



Alliance of Literary Societies

President: Claire Harman

Founder and Hon. Vice-President: Kathleen Adams

www.allianceofliterarysocieties.org.uk

Newsletter: Autumn/Winter 2016

Not Only, But ALSO...

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1. Alliance News

Obituary

Bill Adams, Hon. Vice President ALS

I first met Bill and Kathleen, his wife, when I was asked to be the Jane Austen Society's delegate at the ALS AGM in Birmingham in the 1990s. Bill was then the Hon. Secretary and Kathleen (founder of the Alliance) was Hon. Chair. We met again the following year when I volunteered to join the committee. I subsequently learned that, in addition to a shared love of literature, both Bill and Kathleen worked for the Inland Revenue (HMIT as it then was) as I did. His Civil Service training made Bill an ideal candidate for his administrative roll on the ALS committee; his good humour, efficiency and kind nature made him very easy to deal with. It was clear that he and Kathleen were a very well matched couple; she, the driving force behind the Alliance and Bill her supportive and able general. When I spoke with him earlier this year he sounded spritely and enthusiastic about his forthcoming role in the George Eliot Fellowship memorial event and it was a great shock to learn of his sudden death. Anita Fernandez-Young, our former Hon. Secretary and family friend, represented the ALS at his funeral.

Julie Shorland, Treasurer

New ALS President

As most of you know, Jenny Uglow stood down as President during the last year. We are most grateful for her staunch support of us.

Our new President, Claire Harman, is an award-winning writer and critic. She has written biographies of Charlotte Brontë, Jane Austen, Fanny Burney, Robert Louis Stevenson, and Sylvia Townsend Warner. So, she is well placed to represent the Alliance. You can find out more about her at www.claireharman.com.

Linda J. Curry, Chair

The Alliance of Literary Societies AGM, 21-22 May 2016, hosted by the Brontë Society, celebrating the 200th anniversary of Charlotte Brontë's Birth.

Haworth has long been a second home to me, since I made my first visit back in 1974; and my love of the Brontës and the wonderful landscape that nurtured their genius has not diminished throughout those long years. It was therefore doubly exciting that the ALS were invited by the Brontë Society to hold their AGM in Haworth to coincide with the bi-centennial of Charlotte Brontë's birth, just the first of the four bi-centennials planned to celebrate this remarkable family.

Members of the ALS were given the privilege of visiting the Brontë Parsonage early on Saturday morning prior to the start of a very full weekend of events. Haworth Baptist church was the venue for most of the day, and John Thirlwell, Chairman of the Brontë Society gave a warm welcome to representatives from over 26 literary societies. He then introduced our first speaker, Juliet Barker, historian and biographer, whose book *The Brontës* is undoubtedly the Brontë bible for enthusiasts and academics alike all over the world. The title of Juliet's lecture was 'Re-writing Writers' Lives – Mrs. Gaskell and *The Life of Charlotte Brontë*'. It was an excellent lecture. Juliet received lots of questions from a very engaged and enquiring audience.

After a buffet lunch and raffle, the AGM was held, followed by our second speaker, Ian Dewhirst, retired librarian and well-known historian on West Yorkshire and Keighley in particular. I knew we were in for a treat, as I've heard Ian before, and his talks, though highly informative, are always laced with the kind of humour that has his audience in fits of laughter, and this one was no different. Ian, a true Yorkshire man with a true Yorkshire man's dialect, wears his learning lightly. So well regarded is he that he has not only been awarded an MBE but has had a train named after him. Leading on from Juliet's talk, he soon dispelled the myth of Haworth as a cultural desert, where the Brontë girls ran across those 'bleak, bleak moors'; the emphasis on 'bleak' had everyone reeling, as did the image of the three sisters running over the windswept moors. How had they managed to create such works of genius given their dismal surroundings? This was the crux of Ian's talk which he called 'The Druggist and the Relieving Officer, and other Writers in Haworth'.

Ian could have spoken all night, and apologised for running slightly over time, but no one could have proved more conclusively that the area, far from being a cultural desert, was noted for its writers and poets, many achieving recognition well before the Brontës. It was a delightful lecture, given in Ian's usual inimitable way.

In the evening we gathered for dinner at the White Lion, following which there were the readings from some of the authors represented. It had been an immensely full day, but very enjoyable.

On Sunday, there was a choice of things to do. Some went to see the Brontë birthplace in Thornton which is now a popular café, and then on to Ponden Hall, thought to be the setting of Thrushcross Grange in *Wuthering Heights*, and one time home of the Heatons from whom Emily borrowed books. I led a group on a walk to the Brontë Waterfall, a much loved spot of the sisters; we went via the Country Park, primarily to see the replica parsonage which had been built for the filming of a new play on the Brontës by Sally Wainwright. It looks very realistic, but is due to be dismantled after filming has finished.

I think everyone would agree that it had been a very rewarding weekend for all lovers of books and literature. We thank everyone involved in taking part, but particularly we thank Angela Crow-Woods for her meticulous planning of the event, despite numerous setbacks along the way. Thank you, Angela.

Helen D. Newman, The Richard Jeffries Society

Eggheads

Earlier in the year, we were approached by the BBC to put together a team for the BBC2 quiz programme 'Eggheads'. Having put out a plea for volunteers – and being inundated with likely candidates – we got our team together and went through the long drawn out process of auditions. We did get through to the final hurdle but were not called upon to take part. The production company did say that they might approach us for the next series though. So, let's keep our fingers crossed. It would be great publicity (I hope!) for the Alliance and for those societies represented on the team.

Linda J. Curry, Chair

A new strapline for the ALS

We've had a great strapline for the past few years: 'From Austen to Zola, over 100 societies representing 50,000 readers'.

Unfortunately, the Zola Society seems to have become defunct. But the strapline was too good to lose and so Cally Phillips of the Galloway Raiders stepped up to the plate by forming the Zamyatin Society (see below). We will soon be reprinting our publicity leaflet, updating the list of member societies, and listing our new president, Claire Harman. It will now proudly feature our new strapline: 'From Austen to Zamyatin'.

Marty Ross Smith, Secretary

ALSo 2017

The theme for 2017 will be 'Lost, Found or Faked'. Some examples of the sort of thing this might cover are:

- Lost works of literature
- Texts destroyed by war or natural disasters – e.g. burning books, the destruction of the Library of Alexandria
- Works discovered after the death of a writer
- Wrongly attributed works – either deliberately or by accident
- Pastiches – e.g. Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes, Ian Fleming's Bond
- How do you tell what is fake or real?

As always, the theme is broad – open to many forms of interpretation and the above are just some ideas.

Would someone from your society be willing to contribute a piece for the journal – of around 1,000 to 1,500 words? If so, I would be delighted to hear from you. Remember – it's good advertising for your society!

If you wish to contribute an article to the 2017 edition of this journal, please contact Linda Curry by email to ljc1049@gmail.com) or by post to 59 Bryony Road, Selly Oak, Birmingham B29 4BY, by 1 February 2017.

2. New Societies

The Neville Cardus Archive

Neville Cardus was a renowned music critic as well as a leading cricket journalist with the *Guardian*.

Contacts: Rev. Malcolm Lorimer (email: maxcricket@btinternet.com); Bob Hilton (email: bobhilton@dsl.pipex.com)

The Dracula Society

Devoted to the study of Bram Stoker and *Dracula*, as well as other Gothic literature.

Chair/Treasurer: Julia Kruk

Website: www.thedraculasociety.org.uk

Society email: info@thedraculasociety.org.uk

The Robert Graves Society

The Robert Graves Society has re-joined the ALS.

Secretary: Patrick Villa

Email: robertgravessoc@aol.com; pjvilla@aol.com

Website: <http://robertgraves.org>.

The May Sinclair Society

May Sinclair was a prolific novelist, poet, philosopher, translator and critic.

Chair: Dr Claire Drewery

Email: c.drewery@shu.ac.uk

Website: www.maysinclairsociety.com

The Zamyatin Society

Yevgeny Zamyatin was a Russian writer best known for his 1921 novel *We*, which is seen as a significant influence on Orwell's *1984* and Huxley's *Brave New World*. The Society has been set up to promote interest in Zamyatin and utopian/dystopian fiction and science fiction in general. Until 10 March 2017 free life membership is available to any member from an Alliance Society.

Contact: Cally Phillips

Email: gallowayraiders@gmail.com

Website: www.zamyatin.weebly.com

3. New Publications

Publications, performances and productions by member societies

The David Jones Society

July marked the centenary of the battle of Mametz Wood, part of the battle of the Somme. Aled Rhys Hughes' book of stunning photographs which remind us of the tragic events of 100 years ago is newly available from Seren Books. *Mametz* collects Hughes' contemporary pictures of the battlefield – its topography, the military detritus, and mementoes made by the soldiers who served there. The photographs are accompanied by an essay by Jeremy

Hooker on the photographs and their relationship with the landscape and the men, now long gone, who took part. An exhibition of the photography from Mametz opened at the National Library of Wales on 16th July.

The Galloway Raiders

September 24th (the 157th birthday of Galloway writer S.R. Crockett) sees two new publications. Volume 2 in the 'Discovering Crockett's Galloway' series, entitled *Island and Inland*, takes the reader on an adventure along the Solway Coast and into Crockett's 'heartland' of the Glenkens while a new edition of the late Dr Islay Murray Donaldson's *The Life and Work of S.R. Crockett* is published in paperback with a new 'lost' chapter on Crockett's writing for children. Both books are published by Ayton Publishing Ltd and are available from www.unco.scot as well as other online retailers.

The Thomas Hardy Society

Tony Fincham, a vice president and former chairman of the Hardy Society, has a new book out, *Exploring Thomas Hardy's Wessex*. This is an excellent and superbly illustrated short guide to the landscape of Hardy's fiction and poetry. Published by the Dovecote Press and available from the Thomas Hardy Society.

The Martineau Society

To be published by Routledge & Francis in 2017: *Harriet Martineau and the Birth of Disciplines – 19th Century Intellectual Powerhouse* (edited by Valerie Sanders and Gaby Weiner). One of the foremost writers of her time, Harriet Martineau established her reputation by writing a hugely successful series of fictional tales on political economy whose wide readership included the young Queen Victoria. She also wrote fiction, non-fiction, articles and pamphlets; popular travel books and more insightful analyses. Bringing together scholars of literature, history, economics and sociology, this volume demonstrates the scope of Martineau's writing and its importance to 19th century politics and culture. Reflecting Martineau's prodigious achievements, the essays explore her influence on the emerging fields of sociology, history, education, science, economics, childhood, the status of women, disability studies, journalism, travel writing, life writing and letter writing. As a woman contesting Victorian patriarchal relations, Martineau was controversial in her own lifetime and has still not received the recognition that is due her. This wide-ranging collection confirms her place as one of the leading intellectuals, cultural theorists and commentators of the 19th century.

The Tolkien Society

The Return of the Ring: Proceedings of the Tolkien Society Conference 2012

(edited by Lynn Forest-Hill; £25; available from:

<https://www.tolkiensociety.org/society/publications/sales/return-of-the-ring/order/>)

The two-volume proceedings of the Tolkien Society's 'Return of the Ring' conference held at Loughborough University during August 2012. This collection of papers delivered in 2012 at the Tolkien Society's international conference demonstrates the wide and varied responses Tolkien's works have generated over the decades. The first volume focuses primarily on Tolkien's

life, examining the influence of war, philosophy, and religion on his mythology. The second volume is much more diverse, covering themes from medievalism and romanticism through to fantasy and modernity. With contributions from the likes of John Garth, Colin Duriez, Ronald Hutton, and Janet Brennan Croft, *The Return of the Ring: Proceedings of the Tolkien Society Conference 2012* is essential reading for scholars and casual readers alike.

'Return of the Ring: Celebrating Tolkien in 2012' was a five-day conference organised by the Tolkien Society to mark the 75th anniversary of the publication of *The Hobbit*. It brought together a unique mixture of fun, fandom and scholarship. In addition to the excellent selection of scholars featured in these proceedings, there were singers, re-enactors, artists, performers, figures from fandom and Tolkien's grandson. With around 500 delegates from across the globe, 'Return of the Ring' was one of the largest Tolkien-specific events ever held.

The Francis Brett Young Society

2016 marks the centenary of novelist Francis Brett Young's war service. The society is commemorating this with the publication of a unique anthology of his writings about the First World War in both poetry and prose, selected and introduced by the chairman, Dr Michael Hall. *The World Went Mad* is 148 pages, lavishly illustrated with 56 pages in full colour, and there is a choice of free gift to value of £20 with every purchase (see www.fbysociety.co.uk).

4. Special Features

The Arnold Bennett Prize

This new £500 book prize is administered by the Arnold Bennett Society in partnership with the *Sentinel* newspaper, and will be awarded every year from 2017 onward. For the first award of this prize, works published during 2016 are eligible.

Entries are invited from two groups of authors: those either born in or currently living/working in north Staffordshire; or those whose works deal with aspects of life in north Staffordshire, including works by writers from abroad.

The prize will recognize works of excellence across genres. Topics of interest are therefore unrestricted and may include local history, crime fiction, art, architecture, classics, poetry, literary criticism, social studies, as well as works of literary fiction.

The adjudication for the 2016 Prize will begin next January and individual applicants (including self-publishers) and publishers may submit any number of titles (two copies of each) by 31 January 2017. The winner will be announced in September 2017.

Enquiries for the 2016 Prize should be made to:
arnoldbennettscty@btinternet.com.

Entries should be posted to:
The Arnold Bennett Prize, Faculty of Humanities & Social Sciences Research Office, Room CM0.25, Claus Moser Building, Keele University, Keele, Staffordshire, ST5 5BG.

The Friends of the National Libraries

Have you ever wondered *why* so much of our literary heritage has ended up abroad? (Edward Thomas's field notebooks, Virginia Woolf's diaries, Wilfred Owen's letters to his mother – they are all in the USA.) Have you ever wondered whether anything can be done to stop this exodus? The answer to why is very simple: money. As for what can be done about it, I recently discovered the answer: join the Friends of the National Libraries (FNL).

The FNL was founded in 1931 to prevent the loss to the nation of books and manuscripts of historical and aesthetic importance. In the decade after the First World War, foreign buyers took advantage of the fact that many private and public collections in Britain were forced, for financial reasons, to sell off the literary equivalent of the family silver.

The idea – still its *modus operandi* today – is that the FNL raises money through subscriptions and donations, invests it wisely, and has a fund from which it supports acquisitions of, for example, the autograph manuscripts of the Siegfried Sassoon Archive, the typescript of D.H. Lawrence's last book of poems (*Pansies*), a 1661 edition of John Donne's sermons, the final tranche of the Dame Muriel Spark archive, a Robert Burns' song, a manuscript letter by Jane Austen's sister Cassandra, an autographed letter from Charles Dickens.

The FNL makes grants to eligible institutions throughout the UK, from Aberdeen to Exeter (the university libraries), from Wales (the National Library) to Hertfordshire (the Record Office). When an institution applies for a grant, the FNL evaluates each request in order to support the purchase of the most important items that might otherwise leave this country. In 2015, there were 35 grants from the FNL, totalling approximately £160,000. To give only one example: I have recently been able to use the famous Schroder Collection of papers relating to Rupert Brooke, bought by King's College (Cambridge) Library in 2015 with the aid of a grant from the FNL.

The FNL does so much more than its name implies. It gives grants to the national libraries, yes; but also to university and college libraries, county record offices, museums, and in recent years to Lambeth Palace Library, Kingston University Centre for Iris Murdoch Studies, Foundling Museum, National Trust, Jane Austen's House/Museum, *et al.* Not only individual manuscripts or books but entire archives have been saved for the nation with FNL grants. And the FNL supports the purchase of modern manuscripts, such as the papers of the Second World War poet Keith Douglas which are now at the British Library.

The FNL has a tradition of arranging visits for its members to libraries and private collections. I recently went on a FNL 'behind the scenes' visit to the Bodleian Library, where staff showed us many treasures. Members may also attend the FNL's annual general meeting with its prestigious speakers (in 1933 the AGM speaker was George Bernard Shaw; in 2015 it was the literary biographer Richard Davenport-Hines). The membership benefit I most enjoy is the Annual Report, over 100 pages long, with beautifully illustrated descriptions, written by the purchasing organisations, about the items they are so thrilled to have bought with the help of FNL money.

For further information, go to: www.friendsofnationallibraries.org.uk;
or contact the administrator: admin@fnlmail.org.uk.

Linda Hart, founder and former chairman of the *Friends of the Dymock Poets*.

Norman Nicholson Society Project 14

Project 14 was announced at the Society's AGM in April 2016. A working group is being established to operate the project. The Norman Nicholson Society wishes to purchase 14 St George's Terrace, Millom, the former home of Norman Nicholson (1914–1987).

In the early years of the 20th century Joseph Nicholson ran a gents' outfitters from the property with the front being his shop, and the rear and upstairs being living accommodation for him, his wife and son Norman. Norman was born here and lived his entire life here apart from a two-year spell in his late teens when he was sent to a sanatorium for treatment for TB. When Norman returned from the sanatorium the upper room became his bedroom to allow him as much fresh air as possible. This room, the house, the town of Millom and the neighbouring area have all become synonymous with Nicholson, being the source of inspiration for his writing (poetry, drama and prose) as well as being, in the case of the house, the physical setting for the vast majority of his writing activity (all done in longhand).

The aim is to acquire funding to buy the property, renovate, and extend where possible, to establish No. 14 as a viable mixed-use concern which will form an impressive, lasting and useful memorial to Norman Nicholson, and offer cultural opportunities both to the local community and to scholars and creative people nationally and internationally.

A fund-raising scheme will be launched by the Norman Nicholson Society with due publicity.

Antoinette Fawcett (antoinettefawcett@gmail.com)

The Mary Webb Society

2016 is a very special year for the Mary Webb Society as we are celebrating the centenary of the publication of Mary Webb's first novel *The Golden Arrow*. We decided that we would commemorate Mary Webb by commissioning a bronze bust of her mounted on a stone pedestal which would be sited in the grounds of Shrewsbury Library.

Mary Webb used Shrewsbury library many times throughout her life; it was considered her own 'university'.



On Saturday, 9th July our bronze bust was unveiled by Dr Gladys Mary Coles, our society president, surrounded by Jemma Pearson, sculptor, and Tom O'Leary stonemason, society members, Mary Webb family members and invited guests. This project has been made possible by the very generous legacy left to the Mary Webb Society by the late Muriel Furbank, friend and committee member. Muriel's family members also joined us for the unveiling.
Sue Higginbotham (suehigginbotham@yahoo.co.uk)

The P.G.Wodehouse Society

We are very proud of a special event we achieved this July in conjunction with Cheltenham College, when a tree was planted in memory of Percy Jeeves. Percy played in a cricket match at the College grounds in 1913 when Wodehouse was watching the match. He liked the sound of the name Jeeves

and a short while later the now famous valet Jeeves began to appear in Wodehouse's stories. Sadly the real Jeeves was unable to fulfil his potential as a national team cricketer as he died in the battle of the Somme in July 1916. Members of both families planted the tree at Cheltenham and it received widespread coverage in the media.

Mary Hewitt (info@pgwodehousesociety.org.uk)

The Thomas Hardy Society

A reredos designed by Thomas Hardy when he was working as an architect and which had not been thought to have been realised has recently been discovered concealed behind a later altarpiece in All Saints Church, Windsor. This exciting discovery has featured in the national press and in a BBC video. The church, with the support of the Thomas Hardy Society, is fund raising for the reredos to be fully revealed in 2017. Find it on JustGiving.com.

Helen Lange, Chair

5. Society Newsletters

The following newsletters have been received:

The **John Buchan Society** sent their July 2016 newsletter, with a report of their 2016 AGM, held at Herstmonceux Castle and focussing on Buchan's Canadian connections. There is also a report on the John Buchan Museum in Peebles, now in its fourth year.

The **David Jones Society** sent their newsletter of April 2016 listing the many events commemorating David Jones in this centenary remembrance of the Battle of the Somme. Though most of the focus has been on *In Parenthesis*, Jones's great First World War poem, the newsletter also discussed a new version of *Anathemata*. There is also a review of the exhibition *David Jones: Vision and Memory*.

The **Norman Nicholson Society** sent their winter/spring 2016 newsletter, *Comet*. They were celebrating their 10th anniversary and also their new membership of the ALS. There are articles on Norman Nicholson's sense of humour; Aristotle, Norman Nicholson and John Ruskin; Nicholson and the environmental movement; and the John Rylands Library, which houses the Nicholson archive.

The **Powys Society** sent a copy of their July 2016 newsletter, which includes details of their August conference in Street, near Glastonbury; Chris Thomas's report on the ALS AGM in Haworth; book reviews; and articles on Geoffrey Hill, *Maiden Castle*, Norfolk and *A Glastonbury Romance*.

The **Westerman Yarns** newsletter of May 2016 includes a Percy Westerman story with beautiful original illustrations; an introduction to the life and works of Dr W. Gordon Stables; an article on Westerman and the Battle of Jutland;

additions to the Westerman Yarns collection; and a bibliography of first editions.

If you would like to send me your society newsletter or journal, I will report on the contents in future newsletters. Electronic versions should be sent to martyross73@gmail.com. If you prefer to send a hard copy, my address is: 8 Waters Edge, Handsacre, Rugeley, Staffs. WS15 4HP. I will bring any hard copies received to next year's AGM for free distribution to delegates. This is a great way to find out what other societies are doing and to exchange ideas.

Marty Ross Smith, Secretary

6. Calls for the Class of 2017

Societies with Anniversaries/Special events in 2017

Does your society have a special anniversary coming up next year –50,100,150 or even 200 years of the birth/death of the author or any of their publications? If so, please send us a piece (no longer than 300 words) that we can include as a special feature in newsletters for 2017.

For example, The P.G. Wodehouse Society (UK) will have been established for 20 years in the summer of 2017 and intends to mark the occasion in some way. They want to hear from other literary societies celebrating a significant anniversary in 2017, and so do we. To contact the P.G. Wodehouse Society directly, get in touch with the Membership Secretary, Christine, via info@pgwodehousesociety.org.uk.

We also know that the Brontë Bicentenary will be ongoing (it's 200 years since the birth of Branwell Brontë next year), that Tolkien's *The Hobbit* is 80 years old and S.R.Crockett's sole foray into thriller writing, *The Azure Hand*, (published posthumously) is a century old in 2017.

Who else has a special date for the diary? Please get in touch before February 1st to be included in the next newsletter and help spread the word of your special anniversary and events.

7. New editor, new style?

This is your chance to shape the future of the Alliance Newsletter. A new editorial team for the newsletter offers the opportunity for change. We'd like to know what you think. What do you want from the newsletter? Would you like it in a different format or frequency? Please contact us with your suggestions and ideas by email: gallowayraiders@gmail.com and/or martyross73@gmail.com.

Remember, if you want us to feature something special about your society or a book review, please send us the information in good time for the next newsletter: no later than February 1st for Spring 2017.

Cally Phillips

8. FORTHCOMING EVENTS

There are two excellent ways to advertise your forthcoming events to other society members (and to the public at large). These are via the website and via our Facebook page.

To submit items to the website you simply have to email Linda J. Curry (ljc1049@gmail.com) with brief details.

You can also post to our Facebook site and social media can spread the word for you. Our Facebook page is: <https://www.facebook.com/allianceofliterarysocieties/>; or you can use @allianceofliterarysocieties to locate it on Facebook. It is a great way of keeping up to the minute on what's happening with all the member societies and is administered by Jodie Roberts (geraniumcat@gmail.com).

Events

October 2016

7 October: The Chichester Literary Society. Talk by Colin Pinney on 'Yeats and Maud Gonne, the Gulf of Love'. Details at: www.chichesterliterarysociety.co.uk/events/

7 - 16 October: The Times & Sunday Times Cheltenham Literature Festival, at Cheltenham Town Hall.

8 October: The John Clare and George Borrow Societies joint event in Epping. A morning of talks, and an afternoon guided walk in the Forest, at High Beach.

10 October: The Traherne Society Day Celebrations at Hereford Cathedral include choral evensong at 5.30pm followed by refreshments and a lecture at 7pm by Revd Dr Paul Fiddes DD, Professor of Systematic Theology in the University of Oxford, who will give the thirteenth annual Traherne Lecture in memory of Jeremy Maule. His talk is entitled *The Poetics of Desire in Thomas Traherne and C. S. Lewis*.

Combined tickets for refreshments and the lecture are £5 in advance and £6 on the door. Please book by contacting the Hon. Treasurer at Buttermere, Moreton-on-Lugg, Herefordshire, HR4 8DQ; Tel: 01432 761588.

11 October: The William Barnes Society. AGM at 7pm at Dorford Centre, Top O' Town, Dorchester. Guest speaker: Bonny Sartin 'The Folk Songs of Dorset'. For more information: www.william-barnes-society.org.uk.

15 October: The Thomas Hardy Society. 'A Two-Years Idyll': A celebration of Thomas and Emma Hardy's time living in Sturminster Newton, 1876-8, including a walking tour and presentations (01305 251501; info@hardysociety.org).

27 October: The Thomas Hardy Society. London lecture by Dr Alan Chedzoy, 'The Most Interesting Link: Thomas Hardy's Debt to Williams Barnes'. 7.30pm, Birkbeck College, London University.

November 2016

4 November: The Chichester Literary Society. AGM, followed by talk by David Tregear on 'Peacock Pie'. More information at: www.chichesterliterarysociety.co.uk/events/

27-28 November: Jane Austen Weekend. Live theatre and music, lectures, and relaxation in a Georgian house in the centre of Bedford. With accommodation and food, £250 pp. For more detail contact Anne Atkins on 07814 953483.

Spread the word

Please share this newsletter with members of your society or leave a copy in your local library.

9. Last but not least

Please send any information as follows:

Website: ljc1049@gmail.com

Newsletter: gallowayraiders@gmail.com

Society newsletters/journals: martyross73@gmail.com ; 8 Waters Edge, Handsacre, Rugeley, Staffs. WS15 4HP

Facebook: geraniumcat@gmail.com

And finally, huge thanks to Cally Phillips who volunteered to take over publication of this newsletter, from the grateful new secretary of the ALS.

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 February 2017 to Cally Phillips at gallowayraiders@gmail.com. We reserve the right to edit copy for space.