ALSo …

The Journal of the Alliance of Literary Societies

Volume 10, 2016

Literary Scandal

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LITERARY SCANDAL

Editor: Linda J Curry

If you wish to contribute an article to the 2017 edition of this journal, please contact Linda Curry by email to ljc1049@gmail.com) or by post to 59 Bryony Road, Selly Oak, Birmingham B29 4BY, by 1 February 2017.

The theme for 2017 will be 'Lost, Found or Faked'. Some examples of the sort of thing this might cover are:

- Lost works of literature
- Texts destroyed by war or natural disasters – e.g. burning books, the destruction of the Library of Alexandria
- Works discovered after the death of a writer
- Wrongly attributed works – either deliberately or by accident
- Pastiches – e.g. Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes, Ian Fleming's Bond
- How do you tell what is fake or real?

As always, the theme is broad – open to many forms of interpretation and the above are just some ideas.

Would someone from your society be willing to contribute a piece for the journal – of around 1,000 to 1,500 words? If so, I would be delighted to hear from you. Remember – it's good advertising for your society!

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Editorial

Welcome to ALSo... – the electronic journal for the Alliance of Literary Societies. It is distributed to the representatives of our affiliated societies, for distribution to your individual memberships. It is therefore essential that you keep us up to date on any changes to contact details. You can do that by contacting me.

This year's theme is 'literary scandals' and I hope that you will enjoy the articles herein. We begin and end with two pieces on Orwell: the first a discussion of Orwell the 'failed saint'; the second, a highly entertaining look at Orwell's diary commentaries on the Local Defence Volunteers during WWII, with some personal reflections by a member of the Home Guard.

In contrast, we move on to the way in which 'ingenuity and guile' has been used to print the unprintable – sometimes masking the content so well that even now it can be missed, as in Henry Reed's 'Naming of Parts'. This, in contrast to the sexual explicitness of D H Lawrence, the resulting censorship, and subsequent fame: if it has been banned, it must be worth reading – certainly a good way to increase sales! Two articles take up this theme of disguise in the work of Arnold Bennett: in *The Pretty Lady*, and in *The Old Wives Tale.*

But, of course, we could not write about 'literary scandal' without including an article on Gaskell's biography of Charlotte Brontë – particularly as this was the subject of a fascinating talk by Juliet Barker at this year's ALS weekend in Haworth! The piece includes the part played by Sir James Kay-Shuttleworth in introducing Charlotte to Elizabeth.

From there, we move on to an interesting account of the part John Cowper Powys paid as an expert witness in the (unsuccessful) defence of Joyce's *Ulysses.*

Enjoy!

My thanks go to the contributors, and, as always, to the ALS for supporting the production of this journal.

Linda J Curry

Orwell: The Failed Saint

"Under the spreading chestnut tree
I sold you and you sold me…."
(*Nineteen Eighty-Four, 1949*)

Brian Rubin

George Orwell has long been seen as the patron saint of socialism. Since his premature death in 1950, his reputation has grown and he is regarded by many commentators as the most important and influential political writer of the 20th century. In his Preface to *The Cambridge Companion to George Orwell* (2007), John Rodden writes: "George Orwell's public reputation far exceeds that of any other writer of his generation and, indeed, of any other political writer of the twentieth century."

For many people, Orwell stands as a symbol of political independence, intellectual integrity and journalistic honesty. One of Orwell's biographers, D. J. Taylor, in *Orwell: The Life* (2003), explains his enduring appeal: "For Orwell is, above all, a moral force, a light glinting in the darkness, a way through the murk."

However, before canonising Orwell we need to heed his own warning about the dangers of sainthood. He begins his essay "Reflections on Gandhi" (1949) by noting: "Saints should always be judged guilty until they are proved innocent."

What might Orwell be guilty of? Well, in 1996, his infamous "list" was finally released into the public domain. This seemed to confirm previous allegations that Orwell had worked with the secret services providing the state with a list of so-called crypto communists and fellow travellers including a motley crew of journalists, academics, writers, historians, MPs and actors. Orwell stood accused of being an "informer", a "government stooge" and a "Cold War warrior". Was it possible that the writer of *Nineteen Eighty-Four* was part of the Thought Police supplying names to Big Brother? If so, what were the implications for his reputation as a political writer? Here was a scandal that provided an opportunity for Orwell's enemies on both the left and right to topple a socialist icon.

The full details of the case have been extremely well covered by both Timothy Garton Ash (2003) and Christopher Hitchins (2002). At the centre of the story is the Information Research Department (IDR), a semi-secret department of the Foreign Office created in 1948 by the Atlee Labour Government. Its role, in part, was to support democratising influences across Europe by subsidising publications putting forward a social democratic alternative to Soviet communism. In other words, it was involved in anti-communist propaganda both at home and abroad. In order to carry out this work it needed to recruit socialists, radicals and social democratic writers. Equally important, it also needed to know who should not be approached and trusted to carry out this type of work.

This is where Orwell enters the story. His friend, Celia Kirwan, sister-in-law of Arthur Koestler, author of *Darkness at Noon* (1940), had recently started working for the IRD. In March 1949, she visited Orwell in hospital. Celia was not just bringing grapes: she was also on official business. Would he help the Department by writing a pamphlet? Could he recommend writers who might be approached? Were there any public figures whom he suspected of covert communist sympathies who should not be approached and trusted to carry out the

propaganda work of the IRD? He eventually provided her with thirty eight names. Where did these names come from?

From the mid-1940s, Orwell had kept a pale blue, private notebook which contained 135 names. This private and confidential document was not created especially for the IRD and it was referred to by Bernard Crick, his biographer, as early as 1980. To understand Orwell's motives for keeping such a notebook it is necessary to appreciate the political climate of the time. Orwell was writing at the height of the early Cold War. The war against fascist totalitarianism had only recently ended and the new threat of Soviet communism loomed large. Orwell was pessimistic and feared the spread and development of this alternative form of totalitarianism. There was a real danger that some of those on the left would be seduced by Soviet communism, partly out of gratitude and admiration for its role in defeating Nazism. Left-wing intellectuals might be in positions to influence public opinion and cause harm due to their naive misunderstanding of the nature and aims of the Soviet foreign policy and the puppet regimes being set up in Eastern Europe.

It is not particularly surprising that Orwell was enthusiastic, according to Kirwan, about the aims of the IRD, as he shared many of them. This is evident in so much of his political writing. However, his motives were not those of a right-wing, Cold War warrior. Orwell had consistently warned his readers about the dangers of Soviet communism, and even produced an anti-Soviet fairy tale, *Animal Farm* (1945)! He had very good reasons for disliking this ideology which some left-wing groups had already identified as a form of state capitalism rather than genuine socialism. Firstly, attempts had been made to prevent the publication of *Animal Farm.* It appears that Peter Smollett (OBE), who worked for the Ministry of Information, put pressure on the publisher Jonathan Cape to drop the book. After his death, Smollett was, indeed, exposed as a Soviet agent, just as Orwell had suggested. Secondly, he had witnessed first-hand during the Spanish Civil War in 1936-1937, when he fought alongside the Republicans against General Franco's Fascists, the Soviet strategy of police spying, denunciations, and the murder of members of the extreme left. Orwell nearly lost his own life whilst escaping with his wife, Eileen, from Barcelona, in June 1937.

Orwell's attitude towards crypto communists and fellow travellers of various sorts was hardly a secret. He openly stated his position in his 1947 essay on "Burnham's View of the Contemporary World Struggle". Here he recognised that not all communist supporters should be assumed to be equally dishonest nor even to hold the same opinions: "Probably some of them are actuated by nothing worse than stupidity."

Orwell was opposed to all forms of censorship, blacklisting and proscription, and defended the civil liberties of individual anarchists, communists and fascists, both in his writing and through his work on the Freedom Defence Committee. He was not an enemy of freedom who had abandoned socialism but rather an enemy of totalitarianism, in all its forms. As Ian Williams (2007) notes in his discussion of "Orwell and the British Left", "Orwell's incisively unforgiving attitude to the Soviet Union made him an uncomfortable partner of some of the Labour left."

So, the political scandal over Orwell's list turns out not to be a particularly sensational scandal after all. He was not part of the Thought Police, and it certainly appears that nothing bad happened to the people on his list. No one was imprisoned, no one lost their job, and no one was blacklisted. Those named were simply not asked to write for the IRD. In comparison with the McCarthyite purges in the United States and the humiliating show trials in Moscow, this was a very British scandal. Christopher Hitchens, in *Orwell's Victory* (2002) argues: "All too

much has been made of this relatively trivial episode, the last chance for Orwell's enemies to vilify him for being correct."

Orwell was a complex and fallible human being who continues to both inspire and, at times, infuriate his readers. Some writers such as Scott Lucas, in *The Betrayal of Dissent* (2004), believe his reputation was seriously tarnished by these revelations. However, his close friend George Woodcock (1967) believed Orwell was too angry to be a saint. Perhaps he is best described as a "failed saint".

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‘Naming of Parts’ – Arnold Bennett’s *The Pretty Lady*

Dr Catherine Burgass

The title refers to Henry Reed’s WWII poem in which sexual content is decently clothed by military and horticultural metaphor. So successful was Reed in avoiding the naming of parts that the poem was adopted on the National Curriculum (KS3), a fact that the editor of this Journal informs me caused him much amusement.

Arnold Bennett was quite willing to tackle contentious subject matter in *The Pretty Lady* (1918), namely the liaison between an English gentleman of nearly fifty and a French courtesan (half his age) in war-torn London, and used analogous techniques of symbolic allusion to enrich the sexual subtext. That Bennett had a nice appreciation of literary mores and a supremely pragmatic attitude to the issue is evident in one of his non-fiction works, *The Author’s Craft* (1914):

> “No first-class English novelist or dramatist would dream of allowing his pen the freedom in treating sexual phenomena which Continental writers enjoy as a matter of course. The British public is admittedly wrong on this important fact – hypocritical, illogical and absurd. But what would you? You cannot defy it; you literally cannot. If you tried you would not even get as far as print to say nothing of the library counters. You can only get round it by ingenuity and guile. You can only go a very little further than is quite safe. You can only do one man’s modest share in the education of the public.” (Quoted in *Letters* III)

Lady Chatterley’s Lover, written a mere decade after Bennett’s novel, represents an obvious contrast: Lawrence’s belief that sexual frankness was necessary to the moral education of the nation’s youth led him to reference his protagonists’ ‘private parts’ with a fine disregard for convention. The work was banned for more than thirty years following initial publication, but its literary reputation has obviously far eclipsed that of *The Pretty Lady*. It is now worth considering the merits of Bennett’s novel precisely for its veiling of sexual content, both in terms of literary technique and in the context of contemporary Western culture where sexually explicit material is ubiquitous.

Neither novel is pornographic, that is, designed to arouse. (Lawrence gives a clear exposition of his project in ‘A Propos of *Lady Chatterley’s Lover’.*) But, Bennett’s best-known biographer Margaret Drabble suggests, “He felt like being shocking’ (228) and Bennett himself wrote ‘I anticipate that it will startle the public.” (*Letters* III: 32) His characteristically canny assessment of precisely what this public could stomach is also clear in his journal: “On Sunday I had an idea for a short novel about an episode in the life of a French cocotte. I thought I could tell practically everything about her existence without shocking the B.P.” (302) Bennett’s design to *épater les bourgeois* just enough is straightforward in conception and complex in execution.

The encoding of sexual content, masterfully deciphered by John Shapcott in his introduction to the Churnet Valley edition of the novel, involves a network of cultural references. Central to this network are the decadent etchings of Félicien Rops, the subject of an exhibition attended by protagonist G.J. Of particular significance is the work Shapcott identifies as ‘Pornocrates’, described in the novel as “a pig on the end of a string, leading, or being driven by, a woman who wore nothing but stockings, boots and a hat.” (162)

Pornocrates is prefigured when Christine and G.J. prepare to exit her flat: "She was ready, except the gloves. The angle of her hat, the provocation of her veil – these things would have quickened the pulse of a Patagonian." (103) Christine then raises the veil "just above her mouth", underlining the courtesan's skill in inflaming desire by working accessories. As Christine's garb references Rops' original (adorned also with gloves and blindfold), G.J. is, by association, identified with the pig. Indeed, in spite of the clear distinction in social and economic status, not to mention Christine's reference to herself as G.J.'s 'slave', the power of seduction that is the courtesan's stock-in-trade makes it less than clear – to G.J. at least – who is leading whom. G.J.'s relations with aristocratic dilettante Queenie Paulle are informed by the same allusion and ambivalence: in response to Queenie's conventional porcine insult G.J. replies "But a pig I am." (206) Later, her autocratic behaviour triggers a fantasy of domination: "he heard himself commanding sharply: 'Come down. Come down and acknowledge your ruler. Come down and be whipped.' (For had he not been told that she would like nothing better?)" (258) Pornocrates functions as symbolic backdrop, reinforcing the theme of sexual power struggle and bestowing an additional 'lubricity' on individual scenes.

The sexual palette is by no means limited and there is an erotic element in the relationship between Queenie and war-widow Concepcion, suggested by kisses and significant glances. As Shapcott also points out, the aggressively modernist interior of Queenie's flat endorses the idea of a love that dare not speak its name: "On the front of the mantelpiece were perversely but brilliantly depicted, with a high degree of finish, two nude, crouching women who gazed longingly at each other across the impassable semicircular abyss of the fireplace" (186). Queenie and Concepcion's relationship is potentially shocking; its rendition is tempered by the author's indirection.

There are passages in which Bennett describes physical intimacy directly, though the effect is not always felicitous. One such occurs after an air raid in which Christine and G.J. are caught, then separated – blown apart – culminating with G.J.'s gruesome discovery of a child's severed arm (an image almost pornographic in its intensity). When Christine's gallic hysteria has worn itself out against G.J.'s stiff upper lip, "In an infant's broken voice she murmured into his mouth: 'My wolf! Is it true— that thou didst carry me here in thy arms? I am so proud.'" (236) Later, in response to the same question "He murmured into her mouth: 'Is it true? Can she doubt? The proof, then.'" (238) As a literary trope, the mingling of lovers' breath (life/souls) has an elevated poetic quality; that this 'mouth murmuring' is considered by Bennett to represent the very height of intimacy is suggested by its employment elsewhere (*Imperial Palace*). But the odd lexical choice, exacerbated by a persistent transliteration of the French nominally spoken by the protagonists, renders the whole thing mawkish and slightly obscene.

The Pretty Lady is pretty tame in comparison with *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, but still generated a degree of opprobrium when published in the Spring of 1918. Drabble remarks of the novel: "Inevitably it's hard now to see what much of the fuss was about" (227), but she says something very similar about Lawrence in the *Oxford Companion to English Literature*. Sexual mores are notoriously relaxed during war, propriety had still to be observed in print and Bennett's novel was variously described as 'pornographic', 'shameful', 'abominable' (*Letters* III: 57). What is more, Catholic organisations could not reconcile the heroine's profession with her faith, and protested. Outrage has its upside, as Bennett wryly noted: "this book is getting me into a hades of a row with the Catholics. Various attempts have been made to suppress it. Smiths, after doing exceedingly well out of it, have decided to ban it. Boots [lending library] of course wouldn't touch it. […] The book sells like hot cakes." (*Letters* III: 60-61). The book was in fact his best-seller to date and the biggest dip in U.S. sales was caused not by indecent content but by the author's perceived pacifism.

Bennett's deference to the moral sensibilities of the Great British Public has not served him particularly well in the long run. The novel trod a fine line between respectability and titillation in its day but has been little regarded since. Bennett wrote in his journal of 1928: "I am reading Lawrence's *Lady Chatterley's Lover*. He is the most original novelist now writing, except James Joyce." (449) Lawrence's vanguard defiance of decency, ironically promoted by the obscenity trial, ensured for the novel both healthy sales *and* a place in the literary canon – though too late for the author.

From the standpoint of today's culture, where sex pervades the media and pornography is available practically on tap, graphic description of sex in fiction seems largely redundant (and terribly difficult) though *some* of Lawrence's principles (see 'A Propos') might still be serviceable. On the other hand, an analysis of Bennett's literary techniques, such as that undertaken by Shapcott, unpeels layers of symbolic and semiotic meaning to reveal the virtues of a novelist who avoided the naming of parts.

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The Squire, the Professor and the 'She Author'

David Warwick

Sir James Kay-Shuttleworth is known to many as 'the father of English elementary education'; and to some as an assistant commissioner under the 1834 Poor Law Amendment Act. He was the author of *The Moral and Physical Conditions of the Working Classes,* much admired by Friedrich Engels. Not so Dickens, who commented on the "supernatural dreariness" of the prose; "as if I had come out of the Great Desert of Sahara where my camel died a fortnight ago".[1] But, Sir James does have a perennial place in English literature. He it was who introduced Charlotte Bronte to her first biographer, Elizabeth Gaskell, and, behind this meeting, lies a series of events that might well have sprung from the pages of their novels.

In 1849, he suffered the first of several epileptic attacks. His career was brought to an untimely conclusion, his marriage on the rocks and, at the age of 46, he retired as 'Squire' to Gawthorpe Hall, near Burnley, now renovated by Sir Charles Barry, architect of the new House of Commons. Twelve miles across the moors lay Haworth Parsonage, home of the Brontë family. Gossip, spread by the drunken owner of a local china shop previously sacked from their service, told of a half-demented father starving his children, Charlotte wasting away from consumption, and the whole family deprived of warmth, medical attention or schooling.

Sir James had trained at Edinburgh as a doctor, where fellow student Charles Darwin noted his brilliance, and had been a pioneering practitioner in Manchester during the great cholera epidemic. The baronet's medical, as well as his philanthropic interests were aroused. Besides which Charlotte's identity as an author had recently been revealed whilst by then Kay-Shuttleworth was an aspiring novelist himself. At first, invitations to visit Gawthorpe were declined but fifteen years of public service had left Sir James "as hard as flint". Charlotte's father gave way, leaving her - *without plea of defence* - and, on 1 March 1850, the two families met.

Thereafter, acting as the urbane mentor and flashing his teeth with "too frequent a smile", Sir James accompanied Charlotte on numerous quiet drives in the country. "Erratic and vagrant instincts tormented me", she wrote. "I longed to slip out unseen and run away by myself in amongst the hills and dales." [2]

Back at Gawthorpe Hall, there were 'dialogues' ("… perhaps I should say monologues for I listened far more than I talked") and Sir James insisted that no one but he should introduce her to "the oceanic life of London – a perfect terror … I would as lief walk among red-hot ploughshares". Eventually, she was persuaded to make the trip by George Smith, her publisher. Hearing this, the Kay-Shuttleworths hurried south to join the entourage, three times carrying the '*she author*' (as she tartly dubbed herself) off to view the sites.

Meanwhile, Janet Kay-Shuttleworth had been in correspondence with Elizabeth Gaskell regarding the position of women in society, and, that August, invited her to meet Charlotte at Briery Close, their holiday retreat on Lake Windermere. Elizabeth's description of "the little lady in a black silk gown" is well known, but it is the later passages, repeating verbatim all the local gossip regarding Charlotte's upbringing which are of greater significance:

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[1] Johnson, E. (ed.) (1955), **Letters from Charles Dickens to Angela Burdett-Coutts, 1841-65**, London, p. 223/4.
[2] CB to Margaret Wooler, 27 September 1850.

> "… Lady K S described her home to me as in a village of a few grey stone houses perched up on the north side of a bleak moor – looking over sweeps of bleak moors … The parsonage has never had a touch of paint, or an article of new furniture for 30 years; never since Miss B's mother died … Mr Brontë vented his anger against *things* not persons; for instance once in one of his wife's confinements something went wrong, so he got a saw, and went and sawed up all the chairs in her bedroom, never answering her remonstrances or minding her tears. Another time he was vexed and took the hearth-rug & tied it in a tight bundle & set it on fire in the grate, & sat before it with a leg on each hob, heaping on more coals till it was burnt … Mr B has never taken a meal with his children since his wife's death … their father has never taught the girls anything … the poverty of the home is very great."[3]

All this was to find its way into the Gaskell biography and, through it, into English folklore.

Charlotte married Arthur Nicholls, her father's curate, to whom Sir James offered the Habergham parish. This was declined, but the couple were invited to Gawthorpe in January 1855. Here, they were entertained with readings from Sir James' unpublished novel *Scarsdale.* No doubt to escape such 'monologues', the pregnant Charlotte, already suffering from a chill, ventured out in her slippered feet over the newly-laid, but sodden, lawns. On returning to Haworth, she grew gradually weaker, dying there on 31 March.

Elizabeth was now invited to write Charlotte's biography, and set off to research her early life as an *assistante* under Constantin and Claire Zoë Héger at their school in Brussels. Claire Zoë refused to have anything to do with her but, from the husband, Elizabeth learnt a disturbing truth: not only had Charlotte been infatuated with him, but she had actually written letters confessing as much. Innocent sounding enough today, but, in 1844, they were compromising in the extreme; causing a literary sensation when first published sixty-nine years later.

Having read the letters, Elizabeth realised why it was that her friend had insisted that no French edition of *Villette* should appear. The novel's romantic figure of Paul Emmanuel and the unflattering portrait of Modeste Beck had clearly been drawn directly from life. Unfortunately, a pirated version - *La Maitresse d'Anglais* - found its way into Madame Héger's hands. Henceforth, the works, even the name 'Charlotte Bronte', were forbidden in her school. Later, she was to inform her daughter that Charlotte's final words to her had been "Je me vengerai!". As for her husband, Constantin had ripped the letters to pieces. His wife, though, retrieved them from the wastepaper basket, sewed them back together, and retained the incriminating evidence as a safeguard in case Charlotte "might take some unexpected step in relation to the family!"[4]

Now, Elizabeth was faced with a real dilemma. What more might Charlotte's papers reveal? Could her first, unpublished novel, *The Professor,* relate: to Monsieur Héger even more definitely and exclusively than *Villette* does? The manuscript was still in Arthur Nicholls' hands, along with the rest of the Brontë material, which he refused to give up. Elizabeth had no option but to turn to that "eminently practical man", Sir James Kay-Shuttleworth. Together, they

[3] EG to Catherine Winkworth, 25 August 1850.
[4] For this whole episode, see Spielman, M. H. (1919), "The Inner History of the Brontë/Héger Letters", in **Fortnightly Review**, 111, April, pp. 599 – 605.

visited Haworth where Sir James “coolly took possession of many things while Mr Nicholls was saying he could not possibly part with them. I came away with the ‘Professor’ the beginning of a new tale ‘Emma’*…* a packet about the size of a lady’s travelling writing case full of paper books of different sizes … the wildest & most incoherent things … They give one the idea of creative power carried to the verge of insanity” - the celebrated Brontë juvenilia.[5]

Having wrested the *Professor* from Arthur Nicholls, Sir James refused to relinquish it. He read the manuscript and declared that, apart from certain “necessary alteration” and the kind of “coarse and objectionable phrases” he had discussed with Charlotte during her lifetime, it was worth publishing. Furthermore, as a fellow author, he was prepared to make any such revision himself!

Elizabeth was horrified, complaining to George Smith that *she* (Charlotte) “would have especially disliked him to meddle with her writing”.

In the event, Arthur Nicholls came to the rescue, relieving the manuscript from Sir James’ over-enthusiastic grasp. References to the Pension Héger proved to be slight and Arthur himself made what amendments were required.

There remained the matter of Sir James’ own novel. By 1860, it was completed, Smith Elder being the obvious choice as publishers. But, Mrs Gaskell was there before him:

> “I don’t believe that Sir J. P. K. Shuttleworth seeks your acquaintance & society for any of these reasons simple & pure. (He has generally a double set of motives for all his actions) but he has a novel, – partly read to Mrs Nicholls the last time she was at Gawthrop, – partly to me, – *wholly* to many of his friends … He is a clever painstaking man, and has really laboured hard to make this novel a good picture of country Lancashire society … but sooner or later, take my word for it, you or Mrs Smith will hear this subject gently touched upon … watch his left eye, & provide him with Savoy biscuits.”[6]

Elizabeth refers here to a terrible accident suffered by Sir James in 1854, necessitating the use of a glass eye for the rest of his life.

And here, in the tranquil offices of George Smith (who was eventually to publish not only *Scarsdale* but its successor *Ribblesdale),* with the Squire munching his Savoys, and no doubt sipping his sherry, our story comes to an end. His novels – three-deckers both of them – in no way rival those of the two literary lionesses whose company he frequented. The characters may be stereotypical, the social divisions laboured, the set-pieces over-blown, and the dialect at times impenetrable, but Sir James followed the advice given to all aspiring authors, to “write about what you know,” and he had a lifetime’s experience on which to draw. All of which ensure that his books continue to be studied by those with an interest in this period.

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Stop Press: Scandal in Arnold Bennett's *The Old Wives Tale* (1908)

Martin Laux

> "Impossible for me to divine what are the mysterious passages in *The Old Wives' Tale* that puzzled you! I will however admit that no English novelist ever suggested more unspeakable things, and got away without being understood, than me in that book. I was inspired by Wells's assurance to me once that one could say what one liked even in an English novel, if one was ingenious enough." (Hepburn, 1971, p. 310-11).

So said Arnold Bennett in a letter to Elsie Herzog dated 14 April 1912.

Enoch Arnold Bennett (1867-1931) was a novelist, writer of short stories, plays, film scenarios, a journalist and book reviewer. Bennett was born in Hanley, subsumed by Stoke-on-Trent, and created for the area known as the 'Potteries' the fictional 'Five Towns'. Arguably, Bennett's significant works are *Anna of The Five Towns* (1902), *The Old Wives' Tale* (1908), *Clayhanger* (1910) and *Riceyman Steps* (1923). Bennett's American publisher was George H. Doran, Doran's solicitor was Paul Herzog, and Elsie was his wife.

In the introduction to the centenary edition of *The Old Wives' Tale,* Shapcott makes the observation, "Paradoxically, because the text has nothing to say about the time spent in Baines's sickroom, it may imply a lot about sexuality itself … the sickroom's secrets remain unrevealed with Critchlow's departure." (Shapcott, 2008, p. xx).

The controversial passage is in the first part of the second chapter in the novel, a chapter called 'The Tooth'.

> "The two girls came up the unlighted stone staircase which led from Maggie's cave to the door of the parlour. Sophia, foremost, was carrying a large tray, and Constance a small one. Constance, who had nothing on her tray but a teapot, a bowl of steaming and balmy-scented mussels and cockles, and a plate of hot buttered toast, went directly into the parlour on the left. Sophia had in her arms the entire material and apparatus of a high tea for two, including eggs, jam, and toast (covered with the slop-basin turned upside down), but not including mussels and cockles. She turned to the right, passed along the corridor by the cutting-out room, up two steps into the sheeted and shuttered gloom of the closed shop, up the show-room stairs, through the show-room, and so into the bedroom corridor. Experience had proved it easier to make this long detour than to round the difficult corner of the parlour stairs with a large loaded tray. Sophia knocked with the edge of the tray at the door of the principal bedroom. The muffled oratorical sound from within suddenly ceased, and the door was opened by a very tall, very thin, black-bearded man, who looked down at Sophia as if to demand what she meant by such an interruption.
>
> 'I've brought the tea, Mr. Critchlow,' said Sophia.
>
> And Mr. Critchlow carefully accepted the tray.
>
> 'Is that my little Sophia?' asked a faint voice from the depths of the bedroom.
>
> 'Yes, father,' said Sophia.
>
> But she did not attempt to enter the room. Mr. Critchlow put the tray on a white-clad chest of drawers near the door, and then he shut the door, with no ceremony. Mr. Critchlow was John Baines's oldest and closest friend, though decidedly younger than the draper. He frequently 'popped in' to have a word with the invalid; but Thursday

afternoon was his special afternoon, consecrated by him to the service of the sick. From two o'clock precisely till eight o'clock precisely he took charge of John Baines, reigning autocratically over the bedroom. It was known that he would not tolerate invasions, nor even ambassadorial visits. No! He gave up his weekly holiday to this business of friendship, and he must be allowed to conduct the business in his own way. Mrs. Baines herself avoided disturbing Mr Critchlow's ministrations on her husband. She was glad to do so; for Mr Baines was never to be left alone under any circumstances, and the convenience of being able to rely upon the presence of a staid member of the Pharmaceutical Society for six hours of a given day every week outweighed the slight affront to her prerogatives as wife and house-mistress. Mr Critchlow was an extremely peculiar man, but when he was in the bedroom she could leave the house with an easy mind. Moreover, John Baines enjoyed these Thursday afternoons. For him, there was 'none like Charles Critchlow.' The two old friends experienced a sort of grim, desiccated happiness, cooped up together in the bedroom, secure from women and fools generally. How they spent the time did not seem to be certainly known, but the impression was that politics occupied them. Undoubtedly Mr Critchlow was an extremely peculiar man. He was a man of habits. He must always have the same things for his tea. Black-currant jam, for instance. (He called it "preserve.") The idea of offering Mr Critchlow a tea which did not comprise black-currant jam was inconceivable by the intelligence of St. Luke's Square. Thus for years past, in the fruit-preserving season, *Mrs Baines had when all the house and all the shop smelt* of richly of fruit boiling in sugar, Mrs Baines had filled an extra number of jars with black-currant jam, 'because Mr Critchlow wouldn't *touch* any other sort.'

So Sophia, faced with the shut door of the bedroom, went down to the parlour by the shorter route. She knew that on going up again, after tea, she would find the devastated tray on the doormat.

Constance was helping Mr Povey to mussels and cockles." (Bennett, 1908, p22-3).

"Mr Critchlow was John Baines's oldest and closest friend". Baines was a bed-bound invalid and the support of an old friend, a chemist, would naturally have provided comfort. Both frequent short visits and a set day for a longer visit, coinciding with Critchlow's day off, are also within the parameters of normality.

The reader is twice told Charles "Critchlow was an extremely peculiar man", although the 'peculiar' aspect is not overtly amplified.

A 'peculiarity' relates to the extreme level of privacy created by Critchlow, when he visits Baines. The reader is told Critchlow "would not tolerate invasions, nor even ambassadorial visits". For example:

- As soon as Sophia knocks on the bedroom door 'activity' inside ceases.
- The door is opened by Critchlow in a manner resenting interruption.
- Despite Sophia's father calling out to her, she does not enter.
- The closing of the door by Critchlow re-affirms that their privacy is not to be disturbed.
- The reader is told that Sophia will later collect the dirty plates, from the doormat outside the bedroom.
- Mrs Baines avoided visiting her husband during Critchlow's visits. The strangeness of this is underlined by reference to "the slight affront to her prerogatives as wife and house-mistress".

It is worth noting that Critchlow was the visitor in the Baines' household, and John Baines was married and had two teenaged daughters who usually provided care.

The ‘peculiarity’ is heightened through Bennett’s use of unusual language, including religious overtones. For example:

- “this business of friendship”
- “special afternoon, consecrated by him to the service of the sick”
- “Mrs Baines herself avoided disturbing Mr Critchlow's ministrations on her husband”
- “The two old friends experienced a sort of grim, desiccated happiness, cooped up together in the bedroom, secure from women and fools generally.”

“How they spent the time did not seem to be certainly known, but the impression was that politics occupied them.” In the first part of this sentence, Bennett gently raises the issue of what occurred in the bedroom, the question in itself is tantamount to innuendo. The second part of the sentence blandly counter-balances the suggestion in the first part.

Although the goings on between Baines and Critchlow are barely suggested, the conclusion is inevitably that it amounted to some sort of sexual activity.

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John Cowper Powys and the defence of *Ulysses*

Raymond Crozier

The “little magazines” such as *The Dial*, *The Egoist*, *The Little Review* and *Poetry* played a prominent role in the promotion of modernist literature in the early twentieth century. The Modernist Journals Project[7] is currently constructing a searchable digital archive of English language magazines of “artistic or literary significance” for the period 1890 to 1922. It offers a rich resource for researchers, but here I focus on *The Little Review* and John Cowper Powys’s courtroom defence of James Joyce’s *Ulysses*.

The Little Review serialised episodes of *Ulysses* as it was being written. The U.S. Post Office seized and destroyed three issues of the journal containing episodes. But, the July-August 1920 edition raised the stakes, attracting criminal charges for violation of New York state laws against obscenity. The issue included the *Nausicaa* episode where Bloom spies upon Gerty MacDowell’s white nainsook knickers, and it seems to have been the voyeurism rather than the veiled allusions to Bloom’s masturbation that was considered obscene. The prosecution explicitly referred to the clothing, while Ezra Pound – the Foreign Editor of *The Little Review* who had brought *Ulysses* to the journal’s attention – had edited out the most obvious allusions to Bloom’s response.[8] John Cowper Powys acted as a witness for the defence in the trial. Accounts of the trial give him the briefest of mentions – Birmingham (2014, p. 192) describes him simply as “a British lecturer” – and I draw upon the journal archive to investigate how he became involved in the scandal.

The immediate trigger for the prosecution was a complaint to the District Attorney from a businessman, Ogden Brower, who had found a copy of the issue in his teenage daughter’s possession and discovered that it had been sent to her unsolicited through the mail. After asking John Sumner of the New York Society for the Suppression of Vice for his opinion on the matter, the District Attorney decided to bring the charge and, after a preliminary hearing in October 1920, the case came to court on 1 February 1921. John Quinn, a wealthy Irish-American lawyer, patron of modern art and literature and, due to Pound’s influence, a financial supporter of *The Little Review*, agreed to act for the defence, without fee even though he was frustrated that his previous warnings about prosecution had been ignored. He managed to get the charge redirected from the owner of the Washington Square Bookshop so that Margaret Anderson and Jane Heap, the co-editors of the journal, became the defendants. Quinn persuaded the judges to allow expert testimony, which was not customary for the court, and called as witnesses Scofield Thayer, co-owner of *The Dial*, Philip Moeller, stage producer, director and co-founder of the Theatre Guild in New York, and John Cowper Powys.

Powys had not yet become established as a novelist but, after moving to America in 1908, he proved to be a charismatic lecturer, capable of filling large halls across the country and enthralling the public who flocked to hear him. Anderson had long been an admirer. She heard him lecture, and *The Little Review* (*LR*: January 1915, p. 33) carried an announcement of his forthcoming lectures in Chicago, describing how the audience would “fall under his spell,” and calling him a man “whose intellect has that emotional character which is likely to be the quality of the man of genius rather than the man of talent”. The February 1915 edition includes notes taken by a listener of a lecture Powys gave on Dostoyevsky, one of the few sources in the absence of any recordings to give a sense of his content and style. Anderson encouraged him to submit articles and reviews to the journal: he produced a lengthy review of Theodore

[7] http://modjourn.org/ - a joint venture between Brown University and the University of Tulsa.
[8] Joyce reinstated the offending material in the book edition.

Dreiser's *The Genius* in the November 1915 issue (pp. 7-13). She claimed (*LR*: March 1915, p. 26) that he "was one of the main inspirations behind the coming-to-be of the magazine" and "its godfather". Having heard him lecture on Pater and Matthew Arnold, she felt that his was a model of what criticism ought to be. Powys read the instalments of *Ulysses* with enthusiasm as they appeared and he quickly grasped its importance. He must have seemed the ideal person to give evidence in support of the journal.

In his testimony to the court he argued that the book was "a beautiful piece of work in no way capable of corrupting the minds of young girls" (Anderson, p. 220). Anderson thought that the support of someone with his obvious intellect would be sufficient for the judges to dismiss the case, writing (*LR*: January-March 1921, p. 23):

> "Mr John Cowper Powys testifies that 'Ulysses' is too obscure and philosophical a work to be in any sense corrupting. (I wonder, as Mr Powys takes the stand, whether his look and talk convey to the court that his mind is in the habit of functioning in regions where theirs could not penetrate: and imagine the judges saying: 'This man knows much more about the matter than we do — the case is dismissed'."

This proved to be wishful thinking. The judges did not find the defence convincing. The co-editors were found guilty, ordered to discontinue publication of *Ulysses,* and sentenced to either a fine of 100 dollars or ten days in prison. A wealthy woman in the court paid the fine, and the two editors avoided imprisonment although they gained a criminal record and, to their bemusement, had their fingerprints taken.

Letters to the journal reveal that, although it appealed to a readership with modernist sympathies, not all of its readers would be as distressed at the outcome as the editors were, correspondents claiming that the book was vulgar (*LR*: May-June 1920, pp. 73-4) and denying that it was a work of art (*LR*: November 1921, p. 61). A subscriber wrote to Anderson protesting about the book, using words such as "filth," "sewage" and "muck" (Anderson, p. 212). Although the little magazines made an important contribution to critical recognition of the book - for example T. S. Eliot pronounced in *The Dial* (November 1923) that it represented "a step toward making the modern world possible for art" - its serialisation did not elicit the general praise that the work would eventually receive.

The prosecution had potentially serious consequences for Joyce since it created the risk that he could lose control over the copyright of the material and it would make it difficult to find a printer willing to produce the book. Yet, it was the defeat in the court case that led him to complain to Sylvia Beach that he doubted it would ever be published, whereupon she promised that her bookshop in Paris, Shakespeare and Company, would bring it out. The trial was widely covered in the press and helped to draw the American reading public's attention to Powys as well as to Joyce, and may have facilitated the eventual publication of his novels.

As lecturing as a source of income began to dry up, Powys came to rely increasingly on earnings from articles in journals such as *The Dial*,[9] books of self-help and literary surveys and, eventually, the novels on which his reputation rests. Whilst these did not adopt the stylistic experiments of *Ulysses*, *A Glastonbury Romance* in particular suggests its influence: a return to the places of childhood and young adulthood, written in exile; a concern with topological accuracy by consulting maps and checking details with friends; multiple perspectives on a

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[9] *The Little Review* did not pay contributors.

specific place within a short time frame; the extensive use of myth and legend; an invitation to readers to identify mythological parallels; characters that reflect something of the author and live on the margins of society. This novel too would lead to the courtroom, albeit for libel rather than obscenity.

It was courageous to go to the Jefferson Courthouse to speak up for *Ulysses* on its artistic merits before it was even completed, when Powys was in the early stages of a literary career and given that his personal life fell short of conventional standards of the time. A search through copies of the original issues provides insight into why he was selected by Anderson and Quinn to provide expert testimony and indicates the respect he had earned in modernist circles in America even before he had produced his major novels.

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Orwell and the Home Guard
…with some personal reflections

Peter Davison

The flood of publicity advertising the feature-length film of *Dad's Army* inevitably brings to mind not only the original television series but the institution itself, still alive in the memories of some very senior citizens and for those who have read George Orwell's participation and analyses. The Home Guard is, to some extent, seen by the way it has been presented in the television series, *Dad's Army*. Doubtless some viewers might find the representation of the Home Guard in the TV series offensive. I guess that most of those who served in the Home Guard (as I did) can distinguish fiction from actuality and enjoy it as affectionate comedy, even as a kind of tribute. Orwell and Mainwaring, despite their marked differences, had much in common, not least the seriousness with which they took the whole enterprise. There were more links between Orwell's depiction of the Home Guard, my experience of it, and *Dad's Army.* I have had to exclude the film: I cannot now get to a cinema.

Orwell first mentions what was to become the Home Guard in his diary entry for 13 June 1940, a mere nine days after the completion of the Dunkirk Evacuation.[10] It was then called the LDV – the Local Defence Volunteers. He writes:

> "Yesterday, to a group conference of the L.D.V., held in the Committee Room at Lord's [cricket ground] … Last time I was at Lord's must have been at the Eton-Harrow match in 1921. At that time I should have felt that to go into the Pavilion, not being a member of the M.C.C., was on a par with pissing on the altar …" (*CW*, XII, 183)

Orwell had joined the LDV on the previous day and was soon promoted to the rank of Sergeant, with ten men to instruct. One of these was his publisher, Fredric Warburg. Warburg had the rank of lance-corporal, although he had served as a lieutenant at Passchendaele. Other members included two wholesale grocers, the owner of a large garage and his son, a van driver who worked for Selfridge's, and Denzil Jacobs and his uncle. Denzil and his uncle both visited Orwell in UCH as he lay dying. I was fortunate to be able to meet Denzil and he told me that, although "short on small talk", to Orwell "commitment was everything". There is an illustration of Orwell and his section in *The Lost Orwell.*

On 25 July 1940, Orwell records that the LDV "now said to be 1,300,000 strong, is stopping recruiting and is to be renamed the Home Guard". *Dad's Army* quite accurately dramatized the difficulty this new force had in acquiring weapons, uniforms and even headgear. Orwell records getting his uniform on 21 August 1940 "after 2½ months", and on 1 September 1940 he records that he "Recently bought a forage cap … It seems forage caps over size 7 are a great rarity. Evidently they expect all soldiers to have small heads". (*CW*, XII, 220, 241, 249)

Dad's Army accurately reflects the difficulties experienced in getting hold of uniforms and rifles. On 12 September Orwell records having about one rifle per six men and "… they have stood out against letting the rifles be taken home by individual men. They are all parked in one place, where a bomb may destroy the whole lot of them any night". (*CW*, XII, 256)

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[10] 27 May to 4 June 1940.

Shortly afterwards, on 22 September, Churchill wrote to President Roosevelt asking for 250,000 rifles, telling him that these were urgently needed by the Home Guard. (*CW,* 256, n. 9) These were, in due course, supplied by the Americans.

As late as 24 March 1941, Orwell was still recording in his diary that there was a "very serious shortage of Home Guard equipment (i.e. weapons)". (*CW* XII, 457) On 9 April 1941, he records the arrival of tommy guns: "at any rate two per company". It is, he remarks sardonically, "a far cry from the time when we were going to be armed with shotguns – only there weren't any shotguns". (*CW*¸ XII, 468-9) *Dad's Army*, of course, relishes the arrival of a tommy gun, enabling Pike to reprise his comic American gangster act. I

In due course, rifles could be taken home, but without ammunition. Orwell records the absurd bottleneck assembling his Home Guard Company for a surprise call-out "caused by refusing to distribute ammunition but making each man come to HQ to be issued with it there". (27 March 1942, *CW*, XIII, 249)

I joined the Home Guard in July 1943 when I was sixteen. At first, I served in a platoon formed at Pinewood Film Studios where I was working in the Cutting Rooms of the Crown Film Unit. My colleagues, John Reeve, Paul Shortall, and Eric Fullilove, were all older and senior to me. Slightly junior, but much favoured because she was the daughter of the chief sub-editor of the Communist *Daily Worker,* was the charming Jenny Hutt. My three male colleagues were traditional Labour supporters; I was totally innocent of the world of politics at that time but John was one of those prepared to take on the Communist members of one union which at joint union meetings would forever be demanding that we all go on strike to demand a Second Front to support the Red Army. What riled my colleagues was that, for some strange reason, the vociferous supporters of the Soviets all seemed to be in reserved occupations, whereas we awaited our calling-up papers.

In order to forestall a vote, a motion of no confidence in the Chair would be tabled. The Chairman, a very straightforward man, on being challenged, would immediately stand down. We would go through the farce of electing a replacement but always proposed him and voted him into office again. This could be spun out to take up the time allotted for the meeting so eventually there was no walk-out. Such was my introduction to politics.

I well remember that later on I took 'my' rifle with me on the Tube to a trade union committee meeting near Leicester Square. (The Cine-Technicians' shop steward at the time was Ken Cameron, the Chief Sound Engineer, and I was his deputy - a most inappropriate choice.) My rifle – and I – were certainly not welcome at the committee meeting and the Chairman, George Elvin, gave me a severe dressing down for appearing in uniform and with a rifle. Did they think I was going to arrest them? I did wonder at times whether I was supporting the right side in the conflict. John was later called up to the army; Paul to the Navy (and was the sole survivor of a minesweeper sunk in the North Sea), and Eric served as a Sergeant Cameraman for the Army Film Unit after D-Day.

When I came to edit the *Complete Works* Orwell's essay for the *Tribune*, 'The Home Guard and You', 20 December 1940 (CW, XII, pp. 309-312) in which he addresses "make believe democrats", it reminded me very sharply of those meetings in 1942/3. In this essay, Orwell argues with a member of the ILP who maintains that the Home Guard was "just a Fascist

organisation”. Orwell’s argument is too long and detailed to be repeated in full here but he argued that the Home Guard “is better trained and slightly better armed than were most of the Spanish militias after a year of war. Unless it disintegrates or is disbanded, which is not likely, or unless Great Britain wins an easy victory in the near future, which is even less likely, it will have a big influence over political events”. He goes on to ask – in bold type! – “**what kind of influence?**”. He argues, “The Communists, the I.L.P., and all their kind can parrot ‘Arms for the Workers’, but they cannot put a rifle into the workers’ hands; the Home Guard can and does.” (*CW*, XII, 311-2)

John Reeve and I manned the Spigot Mortar, referred to by Orwell in one of his series of lecture notes for members of the Home Guard. (*CW*, XII, pp. 328-40; see specifically p. 334) These lectures were influenced by his experiences in Spain and, doubtless, by Tom Wintringham’s Osterley Park Training Centre which was unofficially set up to instruct members of the Home Guard. According to Orwell, the Spigot Mortar was “for blowing up strong points” (p. 334) although John and I were trained to use it to blow up an advancing German tank. One aimed short of the tank and, in theory – thank heavens I never had to put this into practice – the lethal lump at its front bounced on to the tank (shades of Barnes Wallis!). I have often wondered whether we would have had the nerve to put this into practice as German tanks advanced.

Although one associates disasters – especially comic disasters – with Captain Mainwaring and his men, they were not unknown in Orwell’s experience or even, indirectly, my own. Fredric Warburg described, on the Third Programme on 2 November 1960, a disaster arising from Orwell’s instructing in the use of the Spigot Mortar.

> “There was a frightful incident in the local garage where on a concrete floor, instead of using a drill bomb he loaded the mortar with a live round that left the muzzle at high velocity and ‘the recoil of the mortar was tremendous’. The two operatives suffered concussion in one case and the loss of all his teeth in the other. A court of inquiry was held and compensation was paid to the two men.”

Warburg concludes his broadcast, perhaps a trifle unfairly, “I don’t think that Orwell can be said to be a highly efficient soldier. He’d have been a very brave one”. (*CW*, XII, p. 328) If Captain Mainwaring and Orwell had anything in common, I think it would be a willingness to put themselves in danger

What *Dad’s Army* does not recall (if my memory serves me aright) is the transformation of the Home Guard into an active role in the defence of the country: in particular, the manning of anti-aircraft guns. On 28 July 1942, Orwell refers to “the new rocket guns” and notes that some “are manned by Home Guards … This is the first time the Home Guard can properly be said to have been in action, a little over 2 years after its formation”. (*CW*, XIII, 436)

As time passed, it became apparent, even to someone as ill-informed and inexperienced as I was, that the likelihood of a German invasion was becoming less likely and our Home Guard infantry platoon could do no more than repeat rather simple defensive exercises or, much later, act as a lookout for approaching V-1s. John and I decided to transfer to an AA ‘Z’ Rocket Battery. The one to which we were appointed was near Slough where Iver station now is. This had what, for me, turned out to be a most appropriate number – the 101st AA (Z) Battery. We manned the battery at night (one night in eight, I think) and the regular army took over during the day.

The battery had sixty-four rocket launchers, each armed with two rockets weighing upwards of one hundredweight. In theory, 124 one-hundredweight rockets could be put into the air in a single 'Whoosh!' Alternatively, smaller numbers could be launched. They were not designed for accuracy. Indeed, a virtue was made of their various bursting points in that they created a huge explosive 'box' of shrapnel, some of which would be likely to damage, or even bring down, an approaching bomber. They were manned by two men, one who loaded the rockets onto the guide rails, and the other who was instructed through headphones as to what to load, where to aim, and when to fire.

In order to train us, we were taken on an exciting excursion to Southsea. There, we went through various exercises, concluding with loading all 124 rockets on to the launchers. These were pointed out to sea over the Solent. It was then intended that the order would be given to unload, and off home we would go. Alas! In an error worthy of Orwell with his Spigot Mortar – or Captain Mainwaring – the order given was 'Fire!' And we did. The rockets went off into the air, exploded and showered shrapnel onto a newly fitted-out destroyer passing down the Solent. We were told that no one was hurt but the freshly-painted ship looked much the worse for wear, to the fury of its captain.

Before the war, my mother had earned her keep by helping run a boarding house, mainly for students, but as the war approached they took in many Jewish refugees from Germany and Austria, and then Polish airmen after the fall of France. (I still have the registration book with all their names and home addresses.) Two of our boarders worked for the GPO in Maida Vale and one of them, Neil Watt, later became a rear-gunner in a bomber. One day, late in the war, he turned up, very much put out, seeking a room. His plane had been shot down at night by a Z Battery and he tried to persuade me it was the battery on which I served. I was not on duty then and have no idea if he was correct but that it happened seemed to me likely because he admitted they had sent out incorrect recognition signals. What incensed him the most was that he had joined the RAF despite his being born in Southern Ireland.

In his article on anti-Semitism in Britain, Orwell mentions an intercession service for Polish Jews held at the St John's Wood Synagogue. This was attended by detachments from the forces and the Home Guard, Orwell being one participant. (*CW*, XVII, 66) This synagogue was opposite the boarding house I have just mentioned (43-45, Marlborough Place). It still survives and, indeed, has taken over the Presbyterian Church that once stood alongside it.

In *The Observer* on 15 October 1944, Orwell contributed a very interesting essay entitled 'Home Guard Lessons for the Future'. (*CW*, XVI, 431-2) It is too long to quote in full but I would pick out a couple of aspects.

First, he calculates what a Home Guard had contributed – over four years, 1,200 to some 4,000 hours (many more for officers) and, had he stood guard, he might have earned (then) about £35. He asks what kept the Home Guard together, and answers, "The Germans". He goes on: "… to an astonishing extent it failed throughout its four years to develop a political colour". Foreign recruits, he argues, were astonished that, in the scores of lectures they heard, there was not a word on the origins of the War. It did suffer from uncertainty as to whether it was a guerrilla force or an adjunct to the Regular Army, and it could have been far more democratic than it was. Unfortunately, it mirrored the existing class system even more exactly than the Regular Army. This aspect is well represented in *Dad's Army*: Captain Square,

Sergeant Wilson, and Lance Corporal Jones spring to mind – and, of course, poor old Mainwaring's pretensions. And, Orwell accurately concludes, "No authoritarian State would have dared to distribute weapons so freely". Indeed, could it be done today? I doubt it.

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Peter Davison is the editor of George Orwell's complete works and has also produced a number of other books on Orwell. He was appointed OBE for services to English Literature in 1999, and awarded the Gold Medal of the Bibliographical Society in 2003.

Martin Laux is a longtime member of the Arnold Bennett Society. As well as being archivist for the Society, Martin also regularly attends the annual Bennett conference. Indeed, he has just delivered a paper about the friendship between Bennett and the overlooked South African writer Pauline Smith. Martin is co-editor of a new edition of Bennett's masterpiece *Clayhanger*, published by Churnet Valley books.

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