
W.H. Davies is primarily remembered as the author of *The Autobiography of a Super-Tramp*, first published by A.C. Fifield in 1908 and continuously in print ever since. In fact, as noted by Sylvia Harlow in her introduction, 54,727 copies of the latest paperback edition (Oxford University Press, 1980) have been sold up to June 1992. *The Autobiography* was Davies's third book, preceded by *The Soul's Destroyer* which he published himself in 1905, and *New Poems* (Elkin Mathews, 1907), and it launched his literary career. It was financed by Mrs. George Bernard Shaw and contained a preface by GBS himself.

Davies was born in 1871 in Newport, Wales and left school at the age of fourteen. After five years as an apprentice to a picture-framer he began to rove about Great Britain, sleeping in doss-houses. In 1893 he went to the United States, met some professional tramps, and commenced the way of life depicted in *The Autobiography*. For the next five years he tramped around the U.S. with a few brief trips back to Britain. In early 1899 he went to Canada intending to dig for gold in the Klondike but missed his step attempting to board a train in Renfrew, Ontario and lost his left foot. A second operation was necessary and his left leg was amputated at the knee (this episode is described in detail by Louis Blake Duff in Part 19 of *The Colophon*). Davies then returned to Britain and after a few tramps, made much more difficult by his stump, settled in Sevenoaks and London. He began to submit poetry to periodicals, with scant success, until the breakthrough of *The Autobiography*. He then published steadily until his death in 1940. Harlow describes fifty-three books in her A section, up to 1980.

This is a full bibliography, with seven sections including, separate works, edited works, introductions and contributions to periodicals, prose and poetry in anthologies, a section on broadcasting, and works about Davies. Sections A and B contain extensive descriptions of each work and the others only lists in the conventional style. Section C [periodical appearances] is particularly important because of Davies's habit of first publishing his poems in journals and later collecting them into books, with, often, significant textual revisions. Thus an editor of Davies has the basic spadework done, and done accurately as far as one can tell.

There are some quibbles about the accuracy of the descriptions in Section A. For instance, in 1922 Jonathan Cape published Davies's *The Hour of Magic*, with 'decorations' by William Nicholson. This was a real collaboration as Davies and Nicholson were friends and shared the 20% royalty between them, a fact revealed in Colin Campbell's *William Nicholson: the Graphic Work*, cited from correspondence, but not mentioned by Harlow. A20 has one error in the title-page transcription [an italic 'The' is missed] and gives the collation as '8vo, [A] in ten, [B–C] in eights; 26 leaves.' This may very well be right but it is very difficult to be absolutely confident as there are no visible signature marks. For A20b, the
'special large paper edition,' no collation is given; it is designated 'as A20' apart from a limitation statement, paper, binding etc. In fact A20b seems to consist of two gatherings of 12 and 14 leaves. The paper, called 'cream parchment' is wove, as opposed to laid in the trade issue and the leaf measurement is not given, although it is 21 x 15.7 cm. as opposed to 19 x 12.5 cm. in A20, a detail that is supplied. The different endpapers are described but not designated as being by Nicholson although he designed the endpapers for both issues. In general Harlow is not as meticulous in her descriptions of secondary editions, impressions, and issues.

Section E (Broadcasting) is most interesting. W.H. Davies made his first BBC broadcast on 3 September 1924, very early in the history of radio, reading his own poems, and continued to broadcast his own work and discussions about literary matters until his death. His work was used by others for broadcast, beginning in 1927, and Harlow's list continues up to 1980 when, rather ominously, the 'written archives' of the BBC end. There have also been numerous radio shows about his work as well.

Overall this is a very good bibliography, revealing the full range and scope of W.H. Davies's literary career. The primary descriptions are full and detailed, with lots of ancillary information about reviews, the existence of manuscripts and, sometimes, textual variants. There are only six illustrations, and Davies is perhaps a case where more would have been useful. Sylvia Harlow is an antiquarian bookseller in East Kent and has obviously been collecting W.H. Davies for a long time as she cites her own copies under 'copies seen' for most of the primary entries. The publication of this bibliography will not, I suspect, cause the poems of Davies to suddenly hit the charts, but it is a most useful contribution to twentieth-century English literary studies.

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The Book Encompassed is a survey and celebration of modern bibliography: thirty essays by thirty-three scholars. It marks the 1992 centenary of the Bibliographical Society, looking back to the half-century landmark Studies in Retrospect, noting developments since 1942, assessing current scholarship and opportunities for future research. Studies in Retrospect concentrated on the Society: The Book Encompassed describes achievements across the full range of bibliographical study. As Peter Davison says, a single volume is not space enough for what is now happening. This collection is an indication of just how far bibliography has come since 1945, and a guide to where it might go next.

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