

*The Wellsian: The Journal of the H.G. Wells Society*  
No 22 (1999)

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ISSN 0263 1176

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(If possible, please send submissions on floppy  
disk as well as on paper.)

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Editorial

I would like to thank four people for their assistance in preparing this edition of *The Wellsian*: Firstly, my predecessor, Sylvia Hardy, who has given me useful advice during this, my first year as editor. Secondly, Patrick Parrinder, who has done a splendid job compiling the list of new publications on Wells for the journal since 1983. He has decided to hand this task back to the editor though his regular contribution will be missed. And finally, for assistance in reproducing the images contained in this *Wellsian*, I thank Chris Constantinou (the Coburn photographs) and Kamkrudit Nimsombun (the Thornwood House photograph).

Notes on Contributors:

François O. Beaulieu has been interested in *The Time Machine* since childhood and, in the last eight years, he has engaged in extensive textual and bibliographical research on it. He lives in Canada and is currently working on several other writings relating to *The Time Machine*.

Jonathan Bignell is Senior Lecturer in Media Arts at Royal Holloway College, University of London. He is the author of *Media Semiotics: An Introduction* (1997), editor of *Writing and Cinema* (1999), and is currently completing a book on postmodern media culture.

Sylvia Hardy is chair of the H.G. Wells Society and a Research Associate of the University College of Northampton. She is currently researching H.G. Wells and film.

Jan Hollm is Lecturer of English at University of Koblenz-Landau and a Reader of English and History at Technical University of Berlin and at University College of North Wales, Bangor. He published his PhD thesis as *Die angloamerikanische Ökonomie. Literarische Entwürfe einer grünen Welt* (Frankfurt/aM: Peter Lang, 1998).

Edward James is Professor of Medieval History at the University of Reading and Director of its MA programme in Science Fiction Studies. He is editor of *Foundation: The International Review of Science Fiction* and author of *Science Fiction in the Twentieth Century* (1994). He also maintains the H.G. Wells Society web pages.

Patrick Parrinder is a Professor of English at the University of Reading and a vice president of the H.G. Wells Society. His latest book on Wells is *Shadows of the Future* (Liverpool U.P., 1995) and he is co-editor (with George Slusser) of a forthcoming volume of papers from the 1995 symposium on *The Time Machine* entitled *The Perennial Time Machine* (Georgia U.P.). He is also general editor of the H.G. Wells titles in Oxford U.P.'s World's Classics series (New York).

John S. Partington is editor of *The Wellsian*. He contributes short annotations of secondary material related to 'H.G. Wells and Science Fiction' for the *Annotated Bibliography for English Studies* and is a regular reviewer for the English literature section of *Kritikon Litterarum*. He is currently writing a doctoral thesis at the University of Reading on Wells's political thought.

Laura Scuriatti graduated in English and German from Università Statale di Milano and is now a postgraduate student of English literature at the University of Reading. She is interested in the interdisciplinary study of literature and the visual arts and is currently working on Djuna Barnes. She has translated A. Barzel's "Arte e industria/Art and Industry" (Milan, Marcos y Marcos, 1996).

David C. Smith is a vice president of the H.G. Wells Society. He is retired from teaching but continues to work on his annotated bibliography of Wells's writing as well as a fifth volume of Wells's correspondence.

David C. Smith

The H.G. Wells Society and its *Raison d'être*

The Context

The following piece was written in September 1994. It was not printed at the time as it appeared that the debate referred to was moribund. Five years later, it is clear that the debate is alive and still being argued out, though mainly in a subterranean way. Therefore, it does seem that it is probably worth printing now. Just a word about the context from the point of view of the writer and a few more words that put this ongoing debate into some sort of general context are probably warranted.<sup>1</sup>

It is also worth saying that the retention of Wells's writings in copyright until the year 2017 has diminished the debate somewhat as his books have become very much more expensive and have gradually disappeared from the second-hand bookshops everywhere. To some degree, then, the debate has been truncated, as the major books in print now tend to be the early scientific romances, in which there is a much less obvious political agenda than in his later books.

When I first wrote this piece, I had just retired after spending some 40 years in the classroom (that is, years in which I taught at least one course). As I wrote, I was breaking away from one life's work, moving on to other things, and I was in a pensive mood about the changes. I was also beginning serious work on what would be my next big project, *The Correspondence of H.G. Wells* (London, 1998).

I did not yet know just how many more Wells letters I had to read, but the debate over the purpose of the H.G. Wells Society loomed very large in my mind. As I write these lines, I am contemplating the proposed and possible fifth volume of his *Correspondence*, which will provide another 400 or so letters that have emerged since last

<sup>1</sup> James Dilloway, 'Implementing in Full the Role of the H.G. Wells Society', *The H.G. Wells Newsletter*, Vol.3, no.5; Michael Sherborne, 'Further Thoughts on the Aims and Role of the H.G. Wells Society', Vol.3, no.6; and the summarized views of John Partington, G.W. Denton, Bernard Loing, Tom Miller and Rose Tilly. Also see the report of the AGM, 1994 in Vol.3, no.6. In preparing this piece for actual publication, I looked back through all the H.G. Wells Society 'Official Publications' of one kind or another. This debate has been going on for a long time, and from time to time, some members have stopped attending meetings (perhaps for other reasons, too), but this means that the debate has been spasmodic. I suggest that we have a meeting with a real debate, operating under the dicta that no one will get angry, but that we all will attempt to understand H.G. Wells and what he means to us.