



Alliance of Literary Societies
President: Claire Harman
www.allianceofliterarysocieties.org.uk

Newsletter: Spring 2022

Not Only, But ALSo...

In this issue:

The Highgate Highflyers: An on-line programme hosted jointly by the Hopkins and Betjeman Societies on Saturday, 2 October 2021 via Zoom

Lance Pierson

LitHouses Conference 2021

Johnson's Willow rises again

'Alice's Day' – Lewis Carroll Society events in Oxford – Saturday 2 July

Someone with website skills urgently needed to join the committee!

Five Best Books About ...

Articles for the Journal

Help with Social Media for Societies

Sharing information on society events

The Highgate Highflyers: An on-line programme hosted jointly by the Hopkins and Betjeman Societies on Saturday, 2 October 2021 via Zoom

This conference was initially planned to take place as the ALS AGM weekend in May, but was postponed until October due to Covid. Unfortunately, the on-going pandemic meant that the weekend was replaced with an on-line programme of speakers. Throughout the day the emphasis was on the many similarities between these two very different poets, who Lance Pierson, the Chairman of the Betjeman Society and Vice-President of the Hopkins Society, has dubbed 'Poetry's Odd Couple'.

The day kicked off with Claire Harman, ALS President, offering commiserations to Hopkins and Betjeman for all the work they had put into planning the weekend, but she welcomed the opportunity to hear about the two poets on-line. She also talked about the current Honresfield

Library appeal, spearheaded by the Friends of the National Libraries, to raise the £15 million required to purchase this unrivalled collection of manuscripts, letters and first editions by Scott, Austen, the Brontës and many others. Finally, she urged us to take action against the on-going and increasing threat to our public libraries by cuts in government spending. She recommended the Libraries Connected website for more information.

‘Hopkins and Betjeman: Poetry’s Odd Couple’ was a lecture written by Lance Pierson. Sadly, Lance could not present it himself, due to illness, but it was wonderfully given by his son Robin. At first glance the two poets could not seem more dissimilar: Betjeman’s language is clear and engaging and frequently funny; while Hopkins’ is opaque and deeply serious, though often also playful. There are many points of convergence, however, the most obvious being their religious faith. Betjeman was an Anglican of High Church persuasion; Hopkins a Jesuit priest. They both grew up in Highgate and Hampstead, attended Highgate School, and then, went on to Oxford, which was a place deeply loved by both poets. Betjeman’s poetry was traditional and perhaps backward-looking; Hopkins was an innovator and seems more like a 20th century poet than a Victorian. Hopkins always stressed that his poetry needed to be read aloud to be understood, while Betjeman’s is readily recited (my first, rather startled introduction to him, as he is not well known in the US, was through his own popular recordings of his poetry). It was appropriate then that Lance’s talk concluded with his pre-recorded readings of ‘The Windhover’ and ‘Before the Anaesthetic’.

The final talk of the morning was given by Dr Jane Wright, Senior Lecturer in English at the University of Bristol, on ‘Making Sense of Hopkins’ Poetry’. She accomplished this through a close reading and explication of two Hopkins’ poems: ‘As kingfishers catch fire’ and ‘No worst, there is none’. The first is an example of Hopkins connecting his deep and observant interest in the natural world with his religious faith in language of ecstatic exuberance, resulting in on-rushing phrases: ‘As tumbled over rim in roundy wells/Stones ring; like each tucked string tells, each hung bell’s /Bow swung finds tongue to fling out broad its name’. The conclusion of the first stanza is full of confident faith: ‘*What I do is me: for that I came.*’ By contrast, the only comfort found in ‘No worst, there is none’ is that, as each day ends in sleep, so life will end in death. This is one of the ‘Terrible Sonnets’, written towards the end of Hopkins’ too brief life, when he suffered profoundly from feelings of unworthiness; or, in religious terms, experienced the dark night of the soul. Dr Wright’s minute examination of these poems, including such odd usages as describing his cries as ‘herds-long’, provided a pathway to understanding Hopkins’ poetry. I can recommend the complete OED as a good companion, having spent an evening as a puzzled undergraduate deciphering ‘shéer plód makes plough down/sillion shine’ from ‘The Windhover’.

We returned after lunch for “‘A Shared Enthusiasm’: Hopkins, Betjeman, and Victorian Church Architecture’ by Dr Jill Robson of the Hopkins Society. Hopkins wrote, ‘What you look hard at seems to look hard at you’ and, like Ruskin, Hopkins looked hard at churches (as well as streams, cloudscapes and a cup of hot chocolate). Like Ruskin, he admired Gothic architecture above all. Betjeman’s love of church architecture was an overwhelming interest throughout his life, beginning with the parish churches of Cornwall, where he spent his childhood holidays. At the Dragon School, he learned an enthusiasm for church architecture from an admired master, and with a group of like-minded friends, set off on cycling holidays to view churches – a hobby difficult to imagine for a schoolboy today. Bells, stained glass windows, and other elements of church architecture feature regularly in his poetry, notably in ‘Before the Anaesthetic’.

Julia Hudson, archivist at the Highgate School, gave us a brief overview of their archive which covers both Hopkins and Betjeman as well as many other notable pupils and masters, including T.S. Eliot (who taught Betjeman). The history of the school is fascinating and while we were

sorry to have lost the opportunity of visiting the archive in person, Julia invited us to visit when possible.

The day concluded with ALS news, as reported by me and Mark Green, our new secretary. On behalf of the ALS, I thanked the Betjeman and Hopkins societies for all the hard work, enthusiasm and inspiration that had been put into planning a wonderful weekend in Highgate, and expressed our regrets that we had not been able to be there in person. However, we had a memorable day of talks and, with the rain pouring down outside, it was perhaps just as well that we were not embarking on a literary walk through Highgate!

There have been major changes on the ALS committee this year. Our new treasurer, Jeremy Mitchell, of the Edward Thomas Fellowship, was unable to join us as he was hosting an Edward Thomas Festival in Petersfield, but our new secretary, Mark Green, was introduced and spoke about our plans to increase the digital outreach of the ALS. I provided an update on the Honresfield Library appeal and on future AGMs, before introducing Lyn Lockwood, who invited us all to next year's celebration of Philip Larkin's 100th birthday, taking place in Hull 20-22 May. It was a fitting way to end a day, on which we had to make do without the stimulus and fun of face-to-face conversation with other members of the ALS, as well as members of the Betjeman and Hopkins societies, but thoroughly enjoyed learning more about these two very different, but strangely similar, poets; or, as dubbed by Lance, 'Poetry's Odd Couple'.

Less than two weeks after The Highgate Highflyers conference, Lance Pierson passed away. He was one of the driving forces behind the Betjeman and Hopkins societies' plans and was determined to give his talk up until the last minute. Our thoughts are with his family, and with the Betjeman and Hopkins societies.

Marty Ross

Lance Pierson

The sad death of the Gerard Manley Hopkins Society Chairman, Lance, was made all the more difficult by the speed with which his cancer spread and the short space of time between diagnosis and his passing at home in October. Those of us who saw him at Bevis Hillier's much delayed Birthday Party in August were appalled at how ill he had suddenly become yet he bravely read 'Devonshire Street W1' around the John Betjeman statue on St Pancras, made all the more poignant since he must have been acutely aware of the message contained in that poem. We can reflect on the unfairness and manner of his departing, but Lance would not have wanted to be remembered for this and nor should we. Instead, we can celebrate what he achieved for the Betjeman Society, the Gerard Manley Hopkins Society and for English Literature in general. He also had many other achievements too, that we were not fully aware of and I was pleased to be sent the following obituary from The Church of England Newsletter of 26 November 2021, which provided more insight into the man and his many abilities.

'Lance Pierson (1947-2021) was an actor and professional poetry performer. He died at home in Fulham on 14 October 2021 at the age of 74. In July he was diagnosed with cancer which developed very quickly. He was the National Chairman of the John Betjeman Society. He ran workshops to improve bible reading in church and could be heard regularly on Premier Christian Radio reading the Living Light Reflections. Lance was born on 9 January 1947 and grew up in Highgate, North London. He was the only son of Catherine Salkeld, an actress who was born in 1909 in Edinburgh. His father, a Roman Catholic, had been a captain in the army but they divorced in 1948.

Lance went to Eton and from there to New College Oxford to read English and Theology. The preacher at a thanksgiving service for his life, held at his home church of St Matthew's Fulham on 18 November, and attended by over 200 people from all around the country, was Canon Andrew Cornes, whom Lance had prayed for daily and led to Christ at Oxford. Canon Cornes recalled that Lance became a Christian because of cricket, a game he loved, as well as steam trains and cycling. He had heard David Sheppard on *Desert Island Discs* speak of how he found Jesus Christ as a Cambridge undergraduate and was intrigued. On his first Sunday at Oxford in October 1965 he heard that David Sheppard would be preaching the "Freshers' Sermon" put on by the Oxford Christian Union (OICCU) and went along. He was the first to respond to give his life to Christ. Lance became a teacher and worked for Scripture Union as an organiser of drama productions, holidays and magazines in schools.

From 1978 he worked freelance as an actor, writer, speaker and trainer. Lance married Sue Tydeman, a deaconess, in April 1979. They had two children, Joy and Robin. Molly, one of their two grandchildren, read her poem 'Gorgeous Grandpa' at the service. In 1998 he went full time as a performer and until 2016 toured the UK with his one-man shows. From St Paul's Cathedral to church halls he entertained congregations with biblical presentations. His cricket, poetry and music hall shows were seen from the National Gallery to the Edinburgh Fringe. In 2008 Lance met Belinda Yates (soprano) and Heather Chamberlain (pianist) and formed the words-and-music trio 'In Voice and Verse'. They toured for eight years celebrating the 400th anniversaries of Shakespeare, the King James Bible, and the Queen's Diamond Jubilee. The Trio lives on (with other actors stepping into Lance's shoes) as does his blog, "the poetry podcast". He stopped touring in 2017 but continued to lead guided 'Poetry walks' around London to Tennyson's Twickenham and Betjeman's Highgate. He also became heavily involved with the Gerard Manley Hopkins Society. Leila Abu-Sharr, a member of the Hammersmith and Fulham Poetry Enjoyment Group, which he founded, recalled: "It was never about him, but about whom he was able to delight. He brought pleasure, humour and warm hearted kindness to so many."

Chris Sugden, Editor of The Church of England Newspaper

With the Hopkins Society, Lance was a member of the committee that brought a new lease of life to its work in 2014. As Vice-President Lance shared his scholarship and enthusiasm for Hopkins and literature at meetings and events. His concern for accuracy and detail can be seen in his work on the Exhibition letters at Highgate School and the place of Aunt Anne in the Hopkins' family circle, and also his presentations for the Virtual International Conference in June 2021. In 2019 a committee of members from the Hopkins Society and Betjeman Society was formed to organise the AGM for the ALS at Highgate in May 2021. Lance chaired meetings, made on site visits and spearheaded the whole enterprise. Because of the restrictions and regulations as we emerged from the pandemic, that AGM was held by Zoom, and the weekend planned for May moved to an online day on 2 October. Lance was hoping to deliver his own talk on 'Hopkins and Betjeman: Poetry's Odd Couple' on that day. Sadly, he was not well enough, and Robin, his son, gave the talk. Lance was able to listen and watch at home, and it was both moving and inspiring to hear recordings of Lance reading two poems by Hopkins and Betjeman during that talk.

On a more personal note, it is worth reminding ourselves of Lance's enormous contribution to keeping John Betjeman in the public eye through his regular Highgate walks, (which included familiar places from *Summoned by Bells*, such as 31 West Hill and the Burdett-Coutts estate), walks around Middlesex and his many poetry performances. It's remarkable to think that he did his last walk just a few weeks before his death, and these walks are part of the John Betjeman well-trodden ways and now folklore. Those members who attended one of these walks were able to gain a sense of place in a far more personalised way. I like to think of Lance as the complete Betjeman aficionado: his Christian faith and love of the Church of England, love of bicycling, love of railways and of course of poetry and verse were all shared passions. The one jarring note

was cricket to which Lance was a self-confessed 'slave' and Betjeman had the horrors of, as an alleged non-hearty. (Never sure if Betjeman counted his ability on the golf course, with a handicap of 18, as participating in sport!) Lance brought Betjeman alive in so many ways and his ability as an actor and skills as a teacher provided the ideal combination to perform Betjeman, particularly as the poems are meant to be read aloud.

In a recent discussion about Lance, Horace Liberty and I talked of the way Lance gave confidence and encouragement to those around him and perhaps Lance's most significant talent was the gift of friendship which was so much an attribute of John Betjeman. Lance had a way of listening that made you think you were the only person that mattered. He once said that he saw himself as a conductor rather than Chairman, and that matched his love of classical music; he was a conductor of the talents around him and brought different aspects out of the 'music' to suit the occasion.

His performances of Betjeman's poetry, many on CD thank goodness, provided insights into how the poems could be brought to life. On his CD *The Betjeman You Never Knew...* he reads poems that the BBC had not recorded and copyrighted, and thus added greatly to our appreciation of a wider set of poems beyond the usual suspects. One that struck me greatly was 'Sunday Afternoon Service in St Enodoc Church, Cornwall', where Lance intones the words 'Come on, Come on' at the beginning of the verse as a tolling bell summoning the faithful to Evensong, and this provided wider significance to the poem's meaning and intent. It increases the precise nature of the metre and enables the listener to hear beyond the words, almost as if they were part of a hymn to Evensong. Lance also offers the opinion that the final verse gives us Betjeman's finest description of the Cornish coast, well worth revisiting time and again. Lance could also help any reader to spot nuances of meaning simply by pronouncing words or introducing pauses that changed the impact of the poem. Another example is his terrific reading of Milton's *Paradise Lost*, also on CD, and a brilliant reminder that Milton, blind as he was when he wrote it, meant this great poem to be read aloud and appreciated for the great sweep of language that Lance revels in.

To say we shall miss him is an understatement. Lance was the last of the regular Betjeman performers, even when he allegedly retired in 2016, he still gave talks and walks. During lockdowns he produced his memorable and highly entertaining poetry podcasts (<https://thepoetrypodcastwithlancepierson.com>) 17 in all, and the quality and range of these are a lasting testament to Lance's energy and commitment to the spoken word and poetry in particular. Currently there is no one to take his place as a Betjeman performer, nor I add as such a constant friend and Betjeman enthusiast. We are determined in the Betjeman Society to ensure that his legacy will be taken forward and his inspiration will remain.

Steve Jackson

LitHouses Conference 2021

The LitHouses 18th Annual Conference was held in November at Gilbert White's House in Selbourne, Hampshire. With the theme 'Content – the Ugly, the Bad and the Good' the delegates discussed how they were facing up to the challenges of running visitor attractions with historical and literary connections through pandemic lockdowns – answer, work even harder than ever before to attract visitors in – and how to reflect a climate of growing concern about how to address the colonial legacy of many of the venues and their collections in the light of the increased consciousness raised by the Black Lives Matter campaigns. The consensus reached was pithily and succinctly captured in the phrase "retain and explain".

Nicola J. Watson, Professor of English Literature at the Open University and author of *The Author's Effects: On Writers' House Museums*, spoke on "Grounding the Writer", about the relationship between writers and their gardens. This was particularly appropriate after completing our rather damp tour of Gilbert White's garden. From William Cowper's summer house to Roald Dahl's shed, writers have taken refuge in and inspiration from their natural surroundings.

The first day concluded with a tour of Gilbert White's House followed by a reception and supper for delegates.

The second day was devoted to a tour of the Jane Austen Museum, where we saw the tiny table at which she worked on her novels, and of her brother's home, Chawton House, nearby at which she spent much of her time.

Mark Green



Johnson's Willow rises again

Lichfield is a beautiful city, and one of its most beautiful spots is by Stowe Pool and Johnson's Willow, looking west to the three spires of the Cathedral and east to St Chad's Church. On 2

November 2021 members of the Johnson Society and Lichfield worthies gathered to see the 5th incarnation of Johnson's Willow planted. The first willow was probably planted around 1700 and was famous for its enormous size. It was then known as the Lichfield Willow and much admired, not only by Johnson, but also by Anna Seward, and the 18th century American poet, Elizabeth Graeme Fergusson. In 1787 she wrote 'Two Odes on the Litchfield Willow', imagining Johnson and his contemporaries gathered under its boughs.

Johnson had many associations with the willow and visited it through his life. By the time the original willow blew down in 1829, it was known as Johnson's Willow. It was replanted from a cutting taken from the original, while curios were carved from the wood.

Willows being notoriously brittle, cuttings have been grown and replanted at regular intervals. In recent years it became apparent that the 4th Willow had become badly decayed. Lichfield District Council Parks Department took cuttings and grew a number of promising saplings, the most vigorous of which was planted on 2 November with great good will and a prayer from the Dean of Lichfield. The Johnson Society has also planted a cutting at the National Memorial Arboretum and it is hoped to plant another at Woburn Abbey, the home of the Duke of Bedford, after whom this species of willow is named. Even more ambitiously, we hope with the enormous help of friends in the US, to have a cutting planted at the home of Fergusson: Graeme Park, near Philadelphia. In her Ode, she expressed the wish that a sprig of the Willow might one day reach America.



As part of the celebrations around the replanting, the Johnson Society held a successful poetry competition. The prize was small but the glory was great and I am pleased to have received permission from the poet, Sarah Dale, to reprint it here:

Resurgam – I shall rise again

Johnson's Willow

Adapted extracts from "By the River, at Stowe Mill, Lichfield, where the Streams Flow Together" and "Know Thyself" by Samuel Johnson, translated from Latin by John Wain.

Book leaves endure, old words rising spring fresh
through yellowed paper, *clear as glass the stream
still wanders, bending trees conceal the water
in a daytime darkness*, but this speechless willow
has a different trick, perfectly re clothed each spring
as March slips into April, summer crowned, then
drifting spent tattered yellow leaves in autumn.

Each year's wheel is counted under her ridged skin;
wide when life grew easy, contracted narrow
by scant rain, vicious winters.
Still, she bears her long tree span lightly
unmarked by grief and loss scarring human lives,
*minds full of fear - of ghosts, of the fleeting glimmer
of the thin shadows of nothing, the absence of shapes.*

This clever willow dreads neither decay nor death;
lightning may strike, storms lay low, but her art
of replication's more perfect than any printing press.
No errata, no genetic miscoding – after each dissolution
she rises youth renewed from phoenix ashes
every fresh, immaculate leaf singing resurrection,
just as *water, never tiring, still runs in the same channel.*
Sarah Dale

The competition was judged anonymously by the editorial committee of the Johnson Society *Transactions*, but when the winner was selected we were delighted to learn that it was Sarah, known to us all, and one of the brilliant attendants at the Samuel Johnson Birthplace Museum. Many of us had fears for the Willow sapling's future, as vandalism is not unknown in Lichfield. Members of the Johnson Society have taken to wandering down to the tree at night to stand vigil, including New Year's Eve, when four met up there to protect the tree and wish each other a happy New Year. Sadly, the main stem of the sapling was broken a few days later. It is unclear whether this was due to vandalism or that night's wind. Running repairs have been made, but we will be anxiously waiting for spring to see if new shoots and leaves will appear. If not, it will rise again from another cutting, but surely, with a blessing from the Dean of Lichfield, Johnson's Willow will continue to thrive and grow.

Marty Ross

'Alice's Day' – Lewis Carroll Society events in Oxford – Saturday 2 July

'Alice's Day' is Oxford's annual commemoration of the day in 1862 on which Lewis Carroll first invented the story of *Wonderland*. Free events coordinated by The Story Museum take place all over the city. Most are intended for children, but the Lewis Carroll Society's talks (and associated walk) are aimed at a more adult audience. This year, the LCS programme will focus on some of the historical realities which inspired Carroll's fantastical storytelling. These include (at the time of writing) Oxford's patron saint of St Frideswide, Alice Liddell's family, Lewis Carroll's University colleagues, and the so-called 'Alice's Door' in the church of St Frideswide (which, like *Through the Looking-Glass*, is celebrating its 150th anniversary this year). Boat trips on the Thames are also intended, recalling the river trip on 4 July 1862 on which the story of 'Alice' had its origins.

For details of the full programme, which is on the loose theme this year of ‘Queens and Kings’ (being in some respects an acknowledgment of our own queen’s platinum jubilee event in June), see here:

<https://www.storymuseum.org.uk/about-us/alices-day-1>

The additional activities instigated by the Lewis Carroll Society include a long riverside walk to the ‘Treacle Well’ and a book sale of unusual editions and translations of the ‘Alice’ books, biographies, Carroll’s transcribed diaries and more. More information will appear on the Society’s website, where a diminishing range of reduced-price publications can also be found:

www.lewiscarrollsociety.org.uk

Mark Davies

Someone with website skills urgently needed to join the committee!

The ALS website is hosted by WordPress - so it is a very user (and admin) friendly site. You don’t have to be a computer whiz kid in order to administer it but you do need to be confident with websites.

The work involves updating the site (particularly the member entries) as and when necessary, and maintaining the events calendar. For this, we use Google Calendar as an add on (very easy to use). Member societies are supposed to tell us about upcoming events but this rarely happens - so part of the work involves the occasional trawl through member societies events webpages to see what is coming up and add them to our Calendar. There will also be information to add in relation to our AGM weekend page, along with AGM papers, etc. The site does have a News section which needs to be kept up to date, liaising with our social media officer to pick up any suitable items.

For any significant design changes to the site, we do have access to a web designer who we can commission.

It really is not a burdensome task but it is an important one for the Alliance. Please do have a look at our site at <https://allianceofliterarysocieties.wordpress.com/>.

If you would be interested in taking on this role, please contact Marty (martyross73@gmail.com).

Linda Curry

Five Best Books About ...

Last year, ALS committee member Mark Davies (who represents the Lewis Carroll Society) was invited by the creator of an American website to nominate his five favourite books about the author of *Alice*. The website is intended to recreate online the serendipity of chance discoveries of books: the ‘bookstore experience’, as the creator Ben Fox calls it. You can see Mark’s selection here:

<https://shepherd.com/best-books/lewis-carroll-and-alice>

As a result, the Lewis Carroll Society has adapted the idea by asking its own members to write in with their own 'best three' choices, along with a single sentence of justification for each. The intention is to stimulate debate and discussion, create a kind of league table of favourites, and also to reveal new titles which might otherwise have eluded even the most ardent students of the author. You might like to try the same idea with members of your own society.

Additionally if any of your members have published books of their own about their chosen author, Ben Fox would be pleased to hear from you at <https://shepherd.com/>. He states:

'I want to help readers find books in new ways and help authors connect with readers and sell more books. There is a growing trend that authors have to become their own marketing team. That concerns me because it takes time away from writing and is very hard to do. I want to make it easier for authors to get their books in front of readers.'

Over to you!

Mark Davies

(Editor's Note: Please note that the website described in the article is run by a commercial, for-profit business. Mention of the site in the Newsletter is not a recommendation or endorsement of the site by the ALS. Anyone who wishes to make use of its services should carry out appropriate due diligence before doing so and review the terms and conditions of the site and the business behind it to ensure that it meets their needs.)

Articles for the Journal

This is to remind members of the ALS that this year the theme of *ALSo* is 'The Day Job'. Contributors are invited to write on the subject of the 'day job' that many professional writers in English (including Trollope, Charles Lamb, T. S. Eliot, Nabokov, William Carlos Williams, Larkin) had while they were writing, or perhaps before they began to write full-time. The focus should be on what impact their non-literary careers had on their literary work. For instance, did it provide a relief from the intellectual demands of their creative life, or was the time given to it seen as eating into the hours they felt were necessary to produce worthwhile art? Did novelists regard their day jobs as providing the necessary contact with people and did poets see regularly paid non-literary posts as absolutely necessary to keep the wolf from the door? These are just some of the issues that could be addressed.

Full details can be found on the ALS website under *ALSo*.

The deadline for articles is 1 May.

Robin Healey, editor (r.healey709@btinternet.com)

Help with Social Media for Societies

Lyn Lockwood of The Philip Larkin Society has kindly offered to help societies who are struggling to get to grips with using social media to promote themselves and their events. Lyn will share her experiences and offer tips and guidance on how to get the most out of the new ways in which we can reach out to new audiences. You can contact Lyn by email at: lynlockwood70@yahoo.co.uk

Sharing information on society events

May I remind member societies that we do have an Events page on our website. I do occasionally trawl the internet for events to include but this is a long and laborious task. It would help so much if you could keep me informed of any events you have coming up. It provides a point of interest on our site, as this page is well visited, and it is also a promotion for you.

You can send event information to: gallowayraiders@gmail.com

ALS Contacts

We welcome your feedback and information. Please contact as follows:

Website content and events: Cally Phillips: gallowayraiders@gmail.com

Newsletter: Mark Green: markr_green@msn.com

Facebook/Social media: Jodie Roberts: geraniumcat@gmail.com

For other matters contact:

Chair: Marty Ross Smith: martyross73@gmail.com

Treasurer: Jeremy Mitchell: treasurer.als@outlook.com



The views expressed in this publication are those of the individual contributors and not necessarily those of the Alliance. Please send copy for the next issue by 1st August to Mark Green: markr_green@msn.com. We reserve the right to edit copy for space. The autumn newsletter will be published in September 2022.

The Alliance of Literary Societies (ALS)
AGM Weekend in Hull
Hosted by
The Philip Larkin Society, celebrating the 100th anniversary of the birth of
Philip Larkin, 9th August 1922
Friday 20th May- Sunday 22nd May 2022

Programme

Friday, 20th May 2022, 7.30pm

Please join us for an informal dinner at the wonderful Hitchcocks, that has become a Hull culinary institution. Hitchcocks is a quirky vegetarian restaurant that describes itself as a 'surrealist mystery tour' and always invites the first guest who books for an evening, to choose the theme of the menu. In honour of Larkin, they are preparing for us a 'retro British' theme- including 'Toad' In the Hole and the 1970s classic Black Forest Gateau. There is a full bar, or you can bring your own bottle {£1 corkage fee applies per bottle}. Please note that Hitchcocks is an old building and has some steep stairways.

<http://www.hitchcocksrestaurant.co.uk/>

Saturday, 21st May 2022, Hull History Centre

10 am Arrive. Registration and tea/coffee.

10.45 Programme begins.
Welcome by Professor Graham Chesters, Chair of the PLS

Introduction to the day by ALS President Claire Harman

Keynote talk by Dr James Underwood (University of Huddersfield) who will discuss his fascinating book, *Early Larkin* (Bloomsbury, 2021) and the use he made of the extensive Larkin archives.

Access to the library and Larkinalia items held in the archives

12.30 Lunch at The Hull History Centre
Selection of Sandwiches (meat/fish/veg)
Homemade Vegetable Quiche
Crudities and Dips
Sausage Rolls
Ready Salted Crisps
Dessert choice
Coffee, Tea and Biscuits

Raffle closes 30 mins before AGM starts

- 2pm AGM
- 3pm Raffle drawn, tea and coffee
- 3.30 Join Hull legend Paul Schofield on a guided walk around the Larkin Trail in Hull city centre (£5 per head, pay on the day)
- 7pm Dinner at The Minerva Pub, Hull Marina

The Minerva is an iconic pub that has been in situ since 1829 and frequented by Larkin himself. We will be taking over the upstairs room. A lovely place for views across the Humber Estuary and for strolls around the town centre in the evening before or after the meal. The meal is an informal hot buffet with vegetarian choices. There is a steep staircase to the upstairs room. Please note we can only seat 35 people at this event.

Sunday, 22nd May, 2022, the main gates at Pearson Park

10.30 am

We'd like to invite delegates to meet us for a wander around Pearson Park, made famous in poems such as *Toads* and *Toads Revisited*, and a flat walk of just over a mile up to the Brynmor Jones Library, built under the watchful eye of senior librarian Philip Larkin, with a little detour to look at Larkin's final home in Newland Park. Please note it is possible to catch a bus between sites or bring your car.

At Brynmor Jones Library we will be able to visit Larkin's personal office (not normally open to the public). Please note numbers may be limited according to staff capacity on the day.

We can also recommend the Larkin Trail and/or a visit to Cottingham or Beverley for any delegates that want to go their own way.

-0000-

Booking. Please book by completing the form below and emailing to the PLS Treasurer or printing and posting with a cheque. Final bookings on Friday April 29th.

Raffle Prizes. It is part of the ALS tradition that, if possible, people bring items to be included as raffle prizes. This is often a good way to advertise your particular author to others! These can be left at the registration table on arrival on the Saturday. Raffle tickets will be on sale until 30 minutes before the start of the AGM, and the winners announced at the end of the AGM.

Stall space. If you would like to book a stall at the Hull History Centre for Saturday 21st May then please email c.weatherall@hull.ac.uk. Please note that space is limited so it is first come, first served.

Saturday evening dinner. Traditionally, we have provided our own entertainment at the Saturday evening dinner. In other words, diners bring along their favourite readings (prose or poetry), to read out. It is not compulsory, but if you want to have a go, please do tick the box on the form and bring your reading with you. As this is a popular activity, please keep your reading to a minimum (one short poem or no more than two pages of text). Names will be put into a hat and drawn out in random order,

Sunday activities. Sunday activities are free and entirely optional, but we hope to see you on our stroll around Pearson Park and its surroundings!

Accommodation. Please find separate document with recommendations from the Hull Tourist Information service. A discount is available with the quoted code Larkin22 when you contact your chosen hotel directly to book.

This programme may be subject to minor changes, but the paid-for portions will remain unchanged.

The Alliance of Literary Societies (ALS)

AGM Weekend in Hull

Hosted by

**The Philip Larkin Society, celebrating the 100th anniversary of the birth of
Philip Larkin, 9th August 1922**

Friday 20th May- Sunday 22nd May 2022

Registration Form

Title:		First name:		Surname:	
Address:					
Email address:					
Tel No.:					
Society(ies) represented:					

Please tick the relevant boxes below and enter the number of people attending

Yes	Number of attendees	Item	Cost per person
		I wish to attend the Friday evening meal at Hitchcocks. (- £22.50 per head for 3 course as much as you can eat vegetarian buffet)	Pay on the night
		I shall be attending the ALS AGM only – on Saturday at 2pm	Free
		I wish to register for the Saturday event, including tea/coffee, buffet lunch and the talk by Dr James Underwood.	£12
		I would like to join the guided tour by Paul Schofield along the Larkin Trail in central Hull at 3.30pm	£5 (pay on the day)
		I plan to bring a reading to the Saturday evening dinner.	

	I wish to attend the Saturday evening dinner at the Minerva (drinks extra). This is a hot buffet. A vegetarian option will be available.	£11.50
Dietary requirements: (e.g. allergies/vegetarian/vegan)		
Total to pay		

Payment method (tick as appropriate):

- Cheque made out to The Philip Larkin Society and posted to address below
- Paypal account plstreasurer@philiplarkin.com
- Direct bank transfer: Sort code 20-43-47 ACC 60097748. Please put your initials and ALS22 as a reference eg. ABALS22

Please return this registration form by 29th April 2022 to:

Thomas Gordon
 PLS Treasurer
 46 Vermont Woods
 Finchampstead
 Wokingham RG40 4PF

Or

Send by email to plstreasurer@philiplarkin.com

We would like to provide a list of participants (with name, society and email address) to those attending. **If you are happy for us to include your details, please tick the box.**

If you have any questions about the event, you can email Thomas Gordon at plstreasurer@philiplarkin.com

Booking details for Hull hotels 20-22nd May 2022

Alliance of Literary Societies Event. Please contact the hotels directly to make the booking quoting *Larkin22*

Guests contacting the hotel direct to make bookings will be asked to provide their credit card details as a guarantee. Payment can then be made by credit card on arrival/departure.

Hotel name and address	Contact details	Price	Parking/check in and check out
DoubleTree by Hilton 24 Ferensway, Hull HU2 8NH	01482 755500 reservations@doubletreehull.com Cancellation policy: 24 hours prior to arrival	£80.00 bed and breakfast per room per night – single occupancy £90.00 bed and breakfast per room per night – double occupancy	£10 per 24 hours on-site parking Check-in 3.00pm Check-out 11:00 am
Express Holiday Inn Ferensway, Hull, HU1 3UF	01482 485700 Email: Hull@fmhos.com Cancellation policy: Up to 4pm day prior to arrival (individual bookings) 1 week prior to arrival (group bookings)	£70.00 bed and breakfast per room per night - single or double occupancy	Parking: £7.00 per 24 hours stay – St Stephens Shopping Centre with direct access into hotel. Hotel reception will validate the reduced rate car parking ticket on arrival / departure. Check-in 3.00pm Check out: 11:00am (Mon – Fri) 12noon (Sat &Sun)
Holiday Inn Hull Marina Castle Street, Hull HU1 2BX	01482 692600 Email: reservations@hihull.com Cancellation policy: 72 hours prior to arrival	£89.00 bed and breakfast per room per night – single occupancy £101.00 bed and breakfast per room per night – double occupancy	On-site parking. £10 per car, per night Check-in 2.00pm Check-out 12.00 noon
Ibis Hull Osborne Street, Ferensway, Hull, HU1 2NL	Guests to contact Conference Hull to reserve their booking. conference.bureau@vhey.co.uk or sophie.bass@vhey.co.uk Guests will then need to contact the hotel direct to provide their credit card details as a guarantee. Payment can then be made by credit card on arrival/departure. 01482 947950 Cancellation policy: 72 hours prior to arrival	£50.00 bed and breakfast per room per night – single occupancy £55.00 bed and breakfast per room per night – double occupancy	Nearby parking at Osbourne Multi-storey for £3.00 per 24 hours Check-in 3.00pm Check-out 12.00 noon

<p>Kingston Theatre Hotel, 1-2 Kingston Square, Hull, HU2 8DA</p>	<p>Tel: 01482 225828 Email: enquiries@kingstontheatrehotel.com</p> <p>Cancellation policy: 4 weeks prior to arrival</p>	<p>£75.00 bed and breakfast per room per night – single occupancy £95.00 bed and breakfast per room per night – double occupancy</p>	<p>24 hour complimentary car parking pass will be issued at the main hotel reception, guests will then be directed to an offsite car park within 5 minute walk of the hotel.</p> <p>Check-in 3.00pm Check-out 12.00 noon</p>
--	---	--	--