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Hazlitt's Portrait of Charles Lamb: An Addendum

By SCOTT MCEATHRON

SEVERAL YEARS AGO I PUBLISHED IN THE *Bulletin* an essay describing the National Portrait Gallery's 1878 purchase of William Hazlitt's portrait of Charles Lamb – the portrait that now hangs in the Romantics room of the NPG, along with such famed works as Benjamin Robert Haydon's portrait of Wordsworth, Joseph Severn's portrait of Keats, and Amelia Curran's portrait of Shelley (*CLB* N.S. 103, July 1998). The essay focused on the fact that, despite the portrait's now-secure status as an iconic image of Lamb, at the time of its purchase there was substantial uncertainty about it provenance and authenticity. There were actually two nearly identical paintings of Lamb being offered to the NPG in 1878, each from individuals with intimate Elian connections. One was in the possession of Emma Moxon, Lamb's 'adopted daughter' and the widow of his publisher, Edward Moxon; the other was owned by Robert Moger, the former partner of Dr. James Gillman, the Highgate physician who had housed and cared for Coleridge in his later years. After a flurry of correspondence and consultation, George Scharf, then Director of the NPG, determined that the Moger portrait was William Hazlitt's original. The painting was purchased and subsequently put on display when the newly expanded gallery opened in June 1879. Scharf came to believe that Emma Moxon's portrait was a copy that Edward Moxon had arranged to have made several decades earlier. Yet Emma Moxon continued to believe that hers, too, was an original Hazlitt, and though she was unsuccessful in her attempts to establish this provenance, when the portrait was sold in 1880 through the auction house Hodgson's, it was advertised as an original Hazlitt.

Recently I have uncovered some additional material surrounding the sale of Emma Moxon's painting, including the identity of the buyer, and I have been able to supplement this information through contact with John Edward Moxon, the great-great grandson of Edward and Emma Moxon.[1] This information may be especially timely for readers of the *CLB* because of the recent reproduction of another Lamb family picture owned by the Moxon family, the portrait of John Lamb, Charles Lamb's father, that was featured in the July 2006 *Bulletin* (N.S. 135). Though much about Emma Moxon's portrait remains unknown to us, the circumstances surrounding its sale provide several interesting glimpses into her later years and the later years of Moxon & Co.

We begin with a letter of August 1879, written by the American novelist Henry James to Wendell Phillips Garrison, the editor of the American magazine, *The Nation*, which is now held at the Princeton University Library:

> Dear Mr. Garrison Aug 16th
> I have received a pathetic appeal from poor old Mrs. Moxon, widow of the late publisher (who brought out Lamb, Worthsworth, Tennyson, &c) requesting me to make known to all

[1] Moxon has told me that 'the commissioning of portrait copies was not foreign to Edward', noting that the publisher also had 'a portrait of Tennyson hanging in his bookshop for 30 years. It was of Tennyson as a young man and is thought to be a copy of the famous Lawrence portrait that now resides in The National Portrait Gallery. This portrait has been handed down through the family until 2005 when I donated it to the safekeeping of The Wordsworth Trust, who have since embarked on a full restoration process'. Private email communication, 8 March 2008.

> Americans that she desires to sell a portrait of Chas. Lamb by William Hazlitt, for the sum of £60. I have offered to advertise for her in the *Nation* (the only way to help her I can think of,) & I send you to this end, her little announcement. She was in her early years a great friend of Lamb's (She figures in Talfourd's Memories as 'Emma Isola') & she vouches for the value of the resemblance, which furthermore must have some interest as Wm. Hazlitt's work. She is very poor (she claims she was ruined by Tennyson, after her husband's death withdrawing his books from her.) & she seems to desire intensely to sell the picture. Would it be possible for you, among the Notes, to call attention to the advertisement? Please charge the latter against my acct. Something may come of it. I leave very shortly for the Continent for the Autumn, whence I hope to write you a letter.
> Yours ever H. James[2]

Garrison promptly complied with James's request, placing the following item in the 'Notes' section of *The Nation* for Sept. 4, 1879. Much of the notice simply recapitulates James's letter, but it does translate Emma Moxon's asking price to a figure in dollars:

> The widow of the late Edward Moxon, the original publisher of Lamb, Wordsworth, and Tennyson, has in her possession a portrait of Charles Lamb, by Hazlitt, which her present circumstances induce her to desire to sell. It has not only the interest which attaches to all Hazlitt's work, but the interest of resemblance to its subject, which in this instance is of course great. At least Mrs. Moxon vouches for its merits as a portrait, and she was a great friend of Lamb's in her early years and figures in Talfourd's 'Memorials' as 'Emma Isola'. The price asked is $300. It is certainly safe to say that the benefactors of our public galleries have frequently paid a much larger sum for a less interesting work. Mrs. Moxon's address is 34 Buckingham Road, Brighton, Sussex, England.[3]

There is perhaps some hedging here regarding the painting's authenticity, especially in the circumlocutory middle sentences: 'It has not only the interest which attaches to all Hazlitt's work, but the interest of resemblance to its subject, which in this instance is of course great. At least Mrs. Moxon vouches for its merits as a portrait…'.

But how was Emma Moxon acquainted with the American novelist? If fact, it is not certain that she was. Presumably they had shared acquaintances in English literary and publishing circles, but there is no record whatever of prior (or later) communication between them. Edward Moxon had died in 1858 while James was still in his teens. Quite possibly the idea of writing James was

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[2] This letter was first published by Jeremiah Stanton Finch in the *Princeton University Library Chronicle* VI (1944-45), p. 196. Finch states that it was addressed to William Garrison, but the editor of *The Nation* at this time was his son, Wendell Phillips Garrison; see the 'Calendar' of James's Letters at <jamescalendar.unl.edu>. No year is listed on the letter, but according to Greg W. Zacharias, co-editor of *The Complete Letters of Henry James*, 'There is internal evidence within the letter that corresponds with HJ's travels during 1879. In August, he is still in London preparing to leave for the "Continent in Autumn". By the middle of September, HJ is in Paris where he stays until the beginning of December 1879. The surviving correspondence during this period (August 1879) is to the family with the exception of two letters to W. D. Howells. The family letters do not mention the portrait at all, and the Howells letters are all consuming, discussing the proposed *Portrait of a Lady* project with MacMillan' (private email communication). Finch's essay mistakenly refers to this portrait as the one now hanging in the National Portrait Gallery (the Moger portrait), which had in fact gone on display at the NPG two months before James's letter was written.

[3] *The Nation* 29 (Sept 4, 1879), p. 157.

conceived by Frederick Locker-Lampson, the poet and book collector, who had served as intermediary between the NPG and Emma Moxon throughout 1878 while her portrait was being evaluated by Scharf.[4] Locker-Lampson had long been an intimate of the Moxons,[5] and had known James well enough to exchange letters with him on several occasions in the 1870s and 1880s and to host him at his home at least once.[6] It seems likely that Locker-Lampson, having witnessed first-hand Emma Moxon's great disappointment at the NPG's decision to decline her painting, had attempted to find some way to help her. With the Moger portrait established at the NPG, the task of locating an interested buyer in England had become more difficult, especially at the price she had in mind. America stood as a good alternative and James, with his transatlantic interests and contacts, was a clever choice.

The most arresting part of James's letter, though, is his parenthetical remark that Emma Moxon 'claim[ed] she was ruined by Tennyson, after her husband's death withdrawing his books from her'. Her 'intense' desire to sell the painting does seem to have been brought on by real financial crises she was facing in 1879, crises which had been steadily gathering since 1869 when, after 'years of squabbling', Tennyson had decided to sever his longtime relationship with Moxon & Co. As detailed by June Steffenson Hagen in *Tennyson and his Publishers*, tensions between the parties had begun immediately after Edward Moxon's death in 1858, when Edward's younger brother William sought to 'replace [Tennyson's] previous verbal contract' with a new written one, and in the process to recover some of the losses Moxon & Co. had incurred in producing the expensive *Illustrated Edition* of Tennyson's poems in 1856.[7] William's assertion to Tennyson that he was responsible for a debt of nearly £9,000 on unsold volumes of the illustrated poems brought about a furious response: 'After my weary waiting for months & rejecting splendid offers from first-rate publishers because I chose to stick by the house of Moxon, I am treated discourteously & untruthfully by W. Moxon … I decline entering into any business till all this is

[4] For the full story on Locker-Lampson's involvement, see my earlier piece in *CLB* N.S. 103, July 1998.

[5] Locker-Lampson's extensive collection included a series of letters between Lamb and Edward Moxon. Locker-Lampson was also a contributor to Emma Moxon's remarkable autograph album, begun for her by Lamb in the years before her marriage. The album, held at the Houghton Library at Harvard, contains autographs and verses from figures including Wordsworth, Dyer, Procter, Landor, Keats, Hunt, Hogg, Campbell, Rogers, Baillie, Moore, Southey, and Tennyson. Locker-Lampson's entry is significant because its 1873 date places it much later than any other of the contributions.

[6] Locke-Lampson also figures briefly in *Varieties of Religious Experience* (New York: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1902) by Henry James's philosopher brother William James. James quotes a passage from Locker's autobiography *My Confidences* (1896) that is surprisingly melancholic given the intensively interesting and active life he seems to have led:

> I am so far resigned to my lot that I feel small pain at the thought of having to part from what has been called the pleasant habit of existence, the sweet fable of life. I would not care to live my wasted life over again, and so to prolong my span. Strange to say, I have but little wish to be younger. I submit with a chill at my heart. I humbly submit because it is the Divine Will, and my appointed destiny. I dread the increase of infirmities that will make me a burden to those around me, those dear to me. No! let me slip away as quietly and comfortably as I can. Let the end come, if peace come with it.
>
> I do not know that there is a great deal to be said for this world, or our sojourn here upon it; but it has pleased God so to place us, and it must please me also. I ask you, what is human life? Is not it a maimed happiness — care and weariness, weariness and care, with the baseless expectation, the strange cozenage of a brighter to-morrow? At best it is but a froward child, that must be played with and humored, to keep it quiet till it falls asleep, and then the care is over. (qtd. in James, pp. 39-40).

[7] June Steffenson Hagen, *Tennyson and his Publishers* (University Park: Penn State UP, 1979), p. 107.

explained & apologized for …' (qtd. Hagen, p. 107). After several months of rancor, a revised contract was finally drawn up on terms very favorable to Tennyson [8] and for several years both parties profited from the enormous sales of the *Idylls of the King* and *Enoch Arden*.[9] But relations soured again in the years after 1864, when J. Bertrand Payne took over the daily management of the firm, eventually becoming a partner along with Emma and the younger son Arthur. Moxon. Payne's 'abrasive business tactics' (qtd. Hagen p. 114), and especially his pattern of making decisions about editions without consultation, eventually led Tennyson to leave in January 1869. Serious trouble for the company followed almost immediately and as debts mounted Emma and Arthur Moxon sued Payne, believing he had misappropriated company funds for his own use and, through control of the company's books, misrepresented the pecuniary value of his share in the partnership.[10] By 1871 Moxon & Co. was forced to go into a trusteeship, bought out by the firm of Ward, Lock, and Tyler, which acquired the stock and copyrights and, as part of the arrangement, provided Emma Moxon an annuity of £250. They operated the firm for several years, but by 1878 'abandoned it'.[11]

Charles Tennyson later wrote that his father's decision to leave was, effectively, the removal of 'the keystone of the arch of the Moxon business' (qtd. Hagen p. 107) and in this sense it can be seen as the proximate cause of Emma Moxon's later financial crisis. But despite Tennyson's reputed close-guarding of his finances, it is difficult to cast him as the villain in the piece, and not only because Payne's mismanagement contributed so heavily to Tennyson's alienation in the years between 1864 and 1868. In fact, according to Hagen, Tennyson had contemplated leaving Moxon & Co. as far back as 1858, but had opted not to so do because of 'his many years of friendship with Edward Moxon' and, crucially, because of 'his growing concern for the possible financial straits' of Emma Moxon (qtd. Hagen, pp. 107-8). His concern was such that, after Edward's death, he had made her 'a present of £1500 or more' and had followed this with an anonymous annual gift of £300 (qtd. Hagen, p.108). This annuity was at some point reduced to £100 per year, and in 1874 Emma Moxon discovered that Tennyson was the benefactor. His donations continued until 1878 when he informed her that his support would end. So while Tennyson's departure from the firm back in 1869 had indeed constituted the effective removal of the business's keystone, Emma Moxon's expression of anger in the 1879 letter to James may well reflect a rekindling of ill feeling brought by Tennyson's much more recent decision to cease providing her the annuity. And there seems little doubt that her need was real enough. Her great-great grandson John Edward Moxon (*c.f.* footnote 1) observes that not only did Emma evidently move house twice late in life, leaving her longtime Sussex residence at 34 Buckingham Road, Brighton, for 31 Preston Road and then for 11 Stanford Road, but also that when the family lived at Preston Road the £250 annuity from the business closure was supporting seven unemployed adults and a domestic servant.[12]

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[8] The new contract 'gave the firm only 10 per cent on books sold. Since Edward Moxon had usually taken a full third of the profits plus 5 per cent of the gross amount of sales, Tennyson was clearly the victor over the heirs in this battle' (Hagen, p. 109).

[9] 'Emily Tennyson's handwritten list of income from the *Idylls* shows payments averaging over £2300 a year for the first five years' (Hagen, p. 110); 'Tennyson's half-yearly payment from Moxon for *Enoch Arden* in January 1865 was £6664 4s 2d., with £1400 17s 8d. more coming in June 1865' (Hagen, p. 112).

[10] After lengthy proceedings, Arthur and Emma Moxon received some relief from a contract that the court ruled had been fraudulently arranged by Payne. The complex circumstances of the case are described in detail in the *Times* of 13 June 1878.

[11] Harold Guy Merriam, *Edward Moxon: Publisher of Poets* (New York: Columbia UP, 1939), p. 194.

[12] Private email communication, 8 March 2008. Moxon also notes that 'all three of the residences [were] within a span

Whatever the precise details of Emma Moxon's financial situation, James's letter in *The Nation* failed to produce a buyer for the portrait, and a subsequent piece of correspondence, this one in the British Library, indicates that she was continuing to try to establish its authenticity. This item dates from February 1880, and is addressed to William Carew Hazlitt.[13] It should be noted that W. C. Hazlitt was the essayist's grandson, not, as she believed, his son:

> 34 Buckingham Road
> Brighton
> February 5th 1880
>
> Dear Sir,
> I am curious to know whether you can give me any information respecting the portrait I have of C. Lamb which was purchased from Mr. Gil[l]man shortly before his death by my husband. We always understood it to be the original painted by your Father Mr. William Hazlitt. I am in hopes that you may be able to tell me whether your Father painted two portraits of Charles Lamb. My reason for troubling you is that the one in the National Portrait Gallery is said to be the original and was lately purchased by the Gallery. I regret to say I am intending to part with ours & if you can tell me any thing about the portraits I shall feel greatly obliged. I enclose an Extract from the Standard for your perusal & will [you] be kind enough to return it to me when convenient.
>
> Apologising for thus troubling you
>
> I remain
> Yours truly
> Emma Moxon

The 'extract from the Standard' to which she refers is, unfortunately, a mystery, for despite extensive reviews of that newspaper for the period of Oct 1878 – Feb 1880, I can find no mention whatever of the portrait. One assumes that she felt this extract to be supportive of her claim, but it

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of 1/2 mile from the main Brighton railway station'. Some detail on the Moxon household in 1881 is available on the web from records of the 1881 census. See<http://www.familysearch.org/eng/Search/census/individual.record.asp?INDI_CODE=1881BR_1160655_0&frompage=5>

A decade after her death, an excerpt of Emma Moxon's obituary in the *Illustrated London News* acknowledges these difficulties, but paints a sanguine view of her last years:

> For some years the publishing business flourished, and the works of various poets – Rogers and Tennyson among the number, – were issued by the house. But misfortunes came at last, and the house became involved in difficulties, in the midst of which, Mr Moxon died. The result of the complications was, however, better than might have been expected. Messrs Ward and Lock came forward with an offer to pay all the creditors to the estates fifteen shillings in the pound. They fought in the Law Courts the battle of the family against the manager, who set up extensive claims to copyrights &c, and taking over the property, paid to Ms Moxon a large sum, and, moreover, agreed to pay that lady an annuity of £250, and a further sum to the family on her death. This was in 1877, and for fourteen years the deceased lady enjoyed the provision thus made for her. (*Illustrated London News* , 14 February 1891, p. 203).

[13] British Library MS, Add. 38903, 83. I thank Bridget Keegan of Creighton University and my father, James McEathron, for the transcription of this letter.

is difficult to speculate further. We also don't know what, if anything, W. C. Hazlitt said in response to her letter, and there is no mention of the situation in any of his contemporaneous correspondence held at the British Library.

Several months later, however, the painting was put up for auction by Hodgson's of Chancery Lane, as part of a sale of Edward Moxon's library and possessions. Seeing the listing in the catalogue, 'Original Oil Painting – Fine Portrait of Charles Lamb, By His Friend William Hazlitt, in gilt frame and oval gilt mount', W. C. Haziltt went to the sale rooms to preview it himself. His account, from his limited edition volume *The Confessions of a Collector* (London: Ward and Downey, 1897), discloses both that he considered buying the portrait for the Hazlitt family, and that the portrait was finally purchased by Alexander Macmillan, head of the Macmillan publishing house:

> Without being aware that the National Portrait Gallery possessed the real likeness of Charles Lamb by William Hazlitt, which had been purchased for £105, I was led a few years since to go to Hodgson's rooms in Chancery Lane by the entry in a catalogue of what was alleged to be the Lamb painting. My father approved, subject to my opinion, of the purchase at £50 or so. I at once dismissed the notion of bidding, because I felt sure, that there was something wrong; and the late Mr Macmillan became its possessor at £60. A visit to South Kensington and an interview with the curator of the Gallery, where I beheld the fine, if rather bizarre, work itself, confirmed my judgment and my distrust. (223)

W. C. Hazlitt's initial claim – that he was unaware of the NPG's ownership of the original Hazlitt – is, to say the least, difficult to understand, since only a few months earlier he had received Emma Moxon's pointed inquiry on this very subject. (It should also be noted, for the sake of clarity that his closing reference to the Gallery in South Kensington and the 'fine, if rather bizarre, work itself' describes a later visit to the NPG to see the authentic Hazlitt.) But that the purchaser of Moxon's copy was Alexander Macmillan is corroborated by Edward FitzGerald, author of the *The Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám*, who in an 1883 letter noted the publisher's fascination with Lamb, or at least with Eliana: 'As Macmillan is sufficiently interested in Lamb to offer £50 or £60 for Hazlitt's Portrait, why don't you set him on finding out that Wageman – which surely he could do among some of the Paternoster Row Moxons, or their Successors'.[14] (What FitzGerald calls 'that Wageman' is the *c*. 1825 drawing of Lamb by Thomas Wageman, later engraved by William Finden.) In reading these remarks, it is evident enough that both Macmillan and FitzGerald, and presumably many other people in their circle of distinguished belletristic Victorians, continued to believe that the Moxon copy was an authentic Hazlitt.[15] The persistence of the confusion is perhaps best encapsulated in a yet-later remark of Augustine Birrell, who seemingly would have been in an excellent position to understand the distinct histories of the two paintings since he was married to Locker-Lampson's daughter Eleanor. Nevertheless, recalling Hazlitt's ability as an artist, Birrell collapses the two paintings into one: this 'capital specimen of Hazlitt's style', he

[14] FitzGerald to William Aldis Wright, 7 February 1883, in *More Letters of Edward FitzGerald* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1902), p. 274. According to Merriam in *Edward Moxon* , 'Arthur Moxon, the son, in the year 1878, set up in Paternoster Row as a publisher' (p. 194). Paternoster Row, the hub of the English book publishing trade in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, was destroyed by World War II bombing and has since been totally redeveloped.
[15] Locker-Lampson's scribbling diary, held at the Huntingon Library, seems to indicate that he too attended the auction, but provides no details.

writes, is, 'after the vicissitudes of the auction-room … now safely lodged in the National Portrait Gallery'.[16]

Given all of this, one would very much like to know just who executed the Moxon copy, and when. Edward Moxon had the copy made sometime after the year 1839, borrowing the original Hazlitt from its then owner, Robert Moger. Though Moger later estimated that it was sometime in the early 1850s when this loan was made,[17] in fact it seems to have been produced earlier, since Thomas Cooper saw either the original or the copy at Moxon's home in 1845. Recounting a visit in which he pitched to the publisher his manuscript poem *The Purgatory of Suicides*, Cooper reports that though Moxon 'declined to receive my poem, assuring me that he dared not venture to publish any poem of a new author', he was nonetheless 'very courteous, and seemed to wish me to stay and talk. He also showed me a portrait which he valued highly in one of his rooms. I *think* it was a portrait of Charles Lamb'.[18]

W. C. Hazlitt believed that Edward Moxon's copy of the portrait was used, after his death, as the basis of the frontispiece engraving that appears in Bryan Waller Procter's *Charles Lamb*, published by Moxon & Co. in 1866.[19] (Procter's edition also includes an engraving of the Portrait of John Lamb that was featured in the July 2006 *Bulletin*). Comparison of the engraving in Procter with the sketch of the Moxon Copy made by George Scharf gives some support to W. C. Hazlitt's supposition, though the evidence is hardly conclusive.[20] The Procter engraving, made by J. A. Vinter, shows no button immediately underneath Lamb's collar, conforming with the Moxon copy and not with the Hazlitt original. But it is also true that Arthur Moxon recalled receiving from Moger, 'some *print or engraving* about the year 1866'.[21] Though Arthur thought that Moxon & Co. had not 'ever used [the print] in any way', the 1866 date suggests that this print was Vinter's, that Vinter had based it on the Moger's original Hazlitt, and that the print was then employed in the Procter volume.

The long-lived confusion between the two portraits can be attributed to several things, most obviously the fact that the Moxon copy, though rendered as an oval, was otherwise almost identical to the Hazlitt original. But also contributing were the sincerity of Emma Moxon's convictions, the wishful desire of late Victorian collectors for an authentic relic of a bygone era, the scarcity of other Hazlitt paintings that might have helped establish a sense of his pictorial style, and not least, the workings of the art market itself. These workings were very much on the mind of W. C. Hazlitt in *Confessions of a Collector*; indeed, the curious circumstances surrounding the sale of the Moxon portrait led him to see it as an *exemplum par excellence* of the hazards of the art trade. His dour but spectacularly concise concluding remarks on the incident can serve for ours as well:

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[16] *William Hazlitt* (New York: Macmillan, 1902), p. 71.

[17] In an 1878 letter to George Scharf now held at the Heinze Archive of the NPG, Moger wrote, 'About twenty five years ago old Mr Moxon of Albemarle Street (Lamb's Publisher) called on me & pressed me very much to lend him the Picture as he wanted to have a copy; he promised me that the copy should be in modern costume …' (NPG 507). Moger's entire letter is printed in my earlier essay, *CLB* N.S. 103, 1998.

[18] *The Life of Thomas Cooper: Written by Himself* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1872), p. 266.

[19] The remark appears in a footnote of W. C. Hazlitt's in his revision edition of Thomas Noon Talfourd's *Letters of Charles Lamb*, 2 vols. (London: George Bell and Sons, 1886): referring more condescendingly to the Moxon copy he writes, 'A very inferior *replica* [of the original] occurred at an auction a few years ago, and was sold for considerable sum to Mr. Macmillan, the publisher. This likeness is given as a frontispiece to Mr. Procter's Memoir of Lamb, 1866'. (I, p. 345n). Procter published under the name of Barry Cornwall.

[20] Scharf's sketch of Moxon's portrait is reproduced in my earlier essay, *CLB* N.S. 103, 1998.

[21] Emma Moxon to Frederick Locker, 16 July 1878, in NPG 507.

> It is notorious enough, that the picture-market is a man-trap of the most signal and treacherous character. Whatever may be true of books, manuscripts, coins, or stamps, paintings and prints are the greatest snare and pitfall of all. I have frequently gazed with private misgivings, which I might have found it difficult to explain or justify, at a portrait in a broker's shop, and as I passed and re-passed the place have speculated on the real history of the production. I know full well that the preposterous sums realized for the artist in fashion … are explainable on principles, which would make me hesitate to enter the field as a competitor under any circumstances. (223-4)

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Charles Lamb and the Brotherhood of the Angle

By ALISTAIR HEYS

THOMAS WESTWOOD WRITES THAT TOTTENHAM HILL has known two great and good men; one is Izaak Walton, intent on mead and down, while the other is the studious Elia, drawn by the roar and tumult of the town.[1] Westwood's Janian contrary provokes the question: what yokes a townie like Charles Lamb to the pastoral of *The Compleat Angler*? I shall argue that Lamb liked things simple but not too simple and the imagination to be imaginative but not to get carried away. My discussion examines Romantic definitions of simplicity in terms of Lamb's reception of Walton and qualifies Lamb's qualifications here by comparing definitions of Imagination with the sense of scientific method that is sometimes associated with *The Compleat Angler*. Ultimately, the enmity between Scottish and English journalists becomes the main focus of this discussion of Lamb and Walton.

The Compleat Angler was out of print between 1676 and 1750 and Dr. Johnson persuaded first Moses Brown and then Sir John Hawkins to publish. Westwood's *Chronicle of the Compleat Angler* states: 'In the ragged regiment of Lamb's book-tatterdemalions … was an early copy of the "Compleat Angler … Hawkins edition of 1760"'.[2] Lamb writes to Coleridge on the topic of an illustrated Hawkins edition, 'I have just been reading a book, which I may be partial to as it was the delight of my childhood … It is Isaac Walton's Complete Angler … The dialogue is very simple, full of pastoral beauties & will charm you'.[3] John Buchan deflates Lamb's sentimental toast to effortless simplicity: 'The style is constantly praised for its naïve simplicity, but this gift of limpid speech may mean a painful and conscious art'.[4] Andrew Lang is drawn to make the same point and quotes a dense passage that was subsequently revised in later editions:

> But if by simplicity you meant to express any general defect in the understanding of those that profess and practise angling, I hope to make it appear to you, that there is much contrary reason (if you have but the patience to hear it) as may remove all the anticipations that time or discourse may have possessed you with, against that ancient and laudable art.[5]

A potential parallel between Walton and Lamb is that both were only moderately successful in verse and that as Lowell says, 'Walton's prose owes much of its charm to the poetic sentiment in him which was denied a refuge in verse'.[6] Walton's *Lives* is testament to his friendship with the Anglican poets, Donne and Herbert, whereas Lamb published some excellent poems but none to rival those of his friends, Wordsworth and Coleridge, as Hunt states, 'His imagination was not great, and he

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[1] E. V. Lucas, *The Life of Charles Lamb*, 2 vols. (London: Methuen, 1921), II, 729; hereafter: Lucas.
[2] Ibid., 728.
[3] Charles Lamb, *The Letters of Charles and Mary Lamb*, 3 vols., ed. Edwin W. Marrs, Jr. (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1978), I. 22-23.
[4] John Buchan, 'Introduction', in *The Compleat Angler* (Oxford UP, 1982), xxi.
[5] Andrew Lang, 'Introduction', in *The Compleat Angler* (London: Dent, 1953), xiv.
[6] Buchan, op. cit., xxii.

also wanted sufficient heat and music to render his poetry as good as his prose'.[7] *The Compleat Angler* is at once a guide to catching fish and an anthology of verse; thus, a list of Lamb's favourite poems includes Walton's *The Angler's Wish* and *The Milk Maid's Song* by Kit Marlowe.[8] According to Lamb, *The Compleat Angler* breathes the very spirit of 'innocence, purity, and simplicity of heart'.[9] Lamb preferred London to the Lakes but was nevertheless impressed by Wordsworth's style in *The Excursion*:

> We breathe in the fresh air, as we do while reading Walton's Complete Angler; only the country about us is as much bolder than Walton's, as the thoughts and speculations, which form the matter of the poem, exceed the trifling pastime and low-pitched conversation of his humble fisherman.[10]

Sarah Flower writes that the fresh raciness of Lamb's conversation was like an atmosphere of country air: 'the perfect simplicity, absence of all conceit, child-like enjoyment of his own wit, and the sweetness and benevolence that played about the rugged face'.[11] Simplicity was the poetic spirit of the age, or at least a love of all things simple was slowly popularised by Wordsworth's 'Preface to *Lyrical Ballads*':

> Low and rustic life was generally chosen because in that situation the essential passions of the heart find a better soil … and speak a plainer and more emphatic language; because in that situation our elementary feelings exist in a state of greater simplicity.[12]

Reginald Hine relates that when Mary Lamb brought to an end her reading of Wordsworth's *Excursion* in 1814, she was moved to doubt whether a dweller in towns has a soul to be saved, whereas her brother needed both town and country and was in Hine's opinion a man of many moods.[13] John Wilson identifies part of Walton's charm as the feeling one has of listening to an old man, who reveals 'his sweet, pure, gentle, guileless, and enlightened character'.[14] Coleridge calls Lamb gentle-hearted and William Archer concurs: 'We may call him "gentle" in the sense in which we apply the term to Chaucer, to Izaak Walton, to Goldsmith, to Scott'.[15] Hazlitt thinks that Walton's readers imbibe what he beautifully calls 'the patience and simplicity of poor, honest fishermen', whilst Lamb has 'a primitive simplicity and self denial about his manners'.[16] Leigh Hunt launched an infamous attack on *The Compleat Angler* but grudgingly allowed that Walton's book's 'pictures of rural scenery, its simplicity, its snatches of old songs, are all good and refreshing…'.[17] If Hunt vents spleen at the 'servitor manners' of Walton and his 'gentle brethren', he nevertheless insists that

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[7] Leigh Hunt, *Essays and Sketches*, ed. R. Brimley Johnson, (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1912), 175.
[8] Lucas, II, 745-46.
[9] Marrs, op. cit., I, 57.
[10] *The Works of Charles and Mary Lamb*, 2 vols., ed. Thomas Hutchinson, (London: Oxford UP, 1908), I, 205; hereafter: Hutchinson.
[11] Lucas, II, 686.
[12] William Wordsworth, *The Prose Works of William Wordsworth*, 3 vols., ed. W. J. B Owen and Jane Worthington Smyser (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974), I, 124.
[13] Reginald Hine, *Charles Lamb and His Hertfordshire* (London: Dent, 1949), xxii.
[14] John Wilson, 'The Complete Angler of Izaak Walton and Charles Cotton', in *Blackwood's Edinburg Magazine*, (October 1823), 474. I am ascribing this anonymous essay to John, but it may have been written by his brother James or another of the Edinburgh essayists.
[15] Lucas, I, 143.
[16] William Hazlitt, *The Spirit of the Age* (Plymouth: Northcote House, 1991), 290.
[17] *American Whig Review* (May, 1849), p. 470.

Lamb sympathises exceedingly with patience and gentleness and the forgiveness of wrongs.[18] Patience is a major theme in *The Compleat Angler* and one connected to Walton's Anglican quietism, while niggling for eels during Cromwell's Interregnum. Lamb forgave his sister for the murder of their mother and bore his own failures in love with Jobian patience, not to mention the annoyingly effeminate 'gentle Charles' moniker. There is pathos in the fact that Fanny Kelly fondly remembers rambling with Lamb: 'there were snatches of old poems, golden lines and sentences culled from rare books, and anecdotes of men of note. Marry, it was like going a ramble with gentle Izaak Walton minus the fishing'.[19]

Despite his Quaker-like simplicity, Lamb was too droll to be entirely simple:

> I am all over sophisticated—with humours, fancies, craving hourly sympathy. I must have books, pictures, theatres, chit-chat, scandal, jokes, ambiguities, and a thousand whim-whams, which their simpler taste can do without. I should starve at their primitive banquet.[20]

Lamb declares of the pagan belly-god that the 'heats of epicurism put out the gentle flame of devotion'[21] but also writes in his sonnet below, 'Work', of its effect on binding down the 'holyday-rejoicing spirit', which he attributes to Satan himself. Jane Aaron has noted Lamb's recalcitrance with regard to time-thrift or what Max Weber interprets as the yoking of puritan spiritual notions of election to material work practices.[22] Lamb's work was at the India house, which traded in Indigo and tea, drugs and piece-goods.[23] His boss once said to him 'I notice, Mr. Lamb, that you come very late every morning'—Yes, but see how early I go'.[24] Like Walton, Lamb preferred the holiday to the work-a-day:

> WHO first invented work, and bound the free
> And holyday-rejoicing spirit down
> To the ever-haunting importunity
> Of business in the green fields, and the town—
> To plough, loom, anvil, spade—and oh! most sad,
> To that dry drudgery at the desk's dead wood?
> Who but the Being unblest, alien from good,
> Sabbathless Satan! he who is unglad
> Task ever plies 'mid rotary burnings,
> That round and round incalculably reel—
> For wrath Divine hath made him like a wheel—
> In that red realm from whence are no returnings;
> Where toiling and turmoiling ever and aye
> He, and his Thoughts, keep pensive working-day.[25]

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[18] Hunt, *Essays* 186.
[19] Hine, op. cit., 11
[20] Hutchinson, I, 550.
[21] Hutchinson, I, 586-7.
[22] Jane Aaron, *A Double Singleness: Gender and the Writings of Charles and Mary Lamb* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), 56.
[23] Lucas, II, 669.
[24] Lucas, II, 670.
[25] Hutchinson, II, 588.

Walton's ironmongers shop was in the parish of St. Dunstan's, and Lamb was familiar enough with the area to cry when the church clock was removed. Walton firmly believed that all work and no play makes Jack a dull boy: 'Men that are taken to be grave, because Nature hath made them of a sowre complexion … for these poor-rich-men, we Anglers pity them perfectly'.[26] Wilson notes that only an in-grained son of Mammon could not be beguiled by the 'simple pleasures' of Walton's piscatory pastoral. As an Anglican angler, Walton swipes at his puritan foes, who banned sports, holydays and drinking in taverns with hostesses that Lamb might envy. Lamb was tickled by simple pleasures and *The Compleat Angler* begins with *Piscator* quaffing a tankard of ale and breaking his fast upon a morning pipe.[27] Hunt recalls that Lamb would rather be with a crowd that he disliked than feel himself alone; there is a qualification that, while Walton's book was an old friend, Lamb did not wish to imperfectly indulge in what Byron calls Walton's solitary vice and that a pious brotherhood of solitary anglers would have been preferable: 'away with this inhuman, shy, single, shade-and-cavern-haunting solitariness. Give me … a sympathetic solitude'.[28] W.J. Keith writes that we hear many references in *The Compleat Angler* to the simple as opposed to the complicated life and that when Venator accuses anglers of being simple men, Piscator replies by referencing such simple men as lived in those times when there were fewer lawyers.[29] The immortal evening splendidly recorded by Haydon indicates that Lamb did not tolerate fools gladly and this would seem another example of a liking for the simple just as long as it was not too simple.

Lamb's playful sensuality constitutes the epicurism that distances the Elian from the simple fare at the Quaker's banquet. Much of *The Compleat Angler* is a sensuous Aristotelian list that compiles species of fishes and methods of catching the same: 'You may see the Hog-fish, the Dog-fish, the Dolphin, the Cony-fish, the Parrot-fish, the Shark, the Poyson fish, sword-fish … the Salamander, several sorts of Barnacles … and so various forms … as may beget wonder'.[30] In the Williamson edition of *The Compleat Angler* there is a Rackham colour illustration of a scribe amongst a collection of sea monsters and Lamb writes to Hood that 'You should go to No. 13, Stangate Street, – a baker, who has the finest collection of marine monsters in ten sea counties, – sea dragons, polypi, mer–people, most fantastic'.[31] Thomas Westwood reminisces that Lamb's edition of *The Compleat Angler* was a pearl of great price:

> perched on the forked branch of an ancient apple-tree … I could almost catch a glimpse of the marshy levels of the Lea itself, it was my delight to sally forth with Piscator … Lamb was a lover of angling books, and I well remember his relating to me … how he had pounced upon his early copy, in some ramshackle repository of marine stores. . . .[32]

Lamb describes a simple childhood spent:

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[26] Izaak Walton, *The Compleat Angler*. . . (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1982), 22.
[27] Lucas, I, 411.
[28] Hunt, *Essays* 172.
[29] W. J. Keith, *The Rural Tradition*: *William Cobbett, Gilbert White, and Other Non-Fiction Prose Writers of the English Countryside* (Toronto: Toronto UP, 1974), 27-28.
[30] Walton, op. cit., 43.
[31] Lucas, II, 654.
[32] Lucas, II, 728.

> watching the dace that darted to and fro in the fish-pond … with here and there a great sulky pike hanging midway down the water in silent state, as if it mocked their impertinent friskings, — I had more pleasure in these busy-idle diversions than in all the sweet flavours of peaches, nectarines, oranges, and such like common baits of children.[33]

In a collection of essays playfully entitled *Philandering Angler*, Arthur Applin describes returning to one of his old angling haunts after the cessation of hostilities: 'I imagined I should find everything just as I had left it … I discovered that the Nelders had gone … gone, too, was the jolly bar in the lounge, the familiar faces and jovial voices'.[34] The wistful allusion to 'The Old Familiar Faces' is quickly followed by a soothing *carpe diem* allusion to Walton that captures the spirit of Lambian sensuality: 'if you remember Izaak Walton's advice to trust in God's providence and be quiet, you may still, when you go angling, meet an inn, an *estaminet* or *gastof* with a stream well stocked with trout, a bottle of good wine'.[35] Lamb said grace to the Dagon-god of fish dishes and because of the religious foundation of those 'monastic' Christ Hospital years indulged in porcine gormandising: 'Socrates loved wild boar, Sophocles truffles, and why should not pig's meat be my gastronomical vanity?'[36] Aaron glosses that the pet-Lamb image became fixed for Victorians like the sensually indulgent Swinburne, who revelled in the 'blithe, child-like freedom of a Never-Never Land or Wonderland, with its mischievous dodging of the values of a conventional grown-up world'.[37] Daniel writes of Lamb that

> I remember seeing a precocious Newgate-bird snatch from the muckle-mouth of a plethoric prentice-boy a hissing-hot slice of plum-pudding, and transfer it to his own, to the diversion of the bystanders, who could not forbear laughing at the urchin's mendacious dexterity.[38]

Walton had a similarly dextrous reputation, as Hazlitt records:

> I feel the same sort of pleasure in reading his book as I should have done in the company of this happy, child-like old man, watching his ruddy cheek, his laughing eye, the kindness of his heart, and the dexterity of his hand in seizing his finny prey![39]

When Godwin fell discourteously asleep, Lamb artfully 'carried off his rum, brandy, sugar, picked his pockets of everything, and made off in triumph'.[40] Gift-giving rather than picking nature's pocket is an important part of Walton's discourse: 'And now lets move toward our lodging, and drink a draught of *Red-Cows* milk … and give pretty *Maudlin* and her honest mother a brace of Trouts for their supper'.[41] Lamb had a generous streak which was especially pronounced with expensive tastes:

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[33] Hutchinson, I, 599.
[34] Arthur Applin, *Philandering Angler* (London: Hurst and Blacket, 1948), 50.
[35] Ibid., 51.
[36] Lucas, II, 640.
[37] Aaron, op. cit., 9.
[38] Lucas, II, 638.
[39] Hazlitt, *The Complete Works of William Hazlitt*, 21 vols., ed. P. P. Howe, (London: Dent, 1930-34), XVII, 156.
[40] Lucas, I, 245.
[41] Buchan, op. cit., 180.

> Teals, widgeons, snipes, barn-door fowl, ducks, geese — your tame villatic things—Welsh mutton, collars of brawn, sturgeon, fresh or pickled, your potted char, Swiss cheeses, French pies, early grapes, muscadines, I impart as freely unto my friends as to myself.[42]

Though the rather (in this context) plain dish he would never say no to was a joint of roast pork, which prompts the comment that Lamb liked extravagance to the extent that moderation is sometimes preferred in moderation.

Lamb's fascination with the contemporary, empirical stage of cookery leads naturally enough to a consideration of his engagement with materiality and imagination.[43] The materialist in Lamb writes: 'For myself — earth-bound and fettered to the scene of my activities, — "Standing on earth, not rapt above the sky", I confess that I do feel the differences of mankind, national or individual, to an unhealthy excess'.[44] It is curious that a simple earthwards-tending sentence that does not ascend to heaven in a transcendent vein should then emphatically end on an excessive nationalistic note. Lamb is not a bundle of incoherence sitting down to breakfast but rather a bundle of prejudices, made up of likings and dislikings — the veriest thrall to sympathies, apathies, antipathies. In his opinion, a Scotsman does not hover upon the confines of truth: 'Surmses, guesses, misgivings, half-intuitions, semi-consciousnesses, partial-illuminations, dim instincts, embryo conceptions, have no place in his brain, or vocabulary'.[45] How could the ostensibly gentle Charles write in such an odious chauvinistic vein and how could the almost universally popular friend of social failures like Godwin and Hazlitt draw Carlyle's fire: 'A more pitiful, rickety, gasping, staggering, stammering Tom fool I do not know … Poor Lamb! Poor England where such a despicable abortion is named genius!'[46] Scottish porridge was too simple a fare for Lamb, who was attracted to beery breakfasts, and if Carlyle was unimpressed by speech impediments he would presumably have disliked Walton's as well. The stereotypical dourness of temperament associated with Scottish empiricism was too factual for the playful quirkiness of Lamb's southern personality that once made light of madness by writing in the mode of a character not unlike Carlyle's sottish caricature, who was visited by the paradox that '*reason shall only visit him through intoxication*'.[47] Elia is an anagram of a lie and therefore Hunt amuses himself at the expense of the factual:

> He knows how many false conclusions and pretensions are made by men who profess to be guided by facts only, as if facts could not be misconceived, or figments taken for them … when somebody was speaking of a person who valued himself on being a matter-of-fact man, 'Now', said he, 'I value myself on being a matter-of-lie man'.[48]

Hazlitt informs us that the shadowy has to our author something substantial:

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[42] Lucas, II, 598.
[43] Hutchinson, I, 453.
[44] Hutchinson, I, 544.
[45] Hutchinson, I, 546.
[46] Thomas Carlyle, *Two Notebooks of Thomas Carlyle*, ed. C. E. Norton, (New York: The Grolier Club, 1898), 217-19.
[47] Hutchinson, I, 175.
[48] Hunt, *Essays* 160-61.

> Ideas savour most of reality in his mind; or rather his imagination wavers on the edge of each, and a page of his writings recalls to our fancy the *stranger* on the grate, fluttering in its dusky tenuity, with its idle superstition and hospitable welcome![49]

Hunt chimes in midnight accord: 'He will beard a superstition, and shudder at the old phantasm while he does it'.[50] If the race of Hume is too matter-of-fact and the author of the *Religio Medici* in his abstract internationalism far too philanthropic for Lamb, then the unfortunate Sir Thomas Browne 'delighted to live in the conjectural world, and lived in it so long, that conjectures and things impossible to be known, assumed the place of realities and things knowable'.[51] Another presumed interpolation in Burnett that Lucas accredits to Lamb soothingly states that Izaak Walton's book is 'pure and peaceful as the lake on which the angler silently awaits his quiet prey'.[52] Wordsworth describes Walton as versed in 'simple discipline', a style of writing that alludes to the '*simple* Fishermen' of the Gospels.[53] Lamb rebukes Coleridge arguing that his metaphysics might affix to the simple fishermen of Galilee phrases of meaning that primitive users never intended to convey: 'straining your comparing faculties to bring together things infinitely distant and unlike … omnipresence is an attribute whose very essence is unlimitedness. How can omnipresence be affirmed of anything in part?'[54] Walter Pater writes that Lamb's gift of appreciation depends upon 'the habitual apprehension of men's life as a whole — its organic wholeness, as extending even to the least things in it — of its outward manner in connexion with its inward temper'.[55] Pater mentions that Lamb's writing communicates 'the Quaker's belief in the inward light coming to one passive, to the mere wayfarer … glimpses, suggestions, delightful half-apprehensions … hints of the innermost reason in things.[56] Lamb notes a character in *The Excursion*, who stares into spring waters until '...we seem'd to feel / One sadness, they and I'.[57] Tragically, this simple bond of brotherness is broken and the poet must wait for a spontaneous moment of quaking inspiration caused by the little Rills and Waters numberless. Lucas writes of Lamb's wistful hesitancies and thinks of him sceptically hovering between earth and heaven.[58] The Coleridgean analogy beckons:

> to reconcile opposites and qualify contradictions, leaving a middle state of mind more strictly appropriate to the imagination than any other, when it is, as it were, hovering between images. As soon as it is fixed on one image, it

[49] Hazlitt, *Spirit* 180.
[50] Hunt, *Essays* 171.
[51] Lucas, I, 254.
[52] Ibid. I, 255.
[53] William Wordsworth, *Wordsworth's Poetic Works*, 5 vols., ed. E. de Sélincourt, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1940-49), III, 10.
[54] Lucas, I, 124.
[55] Lucas, 553.
[56] Lucas, II, 554.
[57] William Wordsworth, *The Excursion*, ed. Sally Bushell, James A. Butler, and Michael C. Jaye (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 2007) 62 (Book I, ll. 517-18).
[58] Lucas, II, 556-57.

> becomes understanding; but while it is unfixed and wavering between them, attaching itself permanently to none, it is imagination.[59]

Lamb was afraid of the quaking vagaries of imagination, half-sceptical of spiritual possession: 'I saw him shake all over with the spirit — I dare not say, of delusion. The strivings of the outer man were unutterable — he seemed not to speak, but to be spoken from'.[60] Lamb's advice on 'the only alembic which in these plodding days sublimised our imaginations' i.e. the infatuation of gambling and consequently of winning the lottery is that this monetary notion of transcendence is best nourished as a fantastic assumed victory for a mere quarter of an hour lest normal life become a flat, prosaic routine of matter-of-fact, or the actual realisation of riches make a death-bed terrible.[61] As a child, Lamb was dreadfully alive to nervous terrors: 'The night-time solitude, and the dark, were my hell'.[62] Mercifully, his adult dreams grew prosaic and he compared himself unfavourably with Coleridge, who at his will conjured up pleasure-houses for Kubla Khan and whose *Rime of the Ancient Mariner* Lamb thought the best poem of the age.[63] In actual fact Coleridge could do nothing wilfully and wrote only when the images came unbidden stimulated by the phantasmagoria of the serpentine muse laudanum. But Lamb knew this truth about poets generally: 'Their imaginations are not active … but passive, as men in sick dreams'.[64] For Lamb dreams and imagination are associated with childhood and fly the earth to leave the grown up world floundering in the darkness of sense and materiality.[65] *The Compleat Angler* was a delight of Lamb's over-imaginative childhood carried over into adulthood. As Coleridge writes of imagination

> …a small water-insect on the surface of rivulets, which throws a cinque-spotted shadow fringed with prismatic colours on the sunny bottom of the brook … the little animal *wins* its way up against the stream, by alternate pulses of active and passive motion … There are evidently two powers at work [in the mind] which relatively to each other are active and passive; and this is not possible without an intermediate faculty … the IMAGINATION.[66]

Richard Holmes connects the image of the 'waterboatman' to Hume on the intrinsic energy of Imagination, which 'is apt to continue, even when its object fails it, and like a galley put in motion by the oars, carries on its course without any new impulse'.[67] It was precisely this automatic quality that made Lamb feel uncomfortable with imaginative activity and the involuntary attraction of a fish to murderous bait is no unapt emblem of an insane urge.

I want to show how Lamb treats of his Waltonesque sense of place without being too patriotic and that from the nineteenth century onwards the figure of the fishermen has nationalistic overtones. The style of Elia is not dissimilar to the analogy of a fly-

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[59] John Payne Collier, *Seven Lectures on Shakespeare and Milton by the Late S. T. Coleridge* (London 1856), 64-65.
[60] Hutchinson, I, 530.
[61] Hutchinson, I, 328-34.
[62] Hutchinson, I, 555.
[63] Hutchinson, I, 557.
[64] Hutchinson, I, 705.
[65] Hutchinson, I, 584.
[66] Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria*, 2 vols., ed. James Engell and W. Jackson Bate, (Princeton UP, 1983), I,124-25.
[67] Richard Holmes, *Darker Reflections* (London: Harper-Collins, 1998), 397n.

fisherman casting and re-casting at a rise, or as Robert Frank suggests: 'Elia rarely forces himself or an opinion; he usually offers his judgements hesitantly and frequently qualifies them'.[68] Frank's appraisal of the Elia essays as sophisticated works of art reminds one of Holmes's conjecture that Coleridge's involuntary image was passed on in turn to W.B. Yeats, a master of poetic 'trance', who used it superbly in his poem 'The Long-Legged Fly', where Michelangelo concentrates on the scaffold, '*Like a long-legged fly upon the stream* / *His mind moves on the silence*' (ll. 9-10). A simple and passionate nationalist discourse is associated with fishing by Yeats, who in *The Fisherman* states that he writes for his own race and the reality (ll. 11-12). Walford Davies argues that against an entrepreneurial bourgeoisie, Yeats sets an ordinary fisherman, 'A man who does not exist, / A man who is but a dream;' (ll. 35-36).[69] In 'Dream-Children', Lamb treats of his childlessness with imaginative pathos and in the ancestral setting of a great house in Hertfordshire, like the Yeatsian dream of reality, the children say that they are nothing, 'less than nothing, and dreams'.[70] Through Lamb's adoption of Emma Isola, we find a parallel with Walton's *de facto* son, the roistering Charles Cotton, who describes Walton as 'my father'. Lovel was the code name for Lamb's father, who was a 'brother of the angle … and just such a free, hearty, honest companion as Mr. Isaak Walton would have chosen to go fishing with'.[71] Lamb punned on his sense of Englishness: '...their hope sits every day, speculating upon traditionary gudgeons … I now know the reason why our forefathers were denominated East and West Angles'.[72] Mary Lamb remembers pleasant walks to Enfield and Potter's Bar, where they wished for such another honest hostess, as Izaak Walton has described on the pleasant banks of the Lea, when he went a fishing.[73] Lamb wrote to Wordsworth that 'I had thought in a green old age … to have retired to Ponder's End — emblematic name how beautiful! ... the Ware road … stretching on some fine Izaac Walton morning to Hoddesdon or Amwell…'.[74] He could state that no native Londoner who has health, rest and innocent occupation 'can make the country anything better than odious and detestable', but as Hine says, the pendulum swung both ways, from London town back to rural Hertfordshire:

> 'Do you know watery Ware?' He asks Wordsworth, 'it is redolent in springs and clear brooks; two or three rivers meet there. It is quite far enough off for a gentleman to purge off town air … The Trouts in particular are admirable.' So likewise were the inns; and again we are left speculating whether he drank his 'foaming mugs' at the George, and whether he beheld the famous trout — near an ell long — so famous that he had 'his picture drawn in Master Rickabie's day' (we have Izaak Walton's word for it) and hung up in that inn.[75]

Though more famed for celebrating the Lake District than Hertfordshire, Arthur Ransome writes that while fishing we return to the golden age and that the happiness

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[68] Robert Frank, *Don't Call Me Gentle Charles!* (Corvallis: Oregon State UP, 1976), 31.
[69] See Walford Davis, 'Bright Fields, Loud Hills and the Glimpsed Good Places: R. S. Thomas and Dylan Thomas', in *The Page Adrift*, ed. M. W. Thomas, (Bridgend: Poetry Wales Press, 1993), 171-210.
[70] Hutchinson, I, 600.
[71] Hutchinson, I, 581.
[72] Lucas, II, 654.
[73] Lucas, I, 209.
[74] Lucas, II, 600.
[75] Hine, op. cit., 27, 53.

of Walton's piscatory pastoral was as keen as our own, but 'the country was then at a Londoner's backdoor'.[76] Lamb's love of the metropolis was in turn qualified by his nostalgia with regard to a presumed golden age untroubled by the sophistication of the city: 'I've often wished I lived in the Golden Age, when shepherds lay stretched upon flowers … the genius there is in a man's natural idle face, that has not learnt his multiplication table! Before doubt, and propositions, and corollaries, got into the world!'[77] Unfortunately, after his retirement too much free time, albeit spent walking in Hertfordshire lanes, proved as problematic for Lamb as the proverbial wisdom that all work and no play makes Jack a dull boy.

But was Lamb's engagement with Walton's pastoral simplicity so one-dimensional as to purely figure a binary between a simpler Edenic England nestling in the heart of rural Hertfordshire and the drudgery of the work-a-day? Hazlitt too celebrates rural tastes as neither lofty nor pretentious but simple and, embroiled in the war of words with Christopher North, reclaims the pastoral of Walton for the south: 'The English nation … are naturally "brothers of the angle"'.[78] John Cooper has criticised Hazlitt's appraisal in the respect that his version of pastoral is vaguely defined and that *The Compleat Angler* contains long passages devoted to social, moral and religious questions. He finds Lamb guilty of a related sin: 'Charles Lamb was apparently one of those who found the "Directions for the Sport" to be "dull and unpleasant"… he advises Coleridge, "All the scientific part you may omit in reading"'.[79] Cooper has no sense of Lamb's association of the scientific with Scottish philosophy and, impervious to the thought of national sentiment, goes on to criticise John Buchan, who states that Walton's pastoral style is an exercise in clear English and that it represents a transcript of old English country life.[80] Walton decants from an Anglican alembic that is gently critical of Puritanism, which begs a comparison with the watery, seeable-down-into quality of Seamus Heaney's verse, since in the *claritas* of the Irishman's vision his father is an Irish fisherman, although one gently stripped of nationalistic propaganda. Heaney describes his father's own ghost-hood imminent in a poem that pleasingly combines references to both salmon and pigs:

> Who feared debt all his life, but now and then
> Could make a splash like the salmon he said was
> 'As big as a wee pork pig by the sound of it'. ('Man and Boy', ll. 11-13)

The affable Heaney is famed for keeping his eye clear from the mud of sectarian posturing as the trout in the spring. In another homely angling poem, Heaney meditates upon human behaviour in a way reminiscent of what De Quincy opined was Lamb's philanthropic refusal to final opinions with regard to any individual, which seemed to shut him out from the sympathy or the 'brotherly' feeling of the just and good:

> One is saying, 'You are not worth tuppence,
> But neither is anybody. Watch it! Be severe,'
> The other says, 'Go with it! Give and swerve.
> You are everything you feel besides the river.'

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[76] Arthur Ramsome, *Rod and Line* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1980), 72.
[77] Hine, op. cit., 44.
[78] Hazlitt, op. cit., XII, 26.
[79] John Cooper, *The Art of the Compleat Angler*, (Durham: Duke UP, 1968), 6-7.
[80] Buchan, op. cit., xxii.

> I love hushed air. I trust contrariness. ('Casting and Gathering', ll. 14-18)

Frank connects Lamb's style to mysteries that will not be hunted down, his aversion to preconceived notions, the likeness of his imperfect sympathies to Keatsian negative capability: 'when man is capable of being in uncertainties, mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact and reason'.[81] In self-deprecating mode, Lamb himself affected the dangerous figure of irony and sowing contrariwise figures and so reaped the hatred of severe religionists; Southey wrote in the *Quarterly* that Lamb's book 'wants only sounder religious feeling'.[82] Southey's criticism caused Blackwood to write Wilson that everyone will be 'in raptures with "Isaac Wilson"' in a letter that praised the *Blackwood's* 'Manifesto' on Southey's strictures and Lamb's exaggerated displeasure.[83] Lamb could, however, divide himself from north Britons with angularity rather than brotherly feeling:

> Old prejudices cling about me … Centuries of injury, contempt, and hate, on the one side, — of cloaked revenge, dissimulation, and hate, on the other, between our and their fathers, must, and ought, to affect the blood of the children.[84]

Lamb alludes to the duelling enmity between the *London Magazine* and *Blackwood's Edinburgh Review*; the scurrilous writers of which could not be addressed by that purely-English word 'fellows'. Their unqualified Anglophobia provoked a sceptical reaction that almost pre-echoes the clarity of Heaney's anti-sectarian diction: 'They have no pretences to much clearness or precision in their ideas'.[85] Lamb's baroque hovering between earth and heaven and preference for imaginative uncertainty rather than spiritual possession reminds that in 1819 Leigh Hunt had this to say with regard to Isaak Walton's play upon the apostles as fishers of men:

> Let us imagine ourselves, for instance, a sort of human fish … Now fancy a Genius fishing for us. Fancy him baiting a great hook with pickled salmon, and twitching up old Isaac Walton from the banks of the River Lee, with the hook through his ear. How he would go uproaring and screaming, and thinking the devil had got him![86]

Hunt had been recently savaged as the effeminate king of cockney poets by a scorpion-like Scottish journalist, who in the June edition of *Blackwood's*, revealed a love of angling. Byron too had been attacked as a paradoxical 'English' poet and, in the empirical Scottish mode of *Don Juan*, he burlesques fishing as a form of masturbation:

> And angling, too, that solitary vice,
> Whatever Izaac Walton sings or says:
> The quaint, old, cruel coxcomb in his gullet

[81] Frank, op. cit., 32.
[82] Lucas, II, 627.
[83] Mrs. Gordon, *Christopher North: A Memoir of John Wilson*, 2 vols. (Edinburgh: Edmonston and Douglas, 1862), II, 66.
[84] Hutchinson, I, 548.
[85] Hutchinson, Ibid.
[86] Hunt, *Essays* 185-89.

Should have a hook, and a small trout to pull it. (Canto XIII, 106)

John Sutherland writes that Scott was the patron of Blackwood's three main '"Mohocks" — literary hatchetmen' i.e. Wilson, Lockhart and Hogg, and Mohocks was a name used by a gang of Whig rakes who terrorised the Tory population of London in 1712 by attaching fish hooks to the cheeks of their victims.[87] Byron wrests a metropolis out of a gentler countryside by responding to his Tory tormentors, whilst Lamb could not play the wanton boy: 'Near Blakesware during his retirement Lamb watched trout in the stream or fed them. Once or twice he took a rod, but he could never bring himself to fix the worms. "Barbarous", he used to say, "barbarous"'. 'Lamb calls "anglers" those patient tyrants, meek inflictors of pangs intolerable, cool devils'.[88] In 1825, the Ettrick Shepherd (the *Noctes* entry was probably penned by Wilson) came to the defence of Scottish angling and uncomplicated Caledonian tastes that do not recommend that we cook salmon in Lamb's beloved oyster sauce:

> It's a maist innocent, poetical, moral, and religious amusement. Gin I saw a fisher gruppin' creelfu' after creelfu' o' trouts, and then flinging' them a' awa amang the heather and the brackens on his way hame, I might begin to suspec' that the idiot was by nature rather savage. But, as for me, I send presents to my freen's, and devour dizzens on dizzens every week in the family — maistly dune in the pan, wi' plenty o' fresh-butter and roun' meal — sae that prevents the possibility o' cruelty in my fishin', and in fishin' o' a' reasonable creatures.[89]

Wilson's 1823 review of *The Compleat Angler* begins with a narrow statement of nationalism: 'Walton's Complete Angler … cannot be so intensely delightful to Scottish as to English readers. Old Izaak was a Londoner'.[90] Despite living in Cockney-land, Wilson allows that the benign octogenarian seems to have preserved 'the freshness of all his boyish enjoyments'.[91] Walton is praised as in wit a man, in simplicity a child, and his work is thought somewhat of an unnatural fiction too often bordering on silliness, a book tinged with a childish and Utopian spirit. Wilson relates that angling in Scotland is a wild, difficult, adventurous, and vigorous pastime, 'It partakes of the passion of savage life', one that haunts the true angler with a Wordsworthian passion and 'carries him to the river or lake side in a fever'.[92] Words like 'silliness' and 'boyish' read like veiled references to the stereotype of Lamb's personality, whereas the feverish passion of Wilson's patriotic concern for angling seems most unlike Lamb. Wilson was described by his daughter as a sublime utilitarian and this reveals a further qualification since, while rejecting Walton's scientism, Lamb owned a far less feverish attraction for the sensuous beauty of the countryside in Hertfordshire.

In his poem *Pike*, Ted Hughes fishes a pond deep as England and after nightfall silently casts 'against the dream / Darkness beneath night's darkness had freed, / That rose slowly towards me, watching' (ll. 42-44). The pike is legendarily large and of

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[87] John Sutherland, *The Life of Walter Scott: A Critical Biography* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995), 243.
[88] Lucas, II, 709.
[89] James Hogg, *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, (April 1825), 504.
[90] John Wilson, 'The Complete Angler of Izaak Walton and Charles Cotton', *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* (Oct. 1823), 473.
[91] Ibid., 474.
[92] Ibid.

imagination; the fisherman dared not cast and yet irrationally did trawl the English depths. Hughes has the patience of Job to whom a vengeful Old Testament God speaks from the whirlwind: 'Canst thou draw up Leviathan with a hook?' William Radcliffe writes that it would be manifestly absurd for Job to go fishing for a Leviathan with a rod and line. Confronting the snark-like implications of this intrepid angling expedition, he turns to Herodotus, who records that Egyptians hooked a chine of pork to fish for crocodiles. Radcliffe asks that we imagine this Egyptian *Piscator* casting with a rod of normal length and a bait of half the back of a porker.[93] Lamb would surely have preferred to write the second of these two references to *The Book of Job* since the history of madness in his family meant that he treasured the quirks of the sensible more than the anarchic world of imagination. His fondness for simple mountaineers in *The Excursion* and the simple fishermen in Walton are acceptable examples of *urbs in rure*, the comparisons in Walton and Wordsworth enlarge the things described without stretching them upon a violent rack, till they burst with ridiculous explosion.[94] There is much pathos in the fact that Lamb indulges his imagination in order to dream of children but also in his inversely corresponding fear of the tyranny of facts. Lamb sought in *The Ancient Mariner* for the forbidden fruit of imaginative sensation, whereas in the anti-Caledonian calmness of *The Compleat Angler* he searched for that which would sweeten a man's temper and Christianise every discordant angry passion.

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[93] William Radcliffe, *Fishing from the Earliest Times* (London: John Murray, 1921), 404.
[94] Hutchinson, I, 195, 197, 215.

Reviews

ADAM SISMAN. *The Friendship*: *Wordsworth & Coleridge.* Viking, 2007. Pp. 430. ISBN: 0670 038 229. £25 in cloth.

I ONCE HAD A GREAT FRIEND WITH WHOM I COULD DISCUSS EVERYTHING — Except we had to admit that 'On one subject we are habitually silent', for she was a Coleridgean and I a Wordsworthian. It was an original and interesting idea of Adam Sisman's to write a biography — not of either of the poets but of their friendship. He gives due acknowledgement to 'the excellent biographies of Wordsworth by Mary Moorman and Stephen Gill and of Coleridge by Richard Holmes and Rosemary Ashton' and he spends Part I of the book drawing in, against the history of the time, the two characters and their backgrounds, personal, social, and political. He ends this section by imagining what might have happened if they had met earlier, before he goes on in Part II to examine the start and development of their relationship. The Introduction to the book had opened very effectively with the famous scene of Coleridge's vaulting over the gate and crossing the field at Racedown and had also included Blunden's query 'Why do people have to like Wordsworth and hate Coleridge and vice versa?'. Sisman says, 'My book is an attempt to escape from this biographical impasse, by concentrating on the friendship itself, at its most intense when both men were young and full of hope'. As emerges, particularly in later life, both men were in their different ways 'awkward customers', but for a while their partnership was wonderfully creative. Sisman had ended his Introduction by saying, 'Overhanging all was their joint mission, to fulfil the hopes of a generation disappointed at the failure of the French Revolution: nothing less than a poem that would change the world'.

Needless to say, this unrealistic ambition was never to be fulfilled, though Coleridge's effort to get Wordsworth to write what only Coleridge himself, if anyone, could have attempted was long to haunt their relationship and Wordsworth's work-life. Nevertheless, for a period their creative partnership was to produce jewels of poetry from both of them and it is this that Sisman goes on to demonstrate in Part II. The individual stories of the two characters continue with details of their changing homes, their finances (or lack of them), their other friendships and their wrestling with ideas. There is nothing new in this but it is beautifully told, with economy but meticulous detail, quite a feat, achieved by keeping the spotlight, in the main, on circumstances closely related to their joint concerns. Part III deals with the gradual disintegration of the friendship, the serious breach caused by Wordsworth's warning to Montagu of Coleridge's failings as a guest and, after a sort of reconciliation, the sporadic and often inharmonious nature of their rare contacts until Coleridge's death when Wordsworth described him as 'the most wonderful man that he had ever known'.

For readers who have made a special study of Wordsworth and Coleridge this is all familiar territory. The originality is not in the story but in the way Sisman centres it on the friendship and tells it in a way which will surely hold the attention of newcomers as well as veterans in Romantic Studies.

There are one or two small errors. For example, Elians will immediately recognize one on page 93 which says of Lamb, 'Like Coleridge, he had been a "Grecian"'. Though the point Sisman is making is valid enough that Lamb had both the intellect and the education to be taken seriously by Coleridge and though it was only Lamb's stammer which prevented him from being a Grecian, nevertheless he was not one.

In the Note 4 on page 451 the surname of the Editor of John Wordsworth's Letters is given as 'Ketchman'. I was sure it should have been 'Ketcham' and seized the book from my bookshelf to check. I was right about that but also discovered that I had spelt his first name with a K instead of a C in a recent *Bulletin* for which I apologize. So it's a case of 'the pot calling the kettle black'! The lesson in both cases is that it is not wise ever to rely solely on one's memory.

Once or twice I was puzzled. On page 214 why should Sisman suppose 'cure' a possible misreading of 'cave' in 'a cure of Unitarian souls' when 'cure' makes sense and 'cave' doesn't? 'A cure of souls' has always been used of a parson or minister and Nick Roe does not query the word in his quoted article from *The Coleridge Bulletin*, in which he transcribes Thelwall's letter from the ms. at the Houghton Library, Harvard.

What Stephen Gill calls 'the complexities of "The Printing of *Lyrical Ballads* 1798"' which D. F. Foxon 'brilliantly untangles', though faithfully recounted by Sisman, do not come over at all clearly. I had to follow Gill's recommendation to 'The non-bibliographical reader' and go back to W. J. B. Owens's account in the Introduction to his edition of *Lyrical Ballads*, which is splendidly clear.

But these are minor matters. The book is, in general, well researched and very accessible and I read it with great enjoyment.

Mary Wedd

Society Notes and News from Members

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT ON 2007

This year, I shall not follow my usual practice of combining my reports as chairman and treasurer, since there is a lot to say in each capacity, so here, first, is the chairman's report.

The Society had another successful year in 2007. Our fear that the Royal College of General Practitioners would have moved out of 14 Princes Gate before the Birthday Celebration Luncheon in February proved to be unfounded (indeed, the College hosted us again in 2008 and has taken a booking for 2009), and we were blessed with what has come to seem the standard blazing sunshine for our pre-lunch drinks on the garden terrace. Numbers at this event have settled in recent years at about 50, and I believe it to be thoroughly enjoyed by all. In 2007, we were very pleased to have our old friend and long-standing member, Pamela Woof as guest of honour, and delighted by her fine after lunch lecture entitled *Rescues and Rescuers among the Romantics*. As usual, two Christ's Hospital Grecians hoping to read English at university attended and gave the Graces before and after meat: making these youngsters' acquaintance is always worthwhile and it is a good way of keeping in touch with Christ's Hospital and spreading word of the Society (as well as Lamb) to a new generation.

The other lecturers during the year were Stephen Hebron on H. F. Cary, our vice-chairman on *Hazlitt as Journalist* (and, again, with a lecture given at short notice in October when Professor George Soule had to cancel his visit to the UK on account of ill health), and Felicity James who very kindly wound up the year's proceedings with her fascinating lecture helping us to mark the bicentenary of the Tales from Shakespeare. All speakers were well-received and we are most grateful to them. It is a pity that we cannot seem to produce larger audiences, and I do urge our regular attenders to think about bringing along a guest to these events. They would be made most welcome.

It is almost ten years since the Council developed the pattern of having five meetings a year. I think this works well, but if members have other ideas for the way in which we organise our activities, I should be very happy to hear them.

In addition to these regular 'home' events, we do, of course, as a Society support and participate in two 'away' fixtures annually. First, we are annually represented by Robin Healey at the weekend gathering of the Alliance of Literary Societies, (whose report follows below). It is worth pointing out that all Lamb Society members are welcome to attend these ALS events and it would be good if some of us were sometimes able to support Robin. This is the moment to thank him for his work in representing us at the ALS, and to congratulate him on his co-editing of and contribution to their publication, ALSO. This is available to our members on the web, and we have a paper copy if anyone would to borrow it to read. The other 'away' fixture is the September weekend conference held at Kilve in Somerset. This is always billed in our programme, albeit strictly a Friend of Coleridge event, and each it attracts a substantial turnout from this Society and definitely has an Elian flavour in terms of its atmosphere and often its theme. For 2007 the subject matter was Coleridge's Notebooks.

Many individual Elians have for many years also supported the Wordsworth conferences held at Grasmere, and although has been no formal link between these and Society there has been a tradition, going back to Bill Ruddick's editorship, of the *Bulletin* publishing a 'Wordsworth Winter School' issue, reprinting some of the lectures heard at the event. It was good that Rick Tomlinson was able to follow this tradition in the July 2007 issue. Rick's work on the *Bulletin* continues indefatigably, and we are most grateful to him. I am always conscious that the *Bulletin* is the means by which the Society reaches a wide international audience and, indeed, is the only contact that the great majority of our members have with the Society. It is therefore perhaps our most important activity. That fact that it is actually read

worldwide is brought home to me by the occasional letter: one came earlier this year from California pointing out that a sheet had been missed out of her copy in collation at the printers, so that she had been unable to read the ending of George Soule's article which she was very keen to do. We furnished her with a replacement copy, so that she could discover the denouement in George's account!

Following the deaths of Robert Woof and Jonathan Wordsworth there was a real possibility that the Wordsworth conferences at Grasmere would have to cease. They have proved over many years to be a fruitful recruiting ground for this Society and so we followed with sympathetic interest efforts made by our member, Richard Gravil, to salvage the conferences, and offered a little financial support for 2007 in the form of a grant of £1,000 to provide four CLS Bursaries to post-graduates who wished to attend but would be unable to afford the fees. It is good to report that the conferences seem to be on a sounder footing now, with the recent registration of a new Foundation to run them in the future, which will, I believe, initially be chaired by our member, Professor Nicholas Roe. As usual, we also gave £2,000 to Manchester University in 2007, to furnish their English department with funds for Bill Ruddick Bursaries, again for post-graduates to attend academic conferences.

Throughout 2007 work continued, albeit at a slower rate than I had forecast on the completion of the catalogue of the Society's book collection. The latest detailed revisions made by David Wickham to this work are now being inputted by a lady typist (or lady typewriter, in David's apt usage). I hope we shall see this publication by the end of the year.

At one moment in 2007 it looked as if we might have a disaster on our hands as regards the DVD the Society hoped to produce, following the filming of Leslie Iron's play, *Lamb's Tale*, at the cottage in Edmonton late in 2006. The film had been due to be edited and produced for distribution during 2007, but as I reported a year ago the work was severely delayed by the ill health of the film editor, Nigel Sizer, who had received a substantial upfront payment for making the film. During the summer it became clear that he was suffering from a multiplicity of problems, both medical and financial, and despite repeated reassurances there was no sign that our film was receiving any attention. In conjunction with Leslie, I entered into quite intensive negotiations in the autumn. The upshot was that Mr. Sizer relinquished all rights in the film he had shot, and handed over the rushes to the Society. We would have to start afresh with a new editor, but at least we had the tapes and had not lost our film altogether. This was the position as reported to the Council in December. I can now bring this story up to date. Jeremy Brettingham-Smith, a film editor formerly with the BBC, who was known to Leslie, offered to complete the DVD at a cost which was significantly less than the Council was led to believe when I reported to the December meeting. Given this opportunity to finish the project at a reasonable cost, I took the decision to proceed after talking informally to some members of the Council. Accordingly, a few weeks ago there arrived a set of DVDs for the Society, which we shall soon be able to distribute to members with an issue of the *Bulletin*. I hope members will both enjoy the film themselves and think about ordering copies to give to friends, thereby spreading the word still further. Leslie has put in an enormous amount of effort in translating his one-man play into film form and we are most grateful to him and his family for all the support they have given, as well as to George and Sandra for allowing the filming to take place at their home (which makes this DVD a very special item).

In the latter part of 2007, we learned that the vice-chairman, Professor Duncan Wu, was to leave these shores in order to take up a post at Georgetown University in Washington, DC. He and I discussed his future position in the Society, and, valuing Duncan's advice and assistance as I do, I was delighted that Duncan was willing to stay on as vice-chairman despite his move, and would be visiting the UK quite frequently and hoped to attend some our meetings each year. He has certainly proved that so far in 2008, having been able to come over for the February luncheon and chair last month's meeting as well! I feel that it is a very good thing that a senior officer of the Society should take up residence in the US, where a

good proportion of our members are based; and it may be that we shall at a future date be able to organise an occasional Society event on that side of the Atlantic. In the meantime, I hope the Society will accept a proposal I shall be making later in the meeting to elect a second, joint, vice-chairman, able to deputise for me here in the UK if the need should arise. Duncan's departure meant that a new home had to be found as from the end of 2007 for chair known as 'Charles Lamb's Chair' which the Society has owned for many years. The Chair has been moved from St. Catherine's College Oxford to London, where, for the time being, it graces your chairman's home.

The Society could not continue without the help of a few stalwarts: in addition to those people I have already mentioned, I want to thank Veronica Finch, Tony Beardwell, David Wickham, Karen Gunnel, and Felicity James all of whom contributed in one way or another during 2007. I must also mention our President, Professor Dick Watson, for his support and for presiding so charmingly and, if I may say so, Elianly over our annual luncheon. Above all, I could not manage without the steadfast support and help of Cecilia, to whom my debt is greatest.

THE AGM OF THE ALLIANCE OF LITERARY SOCIETIES

It's that time of year again. From 17 – 18th May the ALS, now 20 years old, held its AGM. The venue was the Holiday Inn at Coate, near Swindon, and the host organisation for 2008 was the Richard Jefferies Society.

On this occasion venue and shrine could not have been much closer. Three minutes walk from the Inn lies The Jefferies Museum, a mainly Georgian farmhouse, situated bang next door to Coate Water, the picturesque reservoir begun in 1822 which features in various guises in so much of Jefferies's writings.

Attendance seemed up from last year. In the absence of delegates from the Wordsworth Trust and the Keats-Shelley Memorial Society, myself and *ALSo* co-editor Linda Curry (Clare Society) were the only representatives of Romanticism among the twenty five or more delegates, with nineteenth and twentieth century English literature being equally represented.

AGM business was conducted briskly. It was reported that membership of the ALS had declined from 105 in 2007 to the current 99, but interest in its work, judging from the number of visits to the Website, is growing. Chairperson Curry also announced the publication of the second issue of *ALSo*, which this year embraced the theme of Literary Tourism. Next year the theme will be 'Beyond Text' and will explore the ways in which artists, film-makers, TV producers and others interpreting text have approached their tasks. All prospective contributors were invited to send articles or abstracts to Mrs. Curry (l.j.curry@bham.ac.uk) or myself (R.Healey709@btinternet.com).

Voting for officers went smoothly. The hall welcomed the decision of Aeronwy Thomas, daughter of Dylan, to serve as President for another year. Chairperson Curry and Treasurer June Shorland (Jane Austen Society) were also re-elected. A new Secretary was elected. Former Chairman Nicholas Reed (Edith Nesbitt Society) was absent, but asked to be removed from the committee. All the other committee members were re-elected *nem con*, and two new members, Don Lee (Philip Larkin Society) and Anita Fernandez-Young (Dickens Fellowship) were welcomed. It was explained that following the resignation of veteran *webmeister* Rosemary Culley (Graham Greene Birthplace Trust), a new Website had been established and was currently under development.

In the discussion that followed the voting, a very interesting proposal was outlined by Anita Fernandez-Young, a lecturer in tourism at Nottingham University Business School. She explained that her department had received a major grant from the AHRC to investigate the working of literary societies in the UK. She invited members of the ALS to participate in research that would involve workshops and presentations linking two disparate authors. Outcomes might include observations of 'the prior preference functions and changes in those

preference functions brought about in members of literary societies during the course of exposure to new or lesser known (to them) authors…'.

After luncheon John Price (Richard Jefferies Society) gave a talk on 'Richard Jefferies: his Life and Thoughts', after which delegates repaired to the Museum. There, the assembled split into two groups—one taking part in a guided tour of Coate Water, while the other remained at the Museum, where a short film 'Jefferies Land', made by the Society, was shown .

Events ended at 18.00 and a number of delegates, including myself, left for home at this point. Many, however, stayed on for the formal meal and the following day's Treasure Hunt over places associated with Jefferies and other local writers.

Next year's ALS AGM may be held in Dublin. No date has been decided upon.

Robin Healey

A REQUEST FROM JERRY MORRIS REGARDING CHARLES LAMB'S LIBRARY

Charles Lamb's Library has recently become a Legacy Library on Library Thing, an online service for cataloguing books. Legacy Libraries are the personal libraries of famous readers. Library Thing members are currently cataloguing Lamb's library and are requesting input from members of the Charles Lamb Society. Please contact Jerry Morris at: (moibibliomaniac@gmail.com) or post your input in Lamb's comments section on Library Thing: http://www.librarything.com/profile/CharlesLamb

FROM D.E. WICKHAM

Reginald Hine, Seller of Books!

Reginald L. Hine, author of *Charles Lamb and His Hertfordshire*, 1949, etc., etc., mentions and even quotes from Francis Bacon and Ben Jonson in his 'Confessions of an Un-Common Attorney', 1945, and 'Relics of an Un-Common Attorney', 1951, though only in passing. I was therefore a little startled to read on pages 47-48 of Leslie A. Morris's *Rosenbach Redux: Further Book Adventure in England and Ireland*, 1989, some fairly late gleanings from the Rosenbach Museum & Library in Philadelphia, that Dr A.S.W. Rosenbach (1876-1952), the great American book dealer, bought from Hine three volumes, Bacon's *Logic*, 1604, Bacon's *Wisdom of the Ancients*, 1619, and Ben Jonson's *Every Man Out of His Humour*, 1600, all for £300. This was in May 1928. Still, on 19 May that year, Rosenbach bought the autograph manuscript of Canto XIII of Byron's *Don Juan* from Sir John Murray for only £550.