

The Espalier, Time Importuned, Opus 7, Rainbow, Whether a Dove or Seagull, Boxwood, King Diffuse, Twelve 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 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, The Music at Long Verney, Dorset Stories, Portrait of a Tortoise, Somerset, The Espalier, Time Importuned, Opus 7, Rainbow, Whether a Dove or Seagull, Boxwood, King Duffus, Twelve 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 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, The Music at Long Verney, Dorset Stories, Portrait of a Tortoise, Somerset, The Espalier, Time Importuned, Opus 7, Rainbow, Whether a Dove or Seagull, Boxwood, King Duffus, Twelve 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 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, The Music at Long Verney, Dorset Stories, Portrait of a Tortoise, Somerset, The Espalier, Time Importuned, Opus 7, Rainbow, Whether a Dove or Seagull, Boxwood, King Duffus, Twelve 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 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, The Music at Long Verney, Dorset Stories, Portrait of a Tortoise, Somerset, The Espalier, Time Importuned,

The Sylvia Townsend Warner Society Newsletter Number Thirty-Seven

Poems, The Flint Anchor, The Winter in the Air, A Spirit Rises, Sketches from Nature, The Flint Anchor 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, The Music at Long Verney, Dorset Stories, Portrait of a Tortoise, Somerset, The Espalier, Time Importuned, Opus 7, Rainbow, Whether a Dove or Seagull, Boxwood, King Duffus, Twelve 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 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, The Music at Long Verney, Whether a Dove or a Seagull, The

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Sylvia Townsend Warner @ Tanya Stobbs

The Society's website is townsendwarner.com
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NEWSLETTER NUMBER THIRTY-SEVEN

AGM 2018 * subscription rates * STW & Modernism
Edward Fitzgerald & Ronald Blythe * The Archive
Alyse Gregory * ALS * Genevieve Taggard * Penelope Fitzgerald
letters * poems * queries * reviews

Thanks go to Richard Betts, Judith Bond, Gillian Davies, Jan Montefiore,
Judith Stinton, Helen Sutherland and Ruth Williams for contributing to this issue.

Your officers are pleased to announce Hester Styles Vickery has joined the Committee,
as a member-at-large and, eventually, Hon. Secretary. A recent convert
to Sylvia Townsend Warner, she is a graduate of Oxford and is now at
University College London studying for a Masters in Modernist Literature,
with a focus on literary landscapes. In her spare time she works at
John Sandoe Books in Chelsea and climbs mountains.
Welcome, Hester!

* * * * *

SYLVIA TOWNSEND WARNER SOCIETY **Minutes of the 17th Annual General Meeting** Dorset County Museum, 12 May 2018

Present: Janet Montefiore (Chair), Jenny Wildblood, Judith Bond, Judith Stinton,
Richard Searle, Rowan Bright, Eileen Johnson, Peter Swaab, Mercedes Aguirre,
Ann Henderson, Ruth Williams, Helen Sutherland, Tess Ormrod.

Apologies: Ren Draya, Lynn Mutti, Jay Barksdale.

Minutes of the 2017 Annual General Meeting: After two small amendments the
minutes of the 2017 AGM were approved as a correct record and signed by Jan
Montefiore.

Matters Arising: *Finding a new Hon. Secretary for the Society* - Jan reported that
Judith Bond has volunteered to act as Secretary in a temporary capacity until a new
Secretary can be found. Peter Swaab is in negotiations with two possible candidates who
might both join the Committee, one as Secretary and the other to help with IT support.
Both these candidates were entrants for the Mary Jacobs Memorial Essay Prize. If these
negotiations are not fruitful Jan suggested that we should advertise in the next
Newsletter.

Setting the membership subscription fee - Jan reported that the membership fee,
currently £10.00, has not been changed since 2000, the year the Society began. She
pointed out that £10 in 2000 would be £16.00 in today's money and proposed that the
membership fee be raised to £20.00. We are now supplying the members with two

Journals per year, instead of one, as well as two Newsletters, and costs of printing are mounting.

Jenny Wildblood and Judith Stinton felt that an increase of double the present subscription would be too much and proposed raising it to £15.00. Tess Ormrod expressed the view that she very much hoped the Journals would continue to be produced as hard copies so did not feel that £20 would be too much if such a raise enabled this. Peter proposed a compromise of £18.00, with a rate of £12.00 for students and unwaged.

Jenny pointed out that we have a deficit in the finances this year due to the fact that we are now producing two Journals per year, the Mary Jacobs Essay Prize money has been increased and we no longer have any income from sales of back Journals as they will be available online. Therefore, subscriptions and donations are our only forms of income. She felt that an increase to £18.00 would be sufficient. It was agreed to go ahead with this, and to decide later on a rate for members in joint households. Mercedes suggested that we set a fixed rate for European and USA subscriptions. This was agreed.

The Mary Jacobs Memorial Essay Prize - Four entries were received this year, all of high quality, with three being publishable. This is a very fitting memorial to Mary.

Peter suggested that we should revert to having a panel of judges, rather than just one judge, as has been the case in the past. It was agreed to decide on this nearer the time of the next competition.

Jenny reported that she had received a letter of thanks from the winner of the prize, Harry Daniels.

Treasurer's Report: Jenny reported a deficit of £945.73 this financial year. As outlined above, expenditure on printing, the Essay Prize and the lack of back Journal sales are contributing factors. She hoped that members would continue to use the Amazon link from the Society's website to bring in a small commission. Subscription payment is now possible through PayPal, which she has set up with help from Peter and Karina Taubert.

She proposes to move the Society's bank account from Barclays to Co-op Bank. This would make online banking easier and would enable more than one signatory on the online account so that bills could be paid by online transfer. Processing of cheques from overseas would still be free of charge.

The meeting agreed that this would be useful to change banks and raise the subscription at the same time so that members would only have to change their standing orders once. The membership would be informed of the changes in the September Newsletter.

The accounts have been signed off by the checker.

Membership Secretary's Report: Mercedes Aguirre reported that there are 126 members of the Society who have paid their membership in the last 18 months. Eight new members have joined the Society this year, including the three Essay prize winners. Only one new member has joined after the Manchester Conference. Most of our members are based in the UK, with 17 in the USA, two in Germany and one each in France, Norway, Italy, Portugal and the Netherlands.

Mercedes and Jenny will set up a Google Document to make it easier for Mercedes to know who has paid their subscription. Mercedes will also inform any new members who may join this year of the new subscription rate starting in January 2019. **Journal Report:** Peter reported that Mercedes is also helping with editorial duties on the Journal. Digitisation of the back Journals is going ahead, although permissions have been difficult to obtain in some cases. If permission is not given digitisation can still go ahead but those articles will not be open access. Funding from UCL for the process is still in place.

He also suggested that the Newsletters could be made available online in PDF with a link from the Society website.

Now that the Journal is twice yearly, he is building up a bank of material to be drawn on for future editions. The second Journal for 2018 will contain papers from the Manchester Conference, edited by Howard Booth and Gemma Moss. Peter also suggested that some Journal issues could be built around a theme, for example, articles on Warner's Short Stories, Wartime in Warner's works and Warner and Other Writers. This might be a good way to recruit new contributors.

The hosting of the digitised Journals is now carried out by Science Open, no longer by Ingenta. Peter is in contact with Science Open to try to obtain a more satisfactory format.

Newsletter Report: Jay Barksdale was unable to attend the meeting so sent a written report. He is happy with the work of Creeds, the printer of the Newsletter. He would also like to see more contributions from members for the Newsletter.

He asked if there is a complete run of Newsletters in the Warner/Ackland Archive. Lynn Mutti, Judith Bond and Judith Stinton are going to help with the Archive when it moves from the Dorset County Museum to the Dorset History Centre and will look into this. Mercedes reported that, while the British Library has a full set of Journals, the Newsletters are not lodged there. Jay also suggested making a list of other literary societies and sending them copies of our Newsletter to see if this would help to increase membership. The meeting agreed that Jay should be asked to go ahead with this. The Alliance of Literary Societies would be a helpful resource.

A.O.B.: *Report of the Sylvia Townsend Warner Lecture, 22 June 2017* - Maud Ellmann gave a most interesting lecture on *After the Death of Don Juan* at UCL. Approximately 35 people attended. The Society would like to record its thanks to the Institute of Advanced Studies at UCL for hosting this event and providing refreshments.

Report from the Sylvia Townsend Warner Conference in Manchester, April 2018
This was also a very successful event organised by Howard Booth and Gemma Moss. Jan reported that a pleasing number of young people attended and Warner is on the syllabus of some of the courses at the University of Manchester. Some excellent papers were presented.

Privacy Policy - Judith Bond outlined some of the requirements of the new General Data Protection Regulation which the Society will have to abide by. She undertook to draft a Privacy Policy which could be sent out to all members.

Society Website - Karina sent a written report on the use of the website. Her graph of Average Site Visitors Per Day showed a huge spike just before the Manchester Conference. She also reported that a button for paying subscriptions through PayPal has been added to the site.

She pointed out that the Society's Facebook page has not been updated for some considerable time and she recommended that this be remedied as a priority. Peter expressed the hope that one of the new candidates for Committee membership might undertake this and he would make enquiries.

The Sylvia Townsend Warner Weekend 2019 - It is difficult to find new places associated with Warner to explore. Suggestions of Somerset, a Warner-Woolf Weekend in Sussex, or Harrow and the Chilterns were made. It was decided that one of these should be considered for 2019 and would incorporate the AGM.

The Warner Reading Group - This has been set up by Harry Daniels and Harriet Baker and Peter is arranging hosting for it at UCL. It is hoped to provoke a surge of interest in Warner, particularly among students.

There being no further business the meeting concluded at 12.50 pm.



STW Society members at the Five Maries on the afternoon of Saturday, 12 May 2018. Left to Right: Jan Montefiore, Rowan Bright, Peter Swaab, Mercedes Aguirre, photographed by Ruth Williams. We had previously been visiting St Nicholas Church, Chaldon Herring (formerly East Chaldon) visiting the grave of Sylvia Townsend Warner and Valentine Ackland. The stone is getting a bit lichened over, but was still legible, surrounded by spring grass and daisies and the sound of rooks cawing in the trees, all much as in Sylvia's lifetime. Jenny Wildblood read the moving passage from Sylvia's *Journal* about Valentine's funeral, and Peter Swaab spoke part of the poem 'Azrael'.

Afterwards we visited the interior of the church – it was open - and admired the Betty Muntz appliqué hanging, on which she worked with local children in her

studio, in which the beasts (all local animals) make their way from the Five Maries to worship at the Nativity. Then we made our way to the Five Maries themselves, as shown in the photograph, with their splendid views of Chaldon village and the hills around.

Several members visited Chaldon again on May 13 (the Saturday visit was for those of us who couldn't manage this), and lunched afterwards at The Sailor's Return, which remains welcoming.

Jan Montefiore

Changes in subscription rates to the Sylvia Townsend Warner Society from January 2019

All literary societies are obliged from time to time to raise their charges to members, so as to keep up with inflation and with the ever-rising cost of postage. In the 18 years since the Sylvia Townsend Warner Society was founded in 2000, our yearly subscription rates have stayed the same at £10 per annum for UK individuals; £15, UK joint; Overseas Individual, US \$25; Overseas Joint, US \$30. These rates no longer cover the costs of printing and shipping two issues each of the *Journal of the Sylvia Townsend Warner Society*, and of the *Sylvia Townsend Warner Newsletter* to our members, so the Society regretfully agreed at the May 2018 AGM that we must raise our subscriptions.

From January 2019, subscription charges to the Sylvia Townsend Warner Society will be as follows:

- UK individual: £18.00
- UK individual unwaged/student: £12.00
- UK joint subscription: £20.00
- UK joint unwaged/student: £15.00
- Overseas individual: £28.00 (= \$36, or EUR 31.00)
- Overseas unwaged/student: £20.00 (= \$26, or EUR 22.00)
- Overseas joint subscription: £30.00 (= \$39, or EUR 33.50)
- Overseas joint unwaged/student: £22.00 (= \$28.50, or EUR 24.50)

These changes include a reduced rate for unwaged and student members of the Society.

Subscription rates for overseas members are now given in GBP, with dollar and euro equivalents. The previous requirement to pay in US dollars made no provision for overseas members living in the Eurozone (or anywhere else outside the USA, come to that). The advent of PayPal enables us to be more flexible. Overseas members should pay in their own currencies, using the Society's PayPal account on the Sylvia Townsend Warner Society's website, which will convert their currency into sterling GBP. UK members may either pay the same way, or (like me), adjust their Standing Order, or else send a cheque.

As before, these charges are payable from 1st January 2019, and cover the entire calendar year. If you decide to give a friend a year's STW Society membership for Christmas, make sure their membership starts on January 1st - don't date it from December 2018.

We of course regret having at last to raise our rates. That said, for their subscriptions our members receive two issues of our excellent Journal, plus our admirable six-monthly Newsletter, and can also attend our annual Dorchester meeting, our biennial Sylvia Townsend Warner Lecture, and other activities (we plan a Sussex trip in 2019 to see the homes of Sylvia's friends and of Valentine's redoubtable mother Mrs Ackland in her last years): all of which, I hope you agree, is not bad value for money.

Jan Montefiore - Chair of the Sylvia Townsend Warner Society

SYLVIA TOWNSEND WARNER AND MODERNISM

For anyone interested in Sylvia Townsend Warner this two-day conference held in Friends' Meeting House in Manchester was a rewarding experience, exploring as it did Warner's complex relationship to Modernism. This theme was sufficiently specific to give direction to the conference but general enough to include a wide range of material and approaches, with papers on Warner's early writings, short stories, and novels, including *The Flint Anchor* which often escapes critical notice. The plenaries were equally wide-ranging, with Professor Jan Montefiore addressing 'Innocence versus Directness: Children in the Fictions of Sylvia Townsend Warner' and Professor Claire Harman considering 'Behind the Firing Line: Sylvia Townsend Warner in the Great War'.

Two aspects of this event were particularly heartening. The first is its very existence, because as far as I am aware this was the first ever two-day academic conference devoted to Warner, suggesting her increasing importance in university curricula. Equally heartening was the relative youth of many of the academic speakers: Warner should have advocates and enthusiasts for many years to come.

As conferences go this was relatively small, enabling it to be organised in single panels which in turn both tightened the focus of the conference and encouraged wider ranging post-panel discussion than is often the case when delegates have been attending different sessions. This structure also encouraged the more informal discussions over refreshments that often prove so productive and interesting. Regardless of size and structure, planning a conference always involves much hard work so our thanks are due to Dr Howard J. Booth (University of Manchester) and Dr Gemma Moss (Birmingham City University) for this successful and enjoyable event.

As is often the case, there was probably too much material to take in and consider over the two days the conference lasted so the publication of the papers in a forthcoming issue of the *Journal of the Sylvia Townsend Warner Society* is particularly welcome.

Helen Sutherland

Sylvia Townsend Warner and Modernism : A Conference

6-7 April 2018

Organised by Howard J. Booth and Gemma Moss and supported by the Modernism@Manchester Research Group of English Literature, American Studies and Creative Writing at The University of Manchester

Janet Montefiore (University of Kent) : Innocence versus Directness: Children in the Fictions of Sylvia Townsend Warner

Clara Jones (King's College, London) : Experiences of a Lady Worker: Class and Labour in Sylvia Townsend Warner's Early Writing

Emma Shaw (University of Manchester) : Walking at the Margins in *Lolly Willowses* and *Summer Will Show*

Alex Murray (Queen's University Belfast) : Sylvia Townsend Warner's Blake and Modernist Literary History

Paul Robichaud (Albertus Magnus College) : Sylvia Townsend Warner and the Modern English Pastoral

Rose McMahan : Sylvia Townsend Warner : A Literary Feast for the Senses

Gemma Moss (Birmingham City University) : The Value of Art to Society is that by it an Emotional Adaptation is Possible: *The Corner That Held Them* and Marxist Aesthetics

Karen Schaller (University of East Anglia) : *The True Heart*: Sylvia Townsend Warner's Impolitics of Love

Karen Sanders (University of Essex) : 'He would teach him the elements of plane geometry': Euclidean Geometry and the Colonial Educational Imperative in *Mr Fortunes Maggot*

Harry Daniels : Holy and Profane Love in Mr Fortune Fictions

Claire Harman (University of Durham) : Behind the Firing Line: Sylvia Townsend Warner in the Great War

Jennifer P. Nesbit (Penn State York) : Drifting Away from Normativity: The Short Stories of Sylvia Townsend Warner

Mercedes Aguirre (British Library) : *After the Death of Don Juan* and the Spanish Civil War

Jake O'Leary (University of Bristol) : Propaganda, Pacifism and Periodicals: Conflicted Antifascism in Sylvia Townsend Warner's Spanish Civil War Writing

Howard Booth (University of Manchester) : *The Flint Anchor*: Subjectivity and Modernism

'Mr FitzGerald is in the Wood'

In *The Time by the Sea*, a book of memoirs published by Faber in 2013, the writer Ronald Blythe discusses the unconventional life of Edward FitzGerald, famous for his translation of the twelfth-century Persian poem, Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám.

The FitzGerald family home was at Boulge in Suffolk. In 1960, Blythe was living at nearby Debach, acting as guardian to its redundant church. FitzGerald was buried in Boulge churchyard, with a rose-bush, given by the Shah of Persia, to decorate his grave. So many cuttings were taken by admirers that the plant eventually died. Blythe describes the elaborate steps taken to remedy this state of affairs, which he afterwards related to Sylvia Townsend Warner.

'In the Seventies a later Shah, being told of this, commanded that *six* rose trees should surround FitzGerald. They could have made it difficult to read: 'It is He that has made us, and not we ourselves' – the FitzGerald's apology for such a strange member of the family. Someone who told the world all his friends were loves. On a miserable November day I went to Boulge Church along with everyone for miles around to await the Persian Ambassador who was commanded to plant the Shah's roses. It was wet and cold. Two front pews were roped off for the ambassadorial party. The electricity went off and some of us went out to collect paraffin lamps and candles. The organist played all the intonations he knew many times. The Rector, Mr Braybrooke, then climbed into the pulpit: 'I am next in line, I suppose, to plant the roses.' Whilst he was heeling them into the mud, a Rolls-Royce appeared on the concreted path through the sugarbeet, its pennant flapping. It sent the rooks up.

The Ambassador was princely and smiling, very tall and wearing a coat with an Astrakhan collar. There were some smiling ladies. And a little boy.

"Oh, you English – you are so prompt! We came Newmarket way and had lunch!"

'We must give you some tea at the Rectory.'

'The English are so polite.'

'We will charge him for the printing,' said Mr Braybrooke.

Some years after this Sylvia Townsend Warner came to see me en route to Peter Pears. When I told her this story – it was a November afternoon again – she insisted that we all drive down the road to look at Fitz's grave: 'Oh, I must see it!'

She was writing the life of T.H. White and I was writing *Akenfield*, for which I had been stealing names from the Debach gravestones.

Sylvia: 'Names are so important, don't you think?'

We wondered where Shakespeare had found his names. Does anyone know?

Sylvia: 'Is Omar's name on Fitz's stone?'

'Only his.'

She was enthralled when I told her what happened to the FitzGerald crypt on the Debach and Boulge Flower and Vegetable Show day. It was a Gothic building with a flight of steps and a pair of doors, a heavy protective cast-iron fence and a curious solidity. At the Flower Show, the gates and the doors were flung wide and we could enter. It was one of the Flower Show's sideshows. There were brass-studded purple coffins on stone shelves, one above the other, all very tidy as one should be in death.

'Oh, we must see it!'

I told Sylvia a joke about a Shah. 'The Shah of Persia sat next to a Scottish lady in Edinburgh who said, 'They tell me, Sire, that in your country you worship the sun.' 'So would you, madam, if you had ever seen it.'

Sylvia: 'All this Persian thing – in Suffolk! – Wonderful!'

Judith Stinton

Jack Anspaugh

STW Society member Gillian Davies has a request for information: "I received as a gift a book which appears to have come from STW's library after her death. It's called *American Cat-atalogue: The Cat in American Folk Art* and was a gift to Sylvia from Jack Anspaugh, an American. I don't know anything about him, can't find any reference in the obvious places. In the Dorset Archives there is a catalogue entry for "an account by Jack Anspaugh of his correspondence with STW; photocopies of her letters and cards to him with an interlinking narrative by him; many references to their cats". Judith Bond very helpfully told me that "I suppose the photocopies are in the archive because William Maxwell, when he was preparing *Letters*, asked people to send copies of letters they had received from STW, and then he gave the copies to the archive after the book was finished. He didn't use any of Anspaugh's in the book, however." I haven't seen the material in the archive yet and can find no reference to Anspaugh in indexes in cyberspace. If anyone can enlighten me about this man and his friendship with STW I would be very grateful." (replies to diabolista@aol.com)

The Alliance of Literary Societies

has published (online only) their most recent Journal, *Unreliable Narrators*. As are past issues from 2013 onward, and the three most recent newsletters, it is freely available on their site : allianceofliterarysocieties.wordpress.com. Among the 2018 subjects are Charlotte Yonge, Jerome K. Jerome, Angela Thirkell and Marjorie Allingham. The theme for 2019, for which contributions seem welcome, is *When Writers Attack : Authors in the Public Sphere*.

Alyse Gregory & Valentine Ackland

Richard Betts, of the Powys Society and an admirer of the poetry of Valentine, sends us this query :

"I've recently read *Journey from Winter: Selected Poems*, published by Fyfield Books and superbly edited by Frances Bingham. The book reproduces all of the poems by Sylvia and Valentine from *Whether a Dove or a Seagull*, and many later ones too by Valentine. It confirms my view that Valentine Ackland's poems have not nearly received the credit they deserve. Page 196 includes these words from an untitled poem:

'The truth startles for a moment, and is gone again;
Flash of a bright eye in the thicket seen
And vanished in the moving flickering green
Of leaves and grass and shadows: but only so truth shows.

Only so truth is seen: for a moment's moment as we go
Like thistledown on the wind, between life and life.'

The imagery itself startles, and conveys exquisitely two things – truth does exist; truth is ephemeral and cannot be held or captured. I thought I'd read something very similar elsewhere. Then I remembered the closing lines from *The Day is Gone*, the autobiography of Alyse Gregory, published in 1948:

'Truth is a curlew that gives its clear call; the light flashes, a feather drops at our feet, and it has flown away.'

Valentine Ackland and Alyse Gregory knew each other well from their days at Chaldon Herring. I do wonder, though there is probably no way of establishing this, whether Valentine borrowed from Alyse's words, consciously or unconsciously, when she wrote hers. Frances Bingham dates Valentine's poem as no earlier than 1956, long after she had left Chaldon. It is quite possible, I suppose, that Valentine had read Alyse's book?"

Replies to Richardbetts50@outlook.com (or yours truly).

Mr. Betts reminds us that November 9, 2019 marks the 50th anniversary of Valentine's death. Shall we commemorate this in some manner, perhaps by a graveside reading of poems? Please, let your officers know what you think. In any case, Newsletter 39 will be devoted to her. Contributions are most welcome.

Journey from Winter also prints most of the poem 'A Not-poem about love, written during a sleepless night.' The complete poem appears in *Further Poems of Valentine Ackland* (rare) and *Later Poems by Valentine Ackland* (very rare). Here are the last two verses, from the copy of *Later Poems* in the Berg Collection, NYPL.

Age is exile: it has taken this long to discover.
Driven from Eden we stand in unfertile country
And our bones are tired and still we know we must labour –
Is this what we fear in the nights we are not together?

It is all true, but little matters because of more,
The more-than-truth which is the light we have lived by:
The light of two candles burning on either side of the mirror
Facing the fire I kindled at the start of eternity.

The Sylvia Townsend Warner / Valentine Ackland Archive

has moved to the Dorset History Centre. The collection is now safely installed in the strongrooms there and is open to researchers. The Centre's hours are Tuesday to Friday 9.00-5.00, and the first and third Saturdays of each month from 9.00-4.30. Pre-ordering is advised for Saturdays. The first time you visit you will need to register. There is no charge, but identification with a signature and address is required. There is no charge to access documents. Copying services are available depending on the format of the documents, or you can buy a permit to use your own camera. For more details, see www.dorsetforyou.gov.uk/dorsethistorycentre. There is no description online for the Archive, but the Centre has an excel sheet with detailed information of the contents. Requests for this spreadsheet, and any other questions should be sent to archives@dorsetcc.gov.uk.

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The Handheld Press, publishers of the recent edition of *The Akeing Heart* will soon issue a new printing of *Kingdoms of Elfin*. With a cover by Arthur Rackham, foreward by Greer Gilman and introduced by Ingrid Hotz-Davies, these sixteen stories are 'a book for anyone who has heard the horns of Elfin in the distance at twilight, as much as it is for readers who crave fine literature and are certain that elves and their kingdoms are bosh' (Neil Gaiman). To be published on Hallowe'en 31 October 2018, you may pre-order from their site : handheldpress.co.uk (£13 UK, £18 otherwise).

Genevieve Taggard



Laurel Harris, assistant professor of English at Rider University (NJ, USA) has edited and annotated letters from Sylvia to Genevieve Taggard for *PMLA*, vol. 133, no. 1 (2018). Though little known today, Taggard was a “central literary figure in Greenwich Village in the 1920s and a well-known activist poet in the 1930s and 1940s”. They never met, but as ‘fellow travelers’ Taggard may well have been in the audience in 1939 when Sylvia spoke at the Third Congress of the Antifacist League of American Writers at Carnegie Hall. In any case, Taggard sent Sylvia a poem in 1941 and a correspondence began, ending with Genevieve’s death in 1948. Harris selects 11 of the 19 known

letters, housed at The New York Public Library. Below, handwritten from 8.iv.1948, is one she did not select, photocopy courtesy of Michael Steinman.

Dearest Genevieve,

Thank you so much for two so generous parcels: the seeds came two days ago, and the food parcel today. This thanks is of a married kind, for I think the seeds come from your husband, if I remember your letter rightly?

I was delighted to see some old friends among them: Yellow Danvers Onion & Sparkler Radish are encased by memories of very good crops I raised in 1942, when an American association of gardeners had the discerning kindness to send over a quantity of seeds to be distributed among cottage gardeners & allotment holders, and as I was then among the society of local gardeners who had undertaken to grow so much food-stuff I came in for a share. Yellow Danvers did me nobly. I shall plant all I can of your packets, and the rest will be used by gardening friends. For a nice postman has already taken some: most fittingly, since he brought the parcel and is, being an old sailor, a gardener too. I suppose it is looking at such quantities of unharvested sea: certainly sailors seem to turn naturally into gardeners.

And the food parcel will be gratefully drawn on next week, when I have a young cousin, exhausted with a first baby and difficulties of starting a home under current conditions, coming to stay. She is one of these pseudo-lucky people who have got a pre-fab: but it is not being very easy for her, as her earlier life was chiefly spent in rather old-fashioned houses, abounding in prehistoric inconveniences, but also abounding in cupboards & sheds & box-rooms; and she is finding the change-over hard to acclimatize to. Personally I can imagine nothing more horrible. I would rather live in a roomy

cowshed than in one of these multum in parvos [a great deal in a small space]; so very parvo, too. Of course it is one of dozens, set down like hen-coops in tidy rows. When she had been in it for a few weeks she began to feel a particular form of claustrophobia – claustro of time, not space. She felt herself fastened into a pattern of doing just what all her neighbours did: at exactly the same time, she cooked in unison, she washed up in unison, and when she sat down for a rest she felt the thud of a score of down-sitting bottoms to right & left of her. So as a gesture the poor child washed on Tuesdays, and hung out her washing to dry after all the other washing-lines had been filled – a banner of individualism.

It is a difficult world just now for natural-born anarchists: and this country abounds in them. I sometimes think that when the English revolution takes place it will carry us into the anarchic state forthwith. There has been a curious pointer to that quite recently. An organisation called Mass Observation has just carried out an inquiry about what people feel about their jobs. An overwhelming majority of the replies judged the jobs, not on pay, not on conditions, not on prospects; but on whether or no they were constructive and useful. If not, pay or conditions might be good, but the jobs were bad ones. It seems a very wholesome sign if so many employed people make that the judging-point.

It is an offense against humanity to compel people to read my hand-writing, and I apologise; but I have a head-ache, and skulk away from the rattle of my typewriter.

How are you? I do hope you are beginning to feel better, and that you have less pain, and more moments of feeling your head above water. When will your lilacs bloom? Mine are in bud; but thwarted by gales & hailstorms. I think you will feel better when you can smell a bunch of lilac. Fortunately doctors have never invented smell-therapy – so it still has a chance to work!

Ever – Sylvia

And from an earlier letter of 23.ii.1943, “...Here is a poem. I find I can write only the plainest, most nursery-rhyme sort, just now”.

Nosing through the scarves of rain
With a mild mechanic drone,
Even in a bombing plane
Coming home is coming home.

Portland, Chesil, Aldhelm, Swyre:
Brief they beckon, friendly all
As the nursery shapes the fire
Printed on the nursery wall.

Landfall: jolt of ground beneath,
Lights and laughter, eggs and flak,
Interrogatory of death –
Dreaming pilot, come awake!

HYMN TO THE SUN WITH IMPERATIVE REFRAIN

Genevieve Taggard

Light pure from the all-giving sun
Comes to faces of those up early,
Shocking, sun kissing the eyes.
We step, drenched with the sky's
Force, – senses gilded and goaded.
No haste – the day's begun.
(Up now, or consent to lie still.)

So breathing day we come to chill
Arcturus, Sirius, Vega,
Where eyes are kissed to sleep.
Breath mixed with dark to keep
Us passive, tuned low by stars
And all but just heart-beat still.
(Up now, or consent to lie still.)

So alter the tides of light
On human nerves with the in and out
Of breath. Response we know and repeat
With slow and fast heart-beat.
To die shuts this sentient bliss
In static day and night.
(Up now, or consent to lie still.)

Grieve that the tingling will
Of the friend too active to die
Felt the trap, the hardening hand.
Join the quick, the new-born who stand
Erect and bright in imperative sun
Or spent, consent to lie still.
(Up now, or consent to lie still.)

Poetry, April 1942

In 1982 **Penelope Fitzgerald** reviewed *Letters and Collected Poems* for The New York Review of Books. "Keeping Warm" was reprinted in *The Afterlife: Essays and Criticism* (Counterpoint, 2003). Though on the whole complementary, she took issue with Maxwell's idiosyncratic editing and the index being

"sketchy... Addicts of collected letters will tell him that this is a serious mistake. S.T.W.'s index would have read, in part:
celibacy, S.T.W. recommends
clearing up, S.T.W.'s passion for
coalshed, T.H. White's diaries lost in
cold baths, S.T.W. advises, if piano kept in bathroom
Contre Sainte-Beuve, S.T.W. translates"

She ends the review...

"But in the end, what is most striking about this civilized poet is her affinity with whatever it is that defies control. By this I don't mean either sin or magic, for she regarded both of these as perfectly amenable, but what she liked to call 'the undesigned.' Against Nature we oppose human order – the lawn must be mowed and appointments must be kept, even though 'the clock with its rat's tooth gnaws away delight.' But, conversely, we can accept the threat of disorder, even if it is never let loose, as the most precious thing we have. "I have tamed two birds,' she wrote in *The Decoy*, 'called Metre and Rhyme

*At whose sweet calling
All thoughts may be beguiled
To my prepared place;
And yet by blood they are wild.'"*

from *What There Is To Say We Have Said: The Correspondence of Eudora Welty and William Maxwell* (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2001)

[July 29, 1980] – I am still deep in the Warner letters, but everything of importance is gathered in, that I know about, I mean, except the correspondence with David Garnett, which hasn't been an easy trout to land, because of his great age and one thing and another. With any luck I will get it, though, and can then begin the preliminary choosing. Just when I was sure I had failed, a cousin of S.T.W. took it upon herself to get in touch with him, and they met in London and he agreed to let me have them, but actually getting my hands on the photocopies is another matter. I hold my breath and sit with my fingers crossed. I have enough without them but there are a hundred twenty-two letters from two twenty-year periods, and her letters to men were usually more interesting than those to women, for reasons I don't understand, but perhaps George Sand could tell me.

I have a limit of 90,000 to 100,000 words, including the index and notes, to work within. And time is breathing down my neck (a good thing) because the price of publishing books in England keeps rising, as the general quality goes down. It is very melancholy. When you think of all the dearest books on our shelves, The Hogarth Press, etc.

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Britons in Spain: A History of the British Battalion of the XVth International Brigade
by William Rust. Lawrence and Wishart. 2s.
SYLVIA TOWNSEND WARNER

The story of the British Battalion of the International Brigade opened in September, 1936, when a handful of British volunteers founded the "Tom Mann Centuria". What was then to many a laughing-stock had passed into the realm of epic when, two years later, the Spanish Government announced that, as a demonstration of the national quality of their warfare, all foreign fighters were to be withdrawn from the Spanish People's Army.

It is the most convincing testimony to the achievement of the British Battalion that the news of this withdrawal was greeted, all over Britain, with feelings of regret, almost of dismay; not only by those who had always supported the cause of the Government of Spain, but by those who were indifferent, even by those who were opposed to it. During the early days of the International Brigade, the British volunteers were not popular with the bulk of the British public. "Headstrong young idiots," was the kindest valedictory they were likely to get. They were busybodies, rushing into a quarrel not their own; they were Reds, they were adventurers; or men bored with long unemployment; or, *pace* some sections of the Press, they were mercenaries, bribed by vast promises, or criminal characters who, if they left their country, left it for the that country's good.

It was so, though now one can scarcely credit it. Two years' blood has flowed under the bridge since then. During those two years the British Battalion came to represent the glories of our blood and state, and was, during a period of steadily increasing national ignominy, about the only unsmirched splash of colour left in the Union Jack; and those who saw the arrival of the surviving Brigaders at Victoria last December, saw the unmistakable, impassioned welcome reserved for those who have defended their country's honour.

"Britons in Spain" is the story of these volunteers. It is, I suppose, the Official History of the XVth Battalion. As their exploit that reaches back to Homer in its romance and courage reaches also into the future in its nature of being an international defence of an international cause, William Rust's book mingles accounts of a heroism which we please to think antique with a candour and critical analysis which have not, so far, distinguished official military histories. Dull would he be of soul who does not read this book.

Life and Letters To-day – March 1939



Sylvia Townsend Warner

Sylvia Townsend Warner, British novelist, speaker at Third American Writers Congress. Caricature by Georges Schreiber. From *New Masses*, 1939.