

Memoir, legacy and biography revealed in The University of Nottingham's D H Lawrence Collections

The Many Lives of D H Lawrence



Photograph of Lawrence on his 21st birthday, 11 September 1906; La Phot 1/2/1

The name D H Lawrence may be instantly recognised, but the image which that name conjures up has had many forms. The variety of these 'Lawrences' has no simple explanation. Controversy during his lifetime, critical recognition by the academic world, and his popular association with the sexual liberation of the 1960s have all played their part in shaping the complexity of his modern reputation.

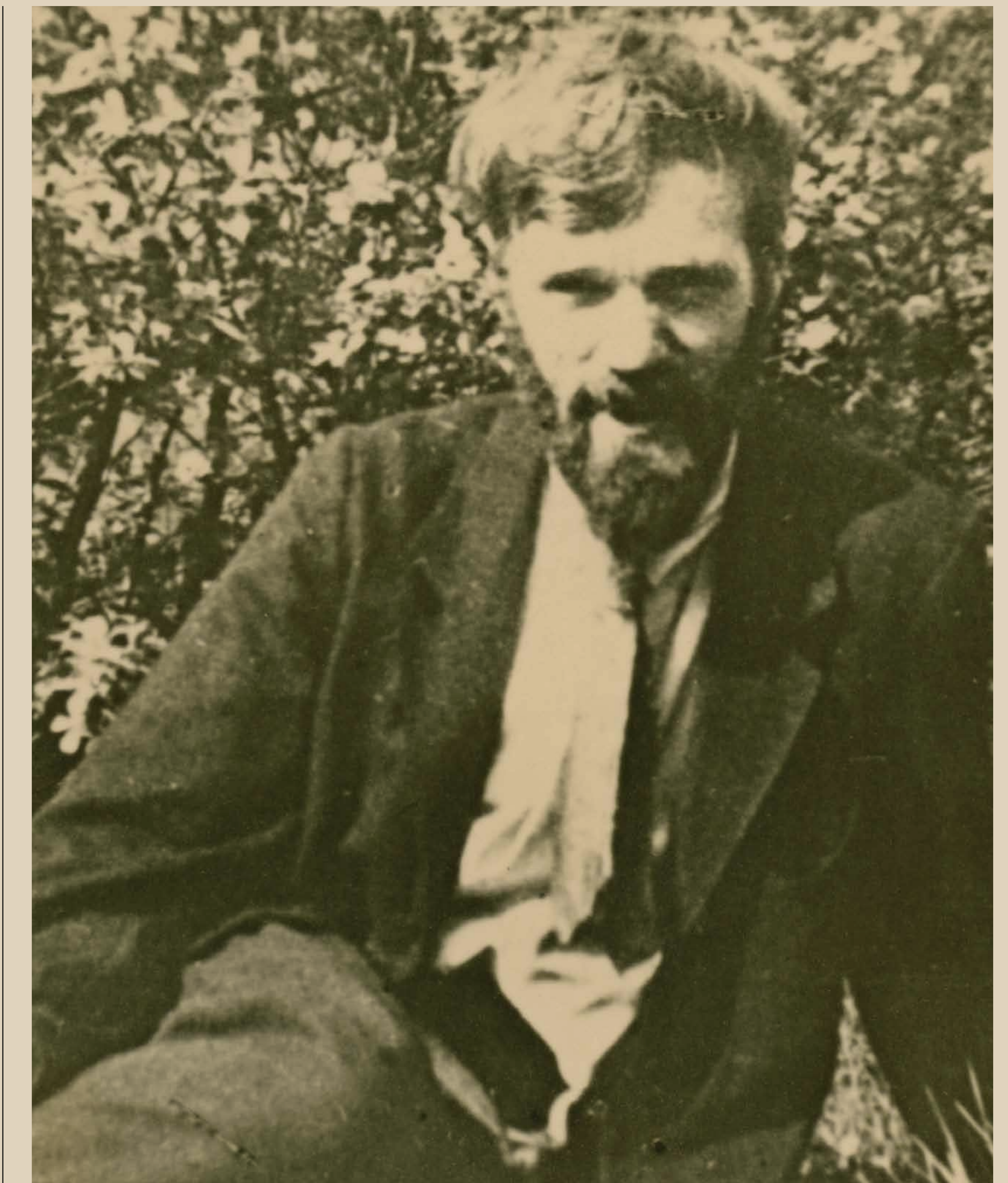
This exhibition examines how the life story of D H Lawrence (1885-1930) has provided such a fascinating subject for the story-tellers. It starts with examples of Lawrence's own occasional self-reflective words, showing how the self-professed "clean-shaven, bright young prig in a high collar like a curate" [*Letters of D H Lawrence*, vii, 620] developed into the outspoken anti-establishment figure of the war years and the 1920s.

We see how quickly public confrontations arose in the early 1930s after Lawrence's death in March 1930, at the age of forty-four. Family members, friends and contemporaries at once offered starkly differing accounts of his life and legacy.

The display follows Lawrence's posthumous reputation in the literary world, from his acknowledgement in the 1950s as a moral writer in the tradition of George Eliot, Henry James and Joseph Conrad to his position in the 1970s as the target of a feminist backlash. The subsequent discovery of new research resources and a wealth of biographical studies have offered fresh perspectives, while a receptive public audience has welcomed different accounts and adaptations of Lawrence's work and life in drama and film.

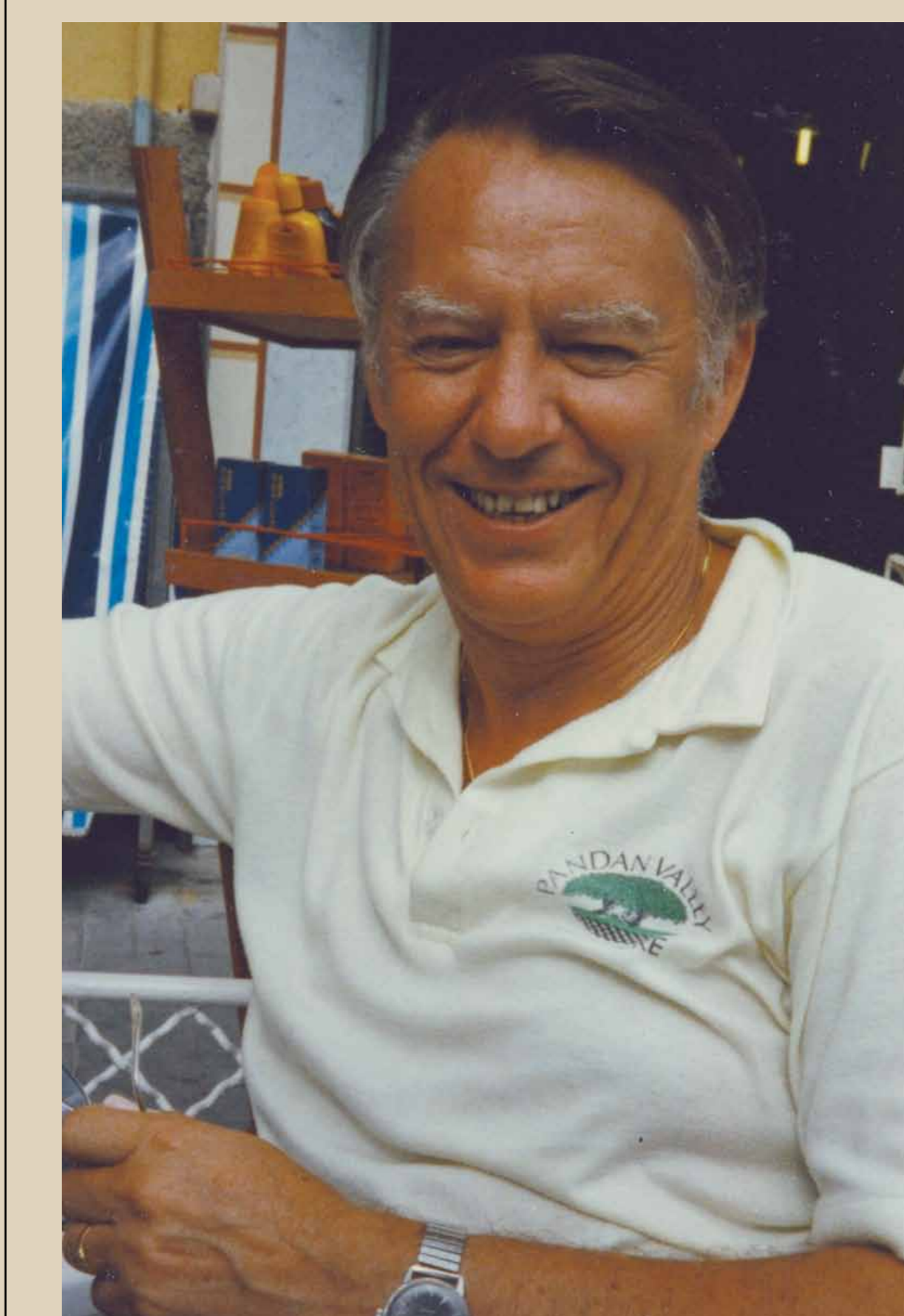
In the end, variety and complexity remain. The creation of Lawrence's iconic status has no single explanation but remains a story in progress.

The exhibition has been curated by Dr Andrew Harrison, Director of the D H Lawrence Research Centre at the University of Nottingham, supported by Paul Redmond, Research Assistant and staff in Manuscripts and Special Collections. The display draws on the resources of the University of Nottingham's nationally designated D H Lawrence Collections, which have been made accessible with support from the Heritage Lottery Fund.

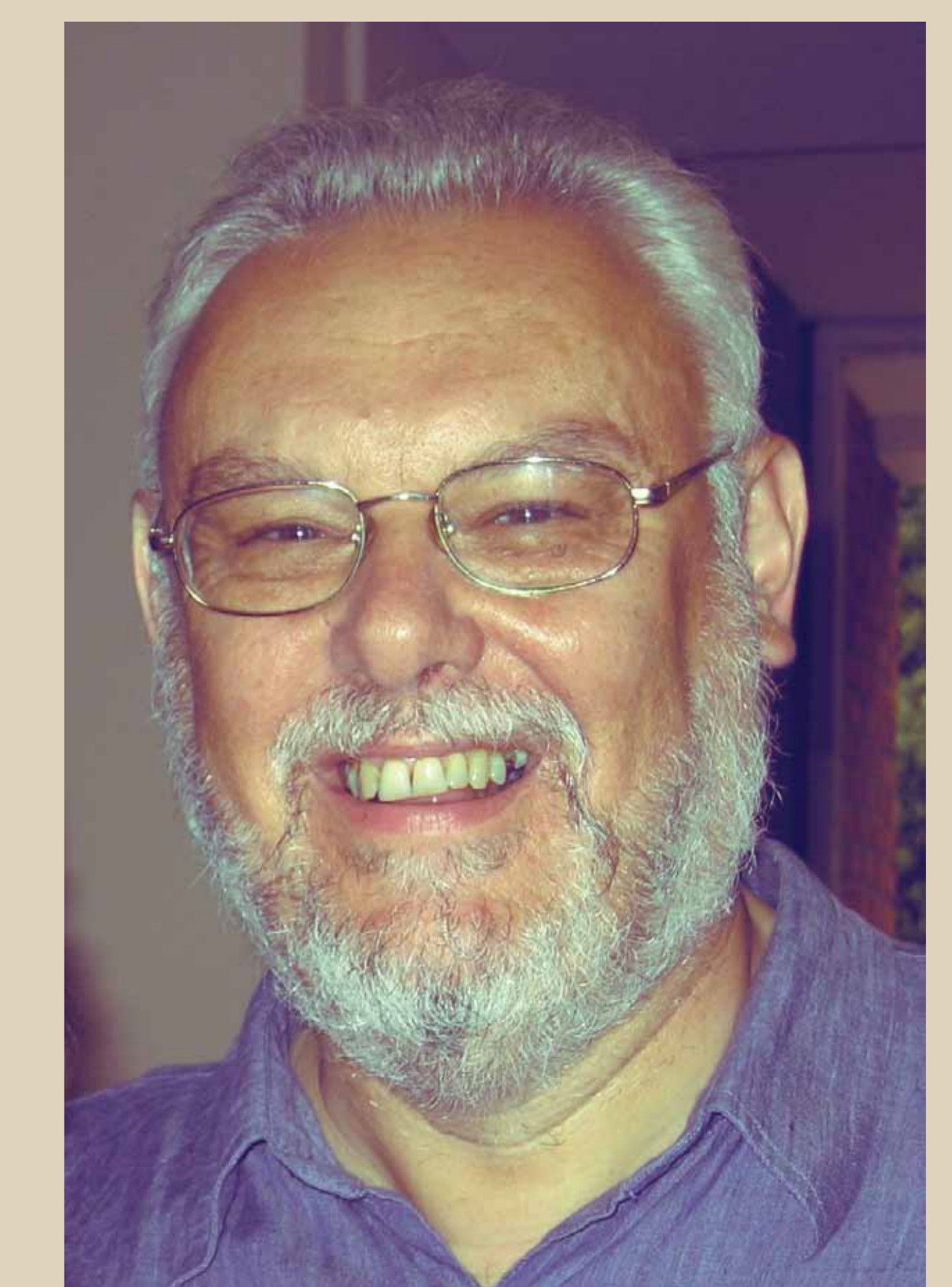


Lawrence at Mountain Cottage, Middleton-by-Wirksworth, Derbyshire, June 1918; La Phot 1/8

The Many Lives of D H Lawrence is dedicated to the memory of two Lawrence scholars who contributed to the study of Lawrence's life and helped new generations to understand him: Mark Kinkead-Weekes (1931-2011) and Peter Preston (1944-2011).

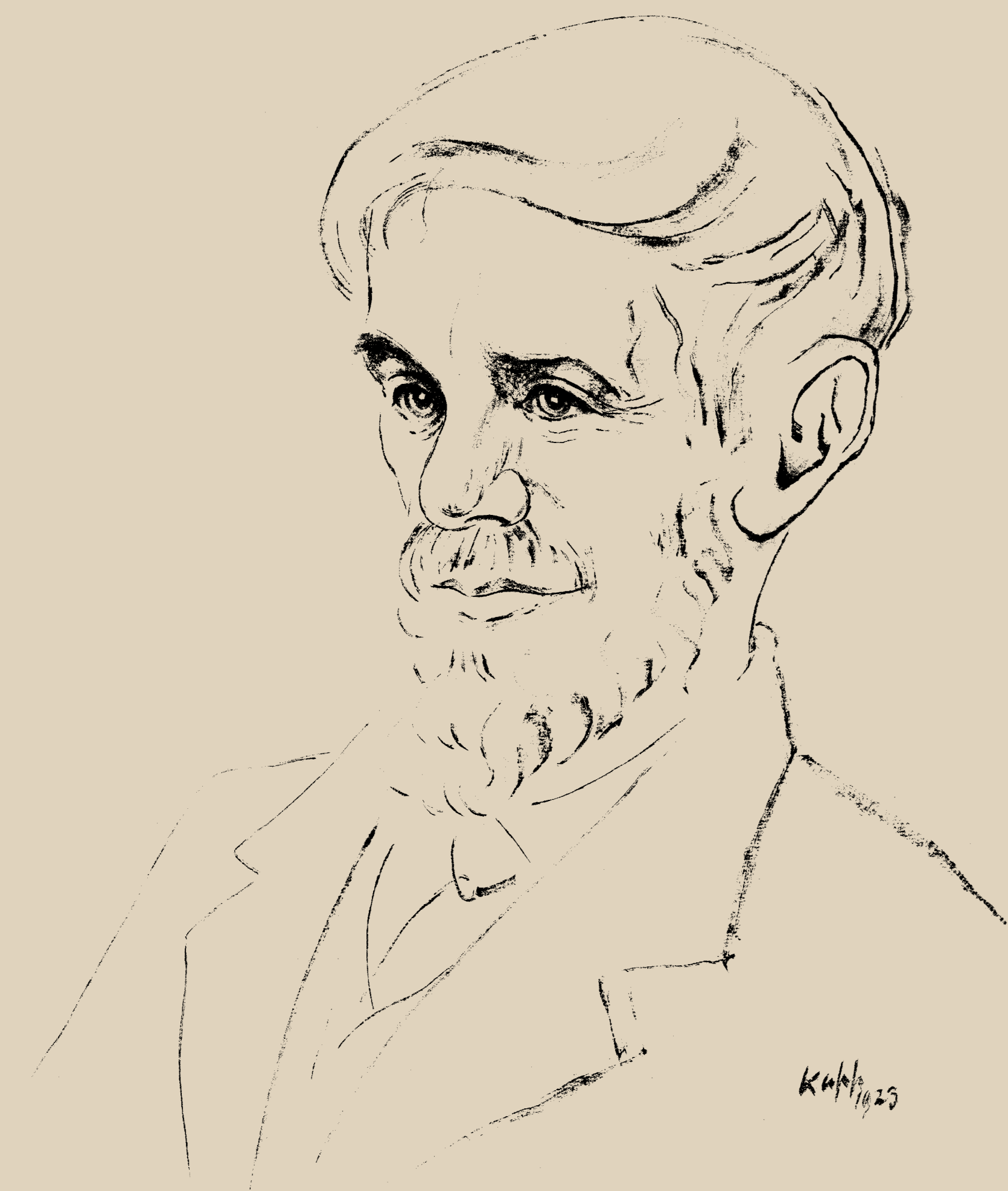


Mark Kinkead-Weekes (1931-2011)

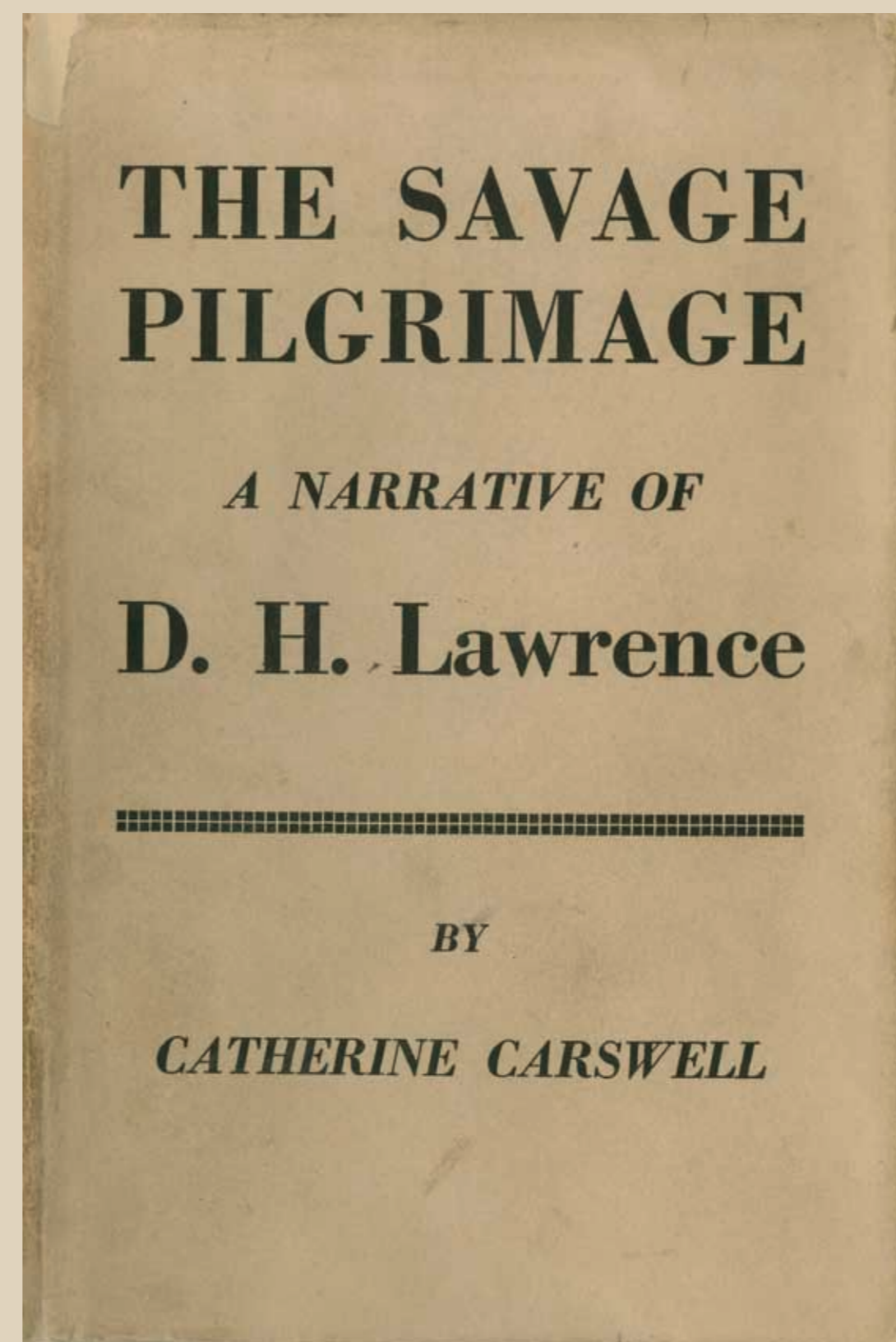


Peter Preston (1944-2011)

Battle of the Biographers

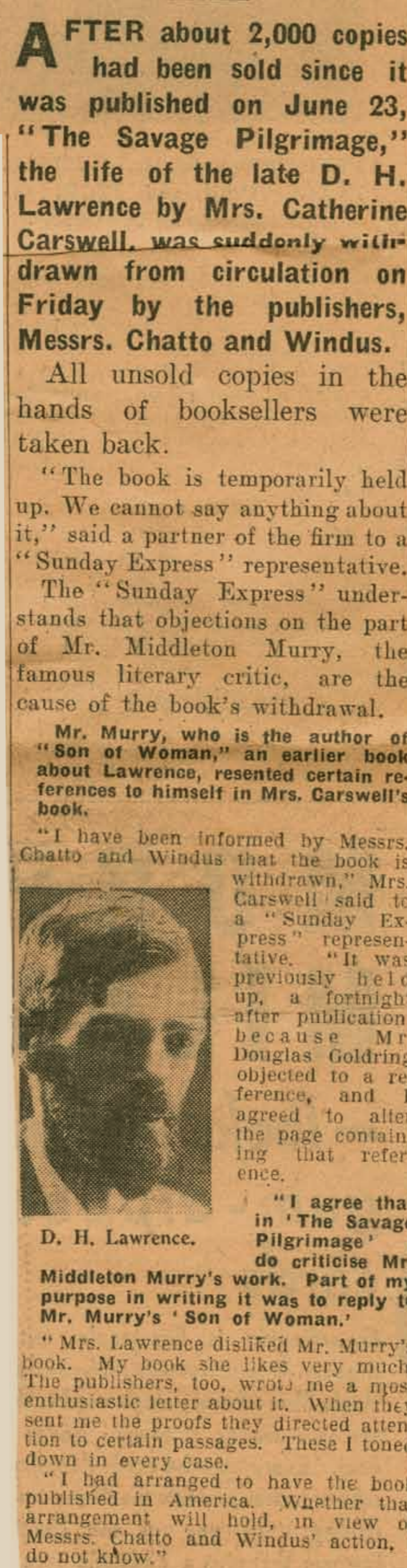
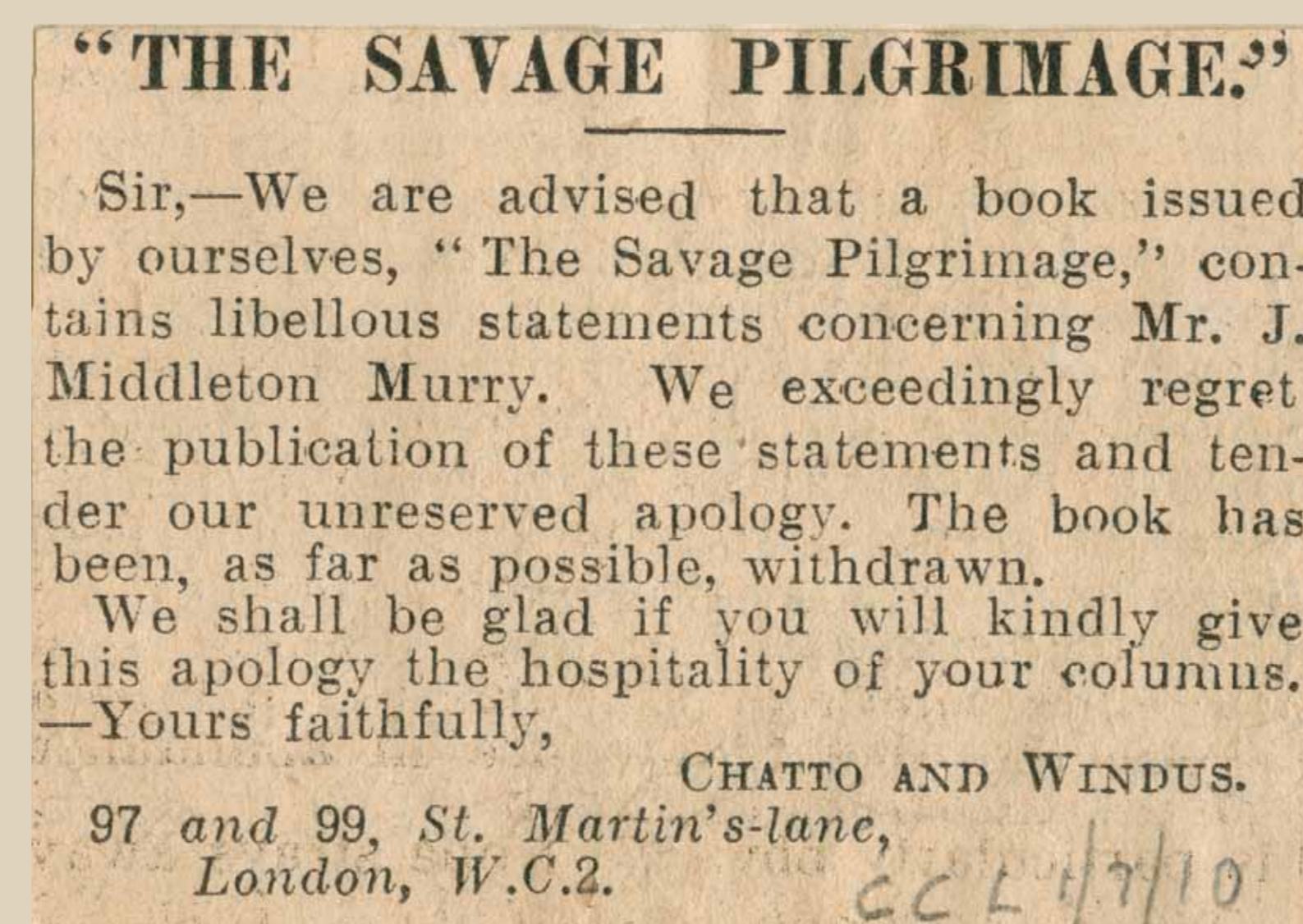
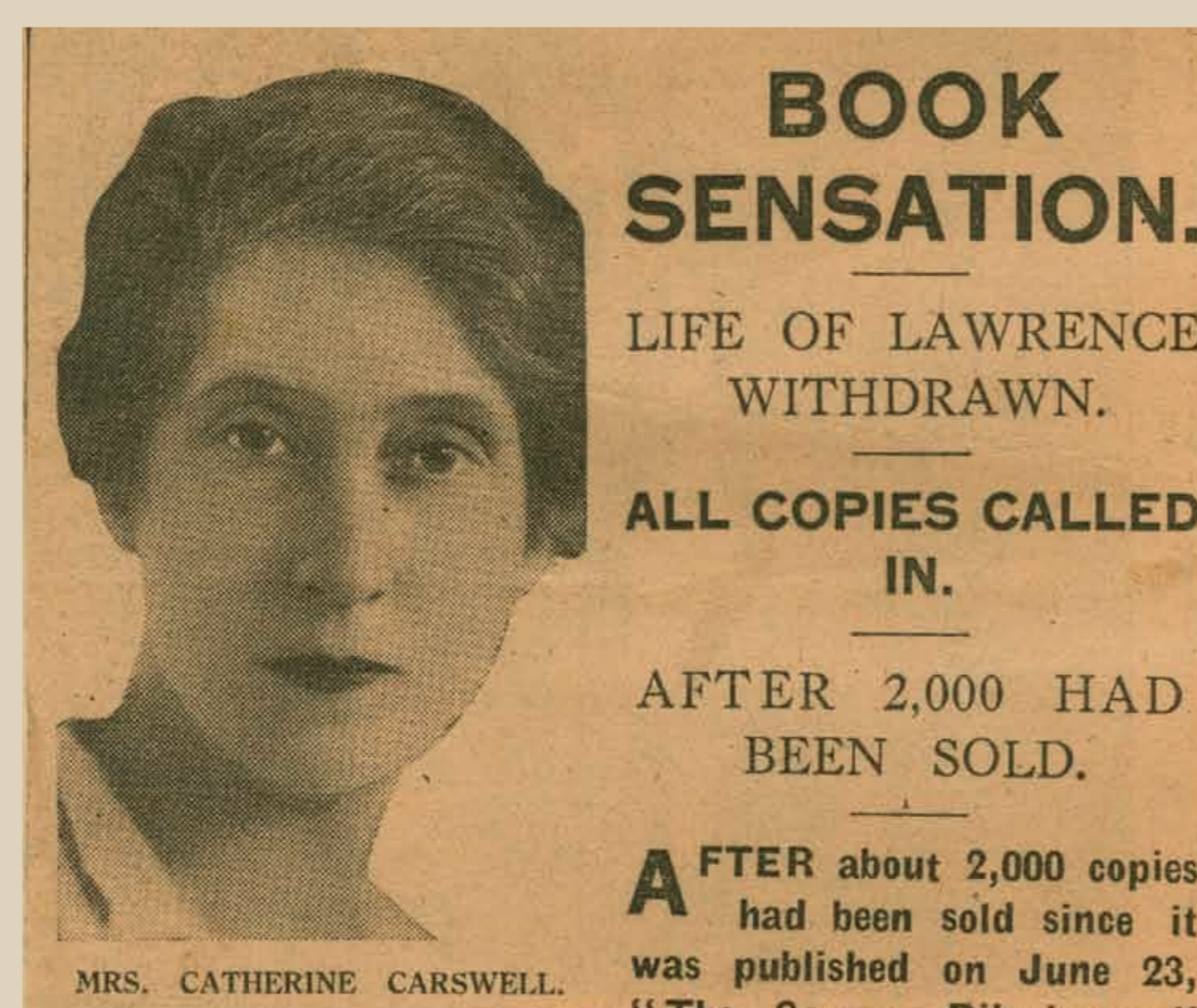


Photograph of Catherine Carswell, undated, c.1899-1905; Carswell Coll. CC X 3/1



C Carswell, *The Savage Pilgrimage* (Chatto and Windus, 1932) PR6023.A9.Z5.C27 Laz

The decade following Lawrence's death saw the publication of a number of memoirs written by the people closest to him and those who had known him at various points in his life.



Newsclippings relating to the withdrawal of the first edition of *The Savage Pilgrimage*, 1932; Carswell Coll. CC L 1/7/5,10

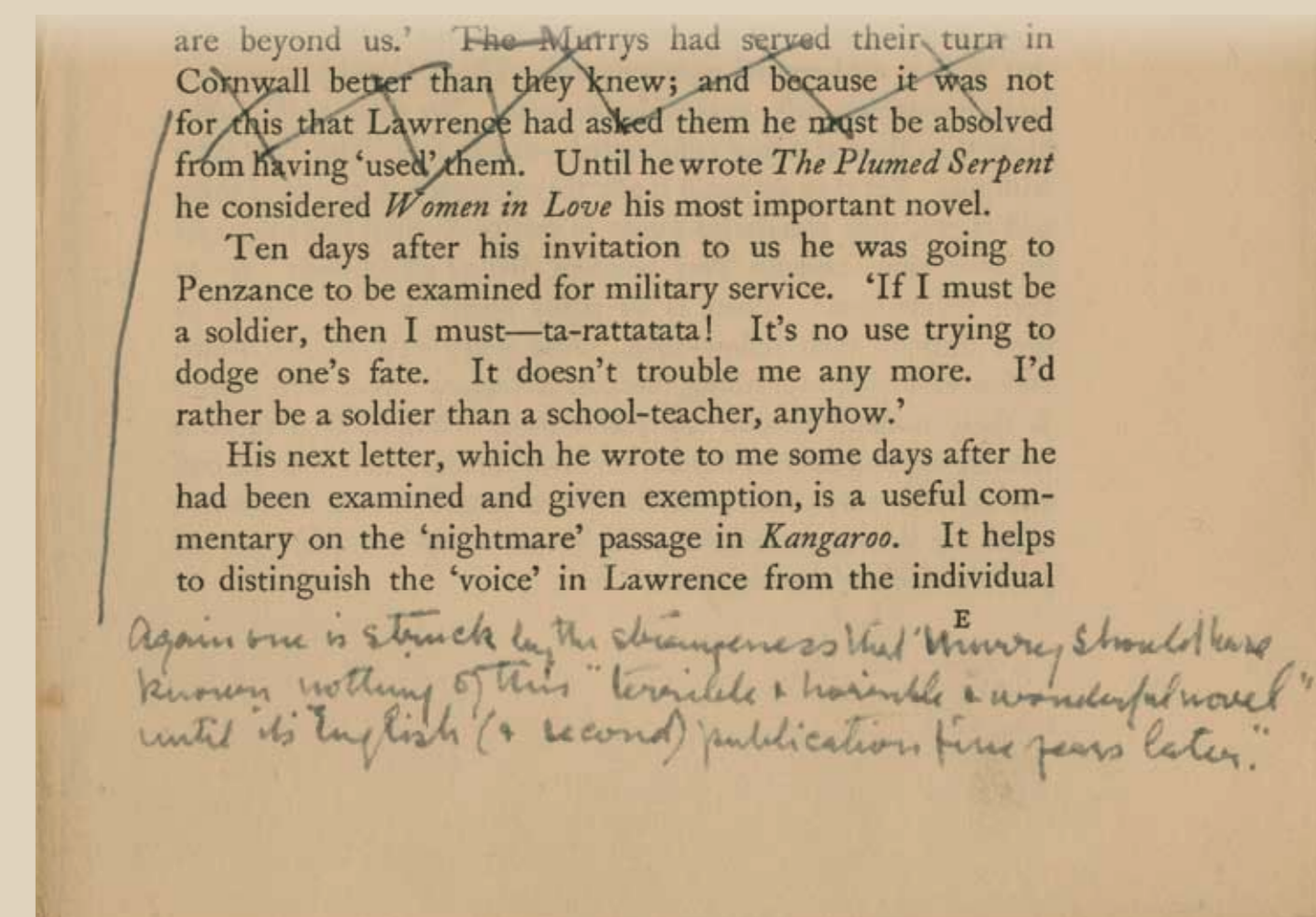
One of the most significant accounts was Catherine Carswell's *The Savage Pilgrimage: A Narrative of D H Lawrence*. Carswell had known Lawrence since 1914. In the following year she wrote a favourable review of *The Rainbow* but lost her job at the *Glasgow Herald* when Lawrence's novel was successfully prosecuted under the Obscene Publications Act. Carswell, who was herself a novelist, became one of Lawrence's closest and most trusted friends. The two exchanged their writings, and Lawrence offered candid advice and supportive comments on her work.



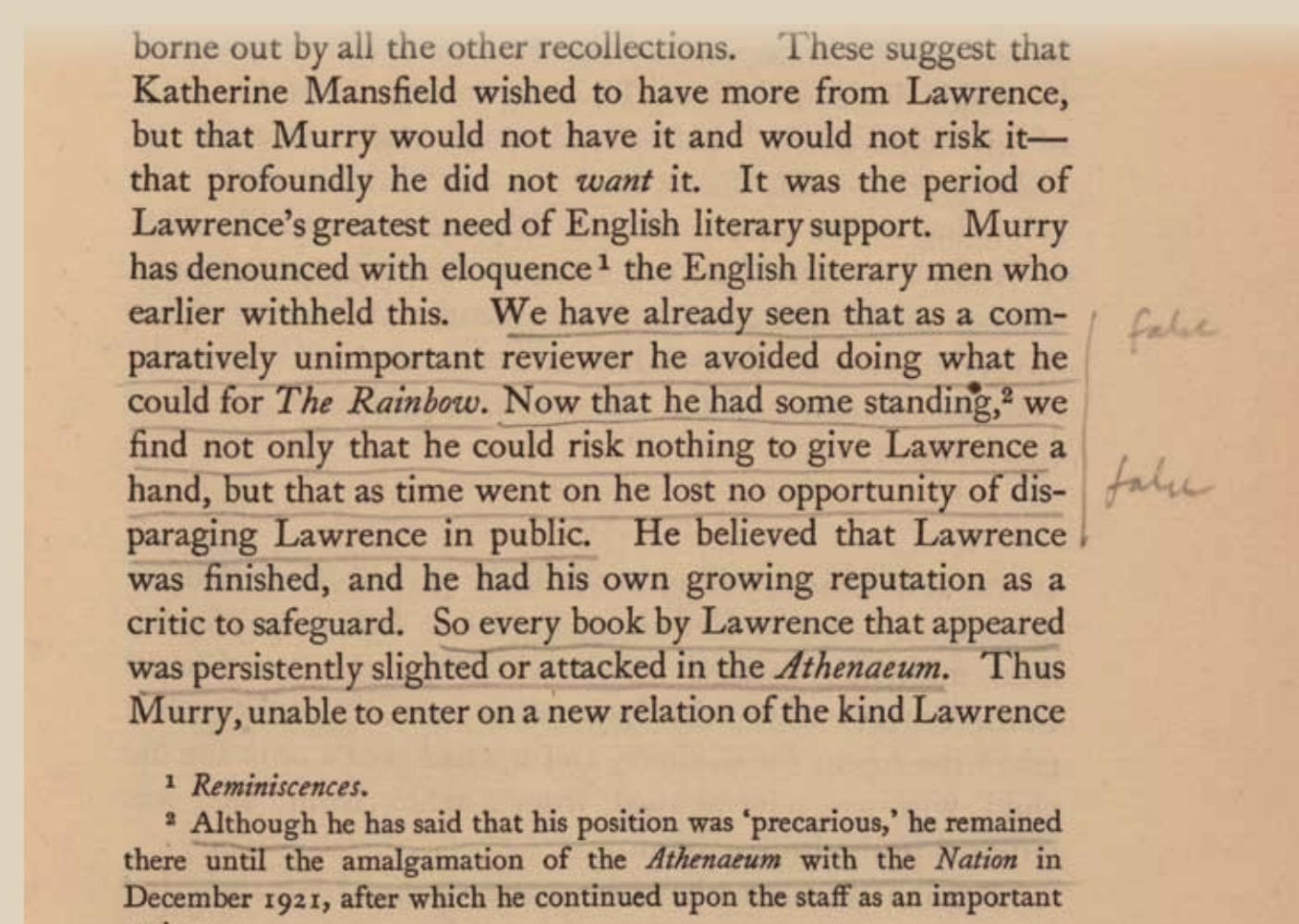
John Middleton Murry and Katherine Mansfield with Lawrence and his wife Frieda on their wedding day, 13 July 1914; La Phot 1/7

The Savage Pilgrimage, which was published by Chatto and Windus in June 1932, was in part a riposte to a more critical book written by John Middleton Murry, another former member of Lawrence's circle. Murry, a prominent literary critic, and his wife Katherine Mansfield had been close friends with Lawrence and his wife Frieda. But the men's friendship had soured. Murry's biography, *Son of Woman* (1931), reflected their tempestuous relationship. He discussed Lawrence's writings as the product of their author's sexual neuroses.

Murry objected to Carswell's critical references to him in her memoir. His threat of a lawsuit led the publisher to withdraw *The Savage Pilgrimage* from sale just weeks after its publication. Carswell subsequently revised her book in response to



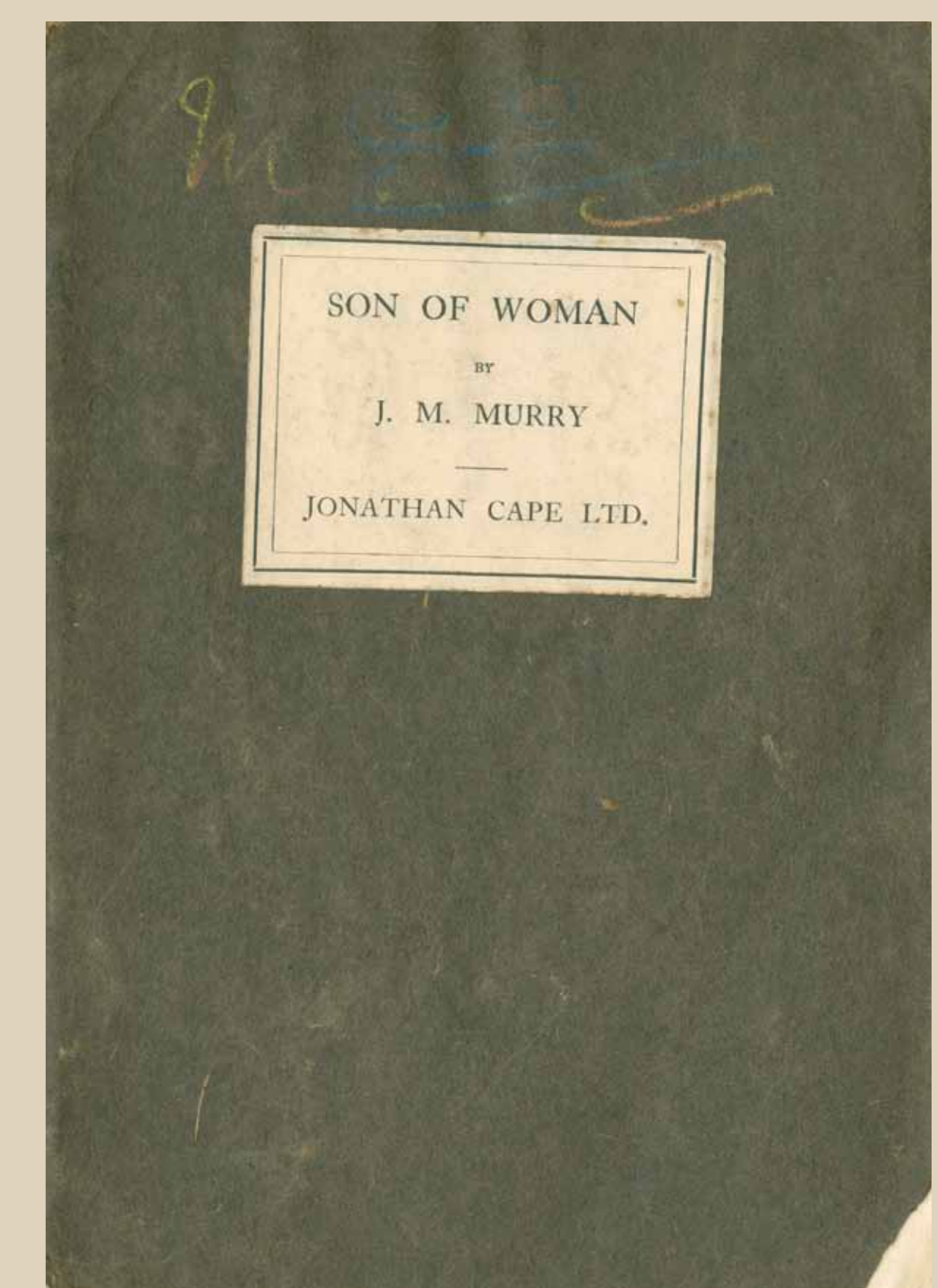
Extract from page proofs of *The Savage Pilgrimage*, revised by Carswell for the second edition, 1932; La Z 6/4/33



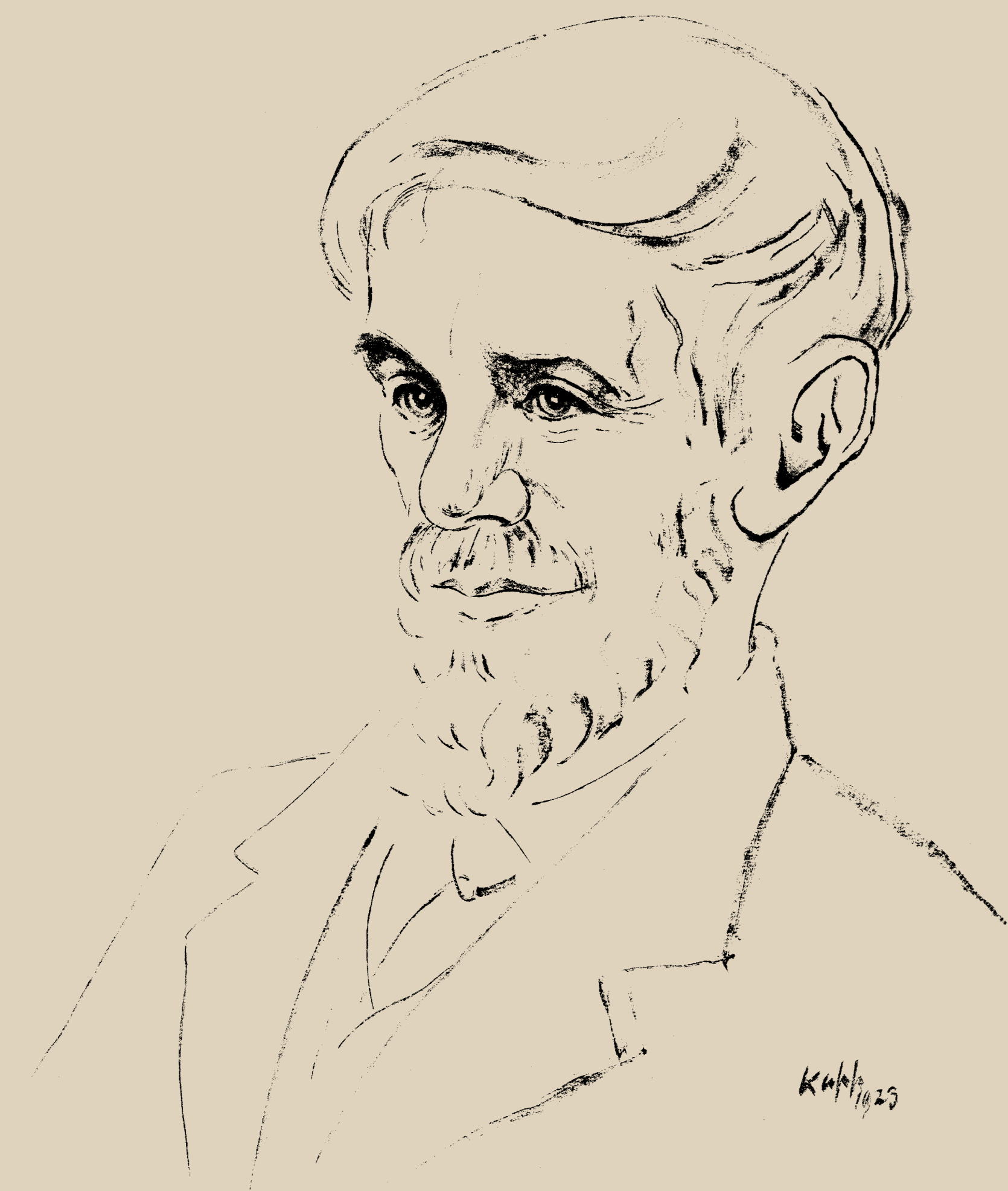
Extract from Middleton Murry's annotated copy of *The Savage Pilgrimage*, 1932; La Mc 3/13

Murry's complaints and re-published it with Martin Secker in December 1932. Murry's *Reminiscences of D H Lawrence*, published the following year, contains a detailed rejoinder to Carswell's book.

The exchange is instructive for the light it sheds on Lawrence's capacity to polarise opinion, and to generate strongly partisan responses in the people who knew him well.



Front cover of Middleton Murry's biography, *Son of Woman* (1931); Lawrence Spec. Coll. PR6023.A9.M87 Laz



Nottingham's Favourite Son?

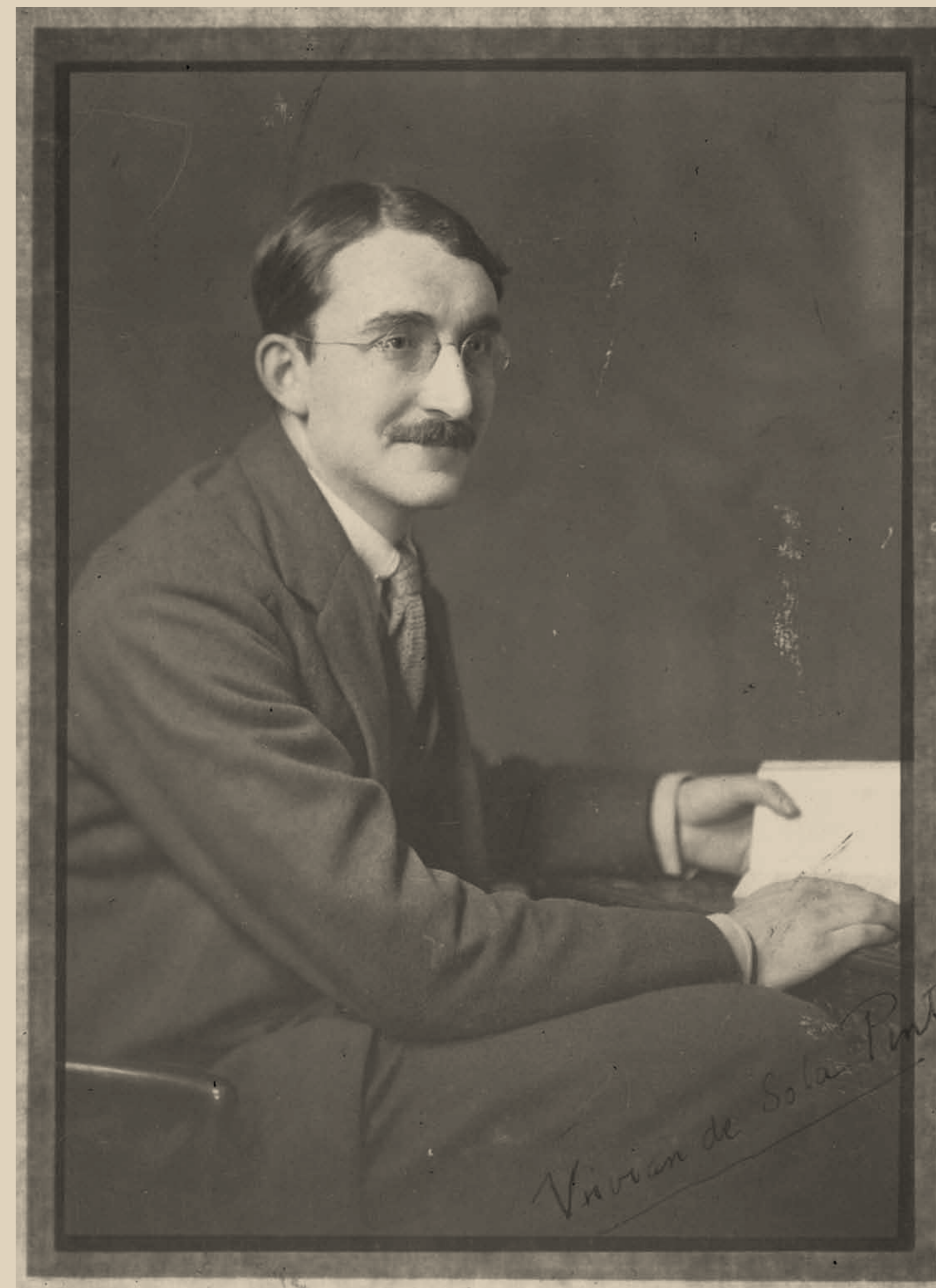
Nottinghamshire is today proud to celebrate the region's close association with one of the most influential writers of the twentieth century. But local appreciation came slowly and with some qualifications.



Ernest Weekley and Frieda von Richthofen, photographed in Germany at the time of their engagement, 1898-1899; La We 2/3

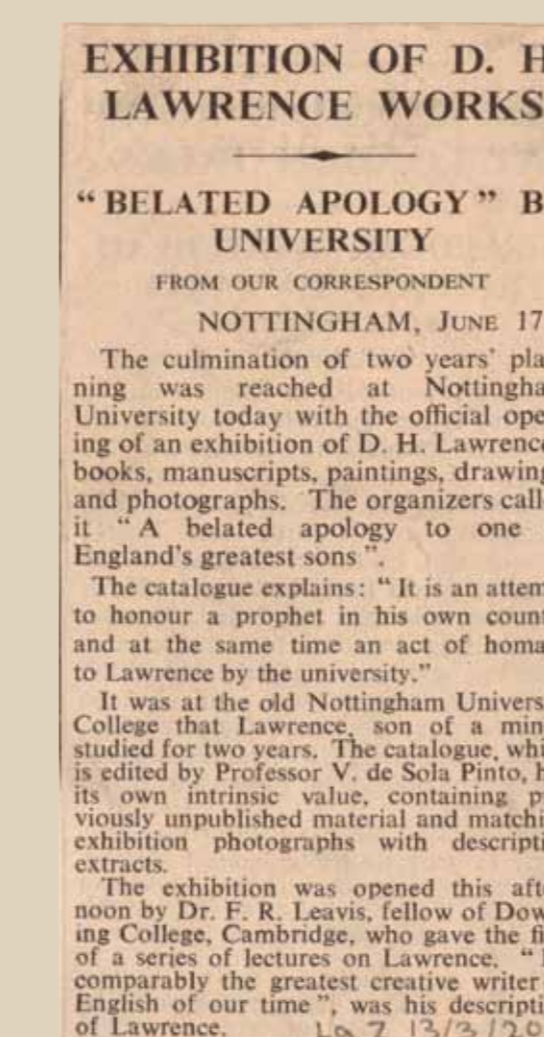
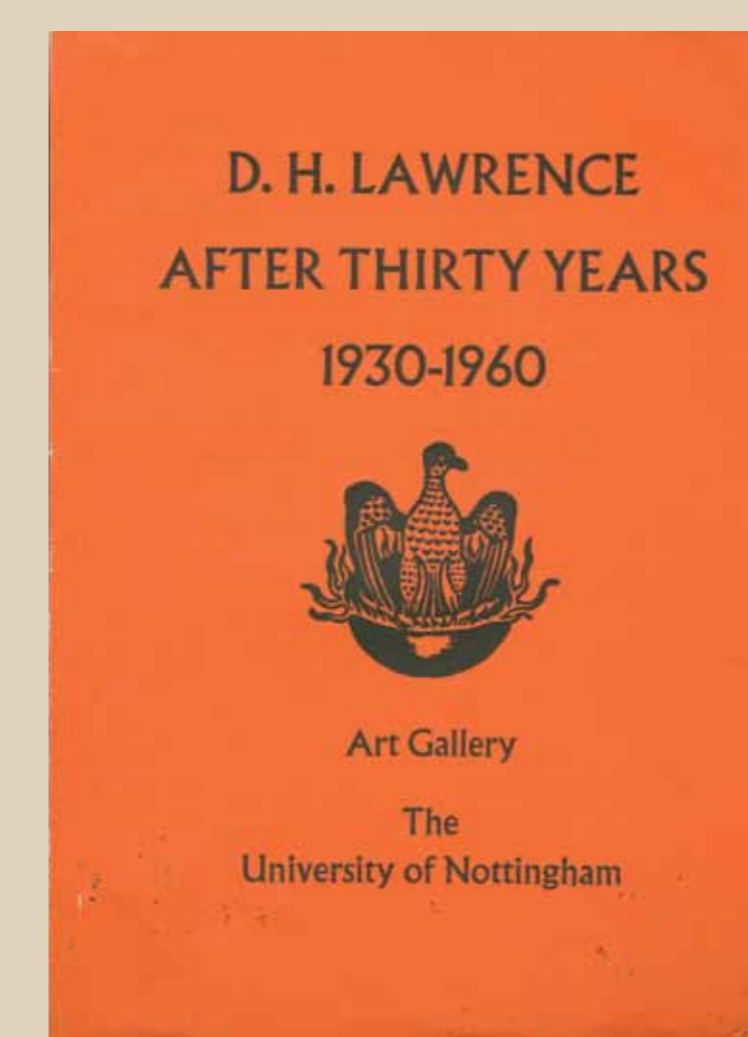
One aspect of Lawrence's private life particularly roused hostility within the community of University College Nottingham. Lawrence's wife Frieda had been married to his former professor, Ernest Weekley. In choosing to spend her life with Lawrence, Frieda gave up her home and family. Respect and affection for Weekley ensured that Lawrence's work was not openly discussed at the University until more than a decade after Weekley retired.

Professor Vivian de Sola Pinto, Head of the University's English Department from 1938 to 1961, was determined to reverse this situation. In October 1951, in a public lecture entitled 'D H Lawrence: Prophet of the Midlands', he announced the arrival of Lawrence on the curriculum and the intention to establish a major Lawrence Collection at the University.



Professor Vivian de Sola Pinto, 1928; University Coll. UMP/2/4

Less than a decade later, Pinto was the key figure behind the Nottingham exhibition *D H Lawrence After Thirty Years* 1930-1960. Manuscripts, correspondence, photographs and paintings came from private collectors, friends and family. This was the first significant UK celebration of Lawrence's life and achievements. Within months, the drama of an Old Bailey obscenity trial, and the vindication of *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, made Lawrence an international household name.



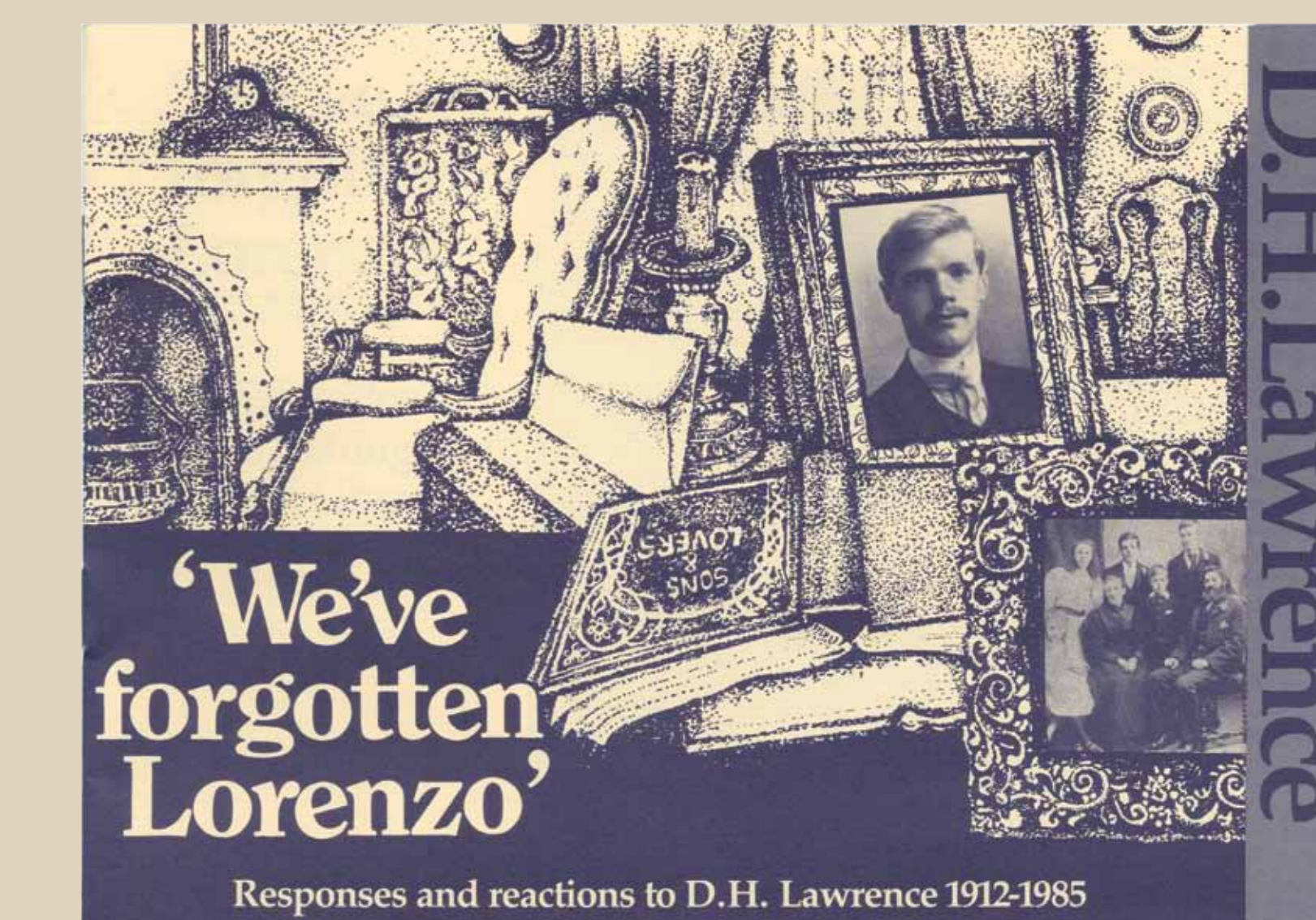
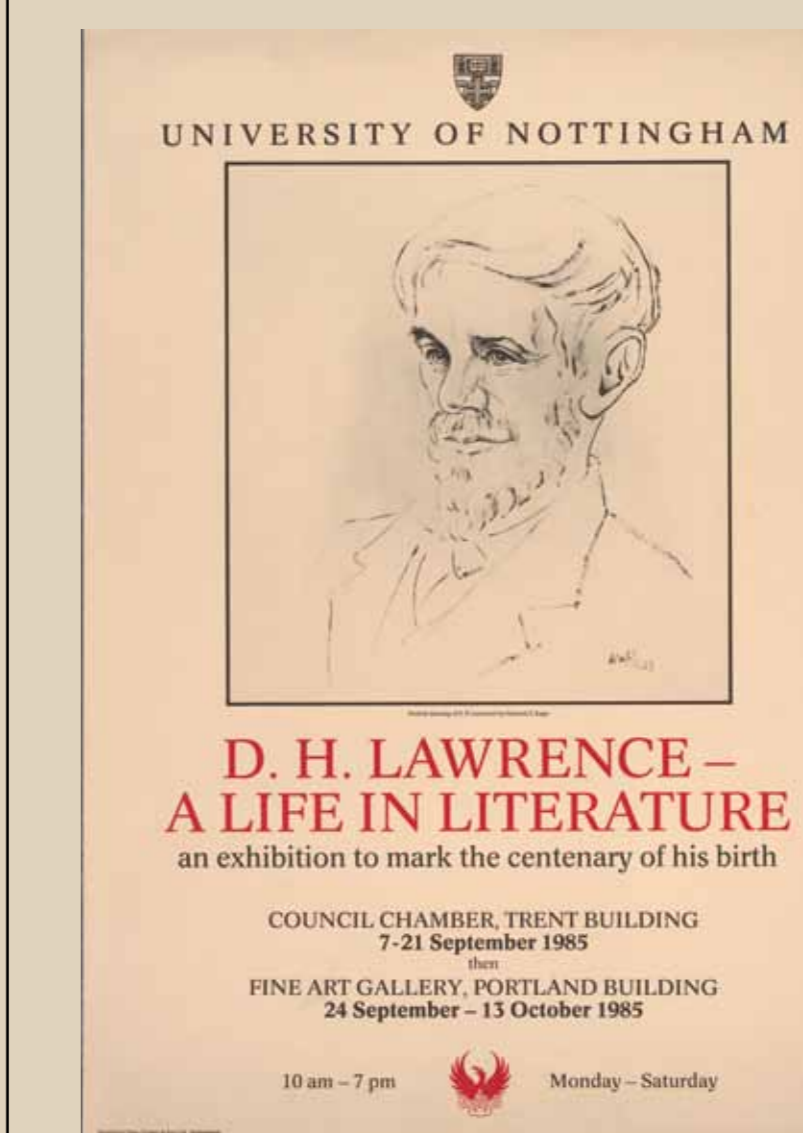
Catalogue for the 1960 exhibition and related newscuttings; Lawrence Spec. Coll. PR6023.A9.Z.Z.UNI and La Z.13/3/205-206

Lawrence's regional associations are now widely acknowledged. In 1974, the Eastwood D H Lawrence Society was founded. In 1980, the University of Nottingham's exhibition *D H Lawrence: A Phoenix in Flight* was opened by an ardent admirer, the poet Philip Larkin. And in 1985, a centenary festival included the University's exhibition, *A Life in Literature*.

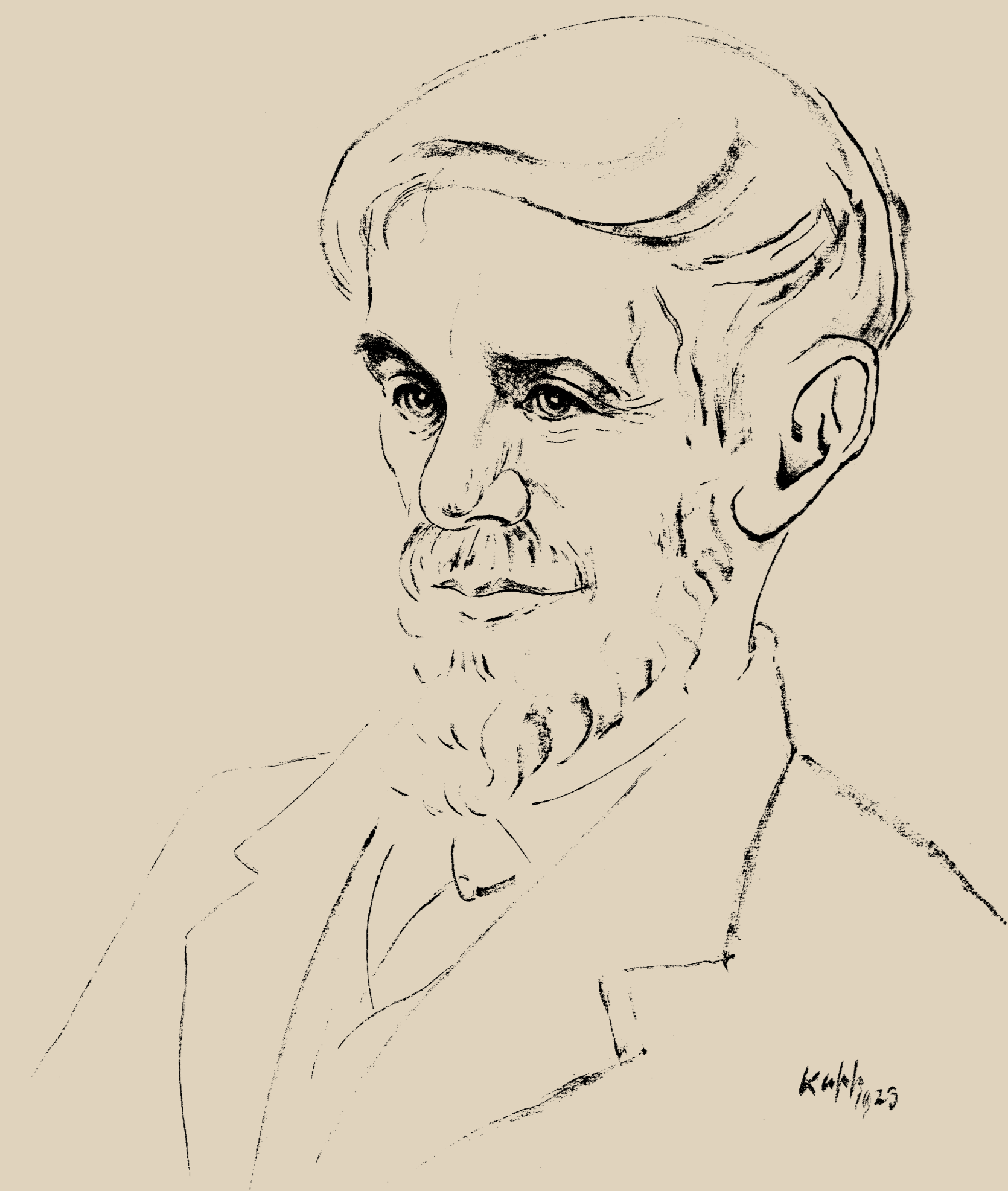


Philip Larkin with a copy of the exhibition catalogue, in conversation with Gerald Pollinger, 7 May 1980; PR6023.A9.Z5.U64 and La S 2/2/2.1.

Today the University works in partnership with Broxtowe Borough Council in Eastwood, which maintains both the Birthplace Museum and the D H Lawrence Heritage Centre. The University's D H Lawrence Research Centre offers a programme of regular events. The Lawrence Collections, now nationally designated, continue to grow; their distinctive strength remains their rich evidence of Lawrence's Nottinghamshire associations.



Exhibition catalogues for *A Life in Literature* (University of Nottingham) and *We've forgotten Lorenzo* (Nottingham Central Library) illustrate the centenary celebrations of 1985; For 6/5/2/7/2 and ACC 1822.



A Composite Biography

The French scholar Emile Delavenay and the Americans Harry T Moore and Edward Nehls were pre-eminent among the first generation of Lawrence biographers. Their distinctive contribution lay in their use of stories from Lawrence's contemporaries. These testimonies are particularly powerful in illuminating his early life in Eastwood.



Emile Delavenay (1905-2003)

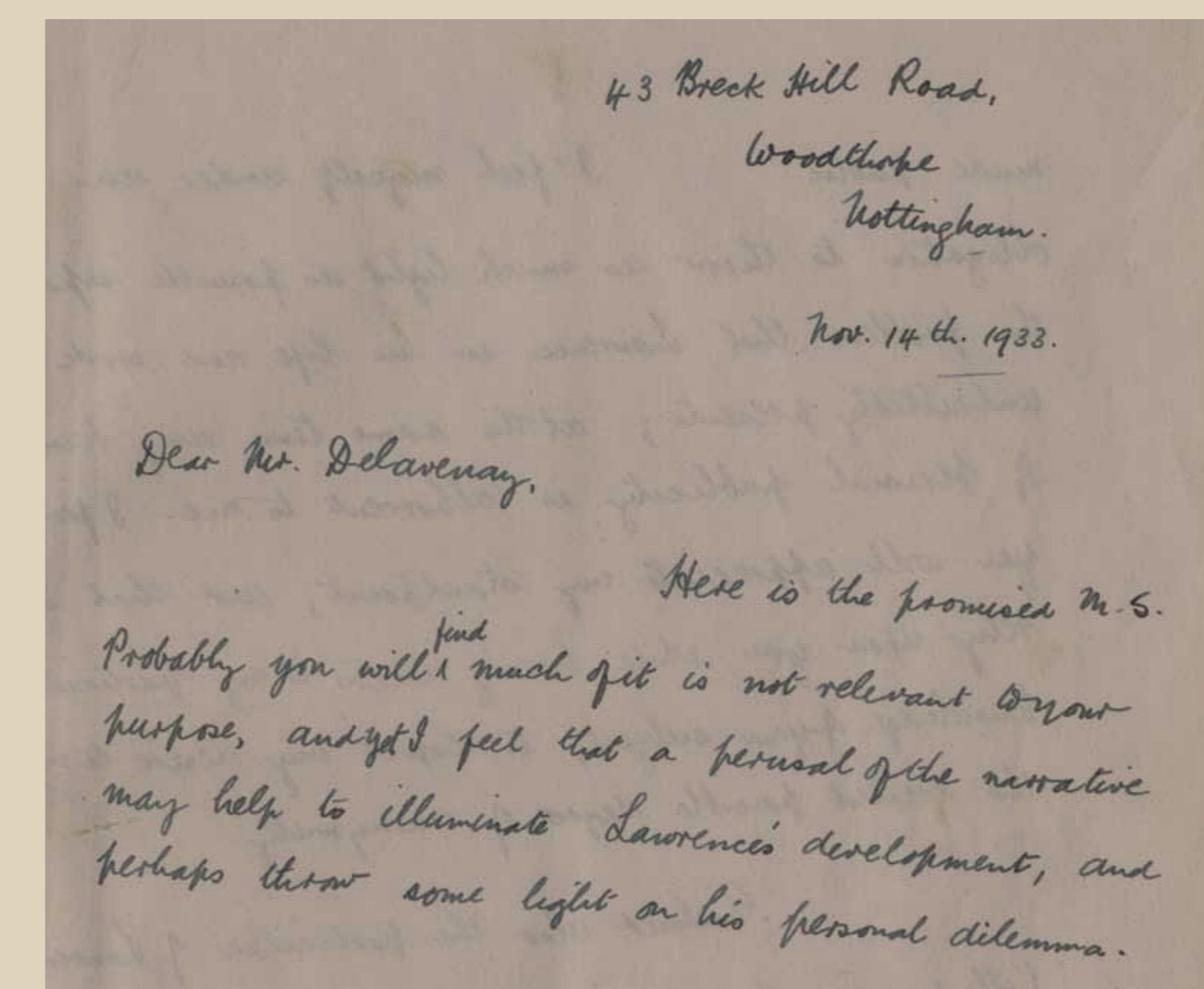
Delavenay's extensive correspondence with Jessie Chambers is especially important because Jessie destroyed the letters she had received during her close friendship with Lawrence. Her own account, *D H Lawrence: A Personal Record* was first published in 1935, under the pseudonym 'ET'. In his biography, *L'homme et la genèse de son oeuvre: les années de formation 1885-1919* (1969, English edition, 1972), Delavenay drew on Jessie's letters. These remain available to modern biographers as part of the University's Collections.

In 1950 Harry T Moore interviewed people who had been close to Lawrence. Informants included Lawrence's brother, George Arthur Lawrence,

and George H Neville, a childhood friend from his Beauvale Board School days. Moore's study was the first critical biography of Lawrence. Originally entitled *The Intelligent Heart* (1954), it was subsequently revised as *The Priest of Love*. Its view of Lawrence became popular through the film version of 1981, directed by Christopher Miles.



Jessie Chambers in 1908, aged 23; La Ch 66



Extract from letter by Jessie Chambers to Emile Delavenay, 14 Nov. 1933; La R 6/9



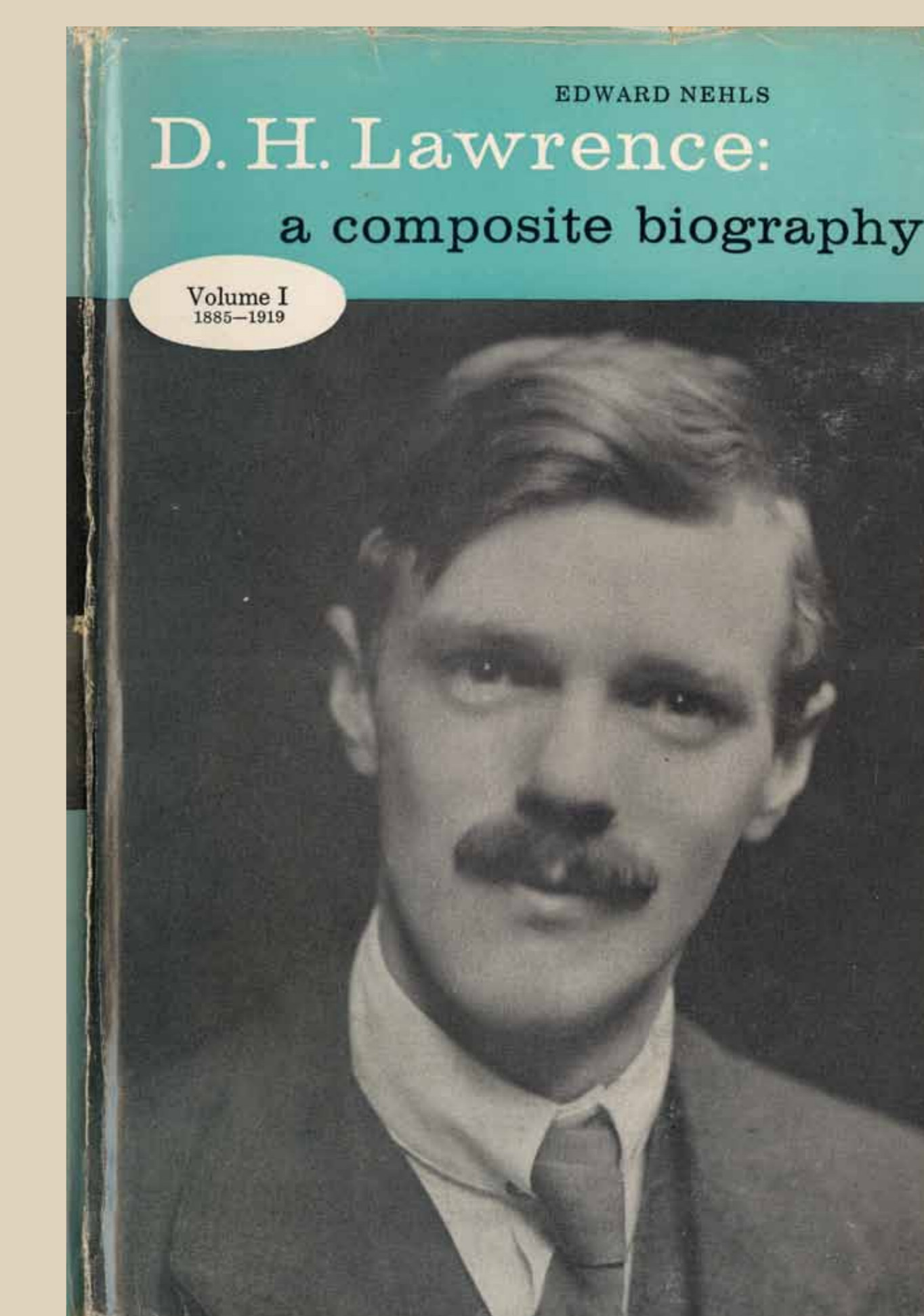
Harry T Moore, during visit to England 1971; Acc 1822

Edward Nehls' three-volume work *D H Lawrence: A Composite Biography* (1957-1959), takes an original approach to its subject. A chronological series of accounts of Lawrence is juxtaposed without the support of an overarching narrative. Nehls drew on many different sources, from familiar published memoirs to Lawrence's own writings. He commissioned accounts from people who had not previously recorded their memories. This included family members, such as Frieda's children Barbara Weekley Barr and Montague ('Monty') Weekley and her sister Else Jaffe-Richthofen. Among local

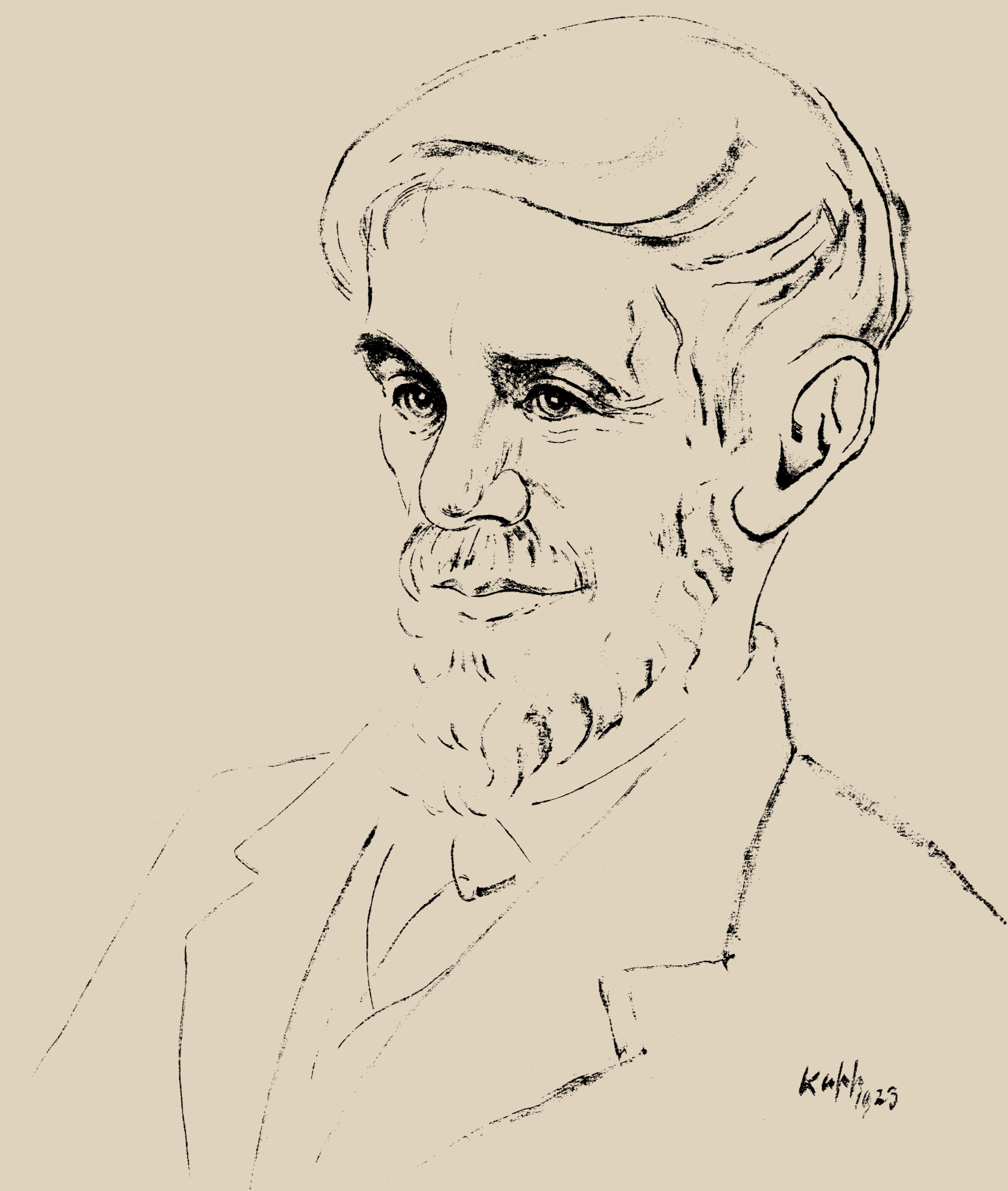


D H Lawrence (3rd row from back, 2nd left) and George H Neville (4th row from back, 2nd left) in a photograph of Beauvale Boys' School Group IV c.1894; La Z 8/1/1/3

contributors was Lawrence's Eastwood friend Mabel Thurlby Collishaw. Nehls' work records how Lawrence was viewed and understood by different individuals at any given time; it has remained an influential study.

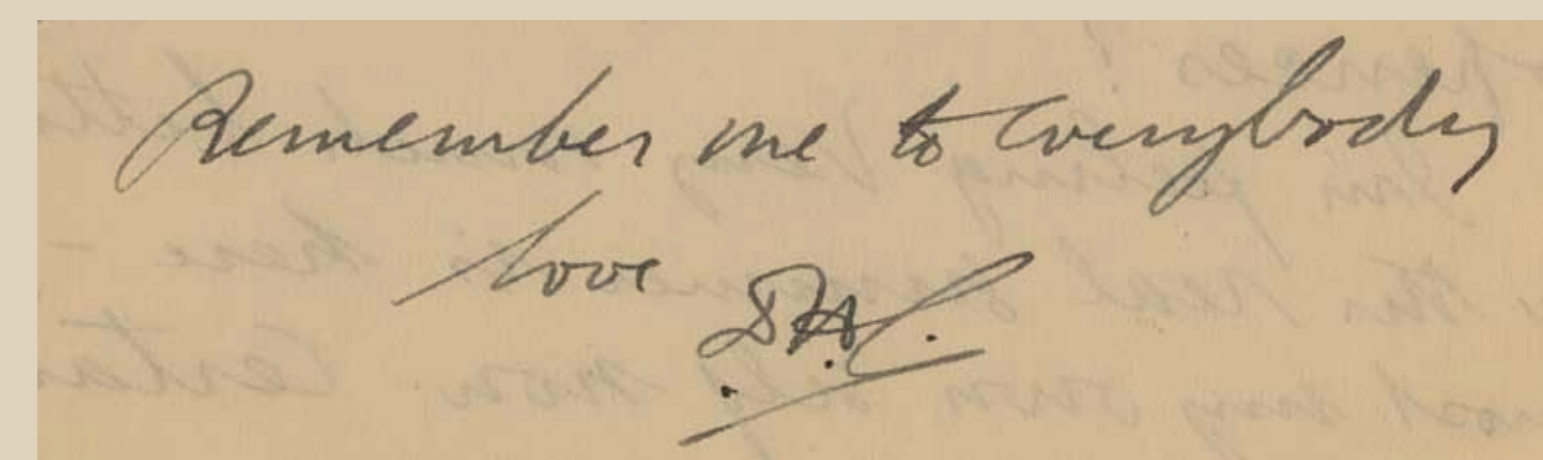


Frieda's children Montague, Elsa and Barbara Weekley with their nurse, c. 1908; La We 2/4.

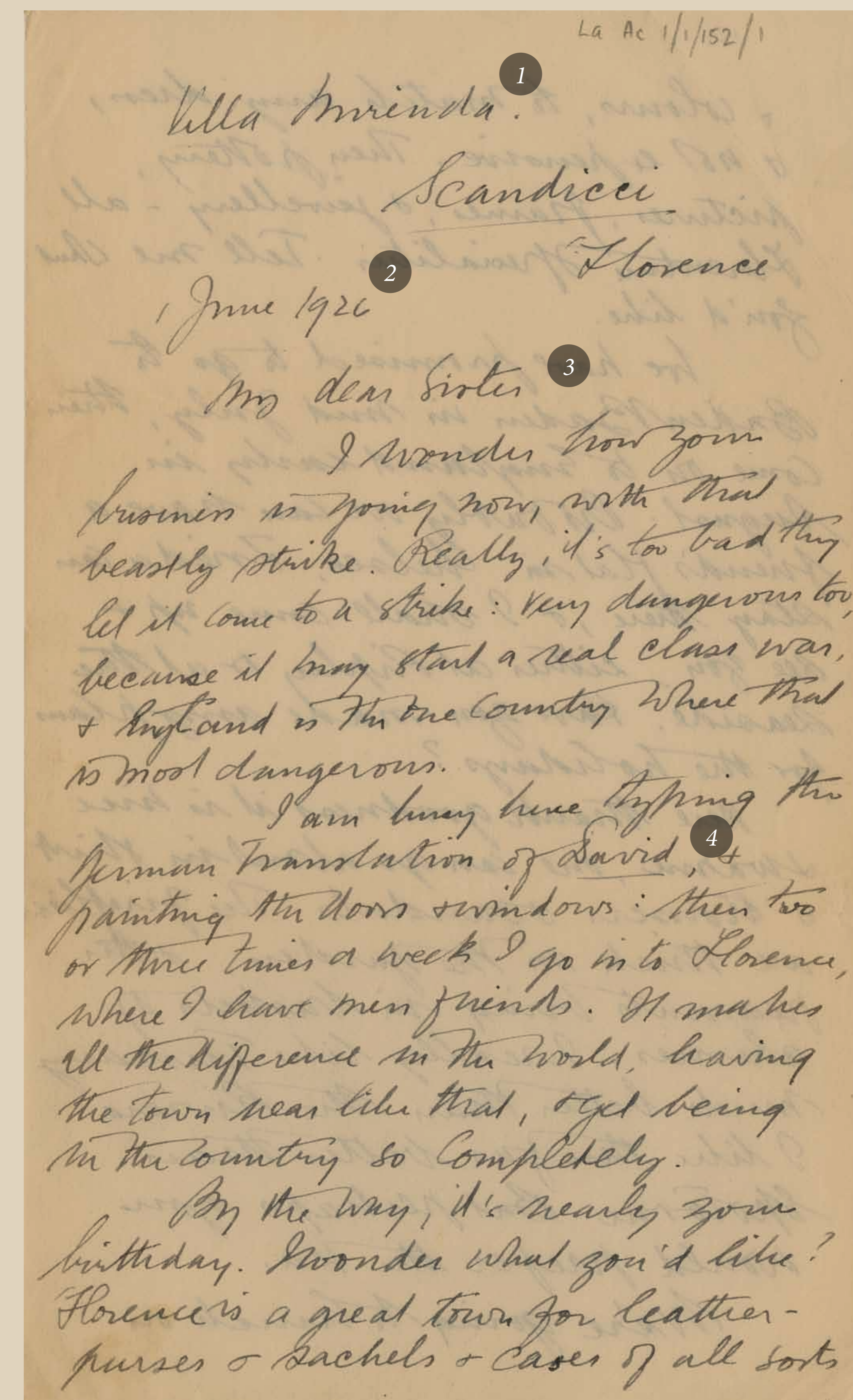


A Life Through Letters

Our knowledge of Lawrence's life – in all its physical, emotional, intellectual and creative aspects – relies very heavily on the evidence provided in his letters. At any given time these tell us where he was living, what he was writing and whom he was meeting. They also reveal his response to his world, through his personal reflections and the expression of his opinions. Lawrence's letters are often erudite and entertaining; through them 'DHL' emerges vividly as both man and author.



D H Lawrence's distinctive signature 'D. H. L.' is found on letters to both friends and family; La Ac 1/1/152



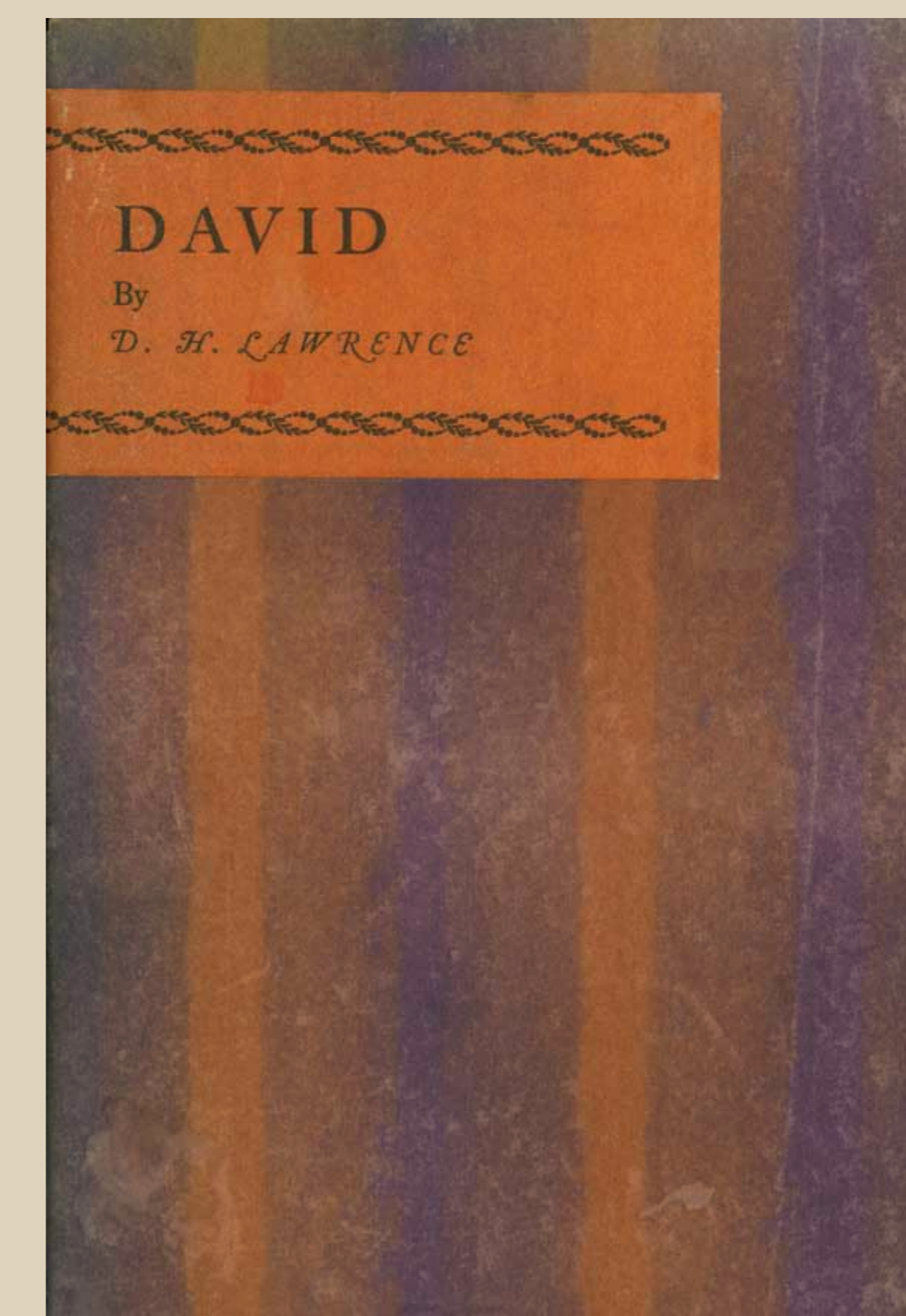
This letter provides an exact date, showing when Lawrence was living at the Villa Mirinda, near Florence. The editors have had to use internal evidence and other research to identify the recipient as Ada Clarke, described here simply as 'Sister'. The variety of subject material shows the challenge facing an editor; Lawrence mentions here the 1926 General Strike, his work on Frieda's German translation of his play *David*, his social life in Florence, and ideas for a birthday gift for his sister. La Ac 1/1/152



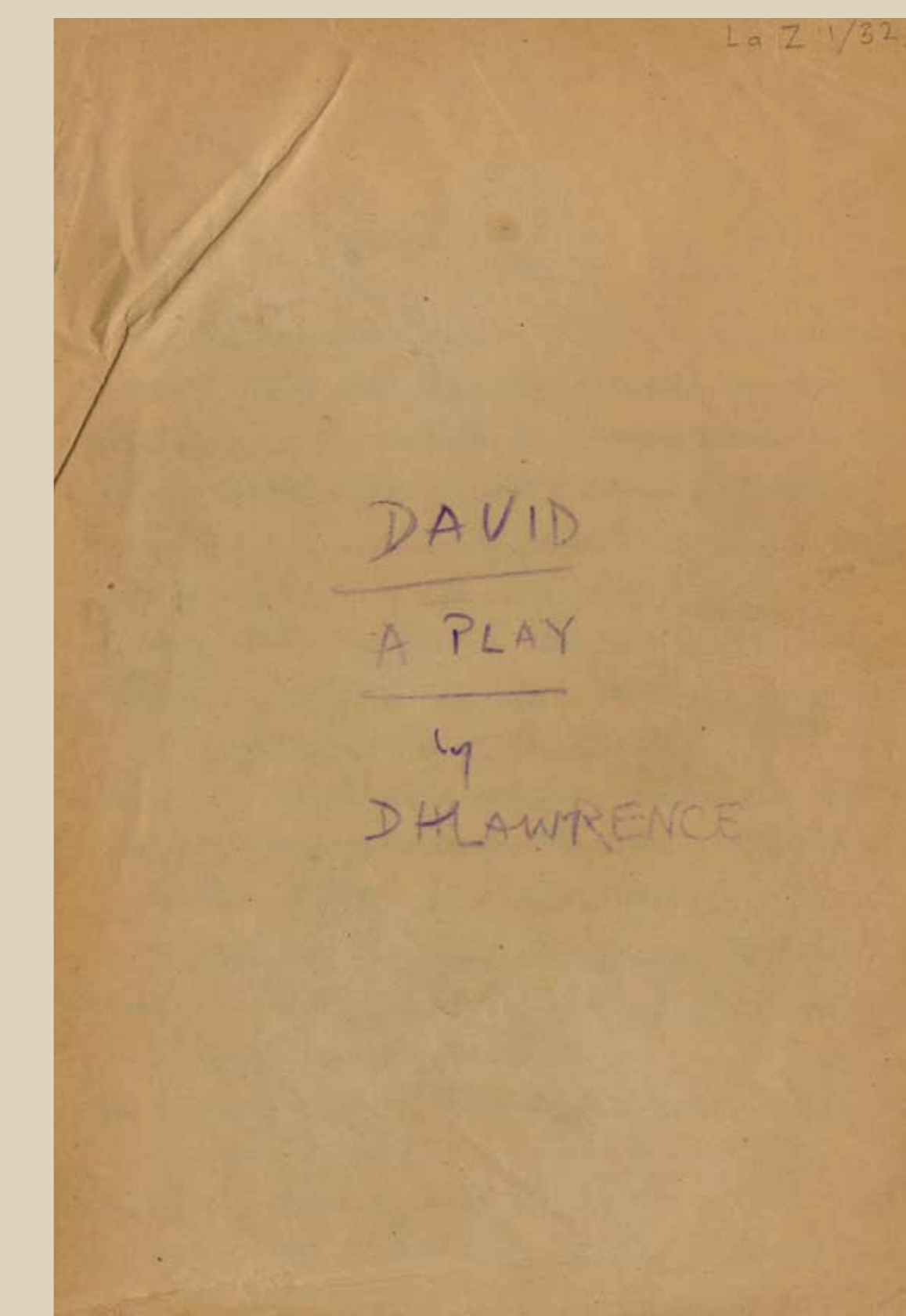
1 Lawrence and Frieda at the Villa Mirinda, near Florence, where they lived from 1926 to 1928; La Phot 1/25



3 Lawrence as a young boy between his parents, in a family photograph with his two brothers and two sisters; La R 8



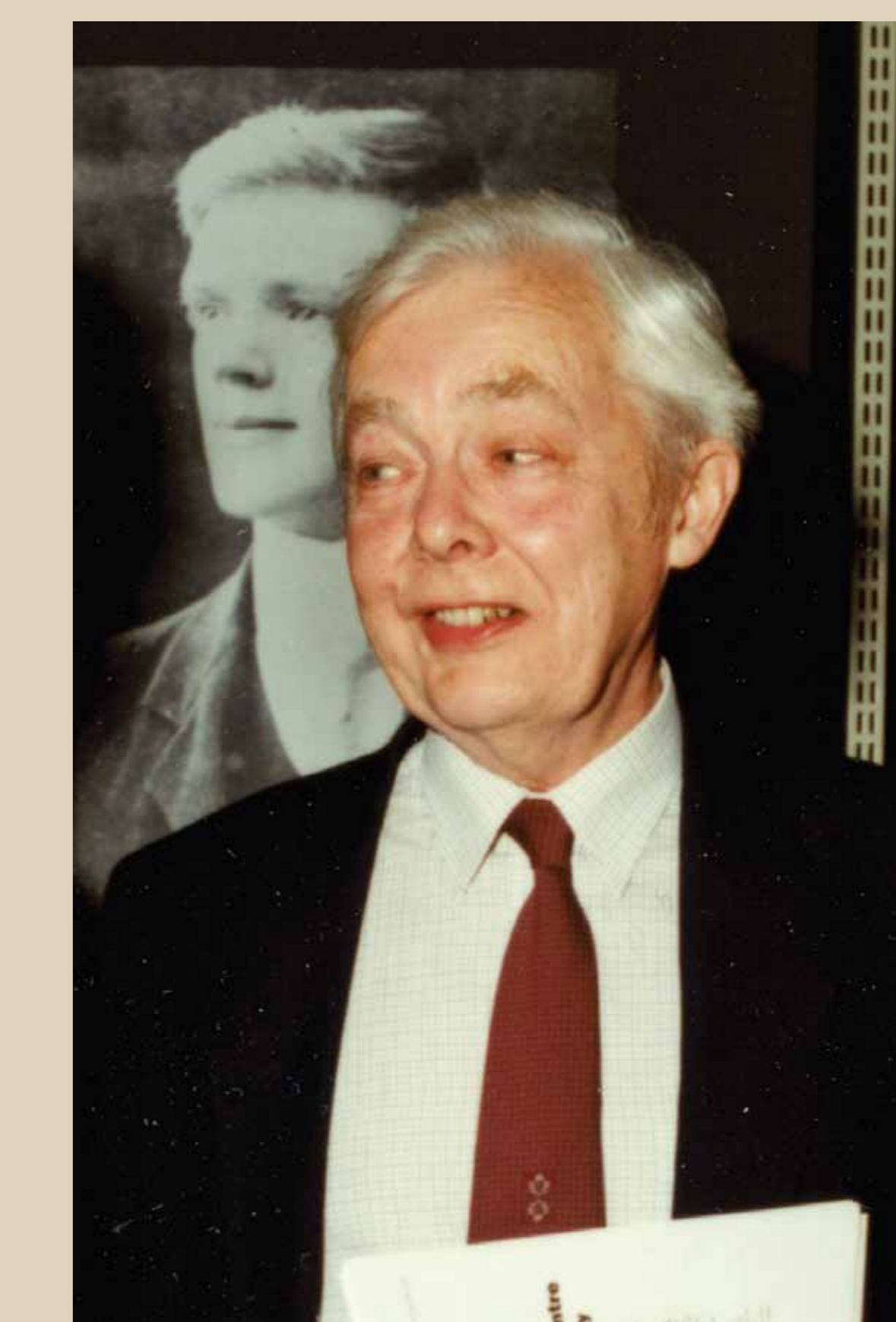
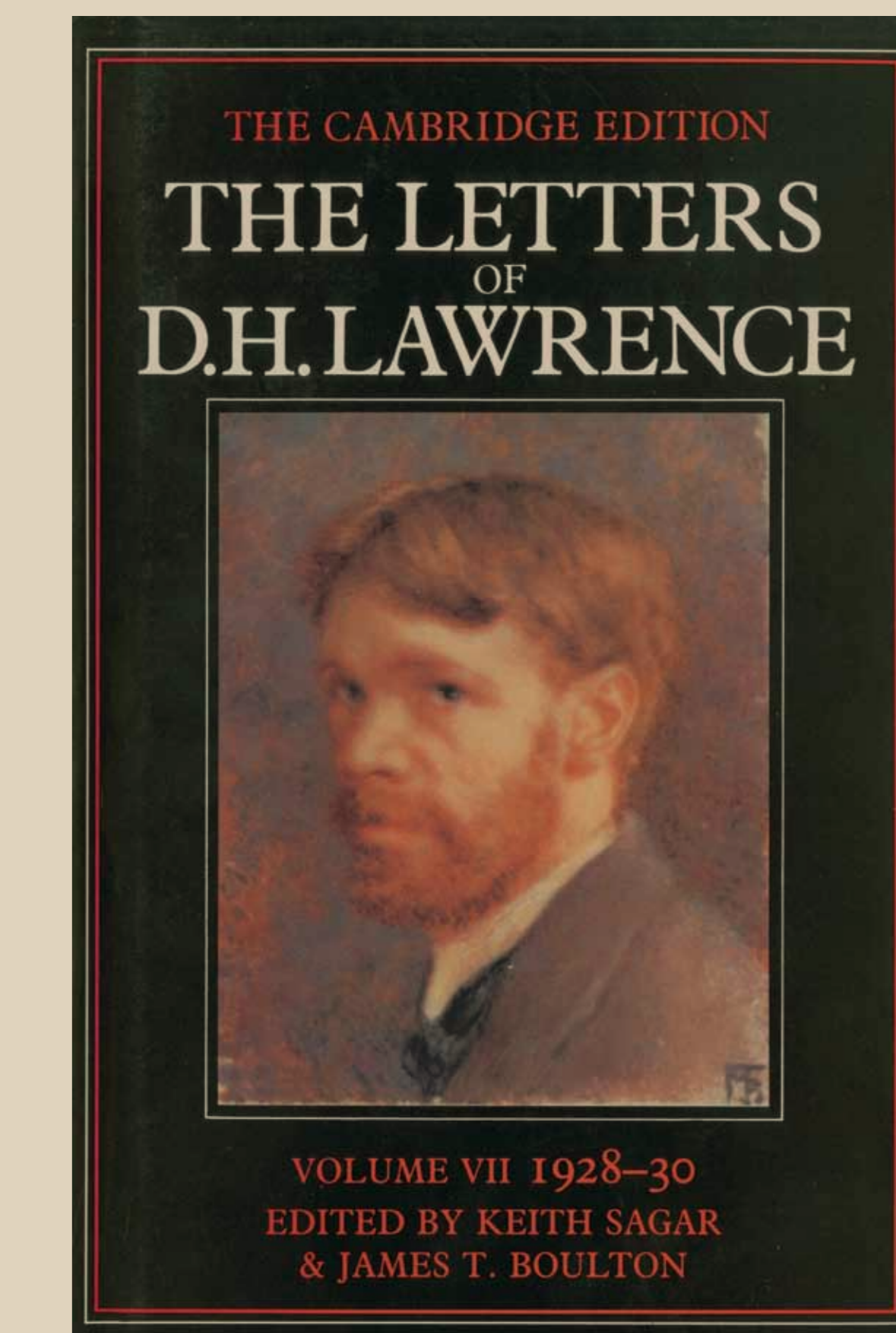
4 Front cover of D H Lawrence, *David* (1926); Lawrence Spec. Coll. PR6023.A9.D28. F26 Laz



4 Title page of autograph manuscript of Lawrence's play, *David*, Mar-June 1925; La Z 1/32

James T Boulton, attempted to locate Lawrence's letters throughout the world. A formidable research project resulted, entailing the transcription and annotation of over five and a half thousand letters, and still more have come to light since the publication of the eighth volume in 2000.

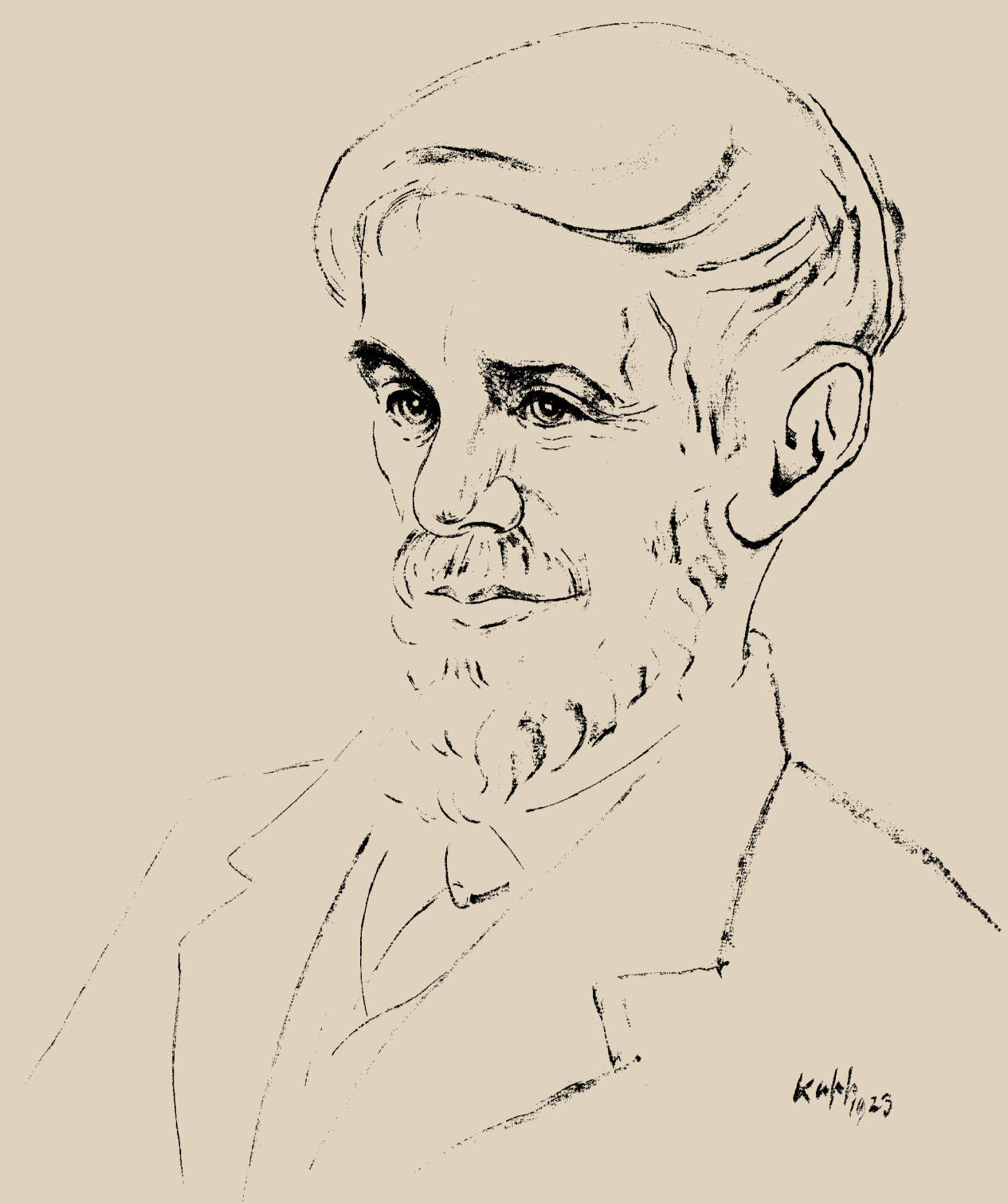
Examples of Lawrence's correspondence held at the University of Nottingham are a significant biographical resource. There is added value in the related archives of Lawrence scholars, recording their efforts to contact his correspondents and their descendants. In some cases this research resulted in the discovery of valuable 'lost' letters and their addition to the University's Lawrence Collections.



Professor James Boulton speaking at the University of Nottingham, 1985

Fortunately many of the letters survive. They were one of the earliest resources to be used by biographers, with the first collection edited by his friend Aldous Huxley just two years after Lawrence's death (*Letters*, 1932). Correspondence has remained a treasure trove for Lawrence scholars and enthusiasts ever since. A single item can upset previous assumptions, and new finds of Lawrence letters are eagerly sought.

The most authoritative publication of Lawrence letters has been the eight-volume edition published by Cambridge University Press, 1979-2000. This edition, under the General Editorship of Professor



A Global Canvas

Lawrence's literary output and influence guaranteed an international legacy, but other aspects of his biography put him on a world stage during his own lifetime.



Lawrence's visit to Mexico in 1923 was recorded by Witter Bynner, who shows him here with his wife Frieda and Willard Johnson; La Wb 1/23.

A constant traveller and close observer of the countries he visited, he wrote vividly about their landscapes and communities. From 1912, with the exception of the war years, he was regularly on the move, living at times in Germany, Italy, Ceylon (now Sri Lanka), Australia, USA, Mexico



Illustrations in D H Lawrence, *Sea and Sardinia* (New York, 1921, p.204) included this image of Fanni. They were by the South African artist Jan Juta, whom Lawrence had met in 1920; Lazarus PR6023.A9.S42.F21.

and France. He drew on these experiences in travel writings such as *Twilight in Italy*, *Sea and Sardinia*, *Etruscan Places* and *Mornings in Mexico*.

An appreciation of place and cultural difference is also apparent in his creative work. Two of his novels were set in Australia and one in Mexico. In others the central characters travel from England to Austria, Germany and Italy. Short stories and poems similarly drew inspiration from his life beyond England.

Lawrence spoke French, German and Italian, produced three volumes of translations from Italian into English and worked with his friend, the Ukrainian S S Koteliansky, on translations from Russian into English.



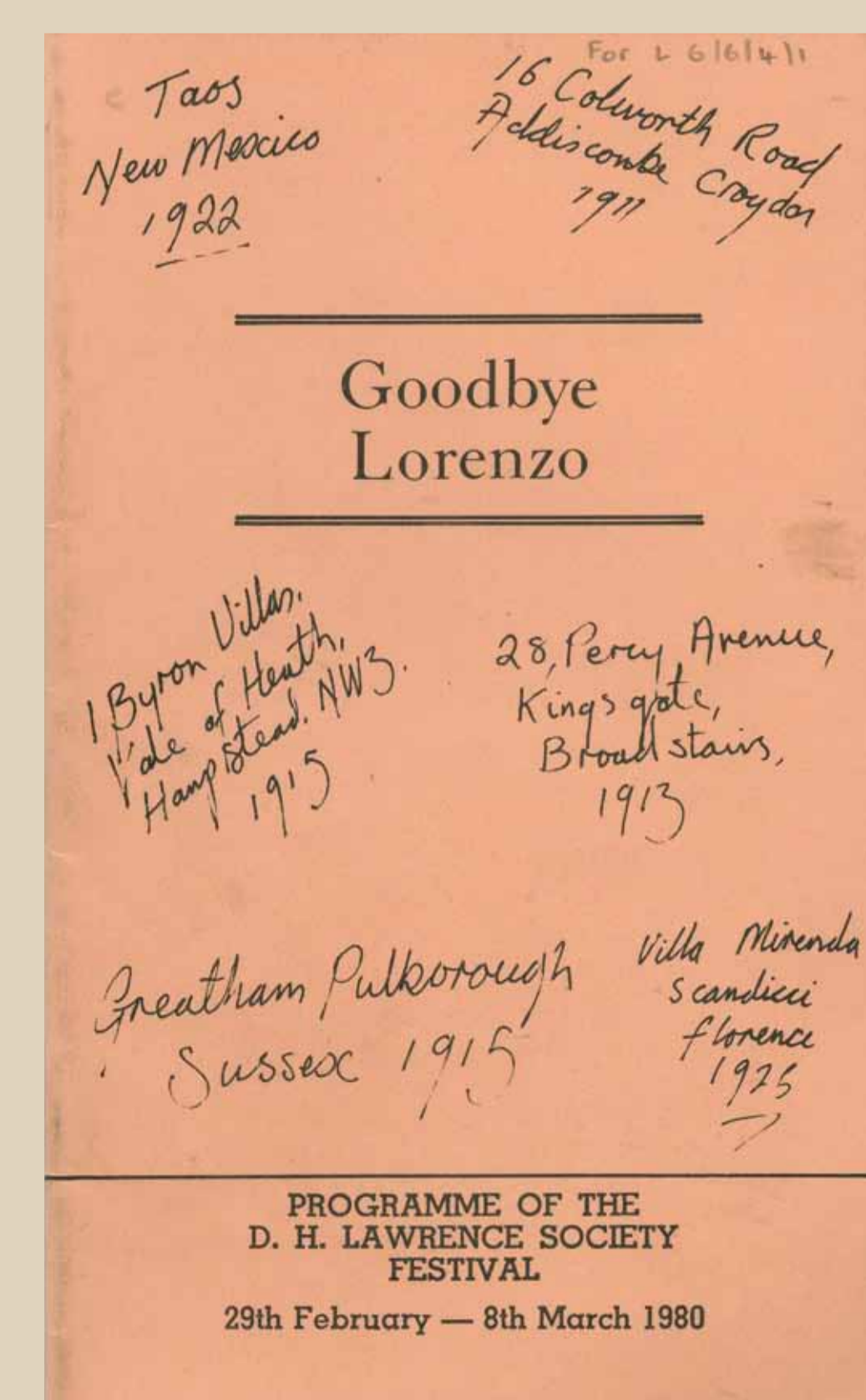
Views of the D H Lawrence Memorial Chapel at Taos, photographed here in 1954; La Phot 3/24,26

His memorial in Taos, New Mexico, celebrates his special relationship with the American Southwest, and his gravestone in Vence, France, draws European followers.

The availability of Lawrence in translation reveals the extent of his modern international audience. The most recent reckoning (*A Bibliography of D H Lawrence*, 3rd edition, 2001) lists forty-six pages of his work in languages ranging from Arabic, Assam and Bengali to Turkish, Urdu and Yiddish. There are Lawrence societies in North America, Korea and Australia and specialist journals in USA, France and Korea. Since 1985 international Lawrence conferences have been held in Boston, Shanghai, Montpellier, Paris, Ottawa, Taos, Naples, Kyoto, Santa Fe, and Sydney. Events in Nottingham and Eastwood draw members of this lively community, keen to explore the Midlands origins of Lawrence's international genius.



An early image of Lawrence's grave in Vence, France, taken before 1935; La Z 8/1/14.



Lawrence's experience of living in many different places inspired the covers of the Nottingham and Eastwood festival programme in May 1980; For L 6/6/4/1