

**THE NEW RAMBLER**



JOURNAL OF  
THE JOHNSON SOCIETY OF LONDON

**GOLDEN JUBILEE ISSUE    1928-1978**

# THE JOHNSON SOCIETY OF LONDON

## President

The Dean of Westminster  
The Very Reverend E F Carpenter MA BD PhD

## Vice-Presidents

Professor W. Jackson Bate, Ph.D., Litt.D., D.Hum., L.H.D., Harvard  
The Rt. Hon. Lord Harmsworth, M.A.  
Professor M. J. C. Hodgart, M.A.  
Mrs. Donald Hyde, Ph.D., D.Litt.  
Professor Ian Jack, M.A., D.Phil., Litt.D., Cambridge  
Professor Frederick A. Pottle, Ph.D., Litt.D., LL.D., Yale  
The Revd. Canon A. R. Winnett, Ph.D., D.D.

## Committee

J. R. G. Comyn (Chairman)  
D. D. Brown, M.A., Ph.D.  
Mrs. P. T. M. Davies  
Mrs. M. E. Dowdeswell  
Mrs. Helen Forsyth  
Miss I. Grundy, M.A., D.Phil.  
Miss E. Molineaux  
Miss U. M. Pye, B.A.  
The Revd. F. M. Hodgess Roper  
T. Russell-Cobb, B.A., B.Sc.(Econ.)  
G. W. Smeeton

## Hon. Secretary

Miss S. B. S. Pigrome, M.A.  
72 Fairfield Road, East Grinstead,  
West Sussex, RH19 4PM

## Hon. Membership Secretary

Lewis Raddon, LL.B., D.P.A.  
18 Rushmere Avenue, Upminster,  
Essex, RN14 3AN

## Hon. Treasurer and Editor

J. H. Leicester, M.A.

(1979-1980)

Dan Paves  
Tender, 2/11/78

# The New Rambler

JOURNAL OF THE JOHNSON SOCIETY OF LONDON

Editor: JAMES H. LEICESTER, M.A., BROADMEAD, EYNSFORD ROAD, FARNINGHAM, KENT

---

Serial C    Supplement:    GOLDEN JUBILEE ISSUE 1928 - 1978

---

## CONTENTS

JAMES LOWRY CLIFFORD, 1901 - 1978	
Donald Greene	3
THE EIDOLON OF HAWKESWORTH'S <u>ADVENTURER</u>	
Philip Mahone Griffith	15
SOME ALLUSIONS, FOREIGN AND DOMESTIC, IN JOHNSON'S <u>LONDON</u>	
Vincent Liesenfeld and Richard R. Schwartz	19
SAMUEL JOHNSON: A SONNET	
Helen Forsyth	27
SAMUEL JOHNSON, LITERARY THEORY, AND THE VALUES OF BIOGRAPHY	
James B. Misenheimer	29
THE JOHNSON SOCIETY OF LONDON	37
THE GOLDEN JUBILEE DINNER	41
THE NEW RAMBLER	42
ST. EDMUND THE KING, LOMBARD STREET	45
THE JOHNSON HALFPENNY	47
NOTES AND ADVERTISEMENTS	26, 28, 40, 48
PLATES	2, 44, 46
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	36



JAMES L. CLIFFORD

in a familiar informal pose,  
chatting with friends at an  
eighteenth-century society  
gathering.



JAMES LOWRY CLIFFORD 1901 - 1978

Johnsonian scholars seem to come to the study of Johnson in unexpected ways. R.W. Chapman (of the Royal Garrison Artillery, as the title-page of one of his early books proudly proclaimed) told of his encountering the Journey to the Western Islands, and falling under the spell of Johnson, while he tended an elderly six-inch coast gun in Macedonia during the 1914-1918 war. J.S.G. Simmons, in the 1976 New Rambler, has related how L.F. Powell, with a minimum of formal schooling, made his way through the ranks of library assistant, lexicographer, and Taylor librarian to the eminence of magisterial (Simmons's just epithet) editor of the Life of Johnson and teacher of a new generation of Oxford Johnsonians. Equally unusual was the early career of Jim Clifford, as he was always called. Well, not always: I remember how, after I arrived, a somewhat mature graduate student from Western Canada, to work under him at Columbia, he always addressed me, with old-fashioned decorum, as "Mr. Greene," and I responded "Professor Clifford" - until, the moment the last formality of the course, the oral "defence" of the dissertation, was over, he turned to me on the steps of the Low Library and said, with his infectious smile, "Now you must call me Jim, and I will call you Don."

He was born on February 24, 1901 - with a touch of the eighteenth-century specialist's self-congratulation, he sometimes remarked that he had narrowly escaped being a Victorian - at Evansville, near the junction of the Wabash and Ohio Rivers in the southwest corner of Indiana, where it abuts on Kentucky and Illinois. He was the second son of George Clifford and his wife Emily, nee Orr. The family were pioneer settlers of the district, and Jim was proud of his "Hoosier" heritage, as natives of Indiana are called. His grandfather and great-grandfather had been trustees of Wabash College, founded 1834, where Jim matriculated in 1918, and the family helped to found Evansville College, later the University of Evansville, whose Lincolnshire campus, Harlaxton Manor, Jim often visited when he was in England. (Some will remember it as the Castle-of-Otranto-like setting of the film The Ruling Class.)

After graduating as Bachelor of Arts from Wabash, Jim went on to take the degree of Bachelor of Science in Engineering at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Many will be surprised to learn that Jim's first book, published

in 1930, bears the title Experiments in Atomic Science for the Amateur, and incorporates articles written in his teens which appeared in such journals as Science and Invention and Everyday Engineering. His love of music dated from the same early period. A classmate of his at M.I.T has recounted how his beautifully trained tenor voice was regularly heard from the shower in the mornings, and how he played an "extra" in a Metropolitan Opera performance of Aida. I first experienced his vocal prowess when I was his student and he kindly drove me up from New York for a week-end at the Cliffords' summer place in Vermont. I had just attended my first performance at the (old) Met and couldn't resist speaking of my delight. "Oh, do you like opera?" he asked. I assented, and throughout the rest of the journey was regaled with tenor arias from Mozart, Verdi, and Puccini. But his taste in music was catholic. For many years he and his friends held a weekly session of "barbershop quartette" singing — the rendition by a male quartette of popular, sentimental old songs in excruciatingly "close" harmony and exaggerated expression. His experiences in the Southwest provided him with a fine repertoire of "cowboy songs," which made a deep impression on the author of the touching obituary of Jim in The Times — it was drafted long ago by his dear friend L.F. Powell.

After obtaining his engineering degree, Jim became manager of a company in Evansville that manufactured the small underground cars in which coal is hauled from the face of the mine. (When the subject once came up, Jim gave me a long learned lecture on their use, the details of their manufacture, and the economic ups and downs of the industry.) Then for reasons of health he moved to the Arizona desert, and worked on a "dude ranch," where horses, cattle, and cowboys carry out their traditional occupations primarily for the enjoyment of visitors who want to recapture the life of the old West. This is perhaps the place to narrate a feat of his still mentioned with awe in the Southwest. In search of adventure, he made an expedition to New Mexico to see the fabled pueblo of Acoma, the "City in the Sky" familiar to readers of Willa Cather's Death Comes for the Archbishop. Centuries ago a band of Pueblo Indians, tired of being harassed by the Navajos and Comanches (who had horses, while the Pueblos did not), moved from the plains to the summit of a tall mesa — from Latin mensa; a steep hill with a level top, rising sharply from the plain, a common feature of the Southwestern landscape. After rebuilding their village there, the inhabitants made it impossible for their enemies to follow them, by pulling

up the ladders necessary for an ascent of the tortuous path up the side of the mesa. (They could of course be replaced in time of peace, and later to facilitate a profitable tourist trade.) Jim made his way across the desert, saw an imposing mesa in the distance, and began to climb it. The ascent was more rugged than he had expected, and he was unable to find anything in the way of a path. Nevertheless, determined not to be thwarted of what he had come so far to see, he persisted, and at last reached the top, and looked around. No village, or any other sign of life! Then he realised what had happened - he had picked the wrong mesa. He was on a nearby one, called the Enchanted Mesa, which was supposed never to have been scaled, and to be unscalable. After some sober reflection, he made his way back down, very, very slowly and carefully, and at last reached the bottom safely. Those who knew Jim will recognise how much there is symbolic of him in the incident.

An unexpected vacancy occurred in mid-term at a neighbouring boys' school, and the engineer-turned-cowboy was conscripted to teach the boys mathematics and polo. And, no doubt, the finer points of baseball, insofar as American boys need to be taught them. Up to the last, Jim retained the tall, lanky, loose-jointed figure of the born baseball player, and often divided his time in the summers in his Vermont retreat between writing up his researches and coaching the farm lads of the neighbourhood baseball team. No doubt it was good for us, but the less athletic of his academic weekend guests were sometimes alarmed to find themselves officiating as scratch shortstop or outfielder in a Vermont meadow during the long summer twilights.

Then a teacher of English at the school fell ill, and the new mathematics master was asked to fill in. It would be wrong to say that this event, occurring when he was on the threshold of thirty, marked the beginning of his interest in the scholarly study of English literature. He used to relate that he had earlier come across A.E. Newton's Amenities of Book Collecting, with its chapter about "A Light Blue Stocking" - Mrs. Thrale - and became fascinated by her and her milieu. And he often said that his first, impressive contact with "real" scholarship was during his undergraduate days at Wabash College, where he was taught by the great historian of pre-Revolutionary eighteenth-century America, Lawrence Henry Gipson, whom the boys (according to Jim) nicknamed "Needle-eye" for his unerring detection of inaccuracy.

(Gipson, who died in 1971, in his nineties and still active, was, amazingly, one of the original group of Rhodes scholars at Oxford.)

However it happened, Jim now decided to go to Columbia University for postgraduate work in English literature. He took his M.A. in 1932, and was awarded the coveted Cutting Travelling Fellowship, which enabled him to go to England in 1935 and 1936. Here he carried out the detective work, told in his From Puzzles to Portraits, 1970, that led to the discovery of Mrs. Piozzi's papers, and eventually to his unsurpassed biography of her. At that time, Columbia required that the dissertation be printed and published before the Ph.D. could be awarded, and many were the devices, and subsidies, often needed before some obscure press could be persuaded to bring it out. It was a thrill for later Columbia graduate students to encounter, on the shelves of the Carpenter Library, a dog-eared copy of Hester Lynch Piozzi (Mrs. Thrale), bearing the imprint "Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1941," and, as well, a sticker affixed to the title-page reading "Presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Columbia University."

In 1938, while still working on the book, Jim took a post as instructor of English at Lehigh University — thrice welcome because of the school's orientation to engineering (Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, where it is situated, is a steel-manufacturing town); because L.H. Gipson now taught there, as he was to do for the rest of his life; and because of presence of the famous Bethlehem Bach Choir. In 1940 he married Virginia Iglehart, the gracious and learned lady — she is Executive Officer of Auburn Theological Seminary — whose companionship and help were so important to Jim, and whose friendship and hospitality were as much appreciated by Jim's students as his own. There are three children: Emily (Mrs. Henry Bucher), James (Jamie), now a Harvard Ph.D. and a budding historian, and Joseph (Joe). Each year friends have been kept in touch with the family's activities by a Christmas card designed by Virginia Clifford, bearing a photograph or humorous drawing of the group, usually with Jim in the centre, with his warm grin, and very recently, beaming on his first grandchild, Cliffie Bucher. How that beaming face will be missed!

In 1944 Jim was appointed professor in Barnard College, the women's college of Columbia University, and

soon after, in Columbia's graduate department of English, as its senior eighteenth-century scholar. He remained on its faculty, later with the title of William Peterfield Trent Professor, until his formal retirement in 1969, though even after this he frequently taught, and maintained his close connection with Columbia up to the last, often walking across Broadway from the Cliffords' apartment on Claremont Avenue to Philosophy Hall to put together, with his co-editor John Middendorf, the next number of the Johnsonian News Letter or take part in the monthly meeting of the university's interdisciplinary Seminar on the Eighteenth Century. It is hard to imagine Columbia without Jim Clifford, or, for that matter, to think of Jim without Columbia — Columbia, most Anglophile of older American universities; founded, as King's College, in 1754 by royal charter of George II; having, as its first president, none other than Dr. Samuel Johnson (D.D., not LL.D.; 1696-1772, not 1709-1784; a formidable philosopher and theologian); Anglican by early affiliation, instead of Congregational like Harvard and Yale, or Presbyterian like Princeton; still using the royal crown as its symbol, even on the dishes in the students' dining rooms. Not that Jim ever wavered in his republican loyalty, or in any way modified the sturdy Americanism of his speech, manner, and political thinking — nor would any of his British friends have wished such a modification. But Columbia undoubtedly made a good base for anyone interested in the study of eighteenth-century English life and literature, especially the life and work of Samuel Johnson, LL.D., whose letter (Chapman No. 299) to Samuel Johnson, D.D.'s son, a later president of the college, is a moving piece of hands-across-the-sea cordiality.

It is hard to know how to go about describing Clifford's massive and varied contribution to eighteenth-century scholarship. Since memoirs of him tend to be highly personal, as this one has unabashedly been — it is hard to write impersonally about him — I can perhaps do no better than try to recount how it most affected me. Not long before his death, I took part in a symposium which Jim had helped to organise on the subject of "New Directions in Johnsonian Studies." When my turn came to speak, I began by affirming that in my opinion the most important new direction had been taken in Clifford's "Survey of Johnsonian Studies," prefaced to his Johnsonian Studies, 1887-1950: A Survey and Bibliography (University of Minnesota Press, 1951). Unlike earlier accounts, and in contradiction to Macaulay, the "Survey", while doing justice to what Boswell and others have contributed to our knowledge of Johnson, makes it clear that Johnson the thinker



and writer must always take priority over Johnson the "great talker," the "fascinating personality." Although Jim's own chief interest was always biography, and his own researches contributed much to our knowledge of Johnson's early and middle life, and although there has been a recent spate of popular biographies such as those of John Wain and W.J. Bate, nevertheless in both these and in Jim's own volumes, Johnson the Clubman has been displaced by Johnson the writer as the centre of the composition. To be sure, Jim's friend and older colleague at Columbia, Joseph Wood Krutch, had published in 1944 a biography which was clearly going in that direction (Clifford's name heads the list of those whose help Krutch acknowledges), and David Nichol Smith, E.L. McAdam, and Allen Hazen had produced studies and editions of Johnsonian writings that treated them with full seriousness as writings, not as minor adjuncts to a personality. ~~But~~ the 1951 "Survey" served as a Declaration of Independence of those who believe that Johnson in his library and at his writing desk is more important and more interesting than Johnson at the Mitre or in a chaise with Boswell, amusing and instructive as the latter may be. The epigraph of the "Survey" might well have been Johnson's reply to an acquaintance who was pestering him for an introduction to some celebrated writer of the time - "You had better let it alone; the best part of every author is in his book, I assure you." It was not by coincidence, I think, that the long overdue inauguration of the first modern attempt at a collected edition of Johnson's writings took place soon after the publication of the "Survey" - Jim's own personal efforts had a great deal to do with getting the Yale Works started and keeping it going - and that since that time younger scholars have turned more and more to the study of the many neglected aspects of Johnson's work. One of Jim's tasks over the years, together with his friend Sir Sydney Roberts, was to bring about the modification, in successive editions of the Encyclopaedia Britannica, of the influential and wrong-headed article on Johnson that Macaulay had introduced into the eighth edition in 1856 (supplanting a much better one by George Gleig, which had first appeared in the third edition in the 1790s). The process took a long time, but was finally completed to Jim's satisfaction. I have an offprint of a recent version of the entry, on which Jim has written in the margin, "Thank goodness, at last we've got rid of Macaulay!"

A bibliography of Jim's writings up to 1971 will be found in the subscribers' edition of the volume of essays put together by former pupils of his in celebration of his seventieth birthday, English Writers of the Eighteenth Century



(Columbia University Press, 1971). It includes revised and enlarged versions of the 1951 survey and bibliography of Johnsonian studies; much on biography - as well as numerous articles, we have Biography as an Art, 1962, an anthology of comment, over three centuries, on the theory of biography, and From Puzzles to Portraits, 1970, recounting some of his own experiences and problems as a biographer, editions of eighteenth-century texts, notably of the long-lost manuscript of the Rev. Thomas Campbell's diary, a source of some amusing Johnsonian vignettes, and of the charity sermon preached at St. Paul's in 1745 by Henry Hervey Aston, but composed by Johnson; an edition, in the Oxford English Novels series, of Jim's favourite novel by Smollett, Peregrine Pickle; collections of essays on eighteenth-century topics, including collaborative editorship of Festschriften for George Sherburn and L.F. Powell; numerous reviews of current books and surveys of current work on the eighteenth century. In one of these last, Jim, though he never regarded himself as a Swift specialist, invented an expression that, to his amusement, became a permanent fixture in Swift studies -- the antithesis between the "hard school" and the "soft school" of interpretation of Gulliver's Travels. (Jim, like most of the older generation of scholars, gave unswerving allegiance to the "hard school.")

But the works dearest to his heart were his three volumes of biography. That of Mrs. Thrale, which won him his Ph.D., was revised in 1953 and 1968, and seems unlikely to be soon superseded. The first review of it that Jim saw was the highly complimentary one in the New Statesman by Virginia Woolf, one of the last things she wrote; it is now included in Volume III of her collected essays. It was typical of Jim's flair for scholarly investigation that he became responsible for a small but significant addition to Woolf scholarship. Leonard Woolf may be permitted to describe it. In the introduction to his collection of his wife's essays entitled The Death of the Moth, 1942, he calls attention to the "immense care" with which she wrote and revised her journalistic pieces;

The following facts will, perhaps, show how seriously she took the art of writing even for the newspaper. Shortly before her death she wrote an article reviewing a book. The author of the book subsequently wrote to the editor saying that the article was so good that he would greatly like to have the typescript of it if the editor would give it to him. The editor forwarded the letter to me, saying that he had not got the typescript and

suggesting that if I could find it, I might send it to the author. I found among my wife's papers the original draft of the article in her handwriting and no fewer than eight or nine complete revisions of it which she had herself typed out.

The author was James Clifford, and he often showed the painstakingly corrected drafts to any of his students who had the mistaken notion that good writing is produced spontaneously and effortlessly.

When I arrived at Columbia in 1952, Jim was in the final stages of his work on Young Sam Johnson, and it was flattering for a graduate student to be asked to look over the draft and give advice about Johnson's political attitudes and involvements. Young Sam came out in 1955; it amused Jim that its English publisher, alarmed perhaps that the name of so great a Cham should be treated so informally, insisted on retitling it Young Samuel. But the point of the title was clear. The book begins, "Everyone thinks of Dr. Johnson as an old man," as, in Boswell and Mrs. Piozzi, he always is. But there had been a time about which Boswell knew little, when he was not a Great Cham, or even Doctor Johnson, but a fiery and impulsive, even "angry" young man from the Midlands, and to supply this important gap was Jim's chief purpose. He succeeded admirably, and in subsequent popular (i.e. derivative) biographies, the pre-Boswellian Johnson, that of his first fifty-four years, has become a more interesting character on the whole than the post-Boswellian one — which is natural enough. To be sure, the groundwork for the recreation of young Sam had been laid by the devoted efforts, over many decades, of Aleyn Lyell Reade and Percy Laithwaite, to whom Jim gives full credit in the book. But Jim's own contribution of original discovery is far from negligible. One by-product of his work was that of making him the most knowledgeable guide to Lichfield imaginable. To be taken on a tour of the city by him — "Here Johnson's father taught him to swim," "Here Gilbert Walmesley used to entertain Young Sam and David Garrick to dinner and conversation" — was a memorable experience.

Young Sam brings Johnson up to his fortieth year, 1749. For the next twenty years after the book's publication, Jim's chief project, among his many other activities, was its sequel, Dictionary Johnson, covering the years from 1749 to 1763. As he often lamented, there had been no Aleyn Lyell Reade to do the spadework, the laborious tracking down of

records of Johnson's life in London during that time; it was, and still is, despite Jim's researches, the most obscure period of Johnson's life. But Jim worked away indefatigably, and uncovered much new information, which will have to be incorporated into the next "popular" biography of Johnson. As usual, he did not work in isolation, but called on his friends to help him wherever they could. One summer when Jim was in Vermont, distant from large libraries, I was conscripted to do research in the libraries of the Los Angeles area on the problem, as Jim put it, of "just what happened to the contents of Johnson's chamber pot" when he was living in Gough Square. I learned a lot that summer about the history of plumbing and waste disposal in eighteenth-century London, but I'm not sure that I was ever able to answer the question to the complete satisfaction of Jim Clifford, B.Sc.(Eng.). Many chapters, as they were finished, appeared in journals and collections of essays, and the whole typescript was finally completed in 1977. Months of revising and polishing ensued and on April 7, 1978, Jim summoned a taxi to take him and the typescript to his publishers (as with Young Sam the book will be published in America by McGraw-Hill and in Britain by Heinemann). After delivering it, he returned to the Claremont Avenue apartment, where his strong heart suddenly gave out. There are worse circumstances in which a scholar would wish to die.

It is a pity that he was not spared to write a third and concluding volume of the biography, dealing with the last twenty years of Johnson's life, which Jim, because of his work on Mrs. Thrale, knew better than anyone ever will again. But to many of the hundreds of former students, colleagues, and acquaintances who have mourned his passing, it is not Jim's scholarship, fine as it was, which will be missed the most, but Jim the tireless animateur and coordinator of eighteenth-century studies throughout the world. The antithesis of the cloistered, tight-lipped scholar, jealously guarding his secrets from prying eyes, he believed in the ideal of an open community of students dedicated to the work of investigating all aspects of the most exciting of centuries, freely and happily sharing their discoveries and opinions with one another. "There was a kind of sad bewilderment about him," one of his students has written, "whenever-rarely, it should be said - he learned of anyone who acted as if the scholarly life was not a community life." To Jim a student was not someone to be "kept in his place" with "professional" aloofness, but someone from whom he, Jim, was eager to learn whatever he could from the student's own findings and ideas.

The Johnsonian News Letter, which he instituted nearly forty years ago — the first of the many modern scholarly "news letters," he was rightly proud to remark — was intended to create and sustain such a community. Scholars in other fields in the American academic scene have commented with surprise on the degree of friendly co-operation that exists among those working in the eighteenth century. It would be too complacent to suggest that controversies and antagonism do not exist there — if they did not, it would be a sign of stagnation. Indeed, Jim was not averse to pointing out areas of disagreement and noting where the battle lines were drawn, as in the continuing duel between the "hard" and "soft" schools of interpretation of Swift, and encouraging debate on such issues. But such controversy, whose end is to ascertain the truth, perhaps degenerates less often than in some other areas into personal feuding; if so, Jim's benign influence is to a large extent responsible.

And certainly Jim, with his own varied background of interests, was the last to believe that eighteenth-century literary study should confine itself to a unidisciplinary ivory tower. From the beginning, the quarterly numbers of JNL recorded the publication of important works in history, philosophy, the arts and much else (as the annual bibliography of current work in the eighteenth century, founded by R.S.Crane over fifty years ago, did and still does). Jim was one of the originators of the Columbia University Seminar in Eighteenth-Century European Culture, which brings together distinguished scholars in every field. When, in the late 1960s, through the efforts of Theodore Besterman, the International Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies came into being, Jim was among the first to see the need for an affiliated regional society on his own continent; he was one of the small organising committee of the American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies, and a member of its original Executive Board, as well as of the original Executive Committee of the International Society. As third President of the ASECS, he pointed, in his presidential address — which also has an account of the history of the Columbia Seminar, and which he significantly entitled "In Praise of Conversation" — to Johnson's own Club, the Club of Reynolds, Gibbon, Burke and the rest, as an ideal for the modern eighteenth-century scholar: "What we need is more discussion among philosophers and biologists, legal experts and sociologists, literary critics and musicologists, art historians and physicists, all having some interest in a single large period of history such as the eighteenth century."

Nor, dear as Columbia and as New York, with its wealth of theatre and music were to him, did he believe that a student of "the age of travel," as a recent book calls the eighteenth century, should, in an age when travel is far easier, confine his activities to one spot. Jim's travels, in which scholarly curiosity and enjoyment were inextricably combined, took him, if not from China to Peru, at least from Japan to Australasia, from Norway to Israel, talking to, and sometimes helping to found, Johnson Clubs and Societies for Eighteenth-Century Studies. As a good Johnsonian, he went on the obligatory tour of Johnson's and Boswell's footsteps in Scotland and brought back a fascinating film of the journey. (Jim abroad was seldom seen without a camera. Indeed, before commercial methods of photocopying became common, he had worked out a technique, which he taught his students, of making readable reproductions of scholarly documents with an ordinary portable camera). Canada of course often saw him; indeed his last public address, a few weeks before his death, was the annual Roy M. Wiles Memorial Lecture at McMaster University in Ontario, honouring the memory of the distinguished Canadian authority on eighteenth-century British periodicals who succeeded Jim as President of the American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies.

England was always very dear to him, as his many English friends know. Many times he spent a year or more there, first as a student, and then with his family, on sabbatical leaves and, in between, many summers. His honours in his native land were many - a Guggenheim fellowship, later renewed; honorary doctorates from Wabash and Evansville Colleges and Lehigh and Indiana Universities. But he equally cherished his British ones - a Fellowship of the Royal Society of Literature in 1956, and of the Royal Society of Arts in 1970. The Johnson Society of London knew him well, and it was under its auspices as Vice-President that he delivered the commemorative address in Westminster Abbey on the anniversary of Johnson's death in 1958. He was an honorary member of the Johnson Club, and a former president of the Johnson Society of Lichfield. Few Americans can have known so much of Britain so intimately as Jim Clifford, from the time when he bicycled through Wales in search of Mrs. Piozzi, to the times when he "researched" the Midlands, Scotland, Oxford, Cambridge, and, above all, London in search of Johnson - and just for the sheer pleasure of it. One of my last and most cherished memories of Jim is inseparable from its London setting. A few summers ago, I accompanied him and some other friends on the classic eighteenth-century



"hike" along the banks of the Thames, from Chiswick House, past Kew and Richmond, to Marble Hill, Twickenham and Strawberry Hill. Jim had done it many times before, and it was pleasant to see how he charmed the sisters of the convent that occupies the site of Pope's villa — it was Sunday and luncheon time — into letting us explore the grotto. At the beginning of the tour, the younger (i.e. middle-aged) members of the party complained that our legs were not what they used to be, and wondered whether we should be able to stay the course; Jim, well into his seventies, politely joined in the groaning. Several hours later Jim was striding along many yards ahead of the rest of the group, occasionally glancing over his shoulder at the weary stragglers and exhorting us, "Come on! Stop loafing!"

A memorial service took place on April 29 at St. Paul's Chapel at Columbia, which was crowded with friends, colleagues, and former students. Excerpts from some of the hundreds of letters that had come in were read — "He seemed to me to be above jealousy or professional pettiness of any kind"; "For me, he was an ideal of humanity and scholarship to live up to"; "He was the kindest of preceptors"; "He was never pedantic, never condescending, never impatient"; "He was a good, a kind, and a happy man." Music at the service was that of Mozart, Bach, Purcell, and Britten (his setting of Christopher Smart's Jubilate Agno). The hymns were fine eighteenth-century ones by Charles Wesley and (Johnson's favourite) Isaac Watts. The last, by Philip Doddridge, set to a tune of Handel, seemed especially appropriate:

Awake, my soul, stretch ev'ry nerve,  
And press with vigour on;  
A heav'nly race demands thy zeal,  
And an immortal crown.

So does the quatrain of Yvor Winters, suggested by Jim's old friend Louis Landa of Princeton, as the epigraph for the 1971 Festschrift presented to him by his pupils:

He who understands the great  
Joins them in their own estate:  
Grasping what they had to give,  
Adds his strength that they may live.

Donald Greene  
University of Southern California



THE EIDOLON OF HAWKESWORTH'S ADVENTURER

---

Philip Mahone Griffith  
University of Tulsa

In sharp contrast to the essay of the Spectator tradition, the fictitious editor or eidolon of Samuel Johnson's Rambler is, one critic remarks learnedly, "the merest nominis umbra." And certainly "there is not that variety of contents present in the Rambler which we are led to expect, from a title which the Italian translator named Il Vagabondo."<sup>1</sup> This is true to a somewhat similar extent in the case of John Hawkesworth's Adventurer (1752 - 54), which appeared shortly after the conclusion of the Rambler, also published after its manner by John Payne and also printed by Edward Cave. Johnson made notable contribution to the Adventurer both as one of the three major writers and as unofficial adviser to Hawkesworth throughout the life of the journal.

But in acting under Johnson's advice throughout, Hawkesworth is clearly aiming at avoiding the pitfalls - the "severity of dictatorial instruction...too seldom relieved," as Johnson himself expressed it in the final issue of the Rambler, Number 208. Hawkesworth, on the other hand, is attempting, as he writes in his final number, 140, to "produce variety and by increasing entertainment facilitate instruction." Thus, the Adventurer does achieve a lightness of tone denied the Rambler. The eidolon of the Adventurer, however, cannot be said to account for its tone; it is, in fact, its variety that is responsible.

The essay of the Spectator tradition drew its distinctive character in part from the fictitious editor and enabled the writer to achieve a balance between the personal and impersonal. By assuming the mask of the eidolon a writer could give the impression of familiarity without endangering his Augustan reserve. This happily sustained persona, in the case of the Spectator, strengthened by the institution of a permanent club, helped provide an underlying unity of plan without which these papers would have been, as Nathan Drake records, "merely a series of essays without any other connection than what their title and juxtaposition may impart."<sup>2</sup> While it is perfectly true that the Adventurer was never developed or utilised as a character in the way that Isaac Bickerstaff of the Tatler, Mr. Spectator of the Spectator, or Nestor Ironside of the Guardian were in earlier periodicals, this very absence of a firmly developed eidolon gave the Adventurer greater freedom as a periodical.

The view, moreover, that the Adventurer has no character is untenable. Having been fully characterised by Hawkesworth as a kind of modern Knight Errant in the first number, the function of the eidolon and the function of the Adventurer as a periodical paper allude to its being a kind of Knight Errantry to attack the vices and follies of men. An "Adventurer," in Dr. Johnson's definition, is one "that seeks occasions of hazard"; to be adventurous, according to the Dictionary, is to be "bold, daring, courageous."<sup>3</sup> And, indeed, Hawkesworth may have received the hint for his eidolon from Johnson. In the now famous Rambler No. 4 Johnson had written: "But when an adventurer is levelled with the rest of the world, and acts in such scenes of the universal drama as may be the lot of any other man, young spectators fix their eyes upon him with closer attention, and hope, by observing his behaviour and success, to regulate their own practices, when they shall be engaged in the like part." The fact that Hawkesworth's own major contribution to the Adventurer, thirty-four numbers of the one hundred and forty, is that of an almost exclusively didactic prose fiction - allegorical, oriental, or domestic - would have made Johnson's remarks here particularly pertinent for him. Hawkesworth tells us in the final paper that he has written as a moralist for the "YOUNG and the GAY, for those who are entering the path of life."<sup>4</sup> The Adventurer becomes, to a quite perceptibly defined degree, a behind-the-scenes character whose function is that of instructing the young and the gay in the religious and practical ways of life.

It must not be forgotten, also, that there is a certain amount of truth in the statement that Hawkesworth's zeal on behalf of the Adventurer, as Sir John Hawkins says,

was excited by a motive far more strong than any which actuated his coadjutors, a desire of advantage in his then profession, which ostensibly was that of a governor of a school for the education of young females, by making himself known as a judge of life and manners, and capable of qualifying those of riper years for the important relations of domestic society.<sup>5</sup>

Although this is the evidence of a somewhat prejudiced contemporary, the boarding school that Mary Hawkesworth conducted at Bromley in Kent later became fashionable and the great success of her husband's journal may have been largely responsible. In any event many of Hawkesworth's papers in the Adventurer seem to be directed to that ever-increasing female audience of the eighteenth century. What loose unity the periodical has is partially due to this functional role of the eidolon.

In tracing the progress of the Adventurer's development as eidolon, however, it must be remembered that Hawkesworth, though probably more conscious than Johnson of the need for the kind of vitality and unity that the well-developed persona could give a periodical paper, was still following the manner of the Rambler. The Adventurer, despite his active cognomen, is, one must repeat, only a little more energetic than the Rambler. If the Adventurer is a more fully realised character than the Rambler, he is nothing like so real as the masks of the Tatler-Spectator-Guardian tradition nor those of his own contemporary companions, "Adam Fitz-Adam" of the World or "Mr. Town" of the Connoisseur.

Between the traditional appearance and departure of the eidolon in the first and final papers, which provide a somewhat mechanical frame for the series of essays, Hawkesworth often reverts to direct reference to the Adventurer as a "periodical paper" rather than to the eidolon, for example as early as No. 4. On the other hand, within the context of a fiction such as the various transmigrations related by a flea in No. 5, there is an appeal on the part of the flea, in its final embodiment as "a young LADY of exquisite beauty," for the Adventurer to "warn the sex of every wile that is practiced for their destruction." Sometimes the Adventurer receives a superficial characterisation in such a paper by the anonymous A writer (either Dr. Richard Bathurst or Bonnell Thornton) as No. 9, in which the "sturdy ADVENTURER" is called upon "to combat these monstrous incongruities" of London signs and "to regulate their Babel-like confusion." In Hawkesworth's allegorical letter from TO-DAY, No. 11, the Adventurer is referred to as persona: "But," writes the author, "identity of person might with equal truth be denied of the ADVENTURER, and of every other being upon earth." Most contributors to the Adventurer use letters from fictitious correspondents and addressed to "Mr. ADVENTURER." This editorial device, a continuing one, is helpful in keeping up, superficially at least, the tradition of dramatising the eidolon. And in No. 19 the A writer asserts: "It is a peculiar happiness to me, as an ADVENTURER, that I sally forth in an age, which emulates those heroic times of old, when nothing was pleasing but what was unnatural."

Joseph Warton, who wrote most of the literary criticism in this journal, was willing, in presenting a series of pseudo-letters, to assume in No. 71 the editorial burden of selecting "a few from the heap I have received from my correspondents." And in his final paper, No. 139, he could write, in summing up his aim, "the ADVENTURER can assert, upon classical authority, that in brave attempts it is glorious even to fail." But the closest that any contributor comes to keeping up a more or less consistent characterisation is in a paper

like Hawkesworth's No. 26, in which he addresses a letter to himself as follows:

The character which you have assumed, encourages me to hope, that you will not be deterred either by toil or danger, from entering the lists as the champion of distressed beauty. That the sufferers may possibly be unknown, and the scene of action is remote, are circumstances of no moment; for neither seas nor deserts are insuperable to perseverance and valour; and the hero's country is circumscribed only by the limits of the world. Nothing more, therefore, is necessary, than to acquaint you with the wrong which you are to redress, and the offender whom you are to punish.

This is, of course, an early paper; but it is the most successful example of the role that the Adventurer plays as modern Knight Errant and defender of the "YOUNG and GAY" against the vices and follies of the age. Thereafter he is a shadowy figure, towards whom the contributors make momentary and perfunctory acknowledgement.

In conclusion, it must be stressed that the nature of the contents of much of the Adventurer precludes a sustained eidolon. Johnson's contributions are predominantly hortatory or expository and those of Warton critical. The A Writer's contributions which soon failed, those closest to the Spectator tradition and that of a sustained eidolon, and those of Hawkesworth provide the only real opportunity for the Adventurer's existence.

#### Documentation

1. George S. Marr, The Periodical Essayists of the Eighteenth Century (London, 1923), pp.116,125
2. Essays, Biographical, Critical, and Historical, Illustrative of the Tatler, Spectator, and Guardian (London, 1805), I,210. For a recent full discussion of Mr. Spectator as eidolon, see Albert Furtwangler, "The Making of Mr. Spectator," Modern Language Quarterly, 38 (March 1977), 21-39.
3. Dictionary, 2nd edition, 1755, I.
4. No. 140
5. The Life of Samuel Johnson, 2nd edition (London, 1787), pp.310-11

SOME ALLUSIONS, FOREIGN AND DOMESTIC, IN JOHNSON'S LONDON

Vincent Liesenfeld, The University of Oklahoma

Richard B. Schwartz, The University of Wisconsin, Madison

London's contemporary popularity was due in large measure to its anti-ministerial political bias. Most of Thales' targets were mainstays of opposition propaganda, the acerbity of his attack ensuring a spirited reception in the charged atmosphere of the late 1730's. Many of the poem's allusions have been explained: Thales, for example, complains of taxes, lotteries, and of the corrupt diversion of public money to private use (ll.29,57-58);<sup>1</sup> of the Gazetteer (ll.71-72);<sup>2</sup> of the "licens'd stage" (l.59);<sup>3</sup> and of Walpole's "spies" and "special juries" (l.252), two of the ministry's chief weapons against the opposition press.<sup>4</sup>

However, Thales' wide-ranging attack is more than a random accumulation of common complaints. It is a bill of particulars accusing the court of traitorously bartering British virtue and strength for foreign artifice at home and peaceful coexistence abroad. Thales deplores what he and many like him saw as two fatal wounds to the national character, the mercantile ascendancy of Spain (ll.51-54,106,173) and the dominance of manners imported from France (ll.93-116,123-28, 152-57). He insinuates a correlation between these complaints throughout the poem: they both manifest the headlong decline of Britain and the rise of Continental influence, a process in which, in Thales' eyes, Britain's own governors had conspired.

Beyond the pervasive association of these complaints, however, the poem offers two complementary sets of images which represent the connection Thales perceives between domestic degeneracy and a foreign policy of accommodation. One ridicules the values of Walpole's modern Britain; the other establishes a norm by which the nation may be judged and to which, according to Thales, it should once again aspire.<sup>5</sup>

In the first case, the link between French sycophancy and Spanish impunity is highlighted by a central passage (ll.123-51) containing two particularly scurrilous allusions



to the British court, both of which must have been clear in the spring of 1738 though they have been largely neglected by recent critics. When Thales mentions the "kick" "our rugged natives" get for their "aukward flattery" (11.129-31), contemporary readers would immediately have recognised the reference to George II's quick temper and his notoriously crude way of expressing it. According to Lord Hervey, "a severe fit of the piles" inflamed the King's "bilious" and "abominable temper" at the end of 1735, after his visit to Hanover, and again early in 1737 on his return to England. His condition sometimes so taxed his self-control that he kicked people near him, apparently including Lord Harrington and perhaps Robert Walpole himself.<sup>6</sup> The opposition press exploited the subject, recommending "schemes" of kicking as ceremonial additions to government protocol in place of bribery. It was also suggested that "...some Poet of sublime Genius [should] venture to write a Kicking in a Tragedy; ... if an Author was to introduce a King kicking a first Minister, ... [such] an Incident must certainly give great Pleasure to the Audience, and contribute very much to the Success of the Play." Instead, The Golden Rump, the farce in which the incident apparently had been incorporated,<sup>8</sup> inspired the Stage Licensing Act late in the spring of 1737.

The play also reportedly presented one of the King's advisers "with a Pair of Scales in one Hand, to scandalize his Office, and lugging up his Breeches with the other, to reflect upon his Politeness." Thales' Balbo engages in similar activity (in 1.151, which is separated from the "kick" reference by a passage dealing with the theatrical aptitudes of foreigners). The pose was characteristic of Horace Walpole (the King's envoy to The Hague and a principal manager of his brother Robert's policy of detente with Spain) who, it was widely rumoured, had been kicked by the enraged King during their visit to Hanover in 1736-37.<sup>10</sup> He is presented in the same indecent posture in The Negotiators, which, like London, appeared in May, 1738:

So without further Speeches,  
H[orace] tuck'd up his Breeches,  
(Pray note what great Patience Negotiating teaches)....<sup>11</sup>

Balbo, however, is said to grope "his breeches with a monarch's air." In view of the variety of activities suggested by the verb, Johnson's line also recalls a situation described in Common Sense the previous year. In an essay "On the Royal Touch for the King's Evil," it was argued that the King's hand



must certainly (like other consecrated Utensils) be appropriated wholly to that Use,... when Necessity requires, [how would the king be content not to] scratch his A—, if it should happen to itch...? Must he be confined to employ one Hand only in that most delightful Recreation, when Providence has supplied him with two, which very often are wanting for the Purpose; and with which the meanest Beggar in the Kingdom may voluptuously regale himself with Impunity? On a sudden Call of this Kind there is hardly a Courtier but would chearfully lend his gracious S— a Hand, and endeavour to help him out on a sudden Emergency; or, if need be, the Office of Scratcher in Ordinary might be erected for that Purpose.... such an Employment would, in its Nature, be a great Trust and Confidence, and fit only to be bestowed on a Person of the first Rank.<sup>12</sup>

These two related allusions recall the Licensing Act, but, what is more important, they also illustrate vividly Thales' central preoccupations — his concern with foreign infestation, the reciprocal decline in the British character, the prosecution of native integrity, the elevation of Continental duplicity, and the nonfeasance of Britain's foreign policy. They epitomise Thales' attack on the causes of the deterioration of the nation's noble character.

While Britain was being undermined at home, where hordes of continentals out-trucked native Britons and monopolised the favours of the great,<sup>13</sup> she was being disgraced abroad. That Walpole's policy of peace was besmirching the national character was a common complaint,<sup>14</sup> and the question of war with Spain had been the latest issue to rally the opposition's fragile political coalition. In March 1738 Captain Robert Jenkins exhibited his ear, severed by the guarda-costas seven years earlier, to the House of Commons. The Lords and Commons again held debates on the Spanish depredations in early May, but they were inconsequential. The opposition had shown it could not unite effectively on any important question, despair was in the wind, and Johnson, realising that London would lose much of its audience if it were published after "the town empties," urged Cave to be "quick."<sup>15</sup> On the very day London appeared (Friday, 12 May,<sup>16</sup> eight days before Parliament rose for the summer), a despondent Earl of Marchmont wrote to the Duke of Montrose, "I look, as several others do, upon the opposition as at an end. If the constitution and liberties of this country are to be saved,<sup>17</sup> and from what incidents it may happen, is not easily to be seen."

"Liberty," the watchword of opposition literature, is the condition which Johnson's Thales most admires, and he no longer finds it in London. On the contrary, the city, the home of the ministry and the spawning ground of courtiers, is directly associated with each of his specific political targets. He takes for granted the geographical metaphor which Pope had used in his imitations<sup>18</sup> to represent the deepest division in British political life. However, Thales appeals for deliverance not simply to regions beyond the menacing shadow of the capital, but to specific areas celebrate or notorious — for their traditional antagonism to town and court. As W.A. Speck points out,

The further into the West Country one penetrates, the more Tory strongholds are encountered...Wales and the West, the bastions of the royalist cause in the civil wars, were the bulwarks of Toryism in the early eighteenth century....

Throughout the reign of Queen Anne the Tories enjoyed virtual control of Wales; under George I no other part of the country returned a Tory majority. Although the balance had shifted by the time of the 1734 election, the Tories and opposition Whigs continued to hold almost 40% of the Welsh<sup>19</sup> seats, and the area was still strongly Tory in its traditions.

There was an older body of associations underlying this geographical distinction. Wales had been the sanctuary for Alfred and his supporters from the Danes, and the birthplace of his "golden reign" (l.248). Kent (l.257), presumably the future refuge of Thales' auditor, was even more suggestive of old rebels and old causes. Its early inhabitants were fiercely jealous of their liberty and, unconquered, yielded to Normans "only on the condition" that they might retain their ancient customs unviolated."<sup>20</sup> Thales himself attempts to embody the qualities of the rustic Briton in his own personality; like the "Last of Britons" in Pope's second Dialogue (l.250) he has refused to sell his birthright and succumb to political oppression.<sup>21</sup>

Johnson's nexus for these geographical and historical associations is Greenwich. The significance of this locale in providing a positive norm against which Thales' complaints are set has been only partially realised. In the political geography of the poem, Greenwich is far removed from the modish servility of the capital. Blackheath Common, just south of the

park, had twice been a rallying point for the rebels of Kent, in 1381 in the peasant revolt under Wat Tyler, and again in 1450 under Jack Cade. The site recalls Henry VIII, who was born at Greenwich (the son of the first English king from Wales), and who established the royal armouries there. During and after his reign Greenwich became of special importance in naval affairs: it was a major ship-building centre and the site of Flamsteed House, the Royal Observatory established in 1675 primarily for the assistance of navigation. In 1694, in gratitude for the victory over the French fleet at La Hogue, Queen Mary chartered a home for disabled seamen to occupy the royal palace begun on the grounds of the earlier palace, Placentia, by Charles II, a hospital Johnson later described as "too magnificent for a place of charity..."<sup>22</sup> By the time of Defoe's Tour, Greenwich had acquired a reputation as the place of retirement for "several generals, and several of the inferior officers," "the most active and useful gentlemen of the late armies...."<sup>23</sup> Johnson himself lived in Greenwich, in the midst of these daily reminders of Britain's former military strength and native courage, the year before London was published.<sup>24</sup>

Within the poem most of the associations with Greenwich centre on the spectacular naval victory over Spain in the reign of Elizabeth, who had been born in Placentia. It had been the Treaty of Greenwich in 1585 that had committed England to aid the Netherlands against Spain, and it was at Greenwich that the Council of State met in 1588 to issue orders to the English fleet to oppose the Armada. These naval elements all point, through the evocative focus on Elizabeth, to the defeat of Spain, and, through Thales' criticisms of Walpole's peace policy, to the necessity for a modern reenactment of that victory (ll. 22-30).<sup>25</sup>

Thus Thales seeks to convict the ministry on two major and related counts: its willing complicity in the ascendancy of foreign manners at home, and its wilful negligence in pursuing reprisals against insults from abroad. Johnson presents him, rendering sentence, at a most appropriate point of embarkation, a spot that provides a symbolic transition between the decadence of the modern city and the national purity of the Tory countryside.

#### Documentation

1. Individually, almost all of Thales' complaints had obvious precedents in the weekly essays reprinted in the Gentleman's Magazine in the early months of 1738. On the subject of

- money and corruption see the "Address of a Chinese Nobleman to the Emperor," and Old Common Sense, 1 April (dates are 1738 unless otherwise specified), rpt. in GM, April, pp. 179-82 and 194-95. All references to London are to Samuel Johnson: Poems, ed. E.L. McAdam, Jr., with George Milne (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1964).
2. See Common Sense, 4 March, rpt. in GM, March, pp. 140-41; and Pope's Dia. I (May), 1.84.
  3. See the Craftsman, 8 April, rpt. in GM, April, pp. 198-201; and Pope's Dia. I, 11. 41-44.
  4. The day after London appeared, Henry Haines, printer of the Craftsman, was fined £200, sentenced to a year in prison, and required to find "Security for his good Behaviour for seven Years" following his conviction for libels printed in the issue for 2 July 1737. See GM, May, p.274; Laurence Hanson, Government and the Press 1695-1763 (Oxford: Clarendon 1936), p.70; and Donald J. Greene, The Politics of Samuel Johnson (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1960), p.307, n.17. Fears ran high early in 1738 that the government was about to introduce legislation restricting the liberty of the press; Milton's Areopagitica (with an introduction now attributed to Thomson) and two pamphlets dealing with the 1735 New York libel trial of Peter Zenger were published in January (GM, Jan., p.56). See John Butt, Alexander Pope, Imitations of Horace (London: Methuen and Co., 1969), p.313, n.2, p.327, n.249.
  5. On the bi-partite structure common to most formal verse satires, see Howard D. Weinbrot, "The Pattern of Formal Verse Satire in the Restoration and the Eighteenth Century," PMLA, 80 (1965), 394-401; The Formal Strain: Studies in Augustan Imitation and Satire (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1969), passim.
  6. Some Materials towards Memoirs of the Reign of King George II, ed. Romney Sedgwick (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1931), II, 484-86, 494-95; III, 896-97, 912-13; and the Craftsman, 6 May, rpt. in GM, May, p.249.
  7. Common Sense, 11 June 1737; see also Common Sense, 18 June 1737, rpt. in GM, June, 1737, p.365; Fog's Weekly Journal, 16 July 1737.
  8. "X. P." in the Gazetteer for 13 July 1737 seems to suggest Fielding as the author of the lost play, the details of which were well known to contemporaries. The crucial scene can be reconstructed from the essay "The Vision of the Golden Rump" (Common Sense, 19 March 1737) and the print "The Festival of the Golden Rump" (British Museum Political and Personal Satires No. 2327), both of which represent the Pagod (George) about to kick his chief minister.
  9. The Craftsman, 28 May 1737, rpt. in GM, May, 1737, p.303.

10. HMC 63: D.2, Manuscripts of the Earl of Egmont, Diary of the First Earl of Egmont (Viscount Percival) II, 1734-1738 (London: HMSO, 1923), p.319.
11. As quoted by Milton Percival, Political Ballads Illustrating the Administration of Sir Robert Walpole (Oxford: Clarendon, 1916), p.109. Percival notes that "this particular action is so often mentioned in the satires of the day that it must be taken as indicating an actual habit."
12. Common Sense, 13 August 1737, rpt. in GM, August, 1737, p.496.
13. National prejudice was not unknown in Britain in the 1730's. The Journals of the House of Commons notes that a witness concluded that one Francis Fradin was a foreigner on the basis of his looks, and when asked "How he could distinguish a Foreigner by his Looks? he said, That they are easily known, by their Fawning" (entry for 3 April 1735, vol. 22, 445).
14. See the Craftsman, 28 Jan., rpt. in GM, Jan., pp. 39-40; Common Sense, 18 Feb., and the Craftsman, 25 Feb., rpt. in GM, Feb., pp. 88 and 90-91; the Craftsman, 4 and 25 March, rpt. in GM, March, pp. 147-48 and 152; the Craftsman, 6, 13 and 21 May, rpt. in GM, May, pp. 248, 254, and 258; and Pope's Ep. II. i (May, 1737), ll. 2-3, 397-401, and Dia. I, ll. 17-18, 154. A translation (possibly by Thomson) of Milton's Scriptum domini protectoris contra Hispanos appeared in pamphlet form in March, 1738 (with a reprinting of Thomson's Britannia); portions of the translation, as rpt. in the Craftsman for 25 March, appeared in GM, March, p. 152, and see p.168. The Registers of Books in GM for 1738 show a steady stream of pamphlets dealing with the Spanish issue.
15. Boswell's Life of Johnson, ed. G.B. Hill, rev. and enlarged by L.F. Powell, 6 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1934, 1950), I, 123. See also James Clifford, Young Sam Johnson (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1955), p.190.
16. See McAdam, Samuel Johnson: Poems, p.45.
17. A Selection from the Papers of the Earls of Marchmont, in the Possession of The Right Honble Sir George Henry Rose (London: John Murray, 1831), II, 100-01.
18. See John Hardy, "Johnson's London: The Country Versus the City," in Studies in the Eighteenth Century: Papers presented at the David Nichol Smith Memorial Seminar, Canberra 1966, ed. R.F. Brissenden (Canberra: Australian National Univ. Press 1968), *passim*, but esp. pp. 253, 257-58, 267; Pope's Ep. II. ii (April, 1737), ll. 88-126 and Ep. I. i, ll. 77-84; Maynard Mack, The Garden and the City; Retirement and Politics in the Later Poetry of Pope, 1731-1743 (Toronto: Univ. of Toronto Press, 1969), *passim*.
19. Speck, Tory & Whig: The Struggle in the Constituencies, 1701-1715 (London: Macmillan, 1970), p.67; and cf. Romney Sedgwick, The History of Parliament: The House of Commons 1715-1754 (London: HMSO, 1970), I, 161.



20. William Camden, Britannia, trans. Philemon Holland (London, 1637), p.325, as quoted by Edward A. and Lillian D. Bloom, "Johnson's London and its Juvenalian Texts, "Huntington Library Quarterly, 34 (1970), 22, n.30; and see their "Johnson's 'Mournful Narrative': The Rhetoric of 'London'," in Eighteenth Century Studies in Honor of Donald F. Hyde, ed. W.H. Bond (New York: Grolier Club, 1970), pp. 117-18.
21. The use of archaisms reinforces these aspects of Thales' personality. See Edward and Lillian Bloom, "Johnson's 'Mournful Narrative'," pp. 130-32.
22. Life, I, 460. In addition to the Royal Hospital for Seamen, Greenwich was the site of Morden College, established in 1695 near the south-east corner of Blackheath as a home for poor merchants who had been ruined in the course of trade. See Olive and Nigel Hamilton, Royal Greenwich (London: Greenwich Bookshop, 1969), pp. 142, 140, 201, 207, 106, 196-97, and 231.
23. A Tour Through the Whole Island of Great Britain (London: Dent, 1962), I, 95.
24. Life, I, 106-07.
25. Elizabeth was in many respects the ideal of opposition literature: for a discussion of this phenomenon, see Isabel Rivers, The Poetry of Conservatism 1660-1745 (Cambridge: Rivers Press, 1973), pp. xi, 204-06. Elizabeth's policies were the subject of two pamphlets published in 1738. In March, "Q. Elizabeth's heroic Speech against the Spaniards" was offered for sale with a related piece (GM, March, p.168). On the other side, Ralph Courteville drew flattering parallels between Cecil and Walpole in The Memoirs of William Cecil Lord Burghley, reissued as a pamphlet in 1738; it had been serialised in the Gazetteer on Fridays from 22 July to 21 October the previous year. See Robert L. Haig, The Gazetteer 1735-1797: A Study in the Eighteenth-Century English Newspaper (Carbondale: Southern Illinois Univ. Press, 1960), p.13.



"When a man is tired of Johnson, he is tired of life,  
for there is in Johnson all that life can afford."

-- Christopher Ricks



SAMUEL JOHNSON

"The largest soul in England," Carlyle said,  
The most extensive pattern of a man  
Based on the cross where Christ's pale beauty bled  
Into the mercy where all love began.  
The most heroic and the most sincere,  
Whose piety was constant, and whose mind  
Worded the truths the whole world had to hear  
In sentences a poet had designed.  
Sam. Johnson, Ursa Major, The Great Cham!  
Behind the names, the sovereign soul is there,  
The lion strength that lay down with the lamb,  
The virtues that were fortified with prayer.  
The largest soul in England, and we claim  
The overwhelming greatness of his name.

Helen Forsyth

1978.

Oxford  
University Press



## 500 years of Oxford books

---

'A book starts life with the bibliographic equivalent of a silver spoon in its mouth if it wears on its spine the colophon of three golden crowns encompassing a double page spread inscribed *Dominus Illuminatio Mea*. No doubt the Oxford University Press has sometimes published a bad book, though it is blasphemy even to whisper the imputation this year. But in general, sound scholarship, disinterested love of truth, and usually good reading as well make the OUP one of the great publishing houses of the world . . . . The Oxford University Press is our greatest stable of books. But its greatness resides not just in size and numbers of books, which have made the imprint a familiar badge of learning from China to Peru. It lies in the Press's persistent and noble belief that truth, and scholarship, and good books matter more than profits.' Philip Howard in *The Times*.

'Looking around him in 1914 for good deeds or objects to cheer him up in a naughty world, Rupert Brooke nominated "Charing Cross Bridge by night, the dancing of Miss Ethel Levey, the Lucretian hexameter, the beer at an inn in Royston . . . the sausages at another above Princes Risborough, and the Clarendon Press editions of the English poets". But, he added, "the beer and the sausages will change, and Miss Levey one day will die, and Charing Cross Bridge will fall; so the Clarendon Press books will be the only thing our evil generation may show to the cursory eye of posterity, to prove it was not wholly bad." Countless readers would endorse, in less flowery terms, Brooke's praise of the publishers of The Oxford English Dictionary, the Oxford Companions, and The Oxford Book of English Verse, not to mention the OUP's ingratiating little "World's Classics," through which so many tyros have extended their literary tastes without utterly ruining the linings of their jacket pockets.' Rivers Scott in *The Listener*.

## Oxford University Press

SAMUEL JOHNSON, LITERARY THEORY,  
AND THE VALUES OF BIOGRAPHY

---

James B. Misenheimer, Professor of English  
Indiana State University, Terre Haute Indiana 47809

Johnson's spirited interest in literature pervades his conversations and his writings. For several decades, literary history has acknowledged Johnson's exalted notion of the dignity of literature and has shown that Johnson himself experienced a versatility of literary accomplishment quite uncommon in any period. Just as the versatility of Johnson in the realm of creative literature cannot be denied, the quantity and the wide range of his critical opinions concerning the various literary genres cannot be overlooked. It is true that he professes no theory of literature per se and that the theory which Johnsonians discern from his criticism and random remarks he nowhere expounds in complete or systematic form. J.W.H. Atkins has commented that "the main structure of his doctrine was determined by principles intuitively discerned in Nature, namely, those of order, proportion, fitness, perspicuity and the like, as well as by others inherent in human nature, and embodying qualities satisfying to the mind of rational man."<sup>1</sup> But Johnson was much adverse to mere theorising and speculative criticism. In The Rambler No. 125, he wrote accordingly:

It is one of the maxims of civil law, that "definitions are hazardous...."

Definitions have been no less difficult or uncertain in criticisms than in law. Imagination, a licentious and vagrant faculty, unsusceptible of limitations, and impatient of restraint, has always endeavoured to baffle the logician, to perplex the confines of distinction, and burst the inclosures of regularity. There is therefore scarcely any species of writing, of which we can tell what is its essence, and what are its constituents; every new genius produces some innovation, which, when invented and approved, subverts the rules which<sup>2</sup> the practice of foregoing authors had established.

Hence Johnson published no unified treatises designed to enunciate inviolable laws governing the composition of poetry, drama, biography, prose fiction, the essay, or even criticism. He provided no comprehensive codification of literary principles which would, in essence, delineate a theory.

The absence of a formal definition by Johnson of his theory of literature — or, even more pointedly, of his theory of poetry, or drama, or the various prose genres — should cause the Johnsonian student little anxiety, once he realises that the animating principles of Johnson's literary theory are clearly visible in comments scattered throughout his writings (not to mention his conversations as recorded by such devoted friends as Boswell, Fanny Burney, and Mrs. Thrale). These comments, once assimilated, reveal that Johnson had very specific ideas regarding the nature and function of literature and that these ideas stemmed in large part from the humanism which prompted him to employ a didactic aesthetic as one of the ruling principles of his literary theory and as a focal concern in the formulation of his views on poetry, drama, and four of the prose genres — namely, biography, prose fiction, the essay and criticism. In two earlier papers I have attempted to deal with his views of prose fiction and the essay. Here, I should like to explore, however briefly, Johnson's literary theory in relation to what he perceives as the values of biography.

Early in July 1763, not quite two months after Boswell had been introduced to Johnson in Mr. Davies' back parlour, Johnson observed to the young Scot who was to become his biographer that "Bayle's Dictionary is a very useful work for those to consult who love the biographical part of literature, which is what I love most."<sup>3</sup> As much as he respected and enjoyed all types of serious literature, he cast his vote of preference for biography. His comment to Boswell was not the result of a desire to "talk for victory" or of hasty and impulsive decision; rather, it was the sincere statement of a man whose essential humanity and intense interest in the portrayal of life in literature are virtually unparalleled in the annals of English literary history. The nature and function of biography was one of his favourite topics both to write about and to talk about; and as Harold Nicholson has said, Johnson's scattered observations, when collected and organised, "constitute perhaps the best definition of biography as an art which has yet been formulated."<sup>4</sup>

Man's ability to associate himself sympathetically with the human aspects of biography and to profit from what he learns by applying these human truths in his own life is the outstanding factor which, for Johnson, sets biography above the other forms of writing. He expresses this superiority in The Rambler, No. 60:

It is not easy for the most artful writer to give us an interest in happiness or misery, which we think ourselves never likely to feel, and with which we have never yet been made acquainted....

Those parallel circumstances and kindred images, to which we readily conform our minds, are, above all other writings, to be found in narratives of the lives of particular persons; and therefore no species of writing seems more worthy of cultivation than biography, since none can be more delightful or more useful, none can more certainly enchain the heart by irresistible interest, or more widely diffuse instruction to every diversity of condition.<sup>5</sup>

Hence it is the traits of general human nature as evidenced in particular lives that make biography a form of literature that man can readily turn to his own use. Johnson unhesitatingly points out that valuable lessons applicable to private life are not to be found, for the most part, in history or fiction; for both of these forms are lacking in the vital human interest which is the essence of biographical composition. Some years after writing The Rambler, he observes in The Idler, No. 84, that "the stratagems of war, and the intrigues of courts, are read by far the greater part of mankind with the same indifference as the adventures of fabled heroes, or the revolutions of a fairy region."<sup>6</sup> He explains that the examples and events of history have seldom been brought home to men's lives convincingly enough to assist in the regulation of human conduct and that, as a result, man's knowledge of history deplorably serves primarily to "diversify conversation". Fiction comes off no better. The realisation that a story is only a representation of reality rather than an account of real lives that have been lived and of true happenings that have been experienced detracts from its credibility, in comparison with the facts, both the pleasant and the harsh realities of biography: "From the time of life when fancy begins to be overruled by reason and corrected by experience, the most artful tale raises little curiosity when it is known to be false."<sup>7</sup> In view of these assertions, which were firmly grounded in Johnson's own experiences (he had been an avid reader and student of history, fiction, and biography since his earliest schooling), it is not surprising to find him referring to biography as "that (form of narrative writing) which is most eagerly read, and most easily applied to the purpose of life."<sup>8</sup> It is undeniable that Johnson views biography as one of the supreme forms of literary art and sees as its primary purpose the



inculcation of moral truth and, therefore, the teaching of the "art of living." In this connection, his comment to Lord Monboddo, while he was touring Scotland with Boswell, has an underscoring effect: "I esteem biography, as giving us what comes near to ourselves, what we can turn to use."

Johnson's ideas that biography contains lessons that are immediately applicable to the state of individual lives, for him, hardly just a high-sounding theory devoid of practicality. Johnson himself stresses the usefulness of biography by making his general theory, as well as his many incidental references to this form of composition, quite specific and meaningful in the two essays which he devotes exclusively to the subject and from which certain pertinent passages have already been cited. In the earlier essay, for example, he elucidates some of the common denominators of human life which are responsible for the educational value and the applicability of biography. He writes:

I have often thought that there has rarely passed a life of which a judicious and faithful narrative would not be useful. For, not only every man has, in the mighty mass of the world, great numbers in the same condition with himself, to whom his mistakes and miscarriages, escapes and expedients, would be of immediate and apparent use; but there is such a uniformity in the state of man, considered apart from adventitious and separable decorations and disguises, that there is scarce any possibility of good or ill, but is common to human kind.... We are all prompted by the same motives, all deceived by the same fallacies, all animated by hope, obstructed by danger, entangled by desire, and seduced by pleasure.

And in the later essay, his remarks are designed to show the kind of helpful and directly applicable information which every man can assimilate for himself from biography: "The mischievous consequence of vice and folly, of irregular desires and predominant passions, are best discovered by those relations which are levelled with the general surface of life, which tell not how any man became great, but how he was made happy; not how he lost the favour of his prince, but how he became discontented with himself."<sup>11</sup> Johnson's profound knowledge and understanding of the human condition is revealed again and again in such passages of specification as the foregoing.

What, then, are the aspects of the human condition which constitute the most proper subjects for biography? Johnson believes in the paramount importance of the domestic view, which reveals that "the main of life, is, indeed, composed of small

incidents and petty occurrences; of wishes for objects not remote, and grief for disappointments of no fatal consequence; of insect vexations which sting us and fly away, impertinencies which buzz a while about us, and are heard no more..."<sup>12</sup> It is the disposition of small incidents which determines oftentimes whether man is miserable or happy, just as it is his ability or inability to cope with recurring and vexatious trivia that proves his mettle, his courage, his fortitude. For, as Johnson says, "For very few are involved in great events, or have their thread of life entwisted with the chain of causes on which armies or nations are suspended; and even those who seem wholly busied in publick affairs, and elevated above low cares, or trivial pleasures, pass the chief part of their time in familiar and domestick scenes..."<sup>13</sup> Johnson points out, as Bergen Evans has appropriately noted, that "the lives of great men have no more artistic value than those of ordinary men"<sup>14</sup> and, as a corollary, maintains that men of letters are just as suitable biographical subjects as men of any other profession or occupation. This idea, of course, hearkens back to his belief that the most common characteristics of men are reflected in all stations of society. Thus he writes in *The Idler* No. 102: "It is commonly supposed that the uniformity of a studious life affords no matter for narration but the truth is, that of the most studious life a great part passes without study. An author partakes of the common condition of humanity; he is born and married like another man; he has hopes and fears, expectations and disappointments, griefs and joys,<sup>15</sup> and friends and enemies, like a courtier or a statesman..."

The significance which Johnson assigns to the domestic view in biography leads him to censure any writer who imagines himself to be writing a life, when all that he ultimately exhibits is "a chronological series of actions or preferments," and who so little regards the manners of his hero, "that more knowledge may be gained of a man's real character, by a short conversation with one of his servants, than from a formal and studied narrative, begun with his pedigree, and ended with his funeral."<sup>16</sup> The same emphasis on the domestic aspect of a life is what prompted his remark to Boswell that "nobody can write the life of a man, but those who have eat and drunk and lived in social intercourse with him."<sup>17</sup> The minute peculiarities and circumstances that distinguish a man and lend spontaneous interest to a biography are, by their very nature, certain to be lost unless recorded by those who possess this personal knowledge.

Johnson's demand for complete truth posed for him a great problem of biography, that of the conflict between truth and loyalty. In concluding his famous Rambler, No. 60, he wrote: "There are many who think it an act of piety to hide the faults or failings of their friends, even when they can no longer suffer by their detection; we therefore see whole ranks of characters adorned with uniform panegyric, and not to be known from one another, but by extrinsic and casual circumstances....If we owe regard to the memory of the dead, there is yet more respect to be paid to knowledge, to virtue, and to truth."<sup>18</sup> Years later he observed to Boswell that "if a man is to write A Panegyric, he may keep vices out of sight; but if he professes to write A Life, he must represent it really as it was."<sup>19</sup> Johnson was well aware of the dangers of portraying a man's vices, not only because he knew that many people govern their conduct by imitation, but also because he did not condone the injury and the hurt that the man's family and close friends might experience as a result of such portrayal. Yet he knew that the vice or fault could not legitimately be ignored. Unless the biography is truthful, it is valueless. The whole purpose of biography is defeated when only the good side of life is depicted. He remarked, in speaking of some of Addison's failings, that "if nothing but the bright side of characters should be shown, we should sit down in despondency, and think it utterly impossible to imitate them in any thing. The sacred writers... related the vicious as well as the virtuous actions of men; which had this moral effect, that it kept mankind from despair, into which otherwise they would naturally fall, were they not supported by the recollection that others had offended like themselves, and by penitence and amendment of life had been restored to the favour of Heaven."<sup>20</sup> The following fascinatingly brooding sentence in a letter to his friend Bennet Langton is perhaps his most telling statement, however, with regard to the value of the full truth: "Whether to see life as it is, will give us much consolation, I know not; but the consolation which is drawn from truth, if any there be, is solid and durable; that which may be derived from error, must be, like its original, fallacious and fugitive."<sup>21</sup>

The whole interest of biography inheres in its truthfulness and the whole value of biography inheres in its application to life. The words which are most central to Johnson's view of this genre are "use," "useful," "life," "truth", and "instruction"; and it is these which recur many times in the splendid abundance of his thoughts on biography. Nor can there

be much doubt as to why Johnson uses these particular words rather than others. This is Bergen Evans' explanation:

First and last Johnson was a moralist: he regarded biography, as he did the essay, poetry, and the novel, as a vehicle for moral instruction. He felt it to be the duty of the biographer to expose folly to ridicule, to discourage vice by showing its consequences, and to promote virtue by displaying the rewards and the comforts of the virtuous. He was even willing, as in the lives of Blake and Drake, to make biography serve an immediate purpose, and he felt it to be "in an uncommon degree useful" to give an account of Sydenham's education and to refute the allegation that the great physician was unlearned, in order that "pride, temerity, and idleness, may be deprived of that patronage which they have enjoyed too long..."<sup>22</sup>

Johnson once commented that he hoped he had written the Lives of the Poets in such a way as to promote piety. The promotion of piety includes, for him, the ancillary results of learning to live as one should and of mending the world for the better. The purpose of biography is moral; or, as William K. Wimsatt sums it up, "Biography is what happened to a person, like oneself."<sup>23</sup> Let us remember that this principle or concept informs the Life of Savage of 1744, a life shared by Johnson of Grub Street.

#### Documentation

1. J.W.H. Atkins, English Literary Criticism: 17th and 18th Centuries (New York, 1950), p.279.
2. Samuel Johnson, "The Rambler," No. 125, The Yale Edition of the Works of Samuel Johnson, ed. W.J. Bate and Albrecht B. Strauss. (New Haven 1969-), IV, 300. Hereafter cited as Yale Edition.
3. James Boswell, Life of Johnson, ed. George Birkbeck Hill, rev. and enl. by Lawrence F. Powell (Oxford, 1934-50), I, 425.
4. Harold Nicholson, The Development of English Biography (London, 1927), p.80.
5. "The Rambler," No. 60, Yale Edition, III, 319.
6. "The Idler," No. 84, Yale Edition, II, 262.
7. "The Idler," No. 84, Yale Edition, II, 261.
8. "The Idler," No. 84, Yale Edition, II, 261.
9. Boswell, V, 79.
10. "The Rambler," No. 60, Yale Edition, III, 320.

11. "The Idler," No. 84, Yale Edition, II, 262.
12. "The Rambler," No. 68, Yale Edition, III, 359.
13. "The Rambler," No. 68, Yale Edition, III, 360.
14. Bergen Evans, "Dr. Johnson's Theory of Biography," Review of English Studies, X (1934), 302.
15. "The Idler," No. 102, Yale Edition II, 312.
16. "The Rambler," No. 60, Yale Edition, III, 322.
17. Boswell II, 166.
18. "The Rambler," No. 60, Yale Edition, III, 323.
19. Boswell, III, 155.
20. Boswell, IV, 53.
21. Boswell, I, 339.
22. Evans, p.310.
23. William K. Wimsatt, The Prose Style of Samuel Johnson (New Haven, 1941), p.97.



THE JOHNSON SOCIETY  
OF  
LONDON



*Nobody can write the life of a man,  
but those who know our and drink  
and lived in social intercourse with him.*  
JOHNSON  
Ld 31 March 1773

Golden Jubilee Dinner

Thursday 5 October 1978  
The Ivanhoe Hotel  
Bloomsbury St.  
London WC1

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Johnson Society of  
London wishes to thank

B.H. BLACKWELL LTD

COURAGE LTD.

OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS  
and  
TROLLOPE AND COLLIS

for their support

Mr. Mark Coppens for help  
with graphics

HEARTS OF OAK BENEFIT SOCIETY  
and Mrs. S.R. Gold for typing  
the issue

Revd. Leslie Whiteside MA for  
details of St. Edmund the King

THE GUILDHALL LIBRARY for  
the picture of St. Edmund's

and especially

OUR CONTRIBUTORS





THE JOHNSON SOCIETY OF LONDON\*

The Foundation Date of the Johnson Society of London was 3rd February 1928, when an inaugural meeting was arranged by the Rector of St. Clement Danes, the Rev. W. Pennington-Bickford, whose wife was descended from the family of Elizabeth Carter, who had first invited Dr. Johnson to St. Clement's to hear her nephew Montague Pennington preach. The Committee then set up lost little time, and the first public meeting of The Johnson Society of London was held on 30th March, its declared purpose "to further the knowledge of the great Doctor's Works, to 'Johnsonise the Land' [in Boswell's phrase] and to found a bond of union between his admirers".

The Golden Jubilee Dinner is perhaps some measure of the success of that small band of devoted Johnsonians.

The first President was G.K. Chesterton. At the beginning the office of Hon. Secretary and Hon. Treasurer was undertaken by Mr. W.H.Q. Prior. On his resignation on health grounds in 1930 Mr. Frederick Vernon was elected as Secretary and continued in office until a few months before his death in October 1942, held in affectionate esteem by all members. We are pleased to have his grandson Mr. R.T.V. Martin at the Dinner.

In its early days the Society was closely associated with the parish of St. Clement's. Meetings were held in the Parish Hall, and members participated in the annual Dr. Johnson Tea and Petticoat Parties given to ladies of the parish over 70, which seem to have been riotous affairs, with musical chairs and dancing and the singing of old songs, and fare that included "Dr. Johnson pudding" (what could that have been?). A Silver Medal, inaugurated in 1935 by Mrs. T. Roscoe in memory of her father Mr. E.S. Roscoe, was awarded annually for the best essay on Johnson written by a boy or girl from St. Clement Danes' Schools in Drury Lane. The Society also attended and took under its auspices the Annual Johnson Commemoration Service at the

\*An expanded version of the history of the Society included in the President's address at the Golden Jubilee Dinner on 5th October 1978.

Church. Among the treasures of the Society stored in the Vestry were a number of books, and a bookcase and mahogany door from the library at Streatham Park, given by Dr. Frank Coleman, which sadly were lost in the Blitz when the Church was destroyed in 1942. One of the more unexpected items from the Society's store of books lost in later years was a collection of all the references to Dr. Johnson in Punch from the 1840 s to the 1890 s.

Perhaps because in those days public transport was cheaper and more reliable than it is today members of the Society went out and about more than they do now; visits were made to Oxford and Cambridge as well as to Lichfield, and, nearer home, to a number of places associated with Johnson — Streatham, Bromley, Clerkenwell. This tradition has been very pleasantly maintained in recent years by a memorable luncheon at Pembroke College, Oxford, in 1974, by a tea-party with Mr. Richard Thrale in St. Albans in 1977, and an invitation to join members of the Johnson Society from Lichfield in a visit to the Anchor Brewhouse, London, this summer.

The number of scholars distinguished in academic and other circles who have served the Society as President, Vice-President or speaker is too long to list, but mention may be made of Dr. Temple when Archbishop of York, Lord Justice MacKinnon, Sir Sydney Roberts, Dr. Matthews, Dean of St. Paul's, Professor Geoffrey Tillotson, Mr. Arundell Esdaile, Dr. R.W. Chapman and Colonel Ralph Isham of the Boswell Papers from this side of the Atlantic, and Professor James L. Clifford, Professor Frederick A. Pottle and Professor Bertram H. Davis from across the water.\*

We must not forget all the officers who devoted so much time to the well-being of the Society — not least the late Mr. A.G. Dowdeswell whose 13 years of service will be gratefully remembered by many of those present. We are glad to see Mrs. Dowdeswell among us tonight.

Over 50 years a great many talks have been delivered on every possible aspect of Johnson and his contemporaries and his times, and many eminent scholars, both English and American, have shared with us the first fruits of their researches. Perhaps the least likely subject to be discussed was Johnson and Ballooning. Fortunately, the supply of topics shows no signs of drying up, since new works of scholarship in the Johnson field are constantly appearing.

\*From the beginning of the 1979/80 session we have been honoured to include among our Vice-Presidents Mrs. Donald F. Hyde and Professor Walter Jackson Bate.

Our Society has always enjoyed cordial relations with the Lichfield Johnson Society and with other kindred societies, including the Johnson Societies of Oslo, Copenhagen and the River Plate, the Boswell Society of Chicago and the Auchinleck Boswell Society.

The Annual Commemorative Wreath was first laid on Johnson's tomb in Westminster Abbey in 1930, the same year that saw the institution of a formal Annual Dinner. During the war this was commuted into a luncheon which happily survives as the informal Christmas lunch held nowadays after the wreath laying. Those who have enjoyed the modest three course Jubilee Dinner may perhaps look back with envy at the 1935 dinner, at which, for the equivalent of a little over 50p, guests could embark upon seven courses, including salmon, chicken, asparagus and artichokes. "Sir, there is a time of life when a man requires the repairs of the table," the Menu reminded them.

The first issue of the Society's Journal, The New Rambler, appeared in 1941, and the periodical continues to flourish today under the devoted editorship of Mr. J.H. Leicester. In its early days a printing bill of £20 was daunting to the finances of the Society, now that charges have risen so astronomically we are most grateful to the Hearts of Oak Benefit Society for so much valuable assistance given with production.

We have had many homes in our time. Bombed out of St. Clement's, we enjoyed the hospitality of St. Mary-le-Strand and later of the Alpine Club. We have met in the Kenilworth Hotel, the White Hall Hotel, the Swedenborg Hall and at the Mary Ward Centre. Today the Society is gratefully privileged to meet in the Vestry Hall of St. Edmund the King, Lombard Street, through the kindness of the Churchwardens, and of the Rector, Mr. Whiteside, whom we are very glad to welcome here tonight.

S.B.S.P.



# COURAGE

*Whose links with Dr Johnson  
are commemorated in its famous  
hostelry, The Anchor Bankside,  
send best wishes to the  
Johnson Society of London in its  
Golden Jubilee Year*



Anchor Terrace, Southwark Bridge SE1

#### THE GOLDEN JUBILEE DINNER

More than forty members of the Johnson Society and guests met at the Ivanhoe Hotel in Bloomsbury on 5th October for a Dinner to celebrate the Society's Golden Jubilee. The sub-committee which organised the Dinner deserves our thanks for making the evening such a memorable one, and not least for choosing the apt Johnson quotations which accompanied the courses on the Bill of Fare. The magnificently produced menu card was a gift to the Society from Messrs. Chatto and Windus and was designed by their leading typographer. Those present will treasure it as a memento of a great occasion in our Society's history. We express our gratitude to Chatto and Windus, and also to Mrs. Helen Forsyth for allowing the reproduction of her print of Johnson.

Our President, the Very Reverend Dr. Edward Carpenter, Dean of Westminster, presided at the Reception and Dinner, and among those we were especially glad to welcome were Mr. J.F. Charlton and Mrs. N. Smallwood, directors of Chatto and Windus, the publishers of Professor Jackson Bate's much acclaimed Samuel Johnson; Mr. R.T.V. Martin, the grandson of the late Mr. Frederick Vernon, the Society's second Honorary Secretary; The Rev. L.W.H. Whiteside, whose hospitality we enjoy at St. Edmund the King, Lombard Street; and Mrs. Marguerite Dowdeswell, to whom and to whose late husband the Society remains indebted for all they gave to it of their gifts and their enthusiasm and themselves. Among those unavoidably absent were our former Honorary Secretary, the Rev. Eric Hodgess Roper, who was on a visit to America, and Mr. N.D. Whiston, Secretary of the Hearts of Oak Benefit Society, whose assistance in the production of The New Rambler is greatly valued. Many of us could not help feeling deep regret that also missing from our company was Dr. Ronald Mac Keith, whose recent death deprived the Society of one of its most distinguished members.

The Dinner opened with Grace by the Dean, who appropriately included a thansgiving for "just men made perfect, and in particular Samuel Johnson." The two toasts were the Loyal Toast and that to "the Immortal Memory". A record of the Society's history, compiled by our present Honorary Secretary and read by the Dean, told much that was new to most of us about the inception and early years of the Society. The organisers had wisely decided that speeches were not to be the main feature of the evening, but the occasion would have been incomplete without one from the Dean, who is known for his



lifelong devotion to Johnson and his profound appreciation of his character and works. Johnson, he said in his tribute, was both a man of his age and a man for all ages. Of the mass of literature which the 18th century produced the greater part has passed into oblivion, but Johnson's writings, and even more his unique personality, possess an immortal quality. Most interestingly (and we could wish that on some future occasion he might develop the suggestion at greater length) the Dean drew a parallel between Johnson and St. Catherine of Genoa, the subject of a study by the late Baron von Hügel, both being examples of neurosis transformed by the grace of God into sanctity.

The Golden Jubilee Dinner was not only a celebration of the past, but it was also a happy augury for the future of our Society as it enters upon its second half-century.

A.R.W.

#### THE NEW RAMBLER

Described as the "Members' Evercirculator" The New Rambler first appeared in the wartime London of 1941. Frederick Vernon, an outstanding figure in the annals of the Society and a former Hon. Secretary, conducted the first three issues until his death in October 1942. A Supplement appeared in the following year and the Journal resumed publication in 1944 under the joint editorship of William Kent and A. Lloyd-Jones. Mr. Lloyd-Jones became sole editor in 1948 and introduced the eight-page printed format with the motto on the title-page: "Quicquid agunt (et putant) Johnsoniani nostri est farrago Libelli." The price rose from one shilling to two with the introduction of the printed edition and remained constant until the editor's retirement in 1955.

After a two-year gap, publication of the Journal resumed under the next Editor, Revd. F.N. Doubleday, MRCS, and continued a twice-yearly issue until his own retirement in 1966. Dr. Doubleday produced 18 issues of the Journal in what is now known as the "B" Serial. It is interesting to note that the January 1963 issue carried a serial reference for the first time: Serial No. B.XII. Subsequent issues continued the practice through to his last issue of B.XVIII for January 1966. Earlier issues have been retrospectively numbered from B.I for June 1957 onwards. Similarly, the original issues have been given "A" serial numbers.

The current "C" serial began with the June 1966 issue under the present Editor. The new format, with alternating blue and green covers, incorporated the Society's monogram designed by the Editor and drawn by John Baker. With the effects of inflation on production costs, it was necessary to change to an annual publication from 1973 onwards.

From time to time we are asked for bibliographical details of previous issues of the Journal. The following is a complete list to date:-

Serial A

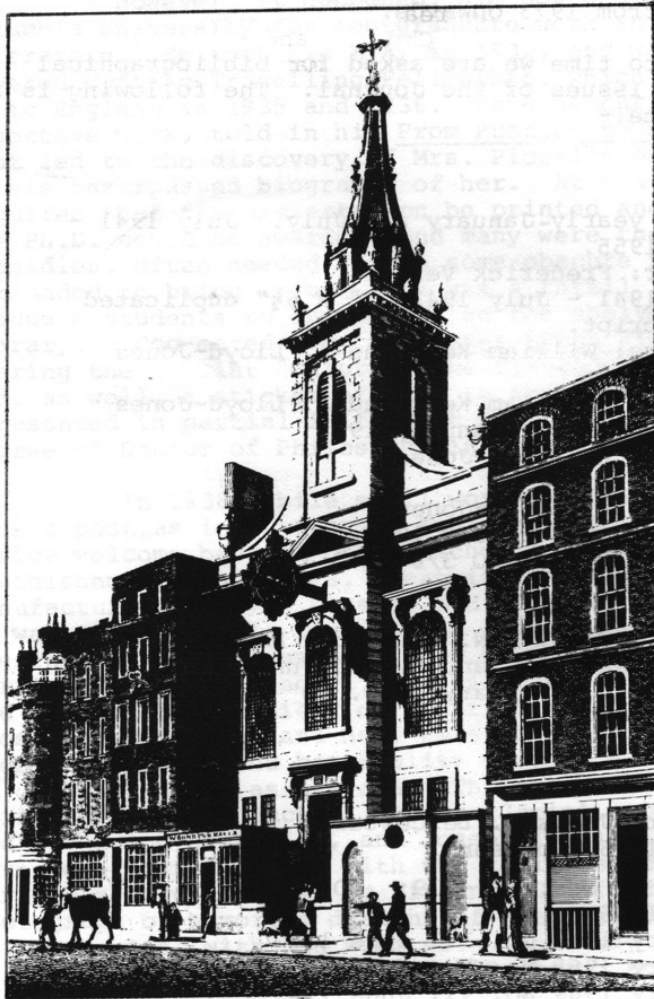
- Nos. 1 - 27 Twice yearly-January and July. July 1941 - July 1955.  
Nos. 1 - 3 Editor: Frederick Vernon  
July 1941 - July 1942. 8" x 6½" duplicated typescript.  
Supplement Editors: William Kent and A. Lloyd-Jones  
July 1943  
Nos. 4 - 12 Editors: William Kent and A. Lloyd-Jones  
January 1944 - January 1948  
No.13 Editor: A. Lloyd-Jones  
July 1948  
Nos. 14-27 Editor: A. Lloyd-Jones  
January 1948 - July 1955  
Printed format 10 3/8" x 7 3/4"

Serial B

- Nos. 1 - 18 Editor: Revd. F.N. Doubleday MRCS  
Twice yearly - January and June  
June 1957 - January 1966. 10" x 8" duplicated typescript.

Serial C

- Nos. 1 - 19 Editor: James H. Leicester  
June 1966 - present  
Nos. 1-9: 8½" x 7" Nos. 10 - 19: 10" x 8"  
No. I June 1966  
No. II January 1967 No. III June 1967  
No. IV January 1968 No. V June 1968  
No. VI January 1969 No. VII June 1969  
No. VIII January 1970 No. IX June 1970  
No. X Spring 1971 No. XI Autumn 1971  
No. XII Spring 1972 No. XIII Autumn 1972  
No. XIV Spring 1973 No. XV 1974 Issue  
No. XVI 1975 Issue No. XVII 1976 Issue  
No. XVIII 1977 Issue No. XIX 1978 Issue



ST. EDMUND THE KING, LOMBARD STREET

Since 1976 the Johnson Society of London has enjoyed the privilege of meeting in the fine Vestry hall of St. Edmund the King. We are grateful to the Rector, Revd. Leslie Whiteside, and the Churchwardens for their hospitality.

The Vestry Hall at the rear of the Church was designed by Rodney Tatchell, Architect to the Church, and opened by the Bishop of London in 1968. Members and visitors may be interested to know that the beautiful little fresco on the wall depicts a Dominican, either St. Dominic himself or St. Thomas Aquinas, and is the last surviving fragment of the former church of St. Nicholas Acons. Also preserved in the Hall are the lion and unicorn - supporters of Royal Arms - taken from St. Dionis, Backchurch.

St. Edmund, the Patron, was born in Saxony circa 840 and crowned King of East Anglia in 855. His reign came to a sudden end when he was martyred by marauding Danish pirates in 870. St. Edmund's Church occupies what was probably a Saxon site on the north side of Lombard Street and must have been founded between 900 and 1100 A.D. The pre-Reformation Church with its shrine of St. Edmund was burned in the Great Fire of 1666. It was rebuilt by Sir Christopher Wren as part of his ambitious plan for the City of London.

An interesting literary link is with Joseph Addison who was married at St. Edmund's in 1716 to the Dowager Countess of Warwick. We know of no direct Johnsonian link but Revd. F.N. Hodgess Roper speculated recently that Johnson must have passed our meeting place as he carried his own baggage to the coach in Cornhill, having arrived by water at Billingsgate after his visit to Bennet Langton in the summer of 1783.

Lombard Street is in one of London's oldest commercial sectors. Documentary evidence of the name goes back to 1319, although the Lombards from Northern Italy had settled in the neighbourhood over a century earlier where they practised as moneylenders. The symbol of three golden balls hung up in front of their houses became the trade sign associated with pawnbrokers. Usurious practices led to their expulsion by Queen Elizabeth and their place as moneylenders was taken by the goldsmiths who gradually developed into the modern bankers. Lombard Street, still distinguished by a number of fine hanging signs denoting various banking houses, remains at the heart of the banking world.

Our illustration from a drawing by G. Shepherd, 1811, shows a Gun Maker's shop on one side of the Church and the Langbourn Watch House on the other. St. Edmund's survived bomb damage in 1917 and incendiaries in 1941. Today it actively continues as a parish church and among those City churches which are connected with specialised work, St. Edmund's is concerned with Personal Relationships.





THE JOHNSON HALFPENNY

In mentioning the abundant homage paid to Dr. Johnson, Boswell observed: "Let me add as proof of the popularity of his character, that there are copper pieces struck at Birmingham, with his head impressed on them, which pass current as half-pence there, and in the neighbouring parts of the country."

We are grateful to Mrs. Helen Forsyth for the photographs of a rare Johnson Halfpenny in her possession. The coin is one of the provincial token-coinage of the 18th century and was struck by Henry Biggs of Moor Street, Birmingham. Only six impressions were made. The diameter measures 29 m.m. — about the size of a modern tenpence piece. The token was valid in Birmingham, Lichfield and Wolverhampton; these names are inscribed on the rim, Lichfield being spelt - Litchfield. As far as can be ascertained it was issued circa 1787 - 1790.

During the second half of the 18th century very little copper was minted. The poor quality and small quantity of the coinage made counterfeiting a profitable occupation. Matthew Boulton (1728-1809) was the first to see that only by producing official coins in sufficient numbers and of such intrinsic value and quality would the making of false ones be no longer worthwhile. He achieved this end by applying the steam engine to coining. By the end of 1788 he had six coining presses at work in his Soho Manufactory in Birmingham. He produced coinage for overseas including a copper coin for the American Colonies, and supplied tokens to private traders to meet the widespread demand for tokens in Britain.

Such tokens were used for paying wages and were generally acceptable in the neighbourhood of the factory which issued them. In 1787 the Anglesey Copper Mining Company struck pennies and halfpennies at the time of an acute shortage of regal copper coinage. There was a new boom in token money. Persons, buildings, coats of arms, local legends, political events — all were drawn upon as subjects for design. The period coincides with the Johnson Halfpenny.

Eventually, Boulton persuaded the British Government to adopt his idea. In 1797 he was awarded a contract for 500 tons of Government coin — penny pieces and twopenny pieces. With the official issue of these Boulton "Cartwheels", tokens were made illegal. The story does not end there. During the Napoleonic wars, increased activity in the industrial districts led to a renewed shortage of copper coins and by 1811 tokens were again in evidence.

(B. H. BLACKWELL LTD)

## BLACKWELL'S ANTIQUARIAN DEPARTMENT



This is a part of Blackwell's  
retail division, and is open for  
business on six days each week  
from 09.00 to 17.00.  
Appointments and other sophistications  
are not necessary.

It purchases and sells  
antiquarian and collectors books  
in most categories.

Regular classified catalogues  
(free on request)  
include the Arts, Juvenilia,  
Natural History, the Sciences,  
English Literature, Modern First Editions,  
Private Presses, Travel & Topography,  
History, Antiquarian Theology,  
and Continental Books.

**BLACKWELL'S ANTIQUARIAN DEPARTMENT**  
3a SHIP STREET, OXFORD OX1 3DA  
(0865) 49111

**Trollope & Colls**

**THE FOUNDATION FOR  
QUALITY BUILDING.**

Trocoll House, 25 Christopher Street, London, EC2A 2BR.