

book, supplying the bread and butter. I am a reliable writer in that I fulfil these contracts on time, even though non-fiction work is at times boring and repetitious. Approaching 70 I decided I would give up commissioned work and retire to New Zealand. I liked the climate and the people; and my daughter, born at Skokholm, had settled to live and farm there and grow grandchildren. I would write nothing but fiction, developing those synopses I had stored away for such a day.

It hasn't quite worked out that way. Though only three million people inhabit New Zealand they are the greatest readers per head of population in the world. Moreover they have had the Authors' Fund (library lending right) Grant for the 15 books I have had published in 15 years of residence here, a useful supplement to my OAP (superannuation). I can grow banana, avocado pear, macademia nut, bougainvillea and jacaranda in my garden overlooking the island-studded Hauraki Gulf, rich in whales, dolphins and my old friends, shearwaters and storm-petrels. New Zealand publishers demand I write about these; which I do. But two new novels are on the way.

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Seeking out Literary Papers

David Sutton directs the Location Register project at Reading University. For five years, he and his colleagues have been travelling the British Isles collecting information about the whereabouts of modern literary manuscripts.

A major new service for biographers and writers on English literature is being created in the Library of the University of Reading. The Location Register of Twentieth-Century English Literary Manuscripts and Letters will provide a full finding-aid for those papers of modern literary authors which remain in the British Isles, together with notes about overseas holdings.

The need for a register of locations of literary manuscripts has been strongly felt for some years. As long ago as November 1972 Michael Holroyd and Paul Levy, on behalf of the Strachey Trust, floated the idea in the *TLS*. At first the proposal was treated with scepticism and even hostility. The *TLS* received fiercely defensive letters arguing that the National Register of Archives, a general historical survey, covered literary manuscripts as much as they needed to be covered.

The Strachey Trust continued to press its case, however, and in 1979 it received powerful support. SCONUL (the Standing Conference of National and University Libraries) organised a major conference on literary manuscripts which heard Philip Larkin's magisterial paper 'A neglected responsibility: contemporary literary manuscripts' (later published in *Encounter*). This conference set in train the moves which led to the setting up of the Location Register project at Reading in 1982, with such influential sponsors as the Arts Council, the British Library, the Leverhulme Trust, the Strachey Trust, the British Academy and the British Council.

The Location Register includes all types of papers (from manuscripts, typescripts and correspondence to laundry bills and annotated menus) of all types of literary authors. No attempt is made to separate out 'canonical' or 'serious' writers. The literary papers of Ethel M. Dell, Marie Corelli and James

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Blish (creator of *Star Trek*) are listed alongside those of Pound, Eliot, Joyce and Beckett. Writers for children, like Alison Uttley, Beatrix Potter and Arthur Ransome, are particularly well represented.

'Twentieth-century' is interpreted as broadly as possible, to include any author who lived in any part of the century. Writers like Kipling and Hardy, who belong to both the twentieth and the nineteenth centuries, are included in full, but so are such quintessentially Victorian figures as Meredith (d.1909), Swinburne (d.1909), McGonagall (d.1902) and even Wilde (d.1900) and Ruskin (d. January 1900).

A similarly broad view is taken of what constitutes 'English' literature. Authors who adopted British or Irish nationality (James, Eliot, Donleavy) are included, but so are those who renounced theirs (Auden, Charteris, Levertov). Immigrants, refugees and writers with close links with the British Isles all find a place, so that the Register is enriched by the presence of authors like Rabindranath Tagore, Wole Soyinka, Dennis Brutus, Buchi Emecheta and Shiva Naipaul.

Philip Larkin's 1979 paper was pessimistic: he feared that most twentieth-century British literary manuscripts had already departed for libraries in North America. The researches of the Location Register give rather more grounds for optimism.

Of course, there are British authors whose original papers are mostly in American libraries: John Masefield, Evelyn Waugh, John Lehmann, V. S. Pritchett and C. S. Forester, for example (all in Austin, Texas); Iris Murdoch and Angus Wilson (in Iowa); J. R. R. Tolkien (in the Marquette University, Milwaukee), Dorothy M. Richardson (at Yale), and so on.

D. H. Lawrence's papers are widely spread (but mostly in Austin and Berkeley), and there are no fewer than five large collections of Robert Graves's papers: in Buffalo, Carbondale, Austin, the University of San Francisco and the University of Victoria, British Columbia.

A great deal of material, however, does remain in the British Isles. There are splendid, and growing, collections in our major national and university libraries. Collections like the John Wain archive in Edinburgh University or the Samuel Beckett archive in Reading University compare with any in the world. And, above all, there is an increasing recognition of the importance of modern literary papers and an interest in building up collections.

Librarians, archivists and keepers of special collections in Britain are now much more likely to have some sort of collecting policy, to solicit gifts and to welcome unexpected donations of modern literary papers. The growing collections in public and university libraries fall into three main groups:

- papers of prominent local writers (Virginia Woolf at the University of Sussex, Adrian Henri at the University of Liverpool, Helen B. Cruickshank at the University of Stirling, Arnold Bennett at Keele, Edward Carpenter in Sheffield Public Library);
- collections of writers who have for various reasons been 'adopted' by a particular university or its library (Samuel Beckett and G. S. Fraser at Reading, Gavin Ewart and Anthony Thwaite at Hull, Barbara Pym at the Bodleian, William Plomer at Durham, Norah Hoult at Trinity College Dublin);
- accumulations of miscellaneous papers, some of which are particularly appropriate (the original of Tony Harrison's *Newcastle is Peru* is in the University of Newcastle Library, for instance), but many of which are quite random.

Another encouraging sign is that more libraries now seem prepared to take the risk of acquiring papers of comparatively young writers - like the poetry manuscripts of Tom Paulin, Paul Mills and Paul Muldoon recently bought for the Brotherton Collection, Leeds, or those of Andrew Motion acquired by the University of Hull. This is, of course, the sort of risk that American repositories have always been prepared to take.

The Location Register will also draw attention to small collections in unexpected places, some of which (such as the Laurence Housman deposit in Bromsgrove Public Library, the correspondence files at Elgar's Birthplace Museum, Broadheath, or the E. A. Hornel Museum, Kirkcudbright), are extremely difficult of access by public transport. It will also underline the value of collections in the colleges and schools attended by certain authors. Most Oxford and Cambridge

colleges hold papers of former undergraduates, and several public schools (notably the King's School at Canterbury and Eton College) have magnificent collections.

In bringing together all this information about manuscript collections, the Location Register will undoubtedly be enthusiastically received by biographers and other authors. Whether it will be welcomed by the custodians of manuscripts collections, as it inevitably increases their work-loads, remains to be seen.

Publication, in two large volumes, will be undertaken by British Library Publications in the summer of 1988. It is hoped to peg the cost at under £100, so that the Register can be afforded by all large and medium-sized libraries and even by a few individuals.

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Working with Wyndham Lewis

Naomi Mitchison

Beyond This Limit, a novel by Naomi Mitchison with illustrations by Wyndham Lewis, has just been republished by the Scottish Academic Press. The author remembers the collaboration.

When Wyndham Lewis suggested to me - and did he really mean it? - that we should do a book together, he making pictures and I making words, I said Oh do let's, or words to that effect. I was fond of him; I admired him as a writer and painter and didn't take seriously his political aberrations, which I saw as part of the disguise he liked to put on. Whenever I went to Paris, which I did fairly often in the thirties, I brought him back one of those big black hats which he liked wearing. I sat for him, usually in a Turkish brocade dress which my husband and I had bought on an early forage to Sarajevo, and probably saved him from having to pay a model - I had to sit in a totally professional way. Once, later on, another painter who was having a go at me was extremely surprised at the way I was able to do my fifty minutes and then, after the break, get back into exactly the same position. And Wyndham was always willing to talk very seriously about both painting and writing. So off we went on our experiment, I think in 1934.

I started with a character out of a book I had written, who was clearly likely to get into trouble. This was Phoebe in *We Have Been Warned*, and I was very fond of her; I wanted her to go on. But when I began writing the book I had no idea what she was going to do. So I started her off in the Paris metro. And all the time I remembered what Wyndham had said, that there was only one word that was totally the right one, the *mot juste*. It was the same with painting. Never put up with less than the best. The only truth. I took my start over to him, seven or eight hundred words. He lit up and began to draw. In no time we had established ourselves, me as Phoebe and him as the Ticket Collector, who is also the Guide of Souls, as Phoebe is also Despoina Horōn. Sometimes I would ask him: 'What's that?' for none of the drawings were simple, all had a life-time of strong art behind them. Then he would tell me that of course it was this or that - and I played the same game if he asked me why Phoebe behaved in this or that way. I usually brought my typescript over to his studio. He didn't like coming out very

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