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August 21, 1971 Coghill Letter

Nevill Coghill

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From Nevill Coghill

SAVRAN HOUSE
AYLBURTON
NR. LYDNEY
GLOS.

TEL. LYDNEY 2240

21 Aug 71

Dear Mr Boyer,

Thank you for your letter. I shall be happy to give you all the help I can about Wystan Anton, but I must warn you that I am the worst possible witness. When Wystan became my pupil I was 27, just beginning ^{I am now 72!} tutoring. I did not know the most elementary things about my job — e.g. keeping a week-to-week account of my tutorial hours with my pupils, in writing, which I did not begin until later on. My interest in Old English and more recent alliterative stuff, specially Piers Plowman was more or less beginning to assert itself, but I dare not expressly claim that I influenced Wystan, for I simply

do not remember whether he influenced me or I him. I don't even remember whether I farmed him out to an O.E. expert, or attempted to teach it to him myself. What I remember is a general jumble of excited discussions about everything (O.E. and politics included) and the cheerful joy of his trust and friendship which I entirely reciprocated, and reciprocate. If I can help you I will, and should you ask me a question I cannot answer, I might be able to write and ask him, provided it was a question he would be willing to discuss.

I am going to France for 3 weeks the day after Tomorrow and shall be back here by 10 Sept. I think I could be in Oxfrd round about mid-day on Sunday 19 Sep., and ~~then~~ perhaps we could make a firm date then, when I come back from France; but I can't be absolutely sure yet. Will you please write again then?

Yours sincerely *Wittgenstein*