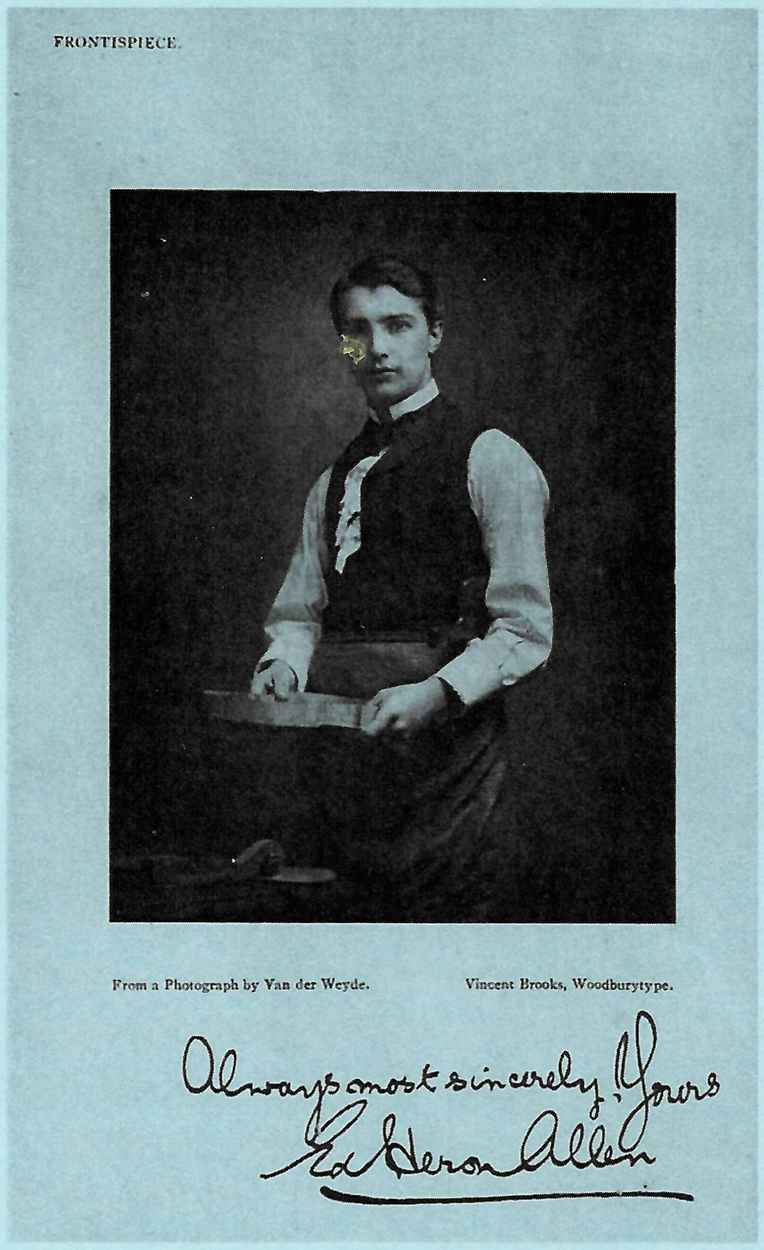
# The Heron-Allen Society

Newsletter
no. 18
Spring 2011

## ELEVENTH ANNUAL SYMPOSIUM

The eleventh annual Heron-Allen Society Symposium will be held in the Donaldson Room at the Royal College of Music, London at 10:45am on Saturday 25 June 2011. Coffee will be available from 10.15am.




*Edward Heron-Allen from a photograph by Van de Weyde: the frontispiece to his* Violin Making as it was and is

### PROGRAMME

*Theme: Edward Heron-Allen and Music*

Welcome and Introduction by Chairman

'Edward Heron-Allen's visit to Downside to see the Music Library' by Timothy J. McCann.

'Edward Heron-Allen as a Music Critic', by Peter Horton.

'Edward Heron-Allen and his Family' by Bill Coleby.

Short interval

Benjamin Norris will play some pieces on Edward Heron-Allen's guarneri violin

"The Resurrection of the Edward Heron-Allen Violin No. 2 Modeled after the Joseph Guarnerius Del Gesu 1734, Ex-Sainton", by John and Barbara Mahoney, with Andrew Dipper

Annual General Meeting

Lunch at Pierinos Italian Restaurant, 37, Thurloe Place, SW7

[There will be an exhibition of some of the treasures from the Heron-Allen collection at the Royal College. By kind permission of John and Barbara Mahoney we are able to see one of the two violins made by Heron-Allen and to hear it being played.]

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For the Royal College of Music take the Underground to South Kensington, or a Bus (Nos 9, 10 or 52) to the Albert Hall.

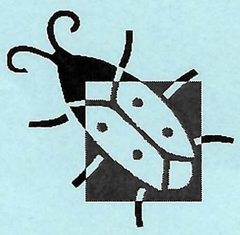
If you would like to attend the Symposium please inform the Honorary Secretary Juliet Field at 40 Portland Road, Oxford OX2 7EY or e-mail: jools.field@dsl.pipex.com ***by 11 June, stating in addition*** whether or not you wish to join us for lunch.

Those attending the Symposium will be required to give their names at the entrance to the Royal College of Music and to sign for a Visitor's Pass. The Donaldson Room will be found downstairs in the College Library.

## THE PLAUSIBILITY OF EDWARD HERON-ALLEN'S DUELING AFFAIR:

Was there duelling in late 19th century England? Really? While reading Edward Heron-Allen's 1889 novel, *The Vengeance of Maurice Denalguez*, the author's inclusion of a duelling scene in late Victorian England was perplexing. Duelling seemed an antiquated late 17th and 18th century-acceptable combat strategy that has been outlawed in 19th century England. Years later, while searching for a particularly rare 1891 Edward and Marianne Heron-Allen bookplate, we happened upon a book entitled, *Anti-Duel; or a Plan for Abrogation of Duelling which has been Tried and Found Successful* by John Dunlap, published in London in 1843. This volume was the long sought-after wonderful joint Heron-Allen bookplate. The subject matter also awakened memories concerning the author's peculiar insertion of a duelling episode in late 19th century England. Needless to say, this seventy-eight page book was purchased because of the likelihood that Heron-Allen used this reference for his novel. The added bookplate obviously helps to assuage the regrets concerning the book's price.

The story is set in 19th century London, but the decade and year are not revealed. Heron-Allen in his other late 19th century novels carefully avoids the exact decade and year which gives his novels a somewhat timeless 19th century quality. Edith Warburton is two years married to the fabulously wealthy, keen, self-made man of business, Philip Warburton. But, alas, Edith is bored with her marriage and wealth. She perceives that her husband is much too controlling of her life and selection of friends. Her closest friends are modern day bohemians who try to both encourage and steer her to arrange her life so that she can be her own mistress, with her husband becoming her perfect devotee and servant. They convince her that in those times of progressive enlightenment, women of her stature should have a lover. Enter the antagonist, a local wealthy bachelor baronet, Sir Reginald Faithorne, who is willing and wanting to accommodate her wishes for an obvious price. The tale has novel twists and turns of a modern day soap opera, a Peyton Place show with other delightful malicious figures. The authors, not wanting to reveal the novel's complex plot and discourage gathered Heron-Allen society members from reading the book, limit the review to its simplest form: Edith is a twit, a modern day airhead whose silly attempts to become a mistress are cut short by her husband's discovery of the alleged affair. Mr. Warburton predictably demands to avenge himself. He confronts the baronet and slaps both sides of his face. By such a physical affront, he has thrown down the gauntlet.



Momentarily thunderstruck, Faithhorne, ever the gentleman, bows ceremoniously to the women and promptly leaves the room. Honor must be restored to its rightful owner, her faithful husband – a duel is born.

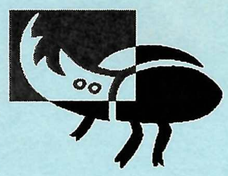
By modern definition, a duel is a prearranged fight with deadly weapons, usually pistols, by two people (accompanied by seconds) in order to settle a quarrel over a point of honor, affaire d'honneur. The modern duel is not identical with ancient duelling which involved battles of selected champions of hostile armies. Ancient single combat between warriors of different nations occurred at the same time as the publicly declared hostilities. Sometimes ancient single contests helped to prevent a general war by settling a national question, such as regional kingships or feudal questions. There is no historical similar practice of "modern duel" to be found in ancient nations. Modern duels were for settling differences between individuals of the same country, did not revolve around hostile nations, and were often conflicts between family members, close acquaintances and friends. The purpose of modern duelling was to redress an alleged incident of dishonor in a prescribed conventional and artificial process (code duello).

Why did "modern" men duel? Revenge seemed unlikely. There were many cases where an adversary, having met his antagonist in the field , shook hands, stood his ground, exposed himself to mortal fire, discharges his pistol into the air and receiving rather than imposing an injury or death ("to delope"). By deloping and surviving, the injured party could imply that his opponent was not worth shooting! The manly display of one's physical courage and contempt of death also seemed unlikely. Such a theory does not explain why the principals frequently and gladly terminate the process when their friends have ruled that no infringement of honor has occurred. Also, if gentlemen challenges an individual who does accept the concept and nature of the modern duel, the latter suffers nothing by his refusal to duel, but the former suffers significant lose of honor among his esteemed friends. From the early part of the Middle Ages, in a quarrel between two individuals, that common belief was that God, if called upon, would settle the dispute by rewarding victory to the individual to whom the right truly pertained. God would defend and protect the innocent and punish the guilty, a sort of celestial judicial, criminal or civil combat. Woe to the unfortunate honorable individual who just lacked the technical skills of duelling. This early period judicial combat was the origin and nature of modern duelling. In the middle ages, there were detailed rules and ceremonies of the combat which formed an important part of jurisprudence of those times. Judicial combat was introduced into England by William the Conqueror, and was used in court martial, felony and in civil disputes when approved. Certain individuals were exempted. An exact duelling process was followed to insure fairness and impartiality.

When the enlightened Christian no longer expected God to assist in such an unchristian and godless manner of settling simple disputes, duelling slowly began to fade for the general public, hastened by limitations of legal enactments of the states and laws of the Church. However, the religious orders of knighthood gave way to a singular system of honor, feats of arms, tournaments and duels. The whole science of knighthood consisted of setting the manner of behaviour in matters of honor: legitimate methods of rendering satisfaction when insult has been personally delivered, or reputation sullied. Honor and its counterpart, "the lie", were strictly defined and codified. The duelling process was strictly defined. Acceptance and refusing a challenge was also strictly regulated. Acceptable grounds for the basis of an orderly duel included: withdrawing a friend or lady who is engaged in talk with a gentlemen without first requesting his departure; staring at a person; biting the thumb; maltreating the servants of others; calling another a traitor, heretic, cheat or rebel; claiming another did not do his duty in arms; claiming another to be a thief, or engaging in counterfeiting activities. Unacceptable grounds for the basis of an orderly duel included: adultery, hatred and revenge.

It became obvious that in the 16th and 17th centuries, the early stages of modern duelling made it difficult for two aristocrats to express an opposite opinion on any subject without involving themselves in a mutually generated lie and the subsequent hazards of death by duelling. Fortunately, there were evolving absurd rules about the doctrine of lies: there were lies and there were challengeable lies which could lead to a judicial duel. You could almost imagine a gentlemen stating, "I have had 16 quarrels with you this Saturday and I would like to duel on quarrel no. 9!"

Duelling was never a practice of the religious class or the great masse of society especially the working and lower middle classes. The code of "honor" had always reigned supreme within the very small circle of practicing upper class refined gentlemen (aristocrats), despite the impediments of the law, public sentiment and the Church. There were remedies for addressing an affront or injury, by weapons or words via existing state laws. The injured party now faced an infinitely more detrimental physically injury to himself by duelling, or ironically, if successful, to have committed murder. At first glance, the state seemed to have a vested interest in abolishing duelling because the practice merely elevated what was atrocious and brutal, and placed it on the same stage with courtesy, worth and manhood. Non-European cultures and nations renown in the 19th century for their politeness and courtesy did not practice duelling. The most important reason for the state to abolish the practice was the societal loss of the population's most educated and productive members at a young age: the ones who employed people and most importantly, paid taxes.



Duelling did diminishing in Europe when leaders such as France's Louis XIV outlawed duelling and expressively made the nobility each personally pledge to refuse all forms of challenges to one's honor and never to fight duels. The legal entanglements that pursued the duel's "victor" and the anathemas of the Church help to seal the fate of the previous acceptable legality of duelling. Yet, despite civil laws in France making duelling a crime of the King, punishable with death and the establishing civil courts to address grievances against the laws of honor, complete obliteration of duelling seemed hopeless with outcomes similar to attempts to prohibit the sale of liquor. The code of honor continued to reign over human jurisdiction. The purest treasure on earth for the upper class gentleman remained a spotless reputation. In England, strictly enforced civil laws slowly prevailed and forced some duelling to be held in anonymity in nearby countries, especially the "sands of Calais", France.

Heron-Allen actually begins the duel scene midway between Calais and Ostend in a primeval-like forest near a coastline fishing village on a warm August early morning. The requisite eight men are all dressed precisely alike, in black with black coats and tall hats looking like "a conclave of legal crows". Each party has a second Principal, a local witness, and a doctor. Maurice Denalquez serves as the protagonist's second Principal. Heron-Allen makes the duel scene plausible for this late 19th century by choosing the setting of a remote rural non-English soil, Calais, and by inserting a warning by the offended husband to his team, "If by any mischance both of us leave this place alive, remember, gentlemen, that today's meeting is entirely between ourselves – a matter that never occurred." The doctor sought to discourage the duel without success by telling Philip Warburton that the greater scandal will be that he participated in a barbarous, old fashioned, ridiculous and unsatisfactory murder solely to avenge his own honor. The duel followed the classical process: a flip of a coin to determine favored duelling positions relative to the rising morning sun, examining the pistols, lining up the Principals back-to-back each with pistols held in the proper position, counting out ten paces, aiming and firing the pistols….presumably at each other. When the smoke cleared, one lay on the ground and the other stood looking at the fallen, his body's position of firing the pistol seemingly frozen in time. When the winner was asked why he did not kill the fallen, he replied, "It was the sun." The fallen was asked why he did not successfully maim or kill the winner, he replied, "……". So

sorry! We cannot reveal the reasons without compromising the interest of future readers.

So concludes our interest in the plausibility of a late 1880s duelling scene between British aristocrats. The last known public fatal duel on British soil occurred in 1852 between two French refugees. Yet, we suspect that like their American counterparts, duelling continued to occur perhaps even into the early 20th century, but fortunately remained extremely limited, private, unpublished, and certainly legally and publicly denigrated and ridiculed.

John P. Mahoney
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*The Murray family: Muriel, Inez, Emily and Charles Freeman Murray on Clare Island.*

## FLAPPERS, BRITISH EMPIRE LEAGUERS AND FORAMINIFERISTS ON CLARE ISLAND IN 1911

When Edward Heron-Allen and Arthur Earland arrived on Clare Island on 16 August 1911 to begin their work on the Clare Island Survey, Heron-Allen wrote in his Holiday Journal: : "we share the Island with a party of nine [sic], a man named Murray and his wife, friends of the Messels from Balcombe, who have been here for a month for the past four years. their daughter and niece, splendid wild flappers of sixteen, a son from Cambridge, a nephew who is school master at that school at Aldwick, and the son's fiancé a girl just like Lillah McCarthy'.

His first impression of the family were not encouraging: 'a rowdier crowd I never came across, dinner was deafening' The very next day he recorded that he was :'looked out by the Flappers (the most enthusiastic and rowdy of them, by name Inez, turns out to be a serious young person of nineteen, who lets her hair down, calls herself sixteen and behaves as such when she gets over here) to start an aquarium for them, which I did with one of the Survey's observation tanks, and some weed grown limpets and a few little rock-fish, to their intense delight'. Heron-Allen graphically describes his horror when 'the Flappers discovered the gramophone in the sitting room of McCabe's hotel, where they were all staying, but he quickly befriended Mr. Murray, who, among other things was 'Secretary of the Empire League and an intelligent genial soul', while the Flappers feature regularly in his journal and in his photographs. He went for walks and swims and went fishing with various combinations of the family and they soon became a part of his life on the island.

John Whittaker has written entertainingly about the flappers in his 'the Foraminifera of Clare Island Co. Mayo. An Account of Heron-Allen and Earland's Fieldwork in Western Ireland, August 1911: A Scientific Expedition with pretty girls; in *Opusculum XIV*, in which he posed the question; 'so who were these girls, named Inez and Muriel?' and who were the Murray family who holidayed on Clare Island?

Recent genealogical research, mostly carried out by Alison McCann, has finally answered at least some of the questions. The 1911 census records Charles Freeman Murray as living at Kelsey House, Balcombe in Sussex and thus being a near neighbour of the Messels, who lived at Balcombe House and later at Nymans in nearby Cuckfield. He was aged 50 and listed as being secretary of the British Empire League and as having been born at Kurrachee (now Karachi in Pakistan). With him was his wife of twenty six years, Emily Lascelles Murray, and their two children Eric Murray, aged 25, a single man working for the British Empire League and his sister Inez Ernestine Murray aged nineteen. Also listed with them as a visitor was Dulcie Gascoigne Fuller, a seventeen year old from London.

It would seem that Charles Freeman Murray came from a military background, His father, James Murray, was born in British Guyana and spent many years abroad with the forces. He was a Lieutenant Colonel of Infantry and government secretary for the Island of Jersey. His wife Marianne was Irish and, of their seven children, two were born in Ireland and the remainder in the East Indies. Charles Freeman was ten at the time of the 1871 census, when he was living with his parents and all his brothers and sisters. By the 1881 census, when he was twenty, he was described as an art student and was lodging in Chelsea and Kensington. In the September Quarter of 1884 he married his wife Emily, described in the records as Emily Louisa E.L. Marston, and by the 1891 census he was living with his wife at 42 Powis Square, Kensington. He was described as a surveyor and had a son Eric, born in Hammersmith in 1886.

His wife Emily Marston was born in Surbiton in 1869. Her mother was called Ellen and Emily had at least one sister. On the 1871 census she is listed as living in lodgings in Kensington with her mother and sister, while on the 1881 census she is living in a boarding house in Kensington and is described as an artist. Charles Freeman Murray was an art student at the time and that is probably how they met.

Sometime very soon afterward the 1891 census was taken Charles Freeman Murray acquired a fine country house – Kelsey House in the village of Balcombe in Sussex - and on 8 November 1891 his daughter Inez Ernestine was baptised in the parish church of Balcombe. In 1901, however, he was shown in the census that year as living in a lodging house at 78 Hereford Road, Paddington. Soon afterwards he began taking his family on holiday with him to Clare Island. It would be interesting to know whether his mother Marianne came from the area.

Two years later, on I March 1913, Charles Freeman Murray was listed as a tourist travelling to St John, Newfoundland en rote to Halifax, Nova Scotia, and he is described as having arrived at St. Albans, Vermont, USA in April 1913. It is not known how long he stayed on the other side of the Atlantic. His son, Eric, was educated at Tonbridge and at Peterhouse, Cambridge, married his sisters friend, Dulcie Gascoigne Fuller, daughter of Major Fuller and succeeded his father as Secretary of the Empire League in 1910. He served in the European War in 1914 commanding Pioneer Battalion, 3rd. Division in France. He was wounded and became Assistant Chief Censor of the Prisoners of War department in London. He relinquished his commission with the rank of Lieutenant Colonel like his grandfather. As a writer he published occasional articles in *The Spectator* and *The Outlook*. Charles Freeman Murray died at Battersea in 1941.

His nephew and niece came from the Murray side of the family. Heron-Allen mentioned the nephew as Kenneth Murray and wrote that: 'the school master has lived a good deal in Alexandria and we swapped experiences, and compared oriental languages and I found we had heaps of mutual friends in Ceylon and London'. In fact he was born in Egypt. The 1901 census records him at the age of eleven as a scholar at Bilton Grange school in Rugby and as a British subject born in Egypt.. Ten years later, confirming Heron-Allen's holiday journal account, he is listed as a schoolmaster at Richard Frederick's boys preparatory school at Aldwick Place near the West Sussex coast. By a process of elimination his sister must have been Muriel Murray.

Despite his friendship with the Murray family, when it came time for Heron-Allen and Earland to leave Clare Island on 23 August, their work done, he confided in his holiday journal: 'I was ready to go. I have had a wonderful experience on Clare Island, but it is one I do not care ever to repeat. Just as fine, if not finer scenery may be seen in Ireland combined with civilisation. Of Clare Island it may truly be said that "Manners they have none, and their customs are beastly"'.

Despite his initial misgivings and his final comments, Heron-Allen was fortunate to find such congenial company for his stay on Clare Island. Unfortunately his niece Muriel has still not been fully identified, but with six siblings of Charles Freeman Murray there are plenty of potential candidates for her parents.

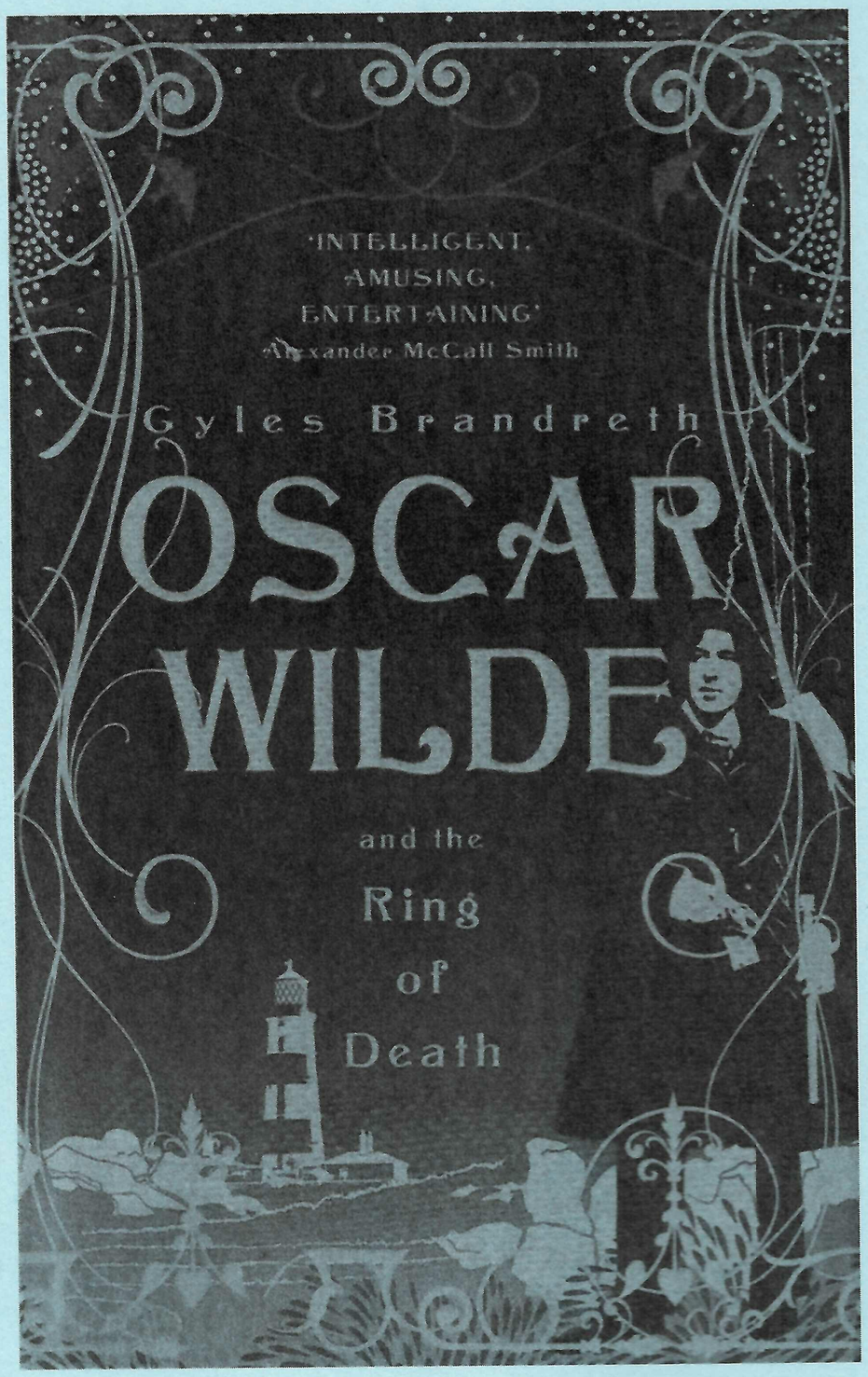
Timothy J. McCann

## EDWARD HERON-ALLEN, OSCAR WILDE AND THE RING OF DEATH

'Edward Heron-Allen is anything but ordinary, Arthur. He cultivates asparagus. He makes violins. He speaks fluent Persian. And he is a world authority on necrophilia, bestiality, pederasty, and the trafficking of child prostitutes:'

'Good grief!'. Arthur Conan Doyle blanched and gazed towards Edward Heron-Allen in horror. The young solicitor was lifting VyVyan Wilde from his shoulders. He kissed the top of the boy's head as he lowered him safely to the ground. 'Good grief!', repeated Conan Doyle.

'I've seated you next to him at dinner, Arthur. You'll find him fascinating. He's another chiromancer – like Mrs. Robinson. Let him read your palm between courses and he'll advise you whether to plump for the lamb or the beef.'




*The Cover of Oscar Wilde and the Ring of Death by Giles Brandreth*

'I'm speechless, Oscar,' said Conan Doyle, still staring fixedly in the direction of Edward Heron-Allen and Constance Wilde. 'I'm quite lost for words.

'No matter,' said Oscar blithely, 'Heron-Allen can do the talking. He has a great deal to say and you'll find all of it worth hearing.'

This conversation comes from the first chapter of the second in a series of murder mysteries featuring Oscar Wilde as a detective, written by Giles Brandreth. The conceit of the stories is that Oscar Wilde is the detective, assisted by his friend Arthur Conan Doyle, who solves the mysteries, while the chronicler of the stories is Wilde's friend and biographer Robert Harborough Sherard. Heron-Allen described him in his diary on 20 December 1885; writing that: 'afterwards a strange creature named Sherrard came in, a young man with an old face, a square jaw no complexion & long straw coloured hair, he said little but looked wonders. It appears he lives upon about 5/- a week in a garret in the Quartier Latin & lives upon tobacco, Opium & Absinthe to obtain which he writes for six hours a week, translates advertisements & similar sordid literature. He has written a curious novel & a volume of poems both unknown to fame'. He was later to write several books about Wilde.

The first of Gyles Brandreth's stories, entitled *Oscar Wilde and the Candlelight Murders*, is set in 1889 and tells the story of the murder of Billy Woods a supposed friend of the poet and writer John Gray. The second, which features Edward Heron-Allen, is called *Oscar Wilde and the Ring of Death.* Gyles Brandreth wrote to me : 'You and your members will find that Edward Heron-Allen features prominently throughout "Oscar Wilde and the Ring of Death" . . . I hope you'll approve of what I've done with him! I first came across him when reading *The Complete Letters of Oscar Wilde* - and when I discovered his admiration for Constance Wilde I decided that I wanted to know more about him . . . Of course, he is such a remarkable man that to do him justice one would need to write a sequence of novels simply devoted to him and his extraordinary range of interests. What you get in *The Ring of Death* is a partial portrait, only, a cameo - but I hope it's one that will amuse and intrigue your members rather than infuriate them.'

The story is set in May 1892, a time when we know very little of Heron-Allen's movements. All Christopher Blayre's *Notes upon the Literary, Scientific, and Artistic Activities of Edward Heron-Allen FRS* tells us is that 'in 1892 he had begun work on the Torres Straits Foraminifera with F.W. Millett of Marazion, and this occupied him until 1904'. Of course he was recently married to Marianna Lehmann, and we know that they did a lot of translation and musical work together. He was still a friend of the Wilde's then, and Brandreth's view of his relationship with Wilde's wife Constance and their sons is very perceptive, but 1886 was the period of their closest friendship. Heron-Allen's diaries of that year record regular visits to Tite Street, usually accompanied by Blanche Roosevelt (Madame Macchetta d'Alligri) and/or Caroline Maxse. In the story Conan Doyle deduces that Heron-Allen is a professional man, 'a solicitor, and the son of a solicitor' but fears that Wilde will reveal to him that his 'supposed model of respectability, is in fact the greatest bounder in the room'. 'Not at all' replies Wilde, 'but we all have our secrets, Arthur, do we not? ,,, he is in love with Constance.'

The stories are set in real time and many of the characeters are genuine, only the story is imagined. In *The Ring of Death,* at the Socrates Club, Wilde proposes a game of 'murder', in which each of his dinner guests must list the names of those they would most like to kill. It is only a game, but within hours the fourteen 'victims' begin to die one by one and Wilde has to solve the mystery as he and Constance are on the list of victims. The six members of the Club were Wilde himself, Conan Doyle, Sherrard, Lord Alfred Douglas, Bram Stoker and Walter Sickert. Their respective guests were Edward Heron-Allen,

Willie Hornung, The Rev. George Daubeny, Lord Alfred Douglas's elder brother Lord Drumlanrig, Charles Brookfield, the actor, and Bradford Pearse, another actor, Other real-life characters include Lily Langtry, Charles Brooke, the Rajah of Sarawak and Katherine Bradley and Edith Cooper, together known as Michael Field

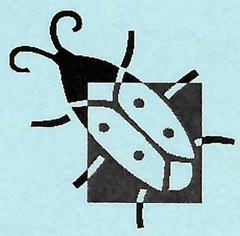
The book captures the late Victorian period very well, the characters both real and imagined, are well-drawn, and the author knows his Wilde and his Conan-Doyle and parodies them entertainingly. Wilde dominates the stories with his wit and intelligence and the supposition is made that Sherlock Holmes based his methods on Wilde's intuitions, while Sherrard plays the role of Dr. Watson However the suspense of the story drops off as Wilde investigates various red herrings, and all the characters and especially the police are portrayed as simpletons contrasted with Wilde's intellect. There are various factual inaccuracies – I am fairly certain that Heron-Allen did not play cricket for the first XI at Harrow, he was not VyVyan Hollan's godfather, and so far as I know had no knowledge of the trafficking of child prostitutes. But, all in all, the book is an ingenious idea, an entertaining story, and well worth reading and I hope that Heron-Allen appears in some of the later planned novels in the series.

Gyles Brandreth, *Oscar Wilde and the Ring of Death* (London: John Murray, 2008)

Timothy J. McCann

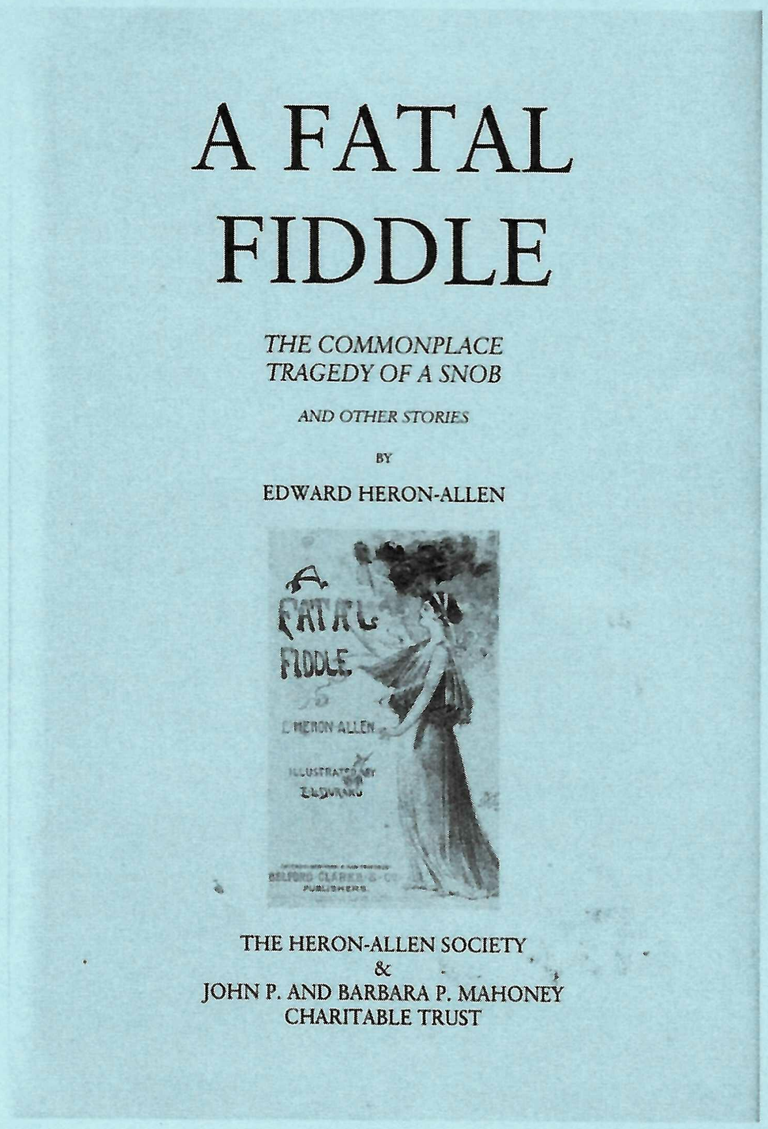
**A FATAL FIDDLE:**
**FICTION: SOUND AND SILLY.**
**A BOOK REVIEW**

After a prolonged and intensive twenty year search for this extremely elusive short story sampler, we had the pleasure of finding an original copy in 2008. In conjunction with the Heron-Allen Society, we reproduced an attractive limited edition of 100 copies. Under the title of "A Fatal Fiddle, The Commonplace Tragedy of a Snob", the eleven short stories were first published in 1889 by Belford, Clarke and Company (Chicago) with an alleged ©1890 reprinting by the National Book Company (New York). (Heron-Allen's "Princess Daphne" and "The Suicide of Sylvester Gray" are even more difficult to find in the public market place.) The first known review of "The Fatal Fiddle" was published in the "Springfield Republican" on December 26, 1889 in Springfield Massachusetts. We are honored to add an updated review 120 years later.



Edward Heron-Allen, a young debonair bohemian Englishman, had been a resident in the USA since 1886 and had already published some novelettes and romantic novels, violin-making books and of course, his palmistry treatises. These early novels and short stories were intended to amuse readers in idle moments. These stories could be graceful and slightly amusing, but a few could make one's mind wander to uncomfortable flashbacks. This discomfort among the more susceptible daydreamers is intensified by the wonderful illustrations of E.L. Durand. This was Heron-Allen's only novel with illustrations. The illustrations of the mummified relic of humanity in the "An External Expiation" still give us great pause and angst. Yikes! This was our favorite short story. The lead story, "A Fatal Fiddle" is an amusing story about an unsympathetic violin player who naively attempts a manoeuvre (fiddle) leading to disastrous long term consequences (fatal). This manoeuvre just happens to involve a violin.

The Necromancer seems to be drawn to ghosts and his most pleasing stories centre around these uncomplicated spirits, who vary from pleasant to gruesome entities. Many of these stories (histories, chronicles?) are interconnected with characters portrayed in Heron-Allen's earlier novels, "The Princess Daphne" and "The Suicide of Sylvester Gray". The novel's narrator claimed in his youth to be a wild psychologist with a rabid bent as a ghost hunter. Six of the eleven tales have spirits as a theme. "The Lute Girl's Charm" warns of the ghostly ferocity generated by a broken heart and discarded promises. "The Heresy of Spencer Carlyon" is a spectral story of a murderous monk apparition. "The Eternal Expiation" forewarns sinners that the biblical hell may




*The Cover of A Fatal Fiddle:*
*The Commonplace Tragedy of a Snob and other Stories*
*by Edward Heron-Allen*

*Clare Island Survey. Foraminiferal sampling stations.*

have many different eternal physical locations and sufferings. "An induced Dream (?)" recalls a recurring Christmas Day murderous spectacle. The chilling "On the Roman Balcony" documents the murderous vendetta orchestrated by a possessed demonic charm, Mano Pantea. And finally, "The Autobiography of a Disembodied Spirit" is a whimsical adventure of a young girl with an estate's resident ancestral gentlemanly spook who attempts to reclaim his former protoplasmic corporeal shell.

Five of these stories including "the Fatal Fiddle" lack adventures with demonic entities. "My Breach of Trust" has lessons on the travails of war and treachery. "A Desperate Remedy" warns about life amongst London's inveterate societal dregs. "My First Love" is a sappy slog of one's first infatuation. Finally, "An Atlantic Tragedy" starkly details a voyage with Titanic implications of love lost and morbid obsession.

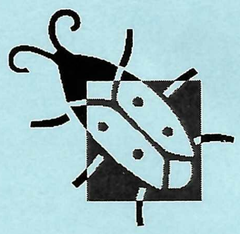
This book would never have won any literary awards in either century. Heron-Allen seems to have enjoyed writing these simple novelettes hoping to secure a smile or a giggle from his friends, and just maybe a "Yikes"! The inclusion of these superb illustrations certainly made the reading experience much more enjoyable. We recommend a good bottle of Amarone and a warm fire late at night to get you in the proper mood.

Edward Heron-Allen, *A Fatal Fiddle: The Commonplace Tragedy of a Snob and other Stories*, with illustrations by E.L. Durand. Published by the Heron-Allen Society and the John P. and Barbara P. Mahoney Charitable Trust (Tartarus Press, 2010)

John & Barbara Mahoney

## THE SOCIETY'S VISIT TO CLARE ISLAND, AUGUST 2011

The Society is organising a trip to Clare Island, off the west coast of Ireland, from 14 to 16 August 2011 to commemorate the visit by Edward Heron-Allen and Arthur Earland in 1911 as part of the original Clare Island Survey. We hope to visit the ruins of the Abbey, the Castle, the Napoleonic Signal Tower and the Lighthouse as well as the places associated with Heron-Allen's visit, to enjoy guided walks and to hear a number of relevant talks. [Members interested in joining the party should contact the Chairman]



## THE HERON-ALLEN BIOGRAPHY

Joan Navarre is writing a biography of Edward Heron-Allen. Any information concerning Heron-Allen (e.g. letters, manuscripts, photographs) will be greatly appreciated. E-mail: jnavarre@hotmail.com

## THE SOCIETY'S WEB-SITE

The Heron-Allen Society has a website at: http://www.nhm.ac.uk/hosted_sites/heronallen/ The webmaster, Dr. Andrew S. Henderson, can be contacted through the website or directly by e-mail at: andy.henderson@fugro-robertson.com. Andy updates our web-site on a regular basis, and members are encouraged to keep in touch by making use of it. There is an opportunity on the site for members to make comments and suggestions and to post queries.

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*The Heron-Allen Newsletter was edited by Timothy J. McCann and designed by Caroline Adams.*