



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

Newsletter: Spring/Summer 2017

Not Only, But ALSO...

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1. Alliance News

Obituary of Kathleen Adams Founder member and Vice President of the ALS

It was with great sadness that we learned of the death of our remaining Vice President, Kathleen Adams, so soon after that of her husband, Bill.

On 21 July 1973 *The Times* newspaper published a letter from Kathleen about a threat to Charles Dickens' childhood home in Chatham and to other literary sites. Kathleen and Bill were prominent members of the George Eliot Fellowship, which also had faced a similar threat to her childhood home in Nuneaton. The public response to Kathleen's letter led, eventually, to the founding of the ALS.

Kathleen and Bill devoted much time and energy to the Fellowship and to the ALS as it grew into the organisation it is today. Kathleen received an honorary degree from the University of Warwick for her work in literature – a fitting reward for her lifetime's work.

Julie Shorland.

**The Alliance of Literary Societies (ALS)
AGM Weekend in Edinburgh
Jointly hosted by
The Siegfried Sassoon Fellowship and the Wilfred Owen Association,
celebrating the 100th anniversary of the meeting of the two poets**

2 – 4 June 2017

Programme

Friday 2 June – optional activity

- 5pm Visit to the Outlook Tower/Camera Obscura & World of Illusions (admission charge). Meet on the top floor at 5.30pm for a short talk on the work of Patrick Geddes.
- 6.30pm Governor's reception in the Great Hall of Edinburgh Castle.
Please register your interest in advance as numbers are limited.

Saturday 3 June

- 10.00 Meet for coffee and registration at the Rivers Suite, Craiglockhart Campus, Napier University, and catch up with friends from other societies.
- 11.00 Welcome by Professor Andrea Nolan, Vice Chancellor of Napier University
- 11.15 Claire Harman, President of the Alliance of Literary Societies
- 11.30 Introduction: Meg Crane, Chair of the SSF and WOA
Speaker: Professor Alistair McCleery, Napier University: "The First World War and the Scottish Novel"
- 13.00 Soup & sandwich lunch
There will be an opportunity for delegates to visit the War Poets Collection, and talk to the curator, Dr Catherine Walker
- 14.00 ALS AGM, followed by the drawing of the raffle.
- 15.30 Speaker: **Professor** Hazel Hutchison, University of Aberdeen.
"Whistling Over the Fields: Soundscapes of War"
- 16.30 Words and Music of the First World War performed by artists from "Glen Art"
- 17.00 (approx.) Further opportunities to visit the War Poets Collection
Note: While the Rivers Suite is being set up for the dinner, a room will be set aside to enable those staying to relax and change if wished.
- 19.00 Dinner at the Rivers Suite – 3 courses with vegetarian option (£35). All drinks extra.

Sunday, 4 June – optional activity

10.30am Literary walk in central Edinburgh, led by Neil MacLennan. Price £5
Meet at Waverley Station. Afterwards visit the War Museum and
memorial at Edinburgh Castle (admission charges apply).

Note: The programme may be subject to minor changes. All timings are approximate.

Booking. For those registering for this conference, the talks are included. A limited number of tickets may be made available for sale to non-ALS members. It is therefore important that you complete the attached form and return it to the Siegfried Sassoon Fellowship as soon as possible. The deadline is 3 May, but really, the sooner the better!

Raffle Prizes. It is part of the ALS tradition that, if possible, societies 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 at the Rivers Suite on Saturday morning. Raffle tickets will be on sale from the start of the day until the afternoon AGM.

Saturday evening dinner. Traditionally, we have provided our own entertainment at the Saturday evening dinner. Diners bring along favourite passages (prose or poetry) to read out. If you would like to join in, please tick the box on the form and bring your reading with you. Readings should be short (e.g. 1 short poem or up to 3 pages of text).

Table space. There will be table space to display member societies' promotional material. However, please do not bring items for sale as the university's regulations do not allow this. There will be a bookstall run by Napier students.

Friday activities. The visit to the Outlook Tower is optional and normally takes approximately 2 hours. If you wish to attend the reception at the Castle afterwards, there will be a charge for drinks. You do not have to join the visit to the Outlook Tower in order to attend the reception, but the latter is by invitation and *must* be booked in advance. Dress code will be "smart". (Any further questions about this can be addressed to Fiona McDonald - 07980 631 110 or fiona@wilfredowen.org.uk)

Sunday activities. The walk arranged for Sunday morning will begin from Waverley station and end at Edinburgh Castle. The city is built on hills and there will therefore be a couple of steep gradients involved. Those who feel they cannot complete the walk may leave at any point and may, if wished, arrange to take public transport for the rest of the way and meet us at the castle afterwards.

Accommodation. There is no accommodation available at the university because it is term-time. An accommodation list is in preparation and will be sent to all those booking for the conference. We recommend that you consider staying in central Edinburgh if you want to make a weekend of it and travel to Craiglockhart by one of the frequent service buses (or car). If you are only planning to attend the Saturday segment, a B&B in the Craiglockhart area might suit you better.

Parking/Transport. Parking will be available at Craiglockhart conference on Saturday but must be booked in advance. Information about public transport in Edinburgh can be obtained from the City of Edinburgh Council website:
<http://edinburgh.cdmf.info/public/bus/list.htm>

2. Special Features

Campaign to keep libraries open!

Maggie Parsons, Barbara Pym Society and ALS committee

As members of literary societies who value reading and the richness it brings to our lives, we must all be concerned at what is happening to libraries around the UK. Library services have come under increasing pressure due to cuts in funding to councils. Around one in eight council-run libraries has closed or been transferred out of the public sector in the past six years. Library book loans have slumped by almost 16 million in the last two years.

How can we, as lovers of literature, help to keep libraries open?

Firstly, use your local library. Go and borrow some books, audio books, or e-books, and encourage others to do the same; especially children and young people. The number of books taken out and the numbers of visitors through the library door are key performance indicators that are taken into account when library closures are under consideration. If the library doesn't have the book you want make a request for an inter-library loan and draw on the expertise of librarians to help you find what you are looking for.

Use libraries as meeting places; recommend any library collections to society members. See if your society can hold an event in a library. I organised a dramatized reading of a Barbara Pym novel in the Library of Birmingham, and the Portman Library in Manchester has held events to celebrate Elizabeth Gaskell and Barbara Pym. Staging events is an important way to get libraries and literary societies involved with each other.

Another vital thing that we can do is to campaign to stop libraries destroying their collections of old books. Virago, for example, discovered so many of the out-of-print, forgotten books they went on to resurrect and republish in the stacks of public libraries. Manchester Library destroyed somewhere between 250,000 and 300,000 books from their book stores during their recent 'refurbishment'.

Libraries are the places where many young people start to explore and develop an interest in literature and we as members of literary societies must join the campaign to protect and promote libraries before it is too late. For more information visit www.cilip.org.uk

LitHouses

Haworth, 25 November 2016

Marty Ross Smith, Johnson Society (Lichfield) & ALS secretary

The ALS AGM in May was my first ever visit to Haworth, and it was strange to find myself back in the West Lane Baptist Chapel in November, attending the LitHouses conference. I was invited by Joanne Wilson, curator of the Johnson Birthplace Museum in Lichfield. It presented an excellent opportunity to network with representatives from literary properties all over Britain. Many of them were unaware of the ALS and the work we do, and I hope I rectified that to some extent. I also invited LitHouses representatives to send information for our newsletter and Facebook pages, and generally indicated that we would be enthusiastic about building stronger links and exploring ways in which the ALS and LitHouses can benefit each other.

Over 40 houses were represented and the day consisted largely of reports on activities in the houses, with a particular focus on the use of literary properties for film and television. Smaller properties, like Johnson's Birthplace, seem limited to a regular diet of antiques shows; however, attendance increases noticeably when these are broadcast or repeated. Knebworth, on the other hand, hosts (and presumably commands large fees for) the likes of *Batman* and *Downton Abbey*. It is often used as a stand-in for Balmoral. The representative for Abbotsford House, the home of Sir Walter Scott, said this was

particularly annoying, because Balmoral was actually based on Abbotsford! However, their remote location, outside Melrose, does not help. They have recently appointed a travel trade consultant in an effort to attract more groups and a digital resources manager to develop their on-line presence. They are also interested in exploring links with other houses and writers.

A general theme was the decline in admissions during the previous year. Many houses have come up with ingenious solutions to attracting more visitors. The John Bunyan Museum in Bedford, run by volunteers, holds regular events with schoolchildren interviewing Mr and Mrs Bunyan, who are played by actors. The Charles Dickens Museum in London recently had an exhibition of the original drawings for the Ladybird biography of Dickens and this drew large crowds. Janet Allan, of the Gaskell Society and Plymouth Grove, said that the house is coming to the end of its Heritage Lottery funding and now must find ways of being economically viable on its own. The representative for the Cowper and Newton Museum in Olney emphasized the need for stories to tell through their museum, which bills itself as 'The Home of Amazing Grace'.

A representative of VisitEngland announced that 2017 has been designated as 'The Year of Literary Heroes'. They will be working with societies and houses to promote literary tourism (see the VisitEngland website for more information).

The day concluded with an interesting talk on the use of the Brontë Parsonage in film and television, including Sally Wainwright's *To Walk Invisible*, broadcast over Christmas.

On Saturday, some of us took the local bus over the moors – bright, frosty sunshine on the tops and mist in the valleys – to Hebden Bridge and on to Mytholmroyd, where Ted Hughes lived as a child. His home, a modest terraced house, is owned by the Elmet Trust and is now a rental property (see Yorkshire Cottages Ted's House). Our guide, Nick Wilding, walked us along a very chilly Rochdale Canal, reading Hughes's poems about particular places and particular memories of his boyhood. The sun came out and warmed us as we neared the house, and we were grateful for cups of coffee inside, where we were warmly welcomed by Sheila Wild, chair of the Elmet Trust, and Mark Hinchliffe, a poet, both of whom knew Hughes and his family.

The conference was a wonderful opportunity to meet people and gain insight into the workings of various literary houses. I enjoyed being back in Haworth, beautiful after dark, aglow with Christmas decorations. We also enjoyed raising a glass or two of Timothy Taylor Landlord, brewed in nearby Keighley, on the Friday evening.

Featured Society: Norman Nicholson Society LITERARY WEEKEND AT COCKLEY MOOR, ULLSWATER

A house in Cumbria which was once a focal point for the country's leading poets and artists came alive to the sound of lively literary discussions once again.

Cockley Moor, near the village of Dockray overlooking Ullswater, is the former home of Helen Sutherland, a celebrated patron of the arts. For more than 20 years from the 1940s she played host to leading poets and artists including T.S. Eliot, Kathleen Raine, Ben and Winifred Nicholson, Percy Kelly, and the Millom poet Norman Nicholson. Helen Sutherland died in 1965, aged 83.

Over the weekend of October 8th and 9th, the Millom-based Norman Nicholson Society organised a study weekend at Cockley Moor, where experts and enthusiasts discussed the works of that elite group in the very same setting which inspired them.

Speakers were headed by the poet and writer Grevel Lindop, who discussed a selection of Nicholson's poems and made a case for Nicholson being an early advocate for 'mindfulness' because of the poet's attention to the detail of everyday life.

The Cumbrian poet Phil Houghton turned detective to track down the exact section of the fells described as 'cubist' by Nicholson in a poem written at Cockley Moor. After

consulting maps of the time, as well as exploring on foot and researching Nicholson's prose writing, Phil confidently concluded that the landscape in question is the Skiddaw range – visible from Cockley Moor in the 1940s but now obscured by forestry plantations.

The two-day event also witnessed a talk by Penrith author and photographer Val Corbett about Helen Sutherland, a presentation by Caroline Watson about Nicholson's friend and contemporary, the poet Kathleen Raine, and a talk by Ian Brodie, former director of Friends of the Lake District, about his recent book *Norman Nicholson's Nature*.

Grevel Lindop said: 'The weekend has been a real insight into the poetry of Nicholson and his contemporaries, and also a celebration of a creative community which used to meet in this house. To be together with people who enjoy and appreciate this work is so exciting.'

Phil Houghton said: 'It's been a great time to listen to, and echo, the poets and artists who were in this collective, and to experience that in the very landscape that they were in.'

Chair of the Norman Nicholson Society Charlie Lambert said: 'This is the first time the Society has held an event like this. It has been a wonderful success. People have travelled from as far as Edinburgh and London to attend. We are incredibly grateful to Hilary Rock, the current owner of Cockley Moor, for allowing us to take over her house for the weekend. I'm sure Helen Sutherland would have approved!'

For more information about the Norman Nicholson Society: www.normannicholson.org.

Featured Society: The John Moore Society

July 27th 2017 is the 50th anniversary of the death of John Moore at the age of 60. The much-loved, Tewkesbury-born chronicler of rural life, novelist, critic and newspaper columnist had a deep love of the countryside, country life and country ways and was in many ways 'before his time' in his attitude to our treatment of our surroundings.

His love of nature grew from a boyhood spent in the open air with schoolfriends, hunting insects, birds-nesting and other instinctive pastimes of the young, combined with a growing love of fishing and the classics from a prep school teacher who later featured in his writing. An unenthusiastic pupil at public school, he was sent on lone rambles where he sought fossils; and after a spell in his uncle's auctioneer business he followed the lure of the pen.

From his early fiction writing his talent grew in his observational recording. His best known works are probably the *Brensham Trilogy* – *Portrait of Elmbury*, *Brensham Village* and *The Blue Field* – which pictured life between the wars in fictionalised versions of Tewkesbury, Bredon and other still-recognisable surroundings. His novel *The Waters under the Earth*, his last major work before his death, was a best-seller here, in the USA and elsewhere; but apart from this his novels were (though enjoyable) mostly not brilliantly written and his strength was in his country writings, of which his collections *The Season of the Year*, *Come Rain Come Shine* and *The Year of the Pigeons* stand out.

His anniversary will be marked by two talks (currently scheduled for June 10th) and special displays at the John Moore Countryside Museum, situated in a delightful restored mediaeval cottage at 41 Church Street Tewkesbury, very close to the Abbey. There will also be a 'Portrait of Elmbury Literary Walk' and village walks on Bredon Hill. Other projects are in advanced planning stage. The Museum re-opens on April 1st: for further information telephone 01684 277174 or see our website: www.johnmooremuseum.org

If any member societies have, in their archives, any letters from John Moore to 'their' writer, our journal editor will be very grateful for information. Please telephone Valerie Haworth on 01625 529404.

For further information about the Society please contact the membership secretary Karen Cording at 29 Hillmorton Close, Church Hill North, Redditch, Worcs. B98 9LX; email karencording@hotmail.com; or telephone 01527 69150.

3. Society News from Newsletters

The Dracula Society are a very active society with many cross-connections with other literary figures as is revealed in their Summer 2016 newsletter *Voices from the Vault*, which contains such entertaining titles as: *Tomes from the Tomb*, *Screams from the Screen* and *Flickers from the Footlight*. If you are interested in Dracula, or Gothic horror/romance in general, this is a great society to join with lots of activity throughout the year. Find out more at the website: www.thedraculasociety.org.uk ; or on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/TheDraculaSociety>; and on Twitter@DracSoc

Friends of the Dymock Poets Their November 2016 newsletter lists forthcoming events related to Edward Thomas, Robert Frost and other poets associated with Dymock and the Malvern area.

Richard Jefferies Society The Winter 2016 edition of the *Richard Jefferies Society Journal*, which is published quarterly, focuses on London, with an article about Jefferies' 'unfinished masterpiece', *After London*. There are also papers on Jefferies' experiences of London and his book *Nature Near London*. Jefferies is so closely associated with rural Wiltshire that it is interesting to consider him writing about nature in an urban context. This issue also includes a poem by Julian Bell addressed to Richard Jefferies and an assessment of Bell's poetry, as well as reviews and other items.

David Jones Society Their newsletter, published in November 2016, announces the 'Starlight Order' conference taking place in March; information about the R.S. Thomas Literary Festival in June (for both these events, see separate listings in this newsletter); and reviews of publications.

The Norman Nicholson Society celebrated their 10th anniversary in their summer/autumn newsletter, *Comet*. There is a lovely reminiscence by Kathleen Morris about delivering a telegram to Norman Nicholson at his home in Millom; an article about Jacquetta Hawkes and Norman Nicholson; a piece on Cockley Moor, near Penrith, home of Helen Sutherland; and reports on recent events, including a writing workshop exploring links between writers and the environment held in Kendal with the poet Kathleen Jones, as well as the ALS AGM in Haworth.

The Powys Society The November 2016 newsletter of the Powys Society contains reports of their annual conference, held in Street in August, as well as reviews of recent publications. Their very substantial Journal for 2016 has articles on John Cowper Powys and William Wordsworth; John Cowper Powys's 'radical medievalism'; T.F. Powys's shorter fiction; James Purdy and John Cowper Powys; as well as articles about other members of the Powys circle and reviews.

4. Tea-Break

Dylan Thomas



Everyone loves a nice, fresh, hot cuppa don't they? Especially with a few nibbles and great company. But what is the difference that helps make a nice afternoon out into a truly memorable occasion? To us, it is the surroundings and atmosphere. That's why we believe we have the perfect place for an afternoon tea....and a gossip!

At the Dylan Thomas Birthplace, 5 Cwmdonkin Drive, Swansea, we are opening up the pantry for traditional Welsh afternoon teas. Mrs Thomas did like to catch up on all the local gossip courtesy of friends and neighbours and of course it would be thirsty work! To keep her guests' energy up, she would lay on a beautiful spread of cakes and sandwiches, covering the table. We'll carry on that important tradition. Our guests can immerse themselves in the splendour of the Edwardian surroundings, exploring the rooms whilst learning of the history of the house and its most famous literary son; then settle down to relax in the comfort of the Thomases front parlour (only kept for entertaining).

You can even have a go at twitching our net curtains if you wish...

Our afternoon teas are priced at £16 per person and also include a self-guided tour of the house (minimum number of guests: 4).

To book, please call us on (01792) 472 55 or email info@dylanthomasbirthplace.com

5. Call for Papers

The Many Lives of Arnold Bennett A Celebration

*The Fourteenth Annual Arnold Bennett Society Conference
Keele University: Friday 1st and Saturday 2nd September 2017*

2017 is the 150th anniversary of the birth of Arnold Bennett: novelist, playwright, journalist, politician, traveller, self-help writer, diarist, screenwriter, artist and bon viveur.

The conference, which is a joint venture between Keele University, Staffordshire University and the Arnold Bennett Society, opens on the Friday evening with a public lecture by journalist and broadcaster Samira Ahmedin at the Westminster Theatre at Keele University. Samira Ahmed will also present the prize for the inaugural Arnold Bennett Society Book Prize.

The Saturday conference will take place in the University Conference Centre, the Grade II listed mansion house Keele Hall, between 10.00am and 6.00pm and will include keynote speeches by Dr Randi Saloman, Wake Forest University, North Carolina and Jonathan Wild, Edinburgh University.

The organisers welcome proposals for individual papers or panels. Titles and abstracts of no more than 250 words should be sent to research.humssevents@keele.ac.uk by 31, March 2017. Selected papers will be sought for publication. For further information please email Dr Nicholas Bentley (n.bentley@keele.ac.uk), Dr Leslie Powner (L.powner@keele.ac.uk), Dr Catherine Burgass (c.j.burgass@staffs.ac.uk), or John Shapcott (j.shapcott@keele.ac.uk).

6. Publications

The Galloway Raiders Centenary Edition of S.R.Crockett's posthumous novel *The Azure Hand* will be published on July 24th in a new paperback edition. Long out of print, this new edition allows readers to engage with a novel that Martin Edwards of the Crime Writers' Association suggests was 'a very modern take on fictional detection' from decades before the Golden Age of Crime Fiction. Unusual among Crockett's oeuvre, Edwards says it is 'a hugely interesting and worthwhile project to reissue this book.' With an introduction by Cally Phillips who gives an insight into its place in Crockett's wider fiction. Details can be found on www.unco.scot

John Buchan on Angling by Keith Harwood

Probably one of the less thoroughly researched aspects of John Buchan's life was his devotion to fishing. Keith Harwood's new book seeks to remedy that. He writes: 'Buchan was a very keen angler, from the age of nine, when he first cast a line into a Border stream, until his untimely death in Canada, aged sixty-four. Shortly before his death, he had started work on an autobiographical account of his fishing exploits, provisionally entitled Pilgrim's Rest, only two chapters of which were written. These, together with a number of articles and poems on angling published during his lifetime, form the nucleus of this book. There are also chapters on John Buchan's life and background, the importance of angling in his life, and the influence of angling in his literary works. This book will appeal not just to anglers but also to those interested in the distinguished life and works of such an important figure in the history of the twentieth century.' Details of the book can be found on the website of the Medlar Press: www.medlarpress.com

7. Forthcoming Literary events and festivals

MARCH

The David Jones Society presents **Starlight Order**, a series of events comprising discussions, films, poetry and musical recitals in honour of David Jones (1895–1974) who fought in the Great War. This event takes place at the Art Workers' Guild, 6 Queen Square, London, WC1N 3AT at 10.00am – 6.00pm, 11th March 2017.

The event will be hosted by the Director of the David Jones Society, Anne Price-Owen. Contact davidjonessociety@gmail.com; or 01792 206144/ 07881044111; or www.david-jones-society.org for further information, and to register your intent to attend this symposium. Cost: £40.00 pp., includes refreshments. **Booking:** please send a cheque for £40.00 per person, payable to the David Jones Society, 22 Gower Road, Sketty, Swansea SA2 9BY. This event is in association with the Temenos Academy.

York Literature Festival Friday 17th March – Thursday 30th March. This year they have the largest programme they have ever delivered, with more than 60 events in two weeks. Those attending include Michael Palin, Dan Cruickshank, Ann Widemcombe, Sue Perkins, Jonathan Dimbleby.

For more information visit: <http://www.yorkliteraturefestival.co.uk/> and <https://twitter.com/yorklitfest>

John Buchan Society The Society's Annual Meeting in 2017, from Friday, March 24, to Sunday, March 26, will be held at the historic Salutation Hotel in Perth. The emphasis for this weekend will be on the young John Buchan and the Buchan family in Fife and includes an exciting coach tour of the places associated with the family (and the novels) in Pathhead, Kirkcaldy and Dysart. For full information and booking, contact the secretary via the website: <http://www.johnbuchansociety.co.uk/>

APRIL

The Fictional First World War: Imagination and Memory Since 1914.

An International Conference at the Centre for the Novel, Sir Duncan Rice Library, University of Aberdeen, 6-9 April 2017

Plenary Speakers: Oliver Kohns, University of Luxembourg; Randall Stevenson, University of Edinburgh; and Steven Trout, University of South Alabama

This international conference, hosted by the Centre for the Novel, invites intercultural dialogue about the war's aesthetic and intellectual legacy. With plenary speakers exploring British, German and American material, this event explores how war narratives are able to disrupt critical categories and to defy national boundaries – but also to entrench them. It examines how factual writing about the war, including government-sponsored 'propaganda' materials, adopted the techniques of fiction to energize the emotional case for conflict. It also looks at how war fiction interacts with other genres and media. Timed to coincide with the centenary of the US entry to the First World War on 6 April 1917, this event will also ask what it means to think about the war beyond national contexts.

More information at: <http://www.abdn.ac.uk/sll/research/centre-for-the-novel-215.php>

Friends of the Dymock Poets 1st April, *Remembering Edward Thomas*.
Readings, poems and the Pear Tree Press
Speakers: Frances Guthrie, John Monks
10.30 - 4.30 £25 includes lunch and tea. Contact@dymockpoets.org.uk

Malcolm Saville Society On 21st April the Society is running a one-day literary conference for those who would like to know more about the life and work of Malcolm Saville. The conference will take the form of about 10 short lectures on various Malcolm Saville subjects: the man himself, the locations of his works, and various themes that are found within his books. The conference is aimed at all Society members (not only those attending the AGM) and also to members of the Alliance of Literary Societies. There is a fee of £35 for those who wish to attend all day – 10 till 4 at the Old Ship Hotel, Brighton, the site of the AGM – and includes morning coffee, a buffet lunch and afternoon tea. It is possible to attend either the morning or afternoon sessions (for £10, or £20 if lunch is included). Places are limited, so early booking is advised. The booking form can be found on the forthcoming events page of the website, [Malcolm Saville Society](#) (from the home page, click on The Society, then Events, then Forthcoming Events)).

JUNE

Jane Austen by the Sea
17 June 2017 - 8 January 2018
Royal Pavilion, Brighton

A new display at the Royal Pavilion in Brighton will explore Jane Austen's relationship with coastal towns and life in Brighton during her time, to mark the bicentenary of her death. *Jane Austen by the Sea* will look at the seaside context of Austen's plots and paint a picture of the leading resort of Brighton in the early 1800s, when it was a fashionable 'watering place' featured in novels like *Pride and Prejudice*.

Although there is no clear evidence that Austen visited Brighton, she included it in several of her works, alongside other resorts on England's south coast. The display will reassess her relationship with the town in the light of a long-term misunderstanding, arising from a hand-written letter of 8 January 1799.

Jane Austen by the Sea will form part of Royal Pavilion & Museums' 2017 *Regency Season*, which will also include the exhibition *Constable and Brighton* (8 April to 8 October 2017) and the display *Visions of the Royal Pavilion Estate* (14 March to 3 Sept 2017) - both at Brighton Museum & Art Gallery.

The Thomas Traherne Association is holding their annual festival over the weekend of 3-5 June, mainly at Credenhill in Herefordshire where Traherne was Rector in the 17th Century. Full details will be available on the Association website nearer the time.

R.S. Thomas Literary Festival 9-11th June, Mehefin, St Hywyn, Aberdaron
Prof. Helen Wilcox of Bangor University on George Hemen and R.S. Thomas
Prof. M. Wynn Thomas, Swansea University, 'Yr Hen Fam'
For registration, contact: susanfogarty@gmail.com, 01758 703039
or visit: www.rstthomaspoetry.co.uk

JULY

The John Moore Society. July 27th 2017 is the 50th anniversary of the death of John Moore at the age of 60. His anniversary will be marked by two talks (currently scheduled for June 10th) and special displays at the John Moore Countryside Museum, situated in a delightful restored mediaeval cottage at 41 Church Street Tewkesbury, very close to the Abbey. There will also be a 'Portrait of Elmbury Literary Walk' and village walks on Bredon Hill. For further information telephone 01684 277174 or see the website www.johnmooremuseum.org

AUGUST

The Wilfred Owen Association is mounting a centenary commemoration of the historic meeting of Owen and Sassoon on Friday 18th August 2017, at 2.00 in the Wilfred and Siegfried rooms at Craiglockhart, entitled "When Wilfred Met Siegfried", with recitations of the poems they both wrote at Craiglockhart and extracts from their letters to link these. This event is free and open to all.

SEPTEMBER

The Many Lives of Arnold Bennett: A Celebration. The Fourteenth Annual Arnold Bennett Society Conference will be held at Keele University: Friday 1st and Saturday 2nd September 2017 between 10.00am and 6.00pm and will include keynote speeches by Dr Randi Saloman, Wake Forest University, North Carolina and Jonathan Wild, Edinburgh University. For further information see under 'Call for Papers.'

7. Call to arms

Your chance for glory: would your society host an ALS AGM?

Marty Ross Smith, Johnson Society (Lichfield) & ALS secretary

In recent years, we have celebrated Charlotte Brontë in Haworth, Trollope in York, Christopher Marlowe in Canterbury and Barbara Pym in Oxford. These events have all been well attended and provide a feast of talk about books and good writing, as well as an opportunity to network with members of other societies.

The 2017 AGM will be co-hosted in Edinburgh by the Siegfried Sassoon Fellowship and the Wilfred Owen Association. We are scheduled to be the guests of the George Eliot Fellowship in Nuneaton in 2019.

However, we are urgently in need of a society to host the 2018 AGM.

In addition, 2020 and 2021 are free. Would your society be willing to host an AGM weekend? This is a wonderful opportunity to highlight your writer and a place associated with him or her. Although many societies use the occasion of a special anniversary – for example, the 200th anniversary of Charlotte Brontë's birth – there is no need to link the AGM to any particular event, and indeed, some societies have commented that it is better to host the AGM when it is not a significant year for the society.

Participants pay for all events in which they take part, and also pay a registration fee to cover the cost of room hire, coffee and tea, etc. The aim is to make the event self-funding.

The ALS committee is currently developing a protocol, the aim of which is to provide societies with guidance in planning and holding an AGM weekend. This is based on the experience of societies that have hosted AGMs in the past. A representative of the hosting

society is invited to the ALS committee meetings in the year leading up to the AGM and advice and assistance are offered.

I helped to plan the AGM in Lichfield in 2011, hosted by the Johnson Society. It was challenging, but extremely rewarding, and at the end of the weekend we felt that we had done our society, our beautiful cathedral city and Dr Johnson proud. The other reward is that, with over 100 societies in the ALS, we will never have to do it again!

If your society would be interested in hosting the AGM in 2018, 2020 or 2021, please contact me (martyross73@gmail.com) or our chair Linda Curry (ljc1049@gmail.com). We'd be delighted to hear from you.

9.Society Comings and Goings

A fond farewell to: Lewis Carroll (Daresbury), Randolph Caldecott and Westerman Yarns and the Great War at Sea Poetry Society.

Welcome to – The Dracula Society, The Elmet Trust, The Hazlitt Society and The Zamyatin Society. More information on each society is available on the ALS website.

10. Last but not Least

Contact details:

Please send any information as follows:

Website: ljc1049@gmail.com

Newsletter: martyross73@gmail.com ; 8 Waters Edge, Handsacre, Rugeley, Staffs. WS15 4HP or callyphillipsis@gmail.com

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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 1 September 2017 to Cally Phillips at callyphillipsis@gmail.com. We reserve the right to edit copy for space.

**The Alliance of Literary Societies (ALS)
AGM Weekend in Edinburgh**

2 – 4 June 2017

Registration Form

Title:	First name:		Surname:	
Address:				
Email:				
Tel No:				
Society name:				

Please tick the relevant boxes below and enter the number of people wishing to attend each.

Yes	Number	Item	Cost per person
		I would like to attend the reception on Friday evening	Free
		I shall be attending the ALS AGM only – on Saturday at 2pm.	Free
		I wish to register for the Saturday event, including refreshments, lunch and the talks/entertainment.	£20
		I would like table space for my society (PLEASE SEE NOTE)	Free
		I would like to read at the Saturday evening dinner. Please note that readings should be short (e.g. 1 short poem or up to 3 pages of text).	Free
		I wish to attend the Saturday evening dinner at the Rivers Suite (3-course set menu with coffee & mints; drinks extra).	£35
		I would like to park at Craiglockhart campus	Free
Dietary requirements: (e.g. allergies/vegetarian)			
			Total to pay

Payment methods (tick as appropriate):

Cheque made payable to 'The Siegfried Sassoon Fellowship'

Paid by bank transfer to Siegfried Sassoon Fellowship, Lloyds Bank Eastbourne
(sort code 30-92-86; account no 02447099; please add an appropriate reference, e.g.
your surname)

I wish to pay by credit card through Paypal (we will then contact you to inform you
of the surcharge amount)

Please return this registration form (by 3 May 2016), along with your payment, to:

Deb Fisher, Siegfried Sassoon Fellowship, PO Box 11, Cowbridge CF71 7XT

Or

Send by email to secretary@sassoonfellowship.org, if you are paying by bank transfer or wish to
pay by credit card through Paypal (there will be a surcharge for this facility)

If you have any questions about the event, you can email Linda Curry, Chair of the Alliance, at
ljc1049@gmail.com.