Welcome to The Herald NS [New Series] #2. We have enjoyed the feedback received thus far based on NS 1 and believe that what we have received is auspicious for going forward in the same vein.

In this issue we choose to highlight a piece that is authored by ILDS’s president – Dr. Isabelle Keller-Privat, titled “Durrell’s Cyprus, another Private Country”. This is an excerpt from a presentation that she provided at the On Miracle Ground XX conference held in Chicago in 2017.

We are also pleased to include a contribution from Françoise Kestsman-Durrell as well as from Noel Guckian, the current owner of the Mas Michel, occupied by Durrell from 1958 to 1966. In addition, we have interspersed some artwork by contributor Geoff Todd who has taken his inspiration for this series of images from Durrell’s The Alexandria Quartet – look for the corresponding article from Mr. Todd, as well. The incomparable Grove Koger builds out our Durrell-related bibliography in his ‘Chart Room’.

Peter Baldwin & Steve Moore, editors

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Sommières, Larry, the sun, the winter

By Françoise Kestsman-Durrell

Introduction

Françoise Kestsman-Durrell was Lawrence Durrell’s companion from 1984 until his death in 1990. She wrote a preface for the book, Durrell à Sommières, published by Éditions Gaussen in 2018. A note on this book appeared in the last edition of The Herald, June 2019. Françoise has kindly allowed us to include this preface in The Herald. The editors are most grateful to her and to Mary Byrne, who provided this translation, for their support in allowing this preface to be printed here. Our thanks also to Éditions Gaussen for their agreeing to our using this preface.

The house and the ‘vidourlades’: the river Vidourle regularly burst its banks to invade cellar and garden, leaving behind it a layer of silt. That was autumn and then it was winter.

Then spring returned, unpredictable.

And with it came friends.

Jacques Lacarrière and Sylvia: endless conversations in the kitchen in front of a blazing fire.

The Menuhins, Yehudi and Diana: song of the violin on the upper floors and memories of Alexandria on the ground floor.

That last year, 1990, Xan Fielding and Magouche. I was never to see Xan again, he passed away three months after Larry.
And then there were the friends from Sommières.
Maurice and Philo Galibert, our neighbours on the *route de Saussines*, whom we ran into regularly on the terrace of the café Glacier, chez Lola, on the banks of the Vidourle.
As soon as the sun came out, we spent our afternoons there under the plane trees, waiting for my son Edouard to get out from school.
We drank awful white wine that Larry said would toughen our stomachs!
We watched young herons stalk their prey and tiny multicoloured birds dive like stones.
There was the huge house and garden that lay along the river across from the café: we christened it The Lebanese House.
Max (Max Sagon, the photographer) sometimes came to sit and have a glass with us.
He remained a discreet but true friend.
I remember old gravelly-voiced Marcel who occasionally joined us. Max had photographed him with Larry in the rue Antonin in Paris, deep in conversation!

And Alexandre! I got to know him when he was coming out of his teens and starting out in his mother’s bookshop!
The notary, Maître Nègre, would sometimes ring the bell and spend a while with us, as did Jean-Marie Combacérès, a friend, and then mayor of Sommières.

Sommières and its universe made all this possible. The warm discreetness of its inhabitants wound us into its fabric of friendship and tact.
Then November 1990 came. Larry passed away and the ‘necrophages’ arrived with their concealed cameras. But then they weren’t from Sommières… Time stood still and masks fell.
That was when the human decency of Sommières proved a very real support for me, my children, and Larry’s daughter, Penelope.

It all seems like yesterday, and although twenty-seven years have since gone by, part of me is still deeply attached to Sommières, its light, its river and its people.

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© Mary Byrne for the translation.
Sommières 2019

I had the pleasure of spending a week’s holiday in June this year in Salinelles, a village just north of Sommières. Here are some photos which may be of interest to readers of The Herald. I can recommend both Salinelles and Sommières as good holiday destinations. Lawrence Durrell is still actively recognised in the town as evidenced by the name of the town’s cultural centre: l’Espace culturel Lawrence Durrell.

Sommières tourist office:
https://ot-sommieres.com/?lang=en

For Espace culturel Lawrence Durrell
https://sommieres.fr/espace.lawrence.durrell-369000-4-24-90.php

Readers are also referred to my article in the June 2019 Herald.

Peter Baldwin

The wall plaque on the gate post of 15 route de Saussines

The Roman bridge over the river Vidourle which runs through Sommières.

The chapel of St Julien de Montredon where LD’s ashes are scattered in an unmarked spot

Espace culturel Lawrence Durrell and its visitor brochure

15 route de Saussines. This was LD’s home from 1966 until his death in 1990. It has since been sold into private hands and, so far as I am aware, is not open to visits. This view is taken from the town by-pass road, built after LD’s death. The photographer of this view would have been standing more or less in the garden of the house before the new road was built.
Durrell’s Cyprus, another Private Country

Isabelle Keller-Privat

Isabelle is Professor of poetry and anglophone literature, President of The International Lawrence Durrell Society, and co-director of the research team ‘Lieux Communs/ Common Places’ for the CAS Research Centre at the University Toulouse-Jean Jaurès, France. Her book Lawrence Durrell’s Poetry: A Rift in the Fabric of the World has recently been published by Fairleigh Dickinson University Press.

This essay is extracted from Isabelle’s paper which she delivered at OMG XX, Chicago in 2018:

‘I just don’t understand what Durrell was doing on Cyprus’

Exile, Survival, and Dissent in Lawrence Durrell’s Bitter Lemons of Cyprus

“In truth, by now I had memorized the lesson so well that the very names of the places I had yet to visit communicated a sharp visual image of them. I could see the lemon groves of Lapithos and feel the dense cool air of its orchards: hear the sullen thunder of the headspring as it gushed into valley from the mountain’s summit. … East of us loomed other peaks whose sulky magnificence echoed each other, mingling like the notes of a musical chord: Buffavento, seat of the winds, with the silent and graceful Gothic abbey of Bellapaix below the foothills; Pendedactyl whose five-fingered peak recalled the fingerprints of the hero Dighenis; fading all of them, and inclining slowly eastward into the mist like the proud sails of some Venetian argosy, to where Cape Andreas drowsed in spindrift at the end of the long stone handle of the Karpass. The place names chimed as one spoke them like a carillon, Greek Babylas and Myrtou, Turkish Kasaphani, Crusador Templos … The mixture was a heady one.” (Lawrence Durrell Bitter Lemons London, Faber and Faber. 1957. Pp 52-3)

The poetic beauty of this hypotyposis conjures up a synaesthetic landscape where the various senses are welded into a poetic moment fraught with sensual ‘vibrations’. Yet, it cannot hide the metadiscourse upon the narrator’s self-induced intoxication with a landscape that, despite his elaborate handling of poetic prose, he fails to master. Eventually, the omnipresent parataxis leads the gaze across a land that is no longer tightly framed as a proper ‘scape’ or scope. Instead of a well-ordered representation, Durrell leaves us with a gaping canvas that ‘evinces not so much mastery as disproportion and dispossession’.

The island of Cyprus has cast its spell upon the conqueror who reverts to the position of the child fascinated by the secret tales of the land. Simultaneously, the timeline no longer functions as a linear axis but as a circular momentum, as a refrain reverberating the narrator’s sensual memory.

Such a surprising map paves the way for the peculiar point of view awarded to the British diplomat from the balcony of his future house:

“… the village curved away in diminishing perspective to the green headland upon which the Abbey stood … Through the great arches gleamed … the delicate spine of Kasaphani’s mosque. … we were looking down upon Bellapaix, and beyond … upon Kyrenia whose castle looked absurdly like a toy.” (ibid p 58)

Durrell’s sweeping vision embraces Greek and Turkish Cyprus and closes upon Kyrenia’s castle which the British used as a police barracks. It also served as a prison for members of the Greek Cypriot EOKA organization. Ironically the British diplomat is only awarded a domineering position to contemplate the insignificant power of his own administration that will be swept away in the coming months. The conclusion of the description ‘the whole eastern prospect was suffused with the light which hovers over El Greco’s Toledo’ (p 59) is an ominous one. It calls to mind the chaotic and stormy atmosphere that characterizes the painting by El Greco who was then an aging artist focusing on the city where he spent most of his life.
The asymmetrical, elongated shapes that are characteristic of Mannerism, as well as the prevailing cold colours (mainly shades of green and blue-grey) give the painting a dramatic undertone. Significantly, Durrell’s pictorial reference sends the reader to another distorted topography since the northern perspective chosen by the artist should not show the cathedral which stands in fact off scene, to the right of the Alcazar. Instead, El Greco chooses to place it on the left hand side to emphasize the monumental nature of the city so that it acquires a spiritual, symbolic reality. Thus, the clear-cut division between sky and earth is made sharper while the play on light and darkness gives the city an unworldly essence.

Durrell’s reference to this metaphysical painting emphasizes the complex nature of his relationship to Cyprus and, in particular, to Bellapaix that echoes his Indian childhood. Simultaneously estranged from the land where he dwells and from the one where he was born, the narrator stages himself at a crossroads. The recurring references to banana leaves and the mandolin (p. 56-7) suffuse the text with the refrain of Durrell’s Indian childhood and usher in a new temporality that paves the way for a disjunctive writing. Cyprus is no longer just Cyprus: it stands for the long lost childhood that has never ceased to haunt the poet. The discovery of the house and of the entire village centred around the Tree of Idleness thus paradoxically leads the reader away from Cyprus, into the poet’s private I/land.

Notes:
1. *A Private Country* (1943) was Durrell’s first collection of poems published by Faber and Faber.
4. After arriving in Cyprus, Durrell bought a house in the Cypriot village of Bellapaix where he lived during the greater part of his stay on the island.
5. ‘The Tree of Idleness’ is the title of a poem written by Durrell. As Durrell explains in a footnote to the poem: ‘The title of this poem is taken from the name of the tree which stands outside Bellapaix Abbey in Cyprus, and which confers the gift of pure idleness on all who sit under it.’
Words Make More Than Noise
Geoff Todd

Geoff Todd is an Australian artist who divides his time between his two studios, one in Victoria in the south, the other in Darwin, Australia’s far north. He travelled to Arnhem Land to work with traditional Aboriginal artists in the early 1980’s for a few years before heading to Indonesia where he found a society committed to art. He moved on through Asia and Europe, spending time working in Greece, especially the island Kastellorizo (known to Durrell). In 2019 the Australia Day Queen’s Honours List, Geoff was made Member of the Order of Australia “for significant service to the visual arts as an artist and sculptor.”

When working as a young illustrator and designer for major book publishers I was first alerted to the idea of an illustrator “extending” an author’s text rather than just being inspired by it. I understood the aim, and sure, if the illustrator and the author were working closely together an honest and satisfying result might be achieved.

But what if the author is not involved and the “creative spirit” of an illustrator is employed? Where might this extension of text take the reader?

My belief is that if the illustrations were supposed to offer more than the author already presented within the writing, this could be somewhat pretentious on the illustrator’s part, taking us away from the author’s path.

After forty years of reading and re-reading Durrell I have completed a group of paintings and drawings in response to The Alexandria Quartet. I hasten to add that I believe this collection of paintings and drawings is neither a case of illustrating Durrell’s novels, nor is it a case of extending his story through illustration.

What I hope is that this group of paintings and drawings will reveal a few points about evocation and inspiration.

When I study the results of my own endeavours and focus on what I believe to be a wonderful truth that one person’s art can evoke inspiration for another person without plagiarism, “appropriatism,” or imitation clouding the process, I see no need for embarrassment about being inspired by another artist from another discipline.

No doubt some people will say: “This isn’t what I saw when I read the books!” In kind response to them I say - “Thank Durrell that you saw anything at all.”

I believe these paintings can and do stand alone, apart from Durrell and the Quartet, perhaps evoking some responses in another to produce something else.

However, for me, and at the risk of being seen as “just another illustrator,” I have a need to acknowledge my cherished source of evocation, and I want to pay respect to that source, to Durrell and the power of his evocative words, with the awareness of that added bonus that we are all free to react in our personal way, even if as a group we splinter off in all directions like sheets of ice cracking under pressure.

“Justine then, standing naked on tip toes to push a lighted match into the eyeball of the god.”
(Justine)
On Miracle Ground XXI

‘Mysticisms, Heresies and Heterotopias in Lawrence Durrell’s work’

Toulouse, France
28 – 30 May 2020

The next biennial conference organized by the International Lawrence Durrell Society will take place in Toulouse, France on the above dates with the above working title.

As well as being a gathering for scholars and the presentation of serious research papers about Lawrence Durrell and associated writers and artists, there will be much for the delight of the reader of Durrell’s work who wants to explore more about Durrell’s writing as well as about Durrell’s generation of writers. Attendees will also have the chance to meet other readers of Durrell’s work to share each other’s enthusiasm for his writing.

The ILDS president, Dr Isabelle Keller-Privat, is the coordinator for the 2020 conference.

A call for papers will be published both on the ILDS website and in The Herald when final details are arranged. At the same time, a more complete program will also be presented. Registrations for attendance will begin in January, 2020.

The following activities are also planned:

• An evening of poetry at the local Cave Poésie (http://www.cave-poesie.com)
• A visit to the local Musée Saint Raymond: saintraymond.toulouse.fr/
• An organized visit to the Cathar sites in the vicinity of Toulouse.
• Conference celebratory dinner.

SAVE THE DATES NOW!

‘On Miracle Ground’ is from Durrell’s poem ‘On Ithaca Standing’
ILDS EXECUTIVE-BOARD REPORT
LOUISVILLE: 23 FEBRUARY 2019

The Executive Board of the International Lawrence Durrell Society met from
9:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. on Saturday, 23 February 2019 at the Brown Hotel,
Louisville, Kentucky, President Isabelle Keller-Privat and Vice President
Pamela Francis presiding. Board members present in Louisville were James
(Jimmy) Clawson, James Decker, Pamela Francis, Anna Lillios, Paul Lorenz,
David Radavich, and Anne Zahlan. Peter Baldwin, Isabelle Keller-Privat,
Steve Moore, and Fiona Tomkinson participated (for varying lengths of time)
by Skype.

President Isabelle Keller-Privat called the meeting to order and updated Board members on recent activities
and issues facing the Society. Subsequently, Secretary-Treasurer Paul Lorenz reported that active members
number 178 and that the Society’s finances are sound (details on file). Following discussion, a motion was
unanimously adopted authorizing access to ILDS accounts for, in addition to Secretary-Treasurer Lorenz,
Vice President Pamela Francis and Immediate Past President Jimmy Clawson.

Discussion quickly turned to planning the 2020 conference. Two proposals for “On Miracle Ground XXI”
were considered, one for Belgrade, Serb Republic, and one for Toulouse, France. Isabelle Keller-Privat
elaborated her proposal for a 2020 conference at Université Toulouse Jean Jaurès and explained the process
of applying for funding from the Centre pour la Promotion de la Recherche Scientifique (CPRS). Board
members unanimously endorsed the Toulouse proposal as well as the proposed theme of Heresy/Dystopia
and the prospect of excursions to the Camargue and the Cathar country. Board members agreed that Belgrade
remained an attractive option for the future. It was noted also that Isabelle and others had been informed that
Hellenic Studies at the University of California Los Angeles has expressed interest in hosting a future ILDS
conference. Jimmy undertook to follow up with UCLA.

After publication updates from Anna Lillios, who indicated that Deus Loci would come out in spring or
summer, Pamela Francis, who announced that she is stepping down as Herald editor, and Paul Lorenz, who
promised a new membership directory soon, there were reports of ILDS outreach activities, among them
“Dining with de Bernières,” a literary and culinary event organized by Fiona Tomkinson and scheduled
for the Alexandrie restaurant in London. David Radavich reported that the new White Mice poetry contest
is underway: winners of the current competition will read in Toulouse. A new project, made possible by
a generous donation from Steve Moore, is the “Lawrence Durrell Scholarship Prize,” to be awarded to
emerging scholars for papers to be presented at ILDS conferences. James Clawson, James Decker, James
Gifford, Isabelle Keller-Privat, Steve Moore, and Fiona Tomkinson were appointed to serve on the Prize
Committee. Plans instituting the Lawrence Durrell Scholarship Prize were endorsed unanimously.

Discussion of the Society’s online communications included commendation of recent website changes and
recognition of the need for an oversight committee. The Bylaws having been consulted, it was determined
that the new Website Committee should be a subcommittee of the Publications Committee. It was
unanimously agreed that the Website Subcommittee consist of James Clawson (chair), Peter Baldwin, Steve
Moore, David Radavich, and Isabelle Keller-Privat.

Continuing consideration of online communication, David reported that tables of contents of all Deus Loci
NS issues are now online. Jimmy indicated that the online bibliography now includes a section of Durrell’s
major works by genre; Peter is expanding this section to include Robin Rook’s summaries and, in future,
member-created synopses. Finally, Jimmy noted that existing bibliography items are being put into the
Zotero system and that Zotero can be accessed through the website under Resources: Bibliography.

Consensus as to the need for an electronic newsletter having grown out of earlier online discussions among
Isabelle, Peter, Jimmy, Steve, and later David, the Board discussed possibilities for format and circulation. It
was agreed that an electronic newsletter be established to replace the current *Herald* but also to be called *The Herald*. A motion appointing Steve Moore as Editor, Peter Baldwin as Associate Editor and Pamela Francis as Consulting Editor or Consultant with the remaining active members of the Board on call to help as needed passed with unanimous consent.

Pamela reported on the Society’s Facebook page (325 members and 272 posts in the month prior to the meeting) and, on behalf of Charles Sligh, on the Twitter feed (3,929 members). Both the Society’s social media spaces are lively and thriving.

Finally, it was decided that ILDS would continue, for the duration, to sponsor annual panels at the Louisville Conference on Literature and Culture after 1900 and to convene board meetings during the conference period. James Decker agreed to organize the panel or panels for 2020 and Pamela Francis the board meeting and other events.

The meeting adjourned at 1:30 p.m. Louisville time.  

Respectfully submitted,  
Anne Zahlan

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### Colenso update

Anthony Hirst of Colenso Books updates us as follows on books being published by Colenso and which may be of interest to readers of *The Herald*:


*The Durrell Log: a Chronology of the Life and Times of Lawrence Durrell* is expected to be published in late September 2019.

Anthony hopes to have Stephanides’ *At the Macedonian Front, 1917 – 1918: A Diary and a Memoir* out around the end of this year. This will be followed by *The Ionian Islands in the Byzantine Period: A Classified Bibliography* by Maria Leontsini. In the first half of next year Anthony also has plans to publish Stephanides’ three Karghiozis shadow-play translations, and his 500 Epigrams from the Greek Anthology.

For orders and enquiries, contact Anthony at colensobooks@gmail.com.

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“If you only knew how I lived you would leave me.”  
(Justine)

“IT can paint. In fact its powers are so comprehensive that I am a little frightened of it. It can undertake the most delicate of tasks, even turning the pages of a book, as well as the coarser ones.”  
(Clea)

Artwork by Geoff Todd  
[www.geofftodd.com](http://www.geofftodd.com)

Mr. Todd provided the captions for his art.
Review


This 116 page book was published by The Durrell Library of Corfu to coincide with the conference organised by the School, The Islands of the Mind, held on Corfu in June 2019. According to the book’s colophon, the edition is limited to 124 copies, one hundred numbered, 24 lettered according to the Greek alphabet. I do not think that is entirely accurate since the flyer slipped into one of the copies kindly sent to me by Richard Pine, Director of the Library, tells me that, in addition, 100 unnumbered copies have also been printed, presumably for general sale. The print run is, therefore, 224 copies; not that this affects the quality of the book, but is relevant to the books bibliographic citation.

Apparently, copies were offered as a keepsake to participants in The Islands of the Mind conference and a generous and handsome keepsake it is. Alongside the English text, there is a Greek translation by Vera Konidari. The book is handsomely printed and should grace the shelf of any self-respecting Durrell collector as well as that of any reader of Durrell interested in, say, the genesis of Durrell as a novelist and/or his life on Corfu, about which relatively little has found its way into Durrell’s published creative works [as opposed to, for example, contemporaneous letters].

I rather regretted the absence in the book of anything but the briefest detail of the origins of the manuscript of this book. Pine, whom I assume edited the text for this publication, tells us only that the typescript of the book is held at Southern Illinois University at Carbondale [SIUC] in the USA. This library, which holds an extensive Durrell archive, having purchased it from Anne Ridler to whom Durrell had given the script in the 1940’s. Ridler was T.S.Eliot’s secretary at the time when Durrell was publishing significant volumes of verse with Faber and Faber, the publishing house of which Eliot was a director. A warm and generous friendship arose between Durrell and Ridler.

Durrell and his then wife, Nancy, lived in Corfu from 1935 to 1939 [with occasional sojourns in Paris], before leaving Corfu for their own safety against the advent of the Second World War. Pine confidently dates the typescript as 1939 and he wrote to me thus to explain his reasoning:

‘…. the typescript (including the drawings) is in SIUC. The date of 1939 is arrived at by a number of routes, not least of which is LD’s dedication to Stephanides “in memory of four years of a charmed friendship” - i.e. it could not have been written before 1939, and, given that 3 drawings by Nancy are incorporated within the typescript, it cannot have been written after her departure from Egypt. I think it’s realistic to date it to 1939, although of course another possibility is that it was written in Kalamata [in Northern Greece]. As for the style, I don’t think the difference between it and “The Black Book” is of much significance - “The Black Book” (sic) was written intensely as “a savage charcoal sketch” while this is a much more idyllic - even if troubled - search for the self.’

Pine’s comment about a comparison with _The Black Book_, Durrell’s third published novel, written on Corfu from January 1936, finished February 1937, is in response to my comment that the style of and ideas behind _The Magnetic Island_ are very different from those of _The Black Book_.

I should add that the book contains three pen and ink full-page illustrations by Nancy whom, it is surmised, created the calligraphic lettering which makes the cover to this edition.

Pine has also sent me a copy of his long introductory note to the version of this novella to be published in his _Endpapers and Inklings_ collection of Durrell’s prose and Pine’s introduction reminds me that Shelley Cox, the late Rare Books Librarian at SIUC, wrote a long essay on the typescript for Deus
Loci NS7 (1999 – 2000) (1). Cox tells us in that essay that *The Magnetic Island* ‘…..tells the story of a man called Tiryns, a red-haired, semi-wild man who is born (sic) on an unnamed island of unknown parents.’ On the basis of internal evidence from the typescript, Cox assumes that the island is Corfu and the novella gives an account of Tiryns awakening to self-discovery, a voyage from innocence to a more worldly attitude to life and relationships, via a number of encounters on what may be other Ionian Islands. Cox also calculates that the story is set in the sixth century B.C.

This reviewer agrees with Cox who finds Durrell’s play *Sappho*, published in 1946, to be the closer in writing style to this novella than Durrell’s other contemporary prose work. In terms of synergy with Durrell’s late-thirties writing, Cox suggests that *The Magnetic Island* ‘is the prose side of the mood Durrell successfully captures in his poetry of this period, specifically the poems inspired by the Greek Islands and Corfu itself.’ (2)

This novella, had it been published at the time, would not have made Durrell’s reputation and, in that way, is only a very minor work. Yet, it evokes well what life on Corfu may have been like for Larry and Nancy and contains numerous ideas and characterisations which Durrell was to develop for his later fiction.

The attention of readers who would like to buy a copy of this book is drawn to the notice elsewhere in this edition of The Herald.

Peter Baldwin

Footnotes:


*It is beyond the scope of the review to consider the interesting comparisons Cox makes in her Deus Loci essay between the typescript of The Magnetic Island and Durrell’s contemporary (late thirties) poetry as well the drafts, some published, others not, to be found in notebooks held as part of the SIUC archive.*
The Lawrence Durrell Journal invites submissions of original scholarly articles on the life and work of Lawrence Durrell and his circles, including Henry Miller, Anais Nin, Gerald Durrell, Richard Aldington, George Seferis, Keith Douglas, Bernard Spencer, Olivia Manning, etc. All critical approaches are welcome, including gender, historical, textual, biographical, and source studies; as well as gender-based, multicultural, ecocritical, and other post-structuralist methods.

Please submit critical article manuscripts in MLA style of documentation (based on The MLA Handbook, 8th ed.). Electronic copies should be saved as a Word .doc or .docx. Inquiries regarding the composition and/or submission of your paper should be sent to Dr. Anna Lillios, Editor, at Anna@ucf.edu

One wet cold Sunday morning in London in June 1998 a small notice appeared in The Sunday Times ‘Property’ pages, which ran along the line: ‘Mas Michel for 40 years the Midi home of the Durrell brothers, Lawrence and Gerald.’ By then, we had been waiting six months for our visas to take up a posting as Head of the British Interests Section of the Italian Embassy in Tripoli. Part of a visa turf war between the UK and Libya, with the Guckian family stuck in the middle.

Well why not pass by Nîmes on the way home from a holiday in Italy? Great decision. Right decision. We bought it on the spot. And the rest is history.

This is the story of Mas Michel after the Durrell brothers, Lawrence and Gerald, lived there for 40 years. Now over 20 years later we are still there, but our diplomat life meant that until 2011 we were living most of the time in the Middle East and North Africa: Libya, Syria, Oman, and in my case, alone, Iraq in 2004-2005. Before 2011 we got to Mas Michel for an average of 2-3 months a year, whilst in Libya, quite often on transit between Tripoli and London. After July 2011, when I retired from the Diplomatic Service, I have spent more time there, pretty much every month, the rest of the time in the UK.

First of all: Mas Michel, which Lawrence moved to in 1958. He then passed it on to his brother Gerald. It really is a mazet, rather than a mas, but what is in a name? The former is a small Midi farm house; the latter is a much bigger one. More like a finca in Spain. The terminus of the 73 mini-bus into town, just down from our entrance, is called Mas Michel! The older part of the Mas is over 200 years old, with additions by the previous owners. Its great joy is that it is standing in 2 hectares of land (and around 300 olive trees, on which below). We do have neighbours, and it is only 10 minutes by car from central Nîmes. Indeed I like winter best as Nîmes and the other cities around live all year round, and there is nothing like a log fire and a good book in the evenings; and I love the misty days and the many ghosts of Roman Provençe. All best visited outside the heat and the high tourist season.

When the Durrells took over in 1958, this was in the high garrigue north of Nîmes. When Lawrence moved in, it is said that it reminded him of Greece, but the food was better! Except for a few very small mazets dotted around, there were only Mas Michel (and related buildings) with the Château de Calvas about a kilometre away (if the land is not built on it belongs to the Château). The land to the east of the lane leading to the Mas, the Chemin de
Clavas, is mine, whilst that to the west has been sold off in parcels for houses. To the north is the Camp de Garrigue, a major training area for the French Army, especially for the Foreign Legion, who have a regiment based in Nîmes - military land which stretches all the way to the River Gardon at the Pont St. Nicolas (the same builder built the famous broken bridge at Avignon, of the song).

And one of the great events of the year, at least for me, and the friends who join me, is the olive harvest in October/November, when, for all my troubles, I got 80 litres of Mas Michel Extra Virgin olive oil in 2018, although half went to my French partner. Enough for me and enough for gifts! And herein lies the rub. Like the rest of the south of France, my olive trees were all killed off to the roots in the great frost of May 1956 but, somehow, have grown back from those tenacious roots. The reason is that the frost happened in May and lasted around 10 days. Because the sap was flowing, the bark fell off and the trees died back to their roots – had it happened in mid-winter this would not have happened, as the trees would have slept through it all. It has been my labour of love to bring them all back to life after 53 years. And I seem to be winning. They are a mixture of olive varieties, mainly picholine, but also the small Niçoise and a large olive that is black from the beginning. Alas, I shall never get rich on my olive harvest. The sixty year old dead wood is still being burnt in the fireplaces of Mas Michel. I now also produce Mas Michel honey, 30 kilos last year, but again 50% went to my French partner.

Now one thing that I have continued from the Durrells’ era is the naming of parts of the house and the land after my family. Thus my daughter Freya’s room is still ‘Troy’ and the wood at the bottom of the garden is still ‘Louisa’, named after the brothers’ mother; and the big salon is still ‘Delphi’. These last three names I have kept from the days of the Durrells’ ownership. One name I have not kept is the room once called ‘The KGB’ because it was the windowless tool shed and garage with a metal door; it is now named after Freya as ‘Villa Freya’.

Further up the land to the east is a capitelle, which is now ‘Euan’s Capitelle’ and the two roomed mazet, still a ruin, is known as ‘Villa JuliaAnna’, a conflation of the names of my two eldest daughters. This two roomed mazet is on my land about 100 yards up the hill from the main property. If I ever win the lottery, it will become my writing bolt hole. I also have another capitelle, named after myself as ‘Noel’s Capitelle’, part hidden away on the north east boundary of the land and now probably a home for snakes, scorpions and the occasional wild boar.

Thus all four of my children have been named here in Mas Michel.

The upper pergola is named after my late wife, Lorna. As for ‘Euan’s Capitelle’, when I restored it three years ago, it was incredible how many old champagne bottles were there (proving that they did drink good stuff). And to the front, there was a little cooking area where Lawrence used to burn his rubbish in the days when rubbish collections did not reach this far up the Chemin de Calvas.

Nice spirits and olive trees. Well I have explained the olive trees, and I really do want to reach 100 litres of extra virgin olive oil in the coming period. It is always good to have an achievable target.
But ‘nice spirits’ need a bit of further explanation. The nice spirits of the Durrells live on here. *Clea*, the last volume of *The Alexandria Quartet* was written here, and no doubt other works too. Gerald and Lee Durrell were prolific writers when they migrated down from Jersey for the summer.

My professional life as a British Diplomat was spent almost exclusively in the Middle East and North Africa, of which I think Lawrence would have approved. I can write here, like I can write nowhere else. And the best diplomatic despatch I wrote as a diplomat of 32 years, was about Libya, written at the Mas Michel whilst I was posted in Tripoli, heading up our small office there. In 1998, 7 months before it happened, I predicted to within a week or two the handing over in April 1999 of the Lockerbie 2 terrorist bombers to a trial under the legal fiction that the court was on Scottish territory albeit physically in Holland. It was in Prime Minister Tony Blair’s summer holiday reading pack that year! I think Lawrence would have been looking over my shoulder that evening as I wrote it! I have yet to develop the discipline of a writer, but when I do, down to Mas Michel I shall go.

Mas Michel came with most of the furniture and a library, where one discovers interesting, and not so interesting, reading. I am a bibliophile and that is great. From 100% Gerald (and some Lawrence) books, it is now watered down to about 50-50% between my choice and that of the Durrells. With some notable exceptions, they liked middle of the road 1950s British novels, Leslie Charteris’ *The Saint*, James Bond and H.E.Bates’ *The Darling Buds of May*! I guess writers need to relax too.

There is no TV in Mas Michel, but I gave in to Wi-Fi for my children, and work, about 10 years ago. And an internet radio to listen to the BBC World Service.

As for the land, well, I have to say that it is *garrigue*; rosemary and thyme are there in abundance. You can find wild lavender and wild garlic in season, as well as wild asparagus which is great in omelettes. And lots more besides. The late August thunder storms bring the smells of the *Midi* through the whole house. Olives I have mentioned, and the Roman Pines drop their cones and another one grows over the years. There are two outside the Mas, which were Christmas trees during the Gerald era, now 15 metres high. I love looking out of the door at them at all times of the year, but especially in winter.

As for the animals, I have only seen two snakes in 18 years, probably both Montpellier ones (*Malpolon monspessulanus*), and large iguanas three times (they tend to come out from the dry stone walls after it has rained, but are still very shy). Wild Boars (*sangliers*) are now a nuisance and come right up to the house. I call my compost-heap the boar feeding centre! Soon my garden will become more *sanglier* proof.

There is a lovely swimming pool at Mas Michel, built by Gerald Durrell, with the old one behind the house built by Lawrence when he decided that swimming trips to Saintes Marie de la Mer were best done at home.

Noel J. Guckian, CVO; OBE
Former British Ambassador to Oman, 2005-2011
August 2019

Noel J. Guckian holds copyright to photos in this article.

A number of French terms are used in Noel’s essay so the editors have included a short glossary on the following page for those not familiar with these terms.
A Glossary of Terms for Noel Guckian’s Article: Nice Spirits and Olive Trees

Capitelle
A pyramid-shaped shelter, typically of the Languedoc region of France and built out of dry-stone, set within a vineyard.

Garrigue
A type of low scrubland found on limestone soils in southern France and other parts of the Mediterranean Basin.

Mas
A large farm in the Mediterranean region of France.

Mazet
A small isolated building, serving as a storage for plowing equipment and a weekend cottage in the French region of the Languedoc. [Durrell’s home, as described in Noel’s essay, is variously referred to as a mas and a mazet. Since the building is commonly known as Mas Michel, we have used that title throughout Noel’s essay]

The 2019 White Mice Poetry Contest is now open!

The International Lawrence Durrell Society welcomes submissions of 1-3 poems on the theme of “The Heavens.” The theme may be addressed literally or figuratively. There is NO ENTRY FEE.

Deadline for submissions is October 1, 2019.

Winners of the 2019 contest will receive the following rewards:
A) A one-year membership to the International Lawrence Durrell Society;
B) Free conference registration and an invitation to read at a special poetry event to be held at Cave Poésie in Toulouse, France in late May 2020;
C) Publication on the International Lawrence Durrell Society website (www.lawrencedurrell.org); and
D) Publication in the ILDS print publication, Deus Loci.

The title “White Mice” comes from Lawrence Durrell’s letter to Henry Miller, in which he claims that “words … breed like white mice.”

The White Mice Poetry Contest, devoted to supporting new lyricism in the spirit of Lawrence Durrell, has been held regularly for decades, dating back at least to the years when former Durrell Society president Carol Peirce administered the competition. Recently the contest theme has been tied not only to Durrell’s work but also to the location of On Miracle Ground Conferences in Greece and Chicago. “Heavens” is the perfect theme for the upcoming conference in Toulouse, which takes place in the aerospace “capital” of France.

For submission guidelines, please visit: http://www.lawrencedurrell.org/wp_durrell/contest-guidelines
“A Deeper Liberation” by Lawrence Durrell was reprinted by the TLS on May 23, 2018, in “From the Archives.” Described by the TLS as “edited,” the article deals with the “emergence of Modern Greek poetry” and originally appeared in the publication on May 13, 1949.

Peter Baldwin has called my attention to a 2018 book by Frédéric Jacques Temple, Divagabondages (Arles: Actes Sud, 2018). It contains two essays about Durrell—“Construire un mur de pierre sèche” and “Sommières, la Grèce de Larry”—as well as pieces on Henry Miller, Richard Aldington and other mutual friends of Durrell and Temple.

Little has been written about Lawrence Durrell’s culinary interests, but Merrianne Timko makes an important contribution to the subject in “Exploring the Christmas Eve Menu in Lawrence Durrell’s Avignon Quintet.” The article appeared in Gastronomica: The Journal of Critical Food Studies 18.1 (Spring 2018), pages 27-43.


Rony Alfandary has announced the formation of a Google discussion group called Durrellians of the World. The topics, he explains, “are varied: the extended Durrell family and their various interests, their influence, their contemporaries, their followers and related issues.”

The last few years have seen the publication of a number of scholarly works about Cyprus. In one of the most recent, Cyprus under British Colonial Rule: Culture, Politics, and the Movement toward Union with Greece, 1878-1954, Christos P. Ioannides notes that “it took an English literary giant, Lawrence Durrell … to make contemporary Cyprus known to the Anglo-Saxon world. His book, Bitter Lemons (1957), constitutes the most widely read literary work about Cyprus in the English-speaking world.” Ioannides goes on to point out that “Durrell was ambivalent as to whether Britain could succeed in Cyprus. But this ambivalence could not disguise the fact that he did serve in Cyprus as a colonial official and, as he himself put it, as ‘a servant of the Crown.’” Cyprus under British Colonial Rule is published by Lexington Books.

Other 2019 titles about Cyprus include Insular Destinies: Perspectives on the History and Politics of Modern Cyprus by Paschalis Kitromilides (Routledge); and British Imperialism and Turkish Nationalism in Cyprus, 1923-1939: Divide, Define and Rule by Ilia Xypolia (Routledge).

The American University in Cairo Press has published The Greeks and the Making of Modern Egypt by Alexander Kitroeff. Praising Kitroeff as “one of the world’s leading scholars of the modern Greek diaspora,” political scientist Robert Vitalis calls the work “the single best book on the role of the one-time flourishing Greek community in Egypt,” and adds that it is “richly sourced, wide-ranging, and subtle and complex in its judgments.”

John Burnside’s On Henry Miller; or, How to be an Anarchist was published by Princeton University Press in 2018. Writing in TLS, Merve Fejzula points out that Burnside “shifts the focus from Henry Miller’s unsavoury legacy to the politics of his aesthetics,” while one of Miller’s biographers, Jay Martin, notes that “Burnside and Miller make a good match.”

The Alyscamps Press of Paris has recently reprinted Karl Orend’s The Bluebird of Love. A brief consideration of Miller and Charles Bukowski, the pamphlet was published “on June first 2019 in a limited edition of twenty numbered copies, hors commerce, signed by the author.” The Bluebird of Love originally appeared in a different version in 2005. Alyscamps has also published reprints of Michael


Clara Oropeza’s *Anaïs Nin: A Myth of Her Own* has been published by Routledge. The study, says Oropeza, “hopes to claim a space for the creative depth of a writer who ardently sought to give voice to the plurality of truths, as integral parts of her sense of self.”


Patrick Leigh Fermor and Xan Fielding are the subjects of two of the fourteen essays in Jeffrey Meyers’ *Resurrections*. Subtitled *Authors, Heroes—and a Spy*, the book was published by the University of Virginia Press in 2018.

The Patrick and Joan Leigh Fermor Centre will open in what was the Fermors’ home in Kardamyli in 2020, according to an article from the site Hellenic News of America. See https://hellenicnews.com/the-patrick-and-joan-leigh-fermor-centre-a-unique-and-exquisite-sanctuary-of-magical-beauty/.

Rachel Weaving’s *Gardens of Corfu* includes photographs by Marianne Majerus and a preface by Mary Keen. The oversize book runs to 256 pages and was published by Impress Publishing London in 2018. See https://gardensofcorfu.com/ for further details.

Billing itself as “An Island Celebration of Culture and Cricket,” the Corfu 2019 Literary Festival is scheduled for September 23-30 and includes not only lectures but also music, walks, historic venues and “fabulous Corfiot food and drink.” Among the many speakers will be Adam Nicolson, author of *Why Homer Matters*. Further details are available at https://www.corfulliteraryfestival.com/events-2019 and tickets may be purchased at https://www.eventbrite.com/e/corfu-literary-festival-tickets-66619060403.
Alexandrie Literary Evenings

THE BACKWARD GLANCE: 
CAVAFY, DURRELL AND MEMORY
A talk by Dr. Anthony Hirst

with

Readings from Cavafy’s Poetry

Flavours of Alexandria
Six-course tasting menu with wine
Price: £79

21st September, 2019 (6.30pm-10.30pm)
Alexandrie Restaurant & Bar
38C Kensington Church Street, Kensington, London W8 4BX
020 7937 2244

For more details contact Fiona Tomkinson fgtomkinson@yahoo.co.uk

Workpoints [corrections]

In the last Herald I referred to the book L’étrange étranger – The strange stranger to what I had assumed, before seeing a copy of the book, to be a guide to Sommières and its environs as known to Durrell. Now I have seen a copy, I can correct that assumption. The book is a reprint published by the Office de Tourisme de Pays Sommières of the catalogue Lawrence Durrell en Languedoc published in conjunction with an exhibition held in the Éspace Lawrence Durrell [as it then was] in September 2000. The catalogue was published by the now defunct Association Lawrence Durrell en Languedoc and has long been unavailable, so its republication is most welcome. If you seek a copy, contact the Office de Tourisme, accueil@ot-sommieres.fr. The book is, essentially, a profusely illustrated 64-page short biography of Lawrence Durrell.

In the June Herald it was stated that the Louisville, KY conference at which the ILDS sponsors a session was part of the American Modern Language Association conference. The Louisville, KY, conference is actually The Louisville Conference of Literature and Culture after 1900, and the ILDS will again be sponsoring a session there in February, 2020 titled: “Paper Kaleidoscopes”: Cycles of Modernism. We apologize for any confusion this mis-statement caused.
Richard Pine writes on the Durrell School of Corfu website:

The journal, in addition to essays, reviews, Notes & Queries and arts features, will focus on the Durrell family and its relations with Greece. The inaugural issue’s “Durrell Studies” section contains three substantial essays: on Durrell in Cyprus (Ciara Barrick), Durrell and Otto Rank (Richard Pine) and a reading of The Alexandria Quartet in the light of Umberto Eco’s Opera Aperta (Bartolo Casiraghi). It also features “Dreams, Divinations”, an excised chapter of Reflections on a Marine Venus with commentary by David Roessel.

Readers will need to cut and paste the above URL into their search box to access the Journal. There is a ‘Durrell Studies’ section. Click on the heading via the above URL and you will access a list of the titles in the section. Hovering your cursor over the essay title you want to read will highlight the title. Right-click once and the full text of the essay will appear.

These are the essays listed as they appear in the Durrell Studies section of the C.20 website:

- ‘My Word, What an Experience’: Form and Readership in the Alexandria Quartet by Bartolo Casiraghi
- Otto Rank and the Case of Lawrence Durrell by Richard Pine
- ‘A Private Individual Without Concern for Policy’: Lawrence Durrell and the Times of Cyprus by Ciara Barrick
- ‘Dreams, Divinations’ – a deleted chapter from Reflections on a Marine Venus by Lawrence Durrell, edited and introduced by David Roessel

Richard Pine tells us in an email:

Following the extremely successful ‘Islands of the Mind’ festival in June, we are now planning a further conference ‘Borders and Borderlands’ for 20-24 May 2020 on Corfu. This will provide several opportunities to discuss border-crossings (both physical and metaphysical) in relation to both Lawrence and Gerald Durrell. A major feature of the symposium will be ‘translation’, a border-crossing between one language and its linguistic territory and another, or between one ethnic identity and another.

A Call For Papers will be issued shortly, but if you are interested, please let us know soon, as places are limited and many participants at ‘Islands of the Mind’ will be returning for ‘Borders and Borderlands’.

Confirmed speakers include Maria Todorova (author of Imagining the Balkans), Kapka Kassabova (author of the award-winning Border: a Journey to the Edge of Europe) and Diarmaid Ferriter, an expert on the Irish/ Northern Irish border which is at the centre of the ongoing debate about Brexit.

Those of you who are considering travelling to Toulouse for the ILDS OMG XXI conference [see elsewhere in this edition of The Herald] from 28 – 30 May 2020 could profitably preface that by participating in ‘Borders and Borderlands’ in the preceding week.

Immediately following ‘Borders and Borderlands’ we will convene a small group to discuss The Alexandria Quartet (25-27 May 2020). Entry to this group, which will meet on Corfu, is by invitation and will be devoted as far as possible to younger scholars. If you feel you could contribute to this convention, please contact us at durrelllibrarycorfu@gmail.com
Durrellians of the World

Rony Alfandary, Ph.d, author of *Exile and Return: a Psychoanalytic Study of Lawrence Durrell’s The Alexandria Quartet* published by Routledge in 2018, writes:

As a Herald reader, you are cordially invited to join to the newly formed “Durrellians of the World” discussion group! The topics of this group are varied: the extended Durrell family and their various interests, their influence, their contemporaries, their followers and related issues. Do not hesitate to raise a topic which seems challenging but always keep the discussion respectful and aware of others’ sensibilities.

You can post a topic or response to any existing one simply by replying to the mail you receive from the group. All members of the discussion group will be able to see your message and respond.

To join, please send a request to: https://groups.google.com/d/forum/durrellians-of-the-world. You may be asked to send a request to join. Please do and you will be responded to very quickly.

________________________________________

Ryan Murdock

We have come across the excellent website of writer, explorer and travel philosopher, as he describes himself, Ryan Murdock – see https://ryanmurdock.com/

Of particular interest to readers of The Herald is his long and profusely illustrated essay *French Connection*, an article retracing the footsteps of LD in southern France. See:


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The White House, Corfu

What is now known as The White House was the principal home of Larry and Nancy Durrell when they lived on Corfu from 1935 to 1939. Now in the hands of the fifth generation of the Atheneos family, the same family who owned it when Larry and Nancy lived there, The White House seems to have gone through a spectacular rebranding exercise and the website recently developed is well worth a visit:

https://thewhitehouse.gr/

This link will take you to the home page for The White House Holiday Experience, as it is now branded. Here you will find links to the history of the Durrells, both in Kalami, the bay where the house is situated, as well as the more obviously touristy side of the family business – links to ‘The Bay’; ‘Greek Cuisine’; and ‘Stay’. Readers will know that in later years, the house has become a tavern as well as holiday rental destination. Certainly, my wife and I have enjoyed two holidays, albeit some years ago now, in the associated White House Apartments. We stayed in early June when the weather was good but not too hot and before the high-summer season had brought a greater influx of tourists.

The revamped website has obviously been developed by professional website developers but it is possible to get more from the site than purely marketing-speak. I dug further and found:

https://thewhitehouse.gr/history/

Here you can follow the link to The White House Digital Museum which tells, through an impressive library of mainly still photos dating back over a hundred years, the story of the Atheneos family with much about the Durrells, Larry and Nancy in particular. This digital museum is well worth a visit, whether or not you are planning to visit Corfu.
“Paper Kaleidoscopes”: The Cycles of Modernism
Session sponsored by the International Lawrence Durrell Society
Louisville Conference on Literature and Culture after 1900
University of Louisville, February 20-22, 2020

Although publication of this edition of The Herald is after the deadline for submissions, readers of The Herald may be interested in a Call For Papers in which the ILDS sought proposals for 20-minute presentations at this conference session sponsored by the ILDS.

Subjects might be on fictional, dramatic, or poetic cycles from the modernist era. Such cycles could include explicit trilogies (tetralogies, etc.) or works connected in more implicit ways. Potential subjects include:

- Fictional cycles such as Durrell’s The Alexandria Quartet, Manning’s The Fortunes of War, Miller’s The Rosy Crucifixion, Richardson’s Pilgrimage, Dos Passos’s USA, Lawrence’s “Brangwen” novels, and Ford’s Parade’s End
- Dramatic cycles such as Stein’s Historic Drama trilogy, O’Neill’s Tale of Possessors, Self-Dispossessed, and Yeats’ Cuchulain cycle.
- Poetic cycles/epics such as Ezra Pound’s Cantos, Bunting’s Briggflatts, Crane’s The Bridge, Loy’s Love Songs, HD’s Trilogy, Rukeyser’s The Book of the Dead, and Hugh MacDiarmid’s A Drink Man Looks at the Thistle.
- Narratological and psychological space in multi-volume works
- Definitions of the cycle
- Consistency and the multi-volume narrative
- Plot, style, and editing: loose, baggy monsters or taut epics?
- Secondary characters and narrative doubling: hidden in plain sight
- Reevaluations: depictions of the Other

The deadline for proposals was last 9th September 2019, later extended to 16 September. ILDS Executive Board member James Decker [jdecker@icc.edu] was responsible for collating submissions in response to this CFP. Please see the conference’s official website for additional information: https://www.thelouisvilleconference.com/
The Herald - editorial guidelines and publication dates

The Herald is the newsletter of the International Lawrence Durrell Society [ILDS] – see: www.lawrencedurrell.org/. It will be emailed as a matter of course to all members of the ILDS. It will also be uploaded to www.lawrencedurrell.org/ for free access to any interested reader.

Should a member wish to receive a printed version of The Herald, they may contact the editors at newsletter.ilds@gmail.com to make the change.

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Readers are invited to contribute articles, news items, events and details of new publications by or about Lawrence Durrell for future publication in The Herald. Articles and contributions should, in the first instance, be limited to no more than 300 words. Unpublished photos or illustrations which may be of interest to readers of The Herald will also be welcome provided the editors are satisfied that appropriate copyright consents have been obtained.

Would-be contributors are advised to email the editors (newsletter.ilds@gmail.com) to discuss the scope of their contribution and its suitability for The Herald.

All inquiries about The Herald should be sent to newsletter.ilds@gmail.com

Copy date for the next edition of The Herald [NS] is November 15, 2019 for publication by December 15, 2019.

The views and opinions expressed in The Herald are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of the International Lawrence Durrell Society.

“The peculiar innocence of childhood which shone out from under the fancy dress was in startling contrast to the barbaric adult figure of the French sailor.”
(Justine)

Artwork by Geoff Todd