

The Espalier, Time Importuned, Opus 7, Rainbow, Whether a Dove or Seagull, Boxwood, King Duffus, Twelve Poems, Collected Poems, Selected Poems, Lolly Willowes, 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 Willowes, 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 Willowes, Mr Fortune's

The Sylvia Townsend Warner Society Newsletter Number Five

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The Sylvia Townsend Warner Society

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The Society's own website is online at:
<http://freepages.pavilion.net/users/tartarus/warner1.htm>

NEWSLETTER NUMBER FIVE

Welcome to the SUMMER 2002 edition of the Newsletter - and thank you to all contributors. We would like this Newsletter to grow larger, so please keep sending in your contributions.

SUBSCRIPTIONS: a reminder

If you haven't yet paid for 2002, 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.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, 2002

The Annual General Meeting of the Sylvia Townsend Warner Society was held in the library of the Dorset County Museum, High West Street, Dorchester, at 2.00pm on Saturday, March 23rd, 2002.

Present: Eileen Johnson, Stephen Mottram, Liz Mathews, Frances Bingham, Peter Tolhurst, Judith Bond.

Welcome was given to Stephen Mottram and Peter Tolhurst who were attending their first AGM as members of the Committee.

1. Apologies were received from Ray and Ros Russell, Judith Stinton, Fiona Marsland, Winifred Johnson, Rosemary Sykes, Lesley Clargo, Judith Fielding, Chris Gostick, Sally Draper, Bridget and Reg Warner.

2. Minutes of the first AGM held on March 24th, 2001 were signed by Eileen Johnson in the absence of the Chairman.

3. Matters Arising.

Eileen reported on the Society's visit to East Chaldon on May 1st 2001 where Richard Garnett presented to the Sailor's Return a mounted collage depicting his father's novel of the same name. The August meeting had been a great success, much enjoyed by all participants.

4. Chairman's Report. The Chairman was unable to attend the meeting, and in a letter to the Secretary had indicated that, given the great distance between Yorkshire and Dorset - and also pressure of work - he had reluctantly decided to relinquish the Chair. However, he and Ros Russell have said that they are happy to continue to edit the Journal, and for this we are very grateful.

5. Treasurer's Report.

Judith presented the balance sheet for 2001-2, which showed funds in the current account standing at March 23 2002 at a healthy £1147.71. Part of this was due, however, to gifts to the Society, including a donation of £565 which was initially intended to help with the purchase of a computer for the STW/VA archive at the

Museum, but which the donor had indicated could be used for any purpose. Judith Bond, who had worked very hard over the past year on the archive, stated that the existing computer's memory was reducing rapidly, and that a new model would be very useful. During the discussion that followed, she agreed that there was probably nearly another year's space in it, though she emphasised the slowness of the machine. The Powys Society were interested in acquiring the computer, which indicated that there was not much wrong with it, and given its poor resale value, the meeting did not feel inclined to part with it. The whole matter was discussed in some detail, and it was felt that the important thing was to complete the catalogue rather than purchase a new computer just now. It was agreed that the Society should look at this matter again in a year's time when even better computer technology would be available at the same price.

6. Membership Officer's Report.

Judith circulated a list of members, and said that most had paid their subscriptions. At least one more reminder would be sent. There were fewer members now, but not alarmingly so. It was agreed that membership should be promoted wherever possible, and information leaflets distributed generally and widely. The Chairman's website should carry a membership application form. Other literary societies, such as the Powys Society, and associations such as the Association of Literary Societies, could be approached to share advertisements in journals.

7. Programme for the year.

a) We will meet as usual at East Chaldon at 12 pm on 1st May.

b) At the end of September a weekend trip to Norfolk is proposed. Based in Norwich, we shall hope to visit various places connected with Valentine and Sylvia. (See below.)

c) Stephen Mottram will be leading a Thomas Hardy Society walk from East Chaldon on Sunday, October 5, to which all members are invited. (See below for details of this walk.)

8. Election of new Chairman.

It was decided that we might manage without one for the time being.

9. Constitution of the Society.

The present constitution shall remain for the present.

10 Any Other Business.

The next Newsletter will be published in June, possibly with a different printer to reduce delays. This would give an opportunity to publicise the programme to members, report on the AGM and generally encourage members to attend events and meetings.

The meeting closed at 3.30 pm.

COMPUTER UPDATE

Subsequent to item 5 above, the Committee have met again and agreed that the need for a new computer had been demonstrated, and that as the money is available, they would go ahead and buy it. This has now been done.



In the garden at Beth Car.

From the left: John Sanders, Judith Stinton, Stephen Mottram, Mrs Cobb and Judith Bond

This year we were blessed with better weather for our annual visit to East Chaldon - at least there was no rain. But how the wind blew! And the Sailor's Return inn sign swung and creaked, and creaked and swung, as it has done for so many years. We had a jolly lunch, though we were few in number, and from there walked round to the church, where Judith Stinton and myself read extracts from Sylvia's writings. After a brief visit to Mrs Cobb at Beth Car, the more doughty of us walked up the chalk road to Chydyok and the coast. The afternoon ended with a welcome cup of tea at Chydyok, with Powys Society member, John Sanders.

Eileen Johnson.

NORFOLK WEEKEND, September 27 - 29

The weekend is beginning to take shape. Peter Tolhurst, who has recently joined the Committee and who lives in Norwich, is helping with the organisation of it, and I am grateful for his offer.

At the moment, the timetable looks like this:

Friday. Arrive in Norwich. (See hotels etc. below)

Saturday am. WINTERTON, Valentine's childhood holiday home. The house is still there, at the centre of a strange 1950s - style holiday camp, which has to be seen to be believed. And a walk on the beach is a must - whatever the weather. Followed by

lunch at the village pub.

Saturday pm. FRANKFORT MANOR, Sloley - the owner is kindly allowing us access.

SALTHOUSE on the north coast. Great Eye Folly is, of course, no more, but it is still a wild and lovely area to visit. Plus, possibly, a visit to the Shell Museum at Glanford.

Sunday. SNAPE, to see the John Craske collection, amongst other things. Finish mid-afternoon.

Obviously, this timetable is not fixed in stone, and it may be that we shall not be able to fit everything in. But there's always a next time!

We think that people might like to book hotels themselves. There are some relatively cheap weekend offers at many places in late September in Norwich. Peter has suggested a few places that you could try if you don't know Norwich. The following are all within easy reach of the centre of town, and near each other:

Earlham Guest House 01603 454169
147 Earlham Road email earlham@hotmail.com

Bristol House Hotel 01603 625729
80 Unthank Road

Ivy Dene 01603 762567
12 Earlham Road

Hanover House 01603 667402
60 Earlham Road email: aylmus/clara.co.uk

Beaufort Lodge 01603 627928
62 Earlham Road www. accommodata.co.uk/beaufort.htm

If you have difficulty booking, give me a ring, and I may be able to put you on to other hotels.

Please let me know if you are coming, and where you have booked, so that we can arrange places and times to meet. We look forward to seeing as many of you as possible.

Eileen Johnson.

(Eileen can be contacted at 2 Vicarage Lane, Dorchester, Dorset, DT1 1LH, 01305 266028.)

...FRANKFORT MANOR was described by Sylvia Townsend Warner writing from East Chaldon on June 17 1933 to Harold Raymond:

'...I have just signed a year's lease of a mouldering grange in Norfolk, which I intend to share with Valentine for a year's experiment of rather larger living than we get

here.

It is a seventeenth century house, called Frankfort Manor. It has a Dutch gable, a drive, two asparagus beds and a trap for visitors. For having approached, with all suitable enthusiasm, its blonde brick face, and gone in by its reeded and elegant door, they are tossed straight into an intact Edwardian long hall, complete with carved oak staircase and c.1900 beams. We have already tried it on Valentine's brother-in-law and it worked like a charm...'

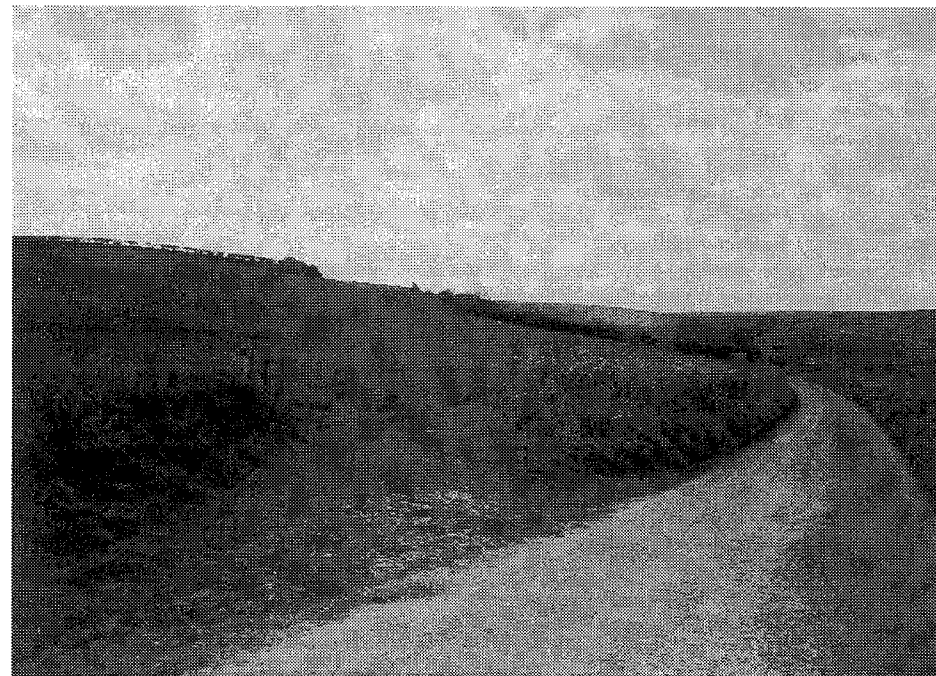
You have been warned!

EAST CHALDON WALK, Sunday October 6

Walk begins at 10.30 am. from the village green, up the path to the cliff, with its spectacular views, along to Llewelyn Powys's memorial stone and returning via Scratchy Bottom. After a drink at the Sailor's Return inn, there will be a visit to the Church and to Beth Car (where Theodore Powys lived for nearly thirty-five years).

The theme of the walk is the lives and works of STW, Theodore and Llewelyn Powys and Thomas Hardy in relation to each other and to the locality. It covers a distance of about six miles, and - with stops for readings and a picnic lunch - will last until about 2.30 or 3.30. Some parts of the walk are steep. Grid reference is SY 791833.

Anyone interested should contact the walk's leader, STW member Stephen Mottram, at 01271 379402, any evening between 7pm and 9pm.



Photograph by John Sanders of the landscape between East and West Chaldon

A WISH LIST?

Scattered amongst the pages of Sylvia Townsend Warner's diaries in the Collection at the Dorset County Museum are some fascinating fragments, scribbled perhaps in an idle moment: sketches of room plans, shopping lists and ideas for Christmas presents.

But the list that follows is none of these. The items seem to have been chosen purely for the exhilarating oddity of their juxtapositions, and their purchase would have sorely strained the resources of the local Woolworths...

A rain-gauge.
A magnifying glass.
A stop-watch.
A box for the pantomime.
Tortoiseshell spectacle frame.
A globe or an orrery.
A sword-stick.
A Mouth organ or penny-whistle.
A cellar-book.
An opera hat.
A set of coloured inks.
Case of china tea.
A fancy dress.
A weighing machine.
An order for tennis balls.
A monomark.
A tuning fork.
A combination tool-set.
Instrument for sharpening safety razor blades.
A window-box.
A herb pillow.
Some logs (applewood logs smell nice)
Writing-paper printed with address.
Season-ticket for a picture gallery.
Twelve-inch sticks of sealing-wax (these give a sense of richness much beyond their cost: so do - a ream of blotting-paper, a magnum of ink, a gross of glass-headed drawing-pins, a dozen reels of coloured sewing-silk, a box of shillings for the slot-meter, an unusual quantity of orange-sticks, a hundred small gilt safety-pins, a set of essences for flavouring, thirty yards of lingerie ribbon...

Is this a wish list? Any ideas?

Judith Stinton.

*

SYLVIA TOWNSEND WARNER : SHORT STORY WRITER AND POET

News of the forthcoming readings on Radio 4 of five of Sylvia's stories came just too late to include in the February Newsletter, but I hope that at least some of you were able to catch them. They had been chosen from the twenty stories by Sylvia which comprise *The Music at Long Verney* (recently published in England by the Harvill Press, edited by Michael Steinman, and with a foreword by the late William Maxwell). They were beautifully read by Penelope Wilton.

The stories were 'Flora', 'A Scent of Roses', 'English Mosaic', 'Furnivall's Hoopoe' and 'The Listening Woman'. The last three are among those set in the Abbey Antique Galleries belonging to Mr Edom. The painting which inspired 'The Listening Woman' actually belonged to Sylvia's family, and now resides in the STW/VA Collection in the Museum in Dorchester.

Eileen Johnson.

Literary Lectures at the Dorset County Museum

This autumn, there will be a series of twelve literary lectures at the Museum, on Tuesday evenings from September 24 to December 10, from 5.30 to 7 pm.

These will include a talk on October 22 by John Lucas, entitled 'Sylvia Townsend Warner among Women Poets'. And on November 26, Dr Morine Krissdottir will be speaking on 'The Figure Under the Carpet: Writing the Life of the Writer John Cowper Powys'. Other writers being discussed are Alan Ayckbourn, Alan Bennett, Keats and Wilde, Dickens, Yeats, Hardy and Mary Butts.

There is an admission charge of £4 per talk, or £35 for the series. This includes tea and biscuits.

For further information on the lectures please contact John Grantham at the Museum (01305 262735).

EARLY ENGLISH WOMEN'S WRITING

Chawton House, the Elizabethan manor house which once belonged to Jane Austen's brother - and which she knew well - is being restored as a part of a major international project to establish a Centre for the Study of Early English Women's Writing (1000-1830). This will house a magnificent collection of over 6,300 rare books from the period, together with some related manuscripts, presently being kept in the USA. The project is due to be completed in the summer of 2003.

As members will know, Sylvia Townsend Warner was a great admirer of the novels of Jane Austen. She wrote a booklet on her in 1951 for the British Council's series 'Writers and their Work'. (In fact, she hoped to do a longer book on Austen, to be

called the *Six-fold Screen* - but this never materialised.)

It might be very rewarding for STW Society to pay a visit to the new Centre as a part of our 2003/4 programme. What do members think about this?

In the meantime, readers might like to know that Chawton House publishes a free newsletter, *The Female Spectator*, with articles on some of the writers in the proposed collection. If you would like to be on the mailing list, contact Tracy Browning, Chawton House Library, Chawton, Alton, Hants GU34 1SJ. (tracy.browning@chawton.net). American readers should contact Margo Karler, Bosack Kruger Foundation, Chawton House Library, 8422 154th Ave., NE Redmond, WA 98052. (bkfoundation@earthlink.net)

Judith Stinton.

CODA

Sylvia Townsend Warner had begun her career in music rather than books. Music remained an important part of her life, as the following letter, written on August 29, 1958, will show. The letter is addressed to Joy Finzi, artist, and widow of the composer Gerald Finzi. It is about Gerald Finzi's friend and fellow-composer, Ralph Vaughan Williams, who, with his second wife Ursula, had been brought on a visit to Frome Vauchurch by Joy Finzi some two weeks before.

'...How blessed and thankful you must feel that you gave V.W. that last wonderful week of views, and country pleasures, and gipsying about in the car - a precious gift to Ursula, too, who will have all that happiness to remember. The house keeps his presence. I think it will always keep it. When I go into the dining-room he looks up from those scandalously stodgy sandwiches, with a look of triumph and satisfaction as though they were a dear little intermezzo in an unrelated key that he was writing entirely to please himself. I feel his stern eye upon me as he asked me why I had given up writing music, his mistrustful attention as I explained why, the still disapproving approval I wrenched from him at last.

I thought as I sat there, "I have loved you in your music for fifty years of my life. and now I am talking to you, with all the freedom of a long affection."

It is in the same way, with the same vividness and actuality of delight, that I remember Gerry standing in the sun, covered with oil after rescuing that lost chord from the inside of our car, and saying, WE have EIGHT cats. It is the music in them that does it, I think. They are like tunes in one's mind.'

They had met only just in time. Ralph Vaughan Williams died on August 26, 1958.

Judith Stinton.

'In the evening the Amadeus played opus 132; and I danced to the last movement, I rose up & danced, among the cats, & their saucers, and only when I was too far carried away to stop did I realise that I was behaving very oddly for my age - and that perhaps it was the last time I should dance for joy.'

Sylvia Townsend Warner's diary entry for October 14, 1958