



Newsletter

Volume 11, March 2009

The editor invites submissions of items relevant to Clare studies, including calls for papers, announcements of recent publications, details of upcoming events, and scholarly notes. Please send submissions to Andrew Hubbell: hubbell@susqu.edu. The editor would like to thank all of the contributors to this issue.

Editor's Column

In this issue of the Newsletter, we offer a small selection of news from and about the John Clare community. There is a review of the Clare panel at the 2008 MLA, a notice about the improvements to the John Clare Cottage, and a notice of Longman's new handbook for students of Clare's poems. We hope you enjoy this 11th volume of the JCSNA Newsletter.

Since this will be my last issue of the Newsletter as editor, I would like to extend my special thanks to Jim McKusick for his encouragement and assistance through the years. He has been a mentor and a friend for over fifteen years; this Newsletter is one of many things that would not exist without his efforts. Thanks to all the membership for their continued support.

Proceedings of the John Clare Panel at the San Francisco MLA, December 29, 2008

By Susanne Schmid, Johannes Gutenberg-Universität Mainz (Germany)

At the Modern Language Association Convention in San Francisco, the John Clare Society of North America hosted the panel "Clare and His Circle," chaired by Katey Castellano (James Madison University). The three panelists showed how firmly Clare was embedded in contemporary print culture and debates about radicalism, contrary to the popular image of Clare as a solitary, rural outsider, and moreover, to what extent he defined himself through his personal relationships.

In her paper "Clare and Hone," Mina Gorji (Cambridge University) mapped out the relationship between the poet and the radical publisher. Hone's *Poor Humphrey's Calendar* and his *Everyday Book* borrowed the structure, method, and even direct quotations from Clare's *Shepherd's Calendar*. While this relationship may have infringed on copyright law, Hone's almanacs helped popularize a number of poets, including Clare and John Keats. This kind of relationship proves the need to investigate the circumstances of publication.

When Emma Trehane (Nottingham Trent University) spoke about "The Letters of Eliza Louisa Emmerson to John Clare," she not only provided a fascinating insight into the complexities of Clare's emotional life, but also showed the need to consider both partners of any literary correspondence. Although Emmerson's letters constitute a quarter of Clare's incoming correspondence and are therefore an invaluable resource, they have received little critical attention. Because Clare had created a highly sexualized image of Emmerson, some critics disregarded her to an extent that even her death date (not 1847 but 1854) was falsely attributed.

Katey Castellano's paper, "Clare, Preservation, and Pessimism," showed how Clare's views of the natural world were linked to his political views. Mixing "conservative organicism" with images of monarchy and chivalry on the one side, and with environmental protectionism and a liberal-radical discourse of individual rights on the other, Clare lamented the alteration of local landscape in poems like "The Nothingness of Life" and "The Instinct of Hope." This tension between conservatism and pessimism also appears in "Burthorp Oak" and other poems, which are thereby turned into ideological battlefields, and are much more than mere descriptions of rural life.

The lively discussion that followed these inspiring and highly informative papers focused on print culture, problems of editing, online resources, the rewriting of Romantic biographies, Romantic circles as well as new, contextualized readings of Clare's poetry.

The John Clare Cottage in Helpston

Source: <http://www.clarecottage.org/>

The John Clare Trust first came about in the autumn of 2005 when Dr. Paul Chirico discovered the John Clare cottage Helpston to be for sale on the open market. The John Clare Trust came together with the goal of obtaining the property and transforming it into a site of historical and cultural importance, open to the public.

Paul Chirico, a lecturer at Cambridge University and published author on John Clare, has long had an interest in the cottage and its historical significance.

Barry Sheerman MP, Chairman of the Education and Skills Select Committee, has started many social enterprises in his career, and on hearing that the cottage was for sale wished to combine his knowledge and interest in education with Paul Chirico's love of Clare.

Through the collaboration of these two people and a selection of Trustees with years of experience in education, environmental issues, other charitable projects, and of course a love of Clare's work, the Cottage was purchased and a first stage application was made to the Heritage Lottery Fund to develop the site into a Cultural, Educational and Environmental hub for every age group.

During 2006-07 the Trust developed an application to the Heritage Lottery Fund and sought investment and donations from other sources to continue its work. The Heritage Lottery awarded the John Clare Trust funding of £1.27m in May 2007 and work commenced shortly after.

Since acquiring the John Clare Cottage Helpston, The John Clare Trust has been incredibly busy. Architects, Interpreters and a Project Manager have been recruited to bring the project to fruition and they have been busy with the design and implementation. The building work started at the beginning of 2008, renovating the cottage and dovecote and the construction of a new annex to act as reception area and cafe.

NOTE: Special thanks are due to members of the John Clare Society of North America, who generously donated over \$900 toward the purchase and renovation of the John Clare Cottage. Thank you for your support!
– James McKusick

Officers of the John Clare Society of North America

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New Book Publication York Notes Advanced Series on John Clare's Poems

Longman's are publishing *John Clare: Selected Poems* in their York Notes Advanced Series. This handbook, intended primarily for high school and university students who are encountering Clare's poetry for the first time, retails at £6.99, with Amazon–U.K. currently offering it at a discounted price of £4.49. Below is the U.K. web address.

Publisher's Description: "Packed full of analysis and interpretation, historical background, discussions and commentaries, York Notes will help you get right to the heart of the text you're studying, whether it's poetry, a play or a novel.

"Full glossaries, self-test questions and suggested reading lists will help you fully prepare for your exam, while internet links and references to film, TV, theatre and the arts combine to fully immerse you in your chosen text."

For further information:

<http://www.amazon.co.uk/Clare-Selected-Poems-Notes-Advanced/dp/1405896175>

Revised Clare Reference Book

Second Edition of Scholarly Research Guide

SECOND EDITION

First Publications of John Clare's Poems

by David Powell

Research Papers on John Clare, number 1

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A revised and augmented **second edition** of the definitive guide for researchers on John Clare, this 100-page book offers detailed bibliographic information on the first place of publication for every poem included in the complete *Oxford English Texts* edition of Clare's poetry (9 volumes, 1984-2003). In this volume, readers of John Clare can discover where each of his poems first appeared in print. The **second edition** is thoroughly revised and augmented on the basis of new research, with dozens of poems and places of first publication appearing here for the first time.

Reflecting many years of scholarly research by a distinguished editor of Clare's poetry, this indispensable volume provides a comprehensive survey of Clare's poems published in books and periodicals of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Every scholar of John Clare, especially those who are engaged in research concerning the reception history of Clare's poetry in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, should obtain a copy of this essential work. Readers of John Clare's poetry will be fascinated to learn where each one of his poems was first published!

This spiral-bound paperback book lies flat for ease of reference. It is exclusively available from the John Clare Society of North America for just \$12.00 (USD) per copy. We will ship to any destination worldwide, and there is no extra charge for shipping, handling, or sales tax. Please consider ordering additional copies for friends, colleagues, students, and university libraries!

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