The Heron-Allen Society

Newsletter no.5

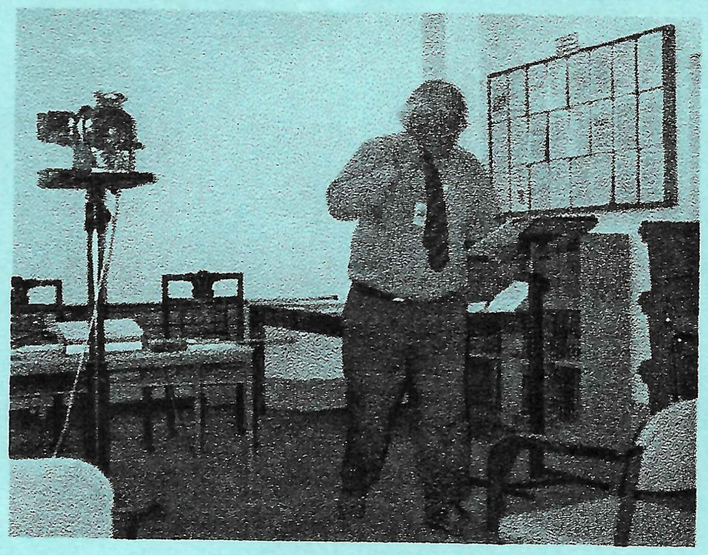
Autumn 2004

Portrait of Edward Heron-Allen by R.B. Ogle, recently rediscovered by Clive Jones.

ACCOUNT OF THE FOURTH ANNUAL HERON-ALLEN SYMPOSIUM 2004, HELD AT THE NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM LONDON

It was with great pleasure that I made the journey from Dublin to London to attend the Fourth (but my first) Annual Heron-Allen Symposium. As a student of foraminifera, I had long been familiar with Edward Heron-Allen FRS, scientist. I was therefore very interested in attending this year's meeting at the Natural History Museum, which was to focus on EH-A's contributions to the study of these microscopic animals.

The members warmly welcomed me and as we chatted over coffee, I quickly discovered that there was much to more to EH-A's life than the study of foraminifera alone. His varied interests were well illustrated by the collection of geological specimens, books, furniture and other Heron-Allen memorabilia on display in the museum. Of particular interest was the 'Delhi purple sapphire' which, to paraphrase EH-A, is 'trebly accursed and stained with blood'. Whilst the curse is apparently restricted to those who own it, I resisted the temptation to test the theory by touching it myself.



John Whittaker at the Symposium

The meeting began with a welcome by John Whittaker, and an account of the three Westminster Fire Office Chairs, which once sat on the Persian rug-covered floors of EH-A's room (and were soon to be sat on by myself and other members of the society). We then moved onto the focus of the day, EH-A's life-long involvement with foraminifera. When speaking to Joan Navarre before the meeting, she commented that, as a micropalaeontologist, I regularly got to see a world that many people were completely unaware of. It was this microscopic world of the foraminifera that captured the interest of a young Heron-Allen, and its 'beauty and mystery' remained one of the constants in his remarkably varied life. Any explorer new to this hidden world could have wanted for no better introduction than that of our first speaker, Richard Hodgkinson. In a talk illustrated by the original lantern slides of EH-A, we were presented with the vibrancy and diversity of these tiny animals. The idea that there is much more to these animals than the small shells they leave behind was

Richard Hodgkinson showing members the Heron-Allen Library at the Natural History Museum

continued in the second talk by Mike Kaminksi, who outlined the development of EH-A's ideas concerning 'Purpose and Intelligence in the foraminifera'. When confronted by the skilful constructions of *Technitella*, or the discernment of those other agglutinating forms that only build their homes from certain types of mineral grain (even diamonds!), it is easy to understand how ideas of foraminiferal intelligence arose. As so often is the case, during the subsequent scientific journey through debate, semantics, misunderstandings and recriminations, something of that initial wonder is inevitably lost on the way. Nevertheless, whether it be by specific gravity or special purpose, these single celled animals continue to assemble the most astounding constructions from the detritus surrounding them. For both lay people and experts alike, the beauty and mystery of the foraminifera remains.

The morning was rounded off by Clive Jones who spoke about the many items held at the museum in the Heron-Allen library. These include the sizeable collection of papers and books on foraminifera that EH-A compiled, all bound in distinctive blue and gold, as well as the original foraminiferal slides assembled during his various studies. After this talk, Clive took groups of us on a guided tour of the library, which remains an important resource for the modern foraminiferologist.

After a very lively lunch that could have happily occupied us for much of the afternoon, we returned to the museum for the final talk of the day by John Whittaker. In a presentation entitled "The Clare Island Survey of 1911 – a scientific investigation with pretty girls", John recounted EH-A's visit to the western coast of Ireland. This trip, in the company of Arthur Earland, is captured in remarkable detail in both the scientific literature and from a more personal angle in Heron-Allen's travel journal. From a series of black and white photographs, we catch a glimpse of what it was like to conduct fieldwork almost 100 years ago. Shortly after the meeting, I returned to Achill Island to resample the beaches that Heron-Allen and Earland examined during their visit. The railway no longer extends to Mulranny, and the Midland Great Western Hotel, in which EH-A stayed, is currently being converted to luxury apartments. But apart from this, the clusters of new holiday cottages, and the profusion of surfers, I think they would have found the area much as they left it.

I thoroughly enjoyed the meeting and look forward to next year's symposium. The friendly atmosphere, enthusiasm and insights of the members meant that I almost felt as if I had met the man himself. After all, I spent many hours as a child playing on the beaches at Selsey and must have come home with hundreds of EH-A's foraminifera in my swimming trunks! Furthermore, I was surprised to discover over lunch with Ivor Jones, that I grew up only a few hundred yards from one of the sites EH-A considered for his house, 'Large Acres': given a few less yards and a few more years, we could have been neighbours.

Robin J. Edwards,
Department of Geography, Trinity College Dublin.

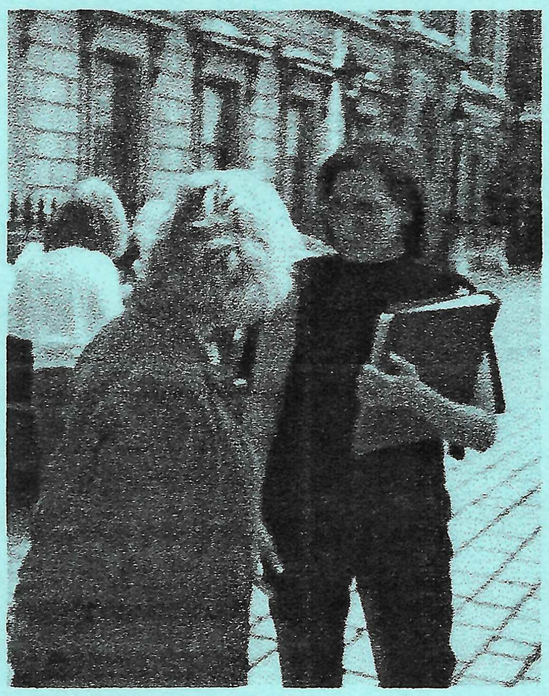
THE LONDON ADVENTURE: EXPLORATIONS INTO HIDDEN LITERARY LONDON

Edward Heron-Allen, FRS. Presented by Dr. Joan Navarre - Saturday, 12 June 2004

A group of about twenty, mainly from literary clubs, and three EH-A Society members assembled at 3pm, close to to St. Mary Abbotts Church in Kensington on the anniversary of the day that Edward Heron-Allen read the palm of Cyril Wilde, Oscar's eldest son.

The area is where EH-A based part of his novel "Princess Daphne", he talked of the 'boy' artists who lived in the area, such as Walter Crane and the artist Edward Linley Sambourne (who was a noted photographer and cartoonist for "Punch"). Sambourne designed the cover of "Practical Cheirosophy: A Synoptical Study of the Science of the Hand" for EH-A who often visited his house. It is now open to the public

The walk took us to the quiet of Holland Street and Stafford Terrace. In spite of it being a busy Saturday, we all managed to catch the same No.9 double-decker bus to the Royal Academy of Arts, Piccadilly. Here Joan explained that EH-A would come, to the Linnean Society, the Microscopic Society and the London Library all in close proximity. A walker explained that readers at the Bodleian Library wanted a library where readers could smoke, so the London Library was founded, and it is there that EH-A donated all his many volumes of Omar Khayyam. The library is now non-smoking.



Joan Navarre at the Royal Academy leading the Heron-Allen walk

Across the road was Hatchards, Fortnum & Mason's, places he must have frequented, as well as being home to his clubs and rooms in No.2 Ryder Street, where he resided after he left home. We walked to Wardour Street where George Chanot had made violins: EH-A would have paid many visits from the family law firm of Allen & Son, 17 Carlisle Street, Soho, while his father was away, learning how to make violins from the craftsman.

Next stop was St. Anne's churchyard: the Allen family had been Vestry Clerks of the parish for over 150 years. Here EH-A married his first wife, Marianna Frederika Lehmann on 1 July 1891. The church was bombed in 1940 and only the tower remains of this Wren church. Now the Soho Society meet there.

Passing Royalty House, 76 Dean Street, formerly a theatre that EH-A had attended, to outside 53, Dean Street, where the first floor room of the building is called "The Allen Room" (the venue for our Symposium in 2003). Final port of call, a room in the "Golden Lion" for refreshments opposite 53 Dean Street, where walkers could glance across to see the art nouveau windows dedicated to the Allens with their coats of arms. Our stay

Tim McCann and Rohinten Mazda
at St. Anne's Soho
on the Heron-Allen walk

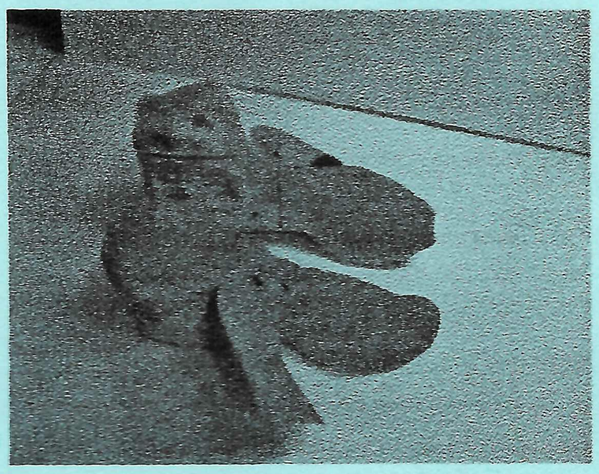
was short-lived as the manager of the hostelry, despite the booking of the room months before, had been made a better offer for a stag night!. So the grand afternoon broke up with us going our separate ways. Thank you Joan for a splendid afternoon, seeing and learning about a different London.

Venetia B.N. Jones

A BETTER MOUSETRAP AND THE SELSEY FEET

Chichester District Museum is celebrating its 40th anniversary this year. In celebration the Museum put on a temporary exhibition about its collection entitled *A Better Mousetrap and the Selsey Feet*. The *better mousetrap* is another story but the *Selsey Feet* originally belonged to Heron-Allen before ending up here in the Museum. These stone effigies that look like feet were reputedly found off the coast in Selsey and were taken to Heron-Allen. We think then that they became part of his collection. Until recently they were labelled as the feet from a statue or rude from the Anglo-Saxon cathedral at Church Norton. However, the general consensus now is that they are a natural phenomena and a fluke of nature.

Heron-Allen also featured in the exhibition as one of the collectors who had contributed to the Museum's collections. Some of his collection of local fossils and prehistoric tools from Selsey formed part of the early collection of the Museum, along with a collection of polished stones and a collecting cabinet filled with specimens of minerals that may have belonged to him. There are also volcanic glass tools from Mexico and Native American arrowheads. We don't know how they entered the collection but they now make a valuable contribution and are used in our educational work with schools. Mr and Mrs Marriner also kindly lent us lantern slides taken by Heron-Allen for display.



The Selsey Feet

As an interesting local character, and an example of a fanatical collector, he formed a large section of the exhibition. The exhibition was visited by many local people and visitors from further afield, and the Selsey feet were chosen by some children as their favourite object in the Museum.

I am indebted to Tim McCann who provided photographs and a copy of a picture of Heron-Allen for display and also helped with the research for this section of the exhibition.

Jane Seddon,
Chichester District Museum

THE TIGER'S MOUTH: A FALSE METEORITE

The Department of Minerals in the Natural History Museum at South Kensington is famous for its collection of meteoric metals, and is constantly offered as of meteoric origin masses of metal which upon examination prove to be non-meteorite. The Trustees of the Museum have, however, just accepted as a gift from Mr. E. Heron-Allen, F.R.S., a pseudo-meteorite which has a remarkable history behind it.

The specimen, which comes from China, and is known as the "Hangchow Meteorite", or "Tiger's Mouth", is really a piece of limestone, weathered and hollowed. But the inscriptions on it, and its carved eighteenth-century stand, harmonize not unsatisfactorily, with the tradition associated with it when Mr. Heron-Allen purchased it. According to this story it was found some centuries ago by a member of a well-to-do family living at Hangchow, in the province of Chekiang. It was taken to be a meteorite, and made an object of reverence for some generations before eventually finding it ways to Europe via Shanghai. Upon one end of the stone an earlier owner had incised an inscription, which has been translated, "The Tiger's Mouth opens the Sun." Upon the other end appears a poem in similar characters: -

"The black Tiger roars . . . . . the Sun
The dark green Dragon raises the storm clouds.
It is heavenly purity of the Wonderful Valley.
It sounds like the chiming of gold and jade (instruments).
It is surely as rare as the Jade of Ho.
I regard it as a perfect treasure."

The poem terminates with the words:
"Inscribed on the first day of the tenth month of the year Ting Ch'ou in Wei Yuan (The Luxuriant Garden) by Mu Min (the People's Shepherd).
"If the inscription synchronized with the mounting of the stone on its stand, Mu Min wrote these words in 1757, though the Chinese calendar also allows the year "Ting Ch'ou" to occur at intervals in cycles of 60 years either side of this date.

According to what may be called the authorized interpretation, the poem relates how "The Tiger's Mouth" (i.e., the shaped stone), was lit up in the sun after a great storm ("The Green Dragon"), and excited the wonder of the dwellers in the Wonderful Valley. When it was struck it gave forth a musical note, and this fact, added to its supposed heavenly origin, gave it a sacred significance comparable to that of other famous meteorites, such as the image of Diana of the Ephesians in "Acts" ("the image of which fell down from Jupiter") or the Ka'aba of Mecca. Mr. Heron-Allen has been at some pains to collect the references in the classics to the worship of meteorites.

It may be objected that the inscription makes no direct statement of belief in the stone's meteoric origin. But the tradition seemed quite as strong as that for the origin of the Ephesian Diana or of the Ka'aba. But a more sceptical school denies that the stone was ever taken to be meteoric or worshipped, and concludes that it was merely preserved as a natural musical instrument, and inscribed, as are other masses of Chinese limestone. Such sceptics offer a translation in which the words otherwise held to be "Tiger's Mouth" become a place-name. Expert Sinologists can be quoted for either view.

The Natural History Museum possesses no genuine meteorites from China, though records of them are far from rare in Chinese history.

©*The Times, Monday, January 26, 1931.*
Page 13, column e.

EH-A AND LADY MARGARET HALL

In his *Notes upon the Literary, Scientific, and Artistic Activities of Edward Heron-Allen, FRS* (Heron-Allen Society, Opusculum I (2000), EH-A wrote that after he lost his younger daughter Armorel Daphne in a car accident, within a fortnight of her having taken her degree (with first class honours) in Science, at Lady Margaret Hall: he founded in her memory '"The Armorel Holiday Gift" of £60 a year, and the "Armorel Daphne Heron-Allen Scholarship" in Science at £300 a year'.

Portrait of Armorel Heron-Allen from Lady Margaret Hall

These were both considerably enhanced before his death in 1943. Lady Margaret Hall confirm that both funds continue to bear fruit. The Armoral Daphne Heron-Allen Scholarship is awarded annually to an outstanding student in the life sciences, while the Heron-Allen travel grant is awarded annually to a student with a good project. Grants to enable students to take a holiday are also awarded. A more recent innovation is the annual Heron-Allen lecture. Three have been held so far, to co-incide with the election of the Heron-Allen Scholar. The third lecture was given by Professor John Lawton, CBE, FRS, Chief Executive of the Natural Environment Research Council, and entitled 'Biodiversity, conservation, and unsustainable development' . It was delivered in the Talbot Hall, Lady Margaret Hall on Friday 12 March 2004. Next year's lecture will be at Talbot Hall on 11 March 2005 at 5.15pm. Details to be confirmed.

Timothy J. McCann

APPEALS

1. The Selsey Plaque

Members will recall the Heron-Allen Plaque unveiling at Selsey on 15 July 2002 (described in Newsletter no.3). Your committee failed to check out the blue plaque unveiled outside Large Acres to the extent, and their eternal shame, that the letters 'FRS' were omitted from it. It was thought essential that this should be corrected: accordingly, the work was put in hand. We have so far paid £265.56 for the new corrected plaque, but still await the estimate for the removal of the old and fitting of the replacement. It is likely that the sum involved will be in the order of £70 to £150, depending on the damage caused by the removal of the original plaque. The new plaque has been manufactured and is ready to be put in place when the money has been raised.

2. Heron-Allen's Grave

At the plaque unveiling in 2002, many of you saw the sad state of repair of the triple grave of Edward and Edith Heron-Allen and their daughter Armorel, the only other tangible memorial to EH-A. The cost of putting it right

The new Plaque to be hung outside Large Acres at Selsey

will be in the order of £626. Your committee considers it to be most desirable to have the necessary repairs done. The family has said that they will of course chip in, but so far we have raised £275 and, if we are to put the work in hand, before further deterioration occurs, funds are urgently needed. Any contributions should be sent to the Treasurer marked specifically for the Grave Fund.

MEMBERSHIP LIST

The Secretary would like to rejig the Members' List, as we are growing and growing, to include the principal interest each member has in E.H-A, so that members can make direct contact with each other. Please let the Secretary have details of your interests.

Ivor E. Jones

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

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

BOOKS

Timothy J. McCann, (ed.), *'Portraits and Persia: Bookplates and Bognor': Proceedings of the 3rd. Heron-Allen Symposium, 2003.* Heron-Allen Society Opusculum VI (2004).

ARTICLES

Peter Allpress, Notes on some Bookplates of Edward Heron-Allen' in *Opusculum VI* (2004), 11-23.

Bryan Burrough, 'The Allen Family and the Allen Room', in *Opusculum VI* (2004), 2-7.

R.L. Hodgkinson and J.E. Whittaker, 'Edward Heron-Allen FRS (1861-1943); a review of his scientific career, with an annotated bibliography of his foraminiferal publications' in *Archives of Natural History*, vol.31, pt. 1 (2004), 6-29.

Clive Jones, 'Rockfall: Edward Heron-Allen: The Man and his Library', in *Set in Stone*, vol. 2, no. 1 (2004), 10-1.

Timothy J. McCann, '"My first Appearance in Print": Edward Heron-Allen, the Rev. W.B. Philpott and the Geology of Bognor', in *Opusculum VI* (2004), 24-30.

Claire Powell, "The Edward Heron-Allen Collection of Editions of Omar Khayyam and Edward Fitzgerald at the London Library', in *Opusculum VI* (2004), 8-10.

Robert Reginald, 'Strange Lessons: Edward Heron-Allen's Cosmopoli Tales', in Robert Reginald, *Xenograffiti* (1996), 60-2.

John Whittaker, 'Edward Heron-Allen' in *Geology Today*, vol. 19, no.6 (2003), 199.

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MEMBERSHIP

Members pay a fee (a minimum of £10) on joining, and £10 annually in July thereafter. Members are entitled to the Newsletter, information about the annual Symposium, the current Opusculum, and information about the Society's activities. Any Society publication will normally be paid for separately. Any back publication will be charged for separately (if still in print). Members are reminded that prompt payment of subscriptions enables the Society to continue to publish its Opuscula. Enquiries should be addressed to the Secretary.

I/We enclose my/our subscription for 2004.

Name:

Address:

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