REFLECTIONS ON HERON-ALLEN'S WAR JOURNAL

BRIAN W. HARVEY AND
CAROL FITZGERALD

TALKS DELIVERED AT THE SECOND
EDWARD HERON-ALLEN SYMPOSIUM,
CHICHESTER, JULY 2002
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Opusculum V
Heron-Allen Society

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Reflections on Heron-Allen's War Journal: Talks delivered by Brian Harvey and Carol Fitzgerald at the Second Heron-Allen Symposium, Chichester, July 2002.

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Brian Harvey

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Cover photograph
Edward Heron-Allen, c.1910

THE IMPORTANCE OF EH-A's "JOURNAL OF THE GREAT WAR"

by BRIAN W. HARVEY

INTRODUCTION

The Journal was "discovered" by the present editors when in the possession of Ivor Jones, (EH-A's grandson). It was of course well known to his family, but the outside world did not know of its existence and no part of it had been previously published. I will not here attempt to delineate the often exciting trail that I first followed except to say that it started with the chapter in my study of the history of the Violin and its Makers in the British Isles (OUP 1995) which included a chapter on previous writers and historians of that subject amongst whom the name of EH-A was pre-eminent. Much of this saga, happily, was recorded for us last year by Tim McCann in his now published address, "The Quest for the Heron-Allen Society" (Opusculum III).

Briefly, a few salient facts. The original typescript of the Journal consists of two volumes, about 450,000 words, but in published form the book is about 120,000 words, which makes just over 300 pages. It follows that the published version is about 26% of the original. It took some 6 years to find, and agree a format with, a suitable publisher. The necessary abridging, footnotes, identification of suitable illustrations and general editorial work then followed. We also had to write a suitable Introduction, and a Dramatis Personae, which involved considerable research, some of it

in Canada, and do the Index. (Many readers have commented on the very handsome end-product for which credit is of course due to Messrs. Phillimore's).

The Journal is in diary form with entries under dates. These start a day or two before the formal declaration of war by the UK government in 1914 and in the main stop on the armistice and its immediate aftermath in 1918. However, various postscripts have been added by EH-A by way of additional comment up to 1920. Because of the episodic and chronological nature of the work the fact that there have been huge omissions is hardly noticeable, particularly as there were big gaps in even the full-blown version. We of course had to he careful that all cross-references were to parts still extant and not omitted. Abridging was a huge and difficult job but the resultant text is still very informative and undoubtedly makes fascinating reading.

The book is divided into, essentially, three parts. These are first the start of the War, its effect on everyday life in Selsey in particular and in the country as a whole, and the formation of the Selsey Volunteer Battalion; secondly, EH-A's officer's training course for three very comprehensively (and sometimes amusingly) described weeks in Tunbridge Wells; thirdly, his work in the War Office as part of its propaganda unit and his visit to the Front at Flanders and France in 1918, again rivetingly described by EH-A's experienced pen.

Illustrations have come from many sources but particularly from Ivor Jones via EH-A's Visitors' Book and other unpublished family diaries. We are most grateful to Ivor Jones for his patient cooperation and to the West Sussex Record Office for all the help they have willingly given.

THE NATURE OF THE BEAST

In assessing a book's "importance" it can be helpful to determine into which category of non-fiction it falls. Comparison with other books can then he more readily made. So what is this newly published work's correct pigeon-hole? Librarians, publishers and booksellers like putting books into pigeon-holes, sometimes ludicrously wrongly allocated (like Richard Dawkins' pathfinding work on the modern theory of evolution, 'The Blind Watchmaker", being put under "hobbies for the disabled", as once I saw!) But EH-A was not a pigeon-hole man. In writing about him for the New DNB the editors cut my reference to him as a "polymath" and substituted "scholar". Yes he was, but that gives a most misleading impression on its own. He had a good knowledge of many fields of human endeavour and natural philosophy but was a practical man of action too and no mere dreamer as the War Journal makes quite clear. And his published non-fiction includes local history, proto-zoology, Persian literature, cheirosophy, musical instruments and Eastern Religions. So we must expect the problem of categorisation of this particular product of a wide-ranging mind to be more difficult to solve than might first appear.

A preliminary question often asked about someone's memoir is - for whom was it written? EH-A explains as follows -

"I intend to record the events of the war and the impressions they create upon private people and families. Not the historical facts. ... . I think that one day, if the war becomes a serious one, my own personal impressions, and the influence the war may have upon our ways of life will

be of interest to my children and their children" (p.4).

But parts of it do not read as if it were for family consumption only. EH-A is too professional a writer so to limit himself. He must have anticipated possible publication one day.

In that light let's consider the possibilities as to its classification.

Local history — its most probable bookshop classification. When the War broke out the Heron-Allens were well established at Large Acres, Selsey, (built c. 1907), and also owned a magnificent house in St. John's Wood, London (21 rooms needed fires!) Much of the Journal concerns day-to-day life in Selsey and Chichester, where he expended great effort to form a Volunteer Battalion. But there are also some splendid descriptions of air raids in London, first by zeppelin and then aeroplanes, which caused many casualties and considerable damage to property. And Tunbridge Wells also gets a part in the drama since he goes for officer training there. But by and large I think the book matches up to its sub-title (the result of much editorial burning of midnight oil) - 'From Sussex Shore to Flanders Fields". It therefore justifies being taken overall as Local History.

Is it also Military History? Again, the Journal is wider than this but there are numerous passages where the army, and the War effort generally, are seen through the eyes of a shrewd assessor. On the whole EH-A is impressed with military organisation and personnel (see pp.173-5). There is some savage criticism of tactics, particularly the fiasco of Gallipoli which EH-A knew from his pre-war travels in Turkey (in the unpublished Travel Journals there is a graphic account of his being taken for a spy there a few years earlier.) EH-A can't believe the generals had contoured maps of the area; he blames primarily "that

egregious ass, Churchill" (see pp. 47-50). There is also a moving account of the departure of young and innocent troops for the Front from Tunbridge Wells station (p. 158) and later, an interesting account of his War Office propaganda-carrying balloons and their launching and flights over enemy lines (p. 239).

Much of the last part of the book is taken up with his vivid description of the devastation he observed on the French front and the Somme battlefields - and this is certainly "military history". In this extract he teams up with an American journalist, Parkerson, who wishes to see what is left of a little village called, on the map, "Amerika".

'This track was frightful. We crawled along at walking pace, avoiding shellholes, but being flung about like peas on a drum, and at last, about two miles from the Menin road, we came upon a cross road at which a board was set up - as usual - bearing the magic word 'Amerika'. There was not a trace of human habitation - merely half a dozen huge shell holes and nine craters full of water and debris - Hun weapons and ammunition of all kinds, pouches full of unused cartridges, old bayonets (one of which, with a derelict pair of old wire-clippers Parkerson brought away as souvenirs) clothing, and here and there imperfectly buried Boches. Many of our own dead are still found in this terrible country, lying where they fell and were covered by the next and nearest explosion. It is an awful spectacle, which gives one a turn, however often one sees them" (p.256).

Descriptive writing of this calibre, and such matters as EH-A's minute explanation of his propaganda leaflet *Courier de l'Air* and its launching by balloon over enemy lines (which is not generally known) would probably qualify as "military history". EH-A certainly thinks that if his Journal had been discovered during the War he would

have been court-marshalled for breach of official secrets - which adds interest for the modern reader.

Is it Social History? I think this is nearer the mark, and as such it should appeal to a far wider readership than if it were purely local history. My co-editor has prepared a talk on the changing role of women in the Great War which also analyses EH-A's attitude to women. As a social phenomenon the importance of the change in the traditional role of women in our island's history cannot be overestimated.

Readers will compile their own favourite list of EH-A'isms which illustrate the rapid social changes and necessary adjustments which had to be made to the lavish pre-war style of living which the Heron-Allens had enjoyed. This might include his resolution to give up his car for the duration. He explains that he got it on "job" from Harrods, a "very convenient but most expensive way of having a car. Harrods provide the car, the chauffeur, petrol and all repairs, and if anything goes wrong with either car or man, they are immediately replaced, and one has no responsibility of any kind" (p. 55). Or we may gawp at his orders for vintage port (32 dozen, and confound the "radicals" who think this is "hoarding" (p. 177), and so on. (More serious deprivations revealed themselves as the War progressed.)

There is no doubt in my mind that the essence of the Journal is a minute and fascinating account of how life changed on the Home Front during those traumatic years. There are very few published accounts of life on the Home Front, (though numerous autobiographical accounts of life in the trenches) and none could be found quite like this one! It is these features, I feel sure, which lend to the book such "importance" to historians as it has, and time will now be needed to make a more comprehensive assessment.

It is also a personal history, as EH-A makes abundantly clear. So is it a sort of autobiography, with many flashbacks? Yes, in part. The Journal is replete with examples and I will only mention three. One is EH-A's "flashback" to Venice in 1885 when "in pure swagger for the edification of two Americans on the balcony of the Hotel Europa, I fired a revolver bullet at random at a bat which was flying up and down the canal, and to my amazement the bat flew into my bullet and dropped into the canal. I did not repeat the experiment but retired on my laurels" (p. 104). Then there is the vividly recounted meeting with Count Zeppelin in Constance in June 1900 and EH-A's fortunate disinclination to accept the Count's invitation to participate in the trial of his ill-fated dirigible balloon, but which later became "a very terrible thing" (p. 22). Thirdly, there are a number of passages where EH-A reveals his underlying philosophy of life and attitude to religion. These are important clues for any future biographer because they are, so far as I know, unique (see eg pp. 30-31 and 135-6).

CONCLUSION

So it is really a combination of all these things. The enigma is - are we seeing the *real* EH-A? You would hardly guess that here is someone who was widely regarded as a guru in the field of hand-reading (cheirosophy as he called it), wrote occult and weird fiction pseudonymously, was convinced that his library was haunted by the former guardian of the "Purple Sapphire" and who took elaborate precautions to contain its supposed evil powers before placing it in a bank vault in London and now in the Natural History Museum, and the like. He confesses that he has to

tread warily in these matters as he is anxious to be elected to the Royal Society (p.118), and is so elected in 1919. He could be criticised for lack of originality in his scientific work, which was mainly exhaustively consciencious, laborious cataloguing and taxonomy, useful and admirable though that be, and perhaps in his more occult activities for breaking his scientific oath administered when joining the Royal Society, that one will "withstand all dogma by an appeal to facts". Certainly- EH-A's main sponsor and long-standing friend, Chalmers Mitchell, was aware of criticism of this kind, but thought there were many redeeming features to EH-A's case, not least of which were the advantages of getting rich and potentially generous amateur benefactors onto the Society's books! But election was important to EH-A partly because he was not himself a graduate of a university and no-one had seen fit even to offer him an honorary degree, though he abundantly deserved one. This supreme honour for a scientist would have given him the kudos in scholarly circles for which he craved. So he generally presents a sober impression of himself here and hardly mentions the more bizarre events of his past. It is interesting that one of the Heron-Allen Society's members who, as a boy, knew EH-A quite well says that EH-A always seemed to be very conscious of the impression that he was creating.

I hope you have heard enough from me and, more importantly, in the extracts you have heard, from EH-A himself, to convince you that his text is lively, and certainly original, the project he set himself fascinating and the whole a very good read for any intelligent person, regardless of background. For those reasons alone it deserves to be a success

EDWARD HERON-ALLEN, THE WAR JOURNAL AND WOMEN

by CAROL FITZGERALD

One strand of social history that was of particular importance during the First World War was the changing role of women, and Edward Heron-Allen's Journal of the Great War illustrates aspects of this change and reflects the author's own reaction to it

To set the historical scene a little - immediately before the start of the War, the most publicized question that occupied many women was their right to vote and there was an active Suffragette movement determined to establish this right. With the outbreak of War, a kind of truce was established and women actively threw their energy into war work, many of them perhaps realising that the new opportunities afforded by the War would in fact assist their argument - an outlook which Heron-Allen greatly supported.

With the urgent need for more fighting men which came increasingly apparent as the war progressed, women stepped into their place on the work front. This was particularly true in the munition and transport industries as well as in clerical posts and the initial trade union resistance to this process waned by 1915 as the juggernaut of war rolled on with its insatiable appetite for men. By August 1916 it has been estimated that 750,000 women were in jobs that had previously been held by men. Many of these women had left domestic service for the higher wages of this new employment - a movement which as we

shall see affected the running of the Heron-Allen household.

For middle-class women the option of nursing was perhaps the most popular and the most traditionally acceptable and here again the Journal gives some insight into the kind of work that these women were expected to do.

Some gains were made: in 1918 women over 29 were allowed the vote - but much of the movement in the job market proved not to be permanent and in 1919 the female job market collapsed and the government encouraged women to return to the home and have children to bolster a population decimated by the years of fighting.

However, if some changes were reversed, some things did alter society irrevocably. One of these alterations was the relationship between the sexes - they became freer and many women found that after the new responsibilities that the War had placed on them, and the financial freedom that this had brought, they could not return to the sheltered life that they had led previously. Many thousands, moreover, had lost their husbands and lovers and were destined for an independent existence. When at the beginning of the war EH-A began to lay in stores in case of a food shortage (carefully selected from Fortnum & Mason), he wrote that if they were not needed they could go after the war to bachelor girls in flats who had to fend for themselves - a situation that in reality many must have faced in 1919.

I think the first thing that the Journal reflects - and one of the most important - is that EH-A liked women - he enjoyed their company (particularly, one suspects, if they were both intelligent and pretty) and went out of his way to help and support his women friends and relatives. We see him in the Journal out with a "ward" buying shoes for her,

or spending the day dashing back and forward to the Gare St Lazare in Paris at the end of the War to meet his godchild, Veronica Gotch, who eventually arrives too late to do anything but continue her journey, although she continues it with food, fruit and drink bought by him for her entertainment. He chose to spend some of his leave in this way and incidentally gives his readers a wonderful picture of Parisian life at the end of the war in the process - what the food was like - what it was possible to buy and what people were doing - even details of the queues that stretched along the streets for chocolate.

His own household was predominantly female - his wife and two daughters, and his mother, from what we learn of her in the Journal, must have been a powerful formative influence. One episode in particular reflects this. In September 1917 Heron-Allen goes to dine with her in London and their meal is interrupted by an air raid - the sky being lit up with burning shrapnel. The maid rushed in to warn her mistress who was deaf. EH-A's mother sternly told the maid that she had not rung for her and then observed "It is bad enough to have one's conversation interrupted by those insolent Prussians; I don't see why the parlour-maid should be involved."

Mrs Elvira Hobson who remembered EH-A from her youth described him not only as brilliant and eccentric but also as a ladies' man and something of his quick sympathy and feeling for women is reflected in the War Journal. His writing also suggests that he supported women in their move into hitherto male-dominated work. But being, as he was, far-sighted in these matters he also saw the difficulties that would ensue at the end of the war. As early as October 1914, two months after the outbreak of the War, he writes "What will happen next will be that girls take the place of boys, and creep with them into the men's places, and there

will be a revolution in commercial life which will be extremely picturesque, but which may lead to considerable social and domestic complications!" And entries written in 1918 make the complications more explicit when he writes of the girl conductors striking for equal pay with men and the public sympathy for their case as well as the working women and girls that he sees on the tube in London in the morning and evening who, he said, then composed 90% of the crowds. Of these he speculated "What on earth is to become of them after the war? As many of them have said to me, it will be quite impossible for them to settle down again to the normal, ornamental, esurient life of the pre-War girl, hedged around by the rules laid down by their Victorian parents." In a later note of January 1919 he highlights the difficulties women were finding in employment when a letter from one of his relations describes how she, with two other girls, have been doing the work of five men at half the pay.

He records too the gradual appearance of women in jobs that had hitherto been male domains. In 1917 EH-A noted the rise in numbers of post women and telegraph girls, adding that postmen were now so rare that they excited remarks when one saw them and that telegraph boys no longer existed. He also noted the number of women chauffeurs that "increased daily" and he describes how the chauffeur who used to wait "lolling on his seat with a cigarette in his mouth, reading a sporting paper, has given place to smart young women in tunic and gaiters - knitting." By 1918 too, the pressure of demand for women workers was felt in his own household when his cook and parlour maid answer the "frantic appeals for women war-workers" and depart to join the Women's Royal Naval Service. He writes on 11 May that his staff is reduced to one housemaid and "one plump specimen of that

anomalous female mammal known in British households as a 'Tweenie'" (defined by him as a transition form between a kitchen maid and an under-housemaid or cook). He goes on to say that as a result his wife has undertaken to do the cooking, adding, with some foreboding, "We look forward with cheerful resignation into a dim and doubtful culinary future". A fortnight later, however, Heron-Allen admits that Nour acquits herself of the task "admirably", the meals are delightful, and his pre-war prejudice about "amateur" cookery which he admitted that he had always rather despised and laughed at is abandoned.

In spite of his own domestic upheavals, his support for women's wartime occupations can be seen in his Journal entries, particularly those about Gladys Bingham. She was the daughter of the clergyman who had married him and Nour, and she was described by EH-A as his red-haired protégée. In 1916 she was working as an oxy-acetylene welder at the aerodrome at Hendon, in 1917 moving to do similar work at an aeroplane bomb factory in Wandsworth. His entries on her work are worth quoting in this context:

> 24 August 1916
>
> "My red-haired protégée Gladys Bingham is spending her hard-earned holiday at Selsey. The work she does is astounding for a girl. She is an oxy-acetylene welder at the aerodrome at Hendon, and tells me they are turning out a great number of aeroplanes, but that many of them are obsolete in pattern, being supplied under early contracts that the government cannot or will not break. They are miserably underpaid compared with the fashionably dressed young ladies who throng

the Admiralty...."

Describing her work at Wandsworth he writes:

26 September 1916

"The work seems frightfully hard, but they are very cheerful and happy over it, getting scarred with molten metal and living in a state of unspeakable grime. Every week that passes gives one a higher respect for these young gentlewomen who are doing real hard war work as contrasted with the fine young ladies who fill in their time at easy jobs in the government departments."

And after a visit to the factory to see Gladys at work he writes:

20 April 1917

"It was a wonderful thing to see these young gentlewomen at work, each of them in a rough blue overall with ragged leather apron, her head tied up in a cloth or silk handkerchief and wearing dark blue "goggles". . . .Gladys had bad burns on her chest (she wears a low V-cut blouse under her overall which is open at the neck) and on her arms - but they look upon it all as part of the day's work. ... I drove her back to Putney where she lives, at 5.30, black with grime and rust but quite happy. She says that they only really get clean on Saturday evenings. As a

rule they work overtime until 9pm and by doing so can earn £2 to £2 l0s a week."

For many women, particularly of the middle class, war work meant nursing. But here too, EH-A noticed that their war nursing exposed them to more extreme experiences than they would have previously encountered. Nour's own work as commandant of the Selsey Voluntary Aid Detachment at the Graylingwell Hospital in Chichester meant that she dealt directly with wounded Tommies in all conditions and told EH-A "harrowing tales of the way the poor boys are smashed up". EH-A described his own visit to the hospital when he saw one of the wards and some of the soldiers who were too ill to leave their beds. He wrote: "The ill, the maimed, the convalescent and the dying are all together. One poor creature lay groaning and whimpering with pain, looking like a living skeleton. The sister in charge of the ward told me he could not live more than a day or two, and was so wasted that she could circle his thigh six inches above the knee with her thumb and forefinger. She asked me if I would like to see it, and laughed unconcernedly when I replied that I would not look at it for anything on earth. It seemed horrible to make an interesting "show" of him - I heard that he was only about 23 years old - he looked 60".

EH-A's godchild, Veronica Gotch, volunteered for Red Cross service and after an initial training of two months at Kensington Infirmary, was, he wrote, with her sister "thrust at once without any preparation into the women's cancer ward and the male surgical where they had to do the most ignoble offices, and do dressings for men suffering from hideous diseases - syphilis and the like, to the horror of their mother when she learnt it. However, they came

through all right and went in due course to the Weir Hospital.... there they have been ever since, working hard and having no holiday."

To someone brought up in EH-A's generation and class, in which women were often protected against the nastier side of life, these changes were momentous. Whilst he was aware and feared that women might become harder and less gentle as a result of their experiences, (a fear which his experience in the ward of the Graylingwell Hospital may have fuelled), he nevertheless accepted the necessity for change. This is reflected in his diary entry of 6 July 1917 when he goes to the theatre to see the play "Damaged Goods". He wrote: "If anyone had told me five years ago that I should pay for a stall and sit in a London theatre, surrounded by men and women, listening to a play the whole motive of which is Syphilis, how it is acquired and what are its immediate effects, I would have assumed that my interlocutor was himself a victim of the disease. But it has happened."

He goes on to explain how the subject of syphilis had become prominent in the newspapers for the last year or so due to its rapid spread and adds: "The emancipation of women, and their work in hospitals, has rendered familiar to them a subject which I dare swear was an utterly sealed book to them before the war". EH-A continues in support of the play "The play is very terrible, but it was no more shocking than would be the sight of an operation in a hospital theatre, and though I went (alone be it said - I had that amount of reservation in my mind, though now I would not hesitate to take a grown woman to see it) prepared to deplore that such a play should be performed in public, I regard it now as perhaps the most valuable work that has been done by the dramatic profession. It is a striking instance of how cataclysmic circumstances sweep

away the conventional barriers that order our social relations as great accidents, great disease, or great griefs, annihilate false modesty in those whom they affect."

Cataclysmic circumstances surely prompted EH-A to do the unthinkable and to give Veronica Gotch, when she was about to work in a hospital in France, a tablet of cyanide of potassium so that she could kill herself if she should fall into the hands of the Germans. "A terrible resource," he wrote, "but it seems quite a natural part of a girl's equipment in a war with the Germans".

Yet in spite of the dangers, EH-A supported women's widening role in the war. He understood how cataclysmic circumstances necessitated some change. But there were also, however, changes which he refused to countenance, in particular the decline in standards of behaviour between the sexes and in manners in general. To a man of his generation, born in the 1860s, women were to be treated with some deference, some courtesy, unless, of course, they were "the worst sort of girls". What distressed him was that this courtesy broke down and also relations between the sexes became freer. Women became more financially independent, that he could accept; women worked alongside men in the workforce, that too he could accept; but what was difficult to face was that this, perhaps inevitably, moved many women off their pedestal. He condemned this fall in standards when he saw it and seemed not to accept that this change may have been inevitable in the pressure of the wartime world.

With the breakdown of an older social order during the War, hitherto rigid class distinctions and social mores came under pressure from the speed of change. For EH-A this was a depressing and unacceptable development. Several incidents in the Journal illustrate this clearly - and reflect the deference that Heron-Allen himself thought was due to

the opposite sex and the standard of manners that he expected generally.

Writing on 29 October 1915 he says:

> "Another consideration is that an officer nowadays is not necessarily a gentleman, and some of the girls have very unpleasant experiences when nursing these mushroom officers, who come home thinking themselves irresistible. No girl who has had any experience will trust herself alone in a railway carriage with a young officer on home leave, for though the majority are decent enough, the minority seem to regard girls at home - of whatever class - as potentially prostitutes, who may be accosted, if not attacked, with invitations and suggestions of the most insulting kind. Two girls who have stayed with us at Selsey have told me that they have been grossly insulted in the train on their way back to London by these new army officers. It is deplorable, but it is an undeniable fact."

His entry for 25 May 1918 expands the theme into observations about manners in general with the following incident recorded on the train from London to Horsham with 15 in the carriage. He observes" Three ladies had to get in, and it irritates me to observe that the officers and gentlemen get up to give seats to ladies whilst the cads who have crowded in sit fast - it makes one rather indignant to see a little cad with a vacant face "sitting tight" whilst a young officer with two wound-badges on his sleeve stands up clinging to the hat rack for an hour or more. But this is

one of the phenomena of the war, the manners which obtain both on trains and omnibuses. Sometimes a woman will refuse to take my seat, in which case I always leave the omnibus - I belong to a generation which could not remain seated whilst women stand up."

He noted also in the Journal that his secretary too was "insulted" when on giving up her seat on the omnibus to a wounded soldier, he suggested, to the laughter of the other passengers, that she should therefore sit on his knee.

EH-A did in fact put his displeasure at this behaviour into a short story entitled "The Sitting Face" which he hoped to have published in the *Daily Mail*. It was, however, refused on propaganda grounds as it was held that it would indicate to the Germans that the notorious courtesy towards women by British men had been undermined by the war! At first he could not take this seriously, but then when to his surprise this opinion was supported by his superiors in the propaganda department who also thought it might indicate a diminution in the British spirit, he bowed to their judgement. After the war, however, when the subject no longer had a propaganda dimension, the piece was published by Arthur Humphreys, the literary bookseller of "Hatchards" in his magazine "Books of Today". EH-A then signed the piece "Flavian" after Walter Pater's character of Flavian in *Marius the Epicurean*, which EH-A said had been modelled on his character as a young man.

The decline in morals and behaviour was not, however, solely a masculine affair and EH-A was as hard on the women who transgressed as he was on the men. In his entry for 8 June 1918 he described how some women were taking advantage of the returning soldiers. He wrote:

> "It is rather terrible to notice how the

> susceptible man, officer or Tommy, returning from a short leave from the Front, is at the mercy of an adventuress. One has only to take up any paper to see what a volume of bigamy is going on - the courts are full of such cases - and the magistrates admit that they are very hard to deal with. I have only this week, had before me a case which I am sorry to say crops up more often than anyone has any idea of. A man comes home famishing for "human sympathy" - and gets it from some adventuress or other, who then blackmails and bullies him (if as is often the case he is a married man) with disastrous results. A friend of mine whose husband was killed recently, finds to her dismay that when he was last home on leave he had been threatened into making a will in favour of one of these women, by which his wife - unless she can get it set aside - is despoiled of everything, even his family estate in the country - which is not entailed. What an awful thing it must be for a man to go into battle with that on his mind!"

Later towards the end of the War EH-A also comments on the outcome of many unwise war marriages in footnotes written in 1919 and 1920. He noted that whilst in 1914 there had been 265 undefended divorce cases, in October 1920 2,323 cases were down for hearing. EH-A was himself interested in divorce reform and had given evidence to an official committee of enquiry on the subject.

Finally, one of the subjects which runs through the Journal illustrates in a light-hearted way another aspect of

women's greater freedom and EH-A's response to it. The subject is Flag Days. Alexandra Day had been instituted two years before the outbreak of war, but when hostilities started it was quickly realised that Flag Days were an easy way of raising money and such days proliferated. As we shall see from EH-A's response to them they raised some moral issues as well as financial ones. In his entry for 14 July 1915 he wrote:

> "It is time that I made a note upon a feature of the war which though doubtless meritorious is likely to develop into a serious nuisance, and will give rise no doubt to considerable scandal. This is the institution of Flag Days. Hordes of beautiful - and other - young women promenade the streets and infest all public buildings and restaurants carrying boxes of little flags which they sell for various war charities." He continues "The highest ladies in the land marshal all their prettiest friends and sell flags, penetrating public meetings, the stock exchange, Lloyds, the Baltic, anywhere where susceptible man congregates, and these ladies get anything from 6d to £5 for a flag - according to the degree of their personal charms and powers of persuasion. There are of course very serious objections connected with the process. In the first place it cannot be good for our young women to get hardened to the process of accosting any strange man in the street and "beguiling" him, in the second a vast number of women, members of "the oldest profession in the world" take this

opportunity of promoting their business interests." He continues "Of course they mingle on terms of camaraderie with our wives and daughters, and the result cannot be otherwise in many cases than disastrous."

By 1917 this situation had been addressed by police regulations that no girl under the age of 16 was to sell flags and that sellers were meant to stand still and not ask men to buy from them. However, EH-A noted that things went on in just the same way although perhaps less persistently and that by 1917 there were sometimes as many as four or five Flag Days a week and it had become an "intolerable nuisance". Even after the end of the war he could not escape them - in a note written in May 1919 he says that Flag Days continue and that "I suppose we must look forward to this infliction and nuisance for all time."

He was not the only one to realise the amount of time they took up for the women of the household - as he records with some amusement that at Marble Arch he had seen one of the well-known posters - he called them pester posters - with the caption "Daddy, what did you do in the Great War?", with an added graffiti reply "I minded you, my boy, whilst your mother was out selling flags."

Whilst the business of flag selling was not something that EH-A would have approved of for his daughters, he was as he said himself nevertheless curious about all aspects of society, and when in 1915 he had the chance to discover a little more about flag sellers, he jumped at the opportunity. His entry of 14 July reads as follows:

> "I am in London - two young ladies were announced "selling flags" and as no feature of the war of this kind is without interest for

> me, I had them shown up to my library. One was a young woman (married?), the other a girl of about 20, and both of them as pretty as they could be, and beautifully dressed in the most fashionable and transparent summer frocks - with silk stockings which in the immortal phrase of Dr Johnson "would have damned an anchoret." I bought a flag and invited them to be seated and rest from their labours and have a chat. They protested that they ought to be selling flags, but we speedily agreed that if I gave them a sovereign each they might conscientiously spend the time they estimated it would take them to collect that sum in the street, talking to me.
>
> To say that they were free and easy to a highly marked degree, is not to say that they were professional prostitutes, but they were young ladies of open minds and wide and readily aroused sympathies. Whilst the married one discussed her adventures as a flag seller and made marked strides towards the cementing of a life-long friendship, the younger girl played the piano most beautifully, and we spent an interesting and instructive two hours. By the time they left, having an appointment to lunch "down town", we had few secrets left for one another, and I had gained an amount of information upon the amenities and responsibilities of "flag selling" which made me determine that if I had daughters old enough to sell flags, nothing on earth would

> induce me to let them do it! It is all very well to talk about the sacred cause of charity, but some of these young women evidently carry a form of charity, which begins at home and stays there, to a very high degree of development."

It seems to me that this passage illustrates many of the delights of the Journal. EH-A looked at things with the trained eye of a scientist and with the mind of a creative writer. He was, moreover, interested in people - what made them tick - what they did and how they did it. He said at one point that no aspect of the war was too trivial for him to be interested in. Of course he would not like his daughters to be like his two visitors - that would be unthinkable - nevertheless I rather think that this two hours research into the lives of flag sellers, so amusingly described here, was well and truly enjoyed by all present.

With the benefit of hindsight we can look back from the 21st century and see that Heron-Allen's attitude towards women was forward-looking in some respects and traditional in others. His writing reveals him as an honourable gentleman, born in the middle of the 19th century, who could both welcome change whilst at the same time refusing to compromise his own standards. Perhaps towards the end of the war the huge social changes that were taking place made him realise that society was moving away from him in this respect and the end of the War Journal has a note of sadness for the passing of an era. He wrote in May 1919:

> "One thing only looms large upon the horizon, and that is that we are on the verge of - if not in the throes of - a revolution of all

> our preconceived ideas and habits of life. Prices are appalling, and there are no servants to be had. How we shall settle down to the new condition of things, no-one can form the least idea. The world is mad."

Opusculum I *Notes upon the Literary, Scientific, and Artistic Activities of Edward Heron-Allen, F.R.S.* Extracted from his Diaries and other Documents by Christopher Blayre (2000).

Opusculum II *Edward Heron-Allen.* A Talk delivered by his grandson Ivor E. Jones at the first Edward Heron-Allen Symposium, Chichester, July 2001 (2001).

Opusculum III *The Quest for the Heron-Allen Society.* A Talk delivered at the first Heron-Allen Symposium, Chichester, July 2001, by Timothy J. McCann (2002).

Opusculum IV *"The Beauty and Mystery of the Foraminifera". The Scientific Research of Edward Heron-Allen FRS.* Based on a talk delivered on the beach at West Street, Selsey, to members of the Heron-Allen Society and guests of the West Sussex County Council, following the unveiling of a plaque in honour of Edward Heron-Allen by Ivor Jones, 15 July 2002, by Richard L. Hodgkinson and John E. Whittaker (2003).

Opusculum V *Reflections on Heron-Allen's War Journal.* Talks delivered at the second Heron-Allen Symposium, Chichester, July 2002, by Brian W. Harvey and Carol Fitzgerald (2003)

Copies of these Opuscula may be obtained for £5 each (£10 for non-members) from Ivor E. Jones, Secretary of the Heron-Allen Society, Sweets Farmhouse, Stour Row, Shaftesbury, Dorset. SP7 OQH.