



(Organ of THE CHARLES LAMB SOCIETY, founded 1935)

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No. 168

(Twenty-Seventh Year)

NOVEMBER, 1962

## PLANTS AND GARDENS IN LAMB'S TIME

An Address by Mrs. Frances Perry, M.B.E.  
October 13th

The period covered by Lamb's life was a most important one in the improvement of English garden styles, bringing as it did vast changes in garden cultivation, particularly the development known as landscape gardening which attained great popularity in the 18th century. It was a revolution against the formal method of layout previously prevailing, for the new system swept away all formality, the effects being obtained from informal groupings of trees framing broad views from the house towards some object of interest, e.g. a natural or artificial lake, a river or a classical temple. The leading exponents of the new style were William Kent and Lancelot ("Capability") Brown, and Humphrey Repton who modified the extravagant practices of earlier exponents. It was a style afterwards much admired on the Continent and became known as the English natural style. The

Ha-Ha introduced by James Edward Smith took the form of a boundary fence or wall sunk in a ditch below the general ground level to permit an unobstructed view of the park or country beyond the garden, was very popular but later came to be abandoned.

Brown, one of the foremost innovators was a landscape gardener and architect, born in Northumberland in 1715 and was originally a kitchen-gardener on the estate of Lord Cobham at Stowe. Repton considers him to have been the founder of the English style of landscape gardening, bringing out the undulating form of the natural landscape. He laid out or remodelled the grounds at Kew, Blenheim, Croome Park, Nuneham Courtenay, and the royal gardens at Hampton Court and Windsor.

Humphrey Repton, 1752—1818, succeeded Lancelot Brown; he was born at Bury St. Edmunds and lived mainly in Norfolk, being interested in gardening, botany and entomology. He became secretary to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland but resigned and took to gardening following the methods of Lancelot Brown. His influence was great and lasting.

Other great gardeners of the period were the Marquis of Blandford, J. C. Loudon born 1783 in Scotland who came to London and met Sir Joseph Banks, later being elected to the Linnean Society. In spite of having lost an arm he undertook the production of an Encyclopedea of Plants, a remarkable piece of work. His wife produced many fine illustrated works of plants, which have now become collector's pieces. Another man was William Forsyth born 1737 who succeeded Phillip Miller at Chelsea and then went to Kensington Palace.

The Horticultural Society originated when John Wedgwood, son of Josiah Wedgwood, on 29th June, 1801 sent a draft plan of such a society to Forsyth asking him to shew it to Sir Joseph Banks. On March 17th, 1804, seven men including Wedgwood, Forsyth, R. A. Salisbury and Sir Joseph Banks met at Hatchard's bookshop in Piccadilly for the purpose of instituting such a society for the improvement of Horticulture. The result was the formation of the Horticultural Society of London in 1805, which later produced many publications on botany and gardening and horticulture generally.

Another important figure was Linneaus (Carl Linné) 1707—1778 a celebrated Swedish botanist who adopted a standard nomenclature for plants and flowers bringing the existing and confused naming system out of chaos into order, and he was the founder of the binomial system. His collection of plants, etc., was brought over on his death to Burlington House. The first magazine of the Society was issued in 1787 and it is still running, the early issues being today very scarce.

Salisbury who lived at Mill Hill planted early specimens of plants in his garden there.

At Enfield Dr. Robert Uvedale was the Headmaster of the Grammar School and a noted botanist, a cedar tree from Lebanon once stood there, planted between 1672 and 1680. Charles and Mary Lamb lived at Edmonton from 1827 to 1833. Uvedale's collection is now in the British Museum.

Lamb's references to flowers and gardens are not very numerous; his enthusiastic letter to Bernard Barton about the fruits and vegetables in his garden at Colebrook Row is well known, and there are nostalgic items in *Dream Children*, in *Blakesmoor in H—Shire* and in *Mrs. Leicester's School*, but Lamb must have taken an interest in the various cottage gardens on his saunterings in Hertfordshire. Mrs. Perry quoted an interesting paragraph from Jane Austen's *Mansfield Park*, and also gave particulars of plants which had been imported and established in this country. She concluded her lecture with a series of relevant and most interesting lantern slides.

Miss Hilda Bandy in the Chair welcomed Mrs. Perry as a member of the Society and an authority on horticulture, having broadcast and written many articles on the subject; a member also of the Horticulture Society and on the B.B.C. Advisory Committee on Horticulture.

A very interesting discussion followed the lecture and a cordial vote of thanks to Mrs. Perry was accorded by Mr. Bernard. Thanks to the Chairman was moved by Miss McGuire.

The Elian Reading was given by Miss Miall from the essay *The Two Races of Men*.

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## VISIT TO BUTTON SNAP AND WIDFORD

September 16th

In Queen Victoria's reign there was such a thing as "Queen's weather", fine, sunny days which coincided with her public outings.

The Society has obviously acquired a similar prerogative, for in this worst of all possible summers, it has been blessed with sunshine and blue skies for its two outings into Lamb's Hertfordshire.

This is all the more remarkable because when we set off from King's Cross on Sunday, September 16th, the weather was cold and blustery; but by the time the coach had reached Button Snap, Cherry Green (is it a coincidence that a signpost just off the main road indicated that we were also heading in the direction of Munden?) the grey skies had lifted and the cottage was seen in all its summer glory.

Lamb's feeling as a property owner are on record. "When I journeyed down to take possession, and planted foot on my own ground, the stately habits of the donor descended upon me, and I strode (shall I confess the vanity?) with larger paces over my allotment of three quarters of an acre, with its commodious mansion in the midst, with the feeling of an English freeholder that all betwixt sky and centre was my own."

Those of us who had not previously visited the cottage also experienced this pride of possession, if only in a depreciated, four hundredth part fashion.

One of the objects of the visit was to inspect the improvements recently carried out by the Society at Button Snap which were described in detail by the present tenant, Mr. Charles Tickle. The floor of the kitchen has been lowered in order to provide a headroom of over six foot which has necessitated steps at its

## LAMB AND LEMONADE

by John Pinches

entrance and at the side door. As the previous height of the room was about 5ft and Mr. Tickle stands 5ft. 8in., this should make those sojourns in the kitchen, from which in these egalitarian days no-one escapes, less of a martyrdom. In the partitioned section of the kitchen Mr. Tickle has made a bathroom so that Lamb's 'commodious mansion' is now a comfortable home, of which he would have surely approved.

The Society's chairman, Mr. Walter Farrow, reminded members that Button Snap, Lamb's only landed property, was dedicated by the Society exactly thirteen years ago.

'At that gathering,' he said, 'its front door was opened with a silver key by my dear wife. That key, with a picture of Button Snap will be today installed here to serve as a memorial to her and a relic of a great occasion.'

The improvements Mr. Tickle had described were made possible by a generous donation to the funds from Mr. T. Edward Carpenter, and to whom it was unanimously agreed to send a message of gratitude.

'In 1949 at the dedication of this cottage,' continued Mr. Farrow, 'I expressed a few words which can aptly be repeated to-day.'

'Here it stands, this haunt of ancient peace, miraculously preserved in a changing world and projecting itself into the dark and unknown future.'

'To-day we dedicate it afresh, so that whomsoever shall pass this way hereafter can touch something which Charles Lamb touched and tread the path where Elia trod.'

After this little ceremony, members adjourned to the Hopecot Tea Rooms at the lovely old village of Westmill, where a hearty appetite, engendered by the Hertfordshire air, was satisfied by a substantial country tea. Then on by coach through the rolling countryside—great fields of corn (many still unharvested) and splendid trees—to Widford Church. It was frustrating to catch glimpses en route of Goddards, the school kept by Lamb's friends the Misses Norris, and the Bell Inn where he made merry during his sojourns in the village, but the sun was setting and time was running out.

At the churchyard gate we were welcomed by the Vicar, who then left to take Evensong. And as we inspected the grave of Lamb's grandmother, Mary Field, (the Society is responsible for its upkeep) and many others with headstones bearing names familiar to Elians, we heard the strains of the organ and the singing of the choir and congregation, as Lamb himself must have heard them on many a Sunday evening.

It was a fitting end to our pilgrimage.

V.W.

The name of Charles Lamb is not usually associated with lemonade and other aerated waters. Rather might we associate it with the ales of Old England, for beer and beef were features of the Thursday night at-homes at which he and Mary entertained Wordsworth, Coleridge, Crabb Robinson and other great contemporaries.

Nevertheless, Lamb was always interested in the products of his country, as we may remember from this essay on the origins of roast pork.

It is not inappropriate, therefore, that the first commercial organisation to have the distinction of joining the Society as a Corporate Member should be John G. Webb and Company Limited, Mineral Water Manufacturers, of South Lambeth.

The story of Webbs, in its way, is as steeped in antiquity as are the "Essays of Elia," for the founder of the firm, Mr. John Webb, at one time known as "the largest manufacturer of soda water in the Metropolis," set up his original factory backing on to Charles's cottage in Colebrook Row (now Duncan Terrace), Islington. And when Charles and Mary forsook this home, they sold some of their furniture to Mr. Webb, among it a chair presented to the Lamb Society some years ago.

In its way, this wooden armchair and its association with Islington are peculiarly evocative of the London Lamb loved, and which he described in his letter to Wordsworth on January 30th, 1801 (nine years before Webbs became incorporated as a limited company):

"...the crowds, the very dirt and mud, the sun shining upon the houses and pavements, the print shops, the old bookstalls, parsons cheapening books, coffee-houses, steams of soups from kitchens, the pantomimes—London itself a pantomime and a masquerade—all these things work themselves into my mind and feed me, without power of satisfying me..."

Charles would probably have been equally delighted with the later history of Mr. John Webb's business. For when Cruickshank was illustrating "Sketches by Boz," in 1835, he had to depict the visit paid by John Dounce to a girl at a new oyster saloon. "Behind the natives were barrels," writes Dickens. "Behind the barrels was a young lady, all in blue and all alone." And behind the young lady, as we may see from the Cruickshank drawing, is a jar of Webb's soda water.

Almost as much prized by the Company itself as this association with Dickens, is the first

Royal Warrant for soda water, granted during the reign of William IV and addressed to Timothy Brent, Esq., Secretary to the Board of Green Cloth:

"These are to Will and require you forthwith to swear and admit the Bearer hereof John Webb—into the place of Purveyor of Soda Water to His Majesty in Ordinary at Brighton;—He is to have and enjoy all the Rights, Profits, Privileges, and Advantages to the said place during my Will and Pleasure, and for so doing this shall be your Warrant. "Given under my Hand this 16th day of March, 1821, in the Second Year of His Majesty's reign.

Cholmondeley"

Webbs is, of course, known for other products besides its soda water.

Chief among these is its Indian Tonic Water, the story of the origin of which would probably have furnished as amusing a topic for an essay by Charles Lamb as his "Dissertation upon Roast Pig". For Mr. Webb's son, who took over the business, was in the habit of visiting the shop of a chemist friend in the Strand, where visitors from eastern and tropical countries came to take their necessary dose of quinine. And, noticing the horrible faces which these visitors pulled as they took their medicinal doses. Mr. Webb the Second went back to his Islington factory and concocted a more palatable drink for them to be known as Webb's Indian Tonic Water.

Because it has never embarked on large advertising schemes, its products are not, perhaps so well known nowadays to the public as are those of its competitors; nevertheless the House of Webbs finds in its overseas interests that there is something to be said for Emerson's philosophy that, if any man make a better mousetrap than his neighbours, though he hide himself in a forest, the world will find its way to his door.

Its Indian Tonic Water, which gained a gold medal at the Buenos Aires Exhibition just before the turn of the century, commands, perhaps, as wide a market as that signified for "Elia" by the names in the visitors' book at "Button Snap."

We shall recall that, in recent years, this has been signed by 19 Americans, 4 Canadians, 3 Australians, a New Zealander, a Frenchman and a German.

**Extra-Ordinary General Meeting—8th December, 1962**—An Extra-Ordinary General Meeting is hereby called for Saturday, 8th December, 1962 at the Mary Ward Centre,

9 Tavistock Place, W.C.1. at 2.45 p.m. The business of that meeting will be to elect an additional Vice-President and arising from the death of Mr. M. A. Jacobs, a Solicitor for the Society.

The Council is proposing Mr. T. Edward Carpenter, B.A., LL.B., J.P. as a Vice-President and Mr. Sidney F. Rich, O.B.E., LL.B., as the Society's Solicitor.

The Business Meeting will be followed by a lecture on "George Cruickshank" by Mr. J. C. Trewin.

**Future Meetings—Monday, 12th November, 1962**—"Two Nineteenth Century Articles on Lamb" by Professor Geoffrey Tillotson, M.A., B.Litt. (President of the Society). Chairman: Rev. F. N. Doubleday, M.R.C.S.

**Saturday, 8th December, 1962**—"George Cruickshank" by Mr. J. C. Trewin. Chairman: Mr. R. Meadows White.

The November meeting will be held at Dr. Williams's Hall, 14 Gordon Square, W.C.1. at 6.30 p.m. The December meeting will be held at the Mary Ward Centre, 9 Tavistock Place, W.C.1. at 2.45 p.m.

**Christmas Cards**—All orders for the Society's Christmas Cards, containing an illustration of East India House, received by Mid-October have been dispatched. Further orders will be accepted while supplies are available. No money should be sent with the order.

## DRAMATIC GROUP

### 17th BIRTHDAY PARTY" 5th October, 1962

The ingredients of a good birthday party are good company, good gifts and good fellowship. Our company was goodly, graced by our distinguished Guest of Honour, Professor Geoffrey Tillotson and by the Society's patriarchal Chairman, Mr. Walter Farrow. The fellowship could not fail to be truly Elian with Mr. Ernest G. Crowsley amiably shepherding the 'lambs' through a programme of varied activity and Miss Edna Philpot a veritable 'dea ex machina'.

The happy evening proved the wisdom of choosing birthday presents well. Some of our members always bring their gifts with them: gifts of music for which we thank Miss Theodora Croucher for her pianoforte solos, "Fantasia"

(Mozart) and "Etude" by Arensky and Miss Florence S. Reeves for her songs "Linden Lea" and "Bright is the Ring of Words" by Vaughan Williams and "Serenade to a Beautiful Day" by Revill; gifts of drama and how nobly they were presented by Miss Annette Park (Peg), Miss Gwen Jones (Lady Wishfort), and Mrs. Marjorie Betteridge (Foible) in their delightful excerpt from "The Way of the World"; the gift from Lamb himself—"Susan Yates; First going to Church" from "Mrs. Leicester's School"—read by Mrs. Nora Halliday; and not least, the gift of a notable 'banquet'.

The gift of the evening, a two-fold present, came from Professor Tillotson. He gave us his thoughts, always wise ones, on the language of drama, and perhaps more important, stimulated our thoughts to pursue his suggestions further. He compared drama with the visual arts, showing us that drama needs to be unfolded while a picture may be seen at once in its entirety. He talked of the poems which are purely pictures in words, illustrating from Keat's Ode to Autumn; then, in sharp contrast, he showed the language of drama, the question, the hint, the suggestion, provoking the reader or spectator to anticipate the next move, the successive links in the chain of events to the climax. His quotations from Macbeth illustrated the progressive nature of the language of drama.

We are grateful to Professor Tillotson for making us think along new tracks—and for his skill in setting a scheme to induce thought; he preferred the talker's arm-chair to the lecturer's stance; he caught the words of a song we had just heard, he referred to a picture on the wall to illustrate his argument. And then, having claimed us all and taken us along his paths of thought, he stopped abruptly and left us to continue for ourselves!

In his expression of thanks for our Guest of Honour, Mr. Farrow spoke truly in extolling the uniqueness of our President; Professor Tillotson is with us often and he gives us so much.

Even after Mr. John Drake had moved a vote of thanks to all those who, in their various ways had contributed towards the evening's entertainment, and the Celebration was declared over, members appeared loth to leave—so enjoyable had proved this—the 17th Birthday Celebration of the Dramatic Group.

EDNA TIMBERLAKE.

**Thursday, 29th November**—Reading by members of the Group of "The Magpie or the Maid?" by Isaac Pocock to be given at Courtauld House Byng Place, W.C.1. at 7-00 p.m. It will be remembered that this play was successfully performed by the Dramatic Group on

Saturday, 29th October, 1955 at the Portcullis Theatre, Westminster under the direction of Miss Annette Park.

### A SUGGESTED CHARLES LAMB BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION IN CHICAGO

One of our American members, Mr. Walter S. Taintor, is prepared to organise a Charles Lamb Birthday Celebration in the Chicago area if sufficient support is forthcoming. Any of our members who would be prepared to support such an admirable venture should communicate with Mr. Walter S. Taintor, at 60 Superior Street, Oak Park, Illinois, U.S.A.

**NEW MEMBERS**—Lady Bourne (Patricia Roland Ronald) Garden Flat, 45 Alma Square, N.W.8.

Mr. Ian Robertson, Director, Ashmolean Museum, Oxford.

Professor Douglas Grant, M.A., D.Phil, Department of English Literature, University of Leeds, Leeds 2.

**OBITUARY**—We deeply regret to announce further losses, by death, in our membership. On 30th August **Mr. D. L. Murray** died suddenly. He had joined the Society in 1954 and was keenly interested in its activities and those of the Dramatic Group at whose Birthday Celebration in 1958 he was Guest of Honour. Members will recall the enthralling lecture Mr. Murray gave the Society in September 1955 on "Charles Lamb as a Regency Figure" which clearly demonstrated his thorough knowledge of the period. He was to have given the Opening Address of the present Winter Session, but alas, we have been deprived of that privilege.

**Mr. Harold Adshead** who died on 19th October joined the Society in 1947 and was a member of the Council for some years. He was also a frequent contributor to the *Bulletin* and a regular attender at our meetings, on occasion taking the chair.

**Mr. Meyer Albert Jacobs**, who died on 5th September, had been a member since 1943. For many years he had acted as the Society's solicitor and gave invaluable advice and assistance particularly in connection with our acquisition of "Button Snap". He has also been a benefactor to the Society in other ways.

**Mr. Roy G. Townend** died on 5th September as a result of a serious illness. Since joining the Society in 1951 Mr. Townend was actively interested in the welfare of the Society. He was the author of several Papers read to the Society on literary and theatrical subjects, and as a result of a Garden Party organised at his residence the Dramatic Group's Plays Fund was successfully launched. He helpfully served on the Council for several years and was Hon. Treasurer for a year having to relinquish that office when he moved to Suffolk.

The sad news reached us at the end of August of the death in hospital of **Mrs. E. L. Smith**, the wife of our Editor who had himself had a lengthy period in hospital.

The Society offers its sincere condolences to the bereaved families.

#### FROM THE EDITOR'S CHAIR

A notice now appears outside Holy Trinity Church in Kingsway, London, which will be of interest to members. The notice intimates that "the Church was built in 1831 to minister to the poor district around Drury Lane that Hogarth knew so well. It is linked with Dickens' London and Dr. Johnson's London. Its very site shares this literary tradition for it stands over 7 Little Queen Street (demolished to make room for Kingsway (where Charles Lamb was living when Mary's sanity gave way and she stabbed their mother to death. This ground is consecrated now. There is a tradition of Prayer and Service here, all who turn aside for quiet and meditation will find peace."

Congratulations to Mr. Sidney F. Rich on his admission as an Honorary Freeman of the Metropolitan Borough of Wandsworth in recognition of his long and conspicuous service to the Borough as a member of the Council for twenty-two years, Mayor of the Borough from May 1953 to May 1954 and as Leader of the Council from 1951 to 1961.

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Some of our members may be fortunate enough to possess a copy of *From a Teacher's Desk* by the late Samuel Morris Rich, a slim volume containing exquisite poetic reflections of a schoolmaster on his aims and labours. His daughter, Mrs. Constance Hale has followed in her father's footsteps by producing an equally slim volume *Grass Widow* of poems on childhood and children, natural scenes, and the hopes and fears of the writer, with a spontaneity which is delightful. With her we

Tread softly through the country lane  
And smell the perfumed rose.

Professor Edmund Blunden contributes a Foreword to the volume.

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An appreciatory letter has been received from Madame Habib, our member since 1955 in which she draws attention to an article which appeared in *The Journal of the Franco-British Society*, Vol. XVII, No. 73, Spring 1962. This referred to Henri Thomas who conveys in a book of his essays some of the joys that have been afforded him by writers as varied as Charles Lamb, Verlaine and Robert Frost.