

# THE KEATS-SHELLEY REVIEW



2002

NUMBER SIXTEEN

# THE KEATS-SHELLEY REVIEW

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THE KEATS-SHELLEY MEMORIAL ASSOCIATION

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*The Keats-Shelley Review* continues under a new title the periodical which appeared as *The Keats-Shelley Memorial Bulletin*, the last number of which was published in 1985 as No. XXXVI of the sequence. The *Review* is centrally devoted to the study of the life and works of the younger Romantics (especially Keats, Shelley and Byron) and of their circle.

The cover shows details of Captain Roberts's painting of Shelley on the *Don Juan*, reproduced in full in the *Review*.

Correspondence concerning individual subscriptions and membership as a Friend of the KSMA should be addressed to the Hon. Sec., David Lee-Hunt, 1 Satchwell Walk, Royal Priors, Leamington Spa CV32 4QE, UK. Orders and enquiries concerning subscriptions for libraries and other institutions should be sent to Subscriptions Dept, Maney Publishing, Hudson Road, Leeds LS9 7DL, UK. Submissions to the *Review* should be sent to Angus Graham-Campbell, 12 High Street, Eton, Windsor, Berks SL4 6AS accompanied with a s.a.e.

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**No. 16**

## HER MAJESTY QUEEN ELIZABETH THE QUEEN MOTHER

Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother had been Patron and friend to the Keats Shelley Association for over half a century. Her interest in the Association had first been aroused by her friend Lady Crewe, who had succeeded her husband as Chairman. Lady Crewe found a ready response in the Queen, who was widely read and had a real love of poetry. One of the most affecting letters quoted after her death was written to Edith Sitwell, who had sent her a book of verse following the death of the King. In it Queen Elizabeth wrote movingly of the comfort she had found in a poem by George Herbert. They are the words of a person for whom poetry was an integral and important part of life.

Over the years Queen Elizabeth was unfailingly supportive of the KSMA. She visited the House in Rome, attended many poetry readings and fund-raising events in London and entertained members of the London Committee at Clarence House, where she showed a keen interest in all our affairs.

When four of our members, from London and Rome, took part in the 100th Birthday Pageant two years ago, we found ourselves in the midst of a great multitude of people from organizations large and small, every one of which was celebrating a special and individual relationship with its Royal Patron.

We feel sure that Queen Elizabeth took great pleasure in her connection with the Association and through it with the work of these two remarkable young poets. We certainly enjoyed having her as our Patron. She will be greatly missed.

## THE KEATS-SHELLEY MEMORIAL ASSOCIATION

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*Curator:* Catherine Payling  
*Mailing address:* The Keats-Shelley Memorial House, 26 Piazza di  
Spagna, 00187 Roma, Italy

## SHELLEY on board the *DON JUAN*

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This picture was painted by Captain D. Roberts RN in 1822, shortly before Shelley's death. It shows Shelley and others on board the *Don Juan* with Casa Magni to the right. It is a rare representation of Shelley taken from life. The painting was engraved and reproduced in *Records of Shelley, Byron and the Author* by Edward John Trelawney. However, the engraving lacks the detail of the painting, reproduced here for the first time: it omits one member of the crew, the dog, and, indeed, the whole top floor of the Casa Magni. The painting was presented to Eton College in 1997 and is reproduced by the kind permission of the Provost and Fellows.

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# KEATS-SHELLEY MEMORIAL ASSOCIATION

Registered Charity No 212692

Chairman's Report for 2002

Two years ago, in my Millennium report, I wrote about the hundredth birthday parade of our Patron, Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother. It was a joyful occasion in which representatives of the Association took their part, bearing poetic banners, and everyone will remember how she stood in the hot July sun almost throughout the long and colourful march-past. Her death this April has cast a shadow over the year. For fifty-two years, she had been our first and only and our most loyal and supportive Patron. A separate tribute to Her Majesty is recorded on p. v.

On 9 April, I and the Vice-Chairman, Sir Stephen Egerton, attended her funeral at Westminster Abbey on behalf of the Association.

The cover of this issue of the *Review* is intriguing: it breaks new ground in the iconography of Shelley, who unlike Keats was painted only once in adult life, by Amelia Curran, at no. 64 Piazza di Spagna, two years before Keats came with Severn to lodge at no. 26. As Friends know, all other images of him, apart from the posthumous busts, are based on this one portrait. The cover shows of course a tiny detail of a little known watercolour by Captain Roberts of the harbour at Lerici, but it is as exciting and poignant to find such an unexpected 'snapshot' of Shelley, the stick-like figure conveying the long legs and characteristic slouch (one recalls Byron's nickname, the Snake) waving imperiously from the bows of the *Don Juan*, which in a few days was to carry him 'darkly, fearfully, afar' as it is to read of new scholarly discoveries about his work.

At the time I write, we are preparing for our usual Awards Ceremony for the Keats-Shelley Prize at Somerset House on 24 June, where after presenting the prizes the Prize Chairman, the biographer Miranda Seymour, will speak on the theme of 'Mary Shelley in Italy'. We have received 240 entries, and the winners have just been selected. The great majority of entries, as always, is of poems, this year set on 'Seas and Shores', and the winner of the first prize in poetry, who receives £1,000, is Jane Draycott, for her poem 'The Night Tree'. Runner-up in poetry, with £500, is Ciaran Berry (from Astoria, USA), for his poem 'Rain Cry Sea'. Essays, as in previous years, were invited on any aspect

of Keats' or Shelley's work or life. The essay winners are Joe Francis, first prize £1,000, for his essay 'Doubting the Mountain: An Approach to *Mont Blanc*' and Katherine Halsey, runner-up, with £500, for her essay 'Percy Bysshe Shelley and Theories of Language: A Discussion'. The winning entries are published in this issue of the *Review*, and have been posted in full on the Association page of the Keats-Shelley Memorial House website, <http://www.Keats-Shelley-House.org>. The essay judges are Angus Graham-Campbell and Professor Peter Kitson of the University of Dundee. The poetry judges are Matthew Sweeney and John Hartley-Williams.

This year, after a most fruitful association with the Folio Society, who have given us invaluable advice and promotional support as well as sponsorship since the Prize was first set up in 1998, we are delighted to welcome our new Keats-Shelley Prize sponsors for the next three years, the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation and the David Cohen Family Charitable Trust. The KSMA is also most grateful to the School of English, University of St Andrews, for its help in organising this year's competition.

Awards under the Sheila Birkenhead Scheme have continued, for graduate students to deliver conference papers on the Romantics. Grants have been made to Matthew Scott, of Oxford University, £200, for a paper to be delivered at the 2002 Coleridge Conference, entitled 'Making Strange: Hulme, Donne and Coleridge's Conception of Novelty', and to Stephen Burley, £200, also of Oxford and preparing for the Coleridge Conference, with a paper entitled 'The Power of Language: Blessings & Curses in the Poetry of Coleridge'.

This November, shortly after Friends receive their copies of the *Review*, a major new exhibition of Byron will be opening at the National Portrait Gallery. It will run for the best part of a year, moving from London in February 2003 to the Scottish National Portrait Gallery, and thereafter to Dove Cottage, Grasmere. On 27 November the Association, which of course commemorates Byron in the Rome Memorial House as well as Keats and Shelley, is hosting a private evening view of the exhibition, in the presence of the Countess of Wessex. This will mark the forthcoming centenary of the House in 2003 and is also intended raise funds for the restorations now taking place there (see below). Tickets will be available for what promises to be a most enjoyable and glamorous occasion, and any Friends who have not already received details of how to apply should send me a fax or email, 020 7352 6705 (from outside the UK use code 00 4420) or [harrietcullenuk@yahoo.com](mailto:harrietcullenuk@yahoo.com).

On the Rome Committee, we bid a warm welcome to the Hon. Mel Sembler, His Excellency the Ambassador of the United States of America,

who becomes Honorary Joint President, and to Maria Valentini. This year Carole Beebe Tarantelli, Professore Rosario Portale and Guihelmo Pizzirani have stepped down from the Committee, and we thank them for their years of service. Amongst donations to the House from various sources, noted by the Curator in her report, we have been most grateful to receive \$2,000 from Peter and Cynthia Rockwell and \$1,000 from the Keats-Shelley Association of America.

In Rome, as Friends will read in more detail in the Curator's report which follows this, major external works are now being carried out in preparation for our centenary in 2003. The façade of the House, due to be repainted in a terracotta pink, has been temporarily transformed into an elegant *doppelgänger* of itself, by means of a light wrap-around 'skin' which covers the necessary scaffolding and carries a full-scale facsimile of the building, as well as advertising to enable us to pay our builders. In a city where sophisticated display is a commonplace, it has been much admired by both visitors and Romans.

Harriet Cullen  
May 2002

## REPORT FROM ROME

2001 saw the city of Rome return to something like normality after the excitement of the 2000 Holy Year and the Keats House embark on the final phases of its massive restoration project. This was the first year since 1997 when the Museum was not obliged to close, even briefly, for building work and, gaining from diminishing demands on all resources, implemented new cultural programmes and plans for the centenary of the Keats-Shelley Memorial Association.

The time-honoured annual poetry competition for children (in its tenth year) went off with customary exuberance, the more so for the presence at the prize giving of Liverpool poet Brian Patten. Brian, who has written abundantly for children, read 'The Race to get to Sleep' and other poems from his own work, and then applauded as the winners read their winning poems on themes 'The Haunted House', 'Magic Carpet Ride', 'A Night at the Circus', 'The Sorcerer's Apprentice', 'Virtual Reality' and 'Sensation'. Heather Munro of Food Italia gave tremendous support to the event, as ever, and threw a party for all winners and their families following the ceremony. An added bonus was publication of the poems in 'Wanted in Rome'. Linda Cookson, Brian Patten's partner and journalist who accompanied him to Rome, interviewed me for a piece on 'Writers and Cities' which appeared in the *Independent* newspaper in the early Summer.

The Museum received other extensive media coverage over the year including several British, Italian and American television programmes, a Byron feature in *Italian Style*, the Alitalia in-flight magazine, and a successful promotion with the Go in-flight magazine for July and August 2001.

Numerous schools brought groups to visit and last year we welcomed our first with video cameras. The filming included music, poetry readings in English and Italian, and some drama. It was a great success, enjoyed by the students and Museum staff alike and future plans include a more substantial education programme with annual open days and mixed media activities.

Last year I reported on a collaboration with the Comune di Terni and Italian designer Peppe Di Guili on a permanent installation celebrating the numerous distinguished artists and writers who visited the Cascata delle Marmore. These included Byron who is now represented at Terni by a permanent sculpture. The project, a great source of local pride, was inaugurated on 30 June and has proved popular with residents and tourists alike.

In collaboration with the British Council in Italy we have presented a series of British poets in Rome. The first of these, an immense success, was Hugo Williams in November 2001, followed by Tom Paulin in May 2002. Matthew Sweeney, who read in June 2002, also visited and gave readings in Milan and Bologna. Future plans include Carol Ann Duffy and Liz Lockhead.

2001 also saw the beginning of what we hope will be a fruitful collaboration between our Museum in Rome and the Keats House Hampstead. Assistant Curator, Allegra Bennett, spent one week working in London, as Charlotte Shaw of the London Metropolitan Archives had done in Rome earlier. She gained invaluable insights into document conservation and storage, restoration of historic properties and organisational structures. We hope that the exchanges will continue.

New staff members joined the existing team in 2001. Lovisa Stephenson, fluent in Italian, Swedish and French and a graduate of Harvard, she specialises in education in the Museum environment. Lovisa and I will be working together to develop and extend our education programme. We were also joined by Sandra Antholt, a vivacious and enthusiastic member of staff we were sorry to lose when her three months came to an end. Georgina Stephens, a graduate in Art History and Italian, has taken her place and since February 2002 has been proving her worth.

The Museum has continued its practice of offering work experience to young people. Our grateful thanks go to undergraduate Claire Mudd and work experience students Nicole Babhout (from the New School) and Alessandro Crisostomi (from the European School of Economics). Marianna Ware, who was a work experience student here two years ago, has come back as a researcher preparing her university thesis on the Shelleys in Italy.

Other researchers who have worked with us over the year have been Arnold Schmidt studying contemporary responses to Byron's death and John Franklin investigating sources for the design elements used for Keats's gravestone.

We have been grateful recipients of donations from several sources: Robert and Cyd Asakura of Hawaii donated a very early and rare Byron edition to the Library, Peter and Cynthia Rockwell donated \$2,000, the Keats-Shelley Association of America generously donated \$1,000 and many donors of smaller amounts.

And a happy ending — in May a volume of the 1809 *Quarterly Review*, missing from the library for several years, was returned anonymously.

By this Autumn we will have completed our building work. After many delays obtaining all the permits we were finally able, in January 2002, to put up the scaffolding necessary to repair the roof and repaint the exterior. At the

time of writing the works are proceeding both on time and on budget. We have been able to benefit from a concession available to owners of historical buildings in Rome and are gaining from corporate sponsorship of the scaffolding which will help us with the considerable expense. The completion of the work will mark the end of one phase in the recent life of the Museum and the beginning of a new one — next year brings the start of an important series of centenaries.

1903 was the year in which the Keats-Shelley Memorial Association was founded in Rome. A spontaneous response to a threat to the building in which John Keats had spent his last months the Association's members represented the three nations of Great Britain, Italy and America and it was from these three that support and financial assistance came. The Museum today owes its existence to those early efforts and in 2003 we will mark the centenary of the founding of Association in a number of ways. In planning ways to celebrate the centenary of the founding of the KSMA I am giving regard to what I consider to be our objectives from our twenty-first-century perspective. These combine founding objectives of the KSMA with more contemporary ones. The founding objectives are very clear: to make a memorial to Keats and Shelley in the form of a library on the floor occupied by Keats and Severn and to give the greatest significance to this undertaking by sharing the honour and the pleasure of it with as many lovers of English poetry as possible and to entrust to the managers of the memorial the perpetual care of the graves of the two poets and their companions. Since the foundation of the Museum its role has grown and now, in addition to the preservation of the Memorial and the promotion of the library and research facilities, embraces didactic work with schools, in both English and Italian languages, and the encouragement of creative writing in people of all ages. The Museum also serves as a model of good practice in areas as diverse as education, conservation, administration and resource generation. Its status as an exemplar of independent Museum practice needs to be maintained and improved upon if it is to be of assistance to the Italian Museum community as it moves further away from the fully funded, state-controlled operating environment of past decades.

We have embarked on a thoroughgoing rethink of the way that the collection is displayed and the means by which the Museum communicates the many stories it has to tell. My objective is to give prominence to the finest pieces and, by allowing them to shine, convey to visitors the pathos of Keats' short life and the beauty of his poetry. We will also be improving the conservation environment by installing fibre-optic lighting and will finally restore the room in which Keats lived and died, replacing display cases with

furniture. The new display will be inaugurated in October 2003 when it is also our hope to introduce an audio-guide.

I have, in addition, commissioned a new history of the House, the Museum and its collection from UK trustee Sally Brown, to be published next year and we will also be holding a Romanticism conference in the British School at Rome's new lecture theatre in September 2003

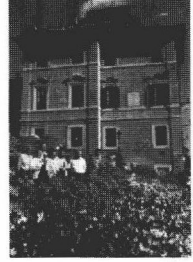
I would like now to record my heartfelt thanks to my Committee in Rome. Benedetta Floridi is an energetic and committed Chairman whose common sense and support have been invaluable. The same is true of Vice-Chair Peter Rockwell and Treasurer Gordon Burrows. I cannot write an account of the year's events and activities without thanking architects Fabiana Zeli and Roberto Einaudi to whom my debt grows with every year that goes by, and assistant curator Allegra Bennet has been a staunch right-hand.

Thanks are also due to outgoing committee members Carole Beebe Tarantelli and Rosario Portale and we welcome Maria Valentini of the University of Cassino who joins the Committee in June 2002.

Catherine Payling



THE KEATS-SHELLEY  
MEMORIAL HOUSE  
26 PIAZZA DI SPAGNA  
ROME 00187 ITALY



*'Discover Rome's  
hidden secret'*

The Keats-Shelley Memorial House used to be known as 'la casa rossa' to Romans, although these days it is a terracotta pink landmark in Piazza di Spagna, glimpsed by tourists as they emerge from Via Condotti, or through a mass of spring azalias on the Spanish Steps. It is a most unexpected but fitting museum celebrating the English Romantic poets, situated in the heart of historic Rome, overlooking the great palm trees and the famous fountain of the 'Barcaccia' or broken boat, designed by Bernini's father.

Keats arrived in Rome with his artist friend Joseph Severn in November 1820. Although just twenty-five years old he had consumption, and had been advised by his doctors that he could not survive another Northern winter. The two young men took rooms in the foreigner's quarter of Piazza di Spagna at No. 26, an eighteenth-century house at the side of the Spanish Steps. At first Keats appeared to improve, but in December he suffered a severe relapse from which he was not to recover, and died in February 1821. His death inspired Shelley, at that time living in Pisa, to write his famous elegy 'Adonais'. Eighteen months later he was also dead, drowned sailing in a storm off the shore of Lerici, with a volume of Keats's poems in his jacket pocket. Both poets were buried in the Protestant Cemetery in Rome.

By 1903 No. 26 Piazza di Spagna had become derelict, and was threatened with demolition. An appeal was launched to buy the property, with the backing of the Kings of England and Italy and the President of the United States, and the Keats-Shelley Memorial Association was established in that year. Finally, No. 26 was opened as a museum and library in 1909 by King Vittorio Emanuele III, with the declared aim of commemorating Keats, Shelley and the other Romantic poets who had spent much time in Italy, especially Byron and Leigh Hunt.

Over the last ninety years, despite two World Wars, treasures and relics of Keats, Shelley and Byron have accumulated in the House. The large *salone* holds the finest library of English Romantic literature on the Continent, with letters of Byron, Shelley and Trelawny, Keats's death mask, and other mementos. It is now visited by some seventeen thousand people a year from all parts of the world, especially from Britain, Italy and the United States.

**Opening times: Mon-Fri 0900-1300 & 1500-1800, Sat 1100-1400 & 1500-1800 (closed Christmas week)**  
Admission €2.6

Free to Friends of the Keats-Shelley Memorial Association and to children under 6  
Tel: (+ 39) 06 678 4235, fax (+ 39) 06 678 4167, email [info@keats-shelley-house.org](mailto:info@keats-shelley-house.org),  
website <http://www.keats-shelley-house.org>



The Keats-Shelley Memorial Association (KSMA) is based in England, and supports this unique Museum of its poets in exile. It has a nucleus of Friends, who together with other funders and sponsors help maintain the House. The Friends enjoy free entry to the Memorial House, and receive the annual journal of scholarship and criticism, *The Keats-Shelley Review*, and two newsletters each year, keeping them in touch with Romantic publications, projects and KSMA events in the UK, including *ad hoc* lectures, readings etc., and the Keats-Shelley Prize for contemporary poetry and essays inspired by the Romantics.

The centenary of the founding of the Association will be marked in October 2003 in Rome with celebrations and renovated museum display. Further details will be given in the KSMA Newsletter of January 2003 and on the House website (see above).

**To become a Friend** (subscription rates: £10.00 sterling within Europe, USA & Canada \$30.00, elsewhere equivalent of \$30.00), contact the Keats-Shelley Memorial House, as above, or write to KSMA, David Lee-Hunt, 1 Satchwell Walk, Royal Priors, Leamington Spa CV32 4QE, UK



# KEATS HOUSE



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John Keats lived here from 1818–1820 and wrote some of his best loved poems, including ‘Ode to a Nightingale’ here. Visitors can see Keats’s rooms in the house and many of his personal possessions; his inkstand, the engagement ring he gave to Fanny Brawne, portraits, life and death masks. The Keats Collections also contain some of the poet’s letters, manuscripts and books, as well as a reference collection of works about the Romantic movement, and may be viewed by appointment.

From July 2002 the House is closed for continuation of essential restoration work. It will re-open in early January 2003. Normal opening times are Tuesday to Saturday, 12–4pm in winter, and 12–5pm in summer, but visitors should check by telephone beforehand.

#### **How to get there:**

**By bus** 24, 46, 168, C11 and C12 to South End Green or 268 to Downshire Hill.

**By underground** Belsize Park or Hampstead (Northern Line), ten minutes walk.

**By train** Hampstead Heath (North London Link).

#### **Admission:**

Adults £3, Concessions £1.50, Under 16s free