that the untrained music lover benefits from his “innocent ears” – he is not aware of what we are all “supposed to like”. But he asked why it was that many appreciate the contemporary visual arts but are afraid of contemporary

music, which he described wonderfully as “slipping away from the moorings of tonality”. Painting would not wish to be locked in the representational; the creative and performing arts must move on. For him, music is endlessly fascinating, as there is no end to what is possible. Even when greeted with incomprehension, all artists must be true to themselves; if they also ‘speak’ to an audience, that is a bonus. The arts must move beyond what is immediately attainable and understandable.

So why, in an age of instant gratification, does happiness still elude us? Berkeley closed his crafted and thought-provoking lecture with his own explanation. In the arts, more is less; the muscles of the mind atrophy if not worked, and worked hard. For him, as for many of us, Housman’s poetry is a fine example of that.

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## Bromsgrove Commemoration



Once more there was a good crowd in the High Street to welcome this year’s Guest of the Day, the Very Reverend Peter Atkinson, Dean of Worcester Cathedral, who was particularly welcome because in his 24 hour Poetry Marathon last year in the Cathedral the Society sponsored him to read some of Housman’s poetry. And the fact that he graduated from A.E.H.’s old college at

Oxford made him doubly welcome.

In his address he felt that the irony of him being present today would not have escaped Housman, if by chance he were looking down on us today. In response to the biography that the Chairman had given him he reminded the assembled company that the author of *The Lord of the Rings*, J.R.R. Tolkien, also came from Worcestershire, and wrote: ‘Any corner of that county (however fair or squalid) is in an indefinable way ‘home’ to me, as no other part of the world is’. The Dean had no doubt that Bromsgrove came into the “fair” category and was delighted to join members of the Society and their guests in celebrating the 153rd birthday of their scholar-poet.

After the Dean had read three poems the company moved to Housman Hall where lunch was served by the always willing Bromsgrove School catering team. The occasion concluded with the winner of last year’s Schools’ Poetry Competition, Andrew Radford from North Bromsgrove High School, reading the poems that won him the competition last November. R.L.S. from *Additional Poems* was his Housman choice and this proved a nice contrast with the light-hearted humour of Lewis Carroll’s *Father William*.

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## ‘....the Act of a Rhinoceros’

*In a letter to Grant Richards dated 20th December 1920, Housman was at his most vitriolic and condemned some of Claud Lovat Fraser's illustrations for 'A Shropshire Lad' because he felt that 'to transpose into the 18th century a book which begins in Queen Victoria's Jubilee is the act of a rhinoceros'. In reviewing a recent book on the artist, Richard Edmonds gives the wider picture and shows that he was an inspirational designer ahead of his time.*

Claud Lovat Fraser was one of those young and totally brilliant artists who surfaced after the First World War. In 1920, Lovat Fraser (as he was generally known) designed costumes, sets and posters for *The Beggar's Opera* and left the art establishment open-mouthed.

His design work was fresh, instantly appealing and his extraordinary talent embraced book illustration as part of his artistic output. Early on in this delightful hardback book, which is high on form and presentation and low in price, there is a touching pen portrait of Lovat Fraser in his youth (he was born in May 1890, the flowering period of that other artistic genius Aubrey Beardsley and, of course, Beardsley's friend, Oscar Wilde).

Romantically modern, Lovat yet loved (and belonged to) the dandified years of the eighteenth century in taste, in vision, even in speech. His keen sense of humour early warned him that his bulk, his stature, his heavy form would have fitted ill with the slender elegancies of the powdered wig, the brocaded coat and the knee breeches. Lovat compromised before his mirror between art and God's design of him, by leaning towards the years of the Regency – the tight sleeve, the high velvet collar, and the silk hat of a belated Comte D'Orsay. Lovat was the last of the dandies. As though warned that he was early doomed (Lovat was dead at 30) Lovat addressed himself to the career of art and letters feverishly, with restless energy that never flagged in his copious output.

Two years after his return to London from the Western Front, Lovat wrote in his diary: "I have lived so long with Death as an opposite partner, that I have of late, ignored his existence." But whatever the causes – congenital weakness plus rheumatic fever, exacerbated by gas and shell shock – his heart was dangerously weakened, and could not stand the strain of an operation that he was forced to undergo in June 1921. Lovat died at the Bevan Military Hospital Nursing Home in Sandgate, Kent. Like the poets John Keats and later Ernest Dowson, (the latter one of the most poignant poetic voices of the 90s), Lovat's glittering career was cut short with brutal finality.

Lovat began his career in his father's law firm, but youthful aspirations resist



*Lovat Fraser's illustration for ASL XXXVIII (The winds out of the west land blow), which Housman rated as "very good".*

confinement in a profession which cannot contain them, and Lovat was a case in point. He learned his craft by example, often wandering through the print shops and theatre booksellers in and around Charing Cross Road, looking, feeling, savouring centuries of design other than his own. Brilliant as Lovat was at fabric design, witty advertisements,

decorating poetry broadsides, making toy costume dolls and decorating books, it is clear from reading this splendid book that theatre design was his passion, and he would have been familiar with the fabulous designs the great Bakst did for Diaghilev's Ballets Russes, when that illustrious company opened in London in 1912.

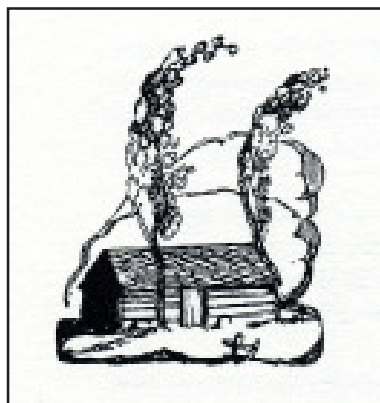
The point is also made that his designs for Lord Dunsany's play, *If*, which starred Gladys Cooper, would not have disgraced Cecil Beaton's stunning designs for the musical *My Fair Lady* (which also, many years later, featured Gladys Cooper again as the indomitable Mrs Higgins). But *The Beggar's Opera* was Lovat's finest hour and since it was an authentic 18th century ballad opera, having been first performed in 1782, the project was guaranteed to delight him. The director was Nigel Playfair whose purse had tight strings. Playfair thought Lovat's designs were perfect, but economics meant they had to be abandoned. Playfair wanted the show to be compressed into one permanent set. Lovat changed colour from beetroot to white, and his voice went husky, but at one o'clock next morning he rang Playfair to say he'd found a way

to do it. *The Beggar's Opera* ran for 1,469 performances – it closed in December 1925 – and was revived again the following year, having inspired porcelain modellers, book illustrators, and publishers along the way.

Haldane Macfall's *The Book of Lovat* (published in 1922) remains a desirable picture of this wonderful artist; Macfall's *The Splendid Wayfaring* is decorated by Lovat Fraser and is worth searching for, as are Lovat's hand-coloured poetry broadsides, and now there is this excellent book from Antique Collectors' Club to complete the list.

*Claud Lovat Fraser* by Brian Webb and Peyton Skipwith (Antique Collectors' Club, £12.50).

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*A.E.H.'s comment on ASL LII: "The poem is about black poplars growing by pools and whispering at night when there is no wind. The illustration displays Lombardy poplars in broad day and a furious gale: no water anywhere about, except suspended as vapour in a cloud."*



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# Celebration of Housman's work caps a day at St Laurence's, Ludlow

*Housman's resting place in Ludlow hummed with the sounds of masons and stonecutters during the day and song settings of his poems in the evening – not to mention a variety of walks and talks. John Cartwright reports.*

Following a very successful venture last year, The Conservation Trust for St Laurence, Ludlow, once again put on a May weekend of talks, tours and an exhibition of traditional crafts. This year the Housman Society made its presence felt with a stall in the grounds during the day and a concert of music and poetry in the church in the evening.

The weather was seasonally mild: the warm sun was accompanied by a cooling breeze and in the lanes and hedgerows around the town wild flowers bloomed in profusion. From the high vantage point of the church grounds the Shropshire countryside looked at its sparkling best.



*The winning carving by Carrie Howard (photo by Jon Best Crumbling Studios). The theme given to the sculptors was "Set the spirit free" This entry won both categories: best as voted by the public and best as voted by fellow masons.*

## Treasures of St Laurence's

The events of this fund-raising weekend began with an illustrated talk by Duncan James on the *Herefordshire school of Romanesque sculpture*. This was a 12th century group of stonemasons who produced some remarkably vivid and accomplished works in the churches of Herefordshire and to a lesser extent Gloucestershire and Worcestershire. This was followed by a talk by Simon Buteux, Consultant

Archaeologist, University of Birmingham, and former Chairman of Ludlow Civic Society on *The Treasures of St Laurence's* – including its medieval misericords. Actually the talk focused entirely on the misericords, appropriate enough as masons and woodcarvers were busy outside working in stone and wood. The talks were completed by Olwen Hughes speaking on the subject of Saint



*"Manful like the man of stone", the entry by mason Jamie Woolrich Moon for the stone carving competition held as part of the Ludlow Conservation weekend. The image is that of A E Housman.*

Laurence himself and looking at the depiction of Ludlow's patron saint in art through the ages. Lunch was followed by a series of tours around the town or the church.

Outside, the Housman Society put up its usual stall — ably staffed by Linda Hart who did a brisk trade in cards, books and CDs. The largest tent on the church grounds, however, contained the masons and carvers, who had just two days to complete their projects as part of a competition. At first it looked like a vision of a medieval workshop with craftsmen crouched over their labours and with stone dust and wood chips flying up to the sound of steel clinking on stone and chisels biting into wood.

## Female Carvers

But here was something never seen in a medieval mason's yard: half the carvers were female. My own eye was drawn to the work of Carrie Howard whose carved sea god head I had so admired last year. Sure enough, after the collection of votes on the Sunday, Carrie's work came first in both categories "best as voted by the people" and "best as voted by her peers". Both prizes were sponsored by G. Gibson and Co. Ltd, manufacturers of specialist tools for stone masonry.

Of interest to readers will be the fact that two masons chose a Housman theme for their entry. One carved a block of stone with words from *ASLLII* ('Far in a western brookland') while another, Jamie Woolrich-Moon, who is a full time mason at Winchester Cathedral, attempted the difficult task of a portrait bust of A.E.H. in stone. As he said, "Normally it takes me a lot longer to carve a stone head so it's a bit rough. I'm sure given more time and more familiar stone I could have made a better job of it." Watching Jamie work reminded me of those wonderfully subversive last two lines of *ASLLI* ('Loitering with a vacant eye'): 'And I stepped out in flesh and bone/ Manful like the man of stone'.

## Celebration of Housman's Work

In the evening, the church was the setting for a celebration of Housman's work in prose, poetry and music. Jim and Frances Page engaged in a thoughtful and perfect combination

of a narrative account of Housman's life and work interspersed by apposite poetry and settings of A.E.H.'s poems set to music. The performance did not fight shy of capturing the main crises in Housman's life: the death of his mother, his loss of faith and his unrequited love for Moses Jackson.

Jim's narrative account of Housman's loss of faith and then Frances' reading of *Easter Hymn* (MP I) was particularly powerful, being delivered in the nave of Ludlow's magnificent Parish Church. (This is an important poem that is not often anthologised or quoted.) Also fitting was Polly Bolton's singing of *ASL XIII* ('When I was one and twenty') immediately after an account of the doomed friendship between Housman and Jackson.

### Life of a Soldier

The musical settings of Housman's verse were an appealing combination of traditional settings by Somervell, Butterworth and Orr, sung by Graham Trew, and more modern folk interpretations with music by the Polly Bolton Band (Polly Bolton, Steve Dunachie and John Shepherd). Graham Trew's rich baritone was as appealing as ever. I particularly enjoyed 'The street sounds to the soldiers' tread' (*ASL XXII*) with its rollicking tune by Somervell and sung with expressive force by Graham. This appeared in a section of the performance dealing with the life of a soldier and the experience of war and contrasted well with Polly Bolton's treatment of *The New Mistress* (*ASL XXXIV*). I must confess that I had not heard Polly sing before but I was so impressed that their CD 'Loveliest of Trees' has been in the car CD player ever since. Some of Polly's settings have quite a traditional British Folk flavour such as 'When smoke blew up from Ludlow' (*ASL VII*) where the verse even invites a choral interjection: 'Lie down, lie down young yeoman'. The setting was so fitting that it almost sounded as if Housman had a folk song in mind when he wrote it.

### Polly's impressive vocal range

Similarly *The New Mistress* (*ASL XXXIV*) with its theme of despised love, a parting, and the life of a soldier fits well into the folk tradition. But the Polly Bolton band has a range much greater than this. The setting of *ASL LIV* ('With rue my heart is laden') showed off both Polly's voice and Shepherd's skill on the violin to good effect. But to my mind, the best was the last: the song 'Into my heart and air that kills' (*ASL XL*) combined Polly's impressive vocal range, the expressive quality of her voice and a hauntingly beautiful melody in a powerful combination.

Together the auction of carvings and the evening concert raised over £5000 for the Conservation Trust. The money raised at the Conservation Weekend will go towards the repair of the two chapel roofs and chancel pinnacles of St Laurence's. The overall cost of these works is approximately £250,000. If you would like to join a nationwide group of supporters who care for this building for future generations, please consider joining the Conservation Trust for St Laurence. For further information contact Rosemary Wood, <rosemary.wood3@virgin.net> or Andrew Pike, <apike@uwclub.net>.

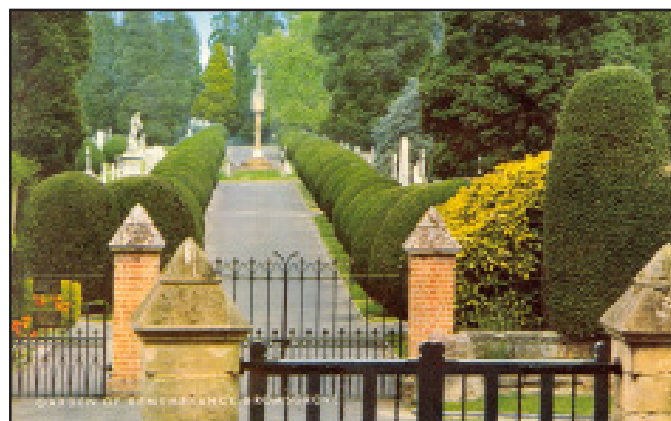
## The Sun Moves Always West

An interesting and unusual weekend of reflection, in words and music, on the work of British composers whose lives were touched by the Great War, is being held at Dewsall Court, near Hereford, over the weekend of 9th to 11th November 2012.

Stephen Johnson (regularly heard on Radio Three's *Discovering Music*) leads the audience into an exploration of composers falling within this orbit – in particular Edward Elgar, Ralph Vaughan Williams, Gustav Holst, E.J. Moeran, John Ireland, Gerald Finzi, Frank Bridge and Benjamin Britten. The mysteriously prescient pre-war poetry of A.E. Housman will have an important part to play in settings by most of these composers. The musicians will be Stuart Jackson (tenor), Ben Hancox (violin) and Anna Tilbrook (piano).

Professor John Cox joins Stephen Johnson and the musicians for an illustrated lecture and debate on *The Psychology of Song*. Further details from 01432 276 724. The weekend is being organised by the Musical Brain which aims to bring together the worlds of science and the arts to advance the understanding of the value of music and other art forms. It is a registered charity which aims to bring together artists, scientists, teachers, therapists and the public, in original and stimulating environment.

## HLF Money for John Adams Memorial



The Society has, along with the Bromsgrove Society, Victorian Society and Bromsgrove Council, been striving to get the John Adams Memorial restored for almost five years now (see Newsletter 28 - Sep 2008). Its application to the Heritage Lottery Fund was a complicated business but the reward (just announced) is a grant of £32,775 – £22,000 for restoration of the memorial and the rest for historic research and production of a Cemetery Walk and Natural History Trail suitable for schools. More details in the next Newsletter.



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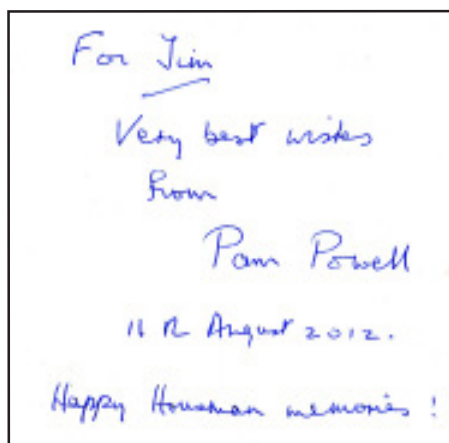
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# Enoch at 100

***Enoch Powell, whose centenary is celebrated in 'Enoch at 100', published this summer, had a unique link with A.E.H., for he was both an undergraduate (1931-33) and a Fellow (1934-36) during Housman's time at Trinity College, Cambridge. He was one of the Society's greatest supporters and his unveiling of the Memorial Window to Housman in Poets' Corner on 17th September 1996 was the last public engagement he was able to undertake before his death in 1998. Some years ago his widow, Pamela Powell, asked if the Society would like Enoch's set of Journals, to which the Chairman's answer was an enthusiastic 'yes', but the agreed collection date of "one day when I am in London" only came about this summer! Jim Page writes:***

When in May Pam Powell wrote to say that I had never collected Enoch's Housman Society Journals and, as she wanted more shelf space, could I please call soon, I resolved there and then to book a ticket for a Prom concert and drop in on her flat in Ebury Street on my way to the Albert Hall. It happened to be the last day of the Olympics and, having eventually discovered the value of the oldies' bus pass, I went on a double-decker bus from Marylebone to Victoria which gave me a wonderful view of London *en fête*. I had anticipated a quick call and collection of the Journals but my welcome was so warm and conversation flowed so easily that I found myself staying for the best part of two hours and in that time we talked mainly about her early life, which was so fascinating that I think the membership might like to share it with me.

Pam Powell's first job was in the War Cabinet Office in May 1944 as a temporary shorthand typist, and this led to working in New York at the UK delegation of the Military Staff Committee of the United Nations in the Empire State Building. But the dollar crisis after the war meant all English-based girls had to return home and as she had already decided that she did not want to remain in the civil service she went back to her secretarial college, which recommended that she work for the Conservatives. She was interviewed by Enoch



*Pam Powell's inscription in Jim Page's "Enoch at 100"*

(then Brigadier Powell) and he asked the Conservative Parliamentary Secretariat about her. Good references came back and with the comment that she was 'all that a bachelor might want', she got the job – and the first thing she did for Enoch was to type his resignation letter to Winston Churchill as secretary to the India Committee.

Her greatest thrill came when, after Enoch had first been elected an MP in 1950, she became secretary of the Questionnaire Committee and worked for the one and only time for Winston Churchill. She went to his house in Hyde Park Gate to take dictation for the Conservative Party manifesto for the

1950 General Election. After that she went to a job in the Council of Europe in Strasbourg, but when the 1951 election came along, Enoch asked if she could work for him. Eventually the relationship developed and when Enoch asked her to marry him he said, "It will be grinding poverty and a life on the back benches". With a wry smile Pam Powell commented that with that condition what else could she do but laugh and, of course, say 'Yes'!

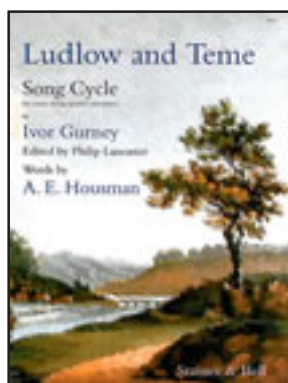
**Postscript.** After writing this I discovered, in talking to our Book Exchange man, Peter Sisley, that his wife Diane taught the Powell daughters to ride when they were living in Wolverhampton!

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## New critical edition of Gurney's 'Ludlow & Teme'

The Gloucester composer and poet Ivor Gurney's lifelong love of the poetry of A.E.H. bore its most significant fruit in 1919-1920 with the writing of two Housman song cycles: *Ludlow and Teme* and *The Western Playland*. Both of these works, for voice with accompaniment for string quartet and piano, were awarded publication by the Carnegie United Kingdom Trust, in 1923 and 1926.

A new critical edition of *Ludlow and Teme* has recently been published by Stainer & Bell, edited



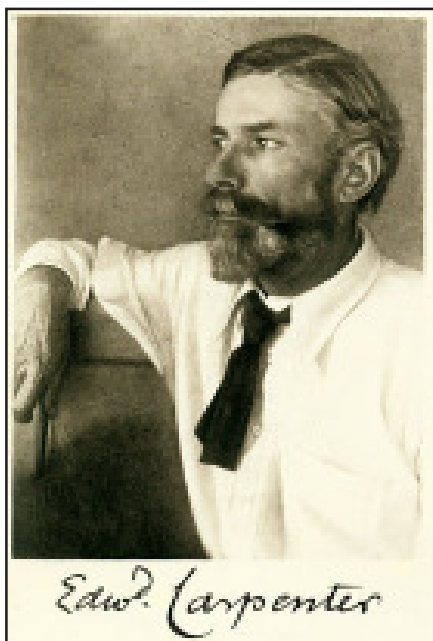
by Gurney scholar Philip Lancaster. This new edition not only irons out the numerous ambiguities in the various published and unpublished sources, but also introduces a number of revisions made by Gurney in 1925, two years after the work's publication, such as that at the end of the song 'Ludlow Fair' ("The lads in their hundreds"), which heightens the sense of tragedy in this enormously powerful setting.

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# The Influence of Edward Carpenter on Laurence Housman's Social and Artistic World

*Edward Carpenter (1844-1929) was a leading figure in late 19th and early 20th-century Britain - a poet, philosopher, anthologist, and early gay activist. He was instrumental in the foundation of the Fabian Society and the Labour Party. A poet and writer, he was a close friend of Walt Whitman and Rabindranath Tagore and corresponded with many famous figures of the day. Elizabeth Oakley reviews Sheila Rowbotham's 2009 book 'Edward Carpenter: A Life of Liberty and Love' and assesses his influence on Laurence Housman.*

Page 272 of this book is taken up by a full length photograph of Edward Carpenter standing in a nonchalant pose, hand on hip, on the steps of a rustic porch. He is wearing what resembles a cowboy hat, a casual jacket, tapering trousers, socks and open sandals. Round his waist is wound an old school tie. He is an elegant if eccentric looking figure, with a stylish beard, who has, to quote Rowbotham, 'a Pan-like demeanour' despite his 61 years. My immediate thought on first seeing the photograph was how much it resembled a photograph of the middle-aged Laurence Housman standing on a similar porch in front of his garden studio, Elbow Room, similarly Pan-like and elegant in appearance.



## A Friend to Left Wing Causes

This is probably no coincidence. Carpenter, 20 years Laurence's senior, had an incalculable influence on Laurence's radical attitudes to gender and social reform, as he did on many other young men, acting as mentor for the young E.M. Forster for instance. Born in 1844, Carpenter's well-to-do Brighton family, dominated by sisters and an intensely religious mother, was a household in which he later said that he never felt at home. Cambridge brought him a clerical Fellowship from which he withdrew a short time later, feeling too constrained by church authority. Instead he joined the lecture circuit of the University Extension scheme which took him north to the Sheffield area where he settled until almost the end of his life.

His father's death gave him financial security and allowed him to follow a varied freelance career as writer, social reformer, market gardener and owner of a small sandal-making industry at Millthorpe, the simple country house where he lived with his long term partner, George Merrill. Hence his footwear in the photograph, while his American style hat may be explained by the close connections, both personal and intellectual, between him and Walt Whitman. Carpenter was friend and host to virtually all left wing causes and campaigners at Millthorpe: visiting anarchists, feminists, socialists and artists crowded the house. He cannot, however, be defined by his allegiance to any specific movement or organisation though

he supported many radical causes. For instance, his coded writings using 'the cloak of friendship' (Walt Whitman) and clever recourse to Classical models of male bonding were a rallying point for the homosexual community under siege after the Wilde trial debacle.

Yet, nothing in Carpenter's life style or self presentation could have been further from Wilde's studied aestheticism. Up at dawn to plunge naked into his garden pool, a teetotaller and declared vegetarian (despite the sandals), Carpenter relished the country living which gave him the low profile he sought to avoid scandal. His poetic, semi-mystical writing of hopes for a new social order in 'Towards Democracy', his revolutionary views on gender in 'The Intermediate Sex', his personal charm which attracted many to

confide him, along with his ability to empathise across class divisions, secured him a devoted following. He was a legendary figure in his time but his star faded quickly after his death in 1929 as the troubled 30s brought with them a more sombre outlook.

Subsequently Carpenter's achievements have been largely ignored by historians. However, Sheila Rowbotham's meticulous research and vivid evocation of Carpenter's life go a long way to redress this neglect. Laurence Housman, likewise largely forgotten after his death, was part of Carpenter's network of left wing associates and features in this book. He collaborated with Carpenter in several social campaigns, including Women's Suffrage. While it is striking how many ideals and personality traits the two men shared, above all it is their unshakeable optimism about human nature that links them. For anyone wishing to learn more about the social and artistic world in which Laurence was so much at home, this book will prove an invaluable guide. That Alfred Housman did not choose to join this brotherly community and declined to share their transforming social vision is material for another book.

Sheila Rowbotham *Edward Carpenter: A Life of Liberty and Love* (Verso 2009) ISBN 978-1-84467-421-3

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## John Saxbee's Sermon in St Laurence's

*John Saxbee, who was Bishop of Ludlow from 1994 to 2002 and retired last year from being Bishop of Lincoln, cited A.E.H. in his sermon at St Laurence's, Ludlow on 4th March.*



The Right Reverend John Saxbee had been asked to speak on The Church in the Countryside and pointed out that the Christian tradition has always been ambivalent about the countryside because it has been seen as, on the one hand, the place where the presence of our Creator God can be felt most strongly and, on the other hand, as a

place where 'nature in tooth and claw' is experienced as threatening or even evil.

So, on the one hand, A.E.H. can write about Shropshire as a place of beauty, peace and contentment and also as the locus of loss and tragedy. To reflect the fact that this sermon was being preached in Lent he read *The Lenten Lily* from *A Shropshire Lad* with its celebration of the daffodil as a thing of beauty – but then, as so often with Housman, the sting is in the tail because the daffodil 'dies on Easter Day'.

This captures well our ambivalent relationship to the countryside especially at a time when many urban dwellers are detached from the day-to-day rhythms of rurality. So the job of the Church in the countryside can be summarised as: to re-connect our country with our countryside, our culture with our agriculture and all creatures with their Creator.

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## Society's Busy Year

Shortage of space leaves no room to report on four well attended events since the last issue. The **Ludlow Commemoration** was followed by a tour of St Laurence's and afterwards members enjoyed a splendid lunch in the side aisle provided by the social committee. The **Last Poems reading** in Bromsgrove School's Old Chapel in August was illuminated by a thoughtful introduction by Andrew Maund. Jane Allsopp gave a beautifully illustrated **lecture on A.E.H.** in Ludlow Assembly Rooms in February and Gabriel Woolf gave a brilliant rendering in Hughley Church of his **Shoulder the Sky** programme as part of the Much Wenlock Poetry Festival.

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## 'Wastelands to Wonderlands' at British Library

*This exhibition, which runs till 25th September, is full of marvels and connects British writers, literature and landscapes over the centuries, writes Sonia French.*

A.E.H.'s 1891 diary is exhibited and records the changing seasons with his observations of flowers and plants. The text of 'By brooks too broad....' is quoted. An 1896 copy of *A Shropshire Lad* is on display with this legend: "The poems are set in a pastoral Shropshire although A.E.H. did not know the county well when he wrote them. During the 2nd Boer War (1899-1902) and later WWI the wistful depiction of the countryside and the untimely death of young men struck a chord with readers and the book became a best-seller."

The manuscripts of Oscar Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest* are another treasure and there's also a section on the development of the railway into Metroland with John Betjeman's poem *Baker Street Station Buffet* with its Bromsgrove-relevant first stanza:

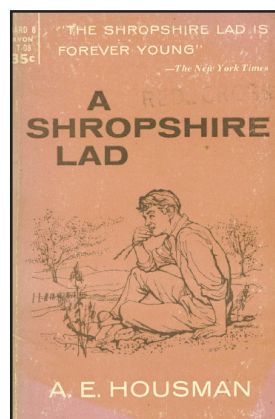
Early Electric! With what radiant hope  
Men formed this many-branched electrolier,  
Twisted the flex around the iron rope  
And let the dazzling vacuum globes hang clear,  
And then with hearts the rich contrivance fill'd  
Of copper, beaten by the Bromsgrove Guild.

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## Early American ASL

Pam Blevins writes to say that at the annual American University Women's book sale she found what has to be one of the earliest US paperback editions of *A Shropshire Lad*, in the Bard series from Avon, 1950. It is illustrated by Elinore Blaisdell, who did a lot of book illustration and lived to be 94. The book she has

was taken from a 1932 edition and inside the front cover is a pasted notice from the Red Cross: "Would you please return this book to the Red Cross Gray Ladies or Red Cross office of Gorgas Hospital when you are through with it, as there are many other ill patients who will also enjoy reading it. Thank You."



Pam wondered what kind of a journey this 62-year old book has had in order to end up in a used book sale in Brevard? The original price was 35 cents; she paid a dollar.



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## Miscellanea

● Union Books have announced the publication of *Housman's Country* by Peter Parker in August 2013. The book will explore how, although Housman was not a regular visitor to Shropshire, when he wrote his best known work *A Shropshire Lad*, it became a touchstone for notions of 'Englishness.' Editorial Director Rosalind Porter said the book promises to be 'a small masterpiece; an expansive examination of how our constructions of place inform our sense of who we are, as seen through a publishing and cultural phenomenon'.

● **The Ludlow Weekend of English Song** takes place from 30th May to 2nd June 2013 and recitals by The King's Singers and Elizabeth Watts are highlights on the first two days. The veteran bass of Wagner fame, John Tomlinson, takes the Master Class and there will be talks, films, discussions and a Young Composers Competition. The full leaflet will be available at the end of November and to join the mailing list send your name and address to <jimpage@btinternet.com, or by post to 80 New Road, Bromsgrove B60 2LA.

● The Shropshire Hills Area of Natural Beauty Partnership has submitted a detailed objection to the **planning application** by Edge Renewables at Lea Quarry on Wenlock Edge.

● Stephen Hough is one of the country's top pianists but he has always been interested in composition. His **'Other Love Songs'**, which includes Housman settings, were performed at this year's Cheltenham Festival. Jacques Imbraglio was one of the singers and 'The colour of his Hair' particularly impressed the *Observer* critic. Hough says of composition, 'There's something powerfully expressive about words and their specific meaning with which I love to work. It's wonderful to try to find melodies which match in expression the emotions in the poetry.'

● Stone Records have just released volume two of **C.W. Orr's Complete Songbook**. C.W. Orr's devotion to Housman has been well covered in this Newsletter but the opportunity that this release gives the world of actually hearing all his music is to be welcomed. Copies can be obtained from the Society at £10.00 a CD plus £1.00 postage.

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## Merchandise Officer

We are delighted to announce that Sonia French has offered to take over the job of Merchandise Officer. The Society is extremely grateful to her and she and the Chairman are in active dialogue over the detail of the handover which will take effect from the end of September.

Contact for Sonia is 18 College Road, Bromsgrove, Worcs B60 2NE.

## Henry Woudhuysen is new Rector of Lincoln College, Oxford

Although Professor Henry Woudhuysen's academic career and literary accomplishments range far and wide, he has a special interest in A.E. Housman. The reason is that his great-grandfather was Alfred W. Pollard, the bibliographer and Keeper of Printed Books at the British Museum, whose friendship with A.E.H. began at Oxford in 1877 when the two Classics scholars had rooms on the same staircase at St John's College, Oxford.

Pollard then shared lodgings on St Giles with Housman and Moses Jackson in their final year. Later on, Pollard supported Housman's application for the Chair of Latin at University College, London. And later still, Pollard not only found a publisher for the manuscript of *A Shropshire Lad* but suggested a better title than the one Housman was proposing ('The Poems of Terence Hearsay').

In 2006 the Foundling Press published a beautifully designed book edited by Henry Woudhuysen that records briefly and movingly, through text and letters, the friendship between the two men. *A.E.H. – A.W.P.: A Classical Friendship* prints in full for the first time five letters from Housman to Pollard. In November 2009, Professor Woudhuysen played a part in 'an evening of celebration' at University College London to commemorate the 150th anniversary of A.E.H.'s birth. In 2010, we learned from his ground-breaking article with Charlotte Mitchell in the *TLS* that Housman, aged 16, won a competition to translate a poem by Goethe. This article became the basis for his chapter in the Housman Society's 2012 book, *Housman and Heine: A Neglected Relationship*.

The official college announcement of his appointment as Rector says:

'The Fellows of Lincoln College, Oxford are pleased to announce the election of Professor Henry Woudhuysen FBA as Rector from the start of Michaelmas Term 2012. Professor Woudhuysen, currently Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Humanities at UCL, will succeed Professor Paul Langford, who retires as Rector on 31 August this year.'

Commenting on his election, Professor Woudhuysen said: 'I am tremendously excited about coming back to Lincoln – after an interval of thirty years – and am looking forward a great deal to working with the College and all its members.'

Professor Woudhuysen is, of course, a member of the Housman Society. I am sure that members will join me in extending our warm congratulations to him. But we hope there are others at UCL who will continue to 'fly the flag' for Housman with the same enthusiasm and interest that he has.

Linda Hart

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# The Housman Society Book Exchange

*Peter Sisley writes: This issue marks the tenth anniversary of the Book Exchange, and what an interesting ten years it has been. Within the Society things have ticked along quietly, but, outside our sheltered walls, a constant barrage of tsunamis have overwhelmed the world's financial institutions. All of us are now fully conversant with a whole new vocabulary of phrases like credit-crunch, sub-prime, derivative-swaps and quantitative-easing, and, when we visit a High Street branch of the Big-Four we know that their financial predicament is much shakier than our own. Have you ever thought, as you slide a couple-of-hundred across the counter, that, if your lending criteria were as strict as theirs you would certainly not complete the transaction? Have you given up the struggle to find an account that, after tax, pays more than the rate of inflation? Have you abandoned the Stock Exchange which, in real terms, is about 40% below its peak of the last century? Or, like me, do you conclude that the only worthwhile investment these days is a good library and a well-stocked cellar?*

It is a happy coincidence that the listings in this anniversary issue are, in my estimation, the best that we have yet offered and in recognition of this fact the Book Exchange has been awarded an extra page to advertise its wares. And I do not propose that this introduction should further reduce that available space other than to repeat that this listing is but a small indication of our stock, and I welcome specific enquiries concerning any book that you are seeking.

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 on telephone number 01299 841361 or facsimile 01299 841582 or e-mail at <sisley.ladywood@talk21.com>

## SALES LIST – SEPTEMBER 2012

Postage and Packing are additional to the prices quoted.

**ALFRED EDWARD HOUSMAN** M.A. Kennedy Professor of Latin, Fellow of Trinity College, DIED 30<sup>th</sup> APRIL 1936. This undated leaflet announcing Housman's death is printed on cream paper edged in black and gives the details of the funeral service arrangements and those for the interment. No printer's imprint, but Cambridge University Press. Very rare. Very good. £75

**ALFRED EDWARD HOUSMAN, FELLOW, KENNEDY PROFESSOR OF LATIN.** This leaflet, headed 'Trinity College', carries the Order of Service for Housman's funeral on the first page, the second and fourth are blank; on the third are printed for the first time the three stanzas beginning *O thou that from thy mansion* which became *More Poems XLVII* under the title *For My Funeral*. One of 300 copies, dated 4<sup>th</sup> May 1936. Contains the misprint 'Ecclesiasticus' "it was appropriately ironical that misprints should have pursued Housman to the grave" [Carter and Sparrow]. Very rare. Very good indeed. £95

**ALDINGTON (Richard). A.E. HOUSMAN & W.B. YEATS.** The Peacocks Press, Hurst, Berkshire; 1955. First edition. 8vo. 35 pages. Green cloth with the rare tissue dust

jacket. Limited edition. One of 350 copies. These lectures were originally given in New York in 1938. Previous owners signature otherwise fine. £40

**BEERSAY (Terence). A SHROPSHIRE LAG.** No Publishers imprint, 1936. First edition. 12mo. 8 pages. Red paper covers. Parodies of Housman including 'Loveliest of cheese the Cheddar now'. According to the preface Terence Beersay is a "literary figure of some note who insists on preserving his humble anonymity" and he succeeded in this attempt for over sixty years until unmasked by P.G. Naiditch in the 1999 HSJ. Number 29 of 99 copies, signed by the author. Some fading to covers otherwise very good. £150

**BELL (Alan) [editor]. FIFTEEN LETTERS TO WALTER ASHBURNER.** The Tragara Press, Edinburgh, 1976. First edition. 8vo. 24 pages. Blue paper wrappers. Ashburner was an academic lawyer, a Professor of Jurisprudence at Oxford, a book collector and, like Housman, a gourmet. These letters were not featured in Maas. Number 76 of 125 copies. In fine condition. £60

**BRINK (C.O.). ENGLISH CLASSICAL SCHOLARSHIP.** James Clarke & Co. Ltd., Cambridge, 1985. 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

**BURNETT (Archie) [editor]. THE LETTERS OF A.E. HOUSMAN.** Clarendon Press, Oxford, 2007. 8vo. First edition. Two volumes in slipcase. 8vo. Volume 1 - 1872-1926. liv. 643 pages. Volume 2 – 1927-1936. 585 pages. Over 2200 letters are here listed and the notes and commentary are simply superb. A remarkable production. In fine condition. £145

**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.**

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Cambridge at the University Press, 1961. First edition. 12mo. 204 pages. Black cloth. Fine with a very good dust jacket. £30

**CLEMENS (Cyril). AN EVENING WITH A.E. HOUSMAN.** International Mark Twain Society, Webster Groves, Missouri, 1937. First edition. 12mo. 19 pages. Card covers. An account of the meeting between Housman and Clemens at Cambridge in the summer of 1930 and which was planned to be a chapter in a never completed biography. Signed by Clemens. Very good. £40

**DIGGLE (J) and GOODYEAR (F.R.D.). THE CLASSICAL PAPERS OF A.E. HOUSMAN. VOLUME I 1882 -1897, VOLUME II 1897 -1914, VOLUME III 1915 - 1936.** Cambridge University Press, 1972. First editions. 8vo. Three Volumes totalling 1318 pages. Fine in near fine dust jackets. A beautiful set of books. £200

**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 20<sup>th</sup> Century. One of 700 copies. Fine. £45

**HABER (Tom Burns). THE MAKING OF A SHROPSHIRE LAD. A MANUSCRIPT VARORIOM.** Seattle, University of Washington Press, 1966. First edition. 8vo. 204pp. Black cloth in cream dust jacket. Haber returns to the manuscript fragments. Fine in a near fine dust jacket. £45

**HAMILTON (Robert). HOUSMAN THE POET.** Sydney Lee, Exeter, 1953. First edition. 8vo. 74 pages. Paper covers. One of the earliest books to concentrate on an evaluation of Housman's poetry. Very scarce. Very good indeed. £45

**HOLDEN (Alan) and BIRCH (Roy). A.E. HOUSMAN. A REASSESSMENT.** MacMillan, London, 2000. 8vo. 225 pages. Black cloth with dust jacket. A dozen essays on Housman have been brought together in this book, which although recently published is very difficult to acquire on the second-hand market. Fine in near fine dust jacket. £45

**HOUSMAN (A.E.). A SHROPSHIRE LAD.** Grant Richards, London, 1900. 32mo. 96pp. Green leather with the title and author's name in gilt on both the front and rear covers. The first pocket edition, the basic format of which was to continue under various Richards' imprints for almost seventy years. One of 700 copies of the printing for the English market and easily the rarest of the early Grant Richards editions. Spine faded and wear to corners, but this book is in the nicest condition that I have yet found in this extremely rare title. £120

**HOUSMAN (A.E.). M. MANILLII ASTRONOMICON.** Five Volumes. Grant Richards Limited, London, 1912, 1916, and 1920, The Richards Press Limited, London, 1930, and Cambridge University Press, 1937. 8vo. A mixed set; Volume 1 being the second edition, Volumes 2, 3, 4 and 5 being first editions. Volume One has Andrew Gow's introductory note and 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. Volume One is in the original red cloth and Volumes 2,3,4 and 5 in the original blue boards, all with the paper spine labels. Condition is very good indeed. £500

**HOUSMAN (A.E.). A SHROPSHIRE LAD.** Thomas B Mosher, Portland, Maine, 1906. 12mo. 91 pages. Cream boards with breviary edges. This first limited edition *A Shropshire Lad* was printed in the United States on japan vellum in an edition of 50 numbered copies. A copy of this edition is currently being advertised in the United States at a price of \$750. The spine is sunned, otherwise very good indeed. £200

**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". Signed by Housman on the half-title. Minor foxing but very good in the scarce dust jacket, torn to bottom of spine but otherwise showing minimal wear. £500

**HOUSMAN (A.E.). A SHROPSHIRE LAD [and] LAST POEMS.** The Alcuin Press, Chipping Campden, 1929. Two volumes. 8vo. 91pp [and] 67pp. Plain light grey boards with linen spines and paper labels. The hand-numbered limited edition of 325 sets printed in black and red inks on heavy watermarked laid paper. This is the only matching edition of his poems ever approved by Housman and is often considered the best presentation of his work. A beautiful set. Very good indeed. £180

**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.** Jonathan Cape, London, 1936. The limited edition. Number 220 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. An excellent copy of this edition in the rare and very good undamaged dust jacket. £150

**HOUSMAN (A.E.). SIX POEMS.** City of Birmingham School of Printing, 1937. First edition. 17 pages. Beige paper covers. Arranged and printed under the direction of Leonard Jay at the School and containing three wood engravings. A delightful example of the printers art. Very scarce. With a neat bookplate, otherwise near fine. £45

**HOUSMAN (A.E.). FRAGMENT OF A GREEK TRAGEDY.** No publishers imprint but Peter Pauper Press, Mount Vernon, 1937. First edition thus. 12mo. 8 pages. Paper covers. A supplement to the publishers 1937 edition of *A Shropshire Lad*. Very good. £15

**HOUSMAN (A.E.). D. IVNII IVVENALIS SATVRAE.**



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Cambridge University Press, 1938. Third edition. 146 pages. Red cloth. Contains the preface to the 1905 edition together with the preface of the corrected edition. Previous professorial owner's signature. Missing the dust jacket. Very good. £45

**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. Very good. £40

**HOUSMAN (A.E.). THE PARALLELOGRAM; THE AMPHISBAENA; THE CROCODILE.** Jake Zeitlin, Los Angeles, 1941. First edition thus. 19mo. vi. 9 pages. With an introduction by William White and a wood engraving by Paul Landacre showing the three subjects of Housman's verse in a complex embrace. The limitation page states a print run of 250 copies but contemporary opinion considered that less than one hundred copies were published. Fine. £120

**HOUSMAN (A.E.). M. ANNAEI LVCANI BELLICIVILIS LIBRI DECIM.** Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1950. Reprint of the 1927 corrected edition. 8vo. xxxv. 342 pages. Blue cloth. Very good in similar dust jacket. £45

**HOUSMAN (A.E.). THE CONFINES OF CRITICISM. THE CAMBRIDGE INAUGURAL 1911.** Cambridge at the University Press, 1969. First edition. 12mo. 54 pages. With notes by John Carter. Green cloth in the dust jacket. Loosely laid in is the relevant cutting from the TLS dated 9<sup>th</sup> May, 1968. Fine. £25

**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 but for the book-plate of Housman collector P.B. Morris. £45

**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. £25

**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. £85

**HOUSMAN SOCIETY JOURNALS. A FULL SET.** 1974 – 2011. 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-Seven issues plus the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary volume. The condition varies from Very Good to Mint. £160

**LEGGETT (B.J.). HOUSMAN'S LAND OF LOST CONTENT.** The University of Tennessee Press, Knoxville, 1970. First edition. 8vo. 160 pages. Green cloth. A critical study of A Shropshire Lad. Fine in similar dust jacket. £30

**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

**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.). A.E. HOUSMAN AT UNIVERSITY COLLEGE. THE ELECTION OF 1892.** E.J. Brill, Leiden, 1988. First edition. 261 pages. Soft covers. Another copy. In very good condition. £50

**PLATT (Arthur). NINE ESSAYS.** Cambridge at the University Press, 1927. First edition. 220 pages. Red cloth. Housman not only supplied the seven page preface but also managed the progress of the book through the press. Very good indeed, missing the dust jacket as usual. £35

**RICKS (Christopher) [editor]. A.E. HOUSMAN. A COLLECTION OF CRITICAL ESSAYS.** First edition. 8vo. 182 pages. Soft cover. Three poems about Housman by Auden, Pound and Amis are followed by a dozen essays by various hands including John Wain, J.P. Sullivan and John Sparrow. Very good indeed. £20

**SYMONS (Katharine E.), POLLARD (A.W.), HOUSMAN (Laurence), CHAMBERS (R.W.), KER (Alan), GOW (A.S.F.), SPARROW (John) and SYMONS (N.V.H.). ALFRED EDWARD HOUSMAN.** Bromsgrove School, 1936. First edition. 4to. 65 pages. The true first edition. Number 211 of 250 copies. Card covers with deckled edges. The Housman Memorial supplement of the 'Bromsgrovian'. Externally very good indeed and internally fine; almost certainly never read. An excellent example of a notoriously fragile publication. £60

**TAKEUCHI (Y) [editor]. THE EXHAUSTIVE CONCORDANCE TO THE POEMS OF A.E. HOUSMAN.** Shohaksusha Publishing Co., Tokyo, 1971. First edition. 157 pages. Three quarter cloth. An essential reference tool. Very rare indeed. Very good in the damaged original printed slipcase. £85

**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

## WANTS LIST

The Housman Society Book Exchange acts as an agent to re-home members' Housman material for a 10% commission. Full details from Peter Sisley.

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# Extra Geoffrey Hill Poems in new edition of ‘Three Bromsgrove Poets’

We are about to publish a second edition of our attractive book, *Three Bromsgrove Poets*, which we launched in 2003 to celebrate the work of Geoffrey Hill, Molly Holden, and A.E.H. It has been a popular book and we have almost sold out the 750 copies we originally ordered. In this new edition we are pleased to be including two extra poems by Geoffrey Hill, our new Vice President.

## Housman's Legacy

*Three Bromsgrove Poets* as first printed was put together by Robin Shaw and Alan Holden. It included ten poems by each of the poets selected for their relevance, first to Bromsgrove, but also to the wider context of Worcestershire and Severn

shore. In some of their poems, Molly Holden and Geoffrey Hill have both drawn upon Housman's legacy to that countryside and the selected works knit well together. Alan Holden wrote

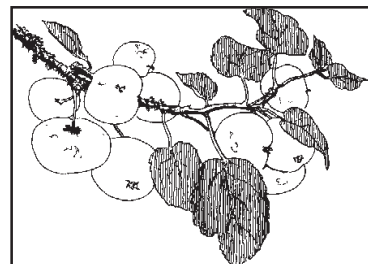


introductions to the poets with biographical material and insightful commentary on the poems.

Geoffrey Hill was born in Bromsgrove and brought up close by in Fairfield and although his academic career has taken him away to Oxford, Leeds, Cambridge and Boston, in the USA, he has always looked back on Bromsgrove as his 'Goldengrove'.

## Influence of King Offa

One of the two additional poems in the second edition is *Mercian Hymns* XXV. *Mercian Hymns* was published in 1971.



The collection reminds us that the influence of King Offa, 'the presiding genius of the West Midlands' is still with us, and it weaves together many of the formative impressions



on the poet's childhood. XXV is a tribute to his grandmother who spent her days (dargs), labouring at the cottage industry of making hand-made nails – a very hard life.

The other new poem in the new edition is 'A Cloud in Aquila'. In this Geoffrey Hill explores the fate of Alan Turing, of code breaking and computer fame, and his connection with the Housmans' Clock House. Even in Bromsgrove few people are aware of this connection. After the Housmans, the notable Morcomb family lived in the Clock House. Colonel Morcom and Mrs Morcom had a son Christopher who was at Sherborne School with Alan Turing – they were very close friends.

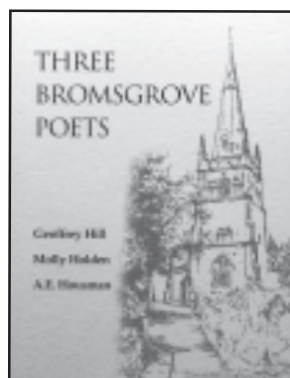
Christopher died tragically in the sixth form and Alan paid several visits to the Clock House sharing his grief with Mrs Morcom. Together they planned the chapel dedicated to Christopher in Catshill church.

## Molly Holden's Wiltshire Upbringing

Molly Holden was the wife of Alan Holden, our Vice-Chairman and Journal Editor for many years; Alan died in 2007, Molly predeceasing him in 1981 after a long illness. Although she was brought up in Wiltshire she spent her best writing years in Worcestershire, came to love it, and drew upon its countryside for many of her poems. Between 1959 and 1981 she published five books which were well received in the media. Her poems are very accessible, and have deep insight and observation.

## Ideal Small Gift

The new edition is very similar to the first edition – neat, compact, and illustrated with line drawings by Robin Shaw. It's an ideal small gift for anyone who loves poetry but especially anyone with an interest in Bromsgrove, Worcestershire and Housman's Severn shore.



It is available from The Housman Society, 18 College Road, Bromsgrove B60 2NE,

for £7.50 with free post and packing offer for members.

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# The Book Collector on 'Housman and Heine'

*The following review appeared in the Spring 2012 edition of 'The Book Collector' and is reproduced by kind permission.*

A.E. Housman was not given to what nowadays are known as 'personal statements'. The closest he came was when he chose, surprisingly, to answer in detail a questionnaire sent to him by a Frenchman in January 1933.

'Did you feel early the "craving for knowledge"?' asked Maurice Pollet. 'Were those years you spent at Oxford decisive for your opinions – say about life, or man's destiny...?' With his eye to the future, Housman answered each question, bat-straight and patiently.

'People have been puzzled by the title "A Shropshire Lad",' said M Pollet. 'Can you possibly tell me in what proportion the Shropshire Lad is the same as the reader of the Greek anthology?' 'The Shropshire Lad is an imaginary figure,' Housman wrote back, 'with something of my temper and view of life. Very little in the book is biographical.' He continued, '“Reader of the Greek Anthology” is not a good name for me. Of course I have read it, or as much of it is worth reading, but with no special heed... No doubt I have been unconsciously influenced by the Greeks and Latins, but I was surprised when critics spoke of my poetry as “classical”. Its chief sources of which I am conscious are Shakespeare's songs, the Scottish Border ballads, and Heine.'

Emboldened by this testimony, the estimable Housman Society (see Author Societies 10, the book collector, Summer 2011) has published *Housman and Heine: a neglected relationship*, a comparative anthology of the two poets with translations of Heine by Gaston Hall, edited by Jeremy Bourne with four additional exploratory essays (ISBN 978 0 904579 21, £10). Linda Hart, with some assiduous detective work, investigates Housman's relationship with the German governess, Sophie Becker. Becker worked for his parents' friends the Wisers, in

Woodchester, south of Stroud – where the boy Alfred was staying when, on his twelfth birthday, his mother died. Did Fraulein Becker introduce him to German literature? She became a sort of surrogate mother-figure to him, but was she – only fourteen years his senior – also something more? Hart, ignoring the poet's strictures ('Very little in the book is biographical'), speculates unapologetically about the playful lines in *A Shropshire Lad* V that end "Good-bye, young man, good-bye." Housman included Becker on the short list of people to be sent his *Last Poems* and kept in touch with her, in Germany, until the end of her life. She died in 1931, five years before he did.

Henry Woudhuysen, in a contribution entitled 'A.E. Housman and Goethe's "Der Fischer"', gives his imprimatur to 'The water rushed, the water swelled' as the authentic 'rediscovery' of Housman's translation of Goethe's poem – printed as the winning entry of a competition set by Charlotte M. Yonge in *The Monthly Packet of Evening Readings for Younger Members of the English Church* for November 1875 (not recorded by Carter and Sparrow, and preceded only in their bibliography by a contribution in August 1874 to *The Bromsgrove Messenger*).

'Yonge,' says Woudhuysen, 'evidently assumed that A.E. Housman was a young woman' and, indeed, 'The circumstances in which the sixteen-year-old Housman was reading *The Monthly Packet*, a High Church magazine for girls, and translating a poem from the German, whose study he was not to undertake properly until around 1890, were initially puzzling.' But Linda Hart's researches had persuaded him. It was Sophie Becker who 'almost certainly saw the competition in the magazine and suggested that he translate the poem'. What a pity that none of Housman's correspondence with her survives.

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## A Contemporary and Traditional Mix at Tardebigge

Jennie McGregor-Smith's Celebrating English Song series (three concerts on Sunday afternoons in the summer) goes from strength to strength and the last recital of the summer on 18th August was a virtual sell-out. Roderick Williams was the singer with Susie Allan his impeccable partner. The programme was a beautifully balanced one which mixed the traditional (Somervell and Ireland) with the contemporary (Michael Berkeley and Ian Venables). Michael Berkeley gave as good a pre-concert talk as one could ever wish to hear and one felt privileged to hear his uniquely personal memories of Benjamin



Britten – who was his godfather. Housman featured prominently with the John Ireland cycle *The Land of Lost Content* reaching its climax in *The Lent Lily* with Susie Allan's beautiful playing of the eddying piano part. The second performance of Ian Venables *The Pine Boughs Past Music*, based on Gurney's poetry, confirmed what a mature, yet fresh and original voice this is in the English Song world. Roddy Williams was in superb voice throughout the recital and even one weighty former London critic (there for pleasure) went away raving at the quality of the music making, and indeed the whole occasion.



## Sir Geoffrey for Vice President

We are very pleased to announce that Geoffrey Hill has agreed to join the list of the Society's distinguished Vice Presidents. His name has always had a special resonance for Bromsgrovians and his inclusion in our edition of *Three Bromsgrove Poets* made many in the local population aware of what a special poet he was. His poetry is deeply influenced by his surroundings, and in spite of almost twenty years in America his poetry still harks back to his roots. Alan Holden, writing in the introduction to *Three Bromsgrove Poets*, concludes by saying, "As will be obvious, Geoffrey Hill's poetry requires close and attentive reading. Even then, the reader may not be completely sure of his or her whereabouts; but the effort will have been amply rewarded".



*The house on the corner of Victoria Road and Stourbridge Road where Geoffrey Hill was born*

Sir Geoffrey's family have lived in Worcestershire for 200 years and his paternal great-grandfather was a blacksmith at Shrawley, near Stourport, while his mother's family were nailers living on Staple Hill, Lickey End. Geoffrey himself was born in Stourbridge Road, Bromsgrove, and, when he was six, moved to the village of Fairfield where his father was a police constable.

He attended the local primary school, before moving on to the County High School. In 1950 he was admitted to Keble College, Oxford to read English. Upon graduation from Oxford with a first, he embarked on an academic career, teaching at the University of Leeds from 1954 until 1980. After leaving Leeds, he spent a year at the University of Bristol on a Churchill Scholarship before becoming a teaching Fellow at Emmanuel College, Cambridge, where he taught from 1981 until 1988. He then moved to the United States to serve as University Professor and Professor of Literature and Religion at Boston University. In 2006, he moved back to Cambridge. He is married to Alice Goodman who is Rector of a group of Parishes in Cambridgeshire. She has been in the news this year as librettist for John Adams' controversial opera, *The Death of Klinghoffer*, which was produced by English National Opera.

Geoffrey Hill has a string of honours to his name, including Professor of Poetry in the University of Oxford, and he was knighted in the 2012 New Year Honours for services to literature. He has been a prolific writer in recent years and since 2005 he has produced no fewer than twelve books of poetry.

## Autumn Weekend Programme

### Friday 26 October 2012

- 4.00pm Welcoming Tea  
 5.00pm **Verse and Song** – The facets of a setting  
 Talk by Valerie Langfield  
 6.00pm Hot Buffet Supper  
 8.00pm **Song Recital** at Artrix Arts Centre  
 James Rutherford and Simon Lepper  
*A Shropshire Lad* in Poem and Song

### Saturday 27 October

- 9.45am **An A to Z of A.E.H.** Linda Hart  
 11.00am Coffee  
 11.30am **Introduction to Last Poems** by Andrew Maund, followed by members' reading  
 1.00pm Lunch  
 2.00pm **Dear Mrs Ashbee** – The Letters of Laurence Housman and Janet Ashbee. Celia Jones and Pamela Marshall  
 3.15pm **Victorian Pessimism** – talk by Nicholas Shrimpton, Emeritus Fellow Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford  
 4.15pm Tea  
 4.45pm **"I think I am in Love with A.E. Housman....."** Wendy Cope reads her own poems and A.E.H.'s poetry  
 7.30pm Dinner  
 After coffee **A light-hearted look at Parodies, Light Verse and Worse** with Elizabeth Oakley

### Sunday 28 October

- 9.45am **A.E.H. at Cambridge** – Talk by Journal Editor David Butterfield  
 10.45am Coffee  
 11.15am **The Housmans' Route to Bromsgrove**  
 Talk by Julian Hunt  
 12.30pm **Symposium** chaired by David Butterfield  
 1.00pm Lunch  
 2.00pm Optional tour to Dodford to visit the **National Trust Chartist Cottage** with Kate and Robin Shaw.

There is a limit on the numbers that can be accommodated at Housman Hall but **there are still places available**. Full Weekend including 2 nights accommodation, 2 lunches, 2 dinners (all with wine or soft drinks), a concert (with interval drink) and all events. £250.00 (positively no extras!)  
 As above but without accommodation £95.00.

**Individual packages can be arranged to suit delegates' needs.** Full leaflet available. Bookings through the Chairman: <jimpage@btinternet.com> or 01527 878586.

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## Forthcoming Events

Friday 26 to Sunday 28 October 2012

Housman Hall

### THE HOUSMAN SOCIETY WEEKEND

The updated programme is printed on page 15 and all those who have sent a deposit should receive a letter with this mailing giving further details and asking for a final payment. The capacity of Housman Hall is limited but at the moment there are places available.

Thursday 15 November 2012, 4.30pm

Artrix, Slideslow Drive, Bromsgrove

### SCHOOLS POETRY SPEAKING COMPETITION FINALS

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. Support from members and participants family welcome. Free entry.

Tuesday 5 March 2012, 7.30pm

80 New Road, Bromsgrove B60 2LA

### ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The meeting will be followed by a talk on the early history of the Society by Max Hunt to mark the 40th anniversary.

Tuesday 26 March 2013, 12.30pm

The Statue, High Street, Bromsgrove

### A.E.H. BIRTHDAY COMMEMORATION

The annual ceremony by the statue will be followed by a buffet lunch in the Council House, by kind invitation of the Chairman of the District Council. Guest of the Day to be announced.

Monday 30 April 2013, 11.00am

St Laurence's, Ludlow

### LUDLOW COMMEMORATION

The ceremony by the plaque on the north wall will be followed by a tour of Ludlow conducted by Jane Caulcott. The tour will begin at about 11.30 and followed by lunch in The Assembly Rooms.

28/29 May 2013 – Date tbc

The Hay Festival of Literature

### THE HOUSMAN LECTURE

*The Name and Nature of Poetry* – speaker to be announced.

Saturday 13 July 2013

Bredon Hill

### SUMMER EVENT

Join Society members for a walk up Bredon Hill and bring a poem (any author) with a "summer" theme to read at the top. Lunch at a local pub afterwards. Full details in the February Newsletter.

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## Invention in Parody Competition

The response to the Parody Competition announced in the last Newsletter has been very good with a number of excellent entries. The Chairman tried one of them out (Linda Hart's "When I was one-and twenty I heard a banker say...") in his speech at the Bromsgrove Commemoration and it went down so well that members at the Weekend will certainly hear it again there. Modest prizes will be awarded for the winners and those adjudged the best will be read after dinner at the Weekend.

The committee has decided that all submissions will be printed in a compact home-produced A5 booklet. This will be distributed at the Weekend and sent to other contributors by post. Copies will be available to the membership at a modest cost.

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## Membership Matters

**Your membership card is included** with this newsletter. If you do not have a card this means you have not paid your subscription. Please contact Kate Shaw at <kate@shaw-line.com> or phone 01527 831426 or send it to 78 Kidderminster Road, Bromsgrove B61 7LD. If Kate doesn't hear from you she will assume you do not want to continue your membership.

**Do we have your correct e-mail address?** We can contact you about radio and television programmes, articles and other Housman news if we have your e-mail. Please email your address to Kate Shaw at kate@shaw-line.com.

**The continually rising costs of postage** have been making the committee realise that our current subscription rates are not sustainable. There has been no increase for many years and so the decision was made at this year's AGM to raise the rates from May 2013 to £15.00 (£17.50 double) for UK members and £20.00 (£22.50 double) for those living overseas.

A further dilemma has arisen as the dramatic increase in postal rates since the AGM makes us consider other options. One would be to have a two tier subscription (posted hard copy or Internet) whereby Journals and Newsletters are only accessible to members through a password. Even before the latest increase posting last year's Newsletters and Journal cost almost as much as a year's subscription and one has to remember that subscriptions also have to pay for producing our publications, the Society's sponsorships and the cost of events. Your committee will be deliberating on these matters in the coming months but if you have any views the Chairman would be happy to hear from you.

*Published by The Housman Society, 80 New Road, Bromsgrove. The next Newsletter will be circulated in February 2013 and contributions should be sent to the Editor at the address given on page 1 by 1st February 2013.*