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The George Eliot Fellowship- 19

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THE GEORGE ELIOT FELLOWSHIP

FOUNDED 1930

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August 1988

Dear Member,

When I wrote the last newsletter we had not then had Gabriel Woolf's programme of readings entitled 'The Warwickshire Pen'. It was, as always, immensely successful - in its content, its performance (see the Review, p. 50) and also financially. That we make a profit at all is entirely due to the great generosity of those members who sponsor the two performances each year. Without these good friends we would certainly not be able to play at the University of Warwick Arts Centre and we are so grateful for their help and support. 'The Warwickshire Pen' is to be repeated in the county on October 8th. when the National Trust is to present it, with Gabriel Woolf, of course, at Coughton Court, near Alcester, and a N.T. leaflet is enclosed for those members within reach. You will see that Gabriel will be presenting another of his recitals (poetry and songs from World War 1) on October 1st. at Berrington Hall, near Leominster.

Next year's programme has already been commissioned for April 27th. and 28th. As this will be Gabriel's 20th. visit to Warwickshire on our behalf, we have invited him to choose his own anthology of poetry and prose in a programme to be called 'With Great Pleasure' and we know his pleasure will include a substantial helping of George Eliot. In the next newsletter, I shall be asking for sponsorship again, so if you have some money you don't know what to do with.....!

Another event which happened after the preparation of the last newsletter was the Seminar of the Alliance of Literary Societies. This, too, was a great success and has paved the way for the informal Alliance instigated 15 years ago by the George Eliot Fellowship to become a more formal and, we hope, powerful organisation in protecting our literary heritage and being of mutual benefit to the many literary societies who have become members.

The Nuneaton Wreath-laying on June 12th. was well supported and we heard John Burton, Chairman of the Bedworth Society and a very good friend of the Fellowship, appeal for some restraint in the promotion of tourism. Tourists at any price must be avoided if quality and integrity are to be maintained. John's speech will be published in the 1989 Review.

We had two guests of honour at the Westminster Abbey Wreath-laying on June 18th. Our principal guest was Jennifer Uglow whose excellent George Eliot was published in the Virago Pioneers series last year. Also in the Abbey was Mrs. Mary Haight, whose husband, Dr. Gordon Haight, had unveiled the memorial stone eight years earlier. Mrs. Uglow very generously offered Mrs. Haight the pleasure of actually placing the chaplet of laurel and white carnations onto the stone; Mrs. Haight was clearly touched by this warm gesture. By an amazing coincidence, Mrs. Uglow had chosen to speak on the very passage also chosen as her reading by Margaret Wolfit! Something similar happened last year; there must be something about Westminster Abbey! Mrs. Uglow's Address will also appear in the 1989 Review.

THE STUDY GROUP Wednesday, August 31st. at 7.00 p.m.

The Group's numbers had dropped for our last session on The Mill on the Floss on June 1st. but we hope it will grow again for our discussion on the shortest of the novels, Silas Marner. With a decrease in numbers we run the risk of not covering our expenses, so we do hope that a few more will read Silas Marner and join us at Dempster House, 33, Queen's Road, Nuneaton to be led in our discussion of the book by our good friend, Ruth Harris. Just turn up on the evening - no need to let us know in advance. You will be most welcome.

The following session of the Study Group will be later in the autumn with Graham Handley, and the book under discussion will be Romola - not the easiest of the novels but it will be made a lot easier under Graham's direction. If you would like to join the group for Romola you will have plenty of time to read it; will you let me know if you think you would like to join us for that session, please?

MARGARET WOLFIT - Tuesday, September 20th. at 7.30 p.m. at King Edward School, Nuneaton

Margaret, always a popular visitor to the George Eliot Fellowship, is preparing an entirely new programme for us for this one performance only. At the time of preparing this newsletter I have been unable to finalise details with her and so am unable to tell you either the programme's title or much about its theme. If this can be ascertained before the newsletter goes out, an extra note will be inserted for Midlands members only. If anyone else wishes to have full details, will they please contact me and I will let them have more information. If the newsletter has to go out without this information, further details will follow as soon as possible. In the meantime, will you please keep the date free? Whatever the theme, we are assured of a most enjoyable evening. Also, we need your support! These programmes of readings are expensive to stage, but a full house on the night ensures that we do not put it on at a loss and it gives Margaret the pleasure of a good response from the people for whom she has devised the programme.

GEORGE ELIOT MEMORIAL LECTURE: GEORGE ELIOT AND MARRIAGE

Lecturer: Dr. GRAHAM HANDLEY. Nuneaton Council Chamber, Saturday, October 29th.
at 7.30 p.m. Admission free

This year's lecturer needs no introduction for he is not only a member of the Fellowship but my co-editor of the REVIEW and one of the two leaders of our Study Group. He is the distinguished editor of the Clarendon and World's Classics editions of Daniel Deronda, lectures at summer schools, teaches at Adult Education Literature classes, edits study notes for students and countless novels for large publishing houses. He is knowledgeable, wise, enthusiastic and completely unpretentious. His own enthusiasm for his variety of subjects is truly infectious and this Memorial Lecture will be no exception. In his chosen title, George Eliot and Marriage, he will discuss George Eliot's attitude towards marriage as it is represented in rich variety in her fiction and as it affected her own life. The fact that she was 'married' and yet not married will be looked at as one of the major influences on her writing. Admission to the lecture is free (thanks to a generous grant from Nuneaton and Bedworth Joint Arts Association) and by ticket. Please come whether you have a ticket or not; the issue of tickets helps us to judge response in advance and is useful to us but by no means obligatory. Tickets will be obtainable from Nuneaton Bookshop, 24, Abbey Street and from Nuneaton Library after October 1st, but are available NOW from me or from Miss D. Edmonds, 180, Coventry Road, Nuneaton. Please come and bring all your friends!

May I remind you of our two tourist souvenirs? The reason for the reminder is that a fresh supply of the attractive brown and ivory mugs has been ordered so that we can still supply as 'sets' the matching teatowel and mug. They will make most attractive and inexpensive gifts at £1.75 for the mug and £1.99 for the teatowel - an exclusive gift as it can only be purchased in the George Eliot Country which they represent. Further details about availability from me or the treasurer.

The 1988 REVIEW is enclosed with your newsletter. As you will see, we have now made a further step forward by having a real printer! This new format, we hope, will be welcomed. It makes for a slimmer volume with a more professional look; we hope the contents will be found to be as attractive and interesting. Printing has proved to be much more expensive, but we hope it will be considered worthwhile, particularly as next year's issue is to be our twentieth, and the editors hope to make it a really special one. Papers for the 20th. are invited (see this year's copy) and may I also ask you to keep an eye open for anything published elsewhere which might be well worth including, subject to permission being available.

DATE FOR YOUR DIARY: GEORGE ELIOT BIRTHDAY LUNCHEON: Sunday, November 20th. at the George Eliot Hotel, Market Place, Nuneaton. Guest of Honour: MARGARET WOLFITT. More in the next newsletter.

I am asked to bring the following to your attention:

JOHN LEWIS STUDIO (which contains the original mould for the George Eliot Statue) will have two Open Weekends at Astley, near Nuneaton - October 22nd/23rd and December 10th/11th. from 10.30 a.m. to 6.00 p.m.

JOHN B. SHELTON THIRTIETH ANNUAL MEMORIAL LECTURE: TALES FROM SHAKESPEARE by Dr. Stanley Wells, Director of the Shakespeare Institute. Friday, 30th. September at 7.45 p.m. The Lecture Theatre, Herbert Art Gallery and Museum, Jordan Well, Coventry. Free tickets from Information Desk, Coventry Central Library.

LEAMINGTON LITERARY SOCIETY 1000th. MEETING! Town Hall, Leamington Spa on Tuesday, November 6th. at 7.30 p.m.: 'THE BLIGHTED STAR: THE NATURAL AND SOCIAL UNIVERSE OF THOMAS HARDY' by W.V. Thomas, M.A. B.Phil, Lecturer in English Studies at the University of Birmingham Department of Extramural Studies. Admission (including refreshments) £2.00. More information and tickets from Mrs. M. Watkins, 15, Church Hill, Leamington Spa, Tel: 25733. Leamington Lit. are very supportive of the Fellowship - let us support them!

MISSING FROM HOME!: George Eliot: the Emergent Self by Ruby Redinger Silas Marner (also including the Poems and Brother Jacob) pub. Collins. Have I lent them to someone, please? If so, can they now come home?

All good wishes,

Kathleen Adams

GEORGE ELIOT MEMORIAL LECTURE: Saturday, October 29th.

Please send free tickets

I enclose a stamped, addressed envelope

Name: