

*The Espalier, Time Importuned, Opus 7, Rainbow, Whether a Dove or Seagull, Boxwood, King Duffus, Twelve Poems, Collected Poems, Selected Poems, Lolly Willowses, Mr Fortune's Maggot, The True Heart, Summer Will Show, After The Death of Don Juan, The Corner that Held Them, The Flint Anchor, The Maze, Some World Far From Ours and 'Stay Corydon, Thou Swain', Elinor Barley, A Moral Ending, The Salutation, More Joy in Heaven, The Cat's Cradle Book, A Garland of Straw, The Museum of Cheats, Winter in The Air, A Spirit Rises, Sketches from Nature, A Stranger with a Bag, Swans on an Autumn River, Two Conversation Pieces, The Innocent and The Guilty, Kingdoms of Elfin, Scenes of Childhood, One Thing Leading to Another, Selected Stories, Somerset, Jane Austen, T.H.White, A Biography, Letters, The Diaries of Sylvia Townsend Warner, The Espalier, Time Importuned, Opus 7, Rainbow, Whether a Dove or Seagull, Boxwood, King Duffus, Twelve Poems, Collected Poems, Selected Poems, Lolly Willowses, Mr Fortune's Maggot, The True Heart, Summer Will Show, After The Death of Don Juan, The Corner that Held Them, The Flint Anchor, The Maze, Some World Far From Ours and 'Stay Corydon, Thou Swain', Elinor Barley, A Moral Ending, The Salutation, More Joy in Heaven, The Cat's Cradle Book, A Garland of Straw, The Museum of Cheats, Winter in The Air, A Spirit Rises, Sketches from Nature, A Stranger with a Bag, Swans on an Autumn River, Two Conversation Pieces, The Innocent and The Guilty, Kingdoms of Elfin, Scenes of Childhood, One Thing Leading to Another, Selected Stories, Somerset, Jane Austen, T.H.White, A Biography, Letters, The Diaries of Sylvia Townsend Warner, The Espalier, Time Importuned, Opus 7, Rainbow, Whether a Dove or Seagull, Boxwood, King Duffus, Twelve Poems, Collected Poems, Selected Poems, Lolly Willowses, Mr Fortune's*

## *The Sylvia Townsend Warner Society Newsletter Number Ten*

*Maggot, The True Heart, Summer Will Show, After The Death of Don Juan, The Corner that Held Them, The Flint Anchor, The Maze, Some World Far From Ours and 'Stay Corydon, Thou Swain', Elinor Barley, A Moral Ending, The Salutation, More Joy in Heaven, The Cat's Cradle Book, A Garland of Straw, The Museum of Cheats, Winter in The Air, A Spirit Rises, Sketches from Nature, A Stranger with a Bag, Swans on an Autumn River, Two Conversation Pieces, The Innocent and The Guilty, Kingdoms of Elfin, Scenes of Childhood, One Thing Leading to Another, Selected Stories, Somerset, Jane Austen, T.H.White, A Biography, Letters, The Diaries of Sylvia Townsend Warner, The Espalier, Time Importuned, Opus 7, Rainbow, Whether a Dove or Seagull, Boxwood, King*

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The Society's own website is online at  
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**NEWSLETTER NUMBER TEN**

Welcome to the Spring 2005 edition of the Newsletter, which contains details of the May (Bank Holiday) weekend, including visits to Jane Austen's house and Gilbert White's rectory, plus a talk on *Kingdoms of Elfin* by member Helen Sutherland. All we need now is for the sun to shine!

Special thanks go to Jay Barksdale, Judith Bond, David Hyde, Eileen Johnson, Pat Jones, Morine Krissdottir, Cynthia Peacock, Rosemary Sykes and Peter Tolhurst for their help in the making of this issue.

*Judith Stinton*

**SUBSCRIPTIONS: a reminder**

If you haven't yet paid for 2005, please send your subscription to Judith Bond, 26 Portwey Close, Weymouth, Dorset DT4 8RF. UK members £10, overseas members \$20. Cheques should be made payable to the Sylvia Townsend Warner Society.

**MARGARET ELAINE MANISTY M.B.E.**

We are sorry to say that our Honorary Member, Peg Manisty, died on 5th January, 2005. Sylvia Townsend Warner's solicitor and friend - and a distant cousin of Valentine Ackland's - she had a distinguished career in the Family Division of the High Court of Justice and later in the Judicial Office of the House of Lords. She was buried in the family grave at St Dunstan's, Mayfield, East Sussex, on January 24th. She was 90 years old and had worked tirelessly for Oxfam since her retirement, to whom any donations in her memory should be made.

**AUTUMN WEEKEND, SEPTEMBER 2004**

Old friends, new friends: we assembled in great number at "Gusto" (a pizzeria in Dorchester) to be greeted by menus welcoming the Sylvia Townsend Warner Society. Here we talked, drank and ate with relish. All too soon we were exchanging "au revours" and arrangements for the next day. A few of us headed for the King's Arms where, as we discussed what Sylvia might have thought of the changes made since her day, a locked door rattled mysteriously.

Sunday found us in Litton Cheney, home to what must be Britain's most twee bus shelter, complete with thatch. This was not our destination. Instead, after ambling round the churchyard, we visited The Old Rectory, once home of Sylvia's friends, Reynolds and Janet Stone. Reynold's engravings (including those that accompany *Boxwood*) and Janet's photographs (familiar to many of us from *Familiar Faces*) endure to this day, but we were to explore a more mutable aspect of their creativity: the garden. This is breathtaking. Steeply plunging hillside is carpeted with an under-storey of prostate ivy, lamium and periwinkle. Enormous trees, including beech and sycamore, allow dramatic shafts of light to penetrate, illuminating the almost primeval scene of stream and lakes fringed by gunnera and bamboo. The Old Rectory's current owners, Mr and Mrs Lindsay, invited us to the drawing-room for coffee and biscuits, whilst Eileen Johnson read aloud Sylvia's description of Reynold's work room to us. It was the very room we were sitting in, animating our surroundings with echoes of the past.

If the morning's paths were steep, the afternoon's walk made me suspect that Sylvia must have had an affinity with the mountain goat. With rain falling steadily, a (fool)hardy group of us struck out on a chalk path across Ashley Chase. We'd originally planned a three-mile walk, following in the footsteps of one of Sylvia's plant-hunting excursions. But then Judith Stinton gave us an animated reading of Sylvia's account of this trip: "vertical mud", "horizontal mud", "on all fours". What were we letting ourselves in for? Judith pointed out that she had included this description in the Society's newsletter, and I cursed my lack of observation. Even our shorter route proved challenging, for suddenly we abandoned the well-worn path and descended into a wooded copse surrounded by a precipitous gully. I was relieved to grab at a rustic handrail, wondering what Sylvia would have thought of this taming of the landscape. Then we reached our destination, the ruined chapel you can see in Reynold Stone's engravings in *Boxwood*. When Sylvia got here she sat on the altar and smoked a cigarette. We, children of that age of health warnings, were content to inhale the atmosphere.

Later, a rather larger group of us descended on the strikingly-named hamlet of Toller Fratrum, meaning Toller of the Brothers, not to be confused with the nearby Toller Porcorum (Pigs' Toller). The "Brothers" in question are thought to have been Knights Hospitallers, and remains of their foundation can be spotted in the fabric of a glorious farmhouse which combines post-dissolution ornate chimneys (plus carved monkey finial) with the earlier building. Next to the farmhouse is the church of St Basil. Despite being an eighteenth-century building it contains treasure

ancient and modern, one of the modern ones being a visitors' book containing the signatures of such luminaries as John Piper and (of course) Sylvia Townsend Warner and Valentine Ackland. The ancient treasures include a fragment of a carving depicting Mary Magdalene washing Christ's feet, and an eleventh-century (or earlier) font, which appeared to have Saxon or Celtic influences. Indeed, with its cover decked out in haws and travellers' joy (wild clematis) in readiness for the Harvest Festival, it had more than a hint of the pagan about it.

Our first stop on Sunday was Lulworth Castle, which would probably have been a romantic ruin when Sylvia knew it, following a devastating fire. Today, thanks to photographs, and detailed descriptive articles in *Country Life* (not to mention vast injections of cash) the facade had been restored to its former glory. The interior, though, has been left more open so one can look up and spot a fireplace halfway up a wall. Needless to say the Weld family does not live in the castle, they have a neo-Georgian farmhouse nearby. The Welds were Catholic recusants and the castle is flanked on one side by the ancient parish church and on the other by an 18th-century Roman Catholic chapel. The chapel is an elegant neo-classical building, but I felt its serenity was somewhat compromised by the piped music in the background.

We concluded our weekend, with a fitting symmetry, by lunching at the Weld Arms, the inn where Sylvia's life long association with Dorset first began.

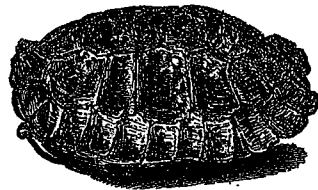
*Rosemary Sykes*

#### **SPRING WEEKEND, APRIL 30-MAY 2, 2005**

Saturday, April 30 at 7.30pm. Gather for a meal at Cafe Jago, High West Street, Dorchester (opposite Holy Trinity Church, and diagonally opposite Dorset County Museum). Please let Eileen Johnson know if you are coming, as we will need to reserve a table.

Sunday, May 1 An eighteenth century day!  
Morning. 11am. Meet at the Jane Austen House Museum, Chawton (just south of Alton, Hants). Sylvia Townsend Warner describes Austen's very productive life there in her British Council pamphlet *Jane Austen* (1951). (Admission £4; wheelchair access to ground floor, garden and toilets.)  
Lunch in Chawton village.  
Afternoon. 2.30pm. Meet at nearby Gilbert White's House, Selborne,

Hants. Charming 18th century house and garden, formerly the rectory of the Revd Gilbert White and home to his aunt's tortoise, Timothy. Timothy is immortalised in *Portrait of a Tortoise*, STW's entertaining selection from White's Journals and Letters, first published in 1946. (Admission £5; wheelchair access to ground floor, garden and toilets.)



TIMOTHY'S CARAPACE.

Evening meal: to be arranged.

#### Bank Holiday Monday, May 2

Morning 10am. AGM in the Dorset County Museum, followed by a talk by Helen Sutherland, 'Elfhome and Otherwhere: Sylvia Townsend Warner's Construction of Faery'.

12.30pm. Meet in Chaldon churchyard, as usual, for ceremony at the grave of STW and VA. Followed by lunch at the Sailor's Return pub in the village. Please let Eileen know if you are having lunch.

Anyone requiring a lift should contact Eileen Johnson at 01305 266028. We look forward to seeing you!

### BOOK NEWS

1. Tartarus Press have recently published *Ritual and Other Stories* by Arthur Machen. Machen - who was Sylvia Townsend Warner's uncle - was born in 1863. He spent his formative years at Llandewi rectory, Gwent, where 'one solitary summer afternoon he took an unfamiliar path through the hills and encountered something that touched his soul and chafed against his Christian upbringing - something that, for the rest of his life, he struggled to put into words'. (Quotation from an appreciative review by Richard Stanley in the *Guardian*, 30/10/04). These stories are a part of that very individual quest.

The book costs £35.00 and is available from Tartarus Press.  
[tartarus@pavilion.co.uk](mailto:tartarus@pavilion.co.uk)

Member Ray Russell writes: 'We won two World Fantasy Awards at the very end of October - one for Tartarus, and one for Rosalie Parker's editing of *Strange Tales*. As a result we received a mention in the *Guardian*. We managed to get a very prominent display of our books in Waterstones Piccadilly, and a letter in the *Bookseller* and that review for

*Ritual* by Machen in the *Guardian* kept us wrapping up books right up until Christmas.'

Other new titles are:

*The Suicide Club and Other Dark Adventures* by Robert Louis Stevenson (507pps, £35). (May be of interest to members as Claire Harman's biography of Stevenson is due out at any minute.)

*Black Spirits and White* by Ralph Adams Cram (145pps, £30). A collection of traditional ghost stories.

*Strange Tales*, edited by Rosalie Parker (289 pps, £30). A reprint of the collection which won the World Fantasy Award for best anthology.

*The Golem* by Gustav Meyrink (253pps, £30).

*Miss Hargreaves* by Frank Baker (266pps, £30) A brilliant fantasy by Frank Baker.

*Wormwood 2 and 3* - Tartarus's literary magazine.

2. Tom Wintringham (1898-1949) was a founder member of the English Communist Party who fought in the Spanish Civil War and set up and edited the *Daily Worker* and *Left Review*. (He knew Sylvia and Valentine during their activist years and visited them at 24 West Chaldon.) A biography of Wintringham, a significant and now almost forgotten figure was published late last year. *The Last English Revolutionary* is by Hugh Purcell (Sutton, £20).

3. Judith Stinton's *A Dorset Utopia: the Little Commonwealth and Homer Lane* is to be published in May. This is the story of a very radical experiment in self-government at Hilfield, Dorset, 1913-1918. Boys and girls referred from the police courts of major cities were taken to the Little Commonwealth where they built their own homes, made their own laws and contributed to the community by working on the land or in the houses. (There was also a Montessori school: one of the first in England.) Initially, the experiment was something of a *cause celebre*, but it was hampered - as the First World War dragged on - by lack of money, and was ultimately destroyed by scandal. Yet it was the inspiration for other social or educational experiments - notably A.S. Neill's Summerhill School. *A Dorset Utopia* is published by Black Dog Books, 104 Trinity Street, Norwich, NR2 2BJ (01603 623771) at £11.95 and can be ordered by members post free (inland). [blackdogbooks@waitrose.com](mailto:blackdogbooks@waitrose.com)

4. Finally, members might like to know that Sylvia Townsend Warner's

novels are available to buy from Virago's Print on Demand service, at Little Brown, Brettenham House, Lancaster Place, London WC2E 7EN. (0207 911 8000)

### THE COUNTRYMAN

Amongst the many periodicals to which Sylvia and Valentine contributed, one of the most interesting is the *Countryman*, a magazine which began in the 1920s as a voice for country people and which survives today on a murmur of nostalgia. In its early days, Sylvia occasionally wrote some of the magazine's brief book reviews, making a virtue out of the required concision. Here is a set of reviews from the Summer 1949 edition (vol 39, no 2).

#### Country Worker and Country Living

SHARPEN THE SICKLE! by *Reg Groves* (Porcupine 12s 6d) tells how English agricultural workers won themselves a trade union. It is a vexed and gusty story, full of thwarted valour and bitter defeats - and not yet, one may think, ended, while farm labourers are tied to the land, as the serf was. The evils of the past are always easier to discern than those of the present; and this may account for a certain complacency in the final chapters. For the rest, the book is informative and succinct, though a few more dates would make it clearer reading.

How a former man-servant came back from the Crimea wearing his Sebastopol medal, kissed the cook, and said that 'nothing could have been worse than the generalship and that Lord Raglan was no commander'; how a Low Church bishop was used for a High Church purpose; how 'during the sermon a woman clothed in scarlet glided in, took a seat, and before the blessing glided out again', and was afterwards identified as 'an insane person belonging to Cromer, who gives out that she is the Holy Ghost', can be read in A NORFOLK DIARY (Harrap, 12s 6d). The diarist was the *Reverend Benjamin J. Armstrong*, vicar of East Dereham from 1850 to 1888. It is a book to keep on the same shelf as Trollope.

In THE GORSE GLEN (Brython, 8s 6d) *Hugh Evans* writes of the old deep Wales with the sureness that comes of hereditary acquaintance - so much so that one might think he had himself known of the days of which his fathers have told him. Though unassumingly written, this is a very well-founded book, and a humane one. It is illustrated with drawings of bygone implements of husbandry, and reproductions of old bills and farm documents. It is significant that this is a translation from the Welsh.

Welsh-English - that stately dialect - is the feature of *E. Moore Darling's* NATHAN THE VERGER (Littlebury, 8s 6d). Nathan speaks

with the shrewdness common to all village 'characters', but with a Celtic fervour to boot. 'Round the field did the forked lightning fly, following the line of haycocks, and then on to the second ring, ending with a ball of fire at the last haycock in the middle of the field.'

In PASTURES NEW (Laurie, 9s 6d) *Prynne Hutton* tells how she and her husband, having made themselves a home from two unpromising cottages, went on to make two contented cottagers from themselves. Besides mastering the problems of hens, goats, pigs and cows, the author learned how to agree with village neighbours - perhaps a more difficult achievement.

'It is nonsense to say that Shakespeare is spoilt by being read and acted at school; he is the only thing worth going to school for.' This comes from *Anne Treneer's* CORNISH YEARS (Cape, 12s 6d), an open-hearted piece of autobiography, full of animation and adventurous sensibility to literature and nature.

*Margaret Leigh's* 'Harvest of the Moor' - just republished by Westaway at half a guinea - and 'Highland Homespun' must have made many readers feel that an all-out wrestling-match with Mother Earth may be the most satisfying experience life can offer. In SPADE AMONG THE RUSHES (Phoenix, 12s 6d), with coloured drawings by *Myfanwy Roberts*, she describes her experiences as a crofter in the remote western Highlands, with the same candour and eloquence, and the same persuasiveness.

Cape publishes thirty-one SELECTED STORIES by *Malachi Whitaker* (9s 6d), mostly of the provincial north of England. His [*sic*] writing has the fine sharpness of the imprint of a wren's foot. In two other volumes of short stories, *Neil Bell's* TEN SHORT STORIES (Golden Galley, 3s 6d) and *Margiad Evans's* THE OLD AND THE YOUNG (Drummond, 8s 6d), the *raison d'etre* of the medium is mostly lost in the pursuit of 'arresting' prose; but in the last of his ten *Neil Bell* makes a solid narrative out of a touch-and-go theme. - *Sylvia Townsend Warner*

#### *The First and the Last* by *Valentine Ackland*

The sun rose, of course, on the General Resurrection Day. Everything was very still and warm. Those men who still remained in the village (the earth had become very sparsely populated) came out into the street and walked about. A few had chores to do, fetching water from the well or calling for the milk, but most of them walked up and down, enjoying the summer air and exchanging friendly words with their neighbours. No one knew if it was the Last, or the First, Day.

There were fewer women than men alive by then, and the one or two

who still lingered on were not to be seen about so early. Two cats promenaded on the churchyard wall; a farm dog barked, and the baker's ageing pony nuzzled quietly against a haystack in the glebe field.

It must have been at about eight o'clock that the trump sounded.

'What's that?' asked Mr Garner.

'Someone playing,' answered Mr Clothier indifferently.

But the cats scattered, running into their own houses, and for some reason Mr Garner, Mr Clothier and the rest started for home too. Only the baker's pony stayed where he was, gently nuzzling and sniffing the sweet hay.

A second or two later the trump sounded again, and before the note had died away the headstones in the churchyard began to sway and slowly to collapse, while the mounds heaved as though giant moles were working beneath them, and the dead pushed their way up and out; standing at last in the daylight, lean, ethereal and strange, each near by his own grave. No living man was about to see this sight; by then everyone had gone into his cottage and shut the door.

The trump sounded for the third time, and there was a rushing sound as the wanderers returned, coming from places very distant and from times long past. The winding path to the churchyard became thronged with people, and there were many people in the street and many more coming along the lane. From the green meadows, too, they rose and began to make their way slowly towards the village, and even from the crossroads someone dragged himself out of the earth and crept along to join the throng.

In the pause that followed, the churchyard dead gathered into little groups and began to whisper together, while the strangers from meadows and distant places slowed their steps and drew near, as it were reluctantly. Those from the tangled plot behind the church stood peering round the bulge of the tower, but did not speak to each other nor attempt to approach the other side of the church.

No sign came from any cottage, nor any movement from the farmyard or the cattle-sheds. The baker's pony continued his dreamy nuzzling of the haystack without paying heed to anything at all.

God came down in glory then, and the multitude of angels spread right across heaven, and although they were themselves so bright, by reason of their numbers they darkened the face of the sun.

The winnowing wind blew with a fierce constancy and rocked the churchyard elms, and made the tall beech tree on the village green stoop almost into an arch before it. It searched the cottages and cattle-sheds, the attics and cellars of the great house; it filled the valley and swept across the hills.

At last all was over, and the sound of the departing host of men, women,

beasts, angels, demons, with the mourning of the disinherited and the songs of the acknowledged heirs, all died away into the limitless distances above and below the spinning earth.

The doors of the cottages stood open now, and the smoke still rose placidly from one or two chimneys. The churchyard trees were tall and composed again, while on the village green the beech tree rose into the air like a jet of clear bright water.

Perhaps because it was protected by the jutting wall of the baking-shed, the haystack had not been disturbed by the tempest of the Judgement. The old pony woke for a moment from his drowse to recognise gratefully that the sun was shining clearly again, and then he pushed his nose into the sweet hay, and blew through his nostrils so that the dust from it should not choke him.

Published in the *Countryman*, Summer 1950 (vol XLI no 2).

This story is set in Chaldon Herring, a village rather prone to Last Judgements. Although obviously influenced by Theodore Powys, it is a gentler and more orthodox tale.

#### **JOHN CRASKE EXHIBITION:** **safe on shore**

Members will probably recall that during our Suffolk weekend in September 2003, we visited two places associated with Benjamin Britten and Peter Pears: the Red House and Snape Maltings. Both of these places contain pictures by the fisherman artist John Craske, whose work was discovered by chance by Valentine Ackland in 1927. The ones at Snape were left by Sylvia Townsend Warner to Peter Pears expressly for display in the Maltings, as she wanted them to return to their East Anglian home. On our visit, they were taken out of storage and re-hung for us to see. It was evident that most were in need of conservation, and that they were something of a forgotten treasure.

Last autumn, however, they were back on display in the Concert Hall Gallery at Snape: 'Newly-restored and re-framed, the paintings are once again on display, together with the fascinating story of how Craske came to be an artist, how he was discovered, and how Snape Maltings came to be the resting-place for this collection.'

### A FROME VAUCHURCH SPRING

Amongst the papers in the STW archive are garden journals, some belonging to Sylvia, others to Valentine. In Valentine's first journal is a slip of paper containing the following list, in Sylvia's hand, of the flowers in the garden at Frome Vauchurch on February 27th 1938 - a day in the first Spring in their new house.

Laurustinus.  
violets - purple, blue, white.  
Wallflowers, yellow.  
snow-drops, double & single.  
yellow crocus  
scyllas.  
grape hyacinths.  
primroses, yellow.  
" coloured, various.  
polyanthus - various.  
winter belle heliotrope.  
daisies.  
geum.  
Blue-eyed Mary.  
saxifrage - mossy.  
rosemary.

\*

### SLOLEY DOES IT

Last autumn I was travelling in north Norfolk when, like Sylvia and Valentine in 1933, I passed the sign to Sloley and felt impelled to turn off the main road and explore the church before moving on to its more illustrious neighbour in Worstead. St Bartholomew's stands alone in the fields beside the Norwich to Sheringham branch line, and about half a mile east of Frankfort Manor. The building is evidently well-maintained and was open when I arrived. As I stepped inside two parishioners lime-washing the nave arcade continued their conversation in hushed tones.

I was intrigued by several wall tablets in the chancel to members of the Neville family, late of Sloley Hall, notably Sir Reg. Jas. Neville, the 1st (and probably sole) baronet of Sloley, together with the Rev. Neville White, brother of Kirke White (d.1806) 'the Poet' responsible for hymns such as 'Oft in danger, Oft in woe'. At the back of the church on a board

listing former rectors my attention was caught by the name of Valentine Husband (1661). Before leaving, I rummaged through the secondhand books on a table by the door in the vague hope of finding a copy of Sylvia's 'The Cat's Cradle Book' which starts off at Frankfort Manor, but was delighted to find a Virago edition of 'Mr Fortune's Maggot' instead.

I wondered whether, during their six month stay in this 'corner that held them', the two lovers had ever lingered here, if only, like me, out of antiquarian curiosity. In the clear light of that late September afternoon it certainly felt as though they too had passed that way.

*Peter Tolhurst*

### THE BARN AT LAVENHAM

Sylvia Townsend Warner first stayed at The Barn in Lavenham in 1927, a house belonging to her friend, the publisher Gerald Rivington. The Barn had, she wrote in her diary, 'a lot of beams'. However, on their trip to Suffolk in September 2003, members did not find this description particularly helpful. Lavenham *has* a lot of beams. In fact (and I should emphasise that this was a pre-lunch visit) although they found several barns (or ex-barns), they did not find The Barn.

Some members were determined not to be defeated by this failure. Cynthia Peacock returned to find it, and even managed to talk her way inside. Pat Jones and Margot Hurst also found it, and Pat has sent the photograph below. The building is in fact in Barn Street, which as she says, is 'a bit of a clue'...

*Judith Stinton*



## FRANK HUDLESTON

Member David Hyde has been continuing his researches into his relation - and Sylvia's - Frank Hudleston (see Newsletter 9). He has recently put Hudleston's novel *Gentleman Johnny Burgoyne* on his website. In chapter 6, he noted the following:

'The Acland family is a very good example of those county families which, from Cumberland to Cornwall, were the backbone of England. The names of such families do not very often appear in the history books. They do not buy peerages; they have never made fortunes when England has been at war; they do not cozen and cheat and swindle; they have never (they would say "Thank heaven!") produced a Waw or a Shells, they have sometimes lived hard, and sometimes drunk hard, but they have always sent their cadets into the army and their bones lie buried all over the world. The Aaronsteins and Isaacsteins who have bought many of their estates will, perhaps, in time learn to follow their example.'

This is not in Hudleston's usual style. David asks, 'Is there any record of Sylvia assisting with editing of this book? I appreciate that the spelling of the surname differs slightly from Valentine's, but in an Internet search I find that the major, who was wounded at the Battle of Saratoga, is referred to under both variations.'

'It is possible that Sylvia was involved in editing the draft after and maybe before Frank's death and added/modified this footnote. Arthur Machen wrote a Biographical Note for the Jonathan Cape edition published in 1928. Frank died on the 29th Nove 1927. Sylvia appears to have met Valentine in 1926.'

The introductory page can be seen at:

<http://www.angelfire.com/art2/frankhyde/joan/pagesj/johnny.html>

The pages are in pdf format which are downloadable and printable.

## 'MODERN WITCHES' - EPISODE TWO

In the first number of the Sylvia Townsend Warner Journal, in 2000, Ray

Russell included a tantalising fragment of an article by STW called 'Modern Witches' (*Eve*, 18th August 1926). He had found the first page in the Dorset County Museum archive; the second page was missing.

Now, Jay Barksdale, a member of the Society who lives in New York, has found the second page - and the complete article is printed below.

1

Women, in their passion for something new, are continually reviving something rather old. They collect Victorian tea trays, they work samplers, they cut their hair as short as was done by their great-grandmothers.

I think there is a good deal of pleasure and profit to be found by women who revive the old art of witchcraft. There is an idea that witchcraft is an antiquated thing which can be best practised in the country, but this is an error. The traditional witch went to the witches' sabbath riding through the air on a broomstick. The modern witch will go on a vacuum-cleaner. There is nothing in witchcraft to make it in the least unsuitable for Ealing or Mayfair. It has many advantages: it is easy, it is cheap, it isn't obtrusive. Without any regular monthly payments, or exercises before breakfast, or installing large patent machines, or undergoing a special diet, a witch can do what she wants, and have what she wants, without exciting any comment, except the usual exclamation, "Selina always has such good luck!"

Why are some women so successful in all that they do? They grow the largest sweet peas, they have the neatest sandwiches, their complexions are so permanent, the backs of their necks so small; their children always have measles at school and never at home, and everyone enjoys their dinner parties. They can't all be geniuses, and they can't all have this phenomenal good luck. There isn't enough of it to go round. They are witches!

They don't say that they are. Indeed, if you asked them, they would assure you that they are not. Witches may not give away the secret that makes them a witch. And to those women who wish to be successful also in the happy infallible way, existing witches can only say, "Go and become a witch for yourself!"

Speaking for myself I can say this. I first began to be interested in witchcraft at an early age. I was about ten years old, and had begun to find reading a pleasure, when I happened upon a book called "Mackay's Popular Delusions". It was bound in green leather, it was in small black print, and it had a few incidental small, black pictures. It was very Victorian, rationalistic and superior, and it had a respectable, fusty smell. One of the "popular delusions" it dealt with was witchcraft. The writer



felt contempt for the witches, but his contempt was qualified by pity, because he thought it a hard end for an old woman to be burnt or drowned. The account of witchcraft was very thorough, and gave many examples of spells and invocations for calling up the Devil. I could not understand much of these, because they were in Latin and other foreign languages, but I learnt them by heart, and used to repeat them to the cat. He was a black cat, and a manx cat, with a

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bull head and no tail, and he might very well have been the Devil in disguise. But if he were the Devil, either he didn't understand the spells because I didn't pronounce them properly, or else he didn't choose to reveal himself just then. He continued to sit beside me, obstinately being a cat. Perhaps he was a cat, after all.

Discouraged by this, I gave up the invocation of cats, and didn't think much more of witchcraft until, in order to oblige a friend, I made a waxen image of her aunt, for all I could hear of it, a loathsome woman. I made it out of a candle-end, and stuck it full of black pins, and set it before the fire to melt, which it did, making a most horrible mess, and causing a great deal of inconvenience to the housemaid who had to scrape it up. The housemaid was not the only person it inconvenienced. Two days after the image had melted, my friend heard that her aunt had been suddenly, mysteriously, inexplicably smitten down with a feverish chill which nobody could account for. A little embarrassed, but on the whole pleased, I discovered that I was a witch, and without making any fuss about it, I suppose I have been one ever since. I find it particularly useful on railway journeys. Even on bank holidays I can always get a corner seat to myself, and people whom I don't like the look of, if they are in the carriage already when I get in, they get out. Or if they come into the carriage which I am in already, they leave it at the next station. This, in itself, should be enough to convince the reader that witchcraft is a great aid in modern conditions.

*Sylvia Townsend Warner*

In a slightly earlier edition of *Eve*, that of July 7, 1926, Sylvia found herself described 'In the News', a column with 'Personal Paragraphs' on 'Pertinent People'.

#### *MUSICIAN, POET, NOVELIST*

*So eminent an authority on sixteenth century music is Miss Sylvia Townsend that she was selected to be one of the four editors of the critical edition of Tudor Church Music in ten volumes, now being*

*published by the Oxford University Press. It is a far cry from the sixteenth century, but she is equally interested in modern music. Curious as it may seem, there is no mention of music either in the volume of poems she published last year under the title "The Espalier" or in her tale, "Lolly Willowses", which she refuses to call a novel. The latter began as a title only, and for some time Miss Townsend Warner did not know whether it was the name of a place, a person or a state of mind. Eventually it was revealed to her that it could only be the name of a maiden lady who, in order to save herself from being a maiden aunt, sold herself to the devil and became a witch. Miss Townsend Warner wrote the book for her own entertainment, and it was published for the entertainment of the world.*

**Rudolph de Cordova**



*Yeovonde*

*Miss Sylvia Townsend Warner*

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Finally, here are two more little-known pieces, again kindly sent in by Jay Barksdale. The first is a manuscript letter from Warner to the writer Frederic Prokosch. The second is a typescript of her poem 'All this winter day', an urban variant on 'Ghosts at Chaldon Herring' and not included in the *Collected Poems*.

The Hill. Winterton. Norfolk.

24: 1: 1931:

Dear Mr Prokosch,

If you knew how many people wrote to me, demanding, out of the blue, manuscripts, locks of hair, photographs, and wonder-working toenails, you would understand how much I appreciated the courtesy of your letter, and the consideration of your \$5.00.

Since you are a poet I am sending you the first draft of a recent poem - illegible and unmeaning to the uninitiated eye; but I think you would prefer a specimen of workmanship to a nice piece of calligraphy. If I could print and picture my poems, as you can, it would be a different story - and since the poem is unpublished, I send, too, a typescript, in case my pencil scribbles are too dark and mysterious.

You tell me nothing of your own work. But, sincerely, I should like to hear how it goes. It seemed to me unusually promising. So, if you have the leisure, send me some more one day. Perhaps another book soon?

Yours sincerely  
Sylvia Townsend Warner

'All this winter day'

All this winter day,  
Bearing down, bearing down,  
Mists have trooped into the town,  
Risen out of clay.

Through the streets they wind;  
With inaudible footfall,  
Wrapping tree and fingering wall,  
Groping like the blind.

So might time restore -  
Under cloke of mist invoked -  
Troops of dead and gone townfolk,  
Each to his own door.

Some by church porch in,  
To their pews of former use  
Creep, and settle in cold dews;  
Others round the Inn

Blur the lighted pane,  
As though, eyed the kind fireside,  
Through their quaking bones might glide  
Ease and warmth again;

Or, when met by chance  
Living neighbours the day's ill-favour  
Blame, stands by a listening vapour  
With covered countenance.

Idle errand led  
Them here when threshold stones their own  
Footing wore their coming disown  
Mute beneath their tread.

All ungreeted they stray,  
Save when, rhyming flight of time,  
Admonition of church chime  
Warns them back to clay.

*Sylvia Townsend Warner*