



THE  
*JOHN CLARE SOCIETY*  
*Newsletter*

*No. 115*

*June 2012*



## THE JOHN CLARE SOCIETY

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Professor Kelsey Thornton, Rodney Lines,  
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**The John Clare Society Website:** <http://johnclaresociety.blogspot.com>  
(webmaster: Roger Rowe)

New members are always welcome. Please contact Sue Holgate, 9  
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The John Clare Society is a UK Registered Charity, number 1124846.

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## Editorial

Welcome to the second electronic newsletter! I haven't seen any reason to make major amendments to the template I set up for the first one, but if you want to make any suggestions please do contact me. I could include more illustrations, but I am anxious that the content of this version shouldn't differ in any significant way from that of the printed version.

Since the last newsletter there has been a repeat of the Betjeman/Clare day. You will find a couple of photographs, one on this page and one on p.8. Ann Ward writes to tell me that the day was again a great success, despite the weather. And there was again an excellent turnout.

This issue also includes plenty of information about our own forthcoming Festival, which we hope will be blessed with the fine weather we have come to expect.

Valerie Pedlar  
[vpedlar@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:vpedlar@yahoo.co.uk)



Day of Two Johns (2). Photograph by Clifford Knowles.

## JOHN CLARE SOCIETY FESTIVAL, 12–13 July

A weekend full of interest and variety! Meet old friends, make new ones and enjoy the special atmosphere of Helpston during the John Clare Festival.

When I discovered that Arthur Pedlar was not only married to Val, our esteemed Newsletter Editor, but that he was an internationally recognized Clown – **Vercoe** - it set me thinking about clowning and poetry. I felt sure that the nature of clowning, with its emphasis on vulnerability and determination to overcome setbacks, was not unrelated to Clare's life and poetry. I was therefore delighted that Arthur agreed to take part in what must be seen as an experimental approach to understanding Clare from a completely different perspective. Accompanied by Alan Whiteley, as his key-board partner, this promises to be a unique exploration of Clare's poetry. Roger Rowe has worked with Arthur to produce a presentation which I hope everyone will appreciate.

This will be the first part of the Saturday evening event. The second half will see our friends 'Pennyless' entertaining us with their distinctive brand of Folk music. They know of Clare's contribution to folk and this will be reflected in their music.

We always look forward with real anticipation to our President's address, which will follow the Annual Meeting of the Society on Saturday morning. In the afternoon we shall welcome Carry Akroyd as the speaker and this will also be something special from someone who so admires and values the writings of John Clare.

Once again there are many choices to be made! The coach tour will visit the hamlet of Upton, for poetry readings in the tiny church of St. John the Baptist and will pass the original site of Swaddy Well and the newly-erected stone by Langley Bush. There will be a guided walk in Helpston; artists in Botolph's Barn; exhibitions; the John Clare Cottage open all day; the usual splendid food in the Village Hall and much more!

The weekend will begin with the Midsummer Cushion ceremony on Friday and then the Folk evening in the Exeter Arms.

I shall be conducting the Festival Service in St. Botolph's Church on Sunday at 11am.

Revd. Ron Ingamells  
Vice chair and Festival Organiser.

The Festival Programme will be on sale (£2) in June at the Cottage or by post (£2.50) from the Society's Sales Officer. As well as the full details of the Festival, there are interesting articles by Roger Rowe, Mike Mecham, Peter Cox and Edward Storey.



Helpston Church. Photograph by Valerie Pedlar

## FESTIVAL PROGRAMME 2012

### Friday

**1.30pm** Helpston Parish Church. The Midsummer Cushion Ceremony. The pupils of the John Clare Primary School, Helpston bring the cushions of flowers to place around the grave of John Clare. The pupils' prize-winning poems are read and prizes awarded, followed by a song and prayers.

**6pm – 8pm** Langdyke Trust at Torpel Manor Field, present another evening of music, art, poetry - and this year drama - among the bumps and ditches of Torpel Manor.

**8pm to 11pm** Folk Music. John Clare's Birthday Music & Song Session - an informal evening in the front room of the Exeter Arms, 3 Church Lane, Helpston, PE6 7DT - free admission. There is only limited space so arrive in good time - musicians & singers especially welcome - details 01778 571563 / 07946 758197 / [pete@peteshaw.co.uk](mailto:pete@peteshaw.co.uk)

### Saturday

**From 9.00am** – coffee and toast in Botolph's Barn – near the Exeter Arms.

**9.30** Festival opens in the school hall – stalls include the John Clare Society sales, booksellers, local tourist offices and exhibitions. Buy your tickets for the coach trip and the evening entertainment.

**10.10** (Marquee) Music from the Pupils from John Clare Primary School.

**10.30** (Marquee) Welcome and Introduction to the Festival from the Chair of the Society followed by the Annual Meeting of the Society.

**11.05** (approx.) President's address by Ronald Blythe.

**From 11am** and all day: 'An Artist's Quarter' - Botolph's Barn.

**10am – 5pm** John Clare Cottage open.

**From 12noon** Lunches in the Village Hall. Peterborough Morris Dancers and the Peterborough Folk Dance Society perform at the Bluebell Inn and the Exeter Arms. Exhibition of paintings in The Gallery (West Street, near Helpston Village Stores).

**1.45pm** (Marquee) Carry Akroyd presents 'Birds with Everything in John Clare'.

**3pm** Coach Tour to Upton church for poetry readings (£5)

**2.00pm - 3.30pm** Children's Workshops - John Clare Cottage  
Suitable for age range: 7 – 12.  
Cost: £4.00 per participant.

**3pm** Guided Walks around Helpston - meet at the Butter Cross.  
Teas in the Village Hall.

**5.15pm** St. Botolph's Church. Read your favourite Clare poem.

**6.30pm** in the Marquee at  
John Clare Primary School

**Vercoe the Clown with Professor Forte**  
**The Clown and Clare**

**Followed by Folk Music with Pennyles**  
Tickets £10

### **Sunday**

**11am Festival Service** in St. Botolph's Church led by  
The Revd. Ron Ingamells (Vice-chair John Clare Society).



A Day of Two Johns (2). Photograph by Clifford Knowles

## What The Dickens!

200 years ago the greatest novelist writing in English was born and naturally his life and works are being widely and appropriately celebrated this year. But recently re-reading *For John Clare*, the verse anthology selected and edited for the JCS by John Lucas 1997, I was struck by two very contrasting features.

Firstly the large number of writers since Clare who have both praised his work and been influenced by his life story, and, secondly, how dismissive Charles Dickens was of Clare and his circumstances (*For Clare*, p.77). That poetry fragment recited to Mr Pickwick, 'Ode to an Expiring Frog' (not Clare's admittedly, but Dickens' own parody of Journal Verse), and the remarks made in his letter to John Forster, his friend and Victorian critic: 'You read that life of Clare? [Frederick Martin's 1865 biography] Did you ever see such an exaggeration of small claims?' – these comments do not suggest that our greatest novelist had much time for some poets, versifiers, or their biographers.

Reflecting on his comments we can only now employ Dickens' own 'Yah!' together with our own 'Boo!' at such comments. For we know, 150 years on, that John Clare's reputation grows with each passing year, and his influence lives on: witness not only the Lucas anthology but also even more recent works, Adam Foulds' *The Quickening Maze* and Ronald Blythe's *At Helpston*, to name but two. And of course there is the JCS itself.

Coincidentally, whilst re-reading *For John Clare* I was also re-reading poems by another neglected poet, this collection from the 20th Century. *Woods Beyond a Cornfield* brings together the poems of Stanley Cook, who died in 1991 but whose work lives on in this volume published by Smith/Doorstep Books (selling at £9.95 in 1995). Even its title has certain echoes from Clare but the volume brings together a wide range of poems, rural, social, urban and industrial, to reveal a craftsman poet whose writing traces its inspiration back to both Clare and Dickens. I'll say no more - except if you haven't read them please do so.

John Lucas's *For John Clare* did not include Stanley's tribute to Clare, so here is the first stanza of four from his poem 'To John Clare' (*Woods Beyond a Cornfield*, p.100):

Ghosts of smoke from the low cottage chimneys  
Fail to define themselves, as they drag in the breeze  
Beneath the weight of the rain-filled air  
That utters the first stammering drops of a shower

Such words speak for themselves, so please obtain a copy and read on. Stanley's collected is worthy of Clare himself.

Bob Tristram

## A Nineteenth Century 'Australian' enthusiast for Clare

It is not easy to discover what was the reputation of a poet at any particular time in the past, so that any evidence of how a poet was regarded can be useful. I have just come across a poem to Clare in a book of poetry by William Reay, which may interest fellow Clare enthusiasts. It is a rare book, published in New South Wales, Australia. I could locate only five copies, and all were in libraries in Australia, so I imagine that few readers will have come across it.

The book is modestly called *Poems and Lyrics*. Its title page reads: POEMS AND LYRICS | by | WILLIAM REAY, | ARTIST. | WEST MAITLAND: | E. TIPPER, PRINTER, NEAR TELEGRAPH OFFICE. | 1886.

The poem in question is on page 11 of that book and is headed: 'SONNET TO JOHN CLARE | The Northamptonshire Poet. Born 1793. Died 1854.' and reads as follows:

Unhappy, yet how happy, gentle Clare;  
Such happiness as thine how few can find!  
How often o'er thy page I bend to share  
The tenderest breathings of thy purest mind!  
What world's wealth would my fond soul give  
To purchase but one day to spend with thee  
Among thy native scenes, where yet may live  
Each prompter of thy kindest ecstasy!  
To see thee pause beside thy favourite tree,  
Sheltering from the sun or travelling shower,  
Where each could warm and set thy fancies free,  
With sweet devotion in each changing hour!  
The meanest things that crawl upon the sod  
To thee were preachers of the living God!

I came across the poem when I was researching the work of the Northumbrian pitman-poet, Joseph Skipsey, whose first book, *Lyrics*, (only the second edition is extant, Newcastle upon Tyne: Thomas Pigg & Co., Clayton Street, 1859) is dedicated to Reay, and who in the 1880s wrote some verse letters addressed to Reay. Skipsey (1832-1903) had become quite well known in Britain and favourably reviewed in the latter half of the nineteenth century, with a group of friends and supporters who included Burne-Jones, Rossetti, William Morris, Oscar Wilde, Theodore Watts, Swinburne, Edmund Gosse and many of the great and good of the artistic world of the period. Their combined recommendation secured him the post of curator of the Shakespeare Birthplace in 1889, a post which he resigned two years later in disappointment at having to spend his time describing 'relics' in which he did not believe. But that's another story (and a very interesting one too, with repercussions in Henry James).

William Reay (1830-1903), miner, artist, emigrant to Australia, art teacher, poet, was born in Newcastle upon Tyne, England and died in Waratah, New South Wales, Australia. In Northumberland he had been a worker in the pits like Skipsey, but also like him had artistic ambitions. His obituary says that he studied art under William Bell Scott (1811-1890) and Henry Hetherington Emmerson (1831-95), which is not unlikely, since Scott, who became head of the School of Design in Newcastle upon Tyne in 1843, saw his job as a 'way of discovering talent among the working-class men' (*ODNB*), and Emmerson was a local boy, an ex-pupil of the School of Design and the painter of *Reading the Queen's Letter* (1862), a picture which he studied from life after the Hartley pit disaster. The obituary also says that Reay practised as a painter in various parts of England, though we have no evidence to say where. We can say however that he, his wife Mary Jane, née Watson, and their young son Robert, emigrated to New South Wales aboard the *Queen Bee*, as part of a group of nearly 300 mainly Irish emigrants, departing from Plymouth on 28 December 1860 and arriving in Sydney on 31st March 1861.

He was perhaps seeking his fortune in the gold mines, or was generally in search of a better life, or perhaps he was aiming to cash in on the interest which was being shown in his painting of *Adam and Eve Expelled from Paradise* which toured to Newcastle, Maitland and Sydney (the picture has not been located). Whether his picture was inspired by his perceived need to emigrate, he certainly lived out its theme of exile, as he discovered that no artistic patronage awaited him and ironically found work as a coal-miner in Newcastle, New South Wales. However he did receive a commission to paint the portrait of Governor Sir John Young (later Lord Lisgar), for which purpose he was granted several sittings at Government House. When the portrait was displayed at a dinner given in the governor's honour by the Hunter River Valley Vineyard Association in 1868, Sir John said (as reported by the *Maitland Mercury*) that he believed that Reay was a self-taught artist:

It appears that Reay is a working coal miner by trade, but, having a natural talent for drawing, has contrived in his leisure hours to attain a very creditable proficiency in the art. Some time ago, Mr. Reay instituted a portrait club amongst his fellow miners; he painted their portraits ... they remunerating him by certain weekly subscriptions. Some of these portraits were seen by Mr. Keene [the manager], who, struck by their fidelity and the talent displayed in their execution, mentioned the circumstance to Sir John Young, and at the same time requested his Excellency to encourage this self-taught genius by having his portrait taken.

In spite of the unqualified praise of Sir John and Lady Young as to the portrait's fidelity, Reay returned to the mines, and the *Mercury*

concluded, in phrases reminiscent of Skipsey's case, that: 'It is a great pity that so much promising talent should be buried in obscurity'. Reprinted in the *Sydney Morning Herald* on 29 May 1868, the story led to commissions from Mayor Walter Renny and other public men of Sydney, the novelty of being a painter-miner proving Reay's major asset. When his oil painting, *View of Waratah Colliery*, was lent to the 1870 Sydney Intercolonial Exhibition by D. N. Joubert, Reay was wrongly catalogued as 'W. Bray', though the fact that he was identified as a miner at the Waratah Colliery confirms that the painting was indeed his.

At this stage Reay's reputation was more likely to be boosted by stories of native working-class genius than by his professional training. Like Skipsey, he was a miner for his bread and butter and an artist by inclination, picking up instruction as he could find it. When he later wished to establish himself as an art teacher, he was more keen to stress his training. He became art master at Newcastle Grammar School for nineteen years and visiting art teacher at Miss Dowling's Young Ladies Seminary in West Maitland and at Mr Theobald's Collegiate School, thus being responsible for the art education of a great number of children in the Hunter Valley. He also painted portraits of local residents such as Mr and Mrs Hannay (recorded in the 1880s) and/or a pair of unidentified sitters (Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales, Sydney). His large oil painting of a bushranging incident was purchased by a Newcastle police officer.

But Reay also wrote poetry, and sent occasional poems to the local paper, the *Newcastle Herald and Advocate*. In the 1880s his friends encouraged him to put his poems together and he sent a few of them back to Skipsey in England for advice and comment. Skipsey replied favourably and the volume was dedicated to him. It contains on pages 51-5 an accomplished 'Epistle to Joseph Skipsey' in a Robert Burns metre, to which Skipsey later responded.

In old age Reay was respected as (the Australian) Newcastle's 'painter-poet' and the painter-miner was forgotten. His poems are uneven, but can achieve a satisfying energy and clarity when he chooses a down-to-earth subject, which does not seduce him into stereotypical and high-flown language; and his verse letters manage an easy and pleasant conversational tone. His models were Robert Burns and Shakespeare and perhaps Skipsey himself. He wrote as an exile from a beloved 'North Countree ... the Borderland – its Battlefields, its meadows, its foaming torrents, its rippling brooks', rejecting the local content provided by the rather depressing mining town of Waratah, now a suburb of Newcastle, where he continued to live. His poem 'To an English primrose growing in Australia' includes

references to his 'banishment'. He died at Waratah in May 1903, leaving a wife, four sons and two daughters. (Much of the above derives from the helpful *Dictionary of Australian Artists Online*).

This brief account probably hints at the reasons for his love of Clare, the sense of fellow feeling expressed by a working miner for the peasant poet, one who has been exiled from his native places and with whose work he is obviously familiar and has been over a long period. But it indicates that Clare's name and reputation were perhaps more widely known than we had thought.

Kelsey Thornton

#### Notes

Where does the date of death as 1854 come from? It could be a misprint for 1864, the correct date, but it could derive from one of those mistaken pieces of information given in some anthology or selection. Clare's virtual disappearance from the scene into the asylum meant that he was not in the public eye, and no one knew or perhaps cared if he was alive or dead. In 1840 a report in the *Halifax Express* of Clare's death in York asylum found its way into the *Times* of 17 June 1840 (p.5), much to the surprise of Matthew Allen, who wrote to the paper explaining that Clare was alive and well (see J. W. and Anne Tibble, *John Clare: A Life* (Totowa, N.J., 1972, p.340)). *The Casquet of Gems: Choice Selections from the Poets* (Edinburgh, n.d. [1875]) consistently gives his death as 1850. Finding who puts Clare's death at 1854 might tell us where Reay read Clare, and which poems he had read.

Line five – 'What world's wealth would my fond soul give' - limps a little and I wonder if there is some mistranscription here. It doesn't scan and it is hard to see what rhythm the poet wants. The printer was not one of the world's finest and may have made a mistake. One could imagine a line like 'What worldly wealth would my fond soul not give'.

## 'To the Snipe': Fear and Loathing in the Wetlands

I'm looking at the entry on the snipe in Lars Jonsson's *Birds of Europe*. Jonsson's beautiful illustrations show 'the rude unseemly length' of the bird's bill, which in Clare's poem 'doth delve and drill/ the gelid mass for food'. There is also an extraordinary illustration of the bird's display, in which it stands tall and folds its wings over its back, looking remarkably like a Jeeves-type butler announcing the latest arrivals at a society ball.

Clare's snipe has no time for such frivolities: it is too busy being afraid. I found that I had to understand the geography of this poem before I could reach any appreciation of it. Clare describes an area containing moorland, 'tepid springs' and woods: it's a place of danger for birds, as it is frequented by 'freebooters', 'stalking fowler[s]' and 'searching dogs'. At the heart of this extensive wetland, though, is a 'quagmire', a shallow, muddy lake overgrown with reeds ('a huge flag-forest'). Here the snipe makes its nest, safe from 'man's dreaded sight' – or is it?

Clare begins the poem with an address to the snipe:

    Lover of swamps  
    The quagmire overgrown  
    With hassock-tufts of sedge – where fear *encamps*  
    *Around* thy home alone

    The trembling grass  
    Quakes from the human foot  
    Nor bears the weight of man to let him pass  
    Where thou alone and mute

    Sittest at rest  
    In safety neath the clump  
    Of huge flag-forest that thy haunts *invest...*

(My italics)



Thomas Bewick, *The Snipe*.

The snipe may be safe, but its safety carries an extraordinary degree of tension. In that remarkable second stanza, even the grass around the lake seems to be trembling in fear of human approach, but that very quality of tremulousness ensures that it forms a defensive barrier, trapping any intruder into the snipe's domain. A similar ambivalence is present in the phrases I have italicized. *Invest*, here, means 'surround (a place) in order to besiege or blockade it' (*COD*, 10<sup>th</sup> edition); in other words, *invest* in stanza three means exactly the same as *encamps around* in stanza one. Clare's metaphors are rich and profound: the snipe is fearful, but its fear keeps it safe; the dense reed-beds that surround its home are kindly, protective besiegers.

Protected by these literal and metaphorical barriers, the snipe's muddy home is seen as an unlikely, virginal paradise, an 'untrodden' place 'Where man nor boy nor stock hath ventured near/- Nought gazed on but the sky'. Beyond the reed-beds, though, there is a wasteland of danger, fear and death, where the water-birds, 'Widgeon and teal/and wild duck', can scarcely avoid the depredations of man. In these middle stanzas of the poem there is an insistent litany of terror: 'Fowl that dread/the very breath of man'; 'man's dreaded sight'; 'they who dread man's sight'. In this desolate moorland, nature's defences are flimsy and ultimately useless: the 'tepid springs/scarcely one stride across' will prove no barrier to the fowler or his dogs, nor will the wildfowl find safety in 'The little sinky foss/ streaking the moors whence spa-red water spews'. The boys in the nearby wood sound relatively innocent as they 'thread' their way through, looking for birds' nests, but the open moorland is a killing-zone, patrolled by ruthless predators, 'intent to kill or slay'.

In the last four stanzas of the poem, Clare moralizes on his contemplation of the snipe's tense security and the dangers that surround it. The snipe's home is also, for the poet, a refuge from the vague world where pride and folly taunts. He concludes:

I see the sky  
Smile on the meanest spot  
Giving to all that creep or walk or fly  
A calm and cordial lot.

Thine teaches me  
Right feelings to employ  
That in the dreariest place peace will be  
A dweller and a joy.

I am sure some readers will disagree with me when I say that I find this moralizing ending trite and disappointing; however, to say that is

only to make a judgement on the poetry, not to sneer at Clare's sentiments. If 'To the Snipe' is a poem of the Northborough period, as Jonathan Bate suggests, the poet's troubled mind needed to find comfort wherever it could. There is no doubt that Clare was deeply moved by the idea of a bird hiding from the dangers that surround it, whether it was the landrail skulking amid the corn or the nightingale nesting in the depths of the wood; 'empathy' scarcely begins to describe the power of his response to the cluster of feelings that include home – safety – displacement – exposure – danger. 'To the Snipe' embodies those feelings memorably, but a poem such as 'The Nightingale's Nest' is a finer work, I believe, because it lets the experience speak for itself.

'To the Snipe' is a flawed poem, then, but it has some fine qualities. There is that wonderful, tense ambivalence in the opening stanzas; there is that brief but precise glimpse of the snipe's bill 'delving' and 'drilling'. Above all, there is the description of the boggy fenland itself, in which imagery and sound combine as effectively as anywhere in Clare's poetry. Look at the precision of the description – the 'hassock-tufts of sedge', the 'tiny islands ... just hilling from the mud and rancid streams'. Listen to the glutinous consonant-sounds in 'flaggy plot' and 'washy flag-sown marshes' – and feel your boots sinking into the mud! Whatever else it is, 'To the Snipe' is surely the finest poem ever written about an English wetland.

David Stokes

#### References

Clare, *Selected Poems*, edited by Jonathan Bate  
Lars Jonsson, *Birds of Europe*  
*Concise Oxford Dictionary*, Tenth Edition.

### **William Bamford**

Peter Cox writes:

Bill died in December 2011. He and his wife Pamela became JCS members in 1982, shortly after the Society was founded, and remained members until 2009. Bill and Pam came to many Festivals over the years, and to early JCS conferences in Stamford and Peterborough in 1987 and 1990.

They lived in a cottage not unlike Clare's, in Harmston near Lincoln. When not visiting Clare country, Bill and Pam at times went to the Lake District to pursue Pam's interest in Beatrix Potter. Bill was a collector of antiquarian books and papers of literary interest. He had quite a collection, including Dickens materials and one or two Stamford Mercurys of Clare's time. Many members will remember Bill and Pam, and miss their presence at Helpston.

### **Nick Parry (Tern Press)**

I knew Nick many years ago when my son, then aged nine, decided that he wanted to play a musical instrument. The instrument he chose was the lute; he liked the sound it made. Not the usual choice for a 'first' instrument. However, we gave him the chance, especially as my daughter was learning to play the violin. In due course we joined the newly formed Lute Society where we met Nick who was an excellent lutenist, and also, I believe, a theorbo player; and Nick was very helpful to every one with encouragement and advice.

When our Society held its first John Clare Festival in 1982, my wife and I were delighted to meet once again Nick, together with his wife, Mary on the Tern Press bookstall. Everyone, members and visitors alike, discovered to their joy the variety of his hand made books and prints so beautifully displayed by Nick and Mary. He was very pleased to show and demonstrate his wonderful and artistic skills showing how books are made. Alas there are too few of his genius about. Try comparing his work on Clare's evocative poetry accompanied by illustrations to reading it on Kindle!

We will miss Nick, a passionate supporter of John Clare and The John Clare Society, and we convey our deepest sympathy to Mary. Thankfully we are left with the legacy of exquisite and unique production of books, prints, and art pictures he has made for all to enjoy.

Peter Moyse



Nicholas Hilliard, Queen Elizabeth1 playing the Lute.

### Members' Publications

**Kelsey Thornton** has brought out a new booklet, *Adelstrophes, or the poets make an excursion to Adelstrop* (2012), a series of versions of Edward Thomas's famous poem. It is only £2 for a most enjoyable read, and is available from Rectory Press, 2 Rectory Terrace, Gosforth, Newcastle upon Tyne NE3 1XY. I should have mentioned in the October issue that the poem he read to welcome us to the Anniversary Festival last year is published, together with a poem about going to the Festival in 2009, in a little booklet called *John Clare & the Helpston Festival*. Since this was a limited edition of 50 copies, I don't know if it is still available.

**Mark Storey** has published another set of short stories, *Party Pieces* (2011). The book sells for £7.50, the proceeds from its sale going to the Refugee Council. And more recently he has published a collection of poems, *A Gallimaufry* (2012), a delightful 'hotch-potch', including several poems to his grandchildren. Both are available from Flemish Old Masters Press, 56 Queenswood Road, Moseley, Birmingham B13 9AX.

**R.S.Attack**, a new member, writes: 'I suppose my interest in John Clare arose as a result of an idea I had a few decades ago to bring together science and art in order to benefit both...[I felt] that John Clare was in a unique position born as he was in 1793 to witness first hand the deleterious effects of the enclosure movements in his own environment about which he writes copiously in his poetry'. Her book, *John Clare: Voice of Freedom*, was published in 2010 by Shephard-Walwyn (Publishers) Ltd, 107 Parkway House, Sheen Lane, London SW14 8LS, and costs £9.95.

### Events organized by or in association with Clare Cottage

17 June - Summer at Swaddywell: walks and talks around the reserve. Celebrating 100 years of Rothschild's Reserves

30 June Walk Glow worm walk around Barnack Hills and Holes, at 10pm. Booking required – Contact Chris Gardiner 07970 408415 for details. Natural England event.

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September - Author's evening at Clare Cottage, 7pm - £6 charge for wine and nibbles.

17 October - Author's evening at Clare Cottage, 7pm - £6 charge for wine and nibbles.



Clare Cottage garden. Photograph by Valerie Pedlar

## MEMBERSHIP

### Renewal of Membership 2012-2013

You are invited to renew your subscriptions for membership of the Society for the year 2012-2013. As you will know, the Membership Year runs from July to June and subscriptions are now due. We have managed to keep the subscription the same this year but it would be much appreciated if you could enclose *a stamped self-addressed envelope* with your renewal form to enable us save on postage.

You may renew your annual subscription at the Festival, but otherwise please complete the enclosed form and send it to me with your cheque as soon as possible. Thank you.

Sue Holgate, Membership Secretary

### New Members

We welcome the following new members since our last Newsletter.

Rosemary Attack from Harrow  
Steven Flinders from York  
Ken Fry from Elstead, Surrey  
Rodney and Heather Girdlestone from Quadring, Spalding  
Clare Jones from Norwich  
Magnus Martin and Melanie Rogers from Northampton  
Piers Massey from Blisworth  
Edith Pike from Oakham  
Thomas Ryan from Tasmania, Australia  
John Shipp from Haverhill, Suffolk

As usual, grateful thanks to all contributors to this issue. Please let me have articles, news items, photos, reports of the Festival – anything you feel like submitting for the October issue – by 3 September.

Valerie Pedlar

