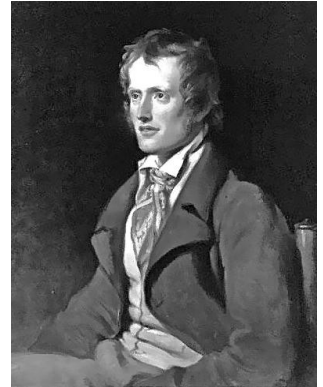


The John Clare Society of North America

Newsletter

Volume Twelve, March 2011



From the (New) Editor

By Stephanie Kuduk Weiner,
Professor of English, Wesleyan University

We hope you enjoy this twelfth volume of the JCSNA *Newsletter*, with its new design. In this issue, we inaugurate a new feature, “Musings,” and as always we offer a selection of news from and about the John Clare community, including a review of the Clare panel at the 2011 MLA, notices of recent academic and literary work, and announcements of Clare-related resources and sites on the World Wide Web.

I would like to extend my thanks to the outgoing editor of the *Newsletter*, Andrew Hubbell, and to James McKusick, for his invitation to continue Andrew’s work.

In future issues of the *Newsletter*, I hope to feature more “musings” about Clare—short reflective pieces, poems, and works of art—as well as to help publicize and promote scholarly, community, and creative work about and inspired by Clare. So please send me your “musings” in whatever shape, citations of recent work, and accounts of events. I can be reached via Facebook and at sweiner@wesleyan.edu.

Musings

Joy and woe are woven fine
By George Handley

In his 1998 poem, “The Bounty,” about his mother’s death, Derek Walcott recognizes that there is a kind of betrayal implicit in elegy, noting with dismay: “I watch these lines grow and the art of poetry harden me/ into sorrow as measured as this.” But the alternative of unrestrained grief kills art and hope. “[I]t must not madden,” Walcott writes, “like Clare, who wept for a beetle’s loss, for the weight/ of the world in a bead of dew on clematis or vetch.” So poetry must make grief *work*.

It might not be accurate to suggest that Clare’s madness had anything to do with uxurious devotion to the heaths of his childhood but it is certainly the case that his poetry was born of an uncontainable joy at the ordinary particulars of the landscape and that such love “for every weed and every thing” is not easy to sustain. This is because to love “every trifle” stimulates an equally uncontainable grief at the passing and changing of the world. As Blake thematized, if we are to love nature, we must learn to weave together “joy and woe” so as to avoid the mania that merely mimics the seasons or the ups and downs of ecological decay and regeneration.

For Walcott, as for Clare, the discipline of poetry
limbers the poet and channels grief so as to keep
praising the world:

as by reeds and cold pools John Clare blest
these thin musicians,
let the ants teach me again with the long lines
of words,

my business and duty, the lesson you taught
your sons,
to write of the light's bounty on familiar
things
that stand on the verge of translating
themselves into news.



George Handley is Professor of Humanities,
Brigham Young University, and author of *Home
Waters: A Year of Recompenses on the Provo River* and
*New World Poetics: Nature and the Adamic
Imagination of Whitman, Neruda, and Walcott.*



Recent Academic Writings

Sue Edney, “‘Times Be Badish vor the Poor’:
William Barnes and His Dialect of Disturbance
in the Dorset ‘Eclogues,’” *The Journal of the English
Association*, 58.222 (Autumn 2009): 206-229

Thomas C. Gannon, *Skylark Meets Meadowlark:
Reimagining the Bird in British Romantic
and Contemporary Native American Literature*
(Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska
Press, 2009)

Sarah Houghton-Walker, “Clare’s Gypsies and
Literary Influence,” *John Clare Society Journal* 28
(July 2009): 71-93

Sarah Houghton-Walker, *John Clare’s Religion*
(Surrey, England: Ashgate, 2009)

Eric Robinson and Robert Heyes, editors, “An
Unpublished Letter and Poems by John Clare,”
John Clare Society Journal 28 (July 2009): 94-98

Yonghee Uhm, “Language Really Used by Men’:
Poems by Wordsworth and Clare,” *Nineteenth
Century Literature in English* 14.1 (2010): 35-51

Stephanie Kuduk Weiner, “Listening with John
Clare,” *Studies in Romanticism*, 48.3 (Fall 2009):
371-390

Adam White, “John Clare: ‘The Man of Taste,’”
John Clare Society Journal 28 (July 2009): 38-54

Simon J. White, “John Clare’s Sonnets and the
Northborough Fens,” *John Clare Society Journal* 28
(July 2009): 55-70

Timothy Ziegenhagen, “Medicine, Poetry, and
Enclosures in John Clare’s “‘The Village
Doctress,’” *Journal of the Midwest Modern Language
Association*, 42.1 (Spring 2009): 179-90

Recent Memoirs *in which Clare makes an appearance*

John MacKenna, *Things You Should Know: A
Memoir* (Dublin: New Island Books, 2006)

Iain Sinclair, *Edge of the Orison: In the Traces of John
Clare’s “Journey Out of Essex”* (London: Hamish
Hamilton, 2005)

Richard Mabey, *Nature Cure* (Charlottesville:
University of Virginia Press, 2007 and London:
Chatto & Windus, 2005)

Recent Novels

Russell C. Carter, *Mary Joyce, John Clare's Muse, a Novel* (Codicote: Blenheim Press Ltd., 2009)

Judith Allnatt, *The Poet's Wife* (London: Doubleday, 2010)

Adam Foulds, *The Quickening Maze* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2009, New York: Penguin, 2010)

Hugh Lupton, *The Ballad of John Clare* (Dublin: Dedalus, 2010)

Alan Moore, *Voice of the Fire* (Top Shelf, 2009)

John MacKenna, *Clare: A Novel* (Blackstaff Press, 1994)

World Wide Web Resources

Romantic Circles' *Poets on Poets* website, edited by Tilar Mazzeo, with Doug Guerra and Matt O'Donnell, contains about a dozen audio files of contemporary poets reading poems by Clare. Steve McCaffrey reads "Signs of Winter," for example, and Anne Marie Macari, Gillian Kiley, and Sabastian Matthews all read "I Am," each in their own way. See: www.rc.umd.edu/pop_blog/?tag=john-clare.

On Facebook's John Clare page, readers from around the world discuss Clare's poetry and what it means to them, post notices of upcoming events and accounts of events gone by, and draw connections between Clare and creative projects of their own and other artists they admire.

Meanwhile, two established Clare websites, Simon Kösevi's "John Clare Page" (www.johnclare.info) and Roger Rowe's wonderful Clare blog (johnclare.blogspot.com), continue to grow and are worth a return visit.



The Cottage in Helpston, Selected Events

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

If you wish to be kept informed of future events at the Cottage, email events@clarecottage.org

Poetry Workshop: "Poetry and Environment," March 9, 4:30-7:00 p.m. Working with Dr. Sam Ward and Cheryl Moskowitz, this workshop will consider the environment and environmental changes that shaped Clare's writings and the images of the natural world that continue to have meaning and relevance for readers of his work. Subjects discussed will include enclosure and nature writing. Entry is free, but places are limited, so you will need to reserve a ticket.

Author's Evening with Peter Wadhams, *The Great Ocean of Truth*, March 16, 7 p.m. Prof. Wadhams, from Cambridge University, will present a slideshow and talk about his circumnavigation of the Americas. While touching on issues such as global warming, climate change and the groundbreaking science they used at the time to study the ocean, his talk is ultimately engaging, very informative and by no means too scientific for the general public. The tickets, £5, include entry to the evening, a glass of wine and light refreshments, places are limited so you will need to reserve a ticket.

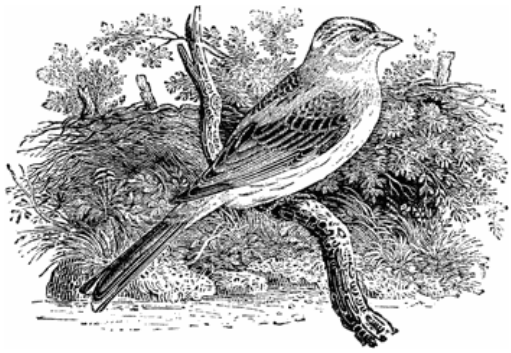
Planting Out Day, April 14, 2:00-3:30 p.m. The Cottage is filling up its gardens with beautiful plants for the summer. Come and help with this important task. Tickets are £3 each. Suitable for

young people between 7 and 12. Places are limited and you need to book them in advance.

Advanced notice of future events yet to be confirmed:

August 6, 10 a.m. Enjoy a walk across Clare country and back to Helpston by lunch time.

September 1 and 4. Follow Clare's journey from High Beach, Epping back to Helpston.



**Proceedings of the John Clare Panel at
the Los Angeles MLA,
January 7, 2011**

By Joshua Kryah,
University of Nevada, Las Vegas

At this year's Modern Language Association Convention in Los Angeles, the John Clare Society of North America organized and hosted the panel "John Clare and the Classroom," chaired by Joshua Kryah. The three participating panelists offered a number of pedagogical approaches and strategies to include Clare's work into the classroom. They also discussed the challenges facing educators when Clare's biography often overshadows his poetry and writing.

Duygu Kilic's (Southern Illinois University, Carbondale) paper, "Placing John Clare," surveyed the ways Clare is typically taught in the classroom—as a nature poet, as an ecological pioneer, as an advocate for the poor, as a

counter-voice to Wordsworth—in order to illustrate the dangers of subordinating his poetry to his biography. Instead, Kilic suggested we "judge [Clare] in relation to his own actions," citing numerous approaches that avoided any overt biographical framework. She ended by asking that educators teach Clare "by reading him through him."

When Marielle Risse (Dhofar University, Salalah, Oman) read from her paper, "John Clare Looks Good in a Dishdash: Linking John Clare to Middle Eastern Poetry," she provided a fascinating, and relatively unknown, view of Clare's poetry when read by students in the Middle East. Unlike in America, where Clare is typically taught within the framework of British Literature, Risse connected his poetry with the recognizable tropes of Arabic garden poetry and their shared metaphorical language. For many of these students, whose family members are shepherds, Clare's poetry can be viewed as an accurate description of a daily event in their lives. Clare then bridges the gap between what these students experience and what they perceive as 'foreign' English/ Western culture.

In "John Clare and the Art of Politics," Jason Goldsmith (Butler University) discussed Clare's often neglected *Don Juan* as a means to connect aesthetic and political treatments of literary work in the classroom. A fractious, allusive, topical, and decidedly promiscuous poem that presents numerous difficulties, *Don Juan's* elusive political references and overt Byronic re-imaginings encourage students to reconsider aesthetic value and the historical contingency of such sensibilities. By considering Clare's letters, autobiographical fragments, essays, and political cartoons and caricatures of the time, Goldsmith convincingly illustrated both the scholarly and pedagogical importance of "Don Juan" when teaching Clare.

The conversation that followed these insightful and original papers focused on Clare's "Essay on Landscape," the universality of Clare's nature poetry, and aesthetic taste in relation to reader expectations of Clare's work.

Revised Clare Reference Book
Second Edition of the 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!

To order this book, please visit our website: www.johnclare.org and click on the link to purchase John Clare books, postcards, and audiotapes.

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