

Housman Society Newsletter

No. 44

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Woodchester House, 2016

Housman Society Visit to Woodchester

On 23 July, 19 members of the Society visited Woodchester in Gloucestershire. This was where A.E. Housman's mother, Sarah Jane Williams, grew up and where the poet enjoyed many summer holidays with his godmother, Elizabeth Mary Wise. Our group met for coffee at the Ram Inn, which is situated on the old road through Woodchester. The catering had been arranged in advance by our Secretary, Max Hunt. After refreshments, we made our way through a pair of imposing gateposts and took the curving driveway up to

Woodchester House. We passed a bank of eucalyptus trees, planted by the current owner, Richard Hains, an Australian who bought the house in 2003. The ample grounds of the house are populated with wallabies, another aspect of Mr Hains' nostalgia for his native country.

On passing through another pair of imposing gateposts we gained our first view of the house, an elegant stone structure, three storeys high and five bays wide, with views across the valley. The house is symmetrical, with two tall sash windows either side of the fine Gibbsian doorway. Mr Hains gave us free run of the

house, which has a very wide hallway with an elegant 18th-century staircase, lit by a tall venetian window. The dining room had a large modern table around which the group sat to hear two presentations.

First off was Julian Hunt, who explained that Woodchester House was one of several fine houses in the parish built by wealthy clothiers in the 17th and 18th centuries. Woodchester was famous for its super-fine broad cloths which were finished in the fulling mills in the bottom of the valley. In the late 18th century, the more ambitious clothiers installed Arkwright's water frames to spin the yarn, and in the 19th century erected large weaving sheds filled with power looms. One of the clothiers, James Harrison of Woodchester House, was bankrupt in 1826, and the solicitor supposedly tidying up his finances was none other than William Housman, then living at nearby Tetbury. Housman had himself been bankrupt in London in 1821, so he was well qualified to help. Housman bought Harrison's house, no doubt at a bargain price, and set up as a solicitor there.

William Housman and his growing family lived at Woodchester until 1834, when they let Woodchester House as a girls' school and moved to Salisbury. After another bankruptcy, William Housman sold the lease of his house in The Close, Salisbury, and returned to Woodchester in 1840. His sons Frank, then aged 11, and Henry, aged 8, were excited by the wide open spaces of Woodchester and the lush flora and fauna it offered. They established their own museum in one of the bedrooms of Woodchester House, an enterprise lovingly recalled in the Rev. Henry Housman's book, *The Story of Our Museum*, published by S.P.C.K. in 1881.

It was probably another financial crisis which caused the Housmans to leave Woodchester in 1844, but William Housman remained on the voters list into the 1850s, suggesting that he retained ownership of Woodchester House. After another bankruptcy in Brighton in 1851, William Housman found it necessary to leave the country, and his whereabouts thereafter and the date of his death remain a complete mystery. His wife Mary moved to London where she died in 1876, but their daughter, Lucy Agnes, was to maintain her Woodchester

connections. She is said to have introduced the rector's daughter, Sarah Jane Williams, to Edward Housman (they were married at Woodchester in 1858) and she became Edward Housman's second wife after Sarah Jane's death in 1871.

The new occupant of Woodchester House in 1844 was Edward Wise, who with his brother John had leased the nearby Woodchester Mills. In 1850, Edward Wise made an advantageous marriage to Elizabeth Mary Woollright, daughter of a very wealthy Liverpool merchant. The Wises became pillars of the Woodchester community, and became very friendly with the Rev. John Williams and his daughter Sarah Jane. Elizabeth Wise gave the land for the new church in Woodchester, completed in 1863. They had three children, Edward, Edith and Minnie, whose education was in the capable hands of Sophie Becker, a German governess. The Wise family were to play a key role in A.E. Housman's upbringing, especially as he was staying at Woodchester House in 1871 when the news came through from Bromsgrove of his mother's death on the 26th of March – his own 12th birthday.



Sophie Becker 1845-1931

At this point Julian handed over to Linda Hart to continue the story. She felt that Mr and Mrs

Wise, age 63 and 44 respectively, might have advised the intelligent and mature 12-year-old to have faced his bereavement with a “stiff upper lip,” whereas Sophie Becker, 26 years old and spending all her time with the two Wise daughters (age 14 and 17), would have been more sympathetic and supportive. Sophie probably would have included him in the schoolroom and extracurricular activities she arranged for them. Linda brought Woodchester House to life by pointing out that we might well be sitting in the very room where Housman learned of his mother’s death. She read to us the letter Mrs Wise would have read while, perhaps, sitting where we were now sitting -- a letter Housman wrote to her from the Oxford Union on 25 November 1878.

Linda recounted the circumstances in which the 16 ½ year old Housman entered and won a competition for translating a poem by Goethe. The contest was advertised in *The Monthly Packet*, an improving magazine for young girls, which Sophie Becker most likely used in teaching Edith and Minnie Wise. Linda felt sure that it was Sophie Becker who had encouraged him to enter the competition. If we want to look for the start of Housman’s career as a poet, this is where it began.

For the chapter she wrote about Sophie Becker in the Society’s 2011 publication, *Housman and Heine*, Linda had read all of the Woodchester House visitors’ books (on a microfilm made available by Indiana University Library). A.E. Housman’s name – with the dates of his arrival and departure -- stand out among many enthusiastic entries made by visitors. Thus we know that Housman continued to visit almost every year throughout his life. Linda read out several of the light verses he had written during his visits, including one about Edith and Minnie Wise which ended with the immortal lines: *“Here ends the tale of the two Miss Wises. It might be true if it wasn’t lieses.”*

The party then returned to the Ram Inn for lunch. Richard Hains had presented Linda and Julian with a photocopy of the Woodchester House visitors’ books, which several people enjoyed looking through during the lunch break. We then walked to the parish church, a large Victorian structure with a very tall spire. We examined the stained glass window in

memory of the Rev. John Williams. This had caused quite a stir in Woodchester in 1863. David Gegg of the Woodchester History Society explained that some of the imagery in the window was regarded as ‘popish’ by some parishioners. He read extracts of a long erudite letter from the Rev. Williams’s daughter, Sarah Jane Housman, in which she explained the ecclesiological background of each panel in the window, and defended the choice of design.



Woodchester Church, built 1863

Our next stop was Oakley House, to which Edward Tuppen Wise and his sisters Edith and Minnie removed after their mother’s death in 1911. It was an elegant early-Victorian house, with a sun dial on the wall and overlooking a large lawn. It had once belonged to a pin manufacturer, Alfred Perkins, who was a supporter of the local Baptist church and politically to the left. Jeanette Day, a descendant of the Wise family, had with her the text of Housman’s amusing poem on the conservative Wises moving into this house:

*“This is the house where Perkins dwelt,
Lord of the mill of pins;
And here, where Radical Dissent
Once pitched its pure and pious tent,*

*Atrocious Tories make their lair
And use the Book of Common Prayer.
Oh, home of Perkins, can it be
That things like this are done in thee?”*



Oakley House, Woodchester, 2016

We then walked northwards to the old graveyard where the chancel arch of the medieval church still stands among the monuments and tombs of Woodchester’s wealthy clothiers. In her second talk of the day, Linda explained that the original parish church had been built on the site of an important Roman villa. Twenty of the villa’s 64 rooms had mosaic floors, but the biggest and best was the Orpheus Mosaic, 47 feet square, and reckoned by scholars to be the finest Roman mosaic floor in Britain, and the largest and most complex one in northern Europe.

A full archaeological excavation was made in 1780, resulting in publication of a book describing the mosaic, illustrated with a

variety of animals surrounding the central figure of Orpheus playing his lyre. The mosaic is covered by three feet of earth, but on rare occasions (the last time was in 1973) it has been uncovered for public inspection. When Housman was visiting the Wises in 1926 he wrote to tell his sister Kate that the mosaic had been uncovered and he had been pressed into service, giving talks about Roman Woodchester.

On our way back to the Ram Inn, we passed Elmsleigh, the home of Edward Tuppen Wise and his sisters from 1928. It is a handsome two-storey house in ashlar stone, situated on the corner of Southfields Road and Church Road. On Housman’s last visits to Woodchester, he had to stay at a local guest



Housman Society members at the old graveyard, Woodchester

house, as Elmsleigh did not have enough bedrooms. It was here that Edith Wise died in 1930, to be followed by Minnie in 1931 and Edward Tuppen Wise in 1934.



Elmsleigh House, Woodchester, 2016

Back at the Ram Inn, we refreshed ourselves for the journey home. Thanks were given to Max Hunt for arranging the event, and to Julian Hunt and Linda Hart for their research and presentations on the day. Thanks were also expressed to Richard Hains who had given us such ready access to Woodchester House.

From the Secretary's Desk

For our second Newsletter of 2016 we welcome a new Editor. My scribblings of last time included a note of relief that, amongst all the gaps to be plugged as we approached Jim Page's retirement, the task of setting and publishing the Newsletter would be taken on by Julian Hunt. In the event, our Editor for the last eight years, Andrew Maund, announced his wish to stand down and Julian has now agreed to take over the whole process of producing our twice-yearly news sheet. Readers will see that we are marking the change by adding colour to the printing to give everyone a benefit otherwise seen only in the electronic version.

We thank Andrew for his care and skill in editing fifteen issues since he took over from Stephen de Winton in 2008. I think we often fail to appreciate all the time and effort that an editing task demands, whether in coaxing contributions from sometimes reluctant authors, ensuring reasonable balance in content, or even occasionally having to deploy tact in rejecting unsuitable offerings. Andrew has, of course, also been a regular contributor himself. Most notable have been his reports on the Hay lectures when he has invariably managed to convey the flavour and thrust of

the presentation with admirable style and economy of language. His report on this year's lecture appears on page 9. It is a role I hope he will be able to maintain from his continuing position of Society Vice-Chairman.

As the Society does now come to terms with Jim Page's retirement it would be fair to say that your new Secretary has not been overwhelmed by responses to his invitation for members to offer their thoughts about future directions. Indeed the AGM, held as ever on a dreary evening, in March, attracted only a thin attendance. However, much more encouraging on a glorious summer Saturday was the level of support for the Woodchester visit (see report elsewhere). There are clearly lessons for me to draw in attempting to shape our future programme.

I have previously expressed a wish to strengthen the Society's Ludlow presence and so for 2017 we are abandoning the March AGM and instead, as will be evident from the "Forthcoming Events" column, combining the meeting with the Ludlow Commemoration day at the end of April. Meanwhile I am engaging with the Ludlow Town Council to explore various opportunities for collaboration. Immediately we are looking at ways the Society might support the recently re-opened Buttercross Museum with some form of display and the sale of publications and greeting cards. A similar arrangement has operated for some years with the Much Wenlock Council in their historic Guildhall.

A further development is that Jane Allsopp, known to many of you for her splendid 1995 publication "The Land of Lost Content", has accepted co-option to the Committee as our own Ludlow representative. Through her role we anticipate that the Society's voice will be better heard in the deliberations of a number of local organisations. Above all we hope that a Springtime AGM, coupled with an interesting Commemoration programme will encourage more members to get involved.

Another feature of the 2017 programme is the planned visit to Cambridge. Elsewhere in this issue we can happily report the acquisition by Trinity College Library of a tranche of letters recently offered for sale by the Jackson family. There may well have been a public

announcement of this important acquisition by the time members read our own report. The letters, some 53 in total, were written by A.E. Housman to his godson, and the Society, as you might expect, gave strong support to the Trinity College librarian in his bid to give them a suitable home. We look forward to an opportunity to see them in Cambridge next summer.

A sad note on which to conclude this time must be to report the death on June 30th of Sir Geoffrey Hill, a Vice-President of the Society and Oxford Professor of Poetry 2010-2015. An obituary by Robin Shaw whose "Three Bromsgrove Poets" anthology (second edition 2012) included a selection of Geoffrey Hill's poems appears elsewhere.
M.H. 08/16

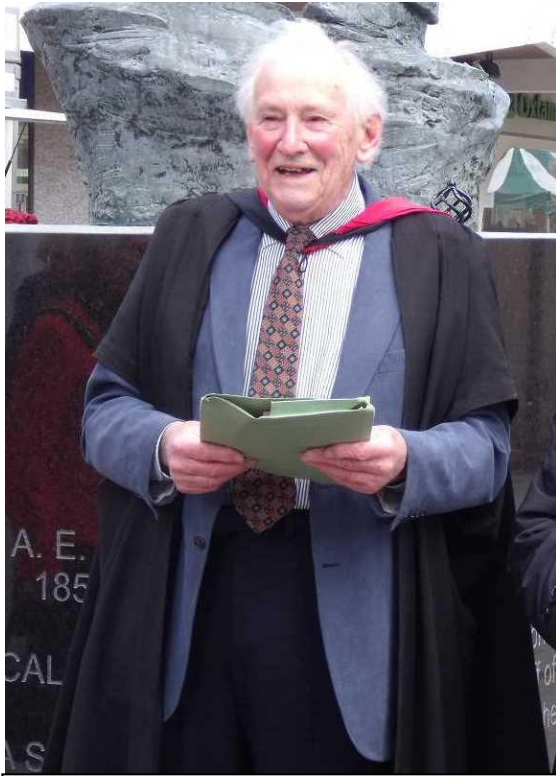
Farewell to Jim

After twenty-nine years steering the Society's fortunes, Jim page stood down as Chairman at the AGM on March 3rd. Over that time, as all members will be aware, Jim took on a great deal more than the normal role of a Chairman. As well as being the public face of the Society, he shouldered all the administrative duties of Secretary. He was effectively John Pugh and Joe Hunt rolled into one. His retirement leaves a very large hole.

In presenting his final Chairman's Report to the Society, Jim, in characteristically self-effacing style, told us that "although no academic" he had learned much from members and developed an "instinctive sympathy" for AEH. Reflecting on some of the highlights of the twenty-nine years he picked out the 1996 ASL centenary year as having generated much activity leading, amongst other things, to a variety of Society publications. In the following year, Tom Stoppard's "Invention of Love" had left enduring memories of several subsequent productions.

Social activity had included summer walks and impressive library visits to such as Eton College and UCL. The wider cause of poetry had been fostered by first the writing competition and more recently the reading prizes for local school students. On the national scene the Society's profile had been

raised by the sponsoring of the annual “Name and Nature” lecture at the Hay Festival, while the Journal had enabled the publication of many important and worthwhile articles over the years. In the last twelve months, Blue Plaques had been placed in Street and at Bromsgrove School.



Jim Page at the Birthday Celebration, 2016

Jim paid tribute to the “unfailing support” of the many Committee members over the years whose hard work had made the Society the success it had been.

In response Max Hunt, as the new Secretary, emphasised the remarkable nature of Jim’s service. For more than a quarter of a century his name had been synonymous with that of the Society and its progress had been the result of his tireless energy in both day-to-day administration and such major tasks as setting the twice-yearly Newsletter and organising the residential study week-ends. Max announced that Jim had been offered and had accepted a Vice-Presidency of the Society. To mark his retirement, a copy of the rare 1990 Tern Press edition of *A Shropshire Lad* had been bound in leather and specially inscribed. It was presented by Treasurer Peter Sisley as a token of the Society’s gratitude and appreciation.

Forthcoming Events

Friday 24th March 2017, 12.30pm
By the statue in Bromsgrove High Street
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.

Saturday 29th April 2017, 11.00am
The Charlton Arms, Ludlow.
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
Details with the February Newsletter
To be followed by lunch

Saturday 29th April 2017, 2.30pm
St Laurence’s Ludlow
LUDLOW COMMEMORATION

30/31 May 2017, date tbc
The Hay Festival of Literature
THE HOUSMAN LECTURE
Speaker to be announced.

Saturday 22nd July, provisional date
Trinity College Cambridge
LIBRARY VISIT
An opportunity to see the recently acquired Jackson letters.



Whewell’s Court, Trinity College. A.E. Housman’s rooms were in the tower.

Birthday Commemoration

Because A.E. Housman's actual birthday, 26 March, fell this year on Easter Saturday, the annual celebration of his birth beside his statue in Bromsgrove's High Street was held instead on Tuesday 29 March. Jim Page, our retiring Chairman, addressed the crowd, which included Caroline Spencer, Civic Head of Bromsgrove District Council, and many members of the Housman Society. Jim explained how the statue had originally been erected in 1985, following vigorous fund raising by Bromsgrove solicitor, John Pugh, and another founding member of the Housman Society, Birmingham businessman Joe Hunt.



Dennis Norton, beside the newly refurbished statue of A.E. Housman, 26 March 2016

As part of the Bromsgrove High Street improvements, the statue of A.E. Housman was temporarily removed and returned with new inscriptions on black granite panels around its base. Unfortunately, the new panels did not overlap, leaving unsightly gaps at each corner, where the original concrete base was still visible. Dennis Norton, the indefatigable promoter of Bromsgrove's Museum, came to the rescue and produced elegant iron columns

with small finials to stand at each corner of the plinth. The result is so appropriate that no-one would believe that the columns were not part of the original design.

Dennis was of course extremely busy, having recently completed the purchase of the Museum building on Birmingham Road which in fact re-opened this May. Jim went on to applaud Dennis Norton's ingenuity and generosity in completing the refurbishment of the Housman statue, and invited him to read a poem from '*A Shropshire Lad*'. Dennis's rendition of 'Loveliest of trees, the cherry now' was warmly received.

After the celebration, the party walked to Housman Hall, where lunch was served by courtesy of Bromsgrove School.

Ludlow Commemoration 2016

On 30 April, Ludford Bridge was closed to traffic and with Ludlow Fair in full swing, Castle Square and the surrounding streets were closed. However, this did not stop a good number of members from gathering and, with an inter-regnum still in place at St Laurence's, the traditional service by the plaque on the north wall was led by Andrew Body, who retired to Ludlow from his parish in Sussex some years ago. He has been a Church of England clergyman for over 40 years and with impressive credentials it was obvious we were in safe hands. Appropriate poems (*The First of May* and *Soldiers from the war returning*) were read and the service had its usual simplicity in this beautiful setting.

After coffee in St Laurence's, we walked down to the Charlton Arms where Liz Oakley and Andrew Maund shared a talk on the 'Housman family in Peace and War'. By bringing together the military poems of AEH and the letters from active service in Burma of his younger brother, George Herbert, much insight was given into the background of the conflicts at this time as well as exploring the inspiration that this provided for many of Housman's finest poems. Andrew Maund looked at these poems in greater detail, considering their place and importance in literature and the way in which many shades of conflict form the

subject matter of Housman's writing. Liz also expanded on the role of Laurence Housman in the pacifist movement in the early 20th century and included fascinating material from Laurence's own writing. A good lunch in The Charlton Arms restaurant, with its fine view of Ludlow's famous tower, concluded another enjoyable Commemoration.

**The Housman Lecture:
The Name and Nature of Poetry
 by Peter Parker; Hay Literary Festival,
 31 May 2016
 by Andrew Maund**



Peter Parker signing books at the Hay Festival, 2016

Peter Parker is a renowned literary figure and his appearance at the Hay Festival coincided with the publication of his latest book, *Housman Country*, which is a magnificent read and thoroughly recommended to members. Its sub-title, *'Into the Heart of England'*, indicates how the essential Englishness of Housman's poetry is such an important factor in its continuing appeal. It was that appeal, as well as the influence of previous poets and the shadow of wars past, present and future, that formed the meat of what many considered one of the most thought-provoking and satisfying Housman lectures at Hay for some years.

The intimacy of 'The Cube' venue reinforced the personal quality of the reflections which our speaker wove together so seamlessly into such an effective whole, although the music playing as the audience took their seats was more suitable for the bright and breezy May weather than the subject matter which followed. He began the lecture by referring to

something Housman had written about poetry eighteen years before the original Leslie Stephen Lecture of 1933, in a letter of condolence to his sister Kate, whose son Clement had been killed in action at the Battle of Loos. 'I do not know that I can do better than send you some verses that I wrote many years ago,' Housman wrote, 'because the essential business of poetry, as it has been said, is to harmonise the sadness of the universe, and it is somehow more sustaining and more healing than prose.' The fact that the person who 'said' that was none other than Sir Leslie Stephen himself was the first of a number of delightful ironies and coincidences that formed the weave and weft of the fabric of the lecture we enjoyed. Carefully deployed irony is, Parker reminded the audience, as notable a feature of Housman's poetry as it is of his correspondence, the inevitable response, perhaps, of someone who had at an early age "seen God's works clearly and found them wanting". Housman may not have really believed that the purpose of poetry, and of his own poetry in particular, was to cheer people up, as he had suggested in some of his correspondence, but the notion that poetry is 'somehow more sustaining and more healing than prose' was his own gloss upon Leslie Stephen's definition.

Our speaker then explored the critical verb "harmonise" from that definition; Housman's habitual insistence that he knew nothing about music was called into question by the discovery, during the work on *Housman Country*, of an unpublished letter that Housman had written to the composer Arthur Somervell that suggests he knew much more about music than he pretended, and was perfectly able, for example, to discuss the differences between the diatonic and chromatic scales. Parker concluded that Housman had the specifically musical notion of harmonizing in mind when he quoted Stephen's definition. He may also have been thinking more specifically of his own poetry, in which personal sadness is harmonized and made into art. Personal experience had a considerable influence upon the poetry Housman wrote, and it was his own world, rather than the one he merely observed, that had gone awry in his early years. His beloved mother had died on his twelfth birthday, something that, according to Kate, 'roused

within him an early resentment against nature's relentless ways of destruction' – a frequent theme of his poems. Having arrived at Oxford on a scholarship and garlanded with almost every prize his school could offer, Housman fell in love with someone who was unable to respond in kind, lost his faith in Christianity, and ended up failing his finals. What he called 'the great and real troubles of my early manhood' would dog him his entire life, as would his hopeless, unreciprocated love for Moses Jackson. The very act of creating poetry was a way of confronting these troubles, containing difficult and upsetting feelings within the framework of verse that is both conventional in its form and mostly very brief in its extent.

The sustaining and healing that poetry supposedly provided for both writers and readers was in great demand when Housman wrote the letter of condolence to his sister. By the autumn of 1915 the First World War had been going on for over a year and the appalling death toll was steadily mounting. Parker's lecture was delivered just a month before the centenary of the First Day on the Somme, 1 July 1916, a day on which the British Army suffered some 60,000 casualties in 24 hours; poetry was being written and read at a time when 'the sadness of the universe' had become particularly acute. The "verses" that Housman sent were, in slightly different form, those that had already been published under the title *'Illic Jacet'* ('There lies...') in the *Academy* magazine in February 1900 and later, of course, in *Last Poems*. It is a poem, as members will recognise, of the South African War rather than the First World War yet, as our speaker pointed out, the sustaining and healing qualities of this poem are neither conventional nor immediately obvious, Housman's concern being principally for the dead soldier rather than those who are mourning him, and this is something that the poem shares with the best-known poetry of the First World War, where the emotional focus tends to be upon dead or suffering fellow-soldiers rather than bereaved or anxious wives and sweethearts at home. As such, Housman's place among the most renowned of war poets in the canon is richly deserved. Personal experience of the loss of loved ones in war was something which Housman had already experienced before he wrote to Kate of

Clement's death, because his own youngest brother, Herbert, had enlisted in the ranks and been killed in the Boer War – though this particular poem was written before Herbert's death.

It is well recognised that although his work is often included in anthologies of First World War poetry, Housman wrote only one poem in direct response to the conflict. *'Epitaph on an Army of Mercenaries'* appeared in *The Times* on 31 October 1917; at a time when most of the war poetry that appeared in newspapers extolled selfless patriotism, 'devotion to duty' and 'the supreme sacrifice', the very title of this poem, Parker commented, seemed provocative. Housman was, Parker reminded us, referring to the original British Expeditionary Force, made up of professional soldiers who were technically mercenaries because they took the king's shilling in exchange for fighting wherever the army sent them. At the same time, he was rebutting German propaganda that had dismissed the BEF as nothing *but* mercenaries. The Scottish politician and writer William Darling would declare in 1931 that the poem 'does in eight lines what the official histories of the war cannot do in volumes', while Kipling described its two brief stanzas as 'the finest lines of poetry written during the war'. Our speaker referred to the work of many of the poets of the Great War to explore the contrasting styles of their writing and the innovative and modern style of Housman's poetry among the others.

It is a well-known assertion that, with its poetry full of the quintessential Englishness of a rural idyll for which they were fighting and also the untimely death of so many young men, by the outbreak of the war the one book that was 'in every pocket' of the soldiers was *A Shropshire Lad*. This may be something of an exaggeration, but there is a good deal of anecdotal evidence that many men carried the book with them to the front. The personal inscriptions in Siegfried Sassoon's own copy, for example, make it clear that he had carried the book with him to the Western Front, then to the Middle East, and then back to France. Parker went on to explore, in fascinating detail, the range of poetic, prosaic and non-fiction reading material that was available to the increasingly literate populace at the time of

the Great War; some providing factual information, some stirring patriotic feeling and some of it, like *ASL*, evoking memories of an immemorial England of the kind it was felt serving soldiers dreamed about in the trenches. While written in a previous century, *ASL*'s frequent focus upon the untimely death of young men clearly had relevance during the war, but it also reflects a universal theme to be found in classical as well as contemporary literature, 'those whom the gods love die young'; this is a notion with which Housman the Classicist would be very familiar – as indeed would all those classically-educated young men who served as junior officers in the war, often leading their equally young soldiers over the top to almost certain death. It is poems such as these that prompted the American poet Robert Lowell to write: 'One feels Housman foresaw the Somme'.

Parker closed his fascinating lecture by returning to Housman's letter to Kate and the inclusion of '*Illic Jacet*'; he commented that it might seem odd that Housman should have sent his grieving sister this poem that seems not to perform the role he outlined in the accompanying letter, when he had another near-perfect poem to hand, a poem that really does harmonize the sadness of the universe and is more obviously sustaining and healing, *ASL XXIII*, "*The lads in their hundreds...*", with its poignant concluding lines,

*They carry back bright to the coiner the
mintage of man,
The lads that will die in their glory and never
be old.*

Parker suspects he may have thought that it would be less personal to send a poem that had appeared in a much reprinted volume. It was also a poem about the fate of an individual soldier rather than 'lads in their hundreds', and it linked Clement's own war and death with those of his Uncle Herbert. But Parker closed by referring to the fact that it was, however, another of Housman's poems that Clement himself apparently found sustaining. *LP III*, "*Her strong enchantments failing...*" was written at the same time as the poems of *ASL*, and originally intended for that volume, but for some reason Housman withdrew it at proof stage, and it would eventually be published as the poem that immediately preceded '*Illic*

Jacet' in *LP*. Before that, it too had been published in the memorial supplement to Clement's school magazine, in a variant form and under the title '*The Conflict*'.

Clement had copied this poem into an autograph book before he set off for the front, and because it had not at that point been published, we must assume that Housman had shown it to his nephew. We are told that Clement himself 'believed the poem to depict the vanquishment of cowardice', and this would undoubtedly make sense if, as his mother claimed, he expected to be killed in the war. We don't know whether Clement, like so many of his generation, took a copy of *ASL* to war; but it is surely significant that Housman's personal gift to his nephew was a single, sustaining poem that brought comfort to one young soldier as, "*Dear to friends and food for powder...*", he marched off to the trenches. As so often, in this example Housman's poetry hits exactly the right spot, setting up a visceral resonance, and that quivering vibration of appreciation at the poignancy of the message was something felt by the audience too as this excellent lecture drew to its close.

Andrew Maund teaches English at King's School Worcester, and for many years was editor of the Housman Society Newsletter

Housman Country

Linda Hart reviews *Housman Country: Into the Heart of England* by Peter Parker (Little, Brown, 446 pages including notes, bibliography and index; plus the complete *ASL* poems and six Agnes Miller Parker illustrations), RRP £25.00.

Can there be such a thing as a biography of a book of poems? This question occurred to me while reading Peter Parker's *Housman Country*. It is not a biography of Housman (though there is much about him in it); it is not a book of literary criticism (though there are excellent explications of Housman's poems); it is not a guide to Housman's Shropshire (though Shropshire, Shrewsbury, Ludlow and the Severn River have long entries in the index while Clun, Clee Hills and Long Mynd have shorter ones). Suddenly it came to me:

Housman Country is best described as a biography of *A Shropshire Lad*.

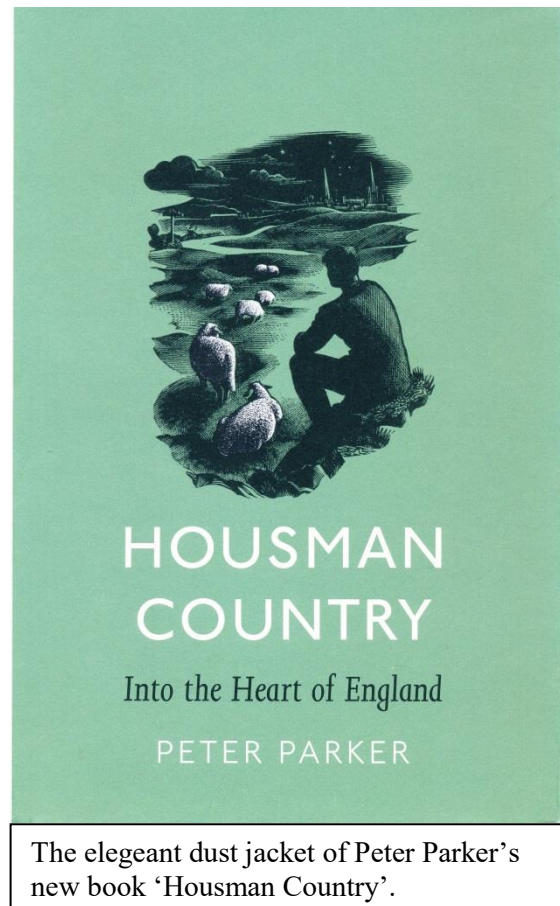
A biographical study of a life looks at the subject's origins and antecedents; it sketches the world and community the subject was born into – its milieu, values, beliefs; it looks at the subject's early life, then at his/her growing reputation as time goes by, and explores turning points that made a big difference. A biographer describes the subject's influence on other people, and what admirers and detractors thought about him/her. Biographies end with the subject's legacy and how he/she is thought of today. They may or may not end with the subject's death.

You can see where I am going with this analogy. Parker tells us the background to, the origin of, and the inspiration for *ASL* – why and how the poems were conceived, how the book came to be born in 1896, and how it differed from other books of poetry born in that decade. We learn of *ASL*'s slow growth, then the help and support it received from an admirer, Grant Richards. We read about who befriended, admired, praised and promoted *ASL*, during its author's life and long after his death. There is a significant turning point: the Great War. The subject's chief characteristics are described, as well as its internal workings, its strengths, the way it conceals and reveals. Above all we learn about *ASL*'s affinity with, and its expression of, ideas that express *Englishness*. There are separate chapters on those who were especially attracted to the *ASL* poems: composers and soldiers. Most biographies end with the death, burial and funeral of its subject -- unless the subject is alive. In this case, the subject is very much alive -- still selling, still being read, still being set to music, still being discussed.

In a first short chapter Parker traces the popularity of *ASL* during the past 120 years. He then raises the theme that recurs throughout the book: the 'Englishness' of Housman's poetry. From the beginning, readers sensed 'that *A Shropshire Lad* represented something recognisably ... English.' The author discusses the concept of Englishness and how it developed, noting that 'the countryside remained the true locus of "Englishness". England has always been defined by its landscape.' He then concludes

that 'the location of *A Shropshire Lad* in a particular if largely imaginary English landscape was a major contribution to the book's popularity and longevity.'

This is true, but the book has many enthusiastic readers in Japan and America who have never been to England. My father comes into this category. He was born in 1907 in New York City. I have on my desk his American "Cameo Classics" illustrated first edition (1932) of *ASL*, inscribed to him from a friend on Christmas day 1941. And I come into this category: I was captivated by *ASL* long before I moved to England in 1975. Parker doesn't say it's *essential* to know English landscape to 'get' the poetry, but the overall impression is that the two are inextricably linked. I don't think this is the case.



Parker's longest chapter (135 pages) is titled 'The Man and His Book'. This is the heart of his study, where he excels at elucidating and illuminating *ASL* as a whole, as well as the individual poems. The eight-page discussion of 'Shot? so quick, so clean an ending?'

(XLIV) is masterly. He is especially thought-provoking when showing how the 63 poems 'are carefully related to each other' and pointing out many fascinating echoes between them. These echoes include themes that recur, such as premature death or the changes wrought by time; subjects that reappear such as soldiers, lovers, lads; favourite Housman words such as friends and friendship, hearts and hands, troubles and troubled -- and words connected with death and dying.

Speaking of death and dying, Parker says that *ASL* has a reputation for being 'overwhelmingly gloomy' and he refers to 'the volume's dark humour'. He believes that the melancholy of the poems 'has always been part of their appeal'. Perhaps. But I think there is another reason that a book of 63 poems which tell tragic truths about humanity have been read and enjoyed by the man-in-the-street for the past 120 years. It is because the poems are so harmonious, lilting and tuneful that the melancholy message is diminished. The praise that a 16-year-old Housman heaped on a poem by Goethe -- 'the exquisitely melodious cadence of the verses' -- applies to the poems he himself would write twenty years later. Their sheer musicality -- when we read them aloud or silently, or hear them read by a consummate professional like Gabriel Woolf -- provides temporary hope and comfort despite the message that the words convey. There are two messages in most Housman poems, and the felicity of one makes the heartbreak of the other easier to endure.

Parker talks about 'the faint note of suppressed homosexual desire that sounds like a muffled drumbeat throughout the book' but admits this is only so to those who know the poet's life. I think it is difficult to separate Housman's sorrow and anger about suppressed homosexual desire from his sorrow and anger about unrequited love. In Housman's case the two co-existed, so in many poems you cannot be certain *why* he is railing against 'whatever brute and blackguard made the world.'

The next three chapters focus on 'English Landscape', 'English Music', and 'English Soldiers'. While reading the first of these, I kept thinking that if Parker ever gives up writing about literary figures (he has written biographies of Christopher Isherwood and J.R.

Ackerley) he could have a brilliant career writing about the English countryside. His lyrical descriptions of Shropshire cannot be bettered. Another joy of this book is cameo appearances by so many writers -- in this chapter we read about Masfield, Coleridge, Hazlitt, W.H. Davies, E.M. Forster, Willa Cather and Rupert Brooke. It's easy to focus on the uniqueness of *ASL*, but Parker helpfully reminds us of its place in literary history by pointing out that its overarching theme was not new: 'the contrast between a simple, innocent pastoral world and a sophisticated and corrupt urban one had been common literary currency in Europe for many centuries....'

Lovers of the many Housman poems that have been turned into songs will find the chapter on 'English Music' worth the price of the book. It is 76 pages packed with everything you need to know about when, where and why Housman's poems were set. They were 'among the most frequently set of all English verse during the twentieth century'. Parker calls it 'the wholesale ransacking by composers of his poetry' and explains the poet's not always consistent views on this phenomenon. This chapter discusses classical music and art songs, before returning to the theme of English landscape and how English composers celebrated it. There is well-informed commentary about the music of Hubert Parry, Cecil Sharp, Vaughan Williams, Arthur Somervell, George Butterworth, John Ireland, Ivor Gurney, Charles Wilfred Orr and Edward Elgar (Parker grew up in the Herefordshire-Worcestershire countryside and one senses a particular affinity with Elgar). If he doesn't take up a new career as a writer on the English countryside he could become a music critic.

We are taken from art song composers to First World War poets, i.e. to a chapter titled 'English Soldiers' -- a subject he has written about in his acclaimed book, *The Old Lie: The Great War and the Public School Ethos*. Parker discusses a range of 'war poets' to help explain why *ASL* was so popular during the war. As this was the focus of his Hay-on-Wye lecture, please see Andrew Maund's article on page 6 of this newsletter.

In summary, Parker's comprehensive study shows convincingly how much influence *ASL*

and AEH have had on English culture in the last one hundred years. Poetry, drama, fiction, music, travel writing are all covered. Jim Page, who knows a thing or two about Housman, read the book and told me: 'I am continually asking myself "How on earth did he find that out?"' He refers to so many people who were all the rage when I was young: Arthur Mee, S.P.B. Mais, Mary Webb, William Rothenstein, Stanley Baldwin, Charles Edwards (Bishop of Worcester), and even the Shell County Guides.'

If this book *is* a biography of ASL, is the 'subject' still alive and well? In his final paragraph the author bids us to disregard literary fashions and cultural arbiters. Irrespective of what they might say, 'ordinary readers ... have continued to respond to the poems as Housman hoped they would, have felt the vibration he wanted to set up in them, and have continued to read *A Shropshire Lad* for 120 years.'

Some people think that reading a book review excuses them from reading the book. If that's you, make an exception for *Housman Country*. Buy it, read it, enjoy it. The poems in *A Shropshire Lad* will never be the same again. You will have a much better idea of how they 'work' and why they make you feel as you do. You will admire more than ever the genius who made them and the skill that went into creating them.

Linda Hart has been writing for, lecturing to, and attending meetings of the Housman Society since 1996.

None That Go Return

By Linda Hart

Housman's poems continue to inspire and to influence. Sometimes it is not a whole poem that does so, but simply a few words. And sometimes when a few words are perfectly suited to a situation, the inspiration and influence result in using the words verbatim.

This is the case with a fascinating book by Don Farr titled *None That Go Return: Leighton, Brittain and Friends, and the Lost Generation 1914-18*. 'Leighton' refers to

Roland Leighton, the fiancé of Vera Brittain; 'Brittain' refers to her brother Edward, who was at school with Roland and a close friend of his; and the 'friends' were Victor Richardson and Geoffrey Thurlow, two other friends of Roland and Edward.

In the summer of 1914 they had all just left their public schools, and were about to enter Oxbridge colleges, when their world was turned upside down. Instead of seeking college digs they sought army commissions and were soon serving as infantry subalterns. None of them returned from the First World War.

Vera Brittain's life and writings have received a great deal of attention, especially since publication of her books *Testament of Youth* (made into a recent film) and *Testament of Experience*. Don Farr puts the focus on the four men in her life, and what happened to them between the autumn of 1914 when their lives were full of promise and the end of 1918 when they were all dead.

*East and west on fields forgotten
Bleach the bones of comrades slain,
Lovely lads and dead and rotten;
None that go return again.*

Stanza three of ASL XXXV ('On the idle hill of summer')

The book is part social history, part military history, part love story, part a tribute to human endurance. It is well written, and full of quotes from letters that are unbearably moving at times. It is a book that deserves to be associated, by way of the title, with A.E. Housman's high standards of writing and Scholarship

None That Go Return is only available direct from the author at a much reduced price -- £19.00 for the hardback, £14.00 for the paperback, post free. Send a cheque made out to Don Farr to Don Farr, 81 Oxford Road, Wokingham, Berkshire RG41 2YH.

A.E. Housman's letters to Gerald Jackson

by Linda Hart

When Oxford University Press published Archie Burnett's *The Letters of A.E. Housman* in March 2007, most of us assumed that was it – everything, the whole lot, each epistle he had written was now in print. We silently inserted the word “complete” before the word “Letters” in the book's title (especially those who paid a small fortune for the two volumes). Given Burnett's reputation as a diligent, industrious and persevering scholar, and given that 1,200 pages were required to publish AEH's letters, surely no more would ever come to light.

But 53 letters have come to light, all to one person – a person of some significance in the Housman story as they relate to Moses Jackson. Rosa and Moses Jackson had four sons. The youngest was Gerald, born in India in 1900. When Housman was asked by Moses to be Gerald's godfather he readily agreed. The 53 unpublished letters that have not been seen before are from AEH to Gerald Jackson.

There are a few passing references to Gerald in Richard Perceval Graves's biography: AEH was paying for Gerald's medical training, AEH was generous to Gerald in his will, Gerald visited AEH several times during his last illness, Gerald attended the funeral service at Trinity College chapel. That's all. So these 53 letters should throw light on a part of AEH's life that little is known about.

The wonderful news for Housman scholars and devotees is that these letters were purchased by Trinity College, Cambridge, in May 2016. They are now housed in Trinity's famous Wren Library in perpetuity, and Housman researchers are able to read them. We plan in due course for members of the Housman Society to make a group visit to see the letters. There is also a possibility that they will be published.

I have been asked to explain how the letters got to Trinity, as I played a part in bringing this about. The letters were bequeathed to and owned by Dr Gerald Jackson's three sons -- Andrew and his two brothers. Because of my

interest in World War I studies, Andrew Jackson was already on my radar. I had read and admired his informative and poignant book, published in 2009, about the three years that his father's brother Hector spent fighting on the Western Front during World War I.*

In 2015 Andrew and his brothers had given Sotheby's in New York City fifteen autograph letters, written by AEH, to auction in its December manuscripts sale. They were written at Trinity College and sent to Gerald Jackson, first in North Rhodesia and later in London, between 19 May 1927 and 6 July 1931. Sotheby's catalogue described this as ‘an important group of unpublished letters by A.E. Housman to the son of Moses Jackson.’ The Sotheby's catalogue contained a few quotes from the letters, this among them:

Housman writes on 15 October 1930, "Advice from a godfather. Don't add 'M.A.' in addressing a letter: I don't know why, but it is not the custom. Don't say 'I will have to work' when you mean 'I shall'. But I never could teach you your catechism."

While chatting with Jim Page in February of this year, I learned that the 15 letters at Sotheby's in December had not reached their reserve price. I said that the letters should be at Trinity College, because then researchers could read them and write about them, and they would be added to the Housman collection already at Trinity. Not only had Housman written them from his rooms at Trinity, but Gerald had been a student at Trinity for two terms. I asked Jim if he would give me an email introduction to Andrew and tell him what it was I wished to write to him about.

I then contacted Trinity College Library to make sure my assumption -- that they would be interested in buying the letters -- was correct. I explained the matter to a library assistant, who advised me to write to Dr Nicolas Bell, the Librarian. On 15 February I wrote a very long email introducing myself, telling him about the 15 Housman letters, explaining the relationship between AEH and Gerald Jackson, explaining who Andrew Jackson was, etc. After providing all of this ‘back story’ I expressed the hope that the

library would be interested in purchasing the letters.

I then heard from Andrew, who lives in California. He was interested in my views about the best home for the 15 letters, was inclined to agree with them, and noted some comments I had made about possible sources of external funding. I was now able to reply and explain directly to him, in more detail, all the reasons that I hoped the letters would end up at Trinity College Library.

Nicolas Bell was also interested in what I had told him, and responded with enthusiasm to the possibility of being able to deal directly with the owners of the letters. It was gratifying that both Andrew and Nicolas thought that, for a variety of reasons, Trinity was the best possible place for the letters.

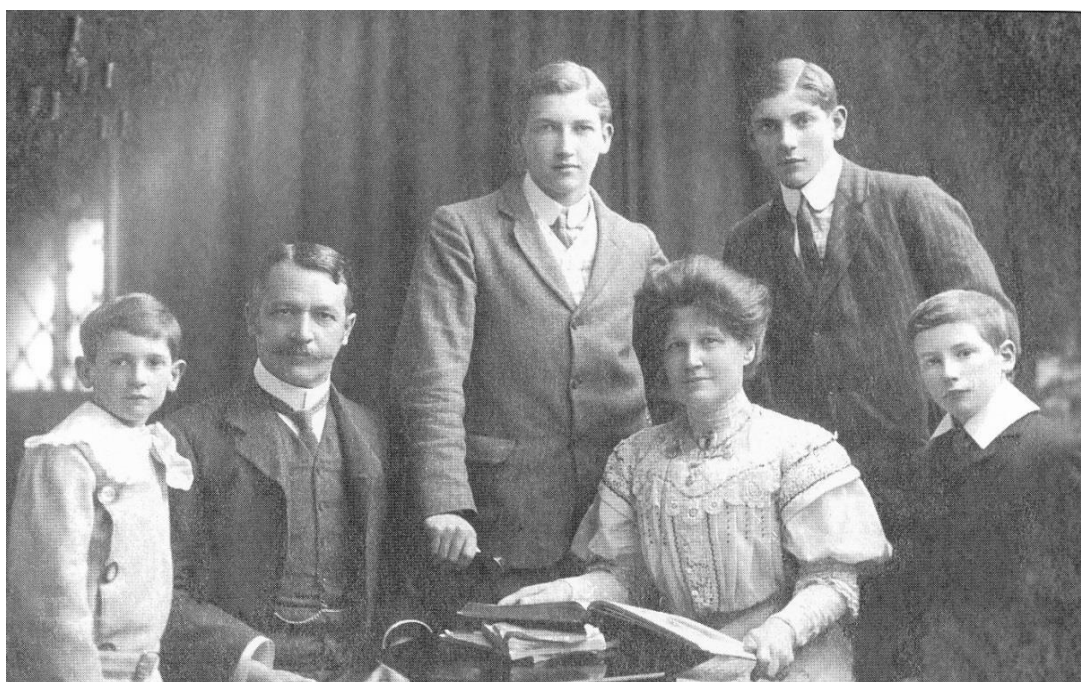
Then Andrew dropped an epistolary bombshell: he and his brothers had another 38 unpublished letters written from Housman to his godson Gerald, in addition to the 15 that had not sold at Sotheby's. Andrew expressed the hope that all 53 letters should be together, and if possible in the Trinity College Library. As 53 was a lot more than 15, I was concerned about funding so I gave Andrew some information about the Friends of the National Libraries, which provides grants to libraries and other institutions to help them buy manuscripts and books. I also proposed to the

Housman Society that it offer some financial help, and the committee readily agreed to this and informed Nicolas.

I then gave Andrew and Nicolas an email introduction, and withdrew from the scene with my fingers crossed. A few weeks later the sale of the 53 letters was concluded -- and without the need for any external funding. I was pleased to learn from Nicolas that there was a tangential Housman connection to the source of the funds: 'The College was able to purchase the letters thanks to a bequest from Harry Richardson Creswick. When he was University Librarian in Cambridge between 1949 and 1967, he had shown particular resolve in augmenting the University's holdings of Housman manuscripts.'

Although Nicolas welcomed the offer of financial help from the Housman Society, this was not necessary. However, he was very grateful for the moral support from the Society. Future generations will be indebted to the Jackson brothers and to Nicolas for reaching an agreement so quickly and amicably; and also to Mr Creswick for the bequest he left to the College.

Nicolas told me in May that the letters had just arrived and 'they are now the property of the Master and Fellows of Trinity College Cambridge and available for researchers to study.' Needless to say, I was thrilled.



The Jackson family: left to right: Gerald, Moses, Rupert, Rosa, Hector and Oscar

Andrew has also written, saying that ‘My brothers and I are very happy with the outcome of the letters ending up where they started, at Trinity, a place that has such an intimate connection with AEH and even a tenuous family one through my father's few terms there.’

There will be an article in a future Housman Society Newsletter or Journal about the contents of the letters and what they add to our understanding of AEH.

*A *Fine View of the Show: Letters from the Western Front*. Search by using the title at www.lulu.com for paper and e-book editions.

Sir Geoffrey Hill 1932-2016

Geoffrey Hill will never be in everyone's knapsack. He was a poet's poet, an intellectual's poet, not easily accessible. And yet from simple Bromsgrove origins, brought up in Fairfield (a village a mile from the Clock House where Housman spent most of his youth), son of a policeman, educated at Bromsgrove County High School, he won a scholarship to Keble College Oxford and went on to achieve great recognition in academic circles. He was often referred to as the greatest living writer of poetry in the English language. His work was regarded as scholarly and profound, and genius was a word used by some critics who did not use the word lightly. All his poems were informed with a hugely eclectic range of interests in literature, history, music. He left a plain reader struggling to recognise the depths from which he drew words which Seamus Heaney said, ‘fall slowly and singly, like molten solder’. A. Alvarez wrote ‘[He] leaves you not so much with statements to be understood intellectually as with physical states to be shared.’

His Bromsgrove origins were always with him and although considered unapproachable, he was pleased to collaborate with the Society in 2003 when we put together *Three Bromsgrove Poets*. After it was published he came and talked to WORDS, the Bromsgrove literary group, and a good audience was treated to what was probably a rare occasion, when with generous humility he explained some of his poems. From 1998 when he was professor of

literature and religion at Boston University, USA, he began a fresh outpouring of poems. In *The Orchards of Syon* his Goldengrove is Bromsgrove and he felt the presence of Housman, ‘I was enreave for Goldengrove, which you had elegised some generations since, untouched beyond/ the Clock House and the Valley Farm’. In a landslide victory in 2010 Geoffrey Hill was elected by academics of Oxford to the position of professor of poetry, and in 2012 he was knighted for services to literature.

Robin Shaw

Three Bromsgrove Poets, Geoffrey Hill, Molly Holden and A.E. Housman, is available from the Society, £7.50.

John Millener (1929-2016)

When John and Rita Millener bought Londmeadow, the attractive house in Street originally built for Clemence and Laurence Housman in 1924, they had little idea of its historical associations. However, once aware of who had lived there, it was typical of John's wide ranging intellect that he should undertake his own personal investigations on Laurence Housman and ensure that the original features of the house and garden were preserved. This included Elbow Room, the garden studio used by Laurence, which still looks as if he had just left it. It was not long before the Housman Society was welcomed to visit Longmeadow and during the writing of *Inseparable Siblings*, the Milleners' hospitality was extended to me. I stayed several times at Longmeadow and my discussions with John on these visits were most helpful in developing my research. The Housman Society was delighted that in 2015, on the 150th anniversary of Laurence's birth, a blue plaque was unveiled at Longmeadow to commemorate Laurence's life and work. John was much appreciated in Street for his considerable contribution to his local community – which included fund-raising for the local St Margaret's Hospice and helping to run the Street Club. However, John's contribution to Laurence Housman studies is equally considerable and the Housman Society remains deeply grateful for his input over the last sixteen years.

Liz Oakley

A.E. Housman: A Single Life

by Martin Blocksidge.

This new biography of Housman was published earlier this year at a cost of £60. It is now being advertised at a recommended retail price of £35 but members of the Society may obtain a copy for just £26.25 post free from Gazelle Book Services of Lancaster.

Orders may be made via their website and by entering the code GZHOUS 16 the 25% discount plus free postage will apply. Alternatively you may order by telephone on 01524 – 528500 asking for Gareth in Customer Services and mentioning the Housman Society.

The Housman Society Book Exchange

In this listing we are offering the two different publications of *A Morning with the Royal Family*. The English version was produced by Jonathan Cape as a Christmas gift and here we are offering the variant marked 'Privately Printed'. The earlier edition is that by the Green Horn Press of Los Angeles and is a rare item. In perfect condition this book would attract a price of £125 but I have listed its defects and now offer the opportunity of acquiring the book at a very affordable price. Also look out for Burnett's *Letters*, here offered at about half the price found in the market place.

Finally I will restate that the Society has a large quantity of lower-value books which because of space restrictions are never advertised. Please email me if you have a specific requirement for any book. As always the items offered for sale on these pages are on a first-come, first-served basis irrespective of the means of contact used. Postage and Packing are additional to the prices quoted. 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 2016

ADAMS (Frederick) [editor]. THE COLOPHON. WINTER 1938. Pynson Printers, New York, 1938. 8vo. 164 pages. Cloth. John Carter supplies a chapter *On Collecting A.E. Housman*. Fine but for previous owner's bookplates. £15

ALDINGTON (Richard). A.E. HOUSMAN & W.B. YEATS. The Peacocks Press, Hurst, Berkshire; 1955. First edition. 8vo. 35 pages. Green cloth missing the tissue jacket. Limited edition. One of 350 copies. These lectures were originally given in New York in 1938. Ex Reference Library. Very Good. £20

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

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 73 of 125 copies. In fine condition. £60

BRYN MAWR COLLEGE LIBRARY. THE NAME AND NATURE OF A.E. HOUSMAN. Bryn Mawr College Library, Pennsylvania, 1986. First edition. 4to. 54 pages. With an introduction by Seymour Adelman. The catalogue of the amazing Housman collection donated to the College by Adelman. A superb work. Fine. £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. £35

GOW (A.S.F.) A.E. Housman – A SKETCH. Cambridge University Press. 1936. First Edition. 8vo. 137 pages. Green cloth in the dust jacket. A delightful sketch of Housman by a fellow professor, together with a comprehensive list of his writings and indexes to his classical papers. Very good. £15

GRAVES (Richard Perceval). A.E. HOUSMAN ; THE SCHOLAR-POET. Routledge and Kegan Paul, London. 1979. First Edition, 304 pages. The first comprehensive biography. Near fine. £15
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

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. Scarce. Very good. £35

HOUSMAN (A.E.). M. ANNAEI LVCANI BELLI CIVILIS LIBRI DECIM. Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1927. Second edition. 8vo. xxxv. 342 pages. Blue cloth. Extensive professorial pencil annotations. Very good. £40

HOUSMAN (A.E.). M MANILII ASTRONOMICA EDITIO MINOR. Cambridge University Press, 1932. First edition. 8vo. xiv. 181 pages. Blue cloth missing the dust jacket. An excellent copy. Very good. £50

HOUSMAN (A.E.). MORE POEMS. Jonathan Cape, London, 1936. The limited edition. Number 171 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. A very good copy but missing the elusive dust jacket. £65

HOUSMAN (A.E.). A MORNING WITH THE ROYAL FAMILY. The Green Horn Press. Los Angeles, 1941. 8vo. 18 pages. Decorated hardback with paper spine label. Written by Housman for family entertainment in the late 1870's it was printed, without permission, in the *Bromsgrovian* in 1882. It is here published in book form for the first time. Illustrated by Frederick Childs in a limited edition of 125 copies. Some sunning to exterior boards. Discoloration to endpapers and stain (perhaps from removal of bookplate) now partially covered by smaller neat bookplate. Nick to paper label. Internally the text and illustrations are fine. Price reduced to sell. Very scarce. £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.). 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. £50

HOUSMAN (A.E.). A SHROPSHIRE LAD. Woodstock Books, Oxford, 1994. 12mo. 96 pages. A facsimile of the Kegan Paul 1896 edition. With an introduction by R.K.R. Thornton. Fine in similar dust jacket. £25

HOUSMAN (Laurence). A.E.H. SOME POEMS, SOME LETTERS AND A PERSONAL MEMOIR BY HIS BROTHER. Jonathan Cape, London, 1937. First edition. 8vo. 286 pages. Blue cloth. Laurence's memoir of his brother including the first printing of the additional poems. Very good in defective dust jacket. £30

HOUSMAN (Laurence) [contributes]. ENCOUNTER MAGAZINE. VOLUME XXIX No.4. Continental Publishers, London, 1967. 8vo. 96pp. Paper covers. On pages 33-41 is printed for the first time *A.E. Housman's 'De Amicitia'*, annotated by John Carter. Very good indeed. £25

HOUSMAN SOCIETY JOURNAL.
VOLUME ONE. 8vo. 56 pages. Blue card covers. London, Turner and Devereux, 1974. Volume One of the Society Journal includes articles by F.W. Bateson, B.F. Fisher IV, A.S.F. Gow, Joe Hunt, Norman Marlow, Enoch Powell, John Sparrow, Graham Speake and L.P. Wilkinson. Mint but for rusted staples. £20

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

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

PAGE (Norman). A.E. HOUSMAN – A CRITICAL BIOGRAPHY. Schoken Books, New York, 1983. First edition. 8vo. 236 pages. Yellow cloth in dust jacket. A beautifully written biography. Fine. £15

RICHARDS (Grant). HOUSMAN 1897-1936. Oxford University Press, London, 1941. First edition. 8vo. 493 pages. In addition to Richard's reminiscences there is an excellent set of appendices by other hands. Very good missing the dust jacket. £15

RICKS (Christopher) [editor]. A.E. HOUSMAN. A COLLECTION OF CRITICAL ESSAYS. First edition. 8vo. 182 pages. Paperback. 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. Fine. £10

RICKS (Christopher). A.E. HOUSMAN. COLLECTED POEMS AND SELECTED PROSE. Allen Lane, London, 1988. First edition. 8vo. 528 pages. Black cloth with dust jacket. Fine. £20

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 with similar dust jacket. £20

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. £15

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 trade edition. 4to. 60 pages. Green cloth. Limited to 500 copies. Fine. £40

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

EFRATI (Carol). THE ROAD OF DANGER GUILT AND SHAME. Farleigh Dickinson University Press, 2002.

Willing to pay £60 for a copy in at least very good condition.

The *Housman Society Newsletter* is published by The Housman Society, Abberley Cottage, 7 Dowles Road, Bewdley DY12 2EJ. The next Newsletter will be circulated in February 2017 and contributions should be sent to the Editor at julianmhunt@btinternet.com by the middle of January.

