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Eric Mottram and Old English: Revival and Re-Use in the 1970s

Eric Mottram is best remembered as a scholar of American literature and as one of the central figures in the 'British Poetry Revival' during the 1970s. His own poetry has received little attention in literary studies, however, and the important role of Old English literature as a resource for Mottram and his circle has not been acknowledged, despite the recent critical interest in the use of the earliest English literature by twentieth-century poets. Yet the Anglo-Saxon past was a strong influence on several poets who sought to challenge the forms of more commercial poetry during the 1970s: it was used through innovative acts of adaptation, small press publishing and translation. This essay will uncover some of the ways Old English was used and re-used during the 'Revival' years, addressing the extent to which it contributed to new kinds of poetics by focusing on Eric Mottram's work in particular. As a poet, editor and critic, Mottram was influenced by the creative translation projects of those he guided, such as his protégé Bill Griffiths, but his own poetry, especially his *A Book of Herne* (a collection of poems written 1975-81), developed forms of collage that brought the early medieval past into collision with new ways of thinking about poetic form.

Design in poetry gives access to both the most ancient and the most recent perceptual structures and signs.

- Eric Mottram, *Towards a Design in Poetry*[1]

Eric Mottram (1924-1995) was a poet, editor and scholar whose controversial work attempted to redefine the landscape of British poetry in the second half of the twentieth century. He is best remembered as a specialist in American literature and as the editor of the Poetry Society's *Poetry Review* from 1971-76, a period during which he often gave pride of place to little-known poets in what was the major poetry publication in the British Isles. His own poetry has received scant attention, despite the two-dozen collections of his own verse in existence.[2] Mottram's editorship was

central to what he would later call 'The British Poetry Revival': a counter-revolution of experimental and performance poetry that took place in the late 1960s and through the 1970s.[3] Peter Barry, in his history of Mottram's time as editor of *Poetry Review*, offers the following overview of this period: an 'odd thing happened in British poetry in the 1970s', he writes, as 'a small group of "radical" or "experimental" poets took over the Poetry Society, one of the most conservative of British institutions'.[4] Although the events in which Mottram and his circle questioned the literary mainstream during the 1970s have been documented in Barry's *Poetry Wars*, the importance of Old English literature as a resource for several of the figures involved in the 'Revival' is yet to be acknowledged, despite recent scholarly interest in the way many twentieth-century poets responded to early medieval cultural productions.[5] By defining the movement in which he was involved as a 'Revival', as well as writing criticism on the poets driving such a movement, Mottram made the possibility of approaching his poetry on anything other than its own critical terms a challenging one. Indeed, the small amount of writings on Mottram and associates such as Bill Griffiths for the most part have been by those who knew them or were at least involved in the poetry scene of that time. Investigating the early medieval influence on some of the new poetries of the 1970s is one way of expanding the possibilities for critical approaches to this period.

During the 1970s, interest in the design and form of Old English poetry was on the rise for scholarly translators in England and America, but, at the same time, this earliest English literature was also being translated and reworked by experimental writers, small press poets and translators outside of the academy. This essay will begin to uncover some of the ways Old English, and the Anglo-Saxon past more broadly, was re-imagined during these 'Revival' years by taking Eric Mottram's poetry and editorial endeavours as the core focus. By looking at Mottram's work we can start to understand how and why the literatures and places of the Anglo-Saxons featured in an approach to poetry that embraced 'open field, projective verse, sound text, concrete poetry, surrealist and dada developments, pop lyrics, and various conceptual forms'.[6] One of the most compelling things about the interactions between Mottram, his expansive network of poets and Old English was the way these writers played with and recycled early medieval language in new poetic objects that rethought both poetry and bookmaking. Some of this work was translation, but much of it moved into the realm of new composition, taking Anglo-Saxon poems,

monuments and places as models for poetic practices of collage and assembly. As an epoch-making event, the 'Revival', as Simon Perril notes, 'reverberates beyond its historical moment, and informs the poetic work of later generations and the questions they interrogate.'[7] In a related way, the poetry Mottram wrote during and just after the years of his editorship of *Poetry Review* often sought to confront and remove boundaries of periodization from verse. The medieval past played a significant role in this and in Mottram's own attempt to develop new theories of poetics. Furthermore, Mottram's literary work from this time also signals the ways he absorbed, and was influenced by, the creative translation projects of poets he guided, including those of his protégé Bill Griffiths, a major 'Revival' poet and publisher who would, at Mottram's suggestion, complete a PhD in Old English, and, later, curate the Eric Mottram Archive at King's College London.

Old Tools on New Skins: Eric Mottram's *A Book of Herne*

To celebrate the achievements of Eric Mottram's career, the opening of the Mottram Archive took place on Monday 19 January, 1998, at King's College, London, where Mottram had taught since 1960.[8] Alongside Stanley Cavell's lecture on Henry James and Fred Astaire, a poetry reading by Roy Fisher, and some musical improvisation—all reflecting the diversity of Mottram's interests—the composer John Kenny put music to a selection of poems from Mottram's *A Book of Herne*, a collection of verse concerned with British mythology and images of metamorphoses, which was published in 1981.

Concluding the sequence selected by Kenny was Mottram's poem 'From the Exeter Book':

both were Lord … radiant array on forest ground
timber helm under showers of night
backs dark and marvellous brothers
leather belly … by his will … waded
deep streams safe valleys
hoar frost in their tines
agile blood … black swallowed water
hoof acts … horned eyes

bare instep on leafy mould

wind tide in high oaks … bleached limestone (1978)[9]

Enigmatic in its form and content, the poem offers little extra detail about what kind of derivation 'from' the Exeter Book, that tenth-century collection of Old English riddles, elegies and lyrics, it actually is. Nor can one be sure on reading this poem that it is a 'translation'. Such a disjunctive, fragmented style reflects Old English poetics, but this kind of less-sentence-based, more phrasal structure was also characteristic of a considerable amount of poetry produced by 'Revival' writers.

Collected within *A Book of Herne* were poems Mottram had written over the period of 1975-81, amidst the later years of the 'Revival' and during the aftermath of his reign as editor at the Poetry Society, when he was beginning to reflect on poetic design, and on the work of the poets he helped fashion, in his critical writings.[10] *Herne* is an assembly of poems that explore and re-imagine a tradition of British mythology circulating around the figure of Herne the Hunter and the being that Mottram viewed as his later incarnation, the Green Man. Herne the Hunter, a spirit or deity of Windsor Forest first mentioned explicitly in English literature in Shakespeare's *The Merry Wives of Windsor* (in Act IV, Scene 4), has a long ancestry going back, some anthropological studies believe, to the early Celts and Anglo-Saxons.[11] Moving through *Herne*, the reader navigates landscapes ancient and thickly forested; journeying through the very roots of early Britain, spotting the recurring motifs as well as illustrations of the stag and its antlers, and other kinds of masks all circulating around Herne himself, 'a hunt ghost green in spirit / his branches the oak's demon tines' (as Mottram writes in the *Herne* poem 'Windsor Forest'). The imagery of 'From the Exeter Book', the second poem in this compilation, is certainly not out of place: like the other poems alongside it, it is fractured and fragmented. It is a sequence of images. Flitting, fleeting glimpses of a creature moving through dense woodland are the essence of the poem: shadowed and half-concealed, its 'tines' and 'hooves' darting past us before it vanishes back into the dark, this being eludes us as we attempt to grasp it, as many of those objects and animated 'things' do in the riddles of the Exeter Book itself.

At the end of *Herne*, 'Resources' are listed for each poem. The resources for 'From the Exeter Book' are 'riddles 88, 89 and 93 from *The Riddles of the Exeter Book*, ed. and trans. John Porter, 1978'.[12] Mottram's poem, then, focuses on several

Old English riddles through the lens of John Porter's translations.[13] The three riddles Mottram has used have the common solution 'inkhorn', although Riddle 89 is damaged enough to make any solution questionable. Battered and fragmentary in the Exeter Book, Riddles 89 and 93 trace the history of the inkhorn, or inkwell, from its past as the horn or antler of a living creature to its re-crafted, functional state as a carved object filled with black ink. These poems, collated in 'From the Exeter Book', are re-situated within a larger Herne the Hunter mythography – the images of antlers and woodland link them with the other texts and images in the *Herne* collection – and the refashioning of natural material (the antlers of a stag) into new objects (inkhorns) that contain the history of the resources that were used to form them mirrors the processes of collage, assembly and cut-up techniques that Mottram employs in his poetry. In the 'Exeter Book' poem, Riddles 88, 89 and 90 compress into a new kind of collage-riddle.

An artistic practice with its origins in the work of Pablo Picasso and Guillaume Apollinaire, who defined it, collage is derived from the French *coller* (to paste).[14] By the second half of the twentieth century, however, collage in experimental English and American literature had expanded to become what Rona Cran has called 'a physical practice and a theoretical principle' that was as much about 'sticking string and scraps of ephemera to paper' as it was about 'an intellectual and emotional relationship with a given aesthetic environment'.[15] There was much potential in collage for revivalist poets – it was a way of bringing different temporal moments into conversation, as Mottram's critical writings on William Burroughs suggest.[16] The Exeter Book poem in *Herne* amasses pieces of Porter's translated riddles so that a new poetic object emerges as an example of what Clive Bush has called 'dramatic enactments of the work, exchanges, languages, and lives of Mottram's chosen visionary company. The poem becomes a meeting place of the living and the dead.'[17]

In Old English Riddle 88, the antler speaks as one of two 'brothers', and of its place amidst the protection of woodland:

> Eard wæs þy weorðra   þe wit on stodan,
> hyrstum þy hyrra.   Ful oft unc holt wrugon,
> wudubeama helm   wonnum nihtum,
> scildon wið scurum   (lines 11-14a)

[the domain was worthy where we two stood, the higher in honour, very often the holt covered us, a helm of wood-beams in the wan nights, shielded us against showers][18]

Inhabiting their *eard* on the head of the stag, the antlers, as brothers in arms, are raised high in honour as though they were warriors, and this, simultaneously, suggests the prized, elevated status of antlers themselves in heroic culture. In John Porter's translation of these lines, the scene is shaped more explicitly as one in which the antlers grow upon the surface of the stag's back: 'the ground we grew on grew lovelier / more radiant by our array, forest hid us, / timbers helm in the dark of night'.[19] The opening lines of Mottram's poem are clearly based on this: 'radiant array on forest ground / timber helm under showers of night / backs dark and marvellous brothers'. Porter's translations have shaped Mottram's response to and interest in the riddles about the antler and the stag. Riddle 93, with its anthropomorphic representation of the stag as the heroic 'frea' or 'lord' of the antlers, occupying a similarly sacred yet threatening environment, is illegible in parts: 'wod / dægrime frod, deo[.........]s' (ll. 7b-8). Translation of these lines in Porter's text fills in the gaps on metrical grounds, and suggests the antlered stag 'waded through deep streams'. Again, this is seen in Mottram's version: 'leather belly … by his will … waded deep streams safe valleys'.

Porter's version of Riddle 89 responds to a key Old English word, 'wamb' (meaning 'womb', but also, more broadly, the stomach of a living thing), and presents it thus:

$$\begin{array}{cc} & \text{the thing} \\ \text{had a belly} & \\ & \text{was leather} \\ & \text{behind.}^{20} \end{array}$$

This is a response to the fragmentary text of the Old English poem, which runs as follows:

[…………………
……]e with   wombe hæfde

[……………………..

…..]tne leþre   wæs beg[……….

………….]on hindan   (ll. 2-5)

As a process, Mottram's resourcing that leads to 'From the Exeter Book' is more than a mere copying out of Porter's interpretive and occasionally transformative translations. Porter's response to the missing parts of Riddle 89 quoted above does not reproduce the manuscript gaps but instead breaks up the lines and arranges the word-images in a way that forces us to move our eyes back and forth, middle to left. 'From the Exeter Book' sees Mottram particularly interested in using the fragmentary state of these inkhorn riddles, which come to resemble objects of age and containment filled with the 'agile blood' of knowledge and with the ink that will set down histories on pages of animal skin. Use of 'tine', which is related to Old English 'tind' (meaning 'tine' but also 'tooth' or 'prong of an [made] implement'), and his keeping of 'timber' (which in Old English has the broader meaning of 'material' that can be used to build structures), suggest further interest on Mottram's part in the survival – in language, in object, in natural materials that can be re-made – of human expression over long periods of time.[21] And, in 'From the Exeter Book', Mottram does not fill in the majority of gaps in these manuscript riddles as Porter occasionally does (Mottram uses dots to signal the lacunae), but captures them, using such space to evoke the glimpsed movement of not only a stag moving through dense forestry but also of an antler passing through the ages and, moreover, to suggest the transition and transmission of a text through time as it becomes subject to the ravages of the centuries that threaten to render it incomprehensible.

An overall exercise in collage, the composition of Exeter Book poem involved re-ordering and re-inscribing previous texts, as well as gathering from sources. These techniques are employed throughout *Herne*. Such was Mottram's resourcefulness, he curated words and images from other works, and from other languages, and re-assembled them so that they became part of a new poetic whole within a larger thematic, mythic sequence. These methods reflect his poetic philosophy that 'the experimental poet is a 'language-designer'; he escribes rather than describes'.[22] So too the power of collage, Pierre Joris writes, 'comes from the shock of reading/tracing seams.'[23] Where the Anglo-Saxon past is concerned, Mottram's approach often

involved seeing distant times and places through the work of his collaborators and fellow 'Revival' poets, amassing his readings of them, and of Anglo-Saxon culture, into new arrangements.

The sense of place formulated through the poems of *Herne* is multi-temporal, achieved through layering and entwining different epochs within one contained poetic object. Places, particularly those with mythic, superstitious or ancient associations, become vortexes in which a number of eras can co-exist. A prime example of this is the poem 'Wycoller', in which the real abandoned village of Wycoller that thrived in the medieval and Tudor periods, now a site of a ruined stately hall and haunting vaccary stones, becomes a vantage-point for an observation of deep time. The place-name is Anglo-Saxon, a merging of Old English 'wic' (dwelling place) and 'alr' (alder), meaning something akin to 'place of the alder trees'.[24] What grabs Mottram's mind in this poem is the possibility that Wycoller is now occupied by many co-existing centuries. It is a place where languages, broken and re-assembled, can produce a meshwork of disparate, connected temporalities:

> Wycoller's vaccary walls
> divide Pepper Ing field and Hellman Heads
> with Saxon rock teeth
> restocked for kings
> wie alr   alder place
> community   narrow col
>   water durr
>   colder calder
> a narrow water community
> cwic   evergreen alder[25]

The 'Saxon rock teeth' here, the old vaccary stones with their connotations of ritual and witchcraft, looking like rows of teeth, serve as a platform into an excavation of the place and its name: Mottram breaks apart the makings of the place, taking the 'alr' (Old English for 'alder') and 'wic (the 'wie' in the poem appears to be the typesetters' error) and providing the modern equivalent, 'alder place', after a long caesura, thus etymologizing the place name itself. In what follows, that 'alder place', fitting in with *Herne*'s imagery of groves, woods, and green spaces, gives rise to a sequence of

wordplay, rhyme and related sounds, threading in and around the original Anglo-Saxon place name, resting on *cwic*, that Old English word for 'living' or 'alive', which bears similarities to *wic* (which can also mean dairy farm, or settlement), as if to suggest that the alders represent the past existing and threshing and giving life to the present.

The myth of Herne the Hunter expands through poems that explore the survival and ruination in and of place. In 'Midsummer: the Longest Day', a multilingual poem that shifts from German (quoting scraps from Wagner's *Die Meistersinger*) to French (the poem also quotes directly from Baudelaire's "Le Crépuscule du soir"), he suggests that however slowly time might pass, it will continue in its erosion of matter, but that this process can be given poetic form. The collision in the poem of images of crumbling masonic art with those of making and crafting creates an atmosphere of what Mottram terms 'old tools' on 'new skins':

burgstede burston

burst apart   rime on lime
master masons in earthgrip

city shrunk to barren patches
into the ringed   pool
how the   city

the centre spider drinks blood

lies still in lies' silk net
a potion still
so we cannot hope but
the Meisters' hope

but makers of leather and songs

break lasts
bring old tools down on new skins
among languages

bring forms to death
                        kill mirror dependences[26]

The line 'burgstede burston' is taken from the Old English poem *The Ruin*, also from the Exeter Book manuscript, and it can be translated as '(the) stronghold burst'. *The Ruin* itself, a heavily damaged poem in an anonymous Anglo-Saxon voice that meditates on a devastated, ancient building (quite possibly an actual Roman site, such as Bath), becomes an object that occupies Mottram's new poem as an old construction of language and material. In the long quotation above, the Old English poem is the foundation of a new collage of imagery concerned with masonry. *The Ruin*'s own shifting movements between past and present—between the era, or prehistory, of the mythical 'enta geweorc' (work of giants, *The Ruin*, l. 2b) and the moment in which the speaker beholds the stone baths in the 'now' of the poem—gives rise to Mottram's own approach to the theme of *sic transit gloria mundi*, of earthly things passing away. Giving this theme a new form, a new 'skin', Mottram places the Old English 'burgstede burston' alongside a modern rendering of 'burston', his 'burst apart'. The caesura that follows this resembles the conventional layout of Old English poetry in modern printed editions, while the lack of word-division in compounds such as 'earthgrip' maintains the heavy tenor of Old English poetry. Old English and Modern English words stand alone, mirroring each other across poetic lines. Gesturing towards the etymological origins of the words for breaking and bursting as well as building, the poem, like 'Exeter Book' and 'Wycoller', also evokes the materiality of language, using language (or languages) to structure one overall portrait filled with the sounds and shapes of tongues old and new.

        Following that 'burst apart' is a caesura before the reference to 'rime on lime / master masons in earthgrip'. This is also drawn directly from the Old English *Ruin*, where 'hrim on lime' in line 4b refers to the rime that has gathered on the mortar of the crumbled buildings and, in lines 6b-7a, 'eorðgrap hafað | waldendwyrhtan' (more literally translated as 'the grip of the earth holds the master builders') refers to the craftsmen of old, now in their graves. It is in this part of the poem that Mottram, using *The Ruin*'s evocation of time's erosion, presents a place diminishing out of existence. Traces of the ancient city remain and the most damaged lines of the OE *Ruin* in the Exeter Book manuscript evoke the stronghold's crumbled foundations as well as their ongoing decay: in the destroyed text on the MS page, words denoting places show

through, including the compound 'hringmere' (l. 44/45), which refers to the stone bath. A translation of *hringmere*, 'ringed pool', has been inserted by Mottram in his poem at a moment in which his own lines begin to become separated, and the city he depicts 'shrunk to barren patches': the collage-poem, then, mirrors the city it illustrates here, a city that draws distant pasts to it, but crumbles as we observe it doing so.

As the poem moves out from this 'centre', where the 'spider drinks blood', ensuing lines offer some consolation: 'we cannot hope but the Meisters' hope', Mottram writes. The 'makers of leather and songs' he refers to here, who 'bring old tools down on new skins' and 'bring forms to death', allow the ancient builders to be aligned with the experimental poets of the present. For Mottram, both the ancient Meisters who crafted their immense structures of stone and the contemporary poet, using collage, or the related forms of concrete poetry or found poetry, work in related ways. Laying block by block their own time upon another, fashioning and designing objects that 'kill mirror dependences' and do not continue to mould boundaries between times and forms, these poets break down the blockades that resist intellectual movement through the centuries, as Mottram will write in the subsequent lines to those above in 'Midsummer':

> we discover how to rip texts
> to true structure out of perfection ghosts
>
> masters in electric armour

Ripping texts and re-assembling them into 'true' structures here gestures towards the ways in which collage, and the more invasive, though connected, cut up methods practiced by writers such as William Burroughs (perhaps one of those 'masters in electric armour' referred to here) were practices that brought disparate elements, texts, or periods into conversation. 'Resources' listed for 'Midsummer' are rich and multilingual. They include 'Anglo-Saxon poems – "The Ruin"' and also '"The Spider"' as well as '*Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*'.[27] Lines lifted from *Gawain* in 'Midsummer' are easy to see: Mottram writes that 'the Green Man leaps / he is not the sea nor knight in Staffordshire' before quoting from the Middle English directly with 'the mon in the grene / the shene blode over his schulderes / schot to the erthe'.

The spider at the centre of the ruined city in 'Midsummer', drinking blood, is influenced by a translation found in a collaboration between the poet Bill Griffiths, who was first published by Mottram in *Poetry Review* in 1972, and John Porter, entitled *North Atlantic Texts I*, printed in 1976 by Griffiths' Pirate Press (Griffiths' most productive small press and one of the major small presses during the 'Revival').[28] Mottram's 'Midsummer' is dated to 1977. *North Atlantic Texts I* contained parallel-text translations by Griffiths and Porter of the Old English *Cædmon's Hymn*, *Wulf and Eadwacer*, *The Ruin* and *The Rune Poem* as well as *The Spider*—a translation of a later medieval text from the thirteenth-century bestiary found in British Library MS Arundel 292.[29] This small press booklet of translations was the major influence on the 'Midsummer' poem, it seems. Mottram's use of small press translations by poets existing on the boundaries of academia fit with his own philosophy about poetry and tradition.

Small presses were an important element of the 'Revival', allowing poets to produce and distribute their own work, but they were also a way of experimenting with form, images and bookmaking technologies in ways that produced poetic projects that conflated the visual and the verbal.[30] Mottram edited and guided many small press projects, including those published by Bill Griffiths. One of the most compelling of these is John Porter's translation of *Beowulf*, published in 1975 by Pirate Press. This version of *Beowulf* offers further inklings of the philosophy of translation at the core of a considerable amount of 'Revival' poetry. Discussing texts such as Porter's *Beowulf*, Griffiths would write that translations of Old English should 'translate the reader to the original text' and 'encourage flexibility in the writer's use of forms / expressions / thoughts / sounds or help establish a more tolerant concept of what poetry can be. And it is an exciting process because it is an exploring.'[31] Translations in *North Atlantic Texts I* and in Porter's *Riddles* moved Mottram to engage with the original Old English language in an explorative, experimental manner.

Mottram's personal copy of Porter's *Beowulf* is in the Mottram Archive at King's College London. It is a striking publication, with its A3 size, pink cover, and hybrid monster illustration by Jeff Nuttall **[see fig. 1],** and its very genesis seems to have been driven by Mottram's enthusiasm.[32] A letter sent to Mottram by John Porter and Bill Griffiths, just prior to publication, includes a sample of translation and outlines the manifesto behind the project. Porter and Griffiths state that this edition,

though 'rough and ready', will present 'parallel texts' – Old English alongside the modern English translation – which, in turn

> will make this the only edition of Beowulf that will enable non-specialists in Anglo-Saxon to approach the richness of sound, rhythm and diction in the original text. At present Beowulf is the most <u>unread</u> poem in English literature: a parallel text edition would be a heroic step forward for the poem!

Although originally a small press publication, the aims behind Porter's *Beowulf* were ambitious, and they echo (and precede) a broader revivifying of Old English that was beginning to take place in British and American poetry at this time.[33] In the bottom corner of the letter above there is an exclamation from Porter addressed to Mottram: 'it was your suggestion!' Moreover, Griffiths was always looking for innovations in poetry and publishing. No other poet of the nineteen-seventies was writing or publishing works of translation (or imaginative re-creation) from Old English in such volume. But poetry was changing in a broader sense, too, and Griffiths' work reflects in particular the rising number of translations from and responses to Old English poetry being published, as well as the growth in the United States of experimental work with early medieval resources.

Indicative of the networks established between 'Revival' poets by Eric Mottram in the 1970s, the first edition of Porter's *Beowulf* was a collaborative project and Mottram was the gateway for many publications of this kind during his time as editor of *Poetry Review*.[34] The poetry published by Mottram in *Poetry Review* that responded to the medieval past is of particular interest here because it had affinities with his own collage poetry and with the 'explorative' translation expounded by Griffiths, suggesting a commonality amongst 'Revival' poets in the way the past and older languages were implemented within new poetic forms.

Eric Mottram's *Poetry Review*

One of Eric Mottram's foremost achievements at *Poetry Review* was to instigate and consolidate cross-pollination between British and American schools of experimental poetry. Among the American avant-garde poets given space in *Poetry Review* was Thomas Meyer who, like Porter and Griffiths, had been working a translation of

Beowulf during the 1970s.[35] Meyer had taken up the opportunity to live in the West Riding of Yorkshire, near Northumbria, with Jonathan Williams, in 1972. While he was there, Basil Bunting visited him frequently, and they discussed translation at length. Meyer recalled: 'Living in the north of England and [being] in contact with [Basil] Bunting, the 'North' was certainly a powerful presence'.[36] His interest in place, translation and Old English informed the 'lyrics' he contributed to *Poetry Review*, which were preceded by his 'note':

> In 1972 I was translating *Beowulf* and tinkering with Old Norse, some Early Welsh, the intricate knotworks of their poesies. These then came out of that. A few lyrics composed in an idiolect, my own, though firmly, simply rooted in Old English and Norse. And this 'hymn' or song apparently in English. The aim was *sound*, the ear's, to risk the mind's as much as was bearable. These are evidences of their author's absolute trust in the tongue at the tip of complete distrust. Pronunciation of the three 'lyrics' follows that generally suggested for Old English. They are each followed by a quick Modern English gloss.

One could note that Meyer risks contradiction here, 'simply' rooting his lyrics in the 'intricate knotworks' of languages like Old English, but, given his communications with Bunting, publication by Mottram, and his own study of Anglo-Saxon, Meyer was certainly aware of the complexities and workings of Old English poetics. Built on this is his interest in sound and the materiality of language (where sound becomes a material substance in the forms that come to exist on the page), which corresponds to Mottram's own use of Old English in *Herne*. Indeed, Meyer's 'idiolect' is made up mostly of Old English words arranged into a collage:

fleen a grubbes

        al gerymdon

wyntres hraec

        edroc

        tredden

untredden tuft

nægl an flatt
uta stigg

fleas for grubs (maggots)
all make room,
winter's rick,
rot,
trodden,
untrodden (knotgrass) tuft,
spikey-one (hedgehog) flat
out on road.[37]

This 'Lyric' in *Poetry Review* is a poetic object that gives shape to a peculiar collection of sounds, echoes and images. Shifting from decay to spaciousness, and referencing things trodden and untrodden, the lines connote expansion and motion – the mystery lies in whether this is regressive or progressive. The Old English verb 'geryman' (past form 'gerymdon' in Meyer's lyric), meaning 'to extend, make room, expand', provides a sense of widening space, treading to that final 'uta stigg' – use of the Old English words 'ut' ('out beyond the bounds') and 'stig' ('path') end the lyric with an open road, an unknown destination.[38] Reflecting the expanse of life and death, the words of the makeshift tongue in this poem refract and bounce off one another and are then unpicked and interacted with in a gloss-translation that again plays off the sounds: 'winter's ric' for 'wintres hraec', for instance, takes the Old English word 'hreac' (referring to a stack of hay) and uses the word 'ric', resembling modern English 'rick' (as in 'hay-rick'), which is also the closest to the Old English in sonic effect. Arranging this poem as though it was an 'original' language followed by a 'translation' (or 'gloss') makes apparent the porous boundary between poetic craft in the early Middle Ages and now, as the translation echoes the text it responds to. Through these techniques, Meyer conjures a peculiar site of interconnection, of composed, pseudo Old English and staccato Modern English, creating an assembly that compresses time, that places decay and stasis alongside the impression of an ongoing, trod road. There is something resistant about this poetic method, too: it is not

straightforward, it makes little sense on the literal level and it ruptures the forms associated with more traditional poetics.

The relationship between Mottram and Meyer – like so many of Mottram's relationships with British and American poets altering and refashioning the landscape of poetry in English – was one of collaboration, and one in which Mottram edited and commented on Meyer's work. [39] Mottram had outlined his intentions to publish diverse and anti-establishment poetry, the kind of which Meyer's poem is an example, when first taking up his post as editor: 'There is an extreme need for a poetry magazine in this country', he wrote, 'which will represent centrally what is being created in poetry in our time. We simply do not have it, the existing outlets being provincial and partisan in the extreme. The *Poetry Review* must stand or fall on its ability to print a wide range of different kinds of poetry'. [40] Issues of *Poetry Review* which Mottram published are populated with translations from a variety of languages, as well as uses of Old English, such as those in Mottram's *Herne* or Meyer's lyrics, that imbricate the Anglo-Saxon language within larger patterns of word-collage. In *Poetry Review* 65, Number 1, for instance, Mottram published 'Maldon' by Bruce McClelland, which begins with a dedication to the Anglo-Saxonist Thomas D. Hill and with a first line that tackles perhaps the most infamous word in the Old English poem *The Battle of Maldon*:[41]

(for T. Hill, Witodlice)

Byrhtnopes ofermod:[42]
a question:
that narrow strip
at what tide?

[…]

Ofermod is not hybris.[43]
& it is not any river's banks
nor space between,
our feet fall in.[44]

McClelland speaks back to one of the best-known Old English poems, which is about a catastrophic attempt to resist a Viking incursion that took place in 991 at Blackwater in Essex, during Æthelred II's reign. In that poem, the nobleman Byrhtnoth leads an outnumbered force of Anglo-Saxon retainers to the slaughter. The Old English poem has received considerable attention to Byrhtnoth's heroism, with much commentary on the following lines:

> Ða se eorl ongan   for his ofermode
> alyfan landes to fela   laþere ðeode.   (lines 89-90)

> [Then the earl, because of his pride, gave up too much land-ground to the loathed people][45]

As Byrhtnoth allows the Viking host to cross the waterway, he condemns his men to certain death. The Old English word 'ofermod', which connotes either pride or resoluteness, or the state of having too much 'mod' or volition, draws the focus.[46] McClelland ruminates on the ambiguities surrounding Byrhtnoth's decision to fight fire with fire. He begins with his own Old English line, '*Byrhtnopes ofermod*', based on lines 89-90 from *Maldon* shown above, and begins to interrogate the temporal and spatial location of the tragedy: 'at what tide?' he wonders, did that state of 'ofermod' localize Byrhtnoth and how was it connected with the giving up of too much ('fela') land to the encroaching seafarers? As with the poems by Mottram and Meyer above, this is not a translation, but an expansion, a line of thought or enquiry developing from Old English words to interlacings of past and present place. A few lines later, McClelland picks up on 'ofermod' again, arguing that it is not 'hybris', thus taking a stand on Byhrtnoth's decision to let the Viking army cross, an act that could be interpreted as one belonging to a man with too much over-confidence. To condemn Byhrtnoth's 'ofermod' is to overlook 'youth as we may find' and 'the names & numbers which count'—that is, as McClelland writes in parenthesis, '(I mean not a poem / against war. I mean one / in it. / constantly.)'. The poem is steeped in war, as was Byrhtnoth, and war at its most unceasing and hopeless (Æthelred II's reign was infamously ill-advised) makes warriors lose sight of where they are and of what land or waterway they stand on. Building around an Old English word for breakage, McClelland concludes his poem with lines that riff on the incomplete nature of the

Anglo-Saxon text – as Mottram did in his 'Exeter Book' poem – as well as the placelessness and emptiness of conflict and the way the clamour and chaos of battle impose themselves on a soldier's ability to make rational decisions:

> break what must be
> *brocen* (where the
> poem is broken off)
> it must somehow
> be, the man in battle
> needs know less who he's
> fighting than
>
>
> where.[47]

Responses to Old English such as those of McClelland and Meyer, published by Mottram, were alternative ways of composing poetry that opposed and challenged the kind of traditional poetics that had become ingrained in mainstream poetry movements (especially those in what Mottram called 'the living death Movement' poetry of Larkin, Davie, Amis and Jennings).[48] Yet, as McClelland's poem also suggests, these recyclings allowed for the use of relatively untapped poetic resources for purposes of responding to struggles that had contemporary resonance, of conjuring senses of place and space that enquired deeply into the pasts of locales and landscapes that, through collage, soundplay and a language full of internal echoes and associations, became multitemporal meshworks. Reviving poetry involved looking to the distant, but local, past – and particularly to the past of Anglo-Saxon England, where it is possible to locate the origins of poetry in English. Seemingly disparate materials were also arranged by Mottram and the poets of his circle to form new poems and poetries that stood not only as affronts to the more mainstream Movement, but reflected exchange between experimental thinkers to-and-fro across the Atlantic (a dialogue that owed much to Mottram's work) and a rising interest in Anglo-Saxon language, image and place.

Eric Mottram and Anglo-Saxon Place

The latter stages of Mottram's reign as editor of *Poetry Review* were fraught. He was put under intense strain by the Poetry Society and their associated funding bodies, as were the poets who had seats on the Society's board. Mottram even sought to publish *Poetry Review* independently of the Poetry Society's funding and struggled. Members of the Society in support of Mottram stepped down in protest, and Mottram himself was ousted in 1976.[49]

Basil Bunting had become President of the Society in 1972, and his role coincided with Mottram's editorship, completing (at least at first) the taking up of positions that would lead to the Society's premises being used for the printing and distribution of a range of 'Revival' material. Correspondence between Bunting and Mottram stemmed in part from their professional roles within the Society, but they also became acquainted as poets interested in the early medieval past, and Mottram's poems influenced by or in dedication to Bunting turn to senses of Anglo-Saxon place, history and material culture consistently, in ways that correspond to or even develop the poetics at work in *Herne*.[50] Recently, Clare A. Lees and Joshua Davies have studied the influence of Northumberland's Anglo-Saxon heritage on Bunting's work.[51] But Mottram was the first to address this in interviews with and criticism on Bunting during the 1970s.[52] In Mottram's poetry dedicated to Bunting, the landscapes and seascapes of Northumberland become focal points and sites for the origin of English poetry. Surviving monuments from the early medieval period, brought to Mottram's attention following visits to Northumberland to see Bunting, also informed Mottram's philosophies about poetic design.

For The Jargon Society's commemoration of Basil Bunting's seventy-fifth birthday in 1977 (for 1975) Mottram composed a poem entitled 'Wing Commanded Salutation', a title that wryly responds to the request that submissions to the collection were 'salutary'. Reference to the Anglo-Saxon Bewcastle Cross and its runic inscriptions (some of which, including those at the top of the north face of the monument, are now illegible) open the poem. The runes on the west face of this stone monument, dated to around the early eighth century, name the makers of the cross (Hwætred, Wæthgar, and Alwfwold) and note the reign of Egfrid, king of Northumbria (from 664 to 670). Reliefs on the four sides of the cross detail vine

scrolls and interlace patterning, along with depictions of Christ treading on the beast of the Apocalypse, other animals and a sundial.[53] Interweavings of words, patterns, glyphs and images like these appealed to Mottram's poetic and critical mind, which on both fronts sought objectivist assemblies that collapsed the boundaries between marginal pasts and contemporary artistic practice. The collage that makes up the Bewcastle monument connects with the radical methods of 'Concrete Poetry' used by Mottram and other 'Revival' poets, while the monument itself might even be read as a concrete poem: performances at writers groups by 'Revival' poets often involved readings of inscribed materials and inanimate objects. In the final version of 'Salutation', Mottram runs through the sites of 'origin country', from Bywell to Hexham and Corbridge, and allows Algernon Charles Swinburne, the nineteenth-century poet who considered Northumberland and its Anglo-Saxon remnants the land of his heritage, to haunt the poem.[54] But 'Wing Commanded Salutation' begins with the Bewcastle cross as a marker, as a beginning of a journey through the land:

Bewcastle rune reads travel east without turning
wind scratched pillar in traverse origin country
Bywell sun wheels on tomb stone cross radials
swords from the Middle Sea   heads of star crystal[55]
six petalled coronels on Cheviot double hexachords
worn night stair of Hexham   descent to Corstopitum chamber

below twelve stones at nave centre a dark Saxon chamber
to places such men inhabit keep a light burning

[…]

a walking heart slows Swinburne to pace a giant passage
between sun and cloud and fell   in a salt blue sky
camels swing upward   a sailor from Spawn of the North
a bearded Balkan   an agent nabbed by Lapps out of woods
by Swin Burn   when certain men stand by their word
a pursuit of love in a dark age of the automatic shift[56]

Like those poems in *Herne* that are invested in ancient place, 'Wing Commanded Salutation' is a constellation of objects within and of locales; of buildings through which time has and continues to pass; and of leaps of imagination from these static, quiet spaces to multiple series' of related things: the poem descends, too, deep into what Mottram calls 'origin country' in the opening lines, and the swerving movement through churchyards containing Anglo-Saxon monuments takes the reader to stairs that lead to chambers and crypts. The 'worn night stair of Hexham descent to Corstopitum chamber / below twelve stones at nave centre a dark Saxon chamber' here refers to Hexham Abbey, founded by Bishop Wilfred in 671-73, situated by Corbridge. Mottram gives the Roman form 'Corstopitum' for Corbridge which, as Bethany Fox has demonstrated, survived in part as early Anglian settlers preserved 'cor' and attached to it an Old English form (here, OE 'brycg').[57] 'Wycoller' in *A Book of Herne* demonstrated Mottram's interest in places and place names across time and here, traversing a northern landscape where the first routes for Anglian settlers were likely to have been, movement through borderlands is akin to the ambulation of a reader around the Bewcastle Cross: motion across both this landscape and the monument involve passing and contemplating languages with different histories, while experiencing traces of peoples with different origins.

Dedicated to St Andrew, Hexham Abbey occupies Mottram's poem because of its layers and depths of history: its Anglo-Saxon remains can be seen above ground, and it was rebuilt, or built over, during the twelfth century; the famous Anglo-Saxon crypt beneath was constructed with Roman stones from the nearby bridge at Corbridge. The crypt and its four chambers are vaulted, with sharp turning passageways. It is to this 'centre' Mottram arrives in his poem, but he does not focus on its vacuousness or silence, but on how it remains, how it perpetuates the past as we inhabit it in the now ('places such men inhabit keep a light burning'), as these lands did for Swinburne, who often returned to the north from the south for poetic inspiration.

On February 22, 1972, a few years before the publication of 'Wing Commanded Salutation', Bunting wrote a letter asking to see some of Mottram's poems. In the same piece, Bunting expresses a longing for the north east of England:

It'd be fine to run you round the moors and fells, and through the forest of Liddesdale

(Hermitage about the grimmest castle in the island) or over the enchanting run to

Briggflatts – 100 miles with never a factory or a town above 3000 population in sight,

unlike anybody's idea of England. And if we see any bloody Jutes or Saxons we can

chuck dirt at them. Or Bewcastle. Or even just Hexham and Bywell, next door to us,

splendid places.[58]

Bunting here counts on Mottram's understanding of the region and its connection to the Anglo-Saxon past: Bewcastle, Hexham and Bywell are Anglo-Saxon sites, and they are certainly monuments of the history of the region. Bill Griffiths suggested that this remark about throwing dirt at the Jutes and Saxons reveals Bunting's identification with the 'unvikingized countryside of Northumberland' and that Bunting saw himself as a poet of the north east, one enmeshed in its history.[59]

Connections between the Anglo-Saxon past of these north east sites and contemporary poetry were certainly kept in mind as Mottram continued to work with Bunting, and on his own poetry. Indeed, Mottram was acutely aware of the importance of the north east poetry scene, through the seventies and beyond, and he was an outspoken supporter of Tom Pickard's work at Morden Tower.[60] Located in the West Walls of Newcastle Upon Tyne, and dated to around 1290, Morden Tower is where the poets Tom and Connie Pickard have hosted poetry readings and musical performances since 1964. It was here Basil Bunting first read out *Briggflatts* in 1965, and it was here that so many poets, including Mottram, shared their work during the 'Revival'. That Mottram had visited the sites mentioned by Bunting in the correspondence above is also evident from certain letters and postcards within the Archive, too: one postcard to Mottram from Tom Pickard in 1990 is from St Cuthbert's Church, Bewcastle, in Cumbria, showing the Anglo-Saxon rune-marked, stone Bewcastle Cross, which stands in the churchyard there. On the back of the card, Pickard has written, 'We're 15 minutes drive from this place. We visited once with Basil, remember?'[61] Mottram's untitled photograph albums in the Archive contain further evidence that Bewcastle and the crypt at Hexham were visited with Bunting.

Mottram's poems for Bunting were collected later, in 1992, as *RAISE THE WIND FOR ME: poems for Basil Bunting*, published by the Durham-based Staple Diet press as a special issue. There we find Mottram using the Bewcastle Cross again as an object of poetic and spatial contemplation. In the poem placed to follow 'Wing

Commanded Salutation' in this collection, entitled 'FOR BASIL BUNTING', Mottram returns to the north eastern landscape and views the stone monument as a marker situated between past cultures, but one that, by surviving, entwines such cultures too:

> again in upland mist round Bewcastle
> cross life tree twines in runes
>
> north between
> Vikings and Celts

Twining images allow Mottram to evoke the interlacing of cultures that have been carved into Northumberland's history and chiseled into this stone monument in the different forms of runes, vinescroll patterns, Christian images and interlace art. The Bewcastle Cross occupies Mottram precisely because it spoke to his own design and vision for a new contemporary poetics, while also being set within a Northumbrian landscape that connoted the origins of English poetry. For Mottram, and in some ways for Bunting too, poetry of the present was not about 'the new', it was more about the ways in which the collage of elements from a *variety* of artistic practices, traditions, and temporal and spatial locations could be threaded through a new poetic object. Mottram took the Anglo-Saxon stone sculptures of Bewcastle and Ruthwell as particular examples of the 'constellatory method' of 'discovering relations', of that process he refers to as 'both letting be and of metamorphosis'.[62]

While his relationship with Bunting certainly contributed to his knowledge of Northumberland and its past, Mottram also explored how the ruins of that landscape might speak to his own aims in redefining what poetry is and what it does, and how it demands a conceptualization that is attached to the process of cognition. As he wrote in *Towards Design in Poetry*:

> The invention of language and measurement is continuous. We read as perception continually: electronic engineers can 'read' a circuit diagram, as Vikings read runes […]
>
> Design in poetry gives access to both the most ancient and the most recent perceptual structures and signs. The runes on Bewcastle Cross and Ruthwell Cross, electronic

maps, and the soundtexts of Paula Claire belong to our investigatory experience of notation and performance – and further back still, the cuts on bones and stones … we learn to code and decode the processes of nature so that increased knowledge can be held by the human memory structure and its storage aids in technology.[63]

Places where the past lives on in fragments, ruins or survivals, and languages that continue to inhabit present voices, were strong components of Mottram's poetry, and of his ideas of revolutionizing what he saw as stale poetics.

It is fitting that Eric Mottram's closest protégé was Bill Griffiths, a poet and scholar who studied and translated Old English throughout his life, and moved to the north east of England to research the intersection of culture, language and landscape across the region.[64] Mottram would write that 'Griffiths has created a body of work second to none in its formal enterprise and necessary aggression against what this country has become, a deteriorated tyranny, both economically and culturally'.[65] Relations between these two renegade scholar-poets, along with Griffiths' use of Old English and his small press publishing endeavours, will be the subject of a larger study, but I want to conclude this essay with some items from the Eric Mottram Archive that showcase Mottram's receptiveness to Old English language, his openness to the diverse expertise of his contemporaries, and his interest in explorations of Anglo-Saxon place, because these inform his own attempts to further poetry as 'not recognition patterns within a spectator-consumer society, but, rather, language which activates imagination and surprises the reader into new abilities' – that is, Mottram saw the writings of the poets he published as generating movement towards a kind of poetry that made readers aware of their ability to see co-existing temporalities in words, to read words as artefacts that reveal systems of relations between the past and the present.[66] Bill Griffiths' life involved a great deal of intellectual and linguistic excavation of those places in which he lived, in both his poetry and in his cultural studies of dialect.[67] Observing some of the correspondence between Griffiths and Mottram makes this even more apparent, but it also suggests the bond between the two men was one founded on a passionate interest in the multitemporality of place, the history of language and the will to unlock barriers on poetic form held in place by periodization.

The Eric Mottram Archive holds items sent from Griffiths to Mottram from during and long after the 'Revival' years. These are exercises in personal, artistic expression and suggest something of Griffiths' attitude to life, art and Old English literature. Several pieces of correspondence in Mottram's Archive are even written in Old English and such inventiveness is seen in Griffiths' 'Map of Kingsbury Church', a coloured drawing of the Old Church of St Andrew in Kingsbury, Middlesex (which was Griffiths' place of birth) [**Figures 2 and 3**].[68]

Surrounded by trees (as it is today, as Brent's only Grade 1 listed building), the church is depicted whole on the first page in its contemporary state. Griffiths has provided details about 'ðeos lytel cyrice' [this little church] in the Old English language. The church, dedicated like Hexham Abbey to 'S. Andreas' [St. Andrew], is on a site that is 'demed yldra ðonne seo cyrice selfra' [deemed older than the church itself] – as Stukely saw ['swa stukely geseah']. This reference is to a church being here since the Anglo-Saxon period, and also to the antiquarian William Stukely, who first visited St Andrew's church in 1757 and had claimed the church had its origins in a Roman encampment. The consensus now is that the church has stood in some form here since the early eleventh century, though the site of worship could well be much older. On the second page, Griffiths offers a cross-section map of the church's north, east, west and south sides. The details offered here show the different pieces of this building, the different materials that have been assembled, and their different temporal locations: the 'bellehus' [bell tower] is noted as 'eft getimbrad 1870' [built after 1870] and as a 'wudu bellehus mid copre' [wooden bell tower with copper]. In his note at the bottom Griffiths writes that 'þa eagðrylu sindon C15th' [the windows are 15th-century] but the church at Kingsbury 'mæg eaðe Angulseaxna geweorc beon' [can easily have been Anglo-Saxon work].

Different compartments and different eras of construction comprising the church are linked to the first foundations of the place itself, set down in the Anglo-Saxon period, through Griffiths' use of Old English. But the remarkable act of writing in Old English brings that language itself into the present here, too: the days of Griffiths' recent visits are referred to at the bottom of the second page as 'Sunnandæg, Mondæg 30. May. 83'. This 'map' suggests Mottram's receptiveness to Old English, and, in these details of St Andrew's church are aspects that speak to Mottram's own philosophy of poetic making, which enquired into the ways whole constructs might be seen in, or re-assembled from, fragments, in a manner that views place across time in

one instant through methods of text-image collage and through the accumulation or collection of diverse voices, sounds, languages and scripts into new modes of expression.

Eric Mottram was Professor of English and American Literature at King's College London until his retirement in 1990. The work accomplished, and the relationships forged, during his years as editor of *Poetry Review* must go down as a key part of one of the most intense and polarised periods in twentieth century poetry. The 'Revival' was a revolution that did not disregard Old English and translation as that which was incompatible with experimental poetry, collage, or small press publishing. Indeed, one way to challenge the ideas behind the Movement, which produced poetry that aimed for 'traditional' and simple form, was to re-introduce Old English as a resource that could be accessed and re-worked in new poems that expanded the ambit of translation, and to recover much Old English poetry – the very beginnings of the 'tradition' of poetry in English – through such methods.

Interrelationships between different temporalities were for Mottram the foundations of poetic design. With that, he stands as a catalyst and a driving force for the dialogue between the past and present that emerged in Britain through small presses, performances and writers' groups during the 1970s. As a resource for the small press, non-mainstream poetry circle during this time, Old English became an important influence on and spark for the poetic and bookmaking endeavours of revivalist writers. A significant era of production, collaboration and cross-Atlantic synergy, the work of the 'Revival' has much to add to histories of Old English translation and adaptation, a subject of burgeoning interest in medieval literary studies.[69] Translations and responses to the Anglo-Saxon past by 'Revival' poets have come to occupy a problematic or marginal space because their methods were anti-establishment, or reactionary. Yet, uncovering this history expands the coverage of that topic – recreating the Anglo-Saxon past in the twentieth century – while it also sheds light on an important chapter in contemporary British poetry that has been largely neglected in standard literary histories. As Clive Bush writes, we need a 'larger cultural and historical context to explain the intensity of animosity and censorship' that assailed the lively poetry scene Mottram helped foster. The 'Revival', though, was a time of rich possibility, productivity and imagination.[70] For Anglo-

Saxonists, there remains much within the work produced during the 'Revival' years to be discovered and disseminated.[71]

[1] *Towards Design in Poetry* (London, 2004, orig. 1977), 5.

[2] Clive Bush, *Out of Dissent: A Study of Five Contemporary British Poets* (Wiltshire, 1997), 417-533, has a very detailed chapter on Mottram's poetry and criticism, however.

[3] The 'British Poetry Revival' refers to a group of poets that reached the height of their productivity in the 1970s (though stirrings had begun as early as the fifties, with the work of Bob Cobbing). In brief, during the 1960s and 70s, non-mainstream 'poets of the Other', driven by important figures like Cobbing, J. H. Prynne and Mottram, 'through readings, festivals, and an astonishing proliferation of small presses, became increasingly aware of each other's work and began to acquire a sense that they were collectively developing some of the issues and positions they had inherited from the 1960s counterculture'. See Richard Caddel and Peter Quartermain (eds), *Other: British and Irish Poetry Since 1970* (New England, 1999), xv-xxix, xxiv. The definition 'British Poetry Revival' was claimed by Mottram in a paper presented at the Polytechnic of Central London British Poetry Conference of 1974, later reprinted as 'The British Poetry Revival, 1960-75' in Robert Hampson and Peter Barry (eds), *New British Poetries: The Scope of the Possible* (Manchester, 1993), 15-51.

[4] Peter Barry, *Poetry Wars: British Poetry of the 1970s and the Battle of Earls Court* (Cambridge, 2006), 1. For an account of the struggles of Mottram's years as editor, see 32-45.

[5] For 'New Old English' see Chris Jones, *Strange Likeness: The Use of Old English in Twentieth Century Poetry* (Oxford, 2006) and Jones's later article, 'New Old English: The Place of Old English in Twentieth- and Twenty-first-century Poetry', *Literature Compass*, 7 (2010), 1009-1019. While at the end of this article Jones mentions more poets who might be investigated for their use of Old English, including Bill Griffiths (a major 'Revival' poet), his main figures of study have been Seamus Heaney, W. H. Auden, Ezra Pound and Edwin Morgan. This critical interest also extends to the related field of Old Norse. See Heather O'Donoghue, *English Poetry and Old Norse Myth: A History* (Oxford, 2014).

[6] Mottram, 'The British Poetry Revival', 16-17.

[7] Simon Perril, 'High Late-Modernists or Postmodernists? Vanguard and Linguistically Innovative British Poetries since 1960', in Edward Larrissy (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to British Poetry, 1945-1960* (Cambridge, 2016), 82-99, 87.

[8] The pamphlet produced to mark the opening of the Archive contains this information: *Opening of the Eric Mottram Archive* (London, 1998).

[9] Eric Mottram, *A Book of Herne: 1975-81* (Lancashire, 1981), 6. All poems quoted from *Herne* are from this edition.

[10] The end of Mottram's time as editor reads like a conspiracy against him and the experimental poetry he was publishing. Members of the Arts Council who were disgruntled by the poetry Mottram was bringing to light commissioned the Witt Report, which gave the Arts Council more control over *Poetry Review*, so that they could, therefore, withhold funding until Mottram was forced out. See Robert Sheppard, *The Poetry of Saying: British Poetry and its Discontents 1950-2000* (Liverpool, 2005), 35-77.

[11] Herne is believed to have an affinity with the Anglo-Saxon Germanic god Woden. See Michael John Petry, *Herne the Hunter: a Berkshire Legend* (Reading, 1972) and Eric Fitch, *In Search of Herne the Hunter* (Somerset, 1994).

[12] *A Book of Herne*, 100.

[13] *Anglo-Saxon Riddles*, tr. John Porter (Hockwold-cum-Wilton, 1995). This was originally published by the Tern Press in 1978 as a parallel text edition limited to eighty copies. Unlike other small press translations by Porter, the renderings of the riddles remained in the same form in 1995 as they did in the Tern edition. Porter lectured at King's College London from 1967 and was there during Mottram's time. Thanks to John Porter for his correspondence and information about these texts.

[14] For an introduction to collage in the twentieth century see Rona Cran, *Collage in Twentieth-Century Art, Literature, and Culture: Joseph Cornell, William Burroughs, Frank O'Hara, and Bob Dylan* (Surrey, 2014), 1-41.

[15] Cran, *Collage*, 3.

[16] See Mottram, *William Burroughs: The Algebra of Need* (New York, 1971).

[17] Bush, *Out of Dissent*, 514.

[18] Old English poems from the Exeter Book are quoted from *The Exeter Anthology of Old English Poetry*, ed. Bernard J. Muir (Exeter, 1994), hereafter cited by line number. This translation is mine.

Editorial numbering of the riddles differs occasionally, depending on where critics choose to separate those that are more difficult to distinguish as individual poems. Porter and Mottram have based their numbering on *The Exeter Book*, eds George Philip Krapp, Elliott Van Kirk Dobbie, ASPR, vol. 3 (New York and London, 1936).

[19] *Anglo-Saxon Riddles*, 92.

[20] *Anglo-Saxon Riddles*, 94.

[21] J. Bosworth and T. Northcote Toller, *An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary* (London, 1898), s.v. 'tind', s.v. 'timber'.

[22] Mottram, *Towards Design in Poetry*, 42. Mottram would use terms such as 'collage' and 'mosaic' often in his own teaching and criticism. It appears his preferred term was 'collage' if juxtapositions were taking place within a poem, while 'mosaic' was used when the purpose was critical. Thanks to the anonymous reader for this background information.

[23] Pierre Joris, *A Nomad Poetics: Essays* (Middletown, 2003), 84.

[24] Bosworth and Toller, *An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary*, s.v. 'wic', s.v. 'alr'.

[25] Mottram, *Herne*, 18.

[26] Mottram, *Herne*, 24

[27] Mottram, *Herne*, 100.

[28] *Poetry Review*, 63.3 (1972), 226-31; *North Atlantic Texts I*, tr. Bill Griffiths and John Porter (London, 1976), 3 (*Cædmon's Hymn*), 4 (*Wulf and Eadwacer*), 5 (*The Spider*), 9 (*The Ruin*), 10-19 (*The Rune Poem*). This is a remarkable little booklet, with a front cover showing Greenland, Denmark and areas around the North Sea. Inside, there are sketches of runes. The intention was to issue this 'translation work' approximately 'two times a year', with future issues including 'tape and visual material as well as original texts and articles'. The ambitious project was never fully realized: this was the only issue published.

[29] The *Physiologus* found in this MS is Middle English. For an edition, see *The Middle English Physiologus*, ed. Hanneke Wirtjes, EETS 299 (Oxford, 1991). The MS seems to have been made at Norwich Cathedral Priory, in the late thirteenth century. See N. R. Ker, 'Medieval Manuscripts from Norwich Cathedral Priory', *Transactions of the Cambridge Bibliographic Society* I (Cambridge, 1949), 1-28, 11.

[30] For details on the laborious printing methods with ink duplicators Griffiths pursued, and the way this kind of publishing was, at least conceptually, aligned with the production of medieval manuscripts, see Alan Halsey, 'Pirate Press: A Bibliographical Excursion' in Will Rowe (ed.), *The Salt Companion to Bill Griffiths* (Cambridge, 2007), 55-72.

[31] 'Approaches to Translation I', *Modern Poetry in Translation* 25 (1976): 19-22, 20.

[32] King's College London Archives, MOTTRAM: 6/102/1-9. Porter's translation has been through several changes. It has been re-published in a run limited to one hundred copies by Tern Press as *Beowulf*, tr. John Porter (Market Drayton, 1984) and in a more widely distributed edition by Anglo-Saxon Books as *Beowulf: Text and Translation*, tr. John Porter (Hockwold-cum-Wilton, 1990).

[33] Experimental approaches to Old English had been gathering pace in America alongside academic translations since the 1950s, which is evident in the work of the poet Jack Spicer, who worked towards a PhD in Old English and Old Norse at Berkeley intermittently between 1945-55. For an overview of this time and Spicer's medievalism see David Hadbawnik, 'Time Mechanics: the modern Geoffrey Chaucer and the medieval Jack Spicer', *postmedieval: a journal of medieval cultural studies 4* (2013), 270-283. In Britain, major works by Basil Bunting (discussed below) and Geoffrey Hill (whose *Mercian Hymns* was published in 1971), coterminous with the 'Revival', signal the growing interest in the use of Old English by contemporary poets. For the Anglo-Saxon influence on Hill's text see Hannah Crawforth, 'Overlord of the M5: Sovereignty in Geoffrey Hill's *Mercian Hymns*', in David Clark and Nicholas Perkins (eds), *Anglo-Saxon Culture and the Modern Imagination* (Cambridge, 2010), 219-236.

[34] The re-issuing of Porter's *Beowulf* in more recent times by other presses has removed traces of its beginnings as a wondrous act of bookmaking. It remains, therefore, an edition that exists on the margins. It is overlooked by Hugh Magennis in his *Translating* Beowulf*: Modern Versions in English Verse* (Cambridge, 2011), a result of not only limited access but also of the way 'Revival' poetry and translations have been silenced. Magennis mentions Porter's *Beowulf* in a footnote in the chapter on 'Other Post-1950 Translations': 'John Porter's translation […] looks like verse at first sight but is not a literary translation but rather a half-line by half-line gloss of the Old English text, which it accompanies in a parallel-text fashion' (192, n.). The edition Magennis refers to, however, is the Anglo-Saxon Books publication, which re-issued Porter's translation in practical form (with facing-

page translation), in 1991. In its first run, however, Porter's translation was very much verse, as it was in the version published by Tern Press in 1984, which contains no parallel text.

[35] Meyer's translation has been recently published as Beowulf*: A Translation*, ed. and tr. Thomas Meyer (New York, 2012).

[36] See Daniel C. Remein, 'Introduction: Locating *Beowulf*', in Beowulf*: A Translation*, ed. and tr. Meyer, 12.

[37] Meyer, 'Lyrics', *Poetry Review* 66.2 (1976), 70-73.

[38] Bosworth and Toller, *An Anglo-Saxon Dictionary*, s.v. 'ut', s.v. 'stig'.

[39] This continued long after Mottram's editorship, too: one letter from Meyer in the Mottram Archive, from 17 September 1981, highlights the ongoing support and feedback Mottram provided: 'Thank you for the care, the attentions,' Meyer wrote, 'I am very happy with it; not at all "stung" by your reasonable doubts and comments on my work…In fact, your "reading" comes at the right point for me, as you might've discerned from our good talk'. Another letter in the Archive from 21 June 1985 reveals that Mottram was also asked to be referee for Meyer's application for a Guggenheim visiting. See MOTTRAM: 5/159/1-13.

[40] Mottram's statement as reproduced in Poetry Society Publications Committee Report of 14 June 1972, quoted in Bill Griffiths, 'Basil Bunting and Eric Mottram', *Chicago Review* 44 (1998), 104-113, 108.

[41] In the same issue, Mottram also featured poems by Glenn Storhaug from his unpublished illustrated sequence called *Hwæt*, which uses copies of Bronze Age Norwegian and Swedish rock carvings. *Poetry Review* 65.1 (1974), 56-58.

[42] The *Poetry Review* has either misprinted thorn as a 'p' here, or did not have that letter within its printing during this time.

[43] The choice of 'hybris' rather than 'hubris' appears intentional. Given the way McClelland maintains older word forms (inserting OE here and there in place of Modern English), keeping the non-Anglicized form here (and therefore the stricter transliteration from the Greek) places *ofermod*, which is 'not hybris', within a different kind of etymological tradition.

[44] *Poetry Review* 65.1 (1974), 52.

[45] *The Battle of Maldon*, ed. Donald Scragg (Manchester, 1981). The translation here is mine. Bill Griffiths would go on to edit and translate the poem, too, and his edition offers a good introduction to

the poem, its criticism and its conception of heroic values. *The Battle of Maldon: Text and Translation*, ed. and tr. Bill Griffiths (Hockwold-cum-Wilton, 1991). Scragg wrote a scathing review of Griffiths' edition, referring to a mistake of an author's name in the bibliography ('John W. Conlee' for 'J. McKinnell') as the consequence of 'an undergraduate's blot in his lecture notes' and concluding 'If this book were not already damned, the magnitude of this error should do it.' Scragg, Review of Griffiths (ed. and tr.), *The Battle of Maldon: Text and Translation*, in *N&Q* 39.3 (1992), 382. Griffiths would write a wonderful response to the review: Bill Griffiths, *The Battle of Maldon: A Response to Donald Scragg* (Seaham, 1993).

[46] For a discussion of 'mod' see Malcolm Godden, 'Anglo-Saxons on the Mind', in M. Lapidge and Helmut Gneuss (eds.), *Learning and Literature in Anglo-Saxon England: Studies Presented to Peter Clemoes* (Cambridge, 1985), 271-98.

[47] *Poetry Review* 65.1 (1974), 55.

[48] A further example is *Poetry Review* 66. 3-4 (1976-77), 167-170, in which Mottram edited and published Kevin Crossley-Holland's 'Naming', a sequence of name-riddles with their answers listed at the end, often with solutions from Anglo-Saxon culture.

[49] For an account of the final years of Mottram's editorship, see Barry, *Poetry Wars*, 102-121.

[50] 'When you consider the similarities between the two', Bill Griffiths writes, 'in many ways—their devotion to modern literature, their interest in travel, their appreciation of classical music, their width of cultural experience—it may seem odd that they had not encountered each other earlier than they did.' (105). And, while their mutual contacts and friends suggest they may well have been in communication since the 1960s, the first letter in the Archive (MOTTRAM 5/28/1-12) from Bunting (dated to 1 June 1971) congratulates Mottram on his appointment as editor of *Poetry Review* (on 18 January 1971). Bunting's copies of the correspondence were destroyed. See Griffiths, 'Basil Bunting and Eric Mottram', 105. An extensive collection of Bunting's writings remain in the Basil Bunting Archive in the University of Durham's Special Collections.

[51] See Clare Lees, 'Basil Bunting, *Briggflatts*, Lindisfarne, and Anglo-Saxon Interlace', in *Anglo-Saxon Culture and the Modern Imagination*, 111-27 and Joshua Davies, 'Re-locating Anglo-Saxon England: Places of the Past in Basil Bunting's *Briggflatts* and Geoffrey Hill's *Mercian Hymns*', in Julian Weiss and Sarah Salih (eds), *Locating the Middle Ages: the Spaces and Places of Medieval Culture* (London, 2012), 199-213.

[52] See Eric Mottram, '"An acknowledged land": love and poetry in Bunting's *Sonatas*', *Poetry Information* 19 (London, 1978), 11-29. The Mottram Archive also contains a transcript of a BBC interview of Bunting by Mottram, from 17 June 1975, in which Mottram asks about the influence of the 'Lindisfarne lacings' and Old English verse on Bunting's work. This is contained in MOTTRAM: 5/28/13-21.

[53] For the Bewcastle Cross, see Fred Orton and Ian Wood, with Clare Lees, *Fragments of History: Rethinking the Ruthwell and Bewcastle Monuments* (Manchester, 2007).

[54] For a good study of Swinburne's life see Rikky Rooksby, *A. C. Swinburne: A Poet's Life* (Aldershot, 1997). While they remain under-studied, Swinburne's poems about the north received some attention in the nineteen seventies. See Andrew Fippinger, 'Intimations and Imitations of Immortality: Swinburne's "By the North Sea" and "Poeta Loquitur"' *Victorian Poetry*, vol. 47 no. 4, 2009, 675-690.

[55] The occasional spaces in the poem again correspond to the caesura in printed editions of OE poetry. In this poem they appear sporadic, yet effectively separate places, objects and people across time and space.

[56] Jonathan Williams (ed.), *Madeira and toasts: for Basil Bunting's 75th birthday* (The Jargon Society, Dentdale and Highlands, North Carolina, 1977 for 1975), unpaginated

[57] Bethany Fox, 'The P-Celtic Place Names of North-East England and South-East Scotland', *The Heroic Age* (2007): http://www.heroicage.org/issues/10/fox.html

[58] The letter is found in the following archive holding: MOTTRAM: 5/28/1-12

[59] Griffiths, 'Basil Bunting and Eric Mottram', 106. Bunting would occasionally make distinctions between southern and northern existence in his letters to Mottram. In one from November 13 ,1973, Bunting reflects on a conversation with the recently deceased W. H. Auden: 'I was polite. That is, I **thought** I was, but am unpractised in the arts of Southern social existence'. This is ironic, of course, given Auden's own Yorkshire heritage, not to mention his translations of Old Norse and re-workings of Old English poems such as *The Seafarer*. In the Mottram Archive, this letter is found in MOTTRAM: 5/28/1-12.

[60] Information can be found on the Morden Tower website: http://mordentower.org

[61] MOTTRAM: 5/192/1-113

[62] Mottram, *Towards Design in Poetry*, 17.

[63] *Towards Design in* Poetry, 45.

[64] For a study of Bill Griffiths' approach to translating Old English, see Robert Hampson, 'Bill Griffiths and the Old English Lyric', in *The Salt Companion to Bill Griffiths*, 72-88.

[65] Mottram, ''Every New Book Hacking on Barz': The Poetry of Bill Griffiths', in *The Salt Companion to Bill Griffiths*, 9. This essay was first published in *Reality Studios* 5 (1983), 45-54.

[66] 'Editor's Note', *Poetry Review* 66, 1 (1975), 1.

[67] Some of Griffiths' final work was on dialect, including *Dictionary of North-East English* (Newcastle, 2004); *A Dictionary of North East Dialect* (Newcastle, 2005); *Pitmatic: The Talk of the North East Coalfield* (Newcastle, 2007).

[68] MOTTRAM: 5/100/45-82

[69] Recent studies in this ever-growing area include Chris Jones, 'Recycling Anglo-Saxon Poetry: Richard Wilbur's 'Junk'', in Julian Weiss and Sarah Salih (eds.), *Locating the Middle Ages*, 213-225 and Clare Lees, 'In Three Poems: Medieval and Modern in Seamus Heaney, Maureen Duffy and Colette Bryce', in G. R. Overing and U. Witehaus (eds.), *American/Medieval: Nature and Mind in Cultural Transfer* (Gottingen, 2016), 177-201.

[70] Bush, *Out of Dissent*, p. 6.