The George Borrow Society Newsletter
No. 1

Contents

The AGM at Chester, October 2019

This was a "meeting like no other" as our Secretary put it. The formal parts of the meeting (apologies, previous minutes, matters arising etc.) were presented and deal with, and all the committee members were re-appointed.

There was then a long discussion on whether or how the Society would continue after the death of Dr. Ann Ridler. Many expressed how valued Ann was, recognised the huge amount of work she put in, her academic standing etc. Members felt that nobody could replace Ann, but that they would still wish to continue the Society, albeit perhaps in a different way. As members know, the *Bulletin* won't continue, but stands as a major achievement to Ann and the Society.

Members said they would like a newsletter to be produced, although nobody offered to do it. Some thought it important that the British Library archives what the Society

produces (it has copies of the *Bulletin*). It was pointed out the British Library take copies of the Society's Website (available on , and that might be the route in future.

The Society currently has no membership fees because the major expense was the *Bulletin* which won't continue. We have enough money in the bank. It was pointed out that there are more people associated with us via the George Borrow Facebook group (Friends of the George Borrow Society) than are members of the Society, and in future it would be sensible to integrate the two groups: something that is easier now we don't have £25 yearly memberships.

There was no formal outcome or actions from this last part of the AGM, but the committee is to take things forward and would also seek to co-opt members to help with events, a newsletter etc.

1 Looking out from Chirk Castle on our Chester Weekend, 2019

The Newsletter

As noted above, members would like a newsletter and this is a first attempt as such. It will be distributed via email in order to avoid the time and cost involved in printing and postage, but that means we can produce more than two a year, and so hopefully the news will be a bit more up to date. The first Newsletter will be sent to members early February 2020, with a second one planned for May.

We don't currently have anyone to take a newsletter on, so please be gracious with this first attempt: hopefully members will give feedback and some will come forward to help, and the next version will be a great improvement.

The last edition of the Bulletin was very close to completion when Ann died, but unfortunately it has not been possible to recover it from Ann's computer. If members had articles, notes & queries etc. that were to appear in the *Bulletin* and would be prepared to let David Price (ccx074@pglaf.org) have a copy, they can be published on the Society's Website, and/or in a newsletter. Similarly, contact David if you have anything to contribute to the next newsletter, be it an article, note, news of events which might be of interest to members etc.

Coming Up

Over the next few months the committee hope to put together a programme for 2020: all volunteer helpers more than welcome! The following are ideas which we may or may not be able to bring to completion:

a) Meeting around Borrow's birthday (5 July 2020) to lay a wreath on his grave, have some readings and a pleasant time in the very nice Brompton Cemetery cafe.

b) A day's event around Abergavenny, South Wales, to see a "show" about George Borrow, and also the town itself.

c) The AGM expressed a desire for a weekend in Edinburgh: nobody is available to organise that but if you'd be able to help please contact us.

d) A Society weekend in 2020, and if Edinburgh cannot be done, other locations associated with Borrow have been suggested.

e) A Christmas meal, although we appreciate not everyone can attend.

There will be three ways you can keep up to date with what's going on:

The Facebook Group (http://www.facebook.com/groups/68884661161)

The Society's Website (http://georgeborrow.org)

and the newsletter.

The Bang-Up Coachman.
By Mike Skillman

In chapter 26 of *The Romany Rye* Borrow met the man who was called 'the bang-up coachman'. In this phrase I think Borrow unwittingly left a clue to his whereabouts at the time. We see so few clues to his locations in the book and we should grab this one and hang on grimly. Why? Well let us go back a bit.

At the beginning of chapter 23 Borrow had been leading his horse into a town and was very tired. He sat down on a 'stepping block' in a depressed frame of mind. Out of nowhere, it seems, his acquaintance of the first chapter, the postilion, appears and all is well. He is met by the 'master of the inn' and given the job of assistant ostler and bookkeeper.

> THE inn, of which I had become an inhabitant, was a place of infinite life and bustle. Travellers of all descriptions, from all the cardinal points, were continually stopping at it; and to attend to their wants, and minister to their convenience, an army of

servants, of one description or other, was kept; waiters, chambermaids, grooms, postillions, shoe-blacks, cooks, scullions, and what not, for there was a barber and hair-dresser, who had been at Paris, and talked French with a cockney accent; the French sounding all the better, as no accent is so melodious as the cockney. Jacks creaked in the kitchens turning round spits, on which large joints of meat piped and smoked before great big fires.

There was running up and down stairs, and along galleries, slamming of doors, cries of "Coming, sir," and "Please to step this way, ma'am," during eighteen hours of the four-and-twenty. Truly a very great place for life and bustle was this inn. And often in after life, when lonely and melancholy, I have called up the time I spent there, and never failed to become cheerful from the recollection.

I found the master of the house a very kind and civil person.

The Romany Rye chapter 24

So where is the inn?

It is a very busy one. Travellers come and go from all directions. There are many members of staff. This is evidently a major coaching inn and as such must be on a major coaching route and must therefore be situated in a large town.

However, we are not told the name of the town, nor or we told the name of the 'master of the inn', but no real surprise there.

However, there is a mighty clue in 'the bang-up coachman' phrase. Borrow heard people call him that name and assumed that it was to do with the coachman's attitude. He wrote, "He derived his sobriquet of 'the bang-up coachman' partly from his being dressed in the extremity of coach dandyism, and partly from the peculiar insolence of his manner, and the unmerciful manner in which he was in the habit of lashing on the poor horses in his charge."

Readers over the years have accepted this reason for his name and read on unwittingly but it is *not* the correct reason and Borrow's mistake has 'let the cat out of the bag'.

The 'bang up coachman' got his name because he was the driver of The Bang-up Coach that in 1825 went up and down between Birmingham and Liverpool, stopping at The Talbot Hotel in Shrewsbury.

I have shown in my earlier notes that Borrow was in that area in 1825 so to find that he was working in Shrewsbury for a while is no surprise.

The 'master of the inn' in 1825 is known. He had held that position for a number of years. His name was John Jobson.

John was previously a coachman himself driving between Shrewsbury and Birmingham on a coach called The Prince of Wales. Borrow does not tell us that, only that he had had a different occupation once. He was obviously friendly with the innkeeper and that fact would have spoiled his argument about the nasty coach*men*.

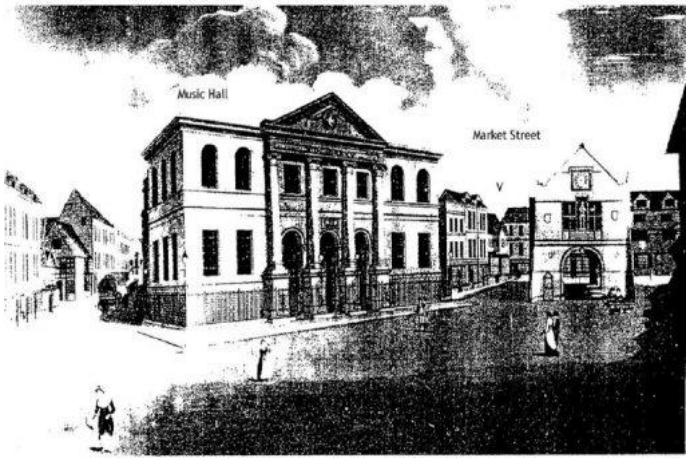
John was born in 1773, married Susannah Parkes in 1796 and died in 1847. His wife and family's births, deaths and marriages are also on record.

The Talbot Hotel, sometimes called Jobson's Talbot Hotel was in Market Street. Yes it *was* in Market Street but it burnt down in the 1980s.

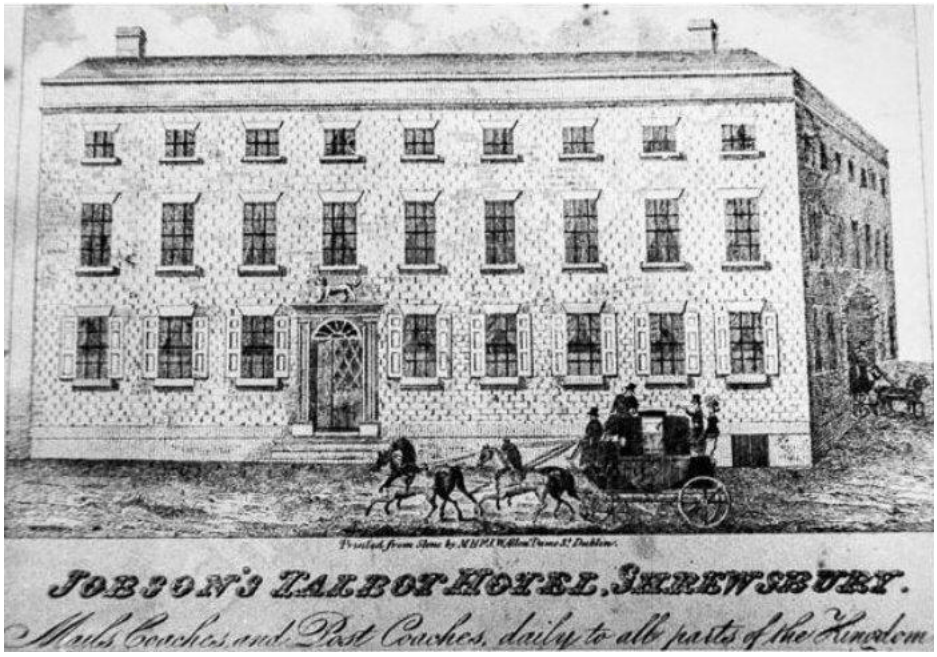
Just after Borrow left the hotel there had been a fire that was quickly put out because the fire station was next door. Soon after that it received a new brick front and then looked roughly like that until its demise.

Where is the site? As one looks at the impressive Music Hall building in Market Street, next door to the right is where the Fire Station used to be and next to that is a building that is on the site of the hotel. It is at present (2018) a *Loch Fyne* restaurant. However there are buildings round the corner at the back that may have been part of the stable block when the hotel was there.

We will probably never know who that 'bang up coachman' was but in spite of his objectionable character I must thank him for enabling me to identify one more place in The Romany Rye.



2 The Market Square about 1800. The Talbot Hotel is a gabled building at the far end of Market Street.



3 Talbot Hotel in the 1830s after having a new frontage

Bang-Up Timetables

Birmingham – Liverpool *A41*, *A5*, *A528* (1818 – daily, 112 miles)

0600	Birmingham
	Wolverhampton
	Shrewsbury, Talbot Hotel
	Liverpool

Shrewsbury — Liverpool A528 (1830 – daily, 60 miles, 8 hrs.)

0500	1600	***Shrewsbury, Talbot Hotel***
0700	1400	Ellesmere, Black Lion
0900	1230	Wrexham
1030	1100	Chester
1330	0800	Liverpool

George Borrow the Rowdy

An interesting exchange of letters took place in the newspaper in 1900, which many won't have seen. It started off when Harry Loweriston, a Borrovian and major figure in the socialist movement, wrote to the Press.

***The Lowestoft Journal*, 5 May 1900, page 8**

Sir,—As "an ardent Borrovian," may I thank Dr. Jessopp for his kindly and discriminating article on George Borrow in your issue of to-day?

The landlord of the Ferry Inn, at Oulton Broad, knew George Borrow very well. I remember five years ago asking him how he liked the author of "Lavengro."

"Didn't like him at all," was the gruff response. "At least," I said, "he was a scholar and a gentleman. 'Scholar be d—d,' replied Boniface, "an' gentleman he weren't; never came into my bar but he quarrelled with every one there and cracked 'em out to fight. An' when he weren't fightin' himself, he were eggin' other on to."

And *that* was George Borrow.

But all the same I'll e'n take down the "Romany Rye" and talk with the gipsies ere I sleep to-night.

HENRY LOWERISON.
Ruskin School Home, Hunstanton, April 30th.

As a true Borrovian he supported his man even when wrong. Needless to say, the newspaper commented, and had clear proof Henry had been mislead:

The Ferry at Oulton should evidently be The Wherry, and the landlord was, no doubt, Mr. George Mason, whose son, Mr. Harry E. Mason, landlord of the Lady of the Lake, at Oulton Broad, writes as follows:—

Sir,—My father, the late Mr. George Mason, of the Wherry Hotel, Oulton Broad, was incapable of using the language attributed to him by Mr. Lowerison, with reference to the late Mr. George Borrow: in fact, he had too good an opinion of him to use such language. He always believed Mr. Borrow to be a thorough gentleman.

Yours truly,
H. E. Mason

William Mackay, who had moved to Oulton (and whose book, *Bohemian Days in Fleet Street* includes accounts of his meeting Borrow), followed up with a fuller analysis:

***Lowestoft Journal*, 12 May 1900, page 8**
LIGHTS ON BORROW

Sir,—An "Ardent Borrovian" will sometimes adopt unscientific methods of inquiry. Thus Mr. Harry Lowerison, writing in your issue of to-day tells us how at Oulton Broad, some five years since, he sought for vestiges of George Borrow. He discovered at the Ferry Inn "a landlord who knew Borrow very well." There is no inn of that name at Oulton Broad. But the landlord of the Wherry Hotel—which is

doubtless the hostelry Mr. Lowerison has in his mind—did *not* know Borrow "very well." I also had tapped that barrel, but obtained from it nothing stimulating. The landlord's name was Mason—he died a twelvemonth ago—and he had often told me that Borrow had not "used" his house twice during all the years through which they had been neighbours. All Mr. Lowerison's story, therefore, about Borrow quarrelling in the bar, fighting himself, and egging others on to fight, is pure romance.

Your correspondent has evidently encountered some one who impersonated the landlord of the Wherry; some one who appears to have been as great a poseur and as flamboyant as prevaricator as was George Borrow himself. This theory finds support in the fact that the real landlord of the Wherry did not swear, and did not converse in a sort of bastard dialect impossible to locate. The late Mr. Mason was a Londoner, an intelligent and widely-read man with considerable literary tastes.

As to Dr. Jessopp's article, which has occasioned Mr. Lowerison's amazing letter, it must be regarded as a most important contribution to the literature of the subject. His last paragraph is especially illuminating, and to those of us who were acquainted with the author of "Lavengro," will make plain much that has hitherto been obscure.

Yours truely,
William Mackay.

Oulton Broad, Suffolk,
May 3rd.

An anonymous writer also backed this up:

Lowestoft Journal, 12 May 1900, page 8

The Late Mr. G. Mason.

Sir,—Having known the late Mr. Mason for many years I can only say I never met with a more gentlemanly or polished man than my old friend, and the writer of the remarks about Borrow must have been mistaken in the identity of the person he addressed. Mr. Mason was the type of what an English landlord ought to be, and left behind him nothing but pleasant memories.

Yours truly,
EAST ANGLIAN.

Borrow vindicated and a few nice complements as well!

Shorsa Borrow.
By "Casey."

This piece appeared in *The Labour Leader* on 16 April 1914. Members of the Society will probably also have been to Brompton, to see Borrow's grave: it's been a pilgrimage for some time . . .

From out the South the genial breezes move,
  They shake the branches of the bramble tree;
Unless the sons fair men and honest prove,
  The virtuous mother will dishonoured be.
When sings the redbreast, it is bliss to hear
  The dulcet notes the little songster breeds;
But, ah! more blissful to a mother's ears
  The fair report, the seven good children's deeds.

—Translated from the Chinese by Borrow.

It was on April the seventh that we stood in a London churchyard. We had taken a penny 'bus from the Albert Museum, which bumped us down in the West of London at Westminster Cemetery. Locally 'tis known as the West Brompton Cemetery, and one may easily reach it from any part of London by toobing to Brompton.

On reaching the cemetery we commandeered the services of the caretaker. He led us by first turn to left from his lodge, where the road forks along a gravey avenue. After this, take the first turn to right and walk 137 paces until between the ninth and tenth tree you see three tombstones with a stone dove on each one. Behind these is a lilac bush and behind the lilac bush is a sloping stone, a couple of feet high, bearing the following inscription:

> To the beloved memory of my mother, Mary Borrow, who fell asleep in Jesus, January 30th, 1869.

On the reverse side:

> In loving memory of George Henry Borrow, Esquire, who died July 26th, 1881 (at his residence, Oulton Cottage, Suffolk), in his 79th year. Author of The Bible in Spain," "Lavengro," and other works. In hopes of a glorious resurrection.

"Is this a Church of England cemetery?" I queried.

"Nau," said the guide.

"You bury any denomination?"

"Enny 'nomination, wotever as comes 'ere, no marter wot peoples, we buries it. (A very Catholic, accommodating person he was.) We buries anybody, Cartlics, Prodistants, Ferench, or Hirish, *as wants* it."

There's a deal of logic in the last portion. Nobody dies unless they desire to. Death sooner or later is desired by all folk with disease. There is a time when Death is pleasanter than life, when the organs refuse to function, when the limbs cease to bear, when the lime sets in the bones, and the world has wiped both feet upon us. People in vigorous health look with dread upon His Levellership, but he has proved a real pal to

hundreds of millions. Babes and centenarians have swallowed his potion, and 'tis not always the vanished who have suffered most—it is often the ones left behind.

I believe Socialism will make Death easy—even to the most honest lawyer England ever possessed—including, of course, Lloyd George. Sir Thomas More has given us glimpses in his "Utopia" of how tired persons may make graceful exit. England, being averse to honest lawyers, allowed that pseudo Defender of the Faith—a brute, by the way, who never kept faith with anybody—rotund Henry the Eighth, to murder Sir Thomas More.

'Tis not Death, however, that many of us fear, 'tis the living Death we bequeath to our helpless wives and babes in the struggle of to-day, nicknamed civilisation. And George lives, so says his tombstone, in hopes of a glorious resurrection.

Ah! Shorsa, how could you?

Had you been cut off at ten months, or bereaved on your wedding night, or daily tortured with heredity's curses, I could have understood you, Shorsa. But you were a fine, upstanding, six-feet-three lump o' humanity who walked on a roll, a glass o' beer, and a pint of milk from Norwich to London, 112 miles, in 27½ hours. You were inches taller than Egerton Wake, though much like him, even of bigger physique, and one of the finest specimens of English manhood that ever saved men from drowning, or put rowdy bully to sleep. Not satisfied, George, with an innings of 79 years, drinking sunshine and sea, visiting continent and island, you wish another Heaven.

Do you wish, old friend, to introduce Mrs. Borrow to Isopel Berners? An' should you see Isopel, would you like to meet the lady to escape whose memory you wandered seven years with a love microbe in your breast, urging you on night and day, and causing you to open the wound again and again by grasping at a chance mention of her name as a drowning man clutches foam? And what will Isopel think of George as a querulous old man of 79, instead of the God-like youth of Mumper's Dingle?

On the other hand, what of Isopel? Suppose the giant Amazon Queen has met with sorrows that have tinged the sunlit hair, troubles which have left creases and crows feet, and disease which may have bent the sturdy back. 'Tis a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead, but it seems to me a Gargantuan greed to cry for another innings when one has had almost all the runs. Think of the consequences of bringing once more together Socrates and his poisoners, Bruno and his burners, Charlotte Brontë and the Professor, Nero, Messalina and Agrippina, Brutus, Cassius and Cæsar, Henry the Eighth and his English harem!

Sir Thomas Browne, another East Anglian worthy, says most pregnant things on these matters. Fancy George spending an eternity with the man in black? Certainly at times one really believes that the bowling has been a little biassed. The rich seem to sample much more happiness than the poor, but a happiness tinged with contempt for the less favoured of fortune is too splenetic for a thinking person. The poor have not as yet learned to walk erect. Unlike the Pharisee, they would thank God to be as other men.

Fancy intelligent human brings trying to pattern their offspring upon the lines of successful sharpers, criminal lawyers, bankrupt politicians, scheming Isaacs, and smart business men who make corners of "Little Ease" to thrust their friends in. Thus, after a life which *they know* has been wasted, as far as bettering fallen humanity is concerned, they clamour for a renewal of the manhood bequeathed by their pain-racked mothers, which they have deliberately murdered in their get-rich-quick efforts.

Faugh! Are these folk going to compel other mothers to child birth pangs i' the future, to carry into a Heavenly arena the discord sown here and perchance, Lucifer like, to be swept out bag and baggage?

Well, in spite of all, we may laugh at Death. Our lives are carried forward by the kiddies, he may end *us* but not *them* as yet. The span of life on this earth may be materially increased beyond wildest dreams of to-day. When gold ceases to be a token of greatness, and science is given time, leisure, and opportunity to develop her resources, then shall the present appear to the children of the future as a fearsome chimera.

And thus have I stated my disagreements with the Great Shorsa, as Murtagh, the Irish boy, called him. And Murtagh's pack of cards, by the way, deserve to rank with the adventures of Tom Thumb, Gulliver, Baron Munchausen, Red Riding Hood, and the Swiss Family Robinson—a most marvellous pack of cards, containing enough nap hands, crib hands, and games of all fours, running through two books, "Lavengro" and "Romany Rye."

4 Borrow's Grave July 2019 as members laid the wreath

A Friend of George Borrow.
By E. V. Lucas.

This article appeared in *The Sphere*, 13 July 1918, page 30.

The venerable veteran of the gloves who edits *The Mirror of Life and Boxing World*, a little weekly paper full of spirited things, has been giving his readers some reminiscences of the author of *Lavengro*. Mr. Bradley—for that is the editor's name—knew Borrow well in later days, and talked fights with him by the hour, and until very recently never allowed himself to pass the Castle Tavern in Holborn without

drinking a cup of ale to his old friend's memory. Their first meeting was in the Isle of Man in the eighteen-seventies, when Borrow, although still full of vigour, had already passed the allotted span, and Mr. Bradley acted as his guide up and down Manxland. "He was then as fine a specimen of a man as anyone could wish to see. He stood 6 ft. 2 in. in his stockings; his frame was of colossal strength, his hair perfectly white, and his face naturally smooth, without a vestige of whisker or moustache. But perhaps the most remarkable feature about Borrow was his eyes—so dark and piercing."

One gathers from Mr. Bradley's remarks that upon Borrow the open-air was exercising more than its usual spell, as though, time growing short, every moment had to be lived doubly. As a walker he was, of course, amazing, even at that age, over seventy, thinking nothing (and yet thinking everything!) of walking for twelve hours a day at an average of little under five miles an hour; while when Borrow swam, says Mr. Bradley—but swam is not the word, for the sea provided him with ecstasies of movement beyond all swimming—when Borrow swam, at one time he "rolled and disported himself like a porpoise," and at another "pawed the water like a dog." Although so far from youth, even in winter he would plunge into the Fen Ponds in Richmond Park and swim the whole length. This may not be news to those who have gone at all deeply into Borrow's life, but it is stimulating to have it afresh on such authority, and the gratitude of Borrovians to Mr. Bradley should be great.

Mr. Bradley's recollections of Borrow's conversation include a priceless contribution to the fine art of coping. Let me quote:—

> A famous Yorkshire horse-dealer once asked him:—
>
> "Now, how would you, Mr. Romany Rye, pass off the veriest screw in the world for a flying dromedary?"
>
> "By putting a live eel down his throat; as long as the eel remained in his stomach the horse would be brisk and lively in a surprising degree."
>
> "And how," continued the knowing Tyke, "would you make a regular kicker and biter appear so tame and gentle that any fat old gentleman of sixty who wanted an easy-goer would be glad to give fifty pounds for him?"
>
> "By pouring down his throat four pints of generous old ale, which would make him so happy and comfortable that he would not have the heart to kick or bite anybody, for a season at least."

That has the authentic note. But authenticity is the mark of the whole article. Take, for example, such a passage as this: "Borrow loved old Burton and '37 port, but nevertheless he would drink whatever he came across on the road, as if out of perversity, to insist on his iron constitution bearing whatever he chose to impose on it. And oh! how he hated the teetotallers! 'Some cants are not dangerous,' he once said, 'but a more dangerous cant than the temperance cant, or as it is generally called, teetotalism, is not to be found.'" Holding such views, it is natural enough that

Borrow's indefatigable feet took him naturally into many an inn, of which one of his favourites was the Bald-faced Stag at Roehampton, where Mr. Bradley has listened to him in eulogies of all highwaymen in general and Jerry Abershaw in particular. Borrovians may like to make a note of this tavern as a point of pilgrimage. Mr. Bradley has seen the old man also in his Oulton home, but happily before his last clouded days. "In that quiet retreat," says Mr. Bradley, "it seems to me that he thoroughly realised the words of the old song of which he was so fond:—

"Give me a haunch of a buck to eat, and to drink Madeira old,
And a gentle wife to rest with, and in my arms to fold,
An Arabic book to study, a Norfolk cob to ride,
A house to live in, shaded with trees, and near to a river-side;
With such good things around me, and blessed with good health withal,
Though I should live for a hundred years, for death I would not call."

Borrow and Reviewers

I did not like reviewing at all—it was not to my taste; it was not in my way; I liked it far less than translating the publisher's philosophy, for that was something in the line of one whom a competent judge had surnamed 'Lavengro.' I never could understand why reviews were instituted; works of merit do not require to be reviewed, they can speak for themselves, and require no praising; works of no merit at all will die of themselves, they require no killing.

Lavengro, Chapter 36

A certain set of individuals calling themselves critics have attacked Lavengro with much virulence and malice. If what they call criticism had been founded on truth, the author would have had nothing to say. The book contains plenty of blemishes, some of them, by-the-bye, wilful ones, as the writer will presently show; not one of these, however, has been detected and pointed out; but the best passages in the book, indeed whatever was calculated to make the book valuable, have been assailed with abuse and misrepresentation.

Appendix to *Romany Rye*, Chapter 9: Pseudo Critics

J. E. Tilford, Jr. published some research into the Lavengro *reviews* in 1944 where he pointed out that Borrow's (and Knapp's) views, since repeated many times, that the reviews were *uniformly* bad, wasn't true. Tilford's paper is available via JSTOR (you can register for free):

https://www.jstor.org/stable/4172668

Contemporary Criticism of "*Lavengro*": *A Re-Examination*
Studies in Philology, Vol. 41, No. 3 (Jul 1944), pp. 442–456
Published by University of North Carolina Press

Although planned, the Borrow reviews haven't yet been republished, so we'll start the ball rolling with one from a provincial newspaper. You may or may not agree with the reviewer: any feedback welcome.

Borrow's Romany Rye
***The Birmingham Journal*, 27 May 1857**

On these fine summer days, when even the most studious find books a bore, and are glad to get out into the fields, it is pleasant, if one must read, to get some book which will do for the denizens of a town what the free life in the country will do for those who happily enjoy it, and break up the clouds of care and weariness with which most of us are sometimes troubled. Books of this class are by no means numerous. Few of our modern authors write because they have something to say, but because they must write to live, and except our travellers, very few indeed take a firm hold of our attention or retain it long.

In spite of his apparent conventionalisms, the Englishman is more remarkable for his love of nature and his tendency to relapse into out-door life than any foreigner. When in business, great as are its attractions, he will leave for a while to ruralise, or to spend a few weeks by the sea; he must shoot, and hunt, and fish; and when retired from business he invariably takes to farming and country life, No nation enjoys the country life so well at the English, and consequently none can appreciate so well books which take it for their theme.

We have lately noticed many books of travel and adventure which have an indescribable charm: we now notice one which is chiefly devoted to our home life, and is most welcome at this season of the year. Its name will be guessed, as it is in many respects the book of the day—a clear, brilliant, eccentric, fascinating book—THE ROMANY RYE, or the Gipsy Gentleman, by Mr. GEORGE BORROW. His name needs no introduction, as everybody remembers the sensation he nude a few years ago by the publication of his "Bible in Spain," where he went under the auspices of the Bible Society, and distributed (surreptitiously of course,) many copies of the sacred book. His adventures during his rambles were remarkable and stirring, and his descriptions of them were vigorous and clear. Another book of his, "Zincali," soon followed, and showed his profound interest in the gipsy tribes. Next came a remarkable book, "Lavengro, the Scholar, the Gipsy, and the Priest," a book as brilliant as ever, but filled with the oddest contrasts, sometimes absurdly polemical, and one of those wild, erratic sort of books that create interest and attention, but almost as much blame as praise. It was always considered an autobiography, whether personal or fictional could hardly be settled; but in the present work the author attacks most fiercely all who ventured to call it a biography, and denies that it was anything of the kind. He also maintains that it was not written as a protest against papal pretensions, inasmuch as most of it was written some years before the famous anti-Papal cry. He grows very angry that reviewers should attempt to judge him and his works, when not one in twenty knows a word of the languages of which he is so fond;

forgetting Johnson's excellent illustration, that you may complain of a bad table though you could not make one, as it is not your business to make tables. Lavengro, however, terminated abruptly, and in the present work Mr. Borrow takes up the thread of the story, and tells us some further adventures of the Romany Rye, which being interpreted means, we believe, the Gipsy Gentleman. The book has well been called that apparently impossible compound a humourous romance, in the original sense of these words. It might be called a philological disquisition, a treatise on gipsy life, a dissertation on things in general, or by almost any title, so varied are its contents. Some critics contend that Mr. Borrow is not as great a linguist as he would have the reader believe; but whatever be his accomplishments, he always writes a pleasant book. In these volumes, extravagant and absurd as they often are, he is generally original enough to be fascinating, and brilliant enough to be interesting. His language is simple but striking; in a few words he gives a vivid picture of a scene, and runs on with a dialogue in a pleasant and natural way. His passionate love of outdoor life, his thoroughly vagabond disposition, teaching him to wander while others work, and to stroll along the lanes and across the commons of the land with some gipsy camp, all give a freshness and charm to these volumes which few modern books possess. In his love of open-air sports and out-door life, he resembles Christopher North, but he mixes with a different class, and gives us most life-like pictures of people of whom we know but little. The book will doubtless be very popular; its story and scenery will attract many readers and secure many admirers; its philosophy will interest many; and its abuse of critics in general will induce them to look more closely than ever into its strange and varied contents. At the end of the volume Mr. Borrow announces that he has some sixteen volumes nearly ready for the press, of translations of ballads and songs, collected in various parts of Europe and the East.

Small point: *Zincali* was published in 1841, before the *Bible in Spain*, which was published December 1843.

Borrow Online

American copyright law has started to move forward again, after a lapse of 20 years, and so we can expect some of the *Norwich Edition* of George Borrow's works to start appearing on the Internet. Apart from the standard works (*Lavengro*, *Wild Wales*, *Bible in Spain* etc.) the *Norwich Edition* contains lots of previously unpublished material, such as *Songs of Scandinavia*, *The Manx Notebooks* etc.

Project Gutenberg (http://gutenberg.org) has also released a number of Borrow-related items:

Title	Number	Borrow connection
Slater's [1856] Directory of Shropshire	60729	Shropshire as it was when the Borrows stayed there in

		1856
Allen's West London Directory for 1868	58160	The area around Borrow's Hereford Square home
Gypsy Sorcery and Fortune Telling, by Charles Godfrey Leland	58465	Leland met and wrote of Borrow, and was a "Romany Rye"
Visits to Fields of Battle, in England, of the Fifteenth Century, by Richard Brooke	58147	Covers the Battle of Shrewsbury at Battlefield, which we visited on our Shrewsbury Weekend
The letters of Richard Ford, 1797-1858	60992	Richard Ford was of course Borrow's friend and a great writer on Spain
Prisoners of War in Britain 1756 to 1815, by Francis Abell	60321	Lots about Norman Cross, cites Borrow etc.

John Hentges CD's

John's latest CD, *Elvir Shades*, in conjunction with Heather Uden, puts some of Borrow's translations (mainly from the posthumous *Songs of Scandinavia*) to music. Those at the 2014 Christmas Meal will remember John and Heather performing *Mollie Charane*, which is included on this CD. The Society's Website has details of all of John's CDs, and they can be obtained from:

John Hentges,
7 Bay Tree Lodge,
Gosport road,
Stubbington,
Fareham
PO14 2RD.

Cost is £10 per CD including UK postage and packing, overseas purchasers should add £3 to cover the extra postage costs.

Lavengro Press and Borrovian Material

Graham York of Honiton has most of the publications of *Lavengro Press* (now closed) in stock, as well as back-issues of the *George Borrow Bulletin*. Graham specialises in Gypsies, Spain and George Borrow, and would be more than happy to help you in acquiring such. Graham advertised for many years in the *Bulletin*, so a free plug is more than in order.

Graham York Rare Books

http://www.gyork.co.uk/

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About our Contributors

E(DWARD) V(ERRALL) LUCAS was born at Eltham, Kent, in 1868, had a very mixed schooling and was apprenticed to a bookseller aged 16. In 1889 he joined the *Sussex Daily News* and published some poetry, starting what would be a major literary career. Various biographies followed, (including on Bernard Barton, Edward Fitzgerald's friend) together with numerous light essays. He's perhaps best known today for his travel writing, although with over 180 publications he's represented in various genres. He died aged 70 at a nursing home in London in 1938.

[BELLERBY] HARRY LOWERISTON, was born in county Durham in 1863, the son of a coalminer. After training as a teacher he joined the Fabian Society in London, becoming joint secretary to the largest branch in London by 1891, and was known as a hard-working socialist progandist, producing numerous articles in *The Clarion*. He setup the Ruskin School, Hunstanton, Norfolk around 1900 and died near Hunstanton in 1935.

HARRY EVERARD MASON was born in Islington around 1857, the son of George, a law stationer, and Elizabeth. By 1871 the family had moved to Acle, Norfolk where they had taken on a hotel. Around 1875 the family moved to Oulton and kept the Wherry Hotel at Mutford Bridge, less than a mile from where George Borrow lived having left Brompton. Harry was a stone-cutter but after marrying Elizabeth Middleton at Oulton church 1889 he took on the Lady of the Lake Inn at Carlton Colville, very close to Oulton, which became a great success. Harry died in 1925 and is buried in Kirkly Cemetery, Lowestoft.

WILLIAM MACKAY was born in Cork around 1846, trained and qualified as a lawyer, and started to write reviews around 1868, eventually becoming a journalist and author. He became a friend of Dr. Thomas Gordon Hake and visited him at Coombe End, Roehampton, in 1869 where he met George Borrow. He worked on Fleet Street for around 20 years but by the 1901 census was living with Jessie Sargent, 2 Bridge Road, Oulton. He published his reminiscences (including his meeting with Borrow) as *Bohemian Days in Fleet Street*, in 1913 and died at Oulton, aged 83, in 1930.

WALTER HAMPSON ("CASEY") was born in Dublin around 1867, the son of a chair-maker and chimney sweep from Stockport, and an Irish mother. By the 1881 census Walter had become a chimney sweep but accounts say he hated it and frequently ran away. He purchased a violin, taught himself to play, and became a musician. He

married Emily in 1888, the family settling in Stockport. Walter travelled extensively and entertained, being a raconteur as well as a talented musician, he also became very involved in the socialist cause, giving lectures, writing pamphlets etc. He started to write under the pseudonym of "Casey" around 1906 and was a popular writer and speaker. He died at Stockport 1932.