

The  
**W. H. Auden Society**  
**Newsletter**

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*Please see the Appeal to Members that appears on the Contents page of this number.*

## Recent and Forthcoming

*W. H. Auden*, by Tony Sharpe, a title in the Routledge Guides to Literature Series, was published in the autumn of 2007..

*W. H. Auden: Prose, Volume III, 1949-1955* (The Complete Works of W. H. Auden), edited by Edward Mendelson, will be published by Princeton University Press in December 2007.

The Ilkley Literature Festival held several Auden-related events in September and October 2007. The main one, on 29 September, with Kevin Crossley-Holland, Nick Toczek, Katherine Bucknell, recalled Auden's own visit to Ilkley, when he opened the first Ilkley Literature Festival on April 23rd 1973, about six months before he died. Other events included an exhibition on 2 October of Auden material from the Festival archives and a reading of Auden's poems.

On 31 October 2007, a poetry reading was held in London at Christie's King Street, organized by Poet in the City and hosted by Katherine Bucknell. Readers were Simon Callow, John Fuller, Lachlan MacKinnon, and Peter Mudford. Poet in the City managed a packed house – about 230 – and the evening seemed to be enthusiastically received.

*Family Ghosts: The Auden Genealogy Project*. Nicholas Jenkins, with the help of Anthony Andrews and Matthew Jockers, has begun an ambitious project to build an Internet-based genealogical tree for W. H. Auden. When the chart is ready for viewing in 2008 it will trace distant connections between Auden and such unexpected relations as John of Gaunt and Werner Heisenberg. The project will bring to light the way in which the Auden family was long concentrated in a small geographical area, and will point to the network of social and financial connections that linked the Auden and Bicknell families even before Auden's parents first met. The web address of the project will be published in the next number of the *Newsletter* and posted on the Society's web site ([www.audensociety.org](http://www.audensociety.org)).

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## An Appeal to Members

The Society operates on a proverbial shoestring (almost on a literal one), and membership fees do not quite cover the cost of printing and mailing the *Newsletter*. Because the costs of a sending a reminder letter are prohibitive, we rely on members to send their annual renewals voluntarily. If you have not sent a renewal in the past year, could you kindly do so now? Payment can conveniently be made by any of the methods described on the last page of this number.

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only after he painted his picture of Auden.) Similar statements about Kenneth Hari appeared on Wikipedia pages devoted to other writers, painters, and musicians, in each case specifying that more than twenty-five to thirty additional original portraits were painted from life after the first; all such passages were eventually removed from Wikipedia.

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### **Sheaves from Sagaland: Three Mysteries Solved**

Auden and MacNeice's *Letters from Iceland* includes a chapter titled 'Sheaves from Sagaland: An Anthology of Icelandic Travel addressed to John Betjeman, Esq.' The chapter is Auden's compilation of curious and entertaining excerpts from travellers' reports from the seventeenth through the twentieth centuries, many of them incorrectly attributed as a result of Auden's slapdash scholarship. In my notes to the chapter in the complete edition of Auden's *Prose and Travel Books in Prose and Verse*, Vol. 1 (1996), I was unable to identify three selections; now I can.

In *Prose*, vol. 1, p. 776, in the notes to Part II of the chapter, I wrote 'the two passages attributed to Tremarec (pp. 219 and 222) are not by him' but did not know who wrote them. They are in fact slightly misquoted from the item listed in Auden's bibliography (p. 240) as 'La Peyrère: *Account of Iceland* (Churchill II), 1644.' This is a shorthand listing for Isaac de la Peyrère's 'An Account of Iseland [*sic*]', written in 1644, published in French in 1663, and translated into English in *A Collection of Voyages and Travels*, vol. II, compiled by Awnsham Churchill and John Churchill (1732).

On p. 777, in the notes to Part III of the chapter, I wrote that the passage attributed to Anthony Trollope is not in his account of Iceland and may be by someone else. In fact it is by Trollope, but has nothing to do with Iceland; it appears in his *Travelling Sketches* (1866), in a sketch titled 'The Man who Travels Alone'.

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love letters to the world and I am happy that many of them came to me and found me out.' (A few other versions of this sentence appear in McKuen's writings, perhaps quoted from memory.) In one detail, this later version may be more authentic than even the earliest one, as printed in 1976, because Auden may well have written 'love letters to the world' and not 'letters to the world' as the 1976 version has it. But Auden almost certainly wrote none of these versions exactly as they appear on McKuen's books and web pages.

*A comment on the painter Kenneth Hari.* The painter Kenneth Hari evidently made a portrait of Auden in 1969; a photograph of Hari with his arm around an apparently indifferent Auden may be found through an internet search. Hari reported the following on his web site ([www.hari.com](http://www.hari.com)): 'The notable poet W. H. Auden wrote of Kenneth Hari: "Your portraits should serve as a unification of Man, not as decorative ornaments. Continue your portrait work, it is excellent."' (This page, and the quotation, first appeared on the Internet in or before 1997.) No evidence exists that Auden wrote these improbable-sounding sentences, which may be compared with other improbable-sounding tributes from many of Kenneth Hari's portrait subjects quoted his web site. (At least one person so quoted, James Randi, has told me he is certain that he never said or wrote a sentence that is attributed to him on another page devoted to Kenneth Hari.)

Curiously, on 31 October 2007, an unknown person added the following slightly misspelled text to the Wikipedia.org page on Auden.

In 1967 W.H. Auden posed for his official portrait in oil on canvass, painted by International artist Kenneth Hari. Although the first portrait was commissioned by Lincoln Kirstein, artist Kenneth Hari went on to paint over 30 more portraits of W.H. Auden all from life sitting's. The sitting's took place at W. H. Auden's home at 77 St. Mark's Place, New York City, New York (Circa 1967-1971)

When this passage was removed by other persons, partly because the phrase 'official portrait' was nonsense, partly because it was an obvious instance of self-advertising, it was quickly restored by a Wikipedia user whose username was Kennethhari (one word). The passage was eventually removed permanently by other Wikipedia contributors. (The passage seems to be contradicted by other web pages in which Kenneth Hari reports that he met Lincoln Kirstein

## Paysage Moralisé: Auden and Maps

Reflecting on the links between his mature poetry and the childhood 'private secondary sacred world' deriving from his fascination with lead-mining and its Pennine landscapes, Auden recalled 'necessary textbooks on geology and machinery, maps, catalogues, guidebooks, and photographs' (*CW*,<sup>1</sup> p. 424), in which his fantasy-life had been grounded before he ever visited the North Pennine moors. When, earlier, he told Geoffrey Grigson that 'My Great Good Place is the part of the Pennines bounded on the S by Swaledale, on the N by the Romans Wall and on the W by the Eden Valley' (17 January 1950; Berg Collection),<sup>2</sup> he offered a quasi-cartographical definition of a locality both physically specific and metaphysically general, whose geographical boundaries were defined as if visualised on a map – which is, in fact, the only 'place' on which they could ever be observed simultaneously.

Critical commentary has noticed the significance of maps in Auden's poetry and drama; but as well as constituting a thematic continuity in his writing, maps figure more particularly in its hinterland, featuring in some of the importantly formative books he included in his 'Nursery Library' or quoted in *A Certain World*.<sup>3</sup> As with that 'lonely' schoolboy mapmaker he drolly but self-referentially admonished (*EA* p. 50), a fascination with maps possibly suggests the 'autistic' dimension he later associated with this phase of his life; but there is some evidence that maps continued to be a means by which older Auden evoked his Great Good Place. In view of the emphasis he would place upon this 'sacred' landscape and its evolving meanings, such precursive materials have potential interest. I want to explore what can be known about the maps by which that landscape's existence was foreshadowed, and then maintained in memory.

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<sup>1</sup> Abbreviations: *AN* = *W. H. Auden Society Newsletter*; *AS* = *Auden Studies*; *CW* = *A Certain World*; *EA* = *The English Auden*.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted in Richard Davenport-Hines, *Auden* (1995), p. 236.

<sup>3</sup> See Edward Mendelson, 'A Note on Auden's "Nursery Library"', *AN* (Nov 1996), pp. 36-8; Katherine Bucknell, 'Auden's Nursery Library', *AS III* (1995), pp. 197-206.

Auden listed Thomas Sopwith's *An Account of the Mining District of Alston Moor, Weardale, and Teesdale* (Alnwick, 1833) as part of his 'nursery library', and quoted it at length in *A Certain World* (which amounted to 'a map of my planet'); as its title indicates, it covers the locality he particularly loved. This small book, which he can have known only in its original printing, has as its frontispiece a part-coloured 'plan', showing principal routes and hachured outline of fells, for 'the MINING DISTRICTS of ALSTON MOOR and the adjoining dales OF THE RIVERS TYNE WEAR & TEES', taking the Roman Wall as its northern boundary, the Tees as its southern, and including Wallsend and Durham city to the east. The 'nursery library' included one other book about this area (despite the fact that it was first published when he was 16): Stanley Smith's *Lead and Zinc Ores of Northumberland and Alston Moor* (HMSO, 1923). There are reasons for believing that he prized this more highly than Sopwith, along with Westgarth Forster's *A Treatise on a Section of the Strata from Newcastle upon Tyne to Cross Fell*, third edition (Newcastle upon Tyne and London, 1883): he is reported as having in 1972 asserted that these two were his most precious books.<sup>4</sup> His copy of this last – as Nicholas Jenkins has pointed out (*AN* 6, December 1990) – Auden induced Random House to use as model for *The Age of Anxiety*, which further suggests its personal significance. Neither Smith nor Forster, however, includes maps, as distinct from more schematically localised diagrams.

Another mining-related book we know that he possessed – not because he ever alluded to it but because his autographed copy is in the city library at Carlisle – is John Postlethwaite's *Mines and Mining in the Lake District*, third edition (Whitehaven, 1913), in which there are fold-out geological and geographical maps of the Lake District orefields. Auden acquired this in August 1921; but although he affixed to its inside covers and endpapers captioned photographs of some of the mines it described (presumably recording actual visits) – which surely suggests some degree of personal investment – its impact on his work is far less discernible than that of another book unrelated to mining, lengthily cited in *A Certain World*. This is Anthony

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<sup>4</sup> See Alan Myers and Robert Forsythe, *W.H. Auden: Pennine Poet* (North Pennines Heritage Trust, 1999), p. 23. This pamphlet includes the text of Auden's *Vogue* article referred to later.

## A Few Things Auden Never Wrote

Like almost every major writer, Auden has often been given credit for remarks he never made and lines he never wrote. Issues 23 and 25 of the *Newsletter* reported the source of the line 'We are all here on earth to help others; what on earth the others are here for, I don't know', in a recording by the music-hall comedian Vivian Foster. Here are a few more things Auden never wrote, or never wrote in the form in which they have been made public.

'*Roast Poet*'. In 1958, the Gaberbocchus Press, a small press in London, published the fifth in its 'loose-leaf' series of folded broadsides, *Roast Poet*, by W. H. Auden. It reads in full: 'If a poet demanded from the State the right to have a few bourgeois in his stable, people would be very much astonished, but if a bourgeois asked for some roast poet, people would think it quite natural.' (The original is broken into five lines as if in verse; the first four lines end 'State', 'stable,' 'astonished,' and 'poet,') Beneath the text is the attribution: '(from the Preface to Isherwood's translation of Baudelaire's *Intimate Journals*; Methuen, 1949.)'. This is not in Auden's introduction to the Isherwood's translation, nor is it in Isherwood's preface, but is an excerpt from Baudelaire himself (as translated by Isherwood); it may be found in Baudelaire's 'Squibs,' item XVII.

*A blurb for the poet Rod McKuen*. In 1976, three years after Auden's death, a collection by the popular folk-singer and poet Rod McKuen, *The Sea Around Me . . . The Hills Above*, was published in London by Elm Tree Books, an imprint of Hamish Hamilton. A blurb on the front jacket flap (repeated on the rear cover) quoted Auden: 'Rod McKuen's poems are letters to the world and I am happy that some of them have come to me and found me out.' Auden, who was generous but not prodigal with blurbs, may indeed have written this; the qualifying 'some' has an authentic ring. However, when a similar but not identical collection of McKuen's poems, *The Sea Around Me*, was published in 1977 by Cheval Books, an imprint of Simon & Schuster, New York, Auden's blurb, quoted on the front jacket flap, had inexplicably been rewritten. It now read: 'Rod McKuen's poems are letters to the world and I'm happy that many of them came to me and found me out.'

Later still, on Rod McKuen's web site ([www.mckuen.com](http://www.mckuen.com)), Auden's blurb had changed again, and now read: 'Rod McKuen's poems are

like one of those places where eccentric millionaires are found dead, their money in piles under the bed. [New York, 1970]

*Best Seat in the House: Memoirs of a Lucky Man*, by Robert Fulford  
(Collins Publishers, 1988)

**Peter Vansittart, novelist: 'Absorbed in a crossword'**

I never spoke to Auden. Once, at a party...I saw him but felt insufficiently brave to accost him. . . .

Years later on a flight from Vienna, Auden was seated beside me, absorbed in a crossword. In my pocket was a proof-copy of my latest novel, in which I had, as a foreword, printed a poem of his. But I could not disturb him, and said nothing. On landing he suddenly grinned at me, very slightly hesitated, I nodded clumsily, friends at once divided us, and shortly afterwards he was dead. (early 1970s)

*Paths From A White Horse: A Writer's Memoir*, by Peter Vansittart  
(Quartet Books, 1985)

Compiled by DANA COOK

*Dana Cook is a Toronto editor and collector of literary encounters. His compilations have appeared in a wide range of newspapers, magazines and journals. This is the final installment of a series.*

**Note**

Rachel Wetzsteon's piece in the previous *Newsletter* (28), 'Ten Reasons Why Auden is Number One in My Book,' was originally delivered in October 2005 on a panel honoring Auden's induction into the Poets Corner of the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, and presented again in June 2007 at West Chester University.

Collett's *The Changing Face of England* (1926; Mendelson believes Auden possessed the 1932 reprint). Collett's book included two small-scale maps of England and Wales (with southern Scotland): 'Tides, Coast and Rivers', principally showing the direction of tidal flows; and 'Race and Language', delineating the approximate boundaries between Anglian and Saxon dialects and the extents, variously, of Anglo-Saxon, Danish, and Norse settlements. One other book associated by Auden with his 'nursery library' contains maps: L. Simonin's *Mines and Miners or Underground Life* (1869); translated and adapted for the English market, it contains various geological maps, mostly of world coal-fields.

None of those books contains maps of Auden's Eden landscape (although Dufton, Cross Fell and also Sedbergh come just within Postlethwaite's eastern boundary). The nature of his interest, and its particular focus on the area defined by the titles of Sopwith's, Forster's and Smith's books, makes it plausible to speculate – as Katherine Bucknell does in her edition of the *Juvenilia* – that he might also have been familiar with William Wallace's *Alston Moor: Its Pastoral People: Its Mines and Miners* (1890): the title alone would have attracted him, although its focus is more human and historical than technical and geological. Wallace provides a one-inch scale fold-out map of Alston Moor which takes as its western boundary 'Heavens Water Division Between the Tyne', and elsewhere, Cumberland's county boundaries with Northumberland (north), Durham (east), and Westmoreland (sic; south); it also identifies, among others, 'Cashwell Mine', by the side of Cash Burn below Cross Fell.

A map such as this is particularly resonant, not only because – as will already be clear – its place-names offer potent signifiers in Auden's writing, but also because it delineates an area both actual and, to use his own term (from 'Prologue at Sixty') 'noumenal': maps, to adjust the well-known sonnet from China, can really point to places where life is sacred now (for this reason I do not here consider 'nursery' books containing maps of fictional terrain – such as that in *King Solomon's Mines*, for example). Humphrey Carpenter's 1981 biography was the first to pay significant attention to Auden's lead-mining landscapes; Edward Callan, in *Carnival of Intellect* (1983), was one of the first critics to consult an appropriate map and relate the action of 'Paid on Both Sides' to it; John Fuller and Bucknell have visited Alston Moor and its environs, and have speculated on the relation between poems and locations. Alan Myers and subsequently

Robert Forsythe have taken further the systematic tabulation of Auden's North Pennine references, which suggest the poet's personal familiarity with its places. All this activity, of course, follows up the hints Auden himself so strongly gave of the area's importance to him.

But although he evidently visited the region from the age of twelve onward, by his own account (to Alan Ansen and elsewhere) its landscape had before then been mediated for him by his reading; and after 1938 it was, again, necessarily to a large degree mediated. The delineation in 'New Year Letter' (III) of his favourite 'English area' suggests a map's apportionment 'from BROUGH/ To HEXHAM and the ROMAN WALL'. Because he attached such significance to Alston Moor and its adjoining regions (Rookhope for instance isn't, strictly speaking, part of Alston Moor), it is regrettable that little of the pre-formative material adult Auden remembered having amassed in his boyhood has survived, or been reliably identified.

The books he specified, even when his own copy has gone missing, can usually be found in the bowels of research libraries; but we do not know enough about the rest for accurate retrieval of information. A particular case in point is what I'll call the 'Bective Poplars map', alluded to by Davenport-Hines and Jenkins: both agree that (to quote Jenkins) 'in 1947 Auden had a large map of the Pennines hanging on the wall of the Fire Island shack that he shared with the Sterns' (AS III, p. 84n). There is some confusion about this: Davenport-Hines doesn't mention the size of the map (which he asserts is of Alston Moor), and he additionally alludes to an ordnance-survey map of Heysham displayed as well (p. 249). Myers believes the Alston Moor map was later seen at Kirchstetten (op. cit. note 3, p. 8).

Myers cannot recall the source for his assertion, which I have been unable to verify; but the others' information appears to derive from – and combine – articles appearing in periodicals on each side of the Atlantic in response to *The Age of Anxiety*: an unsigned two-column review titled 'Eclogue, 1947' published in *Time* (21 July 1947),<sup>5</sup> and a longer piece by Maurice Cranston headlined 'Poet's Retreat', in *John o' London's Weekly* (6 February 1948). Given his interest in machi-

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<sup>5</sup> Mendelson identifies the author as Robert Fitzgerald (AS II p. 191, item I20). Auden wrote a letter to James Stern that makes clear this interview was conducted on Fire Island.

ground, he wouldn't complain at all, he'd be delighted. But Auden was a bit grumpy about having three people there, and my impression of him then was that maybe he was playing a role, the grumpy man, because he complained all the time about pornography. He talked all the time. He said every time he went to the railway station in New York to make a journey and he wanted to read detective novels, it was all pornography now, all pornography. He gave me the impression of being rather like the headmaster of an English school. I did three drawings that morning, two of which were OK. In the third one he looked like Oscar Levant; it was a front view, terrible; I tore it up later. I showed them to him and he commented on them. I don't think he had much visual feeling. . . [London, late 1960s]

*David Hockney: My Early Years*, by David Hockney  
(Thames and Hudson, 1976)

### **Marianne Faithfull, pop singer: 'Stashing drugs'**

I remember going to a dinner with [MP and journalist] Tom Driberg and W. H. Auden. In the middle of the evening Auden turned to me and in a gesture I assume was intended to shock me said, 'Tell me, when you travel with drugs, Marianne, do you pack them up your arse?'

'Oh, no, Wystan,' I said. 'I stash them in my pussy.' [London, late 1960s]

*Faithfull: An Autobiography*, by Marianne Faithfull with David Dalton  
(Little, Brown, 1994)

### **Robert Fulford, journalist, editor and critic: 'Grease-spattered cave'**

At last I was to meet one of the heroes of my life, the poet whose work I'd read since adolescence, the essayist and seer I'd followed for decades. With the [Canadian Broadcasting Corporation] producer and film crew beside me, I knocked eagerly on the door of his old walk-up apartment. When he opened it, everything was as it should have been. Auden wore floppy slippers, baggy pants, and a black turtleneck of some synthetic material. With the gesture of a lord inviting tourists to inspect his stately home, he waved us into precisely what we had been told to expect – a grease-spattered cave that looked



I had already met him a few times, though never for very long. In January 1958 he had sent a long letter—prompted by an ‘understanding and generous’ essay I had written about his work—very warm about *The Uses of Literacy*, and full of vivid generalisations on class habits. He proposed then that I visit him in Oxford, where he was at the time Professor of Poetry.

The sitting room in the apartment just outside Christ Church was, as I had expected, cluttered, even squalid. I had not expected the pile of papers on his working table to be surmounted by tins of pilchards and bottles of red vermouth. . . .

We enjoyed the visit, especially after we had become used to repeatedly replenishing the food—he was a very hearty eater—the gin and the white and red vermouth. He seemed at ease, in the well-run manner of one who spends a lot of time in other people’s homes, especially those of academics across America and Britain; he was a uniquely well house-trained guest. He said you had a duty when on parade to be friendly, and that he had had years of experience in a hard school, the American campus road. At the party he was, true to form, thoroughly available and talkative.

The most striking, and sympathetic, sign of his skill as a guest concerned his love of crossword puzzles. He set out to do the crossword in our *Sunday Times* and began by putting a sheet of transparent paper over it and making a copy in bold pencil. He then read the clues off the newspaper and filled in his own copy. He pointed out, with a touch of pride, that in this way you did not spoil the crossword for your hosts.

*An Imagined Life: Life and Times, Volume III, 1959-1991,*  
by Richard Hoggart (Oxford University Press, 1993)

### David Hockney, artist: ‘Playacting grumpy?’

I started drawing more direct portraits...

The Auden drawings were done because Peter Heyworth, the music critic for the *Observer*, asked me if I’d like to draw Auden and I said certainly I would, just because I wanted to meet him. He was staying with Peter Heyworth, who arranged a time for me to go. Ron Kitaj and Peter Schlesinger came along with me. I thought Auden wouldn’t mind Peter, a nice attractive boy. I was imagining he’d be a bit like Christopher Isherwood. Christopher might have objected if you took a few artists, but if there were beautiful boys in the back-

nery, Auden probably enjoyed having his photograph appear, in the *Time* piece, alongside a bigger spread advertising a ‘dragline clamshell and crane combination’ for attachment to crawler tractors; the sympathetic review notes at its close that he is passing the summer in the ‘tar-paper-covered shack’ where ‘On one wall of his littered study Poet Auden keeps an immense map of Alston Moor in Cumberland below the Roman Wall, his childhood country, whose limestone quarries, fells and valleys – and mining machinery – have persisted as bleakly beautiful imagery in all his work’.<sup>6</sup>

Cranston’s piece, illustrated by Auden’s 1930s face, is more about his Fire Island habitation, to which its writer had paid a visit in September 1947 (a couple of months, therefore, after *Time*); inside the shack, they bemoaned the still-evident New York heat, which led Auden to observe that ‘of course, there are more beautiful places in the world’, and Cranston comments, ‘There was an Ordnance Survey map of Heysham on the wall beside him, and I noticed him glancing at it as he spoke’.

Unlike the *Time* interviewer, Cranston didn’t follow Auden’s visual hint; had he done so, things might have become clearer; for what he writes does not corroborate that earlier account either of the map’s size or subject. There is no obvious reason why Auden should have a map of Heysham, in Lancashire, on his wall, nor why he should think it an especially beautiful place;<sup>7</sup> Heysham, moreover, was not big enough to give its name to an area map (nearby Lancaster was).

I have before me a reproduction of the 1903 Ordnance Survey map of ‘Alston Moor & Upper Weardale’, sheet number 25 in the One Inch survey; at its top it has printed centrally ‘ALSTON’, and immediately underneath, in smaller font, ‘(HEXHAM)’, to indicate the northerly adjoining sheet; at its bottom it has printed centrally ‘(BROUGH)’, for the southerly adjoining sheet. In 1940 Auden had defined the locality he loved as stretching ‘from BROUGH/ To HEXHAM’: albeit that his composing notebook (in the Berg Collec-

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<sup>6</sup> One senses Auden’s own emphasis here; in December 1943 he had evidently drawn attention to boyhood aspirations as a ‘would-be mine operator’ (*AS II* p. 191, item 116).

<sup>7</sup> Then (as now) it was a possible port of embarkation for the Isle of Man: which for Auden had happy associations, both for its lead-mining and holidays spent there with Michael Yates and family.

tion) shows that 'Hexham' was his second thought for 'North Tyne', it is possible that his amendment was prompted not only by metrical concerns but also by a memory of this sheet's upper and lower margins. My guess is that Cranston wasn't map-minded, and himself did no more than 'glance' at something across a cluttered room, misreading 'Heysham' for 'Hexham' (or this might even be an error introduced at printing).

Even were that so, there remains the problem of scale; the *Time* interviewer reports an 'immense' map, but Cranston gives no indication of unusual size – which even someone cartographically negligent might have registered, just as he might have noticed if there had been more than one map on the wall (which is how Davenport-Hines reconciles the differing accounts). The history of Ordnance Survey publications is complex, but the authorities I have consulted make clear that, for example, a two-and-a-half inch survey of Alston Moor was not available in 1947 or earlier; nor was there a single sheet covering Alston Moor in the six-inch series. The approximate size of the 1903 one-inch map already referred to is 12" (n/s) by 18" (e/w), plus margins; so a sixfold enlargement would require a display not less than six feet high by nine across; this would certainly look 'immense' – particularly in a beach-shack! – but it could only have been assembled by joining up constituent six-inch sheets (if, however, Auden stuck to the strict boundaries of Alston Moor, as the one-inch map in Wallace does, then a sixfold enlargement of that map suggests overall dimensions of (e/w) 5'6" by (n/s) 6'6").

Auden might at some stage have cut and pasted six-inch sheets; but these were on stiff, card-like paper, which could not then have been folded for easy transport, either to the USA or, within it, to Fire Island. If that map really was unusually large, I wonder whether in the phase of his boyhood absorption (when he carefully pasted photographs of mines into books) he undertook by hand – 'with the finest of mapping pens' (*EA* p. 61) – a pantographic enlargement of the one-inch map; if so, he would justifiably claim of the locality, in 'Amor Loci', that he could 'draw its map by heart'. His short-sightedness would certainly have given some practical point to such an activity; it is surely noteworthy that the three most autobiographically-impli-

amicable disagreement about which country's sailors were hotter. . . . [New York, early 1960s]

*Saturday's Child: A Memoir*, by Robin Morgan  
(New York: W. W. Norton, 2001)

### **James Merrill, poet: 'On Mediterranean men'**

Auden arrives late [to the party], rumped and wrinkled. . . . [the] rooms are full of people eager to meet him. Catching sight of me, he smiles. Although we aren't yet the intimates we shall become after his death, he approves of my work and fancies that I exemplify moderation to Chester [Kallman].

'What I'd really like, my dear,' he says, 'is to sit down somewhere and enjoy another drink.' . . .

'It's the great, great pity with Mediterranean men,' Wylan is stating with his usual frankness. 'They like sex, but love stumps them. Love is giving, and they simply don't know how to accept it.' [Athens, 1965]

*A Different Person: A Memoir*, by James Merrill (Alfred A. Knopf, 1993)

### **Merv Griffin, television talk show host: 'Christmas reading'**

Sometimes the planning backfired, like the Christmas show for which we booked the esteemed poet W. H. Auden to do a reading. Preceding him on the show was a bit featuring Santa Claus. We invited a few dozen children to receive gifts from Santa, without realizing that once the kids got their gifts they weren't going to be interested in anything else. So while W. H. Auden tried to read his poem, kids were tearing open their packages and playing with toys. It was the last time W. H. Auden visited us. [New York, mid-1960s]

*Merv*, by Merv Griffin with Peter Barsocchini  
(Simon and Schuster, 1980)

### **Richard Hoggart, educator and author: 'Well house-trained guest'**

Birmingham University decided to give Auden an Honorary Doctorate at the summer graduation ceremonies of 1967. We offered to put him up and give the statutory party in his honor.

## Meeting Auden: First Encounters and Initial Impressions (Part IV)

### Robin Morgan, child actor, poet and feminist: *'Tongue-tied'*

Curtis Brown, Ltd, an established literary agency – the post of executive assistant to the head of the periodicals department. . . .

. . . most of Edith Haggard's clients were literary writers . . . when W. H. Auden appeared in person one day, I lost it. I was sitting at the outer office desk, substituting for Irene Petrovich, my pal the receptionist who also worked the switchboard (yeah, lines and plugs, a classic I prided myself on learning). Reenie was on her lunch hour and I was reading a manuscript in between making pert announcements into my headset – 'Good afternoon, Curtis Brown literary agency, may I help you?' – when Auden slouched in through the glass doors, his unmistakable, heavily lined face peering at me with diffidence. He had dropped by 'to see Edith' without an appointment, 'was that all right?' I stared up at probably the greatest then living poet writing in English, and my tongue solidified into a plinth. But the rest of my body, still capable of movement, flung off the headset, vaulted over the desk, charged the poor man, and then stood there, clasping and unclasping my hands, terrifying him until I managed to blurt out the words 'Haggard out. Lunch. Back soon. Wait! Please? Coffee?' He was kind (probably thinking I had a speech impairment and wondering why they'd post me at reception), though he was less kind when I nervously brought him the second cup of coffee, having poured the first one on his shoe. . . .

A few years later, I would meet him again, with his longtime lover and partner, Chester Kallman, on St. Mark's Place, where they'd lived for many years. It was only a few blocks from where I was by then living with Kenneth [Pitchford, whom she married], with whom I was out walking. In the manner of people who've been a couple for many decades (and sometimes even pets and humans who live together for years), Auden and Kallman had come to share a startling resemblance: they could have been brothers. Kenneth knew them both, and Auden, thanks to a compassionate lapse, did not remember me. We four stood chatting on the sidewalk for maybe half an hour. But I was the odd woman out, since the conversation revolved raunchily around the news that the fleet was in, and there was

cated references to maps, in Auden's poetry, refer to the making rather than the mere study of maps.<sup>8</sup>

The 'English area' of 'New Year Letter' came so emphatically to Auden's mind as to seduce some commentators into believing he had spent his boyhood there (Arthur Kirsch (2005) is the latest example). He may have 'grown up' at Rookhope metaphorically, but biographically he was never more than a visitor – albeit one whose visionary commitment entitled him to stake a claim. The sort of map of England Auden's heart might draw is suggested by the illustration for his 1954 piece in *American Vogue*, 'England: Six Unexpected Days', which outlined a principally Pennine itinerary. The accompanying map features a central wedge of the kingdom from London to Edinburgh, idiosyncratically magnifying names not normally registered at this scale, such as Keld, Appletreewick (pronounced 'Aptwick'), Dufton, Alston, Nenthead, and Blanchland; of places normatively constituting a tourist's-eye view of England, only Oxford commands equal prominence. 'To the usual visitor in the United Kingdom the North means the Lake District and Scotland', conceded Auden, his map sidelining the first and his suggested route seeking in all senses to divert an unhurried motorist headed toward the second (a destination of negligible interest to an itinerary whose emotional centre remains in days Three, Four and Five). It is unclear to what degree Auden himself was involved in producing this map.

*Walking in the Pennines* (1937), by Donald Boyd and Patrick Monkhouse, was in Auden's library at his death, and is amongst the Auden library material acquired in 1975 by the Humanities Research Center at Austin, Texas. He drew on some of its details when writing his piece for *Vogue*. It, along with his copy of Forster, may have been one of the books which (according to Ansen) he brought back from England in 1945. Boyd and Monkhouse extol the contemporary one-inch OS series as the best maps available for the 1930s walker; but they also write warmly of 'the pictorial beauty and accuracy of the old engraved hachured 1-inch map', on which 'Every peak and precipice, every nook and cranny, is drawn' (p. xxvi). These were already collector's items when they wrote, but if Auden ever saw or even

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<sup>8</sup> It is also possible that his geologist brother John, who in a 1917 photograph in Spender's *Tribute* is seen 'compassing', and who accompanied Wystan on some visits to mines, made such a map for his brother.

possessed this version for Alston Moor (reproduced in *Old Ordnance Survey*, vol. VIII, p. 43), he might well have been struck by its remarkable depiction of the rumpled landscape as if seen from aloft (in airman's-eye view), and also by its illustrating how the Cumberland/Durham boundary lies along a watershed east of Nenthead: on this map standing out like the upright of a capital 'E'.

I do not believe that a copy of that map graced the wall of the beach-shack; my conclusion is that either a later issue one-inch map covering Alston Moor and Weardale, or a homemade enlargement of such a map, did; I distrust Cranston's identification of 'Heysham' for the reasons given. Finally, whether the 'Bective Poplars' map was standard one-inch scale or larger, I am sceptical that it would ever have been displayed at Kirchstetten (although on this point I would be happily proved wrong). Memoirs of the communal interior of what is now the Audenhaus recall the relative absence of pictorial decoration (a photograph of Stravinsky stood out); but in Auden's upstairs workroom, below the roof-pitch and interrupted by the gable window where he worked, there is little wall-space to display a map, even of smaller size. According to its curator, when I visited, the extension of the attic beyond a partition, where now is to be found a collection of Auden memorabilia, had not occurred in the poet's lifetime. Describing his workroom in 'The Cave of Making', Auden stressed the absence of 'family photographs', as part of a decorative strategy to 'discourage daydreams' (*Collected Poems*, 1991, p. 691): a map of Alston Moor might have offered a fatal distraction, and none of the newsreel footage of its interior, in the recent BBC centenary programmes or – more fully – in Robert Robinson's 1981 broadcast, shows any sign of a map on the walls.

TONY SHARPE  
Lancaster University

*I am grateful to the Interloans Librarian at Lancaster University Library, for going to some trouble to locate copies of the articles in Time and Vogue referred to here. This piece is part of ongoing research into Auden's Pennine associations; the author would be glad to receive comments, corrections and/or additional information at a.sharpe@lancaster.ac.uk.*

legacy of civilization, or the confusion of losing personal orientation in political conflict, have special resonance when infused with a knowing, warning tone.

Auden's wit is as equally compelling and appreciable as his gravity. The audience's laughter through 'After Reading a Child's Guide to Modern Physics' is sympathetic. In all his humorous poetry, a laughing audience can be heard, savouring his poetry's jokes about the inconstancy of love or the hypocrisy of politicians. Auden's sarcastic tone mocks human pomposity-- his are populist targets and the audience laughs in agreement. We hear his sense of grim hilarity and informality that opened a path for later British poets, such as Larkin or writers such as Alan Bennett, continuing the tradition of irony as a particularly British literary sensibility and quality. The Auden that is at once a great intellectual and a Northern entertainer comes across best in the Clerihews he recites. Here's the emerging sense of Auden being a people's poet, we can hear he has a comfortable rapport with his audience. We hear him give voice to major social questions, whether that of man's future or man's capacity for compassion, against the alternative of nihilist Nazism.

His gift of being adaptable appears in his ability to change between modern blank verse and traditional forms of rhyme, between epic and quotidian subject matter, in elevating the ordinary while handling the highbrow with bathos. His flexible pronunciations lay together seamlessly, he switches between a Northern accent, American pronunciation and British received pronunciation, most clear in his use of words like 'ask' and 'path.' Perhaps he does this to fit a rhyme or form, but maybe Auden saw no reason not be inclusive of difference and inconsistency. Anyone who wants to experience being closer to the source of such adaptability, such breadth and mastery, should enjoy this CD.

ELIZABETH JONES

*Elizabeth Jones received her BA from Cambridge and MA from Sussex. She is currently working on a novel and taking a teacher-training course to prepare to teach secondary school English.*

cluded with matins in the Chapel with a performance of the 'Anthem for St Cecilia's Day', set to music by another old boy of the school, Benjamin Britten.

JOHN SMART

*John Smart was Head of Arts at Gresham's School, Holt. His book on Modernism will be published next year as part of the Cambridge University Press 'Contexts in Literature' Series. He wishes to thank Roger Mallion and Hugh Wright.*

### The Spoken Word: A First-Time Release of Auden's Rare Historic BBC Recordings

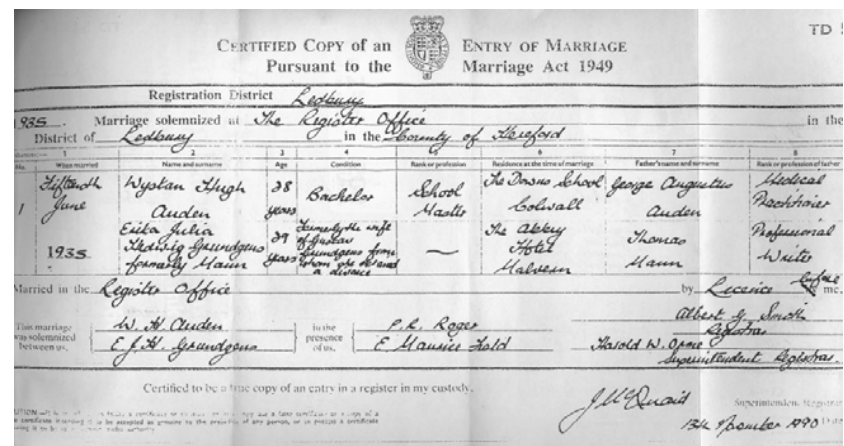
The BBC, with the British Library, celebrated Auden's centenary this year by releasing *The Spoken Word*, a double CD of poems that Auden read for broadcast on the radio from 1936 up until 1973 when he died. Most of the recordings have never been released. The CD comes with sleeve notes written by fellow poet, Andrew Motion. These are recordings gathered to illustrate Auden's artistic range and are not his greatest nor most famous works.

I play 'As I Walked out One Evening'. A dated English voice, which stresses consonants and vowels equally, his diction forms one flattened body. Auden slows the poem's pace to introduce the poem's meaning-- that time causes life's uncertainties, indifference and eventually, death. Auden's tone is an additional break on pace, deepening in warning, his vocal depths tame the giddy romantic feeling of the lyrical pace and skipping rhyme. Such dips in tone work against the lyric structure, supporting the meaning of the contradiction of time and love that play against each other through the poem. His voice and tone accentuate the muted irony that underpins the poem.

There's a haunted sound to Auden's voice, so worldly it's nearly jaded. It's a fitting voice for the 1930s, reflecting the themes in his poetry of that era, of the corruption of morality, integrity, youth and hope. In 'Journey to Iceland' for example, Auden's voice becomes a storyteller's. We are his audience, youth itself. Through a storyteller's voice, Auden can warn and caution. Complex themes, such as Britain's potential independent emergence from Europe, or war as a

### Auden's Marriage Retraced

It all started with Katherine Bucknell coming to give a centenary talk on W. H. Auden at the Ledbury Poetry Festival in July. Katherine wanted to see exactly where he married Erika Gründgens, formerly Mann, on Saturday, 15 June 1935, so we duly went to the sixteenth-century town council building in Church Lane, the location of Ledbury's registry office for some years now. It seemed likely that the ceremony would have been conducted either in the downstairs, panelled council room (the present marriage room) or the room above it, where, in fact, a copy of the marriage certificate is on display. This upper room is now known as the Painted Room on account of the stunning mediaeval wall paintings discovered there in 1988.



The guide attending the Painted Room, however, mentioned she had heard that Auden's wedding might have taken place at the former premises of a local firm of solicitors. That building still exists, now as a private house, so we went to look at the outside of that too, at No. 1, Bank Crescent, opposite the bowling green. Bank Crescent runs steeply uphill from The Homend, the continuation north of Ledbury's High Street, and is residential except for a handful of premises at the bottom end near the main road. There were no house numbers in Bank Crescent until recently and No. 1 seems to have been previously called Bank Chambers. Not one to leave any stone unturned, Katherine subsequently emailed the Herefordshire Council

information service and received the following reply: 'All enquiries I have made seem to point to the registry office being in Bank Crescent in 1935. Everyone says it was at Orme Dykes and Yates and as Mr Orme was the signature on the certificate it seems almost conclusive that's where it was.'

It was at this juncture I agreed to see if I could find out anything more conclusive. The firm, which also still exists, was called Russell, Orme & Co. in 1935, soon to be Russell, Orme & Dykes, but not Orme, Dykes and Yates until the 1960s. The building probably looked pretty much the same in 1935 as it does in this recent photograph. The architecture is unusual for Ledbury in its style and in using a hard, bright red brick.



Though not knowing anything directly of Auden's marriage, the present senior partner of Orme, Dykes and Yates, David Rushton, told me:

Our old office in Bank Crescent was the Registry Office in 1935 so the ceremony would have been performed there. Harold Orme would have been the Registrar and after him Basil Dykes. I think Basil continued to perform this function until the 1960s but Barton Yates would know more. He joined the firm circa 1960 and soon became a Partner. We moved to The Homend in 1980/1981.

I therefore wrote to Barton Yates, senior partner until he retired recently, who replied:

Harold Orme died some years before I arrived on the scene. I doubt whether anything went 'on' at the [Auden's] ceremony, which was normally a very simple affair. I never had

## Two Auden Centennial Festivals

It was an appropriate coincidence that Gresham's School, Holt in Norfolk and Christ Church Oxford both chose to celebrate Auden's centenary in the summer of 2007, for Auden was fascinated by the processes and peculiarities of teaching and education that are themes of many of his essays and some of his poetry. He himself worked briefly as a prep-school teacher at the Downs School and spent much of his life on the lecture circuit.

The celebrations at Christ Church from June 23rd to 24th put Auden into his context as undergraduate, as Professor of Poetry and finally as honorary Fellow of the College. The Festival began with an introductory talk by Professor Christopher Butler. A trio of poets from Anthony Thwaite to Tim Kendall and Oliva Cole demonstrated the ongoing strength of Christ Church poets in their readings. Auden's legacy in contemporary poetry was also underlined by Simon Armitage's brief talk and reading from his own work. John Fuller eloquently discussed Auden and his place in English poetry with Hugh Macdonald who organized the whole event. Peter Porter, James Fenton and Simon Armitage discussed and read the poetry. Naturally enough, at Christ Church, there was a strong focus on Auden and music, including talks on Auden and Opera and two world première performances of a setting from 'In Memory of W.B. Yeats' and Robert Saxton's *O Living Love* based on words from 'For the Time Being'. On Sunday Choral Evensong was broadcast live from the college on BBC Radio 3 and included William Walton's *The Twelve* - the only collaboration between the two men.

Gresham's School's four day celebration, 'In Praise of Auden', started on September 13th with Opera East's production of *The Rake's Progress* and included showings of *Night Mail*, lectures by Craig Raine, Blake Morrison and Christopher Smith, a performance of the Cabaret Songs by Stephen Miles and a festival dinner. A strong feature of the Festival was the attempt to put the Auden into his Norfolk context. Walks around the school and its grounds, an evocative exhibition of photos and manuscripts of Auden at Gresham's, together with Katherine Bucknell's talk on the Juvenilia, recreated his time at school. By contrast, Dr Roger Mallion talked amusingly about Auden's final years at Christ Church and the Byzantine intricacies of High Table etiquette. Lord Gowrie, the Festival's patron, gave a powerful, wide-ranging lecture on Post-War Auden. The Festival con-

acted as go-between in the Giehse-Simpson match, actually have been plotting it more or less from when Roger said no?

It only remains to mention E. Maurice Feild, the other witness. Feild was the influential art master at The Downs from 1928 to 1954, when he left to join the Slade School, where he had studied as a young man. He was an early associate of the Euston Road School operating from 1937 to 1939. His wife, Alexandra, was a pianist, who also taught part time at The Downs. The pair of them became good friends with Auden and there are a couple of portraits of Auden by Feild in the National Portrait Gallery. Feild spelt his name 'ei', but every certified copy I have seen of Auden's marriage entry misspells it 'Field'. Curious to know if his signature was scrawled, I asked the current Registrar whether she could check the original signature in the register and she says it is quite clearly 'ei'.

Assuming safely therefore, I think, that W. H. Auden and Erika Mann were married in the upstairs office at No. 1, Bank Crescent, there is one other famous, or rather infamous couple said to have also been married in that room: Fred and Rosemary West. 'Wonderfully warm and sleepy' though it may be at times, Ledbury does not do things by halves.<sup>9</sup>

ALAN LLOYD

*Alan Lloyd lived in Ledbury for thirty years. He is a trustee and founder member of the Ledbury Poetry Festival, which he also used to organise. He was at school in the fifties at The Downs, where Auden taught twenty years earlier. He wishes to thank Katherine Bucknell for triggering this article and, for their help in sourcing information, June McQuaid and Karen Mitchell from Ledbury Town Council, Penny Gregory (present Registrar), the Herefordshire Record Office, Henriette Heise, Anna Hurman, Julia Johnston, David Rushton and Barton Yates.*

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<sup>9</sup> In addition to the standard biographical works on Auden, I have also consulted *Kelly's Directory of Herefordshire*, 1934 (London: Kelly's Directories Ltd), *Tilley's Ledbury Almanacks*, 1934, 1935 & 1936 (Ledbury: L. Tilley & Son), and Anja Maria Dohrmann, 'Erika Mann—Einblicke in ihr Leben' (PhD thesis, Freiburg University, 2003), <http://deposit.ddb.de/cgi-bin/dokserv?idn=972269290> [accessed 3 Nov 2007]. A photo of the wedding party, probably taken by Maurice Feild, may be found in Carpenter's biography, plate 11(a).

anything to do with the Registrar's duties, not my scene! However, I recollect that the intending celebrants would call at the office to give notice to the Registrar or his Deputy of their intentions. Subsequently the Registrar or his Deputy would perform the ceremony, in one of the offices specifically designated for that purpose. The ceremony would only take a few minutes. The celebrants normally brought their own witnesses, otherwise members of the staff would oblige.

There were two offices used for weddings, one on the ground floor, and a 'posher' room upstairs, which in my time doubled as Basil Dykes' office, with some rather nice furniture.

The firm of Orme, Dykes & Yates originated in Bank Crescent near the turn of the [last] century under other names. In the 20s and 30s it was associated with the firm of Russell in Malvern but that association had ceased well before I arrived. At times it was called Russell, Orme & Dykes, Orme, Dykes & Hewitt and presently ODY.

Meanwhile, checking what information they had at the Town Council, I was shown a letter addressed to the Town Clerk in 1997 from an Irene Southall, now deceased, who knew Peter R. Roger, one of the marriage witnesses, from 1943 to his death in 1977. She confirms that Roger was on the staff at The Downs School the same time as Auden and that they became close friends. There are inaccuracies in the following part of her letter, so her information may not be wholly reliable, but she says,

At that time Mr Dykes was the registrar for the area and so the marriage ceremony took place in his office behind and above the building on the NE corner of the High Street and Bank Crescent. Immediately after the ceremony the two men escorted Erika to the railway station and saw her off on the London train. So far as Peter knew, the married couple never saw one another again.

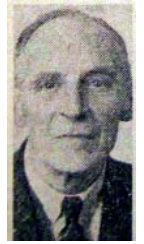
To correct this: Orme, not Dykes, was registrar at the time, the premises are one up from the corner building (which was the Post Office) and Bank Crescent is off The Homend, not the High Street. However, the comment about the office 'behind and above the

building' would indicate that the ceremony was in the posher of the two rooms, as described above by Barton Yates. According to Humphrey Carpenter, Peter Roger worked in the school gardens: I managed to speak to Mrs Southall's daughter, who told me she remembers Peter from when she was little and says he then had a smallholding. She also said he pronounced his surname, Roger, with a long 'o'.

There is one more possible location of the registry office, or at least a subsidiary building. Ledbury's recently retired Town Clerk and Superintendent Registrar, June McQuaid, told me that in her view, marriages in 1935 could have taken place in The Homend, in a very small building now demolished to make way for Tesco's car park, opposite The Homend petrol station. While not denying the likelihood that Auden was married in Bank Crescent, she says that there was a small registry office in The Homend around that time, where certainly births and deaths were registered. Although the evidence is circumstantial, it seems to me that because Harold Orme was involved, the marriage in June 1935 did take place at No. 1, Bank Crescent. This is in effect confirmed by Irene Southall's description, quoting Peter Roger, despite the errors: this other small building would have been three hundred yards further along The Homend – far enough away to prevent confusion. Interestingly, though, Humphrey Carpenter quotes another of Auden's friends, Austin Wright, as saying: 'Ledbury registry office was a clever choice. In those days wonderfully warm and sleepy. We [Auden and Wright] went over one afternoon to see the Registrar. A tiny square room of an office; huge musty ledgers piled and leaning against walls and cupboards, and a dear little old man behind glasses.'

This does not sound like the premises at Bank Crescent, so maybe, just maybe it was the other official at the wedding, Albert G. Smith, that Auden and Wright initially went to see, and his office was in The Homend. Smith, as Registrar, would have been responsible for all the paperwork, while Orme, as Superintendent Registrar, would actually have conducted the ceremony. It seems that Superintendent Registrars were often solicitors in those days, and Orme held this post until the year before he died, aged 75, on 2 September 1949. By then he was senior partner in his firm, which at that time was called Russell, Orme & Dykes, and their premises in Bank Crescent doubled as registry office.

According to his obituary in the Ledbury Reporter and Guardian, Harold William Orme was a substantial pillar of the local community. As well as Superintendent Registrar, he was Clerk to both the Ledbury Urban District and Rural District Councils, a member of the Board of Guardians and Food Executive Officer during the second world war. Honorary posts he held at various times included president of the Herefordshire Incorporated Law Society, president of the Ledbury Crescent Bowling Club, treasurer of the Eastnor Lodge of Freemasons and Grand Warden of Herefordshire. We have to assume that Orme left no reminiscences of the Auden-Mann wedding, but I cannot help wondering what such a person made of the unusual couple he married in 1935! (The photograph is from his newspaper obituary.)



Returning to the subject of Peter Roger, Irene Southall's letter adds the following version of the background to the Auden-Mann marriage:

Auden was a somewhat aggressive 'gay' and Peter was very much dominated by him. In 1934 Thomas Mann's daughter Erika and another young German refugee were presenting a very anti-Nazi cabaret show in Zurich and this became an embarrassment to the Swiss government which refused to renew their work permits. Obviously they dared not go back into Germany. Another English poet (I think it was Spender, not Isherwood) became aware of this situation and wrote to the Downs from Zurich insisting that Auden and his friend should go through the marriage ceremony with these girls so that they acquired British citizenship. Peter refused but Auden agreed.

This is interesting. Apart from saying Spender was the go-between (everyone else is sure it was Isherwood), she raises the possibility that the other 'young German refugee' from the cabaret, who was, of course, Therese Giehse, initially attempted to find herself a British husband at the same time as Erika. Marrying John Simpson (alias Hampson) instead, virtually a year later, could it be true that Therese was turned down by Roger pretty much as Erika was initially turned down by Isherwood? Furthermore, could Auden, who himself