
Cartmel Priory, February 2014

Early Risers, Loughrigg, February 2014

Annual Review, 2013~2014
A conference group on High Rigg, above the Vale of St John, August 2013
(scene of Wordsworth’s poem ‘Rural Architecture’)

Annual Review

The Wordsworth Conference Foundation

2013~14
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Cover Illustrations

*Front:* Earl of Abergavenny, East Indiaman. This unique scale model (scale 1:40) was a gift from Professor Richard Matlak to the College of the Holy Cross. The model builder is Peter Coughlin, Darwen, England. *Photograph by John Buckingham, College of the Holy Cross, Worcester, Massachusetts.*

*Inside Front:* walkers on Sheffield Pike and Scafell Pike; an early morning walk at Rydal; in the grounds of Allan Bank; and winter visits to the Rydal Cave and in Rydal Hall’s adventure playground.

1. Reference and Administrative Details

ADDRESS OF THE PRINCIPAL OFFICE: Tirril Hall, Penrith Cumbria CA10 2JE

REGISTERED OFFICE: Clint Mill, Commarket, Penrith CA11 7HW.

TRUSTEES / OFFICERS: Dr Gordon Bottomley; Professor Frederick Burwick; Dr David Chandler; Professor Angela Esterhammer (retires, August 2014); Dr Richard Gravil (Chairman and Winter School Director); Professor Anthony Harding; Dr Felicity James; Dr Stacey McDowell (Secretary and Conference Administrator; Professor Michael O'Neill; Professor Nicholas Roe (Conference Director); Dr Christopher Simons; Professor John Strachan (Treasurer: resigned February 2014); Dr Gregory Leadbetter (Treasurer: co-opted February 2014).

2. Structure, Governance and Management

2.1 Structure: The Foundation is a Company Limited by Guarantee, governed by a Memorandum and Articles adopted on 22 February 2008. The Articles provide for a Board of not less than five and not more than twelve Trustees, including up to two individuals co-opted by the Board by reason of their relevant expertise.

2.2 Governance: In 2013–14 the Board has consisted of twelve Trustee Directors. In accordance with the articles, four Trustees (Frederick Burwick, Richard Gravil, Anthony Harding and Christopher Simons) retired and offered themselves for re-election. All three were re-elected as Trustees/Directors, by individual resolution. In February 2014 John Strachan resigned, and Gregory Leadbetter was co-opted as Treasurer and Company Secretary. He will assume his duties in August 2014.

2.3 Management: The Board meets at least twice a year, and the quorum necessary for the transaction of the business of the Board is two. There are no paid employees. The Board has appointed a volunteer Conference Director, Winter School Director, and Administrators for both events. The Annual General Meeting takes place in July or August. The sixth such AGM will be in August 2014.

2.4 Risks: The Trustees having reviewed the major risks to which the charity is exposed, have instituted guidelines to manage these risks, together with appropriate insurance cover, and a reserve fund.
3. Financial Review

3.1 The Foundation’s bankers are the HSBC, Market Square, Penrith.

3.2 The Financial Policy of the Foundation is to maintain a Reserve Fund, equivalent to the first £10,000 of life subscriptions contributed by Members and Friends, and an Operating Fund, of which a portion is deposited in an interest bearing account. The purpose of the Reserve Fund, hitherto invested in a 90-day notice account with the Charities Aid Foundation, is to ensure that the Foundation would have the ability to continue its operations in the event that a cancelled or unprofitable conference were to exhaust the Operating Fund. Notice has been given to close the CAF account and the proceeds will be reinvested with the United Trust Bank in June 2014.

3.3 It is intended that the Operating Fund should be maintained at between £7,000 and £10,000 (discounting unallocated bursary donations) at the end of each financial year, the lower of these figures being the estimated costs to which the Charity would be exposed if unforeseen consequences led to the late cancellation of a conference.

3.4 On 31 March 2014 the Foundation’s cash balances amounted to a total of £22,530, made up as follows: in the Operating Fund £8,750 (less deposits on events forthcoming in 2014–15), and in the Reserve Fund £10,264.

3.5 The Ena Wordsworth Endowment is invested in the Charities Investment Fund operated by CCLA Investment Management Limited. The Board has decided for the time being that life subscriptions (over and above the first £10,000) should also be invested in this fund. The combined income from the CIF is likely to produce six bursaries a year.

4. Objectives and Activities:

4.1 The principal objectives of the Company are:

(a) to advance the education of the public in relation to the life work and influence of William Wordsworth (1770–1850) and his circle;

(b) to advance public knowledge, benefit, and enjoyment of the literature and culture of the Romantic Period (1750–1850).

4.2 Its main activities are:

(a) to hold conferences, winter schools and courses either alone or with others;

(b) to make grants to enable students to attend and so benefit from such conferences.

4.3 It is also empowered (c) to accept a transfer of any property, assets, undertaking, functions, responsibilities and liabilities conducive to the realization of the Objects; (d) to accept any subscriptions, gifts, devises and bequests of, any real or personal estate whether subject to special trusts or not; (e) to establish subscription arrangements and take other steps to procuring funds for the Company; (f) to invest in such investments,
securities or property as may be thought fit, and (g) to set aside funds for special purposes or against future expenditure or liabilities.


5.1 The Summer Conference in 2013 was held at Rydal Hall for the first time since 1971, and was attended by 72 people. Keynote Lecturers were Seamus Perry (Balliol, Oxford), Gregory Leadbetter (BCU), Stacey McDowell (Bristol), Sally Bushell (Lancaster), Christopher Simons (ICU, Tokyo), Sharon Ruston (Salford), Timothy Morton (Rice), Ralph Pite (Bristol), Adam Potkay (William and Mary), David Chandler (Doshisha, Japan), Heidi Thomson (Victoria), Deirdre Coleman (Melbourne). The programme concluded with a poetry reading by Michael O’Neill. Events included twelve walks, seven excursions (including an all-day excursion to the Solway Riviera and an all-day walk from Borrowdale to Scafell Pike).

5.2 A selection of twelve lectures and papers from the 2013 Summer Conference—Grasmere 2013: Selected Papers from the Wordsworth Summer Conference was published in both electronic and paper form in December 2013 and deposited with the British Library.

5.3 The 2014 Winter School, with 48 participants, was on the theme The Essential Wordsworth, with Claire Lamont, Gregory Leadbetter and Pamela Woof as Guest Lecturers, and other lecturers contributed by Trustees Frederick Burwick, David Chandler, Richard Gravil, and by tutors Oliver Clarkson and Matthew Ward. An afternoon session of postgraduate papers was chaired by Stephen Gill.

5.4 Book Auctions at these events generated a total of £1362 for the Foundation’s Bursary Scheme, the Winter School auction consisting largely of books from the library of Mary Wedd, formerly of Goldsmith’s College, London, who was a treasured participant in summer conferences and winter schools from the early 1970s to 2010.

5.5 The Foundation continued its reciprocal arrangements the Wordsworth Trust. The facilities of the Trust at Dove Cottage and the Museum are open for the benefit of conference participants, many of whom are also Friends or Patrons of the Wordsworth Trust, and some of whom use the research facilities of the Jerwood Centre during the Summer Conference, while Wordsworth Trust staff and volunteers have free access to conference lectures and papers. Events are held at Dove Cottage, with the assistance especially of Michael MacGregor (Director) and Jeff Cowton, Curator of the Trust Collections, whose presentations at the conference are always greatly appreciated.

6. Public Benefit

Public benefit is integral to the charity’s objectives in the following respects:

(a) The conferences operated by the Foundation are designed to appeal to a wider public than other academic conferences, and local attendance on an occasional, non-residential basis, without payment of the registration fee, is encouraged;
(b) As in previous years the residential cost of both conferences in has been minimized, so as to make them accessible to students and to pensioners, providing some residential places at less than cost. In the interest of economy, part of each conference’s transport requirements are provided by economical hire of a minibus from North Cumbria Community Transport (with Trustees as registered drivers).

(c) In 2013–2014 the Foundation applied £4065 (including £2669 from its own funds) to providing eleven student bursaries of £325 at the 2013 Summer Conference, and four bursaries ranging from £80 to £150 at the 2014 Winter School. Donations totalling £1060 for bursaries were received from Tony Reavell, Piet de Jong and Richard and Fiona Gravil. Approximately £3750 is reserved for bursaries in 2014–15, including income of £1836 from the Ena Wordsworth Endowment established in the last financial year.

(d) The purpose of the bursary scheme is to enable people with limited resources, not necessarily in full-time formal education, and without regard to background or origin, to attend the conference at less than half the real cost.

(e) All donations are applied, without deduction, to the benefit of members of the public. No Trustee is remunerated, only the unpaid Conference Directors and Administrators attend conferences without payment of fees, and there are no paid staff.

As is shown by the above, the charity extends the benefits of attending conferences irrespective of participants’ race, geographical location, sexual orientation, age, or economic circumstance. Both the bursary scheme, and arrangements for local admission are designed to enable people to benefit from the work of the Charity without regard to economic circumstances.

7. Members and Friends

Members


Friends

Paul Betz, Deirdre Coleman, Masako Fujie, Stephen Gill, Teiko Hatsui, Margaret Ives, Yorimichi Kasahara, Claire Lamont, Peter Larkin, Seamus Perry, Deborah Pfuntner, Anthony Reavell, John Rowe, Heidi Thomson, Anne Williams, John Williams, Irene Wiltshire, Saeko Yoshikawa.
8. Participants’ Reviews of the Year’s Events

The 2013 Summer Conference: A Review by Matthew Ward

The 42nd Wordworth Summer Conference returned to its roots at Rydal Hall this year, fittingly for an event that continues to build on its garlanded past. As a bursary holder, I was privileged to be able to attend the entirety of the event. This review cannot possibly do complete justice to the capaciousness of the ten days, nor convey the intellectual and personal rapport that developed over the course of the conference. Having attended as well as organised a range of conferences during my M.Phil and PhD, I nonetheless came away from the Wordworth Summer Conference believing it to be a unique experience that not only offers the opportunity to hear some outstanding papers, but also allows its participants the time and space to build friendships that can further their social as well as intellectual lives.

The range and scope of the papers and keynote lectures was genuinely impressive. There were also intriguing connections between them which suggested certain trends or interests in Wordworth studies. Stephen Gill’s recent *Wordsworth’s Revisitings* illustrated the fruitfulness of focusing on the poet’s relatively neglected later interests, and many papers at the summer conference suggested that there is great interest at present in Wordworth’s poetry after 1802. Despite Wordworth’s apparent anosmia, Rowan Boyson sniffed out his later verse so as to consider the importance of smell to the poetic imagination. Jessica Fay was also fascinated by the poet’s later work, and offered a convincing case for the importance of the North of England beyond Cumbria for Wordworth’s poetic landscape. But her paper’s discussion of monasticism also reflected the attention paid to religion or devotion in many of the papers at the conference. For instance, Chris Simons, and Paul Chi-Hun Kim both offered thoughtful insights into the *Ecclesiastical Sonnets*.

The influence of the environment to Wordworth’s writing, and that writing’s importance to environmental studies itself, were notable features of the conference. There was an invigorating and nimble close reading by Ralph Pite of the River Duddon sonnets on the Sunday morning. While the previous evening, the audience had been dazzled by a magisterial lecture by Timothy Morton which argued that Wordworth’s poetics can awaken a fresh perspective on ecology. Indeed, Wordworth’s capacity to educate us on environmental matters was often commented upon and well represented by numerous papers. There was, in contrast, very little focus on the poetry of the 1790s, though ‘The Ruined Cottage’ was the subject of two papers with contrasting approaches and focuses. Oliver Clarkson’s close reading of ‘shadowy language’ brought the poem’s depths to light, while Matthew Rowney was convincing as to the importance of the cultural history of trees.

There were some excellent papers concerning the importance of textual scholarship, most notably, perhaps, those of Bruce Graver on ‘Bibliographing Wordworth’, and Daniel Robinson whose ‘Unrememberable Being’: Wordworth Writing about Writing’ enthusiastically voiced the pedagogical possibilities of open and easier access to manuscripts through new technology.

Beyond Wordworth, other writers were also well represented, particularly Keats, who, along with Coleridge, was the subject of the first keynote lecture of the conference by an ebullient Seamus Perry. On the first Wednesday of the conference, the barn, which was hosting the talks at Rydal Hall, was the home of an enchanting evening of candlelight and Keats, courtesy of Nicholas Roe. Earlier, we had been fortunate, too, to be given a
glimpse of Keats’s medical notebooks by Hrileena Ghosh. And Keats was something of an inspiration behind Stacey McDowell’s exquisite lecture at the start of that day, as her paper explored the specificity and actuality of reading and the necessity of bringing an emotional intelligence to the experience. Overall the papers were consistently strong, engaging, thought-provoking, and often a pleasure.

I opted for several of the ‘A’ walks that have been such a feature of the conference over the years. These were, quite simply, magnificent. Richard Gravil’s vast knowledge of the area was put to good use, and James Castell led the hikes I was on with great care and enthusiasm. One highlight was the walk down from Scafell Pike which saw us cross a large stream so we could scramble along the side of a waterfall, Taylorghyll Force. The Langdale Pikes rewarded us with superb views, meanwhile, and gave us the chance to visit Dungeon Ghyll (site of Wordsworth’s ‘The Idle Shepherd Boys’ of course). Pausing briefly, we stepped up our pace soon after, eager to quench our thirst with beer at the Stickle Barn. We were very lucky with the weather, only getting rained on as we descended into Coniston from Wetherlam on our last day.

It was a pleasure to take part in Pamela Woof’s perambulation around Dove Cottage. It was a poignant experience that reflected Pamela’s deep understanding of the area. As we wended our way to Grasmere from Rydal, it became apparent that alongside the mutual sympathy which operated between Dorothy and William Wordsworth and their landscape, Pamela and Robert Woof had also had a profound influence on the landscape and events at Dove Cottage, as well as being influenced by them. Indeed, one of the most pleasing aspects of the conference, for me, was the way in which its rich history pervades events but never holds back new opportunities. The hikes, and I suspect the excursions too, became a way of walking with the past, even as a new generation were treading new ground.

Jeff Cowton’s presentation of the riches of Dove Cottage’s archive was itself a treasure. His enthusiasm and generosity was matched by the increasing attention being given to access and openness of resources at the museum. At the end of Jeff’s talk, many of us became members of the Wordsworth Trust, inspired by Jeff’s talk and the work done at the centre.

The final evening brought the conference to a fitting conclusion. First, Michael O’Neill read his poems, and this was followed by a sonnet competition open to anyone at the conference. It was a pleasure to hear O’Neill read his own poetry, not least because his vivid yet allusive verse seems to speak to and through poets of the past, while retaining its distinctive voice. With wine and whiskey being consumed this evening as it had been for many of the previous ones, the evening’s festivities turned gleefully to the infamous sonnet competition. Its theme, ‘Water’, turned out to be a rather unfitting one for such a sunny conference (though, given the number of swims in the nearby lakes that some of us enjoyed it was perhaps not too far off the mark!), and while it did not exactly bring a deluge of poems, it did offer a sprinkling of comic verse alongside the more serious ones. Poems ranged from the sublime to the ridiculous, with the bathetic movements of James Castell and Nicholas Roe’s hastily composed poem gaining the most laughs. Tom Clucas deservedly won the competition, however, and his reading was met with warm applause. The evening’s episodes were an appropriate end to the conference as a whole: at turns erudite, playful, supportive and congenial, and genuinely original.
I was determined to make the challenging journey to Cumbria from the South West peninsula to attend this year’s Winter Conference despite obstacles such as the broken rail link at Dawlish Warren which had temporarily marooned south-westerners from the rest of the country. Arriving in the inspirational surroundings of Grasmere, I felt the journey well worth the effort. Although the weather, to be expected amongst mountains, was somewhat variable, the shifting effects of light only served to enhance the beauty of the place.

It seemed appropriate in this, my first visit to the Wordsworth Conference, to be exploring the ‘Essential’ Wordsworth, particularly in a location just below Rydal Mount in the environment that was the source of his inspiration. The whole event functioned, most effectively, as a celebration and new appreciation of Wordsworth’s genius. This was achieved through an excellent organisational structure which succeeded in combining close reading of key Wordsworthian texts with cultural and pedestrian excursions in the best Romantic tradition. We were treated to a high calibre, stimulating variety of lectures exploring some of the familiar ‘greats’ of Wordsworth’s oeuvre and offering individual perspectives which we all had the opportunity to discuss in a series of expert-led daily seminars. All was punctuated by regular welcome refreshment breaks to renew body and mind!

The first and all following days were concluded with beautifully expressive readings of key Wordsworthian poems by Richard Gravil and the trained actor’s voice of John Rowe, already familiar to listeners of the Archers as Shula’s step-father! I felt this a most appropriate way of communicating Wordsworth and renewing our connection with his work, following in the tradition of the Romantic poets’ own private oral sharing and recitations of their work – although a precise replication of this might have required a more authentically Wordsworthian Northern ‘burr’. The elegiac poignancy of Wordsworth’s ‘Ruined Cottage’ was sensitively conveyed through the first evening’s reading.

I was determined to gain the full benefit of the inspirational surroundings in early morning walks enthusiastically led by the unfailingly energetic Fiona who was always up betimes and led us in refreshing pre-breakfast circuits by water and wood in the immediate locality of Rydal water, often rising, shining, from the lifting morning mist (both Rydal water and Fiona!).

Tuesday contained two excellent, reflective analyses: ‘The Ruined Cottage’, initially, which provided new insights through an astute personal and philosophical reading by Oliver Clarkson of the text heard the previous evening. This was followed in the afternoon, by David Chandler’s consideration of Wordsworth’s ‘Realism’ more generally, which offered a persuasive personal interpretation of the concept of realism, was shrewd, accessible, and very clearly delivered. Classic Wordsworth poems were equally well rendered in the after dinner evening’s reading of poems that included ‘Revisiting the Wye’, with all its familiar, resonant cadences.

In the following morning’s lecture, Matthew Ward, in some subtle and original reading of Wordsworthian texts, offered a challenging, philosophical consideration of Wordsworth: ‘Poet of Nature?’ left open finally to continuing analysis and debate in the seminar sessions which followed in different rooms within the Hall.

Despite unsettled weather, in the afternoon, we managed a ramble around the estate of Rydal Lodge itself which took us up the different levels of the waterfall tumbling down the surrounding hill. Some were even inspired to try out some of the assault equipment in the lower levels of the grounds later! In the afternoon’s session we were treated to two
papers from PhD students Timothy Carson and Priyanka Soni, who each offered fresh perspectives on Wordsworth’s work, Tim, in a neglected area of Wordsworthian scholarship, exploring the Biblical frame of reference in much of the poet’s writing while Priya shared her developing interest in the influence of body and physiology on Wordsworth’s poetic composition and its relationship to the joy or pain of memory. This was followed, later in the afternoon, by a typically challenging, but lucid and accessible analysis by Fred Burwick of conceptual and methodological paradox in Wordsworth’s writing, with fruitful consideration of the interplay between the ‘startling’ of inspirational insight and the ‘hesitation’ of retrospective reflection. The evening’s reading included a powerful recitation of ‘Resolution and Independence’.

After another refreshing early morning walk on Thursday, we were treated to the fresh perspective offered by Claire Lamont’s sensitive analysis of the influence and importance of the child as real presence and symbol in Wordsworth’s writing. In the afternoon, there was an optional excursion to an excellent photographic exhibition of ‘The Land-Keepers’ in the Jerwood Centre, which tied in neatly with what was to be the theme of Stephen Gill’s Saturday Lecture in the same place. The alternative ramble was a bracing Fell Walk confidently led by Richard Gravil to Wren Crag and High Rigg from Legburthwaite Ghyll, which took in prospects familiar to the Wordsworths, some of which had supplied the locations for poems.

In a typically sensitive reading of poetic language, Greg Leadbetter’s late afternoon lecture examined the subtle variation and contrasts in (active and passive) mood evident in some of Wordsworth’s most familiar (sometimes mistakenly designated ‘slight’) poems of early memory. The day was again wonderfully concluded with a powerful reading of Wordsworth’s ‘Intimations of Immortality’.

Broadening the scope of Wordsworthian analysis to consider its wider cultural resonances, Richard Gravil, on the final day’s lectures, explored sometimes unexpected correspondences between ideas developed in Wordsworth’s verse and nineteenth-century American literature from the work of Melville and Poe to Emily Dickinson. The afternoon cultural excursion was a visit to Cartmel Priory, well known to Wordsworth, while some of us took up the challenge of Nab Scar, on the peak of which we ate our packed lunches in the teeth of a wind-whipped hail storm. A touch of the rugged Romantic sublime, perhaps. Fortunately we survived – and, masochistically, even enjoyed – the experience.

In a sensitive analysis of poetic text, Pamela Woof’s evening lecture on the Elegiac Wordsworth involved brought the week’s lectures to a fitting close with a broader consideration and illuminating perspective on Wordsworth’s poems of loss and commemoration and what they revealed of his values and loyalties.

After dinner, we were treated to a grand finale consisting of many lively, varied contributions of talent in song, verse, and performance from various conference members. This was followed by an auctioning of various works of Romantic literature and criticism from the library of Mary Wedd, proceeds supplying a helpful contribution to the cost of conference bursaries for student academics.

On Saturday, after attending Stephen Gill’s excellent lecture on the link in Wordsworth’s poetry with working inhabitants of the rural landscape: ‘Wordsworth, Shepherds and a Visionary Republic’, delivered with characteristic modesty and authority, I made my way back to Oxenholme for the return journey to Devon which was accomplished safely, with (most of!) my luggage and a treasury of memories from a wonderful week of rich new meetings, discoveries and revisitings.
9. Membership Categories

The Wordsworth Conference Foundation has a democratic structure. Its Trustees may be nominated by Members as well as by the Board, and are elected by its Members. Their periods of service are limited to two terms of three years. You can join the Foundation as either a Member or a Friend, on payment of the same life subscription. Becoming a Member of the Foundation is a legal step, which involves signing the Memorandum and Articles of the Company, being elected to membership by the Board, and adopting a share of the company’s limited liability to the public. Members are entitled to attend and vote at annual general meetings, which take place during each summer conference. Members receive an annual report and financial statement and the agenda and minutes of the annual general meeting, and participate in the election of Trustees. Friends of the Foundation do not have voting rights (though they may be elected as Trustees and thereby become Members; and they may attend AGMs as observers). Nor do they incur any obligations. Both Members and Friends pay a lifetime subscription of £295 and are entitled to the same 10% discount on conference fees (i.e. the registration fee) for a period of fifteen years. Members and Friends are entitled to receive notice of forthcoming conferences, at their email or postal address (email being preferred).

To join the Foundation please complete and return this form to
Wordsworth Conference Foundation, Tirril Hall, Tirril, Penrith, CA10 2JE

Please tick applicable boxes

1. TO BECOME A MEMBER
[ ] I wish to become a MEMBER of The Wordsworth Conference Foundation. Please supply me with a copy of the Memorandum and Articles. If elected to membership by the Trustees I will pay, when requested, a life subscription of £295, sign a certificate of liability, and endeavour to attend annual general meetings, as a voting member.

2. TO BECOME A FRIEND
[ ] I wish to become a FRIEND of The Wordsworth Conference Foundation, and.
[ ] I enclose a cheque for my life subscription of £295 payable to The Wordsworth Conference Foundation
[ ] OR I have transferred £295 to The Wordsworth Conference Foundation HSBC bank account
   IBAN reference: GB67MIDL40361061448617
[ ] OR I have paid my life subscription of £295 by Google Checkout.

Signed:       Date:
Name and title:
Address:
Email:
10. Summary Statement of Account, April 2013 to March 2014

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**Bank Accounts**

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**BALANCE**

19121

**Balances at 31 March 2014**

19121

Dispositions:

- Reserved Funds (the CAF deposit account and bursary income) 14421
- Operating Funds (after payment of £4050 in deposits) 4700
- Charities Investment Fund 52523

* With deposits paid in 2012/13, conference expenditure was £49513