



THE
JOHN CLARE SOCIETY
Newsletter

October 2014

No. 122



THE JOHN CLARE SOCIETY

Patrons: Richard Mabey, and the Rt. Revd. Donald Allister, Bishop of Peterborough.

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Vice-Presidents: Professor Eric Robinson, Edward Storey, Professor Kelsey Thornton, Rodney Lines, Peter Moyse, Professor John Goodridge

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Vice Chair and Newsletter Editor: Dr Valerie Pedlar

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Journal Editor: Professor Simon Kövesi

Archivist: Dr Sam Ward

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Committee Members: David Dykes, Dr Bob Heyes, Mrs Anna Kinnaird, Norman Lee.

North American Representative: Professor James McKusick

The John Clare Society Website: <http://johnclaresociety.blogspot.com>

New members are always welcome. Please contact Sue Holgate, 9 The Chase, Ely, Cambs CB6 3DR (01353-668438) or sueholgate@hotmail.co.uk.

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Editorial

This issue of the newsletter contains reports of the many events that were organized in commemoration of the 150th anniversary of Clare's death. On behalf of the committee I must express heartfelt thanks to our Honorary Secretary, Sue Hogate, for taking on the organization of the John Clare Festival in Helpston in July, to Ron Ingamells who worked so hard on the concert in Peterborough, and who with Linda Curry enabled the ceremony in Westminster.

The Society also played a part in the conference at Oxford Brookes University, so ably organized by Simon Kövesi, by hosting a wine reception on the Friday evening. And many of the speakers and a number of attenders were members of the Society.

Sadly, I have to report the death of Ron's wife, Janet Ingamells on 24 August. An appreciation appears on p.20.



The wreath laid by Clare's memorial. Photograph by Peter Moyse.

The John Clare Festival 2014: Friday

The John Clare Society held its annual Festival in the village of Helpston over the weekend 11th to 13th July to celebrate the legacy of John Clare and his deep love for the natural world around him. Fortunately the weather was lovely apart from a shower on the Sunday morning.

The highlight on the Friday afternoon is always the Midsummer Cushions Ceremony when children from the John Clare Primary School process to the churchyard carrying their self prepared floral cushions to set around the grave of John Clare, who died 150 years ago this year. The children had written poems themselves and these had been judged by Rodney Lines, Mavis Leverington and Pauline Lines. Although prizes were awarded for the best entries and presented by His Worship The Mayor of Peterborough, Councillor Over, the standard of every child was very high. The winners were able to read their poems to everyone at the ceremony.

Norman Lee



Linda Curry greets the Mayor of Peterborough (left), and the Mayor of Stamford (right) at the Midsummer Cushion ceremony. Photograph by Peter Leverington.

The Children's Poetry Competition

It was one of the best Midsummer ceremonies I can recall, and shows how much it is appreciated by children, parents, teachers and Clare Society members. Readers of the Newsletter can judge for themselves how standards in poetry writing have developed over the years and can take pride in what the Society has contributed to the overall environment in Helpston over many years.

Rodney Lines

Buttercross

Our Environment

Look! There's a bee getting nectar,
A bird is singing,
The branches are moving in the wind,
I can see flowers,
Birds are gliding through the air.

Erin Nicolson (Age 5)

Our Environment

Birds tweeting,
The wind blowing,
An owl feeding its babies,
The wind blowing the grass,
A fly just sitting on the coloured wall.

Rosie Tighe (Age 4)

Woodgate

Ouch!
There is a stinger on my finger tips
Ouch!
There is a thorn in my foot
Ouch!
Nature can hurt you but...
Dock leaves can make it better for you.
Buttercups can tell if you like butter.
I do like butter!

Caitlin Walls

Racing in the air like a zooming horse
Open wide yellow orange beak like a pair of scissors
Beautiful robins flying through the rough wind and snowy
weather
I love the way that their chicks cheap all the time
Nipping up all the delicious worms.
I love robins!!

Jessica Brownlow

Broadwheel

Red Kite

I see a red kite recognised by
Its forked tail swooping in the sky.
Sun scorching making a shadow of
the bird: soaring high in the sky.
How I dream of being that bird flying high.

I see a pigeon. I swoop down
my feet ready for action.
The pigeon flies away – I have
failed – that does not bother me
I am ready to catch another.
Suddenly I say this rhyme;
Wonderful bird, flying bird, killing bird.

Alex Nicolson

My walk in the woods
I see bluebells in the mist.
Hear black birds tweeting.

Nest in the trees high up.
Walking on old wet sticks, my feet crunching.
Sunlight gleaming through the trees.
In the tall old trees, leaves that are brown.
On the wet grass are daisies with
Yellow middles like the sun.
Bark on the ground as I
Sway through the restful woods.

Ben Fowler



Lichen on church wall. Photograph by Jane Clare.

Torpe!

Skies are grey.
There is always a chance of a storm.
Paths are growing icy.
People are skating.
Winter is coming again.

I wonder if the snow loves the fields so.
For it kisses them so gently.
And in the depth of winter I found
an internal summer with no end.
Now the cycle has begun again.

Yasmeen Hughes (Age 11)

Sunlight peeking through the leaves.
Beautiful sights that no one believes.
Gently stroking the claret flowers.
Anyone could sit here for hours and hours.

The garden is a golden tapestry,
Shrouded in love and wonderous mystery.
It is the face of a divine designer.

Phoebe Dunn (Age 11)



The School Choir singing in St Botolph's Church. Photograph by Jane Clare.

The John Clare Festival 2014: Saturday

On the Festival Saturday, the John Clare Primary School hall was open for the usual stalls for the Society as well as for the booksellers and the Stamford Tourist Information Office who were in attendance. The required Annual General Meeting took place in the church in the morning and the President of the Society, Dr. Ronald Blythe, gave his annual address. He started by telling everyone that he had been coming to the Festival for 32 years! His address, was as usual, most inspiring and it linked the works of the two poor rural poets, John Clare and Thomas Hardy, looking at contrasts and comparisons within their writings.

There was food in the village hall and food and drink in the Blue Bell pub. The Village Cross was decorated and the Morris Dancers and the Peterborough Dancers provided entertainment during the lunch time period.

The afternoon lecture was given by Professor Arthur Homer of the University of Nebraska. His talk linked the works of John Clare with other poets both here and in America. In the later afternoon there were poetry readings of John Clare's poems by anyone who wished to take part. The day was rounded off by a most excellent concert given by The Greenwood Quire in costume of the periods 1600's to 1800's. By the middle of the 1600's Cromwell had made sure that singing in churches was almost wiped out so groups of amateurs from village and farm formed their own Quires and these sang from a high gallery at the West end of the church. There were readings and music based around John Clare and Thomas Hardy, again about Dorset Quires, Village Music, Romance and Christmas. It was certainly a delightful conclusion to an eventful day.

Norman Lee



Pete Shaw and the Greenwood Quire. Photograph by Jane Clare.

Extracts from emails from 2 people new to the Festival:

It was an incredibly moving and beautiful weekend... Strangely, it was the little things that moved me the most... having become a little lost on the way back to the school, I had been directed to go through the side of Clare's cottage. There were lots of visitors queuing for refreshment, the garden was empty and I wound my way along a gravelled path, before coming to a little gate set in a hedge. When I went through I found a well trodden path, dark and cool in the shade (wasn't it hot that day?) and very quiet, and I knew this was a path that Clare would have used over and over again. It was very comforting.

Marianna Kneller

Well goodness me, what an absolutely fantastic time I've had! I still feel as if I have yet to return to earth after my very first John Clare Society Festival. It truly did feel like a poetic and cultural pilgrimage. I was...overwhelmed and excited looking around Clare Cottage, including the beautiful garden and purchasing books...Visiting the grave and seeing the beautiful midsummer cushions was quite emotional indeed. So peaceful and tranquil too.

Tony Lanfranchi



Ron Ingamells dedicates the new gravestone. Photograph by Peter Leverington.

John Clare Society AGM

The day was fair and warm, and the church in Helpston was full for the AGM. Linda Curry, our Chairman, welcomed members and thanked especially Sue Holgate, who had coordinated the preparations for the Festival. Linda announced Honorary Memberships for Ron Ingamells and Peter Cox, who were both retiring from the committee after many years' service. In her report Linda mentioned recent highlights: the excellent concert in Peterborough by the Fairhaven Singers, the wreath-laying in Westminster Abbey, and the most successful conference at Oxford Brookes University.

After approving the minutes of the 2013 AGM, members heard reports from the officers: Membership (stable), Treasurer (satisfactory), Publicity (abundant), Sales (profitable and into new outlets). Mavis said that *The Wood is Sweet* is still our best seller, not yet equalled by *This Happy Spirit*. Jim especially thanked members for their generous response to the Headstone Appeal. The headstone now stands, vertical like a milestone (as Clare wished), at the east end of the original horizontal stone. Visible from the church porch it will guide visitors to Clare's grave, and it is inscribed with words that Clare himself suggested: 'Here rest the Hopes and Ashes of John Clare'.

Ron having retired, Valerie Pedlar was elected as Vice-Chairman, the other officers were re-elected, Anna Kinnaird and David Dykes were elected on to the committee, and Bob Heyes and Norman Lee were re-elected. Linda reminded members that new committee members were always most welcome. A full list of officers and committee members will be found on the inside covers of this newsletter.

Paul Chirico updated members with news from the Clare Cottage Trust. Funding is now very tight and the Cottage is staffed almost totally by volunteers, led by David Dykes. They are all most warmly thanked for the work they do. Opening hours are Friday to Monday though visits on other day may be possible by prior arrangement. Barry Sheerman MP, Chairman of the Cottage Trust, gave details of a 150th Anniversary Appeal about to be launched. Paul also told us about the John Clare Centre in Cambridge to be inaugurated on 22 July.

The 2015 Clare Festival will be 10-12 July 2015.

Peter Cox

The John Clare Festival Service

This year's Sunday morning service concluding our Festival weekend was the last one to be organised by the Revd. Ron Ingamells as he has stepped down from the Society committee. For the past 9 years he has kept our attention with his thoughtful, relevant and always interesting services, including the children of the village reading their poems whenever possible.

The service followed this year's Festival theme of Clare's legacy in its three sections; each thought was illustrated by a Bible reading followed by a reading of one of John Clare's poems:

1. Respect for Creation: Psalm 65 verses 5-13 and 'Nature's hymn to the deity'.
2. To be an observer/awareness: Mt6 verses 25-30 and 'Emmonsails Heath in winter'.
3. Concern for the poor: James2 verses 1-9 and 'The fallen Elm'.

The final part of the service was the procession to the grave for the dedication of the new headstone that has been erected at the East end of the grave. It was conceived as a solution to the problem that the inscription on the original grave stone is now very difficult to read. It faithfully reproduces this but also answers John Clare's request for a headstone in the form of a milestone with the following inscription: 'Here rest the hopes and ashes of John Clare'.

Ron Ingamells had worked hard with the design, the sculptor, the church and the Parish council on this his final project in a hardworking year to mark the 150th anniversary of John Clare's death. He was also heavily involved with our Westminster Abbey Service for 20th May and the delightful concert in St John's church Peterborough with the very talented Fairhaven Singers. We will miss his sincerity, humility and belief in John Clare's relevance to our modern lives.

Mavis Leverington

A Concert and an Exhibition in Peterborough

On 17 May The Fairhaven Singers, under their Director, Ralph Woodward, gave a wonderfully impressive concert, at St John's Church in Peterborough. The concert, which was promoted by the John Clare Society, included a new composition by Somtow Sucharitkul, commissioned by the Fairhaven Singers, to commemorate the 150th anniversary of Clare's death.

The audience was treated to an eclectic programme of choral pieces, mostly unaccompanied, ranging from the sixteenth to the twenty-first century, from polyphony to folksong. The choral items were interspersed with readings from Clare's poetry read by Peter Irving, Peterborough's current Poet Laureate, and Sadia Moeed, a member of Peterborough Mask Theatre.

There were two musical settings of Clare. The first was Benjamin Britten's setting of 'The Evening Primrose', which forms one of his *Five Flower Songs*. This is not an easy piece to sing with Britten's characteristically tricky rhythms, close dissonances and unpredictable melodic phrases, but the Fairhavens gave an admirable performance.

Even more difficult for the singers was the new commission from Somtow Sucharitkul, who is currently director of Bangkok Opera. In his introduction Ralph Woodward said that Somtow had written everything that was difficult for a choir to do! But this choir of about 35 singers rose to the challenge and gave an impressive first performance of settings of two poems by Clare. The poems which the composer had chosen were unexpected, quite unlike 'The Evening Primrose'. In the first, 'Graves of infants', Clare illuminates a sombre subject by the beauty of his natural imagery and elevates pathos to celestial splendour:

Infants' graves are steps of angels, where
Earth's brightest gems of innocence repose.

These opening lines are set to music that mimics the ascension of the steps to heaven and has some stratospheric singing for the sopranos.

The other poem, 'Insects', is in lighter mood, rhythmically challenging I suspect, and the composer this time mimics insect noises. Clare's imagery is charming and reminds me of Shakespeare's fairy and natural imagery in *Midsummer Night's Dream*:

One almost fancies that such happy things
With coloured hoods and richly burnished wings
Are fairy folk in splendid masquerade
Disguised as though of mortal folk afraid...

Before going to the concert I took the opportunity of visiting the delightful and informative anniversary exhibition, which was mounted at Peterborough Museum (10 May-22 June), in collaboration with the

newly formed Centre of John Clare Studies at the University of Cambridge – A Poetic Journey.

Arranged in roughly chronological order display cases and boards were based on particular topics, such as love and family, patrons and friends, festivals and folklore, enclosure, the natural world, literary life, getting into print and so on. Exhibits included artefacts from the Museum's collection, letters, Clare manuscripts (including that of his last known poem, 'Birds nests') and – most poignant of all – the certificate for his committal to Northampton Asylum.

The exhibition gave a lot of information both about Clare himself and his work, and also about the different contexts in which he lived and worked. One display showed the printed music of a setting by one Haydn Corri of Clare's poem, 'The Meeting', which had been sung by Madame Vestris at the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane. Obviously Clare's poetry reached into the most fashionable areas of nineteenth-century society, but I doubt if anyone today has heard that song.

By a happy coincidence the first person I ran into as I entered the exhibition at Peterborough Museum was Ron Ingalmells, who had worked so hard to organize the concert. It seemed appropriate to take a photograph of him by the display case that shows Haydn Corri's music and Clare's poem.



Valerie Pedlar

Evensong at All Saints Church, Northampton

I represented the Society at a very formal Anglican Evensong at All saints Church Northampton on Sunday, 18 May, and read one of the lessons.

The Society was clearly mentioned as a partner in the Composition Competition and the new work by the Croatian was sung very well. They have an excellent musical tradition. The local MP was present and Revd David Saint gave an excellent sermon.

Ron Ingamells

The Ceremony at Westminster Abbey 1

On 20 May a small group attended a wreath laying ceremony in the cramped space which is Poets' Corner in Westminster Abbey. The ceremony was to mark the 150th anniversary of John Clare's death, and those present included many of the Committee of the John Clare Society, together with past officers of the Society. Also in attendance were Barry Sheerman MP and Sir Peter Bottomley MP.

The wreath was the beautiful creation of Monica Agnes, made with materials gathered from the countryside around Helpston. It consisted of a base of twisted twigs, arranged something like a nest; this was covered with foam, then a base of moss, and decorated with cones, young oak leaves, wild garlic heads, ears of wheat and spires of bugle and honeysuckle. The wreath was carefully carried down the East Coast Main Line to Kings Cross by Mavis and Peter Leverington, Anna Kinnaird and Peter Moyse.



Some of the JCS members gathered by Clare's memorial. Photograph by Kelsey Thornton.

The ceremony was conducted by Canon David Stanton, and after his welcome to the Abbey Rodney Lines read 'The Yellowhammer's Nest' which was followed by a reading of Clare's 'The Invitation' by Peter Moyse. Our President, Dr Ronald Blythe, gave an address, as illuminating and thoughtful as ever, before Rodney Lines read an extract from 'The Shepherd's Calendar'. The Chair of the Society, Linda Curry, then laid the wreath on the memorial to John Clare. Prayers were said and a tribute written by Professor John Goodridge was read by the Vice Chair, the Revd Ron Ingamells. The ceremony ended with further prayers and a blessing. Those present then made their way to Barry Sheerman's office in Portcullis House, where he had kindly arranged for refreshments to be served.

Bob Heyes



Visible readers (L-R): Peter Moyse, Ronald Blythe, Rodney Lines, with Barry Sheerman standing the other side of Canon David Stanton. Photograph by Kelsey Thornton.

The Ceremony at Westminster Abbey 2

At the start of today's adventure I knew very little about the poet, John Clare, other than the fact that my grandad, Rodney Lines, thought a great deal of him. I was, however, very excited and privileged (not to mention that it involved a day off school!) to be asked to go with my grandparents and my mum to the Clare Memorial Service at Westminster Abbey.

Our journey started with the 10.20 train from Horsley near Guildford and for an hour we trundled through the beautiful countryside that stretches between Greater London and Guildford. I mentioned to my grandad that I hoped that the Greenbelt would never be built on as it is under threat from development at the moment. I had no idea until then that John Clare felt as strongly about the countryside in his day too. A strange coincidence!

When we reached Westminster Abbey, which I had never visited before, I was very excited to realise that we were going to be some of the only people especially allowed in that morning. Walking through the Cloisters to the Abbey entrance felt like going back in time. Here we met some of the other people who would be attending the service including Mr Peter Moyse who it turned out had taken my mum and dad's wedding photographs! On another personal note, my grandma pointed out the grave of Anne Bracegirdle, an actress, who she may be related to! The Dean of Westminster Abbey met us at the door and led us all to Poets' Corner where the Memorial Service was to take place. It felt strangely exciting to be with all these people in this almost empty huge building surrounded by so much history. It was wonderful to hear my grandad read a couple of Clare's poems- it made me feel very special and proud of him too. He does have a very loud voice!

After the Service and wreath laying I was so excited to hear that we had been invited back to the House of Commons for a drink by Mr Barry Sheerman, an MP. It was amazing going into this important Government building- like going through airport security! My friends would be so envious when they heard! Mr Sheerman's office was on one of the upper floors and the views were amazing! You could see Big Ben and the Houses of Parliament so clearly through his windows! It was very nice that so many of the John Clare Society members took time to talk to me - it made me feel very grown up. Mrs Rose, who we used to live near, remembered me as a baby and I had no idea she was actually a relative of John Clare!

My wonderful day out has made me want to learn more about the Poet who has inspired all the people I met today and I hope to see them all again one day.

William Hughes, age 11

John Clare in Space – Conference at Oxford Brookes University

Although the year 2014 marks the 150th anniversary of John Clare's death, the conference held on 30-31 May demonstrated that Clare's poetry and legacy is very much alive and thriving. Masterfully organized by Professor Simon Kovesi and hosted at Oxford Brookes University, 'John Clare in Space' welcomed delegates from the UK, US, Canada, and France. The meeting featured academic papers as well as contributions from poets, artists, filmmakers, and – in what was perhaps a first – even a stand-up comedian and a straw bear. And it was entirely fitting that the space for the conference was a the recently completed state of the art 'green' building, named after the university's founder, John Henry Brookes.



The Terrace, John Henry Brookes Building. Photograph by Valerie Pedlar.

The meeting was a perfect balance of panel discussions with innovative plenaries and presentations. The opening keynote by Nick Groom (University of Exeter) set the tone, arguing for a new theoretical way of understanding Clare's relationship to nature, one based on the principles of social ecology. The second was a spoken word performance of *The Gypsy and the Poet* by the author, Professor David Morley (University of Warwick). Morley's poems brought the encounter between Clare and the gypsy Wisdom Smith to life using a blend of Romani language, bird song and sonnets.

The panels and presentations included the work of well respected scholars, such as John Goodridge, Bob Heyes, Mina Gorji, and Paul Chirico, as well as several new voices, including Caroline Jackson-Houlston (Oxford Brookes University) who explored Clare's 'familiar birds' by focusing on Clare's poetic imitations of birdsong and their real-life counterparts and Helen Pownall-Lebreton (University of Paris) who offered an exquisite linguistic analysis of Clare's writing about wetlands. Clare's status as a poet's poet and an artist's artist was

another theme of the conference with a panel featuring poets Jeannette Lynes and Sarah Corbett and another with visual artists, Sue Shields, Lucie Winterson, and Carry Ackroyd, all discussing how Clare has shaped their respective works. A spirit of inclusivity, typical of gatherings of those who study, love, and are inspired by Clare's work, prevailed.

Beyond the panels, throughout the conference delegates were able to enjoy a beautiful exhibition featuring Brian Shields's provocative and poignant painting and sculptures (some of which have graced the recent issues of the John Clare Society Journal), as well as visit stalls featuring books about Clare and by conference delegates, and one run by the Clare Society.

Once the more serious and scholarly aspects of the opening day were complete, conference attendees were entertained by a stand-up performance by comedian Josie Long followed by a delicious dinner based upon early 19th century recipes, prepared and served by students at the Oxford Brookes School of Hospitality Management. On the second afternoon, the meeting ended with a presentation, at once powerful and playful, featuring Clare biographer Jonathan Bate interviewing author and psycho-geographer Iain Sinclair and filmmaker Andrew Kötting about their film *By Our Selves*, a stirring re-imagination of Clare's 'Journey out of Essex'. A portion of the film was screened – and performed – for the conference attendees, with a surprise appearance of a straw bear! If the work of all the delegates is any indication, Clare's legacy and importance will continue to grow in the next 200 years.

Roz Parr (Creighton University) and Bridget Keegan (Creighton University)



Delegates enjoy a break in The Terrace. Photograph by Valerie Pedlar.

**Janet Mary Ingamells
1935-2014**



On Monday 8 September at 12 noon we gathered in St Mary's Church at Buckden for a celebration and thanksgiving service for the life of Janet Ingamells. Her death on Sunday, 25 August had saddened us all.

It was indeed a celebration: the sun shone down from a brilliant blue sky and we were greeted by a peal of bells. The church filled with over 200 people, many having made

a lengthy journey to say goodbye to Janet who had gained love and respect in all the many aspects of her life. This included time on the John Clare Committee together with her husband, the Revd. Ron Ingamells, where they both devoted much time and energy in helping to plan and organise our annual Festival.

It was a moving service, conducted by the Revd. Miles Falla, but put together by Ron with Janet's help. Her love of music and its importance to her shone through. She had a beautiful singing voice, winning a number of competitions and was an Associate of the Royal College of Music. She was selected to join the BBC Chorus on a visit to Rome where they sang in different churches and chapels each day for a week. A tribute to this love was Rachel Godsill's clear and perfect voice rising from the back of the church, singing 'God be in my head'.

Three grandchildren, Hannah, Tom and Joe, expressed their appreciation of their grandmother and were followed by Ron, whose moving and brave account gave us a further insight into the life of his lovely wife. Janet was one of life's givers with her calm presence and warm smile, which will be remembered by many Society members.

Ron chose John Clare's poem 'How can I forget', for the last page of the Order of Service. It begins:

That farewell voice of Love is never heard again,
Yet I remember and think on it with pain

A very appropriate and immensely moving final word.

Mavis Leverington

NEW PUBLICATIONS

Storey, M. (2012), *Notes towards a Tao of Walking*, Flemish Old Masters Press, £7.50.

'A journey of 1,000 miles must begin with a single step', Lao Tzu, the founder of Taoism.

I've wandered many a weary mile', John Clare, *Child Harold*, 1841.

The Tao of Walking is a low impact movement. The slower and more measured the step, the more space you give your mind to wander, exercising both body and soul.

This book is a series of short stories, written with a hint of humour, which will keep you thinking long after you have finished reading them. Each one is a journey, all brought together by the final piece 'Notes'. And what has this got to do with John Clare, you might ask? If you had forgotten about Clare's journey out of Essex you will certainly be reminded of it in 'Notes'. The stories talk of loss and remembrance, with a highly amusing sideways glance at the 'bludgeoning' enthusiasm of the amateur lit. crit. journeying through the West Country in search of the Romantics.

An interesting little book, which I am sure will give you much food for thought.

Storey, M. (2013), *Ancient History*, Flemish Old Masters Press.

This is a selection of poetry which, like *Notes towards a Two of Walking*, takes the reader on a journey through time and place: the building of the Great Wall of China; the legacy of Soviet Russia; the soothsayer's 'weather forecast' for the Ides of March; using conkers to mark the annual cycle; the shallowness of the great escape to poolside holidays; and the forced route of the tourist of the trail, watching and being watched in turn. Some are humorous and some are sad – but it is an entertaining selection.

Both publications are available from: The Flemish Old Masters Press, 56 Queenswood Road, Moseley, Birmingham B13 9AX.

Linda Curry

Journeys After

Journeys After is a CD of 2 symphonic pieces by Brian Noyes: *Points of Decision* played by the Moravian Orchestra conducted by Petr Vronsky and *Shadows of Memory* played by the St Petersburg State Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Vladimir Lande.

Readers may remember that Noyes wrote a piece in the newsletter of December 2010 about the way his music is inspired by Clare's poetry. As he himself says, his music is in no way programmatic, but it makes reference to Clare's state of mind at the threshold of his escape from the Epping Asylum (in *Points of Decision*), and to the

actual journey out of Essex (in *Shadows of Memory*). The music does what music does so well by conveying different emotional states, and the shifting orchestral textures and timbres are constantly fascinating.

Noyes explains both in the newsletter article and in the notes accompanying this CD that he writes in a modernist idiom, so you won't find yourself whistling the tunes in his music. But you may recognize at the end of *Points of Decision* 'Highland Mary', the tune Clare whistled to himself during his walk home from Essex.

The CD is produced by Navona Records. www.navonarecords.com

Valerie Pedlar



Hollyhocks in the garden of Clare Cottage. Photograph by Jane Clare.

TWO PROJECTS

UnEarthed

UnEarthed is a partnership between five artists and the John Clare Trust to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the poet's death. The project involves an artists' residency based at Clare Cottage in Helpston and its local environs.

Using a variety of found objects, recycled materials, contemporary technologies and traditional skills the work is presented in two stages: a work in progress exhibition and a final show of resolved pieces.

Referencing Clare's own manuscripts, poetry and prose, and collaborating with Dr Sarah Houghton-Walker and Dr Paul Chirico of the Centre for John Clare Studies at Cambridge University, the artists have developed their own impression of the life and personality of the poet and his influences. Juxtaposing the research of John Clare's legacy with current creative contexts and the personal responses of each artist has resulted in innovative interpretations of the poet's life and work, enhancing the understanding and appreciation of Clare's story.

The two stages were shown at Clare Cottage and the exhibition will be shown at Northampton Museum 7 October-2 November, and at Peterborough City Gallery 7-30 November): www.facebook.com/UnEarthedClare

By Our Selves

Another project of interest in this anniversary year is the John Clare-inspired film, *By Our Selves*, and performance project by Andrew Kötting and Iain Sinclair, which Kötting writes about in this year's Journal. There will be a follow-up event on the evening of Friday 31 Oct 2014, free, at Oxford Brookes when Andrew Kötting, Iain Sinclair and some very special guests, will present some of the film shot this summer. More details about this work-in-progress event, and how to book free tickets, are at:

www.brookes.ac.uk/about-brookes/events/by-our-selves/

MEMBERSHIP

Reminder for Renewal of Subscriptions – 2014/15

If you have a Membership Renewal Form with your newsletter it means that you have not yet renewed for this year. We rely on your subscription to keep the Society going, so please renew as soon as possible by sending the form to me together with your cheque made payable to the John Clare Society and a stamped self addressed envelope for the return of your Membership Card. Those who have not renewed by 1 December 2014 will unfortunately be removed from our membership database and will no longer receive Newsletters and information from the Society.

Jim Heppell, Treasurer and Membership Secretary

New Members (16 Sept 2014) since the October 2013 Newsletter

Rachel Aldridge of Walgrave, Graham Bathe of Fordingbridge, Misty Beck US*, Joan and Christopher Bornett of Felsham, Mr and Mrs P. Bradley of Tooting, Christine Briscoe, Katey Castellano US, Mrs Dorothy M Chambers of Stamford, Rev Arnold Clay of Harrogate, Peter John Davies of Redhill, Nancy Derbyshire US, Jonathan Dolton of Sudbury, Gilli Driver of Croydon, Hilary Dunne of Helpston, Catherine Duvall US, Dr Sue Edney of Blagdon Nr Bristol, Guy Franks of Kelsall Nr Tarporley, Liv Grant of Cambridge, John and Jennie Hart of Loughton, Peter Hodgkiss of Whitley Bay, Pamela Jenkins of Stevenage, Lee & Julie Johnson of Bolton, Tania & Gordon Kent of Oakham, Anna Kinnaird of Helpston, Edward and Lorna Kirtland of Loughton, John Kitchener & Dr Frances Rhoden of Ebury Road, Erin Lafford of Oxford, Judith Line of Wellingborough, Revd Peter Lister of Bourne, Jennifer A. Lorch of Leamington Spa, John and Joan Marquis of Falmouth, Erica McAlpine US, Ms Christine Metcalf of Lincoln, William B Mixon jnr US, J and L Montague of Eltham, Michael Nicholson US, Christopher & Susan Owen of Sawtry, James Plester of Banbury, Neil Proctor of Little Dawley Telford, Christopher & Valerie Purcell of Teddington, Judith Pyke of Cambridge, Michael Ramirez of Peterborough, Annette Ratuszniak of Salisbury, Kelvin Ravenscroft of Manchester, The Revd Dr Andrew Rayment of Ketton, M and H Roberts of Bourne, Alan Ross of London, Ann Rostron & Anthony Fielder of Wymondham, David & Nicola Shelton of Market Deeping, David Shipton of Uppingham, Christopher Sparey-Green & Susan Willetts of London, Prof F J Stafford of Oxford, John Stafford of Narborough, Louise Summers of Osney Island, Jean Teague of Peterborough, Mr & Mrs Ronald Teasdale of Wothorpe, Victoria & Barrie Watkins of Camborne, Donald Wilson US, Trevor Winkfield US, Ms Lucie Winterson of London. *US indicates members via JCSNA.

The Friends of the Festival Scheme 2014

Thanks to those who contributed to the Friends scheme again this year. With donations (and plus the gift aid we are able to claim) the scheme raised in excess of £450 for which we are extremely grateful.

Jenni Bancroft, John Brierley, Janet Burden, David Butcher, Christine Carlin, Geoffrey Cleave, Peter Cox, Michael Davis, David Day, Elisabeth Field, Jessica Finch, Melvyn Freake, Norman Goodman, Stan Groves, Jim Heppell, Dr Robert Heyes & Susan Savva, Michael Hiscock, Chris & Jill Holmes, Lee Johnson, Bob Kelly, Tony Lanfranchi, Peter Latham x2, Peter Lee, Norman Lee, Rodney Lines, Lionel & Linda Little, Marion Marshall, Caroline Morgan, Brian Noyes, Shirley Penny, Malgorzata Kmita & Kelvin Ravenscroft, Mr & Mrs DCJ Reid, Tony Richards, Cynthia Robinson, Dorothy Rose, Prof Alan Sell, Mick Sharpe, Bridget Smith, John Stafford x2, Gillian Stokes, Dr Stephen Sullivan, Nancy Titman x2, Leslie Tooby, Malcolm Wallis, Dr Ann Ward, Victoria Watkins, Yvonne Worthington.

Finally...

My heartfelt thanks to all those who have submitted material for this issue, and apologies to those people whose pieces I have been unable to include this time. I was delighted to have been sent so many photos of the various events this year. Next deadline: 3 January 2015.

Valerie Pedlar



The new headstone. Photograph by Peter Moyse.