

Oswalds
Joseph Conrad Society (UK)
3 August 2024

Following the centenary commemoration at Joseph Conrad's grave in Canterbury Cemetery, the assembled group were welcomed at Conrad's final home, Oswalds, in Bishopsbourne Kent, by the current and long time owners, Dr Wolfgang and Mrs Dominique Kerck.

To mark the occasion, Robert Hampson, Chair of the Joseph Conrad Society (UK), read Conrad's own recollections of leaving Capel House¹ in July 1914 for his first visit to Poland in over twenty years.

As we left the door of our house, nestling in, perhaps, the most peaceful nook in Kent, the sky, after weeks of perfectly brazen serenity, veiled its blue depths and started to weep fine tears for the refreshment of the parched fields. A pearly blur settled over them, and a light sifted of all glare, of everything unkindly and searching that dwells in the splendour of unveiled skies. All unconscious of going towards the very scenes of war, I carried off in my eye this tiny fragment of Great Britain; a few fields, a wooded rise; a clump of trees or two, with a short stretch of road, and here and there a gleam of red wall and tiled roof above the darkening hedges wrapped up in soft mist and peace. And I felt that all this had a very strong hold on me as the embodiment of a beneficent and gentle spirit; that it was dear to me not as an inheritance, but as an acquisition, as a conquest ... by love, which is a sort of surrender.

(From 'Poland Revisited', *Notes on Life and Letters*)

¹ The Conrad family lived at Capel House, Ashford, Kent from 1910 to 1919. Prior to taking up residence at Oswalds, from September 1919, they stayed briefly at Spring Grove, Wye, in Kent.



OSWALDS





