

THE C.L.S.



BULLETIN

(Organ of THE CHARLES LAMB SOCIETY, founded 1935)

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No. 216

(Thirty-seventh Year)

OCTOBER, 1972

MEETINGS—1972-73 SEASON

Saturday, 7th October: PROFESSOR BASIL WILLEY on Lamb and Coleridge (The Ernest G. Crowsley Memorial Lecture) F. E. Sandry in the chair.

Saturday, 4th November: PAPERS BY ERNEST CROWSLEY, read by Miss Florence Reeves. S. L. Hall in the chair.

Saturday, 2nd September: TIM CHILCOTT on The House of Taylor and Hessey, Basil Savage in the chair.

Saturday, 6th January: D. MONTAGU SCOTT on The Law in Elia's Time. Dr. S. F. Rich in the chair.

Saturday, 10th February: The Charles Lamb Birthday Celebration Lunch at Simpson's-in-the-Strand. Guest of Honour *to be announced*, Chairman: Ian Jack, M.A., D.Phil.

Saturday, 3rd March: MISS MOLLY SANDS on London Entertainment of Lamb's Day. Mrs. M. Huxstep in the chair.

Saturday, 7th April: Annual General Meeting.

THE ENFIELD EXHIBITION

The exhibition described in the April Bulletin duly took place between 2 May and 18 June,

and was seen by over 8,000 people. We have since received a letter of thanks from Enfield's Director of Arts and Libraries for our help. One form which this took was the arranging of a public lecture: on Wednesday 17th May Professor Duane Schneider of Ohio University spoke on *Charles Lamb and the Spirit of his Age*. Starting with some account of Lamb's life (it must be remembered that not all members of the audience of about fifty were so well informed on these matters as members of the CLS are) he went on to consider what sort of a person he was and how far he related to the age in which he lived, and particularly to the literary aspects of that age. Amusing, recondite, stimulating as the lecture was, Professor Schneider could well afford to say: "Any man who could, as Lamb did, join in the hissing of his own play must have been very remarkable indeed. Please do not start hissing me to see if I am the man he was". With his pipe in his hand Professor Schneider also made some pertinent observations about Lamb's habit of giving up smoking.

In more serious vein he went on to consider Lamb's position in that pivotal movement which we call Romanticism, and he drew some interesting parallels between him and his

contemporaries in four fields: an interest in antiquity; an interest in the self, in the writer's own nature and feelings; a tendency towards literary experimentation; and a respect for the intuition and the imagination as modes of apprehension. He ended with a quotation from Patmore:

"Lamb spoke of Dryden as a prodigious person, so far as the wonderful power of versification went, but not a first rate poet, or even capable of appreciating such—giving instances from his prefaces in proof of this. He spoke of Dryden's prefaces as the finest pieces of criticism, nevertheless, that had ever been written, and the better for being contradictory to each other, because not founded on any pretended rules."

As he said, it sounds just like Lamb.

OBITUARY

PROFESSOR J. C. REID

We very much regret to record the death of Professor J. C. Reid, Professor of English at Auckland University and one of our Vice Presidents. Active in literary and other cultural affairs in New Zealand, Professor Reid was the author of several books, including a standard biography of Thomas Hood.

MRS. NORAH GORDON LEWIS

Mrs. Lewis died on 10th September at Exmouth aged 85. Her late husband, Mr. Ernest Frederick Lewis, was Hon. Treasurer of the Society from 1938-1945, and she herself was one of our most senior members, having continued her husband's membership on his death in 1948. We are glad to hear that in her turn she is to be succeeded by her friend, Mrs. Irene Hollister. We have heard very gratefully that Mrs. Lewis has bequeathed the sum of £500 to the Society.

We very much regret that an unfortunate misprint crept into the obituary notice of Mr. Bertram Davis in the last issue. In line 12 of the fourth paragraph the word "bedroom" should read "bookroom". We should like to offer our sincere apologies to Mrs. Davis and to the writer of the notice. The date of the death should have been given as 16th April.

NEW MEMBERS

Dr. C. R. Beetles, 171, Sumatra Rd., London, N.W.6.

Mr. S. J. Brett, 111, Park Rd., New Barnet, Herts.

Mr. P. Griffin, 27, Mountfields Drive, Loughborough, Leicestershire LE11 3JD.

Professor Carlo Izzo, Istituto Universitario di Lingue Moderne, Piazza dei Volontari, 3 Milano, Italia.

Mr. D. E. Muspratt, 39, Preston Rd., Leytonstone, E11 1NL.

Ohio University, Dept. of English, Athens, Ohio 45701 U.S.A.

Mr. M. I. Nice, 131 Birkbeck Rd., Enfield, Middlesex.

Mr. E. Stevens, 2 Prospect Rd., London, N.W.2.

Mr. R. Wordsworth, Melford House, 62 Portmore Park Rd., Weybridge, Surrey.

Mr. W. S. Ward, University of Kentucky, College of Arts and Sciences, Dept. of English, Lexington, Kentucky 40506, U.S.A.

The Answers to the Crossword in the July issue are as follows:

ACROSS:—1. Mackery End. 9. High. 10. May. 11. Bridget. 14. Me. 15. Ants. 16. Sober. 18. Mu. 19. El. 20. TT.. 22. Slays 25. Local. 28. Ur. 29. Inc. 30 Aid. 32. M.E. 33. Button Snap.

DOWN:—2. Chit. 3. Kids. 4. Egg. 5. Rhesus. 6. Em. 7. Namely. 8. Dyer. 11. Battle. 12. R.N. 13. To. 17. Bear 21. To. 23. Lucas. 24. Sweep. 26. Chat. 27. Lido. 31. It. 32. Ma.

CHRISTMAS PARTY

On Friday, 15th December from 7 p.m. to 10 p.m. there will be a cheese and wine party at 191 Randolph Avenue, Maida Vale, W.9. (by kind invitation of Mrs. A. Bishop). Tickets, price 35p, will be available at the November and December meetings or by post from Mrs. Bishop (please enclose a stamped addressed envelope). The house is three minutes walk from Maida Vale Underground Station (Bakerloo line).

A LAMB RELIC?

The following letter appeared in *The Times Literary Supplement* of 4th August:

LAMB'S TROTTERS

Sir,—We have a relic, three pigs' trotters in a glass case, which was displayed for many years at the Kings Head public house, Crouch End. It is the result of a wager made at the house many years ago between a customer and a neighbouring pork butcher, who won the bet by producing the impossible—a "yard of pork". The house is still known locally by that name.

My researches into the legend indicate that the drinker who lost the wager was Charles Lamb, probably during his residence at Enfield between 1827 and 1833. An informant, who was living at the pub when his father was lessee in the years before the Second World War, is emphatic on the point. He recollects a visit there by a Lamb society expressly to view the trotters, and puts the date at about 1925. The present Charles Lamb Society was not then formed, so

the visit was presumably made by the Elians who were dissolved many years ago.

Members of the present society have been most helpful but have been unable to trace any reference that would enable me to establish firmly the connexion between Lamb and the relic. My only remaining hope is that a surviving Elian may be able to help me, either from a written record or from memory.

The trotters are to be sold for the funds of the charity on September 16 at an auction sale at Hornsey Town Hall, just across the road from their original resting place at the Kings' Head. Obviously the Lamb connexion, if established, will enhance their value considerably, quite apart from the interest that would be aroused in literary circles.

S. C. COLE.

The Hornsey Trust for Handicapped Children, 26A Dukes Avenue, London N10.

Mr. Cole tells us that his letter did not elicit any useful information, but he will still be interested to have any ideas. Alas, the trotters had to be bought in by the landlord of The King's Head for £8.50.

TWO LAMB LETTERS

Two letters addressed by Lamb to Taylor and Hessey—the first 1 page folio, the second ½ page folio—were on sale at Southeby's on 27th June. The first is postmarked 18th Sept. 1821 (4 o'clock) and contains the last paragraph of *Witches and Other Night Fears* as in the published version. He asks that this should be substituted for the conclusion "in the copy you have" and, in a postscript, for a proof. The second is undated but was written on the same day and refers to the first, sent "this morning by post one o'clock". In it he says "If it be any trouble, it [i.e. the last paragraph] will do as it is: tho' I like the substitution better". The first letter is signed "C. Lamb" and, after the paragraph of the essay, "Elia". The second is signed with large initials. Both are addressed on the verso, and since the second has no postmark one presumes it was sent by hand. The letters were sold for £260 to Messrs Pickering Chatto.

Witches and Other Night Fears was published in The London Magazine in October, 1821, and collected in *Elia* (1823). The final paragraph as it stands in Lamb's original essay can be seen in the manuscript, which is now in the Dyce-Forster collection at The Victoria and Albert Museum. Neither letter is included in E. V. Lucas's three volume edition of 1935.

A MEMORIAL TO SHELLEY IN ITALY

The 150th anniversary of Shelley's death last

July was celebrated in Italy by the opening of the ground floor of his house Casa Magni, Lerici, as a small museum in memory of Shelley and his circle of friends in Italy. It was this house—now renamed Casa Shelley—to which he was endeavouring to return with his friend Edward Williams and the cabin boy Charles Vivian when his boat the "Ariel" capsized and he and his companions were drowned.

The anniversary was marked by three days of celebrations in which members of the Keats Shelley Memorial Association of London and of Rome, and members of the Byron Society, joined with Italian enthusiasts in a pilgrimage to the houses in Pisa and Bagni di Lucca in which Shelley and Byron stayed. A trip in the boat appropriately named THE SHELLEY was taken to Viareggio during which Lord Abinger (whose grandmother was adopted by Shelley's son Percy Florence) threw a laurel wreath into the sea near the spot where Shelley's body was washed up. He invoked the spirit of the poet thus "We applaud the music of your poetry, we recall the brilliance of your intellect, we admire the nobility of your thought—"

The celebrations included evening lectures in the lamp-lit gardens. The Mayor of Lerici, Dr. Giovanni Tincani, spoke of Shelley's philosophy; Mr. John Buxton of New College, Oxford, described Shelley's eventful life in Italy; the Marchesa Iris Origo gave a short talk on Byron's small daughter Allegra. She told how the news of the death of this five year old love-child of Claire Clairmont in the Convent in Bagnacavello was broken to the distraught mother while she was living with the Shelleys at Casa Magni. The Marchesa has given Allegra's doll (a wax Madonna) to the museum.

Members of the Byron Society were received by Countess Gamba at her house at Bagni di Lucca. She is a descendent by marriage from Byron's "last attachment" Teresa Guiccioli (née Gamba). There is an original water colour of Teresa in the museum. The Marchesa Iris Origo gave a party at sunset at her summer villa at Fiascherino. Guests sipped their drinks while sitting on the rocks at the bottom of the garden from which Shelley and Byron used to swim. A colour T.V. film of the life of Shelley has been made on location which included these rocks and Casa Magni, and was shown in England and Italy.

Casa Shelley is not yet fully paid for. Donations would be gratefully received and should be marked "Museo Casa Shelley" and sent to the Midland Bank, 85-87 Lewisham High Street, London, S.E.13. The Mayor of Lerici hopes that lovers of Shelley will send him books on the period in any language and other

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memorabilia addressed to Miss Margaret Brown,
Casa Shelley, Casa de Comune, Lerici, La
Spezia, Italy.

TWO BOOKS ON COLERIDGE

The bicentenary year has produced several books of major importance. Not least is *Samuel Taylor Coleridge* by Professor Basil Willey*. Cast in chronological form it is not a biography but rather a record of the development of Coleridge's beliefs from childhood through his early flirtation with Pantisocracy and Unitarianism to the mature search for the reconciliation of opposites which was to be reached in his *Opus Maximum*, never yet published but promised as a volume in *The Collected Coleridge*. One does not need to say that Professor Willey is his usual lucid self and that he wears his immense learning with a deceptively casual air.

Owen Barfield's *What Coleridge Thought*† may seem on casual inspection to cover somewhat the same ground. However he takes Coleridge's major areas of thought and subjects them to the most intense scrutiny. He has lived with Coleridge for many years: if one looks back at his *Romanticism Comes of Age* one finds an essay on "Thinking and Thought" which dates back to the 1930's, and on "The Philosophy of Samuel Taylor Coleridge" which is drawn from a lecture given in 1932 on the occasion of the Goethe Centenary Festival. In his present book his aim, he says, is to provide a full-scale study of Coleridge's philosophy not as related to something else but as arising out of the views he can be understood as expressing which have a value in *themselves*. Mr. Barfield's contention is that the development of Coleridge's views was so consistent or "organic" throughout his life that his later views are implied in the earlier. If one cannot agree with this, he says, perhaps his book could be mentally retitled *What Coleridge Thought towards the End of his Life*. This is a book for the specialist, the scholar, the philosopher; but at least one common reader can testify to its value as an approach to the essential Coleridge, a mine which can be worked for many a long year, rich and reward-

*Chatto & Windus, demy 8vo, 264pp. £3.00

†Oxford University Press, royal 8vo xii, 285pp £3.70

ing. It must indeed be one of the best books on Coleridge ever to be written.

BASIL SAVAGE

BOOKS RECEIVED

Wallace Nethery: *Eliana Americana*; Charles Lamb in the United States, 1849-1866, Los Angeles, The Plantin Press (limited edition of 350 copies) £3.75.

JW and Anne Tibble: *John Clare; a Life*. Revised edition, Michael Joseph £6.00.

Ralph M. Wardle: *Hazlitt*, University of Nebraska Press £7.00.

It is hoped to review each of these in due course. The Folio Society are shortly to produce an edition of *The Reminiscences of Michael Kelly* introduced by J. C. Trewin and edited by Herbert Van Thal. *The Annual Biography and Obituary for 1827*, the year of Kelly's death, said of the book "it may justly be characterised as the most amusing production of the kind that has for many years issued from the press".

Our member Mr. Kenneth R. James has sent us an interesting pamphlet, published by himself called "Companion Around Watford". Copies may be had from Mr. James at 89 Woodland Drive, Watford, Herts.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Miss Parsons reports that some members have not yet paid their subscriptions for 1972. They are reminded that the subscription for London members is £1.50 (£2.00) double, and for country and overseas members £1.00. If a subscription remains unpaid at the end of the year it will be assumed that the member does not wish to continue and his name will be deleted from the circulation list of the Bulletin.

BACK NUMBERS OF THE BULLETIN

Miss Reeves has been successful in making up a number of sets for university libraries. She is appealing however for copies of Nos. 123, 128-140, 145, 156, 158-161, 164, 165. Any member who has a copy of any of these to spare may be sure of a letter of thanks if he will send it to her.