



**Newsletter
of the
Monasterevin
Hopkins
Society**

Hopkins' Anvil

Issue No 1/23 – Summer 2023



No 1/23, Hopkins' Anvil – newsletter of the Monasterevin Hopkins Society



**Gerard Manley
Hopkins**

Monasterevin Hopkins Society Annual Festival 2023



**Monasterevin
Community Centre**

Fri, 28 July, 2023

Venue: Monasterevin Community Centre, Main Street, Monasterevin

- 4.00 pm Opening of the Artists for Peace Art Exhibition, with music and poetry
Curator: Ann Scully RSM
- 4.30 pm Lecture: Irene Kyffin, Vice-Chairperson, Monasterevin Hopkins Society
Topic: Geometric Abstraction (an art form)

Venue: Saint John's Church of Ireland, Main St, Monasterevin

- 8.00 pm Concert: Dominic McGorian, Tenor

Sat, 29 July, 2023

Venue: Monasterevin Community Centre, Main Street, Monasterevin

- All day Artists for Peace Art Exhibition
- 10.00 am Lecture: Lewis Roberts, Cambridge University, UK
Topic: Hopkins and Augustine: One way of reading poetry
- 11.00 am Lecture: Gary Wade, Haileybury College, Hertfordshire, UK
Topic: 'Fosterer': the Influence of Gerard Manley Hopkins on the
Poetry of Seamus Heaney
- 12:00-2.30 pm Lunch Break ~~~

Venue: Monasterevin House, Presentation Generalate, Main Street, Monasterevin

- 2.30 pm Poetry Reading: Pat Boran
- 3.00 pm My Favourite Hopkins Poem
All those who wish to do so are invited to read a Hopkins poem of their choice.

Sun, 30 July, 2023

Venue: Monasterevin Community Centre, Main Street, Monasterevin

- All or part day Artists for Peace Art Exhibition (closing time to be decided)

See more information on pages 4-9
Details will soon be available online at monasterevinhopkinssociety.org



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Note re sources for Hopkins' poems reproduced in Hopkins' Anvil

Where differences exist between the versions shown as sources, the version given in *Gerard Manley Hopkins, The Major Works*, Ed. Catherine Phillips, published in 2002/reissued in 2009 by Oxford University Press, has been used, unless otherwise stated. For online sources referred to, these are current at the time of publication of the Anvil issue.



Editorial by Anni (Áine) Wilton-Jones



As there are no problems with travel this year, Monasterevin Hopkins Society is able to provide a Festival featuring excellent speakers from abroad, along with expertise from various parts of Ireland, including talented local people. This copy of Hopkins' Anvil includes all the details about the Festival – performers, speakers, the art exhibition, registration and costs. If you are coming to the Festival from a distance, the list of accommodation addresses may be of assistance though I cannot guarantee availability.

A question that has been asked is whether the annual event is a festival or a conference, to which I would give the enigmatic answer 'Yes!'. This is because the aim of the Monasterevin Hopkins Society is threefold:

- to provide an enjoyable event of benefit to both the town of Monasterevin and to the people who attend
- to celebrate the town's links with the life of Hopkins
- to offer talks of conference quality and other events related to the arts in general but with a strong central focus on Hopkins, who, besides being an outstanding poet, was also an artist and a musician.

A look at the Festival Programme will, I think, confirm that this three-fold aim has been achieved again this year!

If you can't be there for the Festival, though, this copy of the Hopkins' Anvil has other items of interest. There is a report about a Hopkins event held in Wales, at a venue that is of great significance to the story of Hopkins' life and to the development of his poetry. There are also, five of Hopkins' poems and, for easy reference, these are included within an article about them. It even includes a short poem by Coleridge. A glossary has been included, as some words in this issue might be new to some readers. There are also a number of photographs to inform and entertain you. I hope you will enjoy this issue of Hopkins' Anvil and pass it on to your friends, too. They can get their own copy sent to them in future by emailing me and asking to be added to the circulation list. Contact details are on the back cover.

[If you are new to the work of Hopkins or if you do not know about his connection with Monasterevin you may like to read *A brief introduction to Gerard Manley Hopkins, SJ, and his connection with Monasterevin*, p25.]

About the Festival

Registration	
People coming to the Festival may register on arrival on Friday, 30 July, or Saturday, 31 July. If you wish to pre-book, just to make sure, please see contact details (final page).	
Charges	
Fri, 28 July, Lecture	Free of charge
Fri, 29 July, Concert	€20
Sat, 30 July, Two Morning Lectures & Two Afternoon Poetry Events	€20
Fri, 29 July, and Sat. 30 July, Full Festival	€40
Fri, 29 – Sun, 31 July, Art Exhibition	Free of charge



Front view of Monasterevin House, Presentation Generalate

Venue for the poetry readings



Two views of the Church of St John the Evangelist (St John's Church of Ireland)

Venue for the concert



Photograph by Trenchspike - Own work, CC BY-SA 4.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=82495790>

Festival News

Monasterevin Hopkins Society is very much looking forward to welcoming you to this year's Annual Monasterevin Hopkins Festival, which will take place on Friday, 28 July, to Sunday, 30 July, 2023.

The lectures and Art Exhibition this year take place in Monasterevin Community Centre, a former RIC Barracks (see photograph on p2). Previous concert attendees will be sorry to learn that Baronial Hall in Moore Abbey is not available this year. However, an excellent alternative venue has been provided in the Church of St John the Evangelist, commonly known as St John's Church of Ireland, a Gothic-style church, built in 1769 to 1772. Entry is through the intricate gateway, which is a good example of early decorative iron work. For the poetry reading events, the venue this year will be back in the lovely setting of Monasterevin House, the erstwhile home of the Cassidy sisters, where Hopkins stayed. The Monasterevin Hopkins Society extends its thanks to the providers of all these venues for their kind cooperation.

There is a lot of history in these venues, for those with an interest in local heritage, and the same applies to Monasterevin itself and the area around. Monasterevin is a beautiful small town of great antiquity. There is evidence of Neolithic occupation in the area and remains of fortified settlements date back to the Bronze Age. The St Evin who founded a monastic settlement, as reflected in the town's name, was a contemporary of St Patrick. The town that stands today was mainly built between 1790 and 1860 though the present Moore Abbey was built a little earlier, in 1765-70, and incorporates the fabric of previous buildings from c 1150 and c 1650. The town contains lovely Georgian houses and boasts both the Barrowline from the Grand Canal and the Barrow River. Monasterevin has been called the Venice of Ireland because of all its bridges. Sights worth seeing are, for example, the Lifting Bridge and the Bell Harbour, with its flock of water-birds. All in all, Monasterevin and the Festival are well worth visiting!



Concert Performer - Dominic McGorian



Dominic McGorian was born in Dublin in 1978. He has sung at many weddings and concerts since 2001. He sings all the time and loves it. Dominic was one of the 'Three Tenors Ireland' for seven years. He continues to sing at home and abroad and focuses on weddings and concerts. He admires Andrea Bocelli, Finbar Wright, Pavarotti and Mario Lanza and also Hayley Westenra and Charlotte Church.

He toured with 'Rhythm of the Dance' and Gaelforce Dance, singing Irish Ballads. He performed on the 'Holland America' Irish cruise as one of 'The Three Irish Tenors'. Also, Dominic performed on a Christmas Tour in America as one of "The Three Irish Tenors". He sang for Mary McAleese and President Michael D. Higgins. He performed with 'The Liam O'Connor Show' many times. Dominic has sung in operas and soirees over the years. He was on RTE Radio with Miriam O'Callaghan and on the Marty Morrissey Show. He was also on TV3.

dominicmcgorian.com

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Speaker – Irene Kyffin



Irene came to the UK from Ireland in her late teens. She began studying in her late 30's, took a Degree in teaching Speech and Drama and went on to do a Masters in Social Anthropology. Irene has taught in Primary, Secondary and Further Education sectors. She has also lectured at University. Irene worked in Dyslexia for about eighteen years. In Further Education, she ran workshops for tutors. Since leaving, she has been giving public lectures in Dyslexia.

Irene devised a programme, *The Nature of Hopkins* with the famous jazz pianist Stan Tracey. Hopkins' poems were read as jazz/poetry fusion. This programme was presented at many Literature Festivals in the UK. Irene wrote papers on Hopkins and presented them at conferences for a number of years. She has given papers and readings in the US, the UK, Ireland and Nepal. She is teaching *An Architectural History of the Theatre* at the University of the Third Age, as well as giving papers in the Arts. Irene has been writing poetry for a number of years and has been published.

Geometric Abstraction This talk explores the birth of the art form, Geometric Abstraction from its roots in Constructivism – from which it takes an alternative name: Systematic Constructivism. The movement was engendered by a resistance to what the proponents saw as the unhealthy irrationality of Surrealism. The artists were drawn to the idea of working from the constraints of a mathematical or geometric base and developing a piece based on chance or accident or intuition. Its ability to express emotion without reference to objective forms has likened it to music.



Speaker – Lewis Roberts

(Dr Anna J. Nickerson, the speaker announced previously, is, sadly, unable to attend but has kindly sourced this excellent replacement speaker)



Lewis Roberts teaches at the University of Cambridge, where he is completing his PhD. From September, he will take up the Procter Fellowship at Princeton University. His research centres on nineteenth-century literature and philosophy, with particular interests in the history and theory of poetics. As well as his work on Hopkins, he has published and presented work on Coleridge's manuscript compositions, Tennyson's theories of negativity, Christina Rossetti's criticism, and T.S. Eliot's French poetry. He is also an authority on the artist and author Simeon Solomon. His work has received substantial support from the Wolfson Foundation, the Senior Mackinnon Scholarship, and the Rothermere American Institute.

Hopkins and Augustine: One way of reading poetry Hopkins turned to St Augustine as an authority on both Christian faith (and doubt), and on poetics. Hopkins's own writings on poetic form weave such a complex and self-contradictory web that read together they can do more to cloud than to clarify his thinking. This lecture suggests that by turning to Augustine, what seem to be contradictions in Hopkins's thinking emerge as productive tensions that he revived from the Neo-Platonic tradition that Augustine developed. It will suggest that the concept of *distentio animi* (the distention of the soul) in Augustine's *Confessions* and the early text *De Musica* provides both a new way of reading Hopkins's poetic theory and of reading poetry itself.

Speaker – Gary Wade



Gary Wade graduated from Durham University with a PhD in English Literature in 2021, where he worked on a Catholic sensibility in the poetry of Seamus Heaney. He was Warden of Trinity Hall (St Chad's College) between 2018 and 2021. He also holds a master's degree in Classical Reception from University College London, and in Theology from the University of St Thomas Aquinas in Rome. He is currently working on a monograph entitled *Seamus Heaney and Catholicism*, and on an essay 'Moving in Step: Seamus Heaney and Patrick Kavanagh' to be included in the forthcoming *The Frontier of Writing: A Study of Seamus Heaney's Prose*, to be published by Routledge in 2024. He is Assistant Chaplain at Haileybury College in Hertfordshire.

His lecture is entitled '**Fosterer**': the Influence of Gerard Manley Hopkins on the Poetry of Seamus Heaney.



Guest Poet - Pat Boran



Pat Boran was born in Portlaoise in the Irish midlands in 1963 and has long since lived in Dublin. He has held a number of positions as Writer-in-Residence, including with Dublin City Libraries and Dublin City University, as well as with the Western Education and Library Centre in Co. Fermanagh.

He is a former Programme Director of the Dublin Writers' Festival and a former presenter of both *The Enchanted Way* and *The Poetry Programme* on RTÉ Radio 1. He is a former editor of *Poetry Ireland Review* and the current editor and publisher of Dedalus Press, one of Ireland's most energetic and long-standing poetry imprints.

Since receiving the Patrick Kavanagh Award for Poetry in 1989 he has published more than a dozen books of poetry and prose. The most recent poetry books are: *On a Wave of Light* (2022), *Building the Ark* (2022), *The Statues of Emo Court* (2021) and *Then Again* (2019). In *Waveforms: Bull Island Haiku* (2015), the poems are accompanied by the author's own black and white photographs.

Since early 2020, he has made more than a dozen short poetry films, including *The statues of Emo Court* and *On a Wave of Light*, commissioned, respectively, by Dunamaise Arts Centre and Laois County Council.

Pat Boran is a member of Aosdána, the affiliation of creative artists in Ireland.

patboran.com

Art Exhibition Curator - Ann Scully RSM



Sister Ann Scully, of the Mercy Convent in Monasterevin, is the figure behind the Artists for Peace Art Exhibitions, held in association with the Monasterevin Hopkins Society. As in previous years, Sister Ann has arranged an exhibition of a wide range of art-works by artists from the Monasterevin area and beyond.



The Art Exhibition - Artists for Peace by Sister Ann Scully



The Art Exhibition - Artists for Peace draws attention to the need for peace in our world and the contribution of Artists to creating this world. Artists, no matter what the medium, whether the pen, the brush, the needle or the clay unfold and show forth our world for us, sometimes ugly sometimes beautiful, always mysterious.

This year our Artists include:

Jean Ryan Hakazamana, a Burundian Artist living in Ireland, with paintings showing in Limerick. His studio is in Limerick and details can be found on his website, jeanryan-art.com/. Jean is a regular contributor to our exhibition. Jean works through the medium of painting.

Michael Haggartay, who both works in paint and creates wonderful works of sculpture through the medium of clay, cloth and wire.

Beth Murphy, Willow Weaver, has created many fine works of Art through the medium of Willow and will both exhibit and ply her trade during the exhibition.

Pat Fox, a renowned Irish Artist, who created a beautiful work giving life, through the medium of paint, to the sentiments of *'The Fields of Athenry'*. Pat's work is exhibited in such places as Áras an Uachtaráin. Pat lives locally.

Among the local artists exhibiting is Brendan Higgins, who regularly sells his paintings on Merrion Square on weekends. Our local photographer John Kevin will exhibit. Angelina Foster, who works creatively with Community Groups, will show a piece of local Community Art which will be exhibited at IMMA later in the year. Crafts created by people from around the globe will feature in the exhibition.

At the opening of the exhibition on Friday 28th July at 4pm, a local poet Kathleen Doyle will read some of her poetry, along with Anni Wilton-Jones, a nationally-renowned poet. There will also be a performance from the local Ukrainian group. Our local flautist Eugene Nolan will play the flute.

A raffle will also be held over the weekend. Jean, our good friend from Limerick, has donated three paintings as prizes. We are indeed humbled by his generosity and very grateful to him; a wonderful friend to local and little-known projects and groups.



Beautiful paintings, donated as raffle prizes by painter Jean Ryan Hakazamana



About Other Organisations

The Hopkins Society Day at St Beuno's, with reports by attendees

The name of St Beuno's is well-known amongst those who have looked into Hopkins' life-story. It was to St Beuno's College, in August, 1874, that Hopkins went to study theology, leaving there three years later in October, 1877, as a newly-ordained priest. These were happy years for Hopkins. He had given up writing poems to concentrate on his priestly work but, whilst at St Beuno's and with the support of his superiors, he returned to his poetry, commencing work on *The Wreck of the Deutschland* in December, 1875 and finishing it the following year. He went on to write what are considered some of his finest works, such as *God's Grandeur*. Additionally, he learnt Welsh and studied Welsh poetry, gaining a strong understanding, in particular, of Cynghanedd (see Glossary on p23) – which he incorporated into some of his own poetry.

It was a very special place, therefore, for the UK organisation, The Hopkins Society, to hold an event. The Hopkins Society Day at St. Beuno's Jesuit Spirituality Centre (St Beuno's College's official name now) took place on 20 May, 2023, and many attendees stayed for two nights in the centre. Amongst the attendees were Irene Kyffin and Richard O'Rourke, both members of Monasterevin Hopkins Society. Irene is a member of The Hopkins Society, too, and she was one of the two speakers. Another attendee, a member of The Hopkins Society, was Elaine Marshall, who attended the Monasterevin Hopkins Society Festival last year. We are looking forward to welcoming her again this year.

Elaine has provided three photographs, which she took during her stay at St Beuno's and for which we are very grateful. She commented:

Irene and I, and a few others, had rooms on the top floor of the building, just below the pitched dormer rooms on the roof. We had lovely views and the rooms were very comfortable.

It was great to have Richard with us for the weekend, and Irene's lecture on prosodic markings was fascinating, enhanced with a range of PowerPoint slides. It was extremely interesting to compare Hopkins' autograph copies of the poems with Bridges' version and the final edited version in Cathy Philips' book of poems. I knew nothing about Hopkins' prosodic markings (Editor's note: see Glossary) to start with, and now I want to learn more!

Irene, herself, remarked:

It was very nice indeed, the setting was lovely. I was enthralled by the gardens.

Richard kindly agreed to be interviewed about his experience of the event and the following is an encapsulation of his comments:

This was not my first visit to St Beuno's. I paid a flying visit some sixteen years ago, when, I remember, I met a lovely Irish Sister of Mercy there. It was good to be able to make a longer visit to the peaceful place this time.

The centre stands on a hillside between the villages of Tremeirchion and Rhuallt and is approached along narrow roads. It is a striking Victorian building, built on three levels because of the slope of the hill. There are also some new additions to the original layout.



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Inside, I was struck by the numerous artworks, many of which, I discovered, were donated by visiting artists. There was a feeling of sensibility, of hallowedness, and I considered that, yes, this place and its atmosphere would have suited Hopkins' temperament.

There were two lectures. The first was The Annual Hopkins Lecture by Dr. Rebekah Lamb of the University of St. Andrews and it was entitled: '*Daily make me harder hope*': Hopkins and the Place of the Poet. I considered it to be wide ranging and philosophical and what I brought from it, especially, was the feeling that Hopkins has so much that he can give to so many people today. This is the case, in particular, in that he encountered and overcame severe depression and the consideration of suicide*, distressful experiences that are suffered by many people now, especially young people.

The second lecture, by Irene Kyffin, was entitled *Punctuation and Prosodic Markings in the Poetry of Gerard Manley Hopkins*. I had heard a similar lecture by Irene during one of our Monasterevin Festivals but, at that time, much of it went over my head. This time, however, I was much more attuned to what Irene was saying and learnt a great deal from it and from the very good notes she provided. An enjoyable session took place after the lecture. Irene divided us into small groups - there were three of us in mine – and each group studied a different excerpt of about four lines, all the excerpts being taken from the same Hopkins' poem. The task was to discuss and decide on the delivery that Hopkins intended for these lines. One member in each group was chosen to demonstrate the decision of the group. I was delighted with the performance of our group's representative.

During my two-night stay, along with the lectures, I was able to see over some parts of the house and to visit the Rock Chapel. This is a tiny building, which would seat maybe six people and which stands a little way from the house, with views over the countryside. A special feature is the windows by stained-glass artist, Claire Mulholland, who was born in Nenagh, Co Tipperary, and studied art in Dublin, before moving to Glasgow. I thought these windows were really lovely.

I certainly had a very enjoyable time at St Beuno's and I would recommend the speakers and, also, the place, to which I would love to return in the future.



Photographs of St Beuno's Jesuit Spiritual Centre and grounds by Elaine Marshall



*Editor's note: This relates especially to Hopkins' poem *Carrion Comfort* which is featured on p22 of this copy of Hopkins' Anvil.



About Hopkins and His Work



Anni Wilton-Jones, from Wales but now living in Ireland, was on the *Writers of Wales* list and a member of *Salern*, a five-poet performing group. She has read in Ireland, UK and USA. Her publications include *Bridges*, *Winter Whiting*, several chapbooks and journalistic articles. She is also a keen photographer and this article is illustrated with her own photographs. She is the Public Relations Officer for the Monasterevin Hopkins Society and Editor of Hopkins' Anvil.

The following piece is written as an article, not a formal paper. Detailed references are not provided but some simple URL addresses are given. A glossary is included on p23.

Minor Sweetness?: Hopkins early works *by Anni Wilton-Jones*

Introduction

Like many other people who write poetry, I suspect, I look back on most of my early poems and cringe. In fact, it was only in my mid-forties that I started to produce work that I feel has any real merit. I served a very long apprenticeship!

It would be easy to think that Hopkins only came into his own as a poet at the age of thirty-one. All the poems that are considered his significant works were written in the short period of thirteen and a half years from then to his untimely death in June, 1889, when he was aged forty-four. This is partly because he burned his youthful works on 11 May, 1868, and then gave up writing poetry, in favour of his priestly vocation. He only returned to poetry, with the encouragement of his superiors, when he wrote *The Wreck of the Deutschland*, which he commenced in December, 1875.

However, a significant number of his earlier works still exist and what interests me is whether there is a foreshadowing in his earlier poetry of the excellence of his later works. That is what I am looking at in this article and my choice of examples is based purely on my own whims. The early works included were all written during his time in Oxford.



The Lover's Stars *by Gerard Manley Hopkins*

The destined lover, whom his stars
More golden than the world of lights,
O'er passes bleak, o'er perilous bars
Of rivers, lead, thro' storms and nights,

Or if he leave the West behind,
Or father'd by the sunder'd South,
Shall, when his star is zenith'd, find
Acceptance round his mistress' mouth:

Altho' unchallenged, where she sits,
Three rivals throng her garden chair,
And tho' the silver seed that flits
Above them, down the draught of air,

And keeps the breeze and clears the seas
And tangles on a down of France,
Yet leaves him in ungirdled ease
8000 furlongs in advance.

But in the other's horoscope
Bad Saturn with a swart aspect
Fronts Venus. – His ill-launched hope
In unimperill'd haven is wreck'd.

He meets her, stintless of her smile;
Her choice in roses knows by heart;
Has danced with her: and all the while
They are Antipodes apart.

His sick stars falter. More he may
Not win, if this be not enough.
He meets upon Midsummer day
The stabbing coldness of rebuff.

Sources: *Poetry Nook* (at poetrynook.com) and *Gerard Manley Hopkins, The Major Works*, Ed. Catherine Phillips, Oxford University Press.



Her choice in roses knows by heart



Minor Sweetness?: Hopkins early works, part 2

Hopkins described *The Lover's Stars* as 'a trifle in something like Coventry Patmore's style'. It was written between 16 and 18 July, 1864, the latter date being notable as the day on which the Coventry Patmore married his second wife, Marianne Byles, having first converted that same year to Catholicism. Whilst he converted in order to marry Marianne, herself a Catholic, his interest in Catholicism was of long-standing. Patmore was noted for his idealisation of women, particularly as wives, and his poem on this subject, *The Angel in the House*, previously serialised, had been published in its entirety in 1863. Patmore had been drawn into the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood.*

Hopkins was later to have correspondence with Patmore over a period of six years and Patmore was to revise *The Angel in the House* based on Hopkins' criticisms. At this point in his life, the two poets had not met. However, it is reasonable to assume that Hopkins was well aware of Patmore, both as a fellow poet, though already established and Hopkins' senior by twenty-one years, and as a Catholic convert. Hopkins was, himself, experiencing turmoil regarding his religious beliefs - this was the year that he first read John Henry Newman's *Apologia Pro Via Sua*, which discussed the author's reasons for converting to Catholicism.[#] He was also strongly influenced by Pre-Raphaelitism, to the extent that, on 18 July, 1864 – that date again – he added an entry to his personal notes, under the title 'Notes for essay on *Some Aspects of Modern Medievalism*'[†], though this essay was never completed.

As an example of an 'in the style of' piece, it cannot be expected to truly represent its writer's personal style. A poem of Patmore's to which it seems to be somewhat related is *Stars and Moon*, though, as I cannot find the date that poem was written, I do not know whether Hopkins had it in mind. The titles appear to promise poems on similar subjects and, indeed, they do both deal with love set against the stars in the heavens. The shared rhythm seems to be leading us in the same direction, too – but, no. Patmore's poem tells of married love and a wife who loves her husband, even though he tells her of his failings. Hopkins poem tells of a man who comes to his loved one to find her in company with other contenders and who has to accept her rejection of his love. Strangely, though, the fact that 'they are Antipodes apart', resulting in 'the stabbing coldness of rebuff' that the ill-fated lover experiences is, to me, more satisfying than the happier tale, which I find too cloying.

So what else is satisfying in *The Lover's Stars*? The regular rhythm and perfect rhyme are necessary to the form – any glitch would be readily apparent and would jar. However, they are also humdrum unless other techniques give a lift. This is where we see Hopkins, not yet having reached his twentieth birthday, showing his potential. This short and, seemingly, simple light piece is skilfully worked with subtle effects that only become fully apparent on deeper study. Alliteration is there in plenty but it does not overpower: 'Saturn with a swart aspect' and 'down the draught' are examples. Assonance – 'leaves' and 'ease', 'roses knows' – is also present and is especially striking in the line 'and keeps the breeze and clears the seas', which also features internal rhyme and, I would suggest, parallelism, too! Parallelism is certain present in 'O'er passes bleak, o'er perilous bars'. The metaphor of hope as a 'wreck'd' boat is compelling. In fact, every verse contains at least one example of a poetic technique to tantalise and delight the reader and the whole poem is tightly worked.

*poemhunter.com/i/ebooks/pdf/coventry_patmore_2012_3.pdf

#englishliterature.net/gerard-manley-hopkins

†jstor.org/stable/30095485



From **(Epigrams)** by Gerard Manley Hopkins

(v)
Modern Poets

Our swans are now of such remorseless quill,
Themselves live singing and their hearers kill.

Sources: *Poetry Nook* (at poetrynook.com) and *Gerard Manley Hopkins, The Major Works*, Ed. Catherine Phillips, Oxford University Press.



Our swans are now of such remorseless quill

Minor Sweetness?: Hopkins early works, part 3

Hopkins' noted down that *Epigrams* were written 'in the van between Ffestiniog and Bala' in August, 1864. He was just over twenty and was on a summer break from Baliol College. *Modern Poets* is a fine example of an epigram.

Epigrams are pithy, that is precisely meaningful, forceful and brief. They are frequently witty, too. This rhyming couplet is also poetic and very clever. It packs a great deal of symbolism and meaning into its two short lines. On top of this, the title has been used to fix the subject matter in its proper place so that here is no need to burden the epigram itself with explanations. This is a useful technique in all forms of poetry (except the Haiku, which, by tradition, doesn't have a title).



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Looking at each part of the poem individually, there are many different references and allusions. The title tells us that 'swans' in the epigram are a metaphor for modern poets. This is very appropriate as the Romans associated swans with Apollo, the God of music, prophecy and poetry. In Celtic Tradition, swans were also sacred to Bards, and their skin and feathers were used to make the tugen, the ceremonial Bardic Cloak. Additionally, swans symbolise death and this links with the myth of the swan-song, which I will discuss later.

The poets in question are 'ours', by which Hopkins probably means English or, maybe, British, which could have also included Irish, in the general usage at that time. The 'modern' in the title is emphasised by the 'now' – this is about a phenomenon which had been developing over a period of time and had become very apparent, that the poets are of 'remorseless quill'. They use the quill with viciousness, mercilessness and/or relentlessness.

A quill is made from a flight feather of a large bird, generally a goose but also swans and some other birds; the most common use of a quill being as a writing implement and swan feathers being used for large lettering. Use of quill pens waned after the invention of the metal pen in Britain in the 1820s. However, they are still in use, even nowadays, for specialised purposes and are often used pictorially to signify writers. In the epigram, the quill can be seen as a weapon, producing painful or unpleasant words (or just bad poetry?) and this metaphor is allied to the fact that quills were also used, filled with gunpowder, to prime canon and, also, being hard and sharp, could be very painful if stabbed into a hand.

The second line is a play on the myth of the swan-song, the song sung by a swan before its death. There is some justice in applying this to the whooper swan, which does have an ugly cry normally but tends to let out a long-drawn note before expiry. However, the myth is applied to the mute swan, too, which, as its name applies, does not cry. The myth goes back to ancient Greece and has been used in very many poems and other artworks. Though the epigram was written before Tchaikovsky composed *Swan Lake* in 1875-76, Hopkins would, without doubt, have known Alfred Lord Tennyson's *The Dying Swan* (1830) and *Morte D'Arthur* (1835), both of which made use of the myth. He may also have encountered the epigram, written by Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772-1834) and using the same myth:

On A Volunteer Singer

Swans sing before they die – 'twere no bad thing
Should certain people die before they sing!*

Hopkins, however, whilst re-using the myth, adapted it to make it his own. The swan-poets live on, singing, but this results in the hearers being killed, bored to death, perhaps, or struck down by the remorselessness of the poetry. The syntax, too, is such that there is just a hint that, if there is no let-up in the swans' singing, the hearers might be driven to do the killing!

From this discussion it can be seen that this simple rhyming couplet encapsulates a wealth of ideas in just a few words. Additionally, there is just enough alliteration of the sibilants to bind the two lines together. Again, therefore, this is a tight piece of writing.

Only one question is left, did Hopkins class himself as a modern poet?

*poetrynook.com/poem/volunteer-singer



Trees By Their Yield *by* Gerard Manley Hopkins

Trees by their yield
Are known; but I –
My sap is sealed,
My root is dry.
If life within
I none can shew
(Except for sin),
Nor fruit above, –
It must be so –
I do not love.

Will no one show
I argued ill?
Because, although
Self-sentenced, still
I keep my trust.
If He would prove
And search me through
Would He not find
(What yet there must
Be hid behind

Sources: *Poetry Nook* (at poetrynook.com) and *Gerard Manley Hopkins, The Major Works*, Ed. Catherine Phillips, Oxford University Press.



Trees by their yield are known



Minor Sweetness?: Hopkins early works, part 4

It was just over a year later, on 28 September, 1865, when Hopkins wrote *Trees By Their Yield*. He was now twenty-one and so officially an adult.

The first two lines are a reference to Luke 6. 44 – 'yield' being more commonly rendered as 'fruit'. It is easy to see this poem as Hopkins wishing he could be like other people, looking forward to falling in love and having a family but he does state that he is self-sentenced. Is he perhaps holding himself in readiness for what ever God wants him to do? Maybe he is already seeing that the priesthood and celibacy will be the next logical step for him, if he does take that first step of becoming a Catholic.

The poem is in the form of a discussion with other people – 'Will no one show / I argued ill?' However, Hopkins seem to be trying to convince himself - 'It must be so / I do not love.' He does not appear to be sure of himself, even at the end of the poem.

The poem has two ten-line verses but Hopkins had written above the poem 'A verse or more has to be prefixed', although this was never done.

The first verse has an unusual but logical rhyming pattern (see the glossary): ABAB/CDC/EDE. In the second verse, however, the rhyme is irregular: ABAB/CDE/FCF.

This is looking at the verses as if they were individual poems, to make it easier to compare them. However, additionally, the sixth and ninth lines in the first verse rhyme with the first and third in the second verse, which is not demonstrated by this treatment.

It is interesting that Hopkins uses two different spellings of 'show'. The older 'shew' variant would have been perfectly normal at that time and is clearly to be pronounced 'show' to rhyme with 'so'. However, whilst not incorrect, it is a somewhat unexpected inconsistency, especially in a poem of so few words.

The poem uses some poetic techniques, for example:

- a) Because, although
Self-sentenced, still
I keep my trust.

These lines contain two examples of enjambment –
although_self-sentenced
still_I keep

- b) My sap is sealed
My root is dry

This is an example of parallelism and includes another example of alliteration.

I do wonder why Hopkins felt that there should be more verses, as to me the poem seems to be complete and very concise as it stands but just in need of reworking to improve the form. If anything, it is the ending that seems unfinished, not the beginning. Did he just feel something was not quite right? If so and if he had looked at it again, might he have reworked the rhymes so the two verses matched, sorted out the brackets and then been satisfied? I like to think so.



'Let Me Be To Thee' by Gerard Manley Hopkins

Let me be to Thee as the circling bird,
Or bat with tender and air-crisping wings
That shapes in half-light his departing rings,
From both of whom a changeless note is heard.
I have found my music in a common word,
Trying each pleasurable throat that sings
And every praised sequence of sweet strings,
And know infallibly which I preferred.

The authentic cadence was discovered late
Which ends those only strains that I approve,
And other science all gone out of date
And minor sweetness scarce made mention of:
I have found the dominant of my range and state –
Love, O my God, to call thee Love and Love.

Sources: *All Poetry* (at allpoetry.com) and *Gerard Manley Hopkins, The Major Works*, Ed. Catherine Phillips, Oxford University Press.



Let me be to Thee as the circling bird



Minor Sweetness?: Hopkins early works, part 5

After *'Trees By Their Yield'*, *'Let Me Be To Thee'* is the next Hopkins' poem, chronologically, in the Phillips collection of his works. It was written on 22 October, 1865, and the note in the book states: 'This again appears to refer to G. M. H.'s conviction of the truth of Catholicism'.

Certainly, although written less than a month after *'Trees By Their Yield'*, this Petrarchan sonnet is much more assured in both content and form. Hopkins does, indeed, show himself to be convinced of his belief in God and that this belief is in line with Catholicism can be deduced, although it is not stated. This is a poem of joy and contentment in discovering where one truly belongs – though it would be nine months before he would make the definite decision and a year, almost to the day, before he would be received into the Catholic Church.

In his paper *Modes of Religious Response in Hopkins's Poetry**, Donald Walhout, Rockford College, Illinois, says that the work can be read as a conversion poem and that it 'is a quiet expression of serenity following decision', 'a needed antidote to the over-emphasis on Hopkins's youthful turmoil'. He describes it as being 'dominated by the presence of divine love felt in Christian conversion'.

There are strong indications in this poem that the sonnet is a poetic form with which Hopkins is comfortable; short in length, regular in rhythm and with a set rhyming pattern. He does have some problem with the rhymes in that 'approve', 'of' and 'love' are, at best, no more than half-rhymes and this type of verse does show up such imperfections. Apart from this, though, the poem is totally true to form.

Poetic techniques are well-used. The very first line contains internal rhymes 'me be to Thee'. Alliteration, particularly of sibilants – 'sequence of sweet strings' 'sweetness scarce' – is allied to other forms of repetition such the 'ing' sounds in 'circling', 'crispings wings' and 'departing rings' packed into three lines. Those 'ing' endings echo the 'ing' in 'flying' – a word that does not occur on the poem but that definitely came into my head as I read about birds and bats.

The final line 'Love, O my God, to call thee Love and Love', with its powerful use of repetition, recalls the verses in St John's first epistle (1 John 4:7-12) which also use repetition of the word 'love' to instil the idea that 'God is love' in the reader's mind. This may have been in Hopkins' mind, too, as he would have been familiar with the Authorised Version of the Bible because of his Church of England background (the Catholic Douay Version uses 'charity', in these verses, not 'love').

The whole poem is an extended metaphor, using music to represent faith: 'changeless note', 'my music', 'pleasurable throat that sings', 'praised sequence of sweet strings', 'authentic cadence' (a hint of plainsong, perhaps), 'strains', 'minor sweetness' and 'range', all have musical overtones. When added to the last line, one might wonder whether Hopkins was also thinking of another famous line – 'if music be the food of love, play on'.

At first reading, this seemed such a simple piece but it has so much depth and beauty, too.

*jstor.org/stable/45241096



Minor Sweetness?: Hopkins Early Works, part 6

The Final Analysis

You have probably noticed that all the poems I chose as examples were short ones, no longer than twenty-eight lines. This was partly personal preference – I have a grá for concise poetry – and partly a matter of practicality. Longer poems would lead to longer analyses. There is a third reason, though. Hopkins wrote poems ranging in length from a few lines to many but he is, in particular, I would suggest, a master of brevity in poetry.

My feeling would seem to be bourn out in various lists of his work. The Poetry Foundation has twelve of Hopkins' poems displayed – all sonnets, except for one twelve-liner. Dr Oliver Tearle, a literary critic and lecturer in English at Loughborough University, in his list of the *Best Gerard Manley Hopkins Poems Everyone Should Read**, recommends ten poems. With two exceptions, these are all sonnets or the even shorter curtal sonnets. Of the other two, Binsley Poplars has only twenty-four lines. The Gerard Manley Hopkins website[#], referred to as the official website, shows thirty-seven examples, which it describes as his most well-known poems and thirty of these are of twenty lines or fewer.

I would suspect that, even amongst people who profess a liking for Hopkins' work, there are quite a few who would have some difficulty in naming a longer piece, other than *The Wreck of the Deutschland* – which was the only long piece in Tearle's* list and one of the few in the Gerard Manley Hopkins website's list.

What makes Hopkins' shorter poems so good? Some reasons, in my view, are the amount of meaning and feeling he packs into so few words and the tightness of the pieces overall. No words are wasted and every word has power. Especially apparent in the shorter poems are his expert knowledge and understanding of the poetic conventions and techniques and his talent in then bending these to his own will! In the earlier pieces that I have discussed, I feel, there is evidence of the development of Hopkins' skills that would culminate in the production of his later works. At the same time, these early examples have a appeal all of their own and I have much enjoyed my study of them.

I will finish by introducing my final example, *Carrion Comfort*, like *Let Me Be To Thee*, a Petrarchan sonnet. It is one of Hopkins' later works, included here to illustrate what I mean by the culmination of the development of Hopkins' skills. This tight poem, with its use of alliteration, assonance, parallelism, enjambment, personification and, of course, the rhyming inherent in the form (perfect in this case), shows all that the earlier examples did and more. By the time that it was written in 1885 and revised in 1887, Hopkins had formulated and put into practice his ideas on sprung rhythm, evident in this poem, where the metrical marks show the stresses. On the Gerard Manley Hopkins website and also in Britannica and other places, it is classed as one of the so-called *terrible sonnets*, which are about the depths of the despair that Hopkins was encountering. However, Tearle* sees it as contemporaneous but not one of them. He comments:

written in Ireland around the same time as the Terrible Sonnets, 'Carrion Comfort' (another sonnet) sees Hopkins **refusing** to give in to dark despair, no matter how much it wants him to. (Editor's emphasis)



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I have a fair degree of sympathy with Tearle's assessment. The darkest time is past, as Hopkins has beaten Despair down. However, by my reading, he is not content as he is not sure which of his two selves he should cheer – the one who, like Job, accepted the travails God laid on him or the one who, like Jacob, questioned, even fought against, the God he should love and serve. Or should he cheer both as both Job and Jacob are commended in the Bible? Is this uncertainty sufficiently disturbing to drag him back into Despair's clutches? If so, *Carrion Comfort* would indeed be a *Terrible Sonnet*. Alternatively, this could be a sign that Hopkins, with his recovery, is regaining his former interest in critical analysis.

I leave it to the reader to decide for themselves on this and on whether *Carrion Comfort's* perfection (my assessment!) was predicated by the skills Hopkins displayed in the earlier works I have discussed.

*interestingliterature.com/2015/10/the-best-gerard-manley-hopkins-poems-everyone-should-read/
#hopkinspoetry.com

Carrion Comfort by Gerard Manley Hopkins

Not, I'll not, carrion comfort, Despair, not feast on thee;
Not untwist — slack they may be — these last strands of man
In me ór, most weary, cry *I can no more*. I can;
Can something, hope, wish day come, not choose not to be.
But ah, but O thou terrible, why wouldst thou rude on me
Thy wring-world right foot rock? lay a lionlimb against me? scan
With darksome devouring eyes my bruised bones? and fan,
O in turns of tempest, me heaped there; me frantic to avoid thee and flee?

Why? That my chaff might fly; my grain lie, sheer and clear.
Nay in all that toil, that coil, since (seems) I kissed the rod,
Hand rather, my heart lo! lapped strength, stole joy, would laugh, chéer.
Cheer whóm though? the héro whose héaven-handling flúng me, fóot tród
Me? or mé that fóught him? O which one? is it éach one? That níght, that year
Of now done darkness I wretch lay wrestling with (my God!) my God.

Sources: *Poetry Foundation* (at poetryfoundation.org), *Gerard Manley Hopkins: Poems and Prose* (Penguin Classics, 1985), and *Gerard Manley Hopkins, The Major Works*, Ed. Catherine Phillips, Oxford University Press.



Scan with darksome devouring eyes



Glossary

For those new to the study of poetry, this glossary is included to explain, in basic terms, words and phrases used in this issue of Hopkins' Anvil.

Alliteration – the use of the same sound or sounds, especially consonants, at the beginning of two or more words that are close together, eg The dog did not do it.

Assonance – a figure of speech in which the same vowel sound repeats within a group of words that are reasonably close together, eg Whose is that beautiful shoe?

Cynghanedd – a strict intricate system of assonance, alliteration and rhyme, found in Welsh poetry but adopted by some non-Welsh poets, too. (See en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cynghanedd for a more detailed explanation and theguardian.com/books/booksblog/2014/sep/15/poem-of-the-week-gerard-manley-hopkins-the-sea-and-the-sky-lark for a discussion of one of Hopkins' poems featuring the technique.)

Enjambment – where a sentence or clause is carried over to the next line without pause.

Epigram – a concise poem (or saying) dealing pointedly and often satirically with a single thought or event and often ending with an ingenious turn of thought. Coleridge wrote an epigram to define an epigram (poets.org):

What is an Epigram? A dwarfish whole,
Its body brevity, and wit its soul.

Metaphor – a figure of speech that describes something by saying it IS something else. It is used often in poetry because it is stronger than a **simile**, which says something is LIKE something else. Examples:

I am a ship, sailing in uncharted waters – metaphor
I am like a ship, sailing in uncharted waters – simile

Extended metaphor – where the same metaphor is used throughout several lines or even the whole of a poem or piece of writing. For example, a whole poem might be written about a person, as if they were a ship.

Metrical marks (or markings) – marks used above syllables in words to distinguish the ones to be stressed from the ones that are not. There are many different systems for metrical marking. Hopkins used metrical marks particularly to show where stress should be applied in poems using sprung rhythm. The term **prosodic marks (or markings)** is also used for the same purpose, in relation, for example, to Hopkins work.

Parallelism – a figure of speech in which two or more elements of a sentence (or series of sentences) have the same grammatical structure. In some cases, parallelism involves the exact repetition of words, but all that is required to fit the definition of parallelism is the repetition of grammatical elements.

Personification – giving human feelings and actions to objects or ideas. Example:
Hunger stalked the streets.

Prosodic marks (or markings) – See Metrical marks.



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Rhyme – the repetition of similar sounds in two or more words. Rhyming is common in many types of poetry, especially at the ends of lines.

Internal rhyme – rhyme that occurs in the middle of lines of poetry, instead of at the ends of lines. A single line of poetry can contain internal rhyme (with two or more words in the same line rhyming), or the rhyming words can occur across multiple lines.

Rhyming (or rhyme) pattern or scheme – the pattern according to which end rhymes (rhymes located at the end of lines) are repeated in a poem. Rhyming schemes are described using letters of the alphabet, such that all the lines in a poem are assigned a letter, beginning with A, and those that rhyme with each other are assigned the same letter. Example:

<i>Hey Diddle Diddle,</i>	A
<i>The cat and the fiddle.</i>	A
<i>The cow jumped over the moon.</i>	B
<i>The little dog laughed to see such fun</i>	C
<i>And the dish ran away with the spoon.</i>	B

The rhyming pattern or scheme is AABCB.

Sibilants – speech sounds resembling the hiss of a snake, such as **s z sh zh ch j** in English. Alliteration/repetition of sibilants is called sibilance.

Simile – See Metaphor.

Sonnet – a fourteen-line poem, with a variable rhyming scheme, originating in Italy and brought to England in the 16th century. Literally a “little song”, the sonnet traditionally reflects upon a single sentiment, with a clarification or “turn” of thought in its concluding lines. There are many different types of sonnets. Two are mentioned in the article on Hopkins’ early works:

Petrarchan (or Italian) sonnet – This was perfected by the Italian poet Petrarch. The fourteen lines are divided into two sections: an eight-line stanza (octave) rhyming ABBAABBA, and a six-line stanza (sestet) rhyming CDCDCD or CDECDE. The two examples of Petrarchan sonnets shown in the article use the CDCDCD version.

Curtal sonnet - a shortened version of the sonnet, devised by Gerard Manley Hopkins and consisting of ten lines and a final half-line, rhyming ABCABC DEBDE.

Sprung rhythm – this refers to the arrangement of stresses rather than syllables in a line of verse. The first syllable is stressed and is followed by a number of unstressed other syllables. That number can vary but was usually between one and four in Hopkins’s work. Hopkins believed that this type of rhyme mimicked the natural patterns of speech better, as it is dynamic and variable.

Stress – the emphasis that falls on certain syllables and not others. The arrangement of stresses within a poem is the foundation of poetic rhythm.

Syntax – the arrangement of words and phrases in a specific order. If you change the position of even one word, it’s possible to change the meaning of the entire sentence. All languages have specific rules about which words go where, and skilled writers can manipulate these rules to make sentences or poems sound more poignant or poetic, to produce deliberate ambiguities, etc. Bad syntax, though, can produce a nonsensical or misleading result.



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Hopkins' Anvil – Submission Details

Whether you are new to Hopkins' work or very knowledgeable on the subject, you are invited to send your comments and items to be considered for inclusion in Hopkins' Anvil. Ideally, your submission should be sent by email, either in the body of the email or as a Word, LibreOffice or OpenOffice attachment, so that the text can be easily transferred to another document. Please do not send in PDF format. Photographs are also welcome and can be submitted by email or by a transfer programme like WeTransfer. Please see the back cover for contact details.

A brief introduction to Gerard Manley Hopkins, SJ, and his connection with Monasterevin

Gerard Manley Hopkins, SJ, lived from 28 July 1844 to 8 June 1889. He was an English poet, a Roman Catholic convert and a Jesuit priest, whose posthumous fame established him among the leading Victorian poets. His experimental explorations in prosody (i.e. the patterns of rhythm and sound used in poetry), especially sprung rhythm, and his use of imagery established him as a daring innovator in a period of largely traditional verse.

Hopkins in Monasterevin

Hopkins moved to Dublin in 1884 and died there in 1889. During this time he was a professor of Greek and Latin at University College Dublin. In letters to his mother and friend, English Poet Laureate Robert Bridges, he fondly mentions taking six or seven short breaks at Monasterevin House with the Cassidy sisters, commencing in 1886. The Cassidy family were wealthy Catholic whiskey distillers.

Monasterevin Celebrating Hopkins

Monasterevin has been celebrating the Hopkins' association since 1988, when a module on Hopkins was included in the Monasterevin Canal Festival. The Monasterevin community has supported and organised the Annual Monasterevin Hopkins Festival every year since, under the aegis of a number of community organisations. Since 2010, the Annual Hopkins Festival has been organised by the Monasterevin Hopkins Society.



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The Monasterevin Hopkins Society organises an Annual Monasterevin Hopkins Festival, a celebration of Hopkins, his poetry and his connection with Monasterevin. The programme consists of poetry, literature, lectures and music and aims to educate and stimulate the community.

For more information about the Monasterevin Hopkins Society and the Annual Monasterevin Hopkins Festival, visit monasterevinhopkinssociety.org.

You can also contact the society direct for information or to discuss delivering a paper or talk at a festival. Contact details are as follows:

Email:

info@monasterevinhopkinssociety.org

Some of the accommodation in the area:

Castle View, Lackaghmore, Kildare, Co. Kildare, W34 C525. Ph:045521816/0868224092; info@kildarebandb.com; www.kildarebandb.com

Cloncarlin House, Globeisland, Monasterevin, Co. Kildare W34 W229; Ph:045525722; URL:www.cloncarlinhouse.com; Email: maire@cloncarlinhouse.com

Heritage Hotel, Killenard, Co. Laois, R32 PW10; Ph:0578645500; URL:www.theheritage.com; Email: info@theheritage.com

Old Rectory, The, Drogheda St., Monasterevin, W34 EF88; Ph:0862313785;

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