

EDITORIAL

2018 marks the twenty-fifth anniversary of my work as an editor of a little magazine and it is more than thirty years since I started to get interested and involved in the small press world. Reading William Oxley's collection of autobiographical essays, *On and Off Parnassus*, just published by Rockingham Press, made me look back and consider, hopefully without any sense of false nostalgia, how my fascination with this phenomenon really started. I also asked myself who reads our magazine, how many know why it exists and why Salzburg has a long tradition of publishing English-language poetry. James Hogg initiated this tradition at the University of Salzburg in the early 1980s and, until his retirement in the late 1990s, published hundreds of volumes of poetry and academic works. The first poets he published were Oxley, Peter Russell and Anthony Johnson. His list of writers included, among others, John Gurney, Brian Merrikin Hill, Edward Lowbury, and Desmond O'Grady. In 1994 Hogg appointed me as his co-editor and, in the same year, we re-launched, together with its founding editor Fred Beake, the magazine *The Poet's Voice*.

It must have been sometime in 1995 that James called me to his office and showed me a letter from Andorra signed by James Kirkup, who had just returned from Japan. Kirkup suggested the republication of some of his early books that had been out of print for quite a while. At the same time he wanted to offer new manuscripts that would establish the Salzburg imprint as his principal publisher. What started in 1995 with the collection *Strange Attractors* and *A Certain State of Mind* – the latter an anthology of classic, modern and contemporary Japanese haiku – ended after more than a dozen publications with the epic poem *Pikadon* in 1997. It was in this year that Hogg handed over to me the entire archive of the imprint and suggested I found my own press. Which I duly did, launching it with the collection *Survivors of the Moving Earth* by the American poet Nicholas Samaras.

As a tribute to this tradition as well as to enhance it, we have initiated a section that will in every issue focus on the work of a poet of major standing identified with Salzburg. The aim is to continue that championing of significant poets in danger of neglect which has been one of our highest achievements and to find new readers for their work, an aim greatly aided by the fact that all the Salzburg titles are still in print and can be ordered. For our autumn issue we selected Peter Russell. His literary executor Glyn Pursglove guest-edited the section, including in it a

number of unpublished sonnets and prefacing it with a short introduction. For this issue William Bedford has contributed an essay that re-evaluates two of John Gurney's Salzburg volumes, the sonnet sequences *Observing Dr. Freud* and *Mr. Eliot's Summer Honeymoon*. Gurney's widow Sally has enabled me to print four unpublished poems. She has also submitted an unpublished manuscript, a sequence focusing on the fourteenth-century mystic theologian Meister Eckhart, that we will consider for our pamphlet series. Entitled "Meister Eckhart and The Predicate of Light", it reflects her late husband's life-long interest in mystical thought. His fellows, the late Michael Hamburger among them, particularly admire his epic poem *War* about World War One, "a real triumph [which] makes redundant the question as to how far can a poet write about suffering he or she has not actually participated in" (Oxley).

The Word Library in South Shields, which holds a collection of his books and his archive, organized a James Kirkup Centenary Event on 18 April. Kirkup's poetry is generously represented in the Bloodaxe anthology *Land of Three Rivers: The Poetry of North-East England*, which was published recently. In order to contribute to a reevaluation of Kirkup's oeuvre, we have decided to feature his work in our autumn issue. One of the organisers of the event, Jake Campbell has accepted a commission to re-value some of Kirkup's Salzburg volumes. He is a young poet from South Shields, Kirkup's birthplace; his PhD thesis at Newcastle University will also include a section on Kirkup. Being particularly interested in Kirkup's poems that relate to his youth in South Shields, he also read Kirkup's poems at the Centenary Event. We are looking forward to Campbell's essay, a young poet's re-evaluation of a local master. Red Squirrel Press, who published three of Kirkup's last collections, plan to publish a Selected Poems volume in 2019.

The current issue introduces our readers to the work of the Scottish poet and university professor Alan Riach, whom I first met at the Between.Pomiędzy Festival of Literature and Theatre in Sopot. Its organiser David Malcolm contributes a review of Riach's new collection *The Winter Book*, which is accompanied by new poems. We had originally planned to print extracts from interviews that David and I had conducted with the poet. Due to a lack of space we have to postpone this publication to our autumn issue where our readers will find a more comprehensive version than we could have offered in this number.

Wolfgang Görtschacher