



Alliance of Literary Societies

President: James Naughtie

www.allianceofliterarysocieties.org.uk

Not Only, But ALS^o: Spring 2023

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Introducing Our New President: James Naughtie



We are delighted to announce, at the start of our 50th anniversary year, that James Naughtie is our new president. An eminent BBC journalist, he co-presented the *Today* programme from 1994 to 2015, with a particular focus on political reporting and US elections.

He is now a Special Correspondent for BBC News. Books are one of his passions and he has presented BBC Radio 4's *Bookclub* programme since its inception in 1997.

He has chaired both the Man Booker and Samuel Johnson judging panels. He is the author of several books, most recently, *On the Road: Adventures from Nixon to Trump*. In March his new novel, *The Spy Across the Water*, will be published.

It will be a great pleasure to welcome James Naughtie to our 50th anniversary AGM at Winchester in April, hosted by the Charlotte M. Yonge Fellowship.

Marty Ross, Chair

Linda Curry: a Tribute

Our friend and colleague Linda died on 6 January 2023 after a long illness. Her husband Bob and son James were with her.

That Linda died on Twelfth Night seems curiously appropriate for a woman who loved literature so genuinely and unpretentiously. She loved mystery novels and she loved John Clare; she loved Sherlock Holmes and she loved books with beautifully printed bindings. We once spent a lovely day together at Astley Book Farm, browsing and accumulating stacks of books; having a coffee and talking about ALS business and putting the world to rights; browsing some more; meeting for lunch and looking at each other's selections; buying more books, until it was time to go home; and then laughing that we would never have time to read all that we had bought. We will all remember her laugh.



*With great thanks to Bob Curry
for additional information.*

Linda was born in Salford in 1949 and educated at Worsley Wardley Grammar School, where she excelled in French and English. She then did a secretarial course at Bolton Technical College. On moving to Birmingham in 1973 she was sent by a temping agency to Birmingham University for a week and was offered a permanent job on her third day at work. She left full-time work in 1986 when her son James was born and decided to embark on higher education in 1991. Aged 42 and without any A-levels, she did so with some trepidation, but completed the Arts Foundation course at the OU. Applying to Birmingham University for a degree course, she was undecided between History of Art and English, but found her interviewer in the Arts faculty so obnoxious that she opted for literature (their loss, our gain!). She immediately went on to the MA – 'Meaning and the Production, Transmission and Editing of Texts' – where she was introduced to John Clare by Kelsey Thornton and Mark Storey. Her dissertation was 'Henry Reed: A Critical Edition of Selected Letters', which included the subject of censorship relating to some of the 'Hilda Tablet' plays. She

would have loved to have continued on to a doctorate, but other interests and activities took over (once again, their loss, our gain).

Linda was chair of the ALS from 2007 until 2021. When I joined the committee in 2008, it seemed a stable and unchanging entity: Linda in the chair, with Anita Fernandez-Young as secretary and Julie Shorland as treasurer. Twice a year, at Carr's Lane Church and then at the John Lewis Community Hub, she presided over committee meetings in her typically understated, friendly, relaxed manner. Committee meetings have always been a pleasure to attend, and that in itself, is a great tribute to her. At our annual AGM weekends, she has been a welcoming presence, always eager to learn about the host society's writer and efficient about getting through the AGM business itself so that we could all get back to talking about books.

Linda was first diagnosed with cancer in 2004. In 2015, when the Trollope Society hosted us in York, she was very ill indeed, unable to chair committee meetings or to attend that weekend, which she very much regretted. When she first returned to chair a committee meeting, she joked that she looked 30 years older, but with typical resilience, when this disease knocked her down, she fought her way back to her feet and resumed her life, which included so much service to others. In addition to all she did for the ALS, she served as chair of the John Clare Society for many years (and latterly as treasurer), was an enthusiastic member of the Sherlock Holmes Society of London and of many local craft groups. She volunteered at the Bournville Carillon Visitor Centre. When she stood down as chair of the ALS, she almost immediately became the chair of her large and very active branch of the U3A. Frying pans and fires came to mind, but that was Linda all over.

Linda expressed a wish to resign from the committee early in 2022, but I asked her to stay on. That committee which seemed set for the ages when I joined it in 2008 had changed out of all recognition, with the departure of Anita, the sudden death of Julie and the recruitment of new and younger members. The pandemic had also given rise to tremendous changes in the way the ALS and its committee operated and, as I took over as chair, I dearly wanted her guidance and the sense of continuity that her presence provided. She agreed, and in the last year I have repeatedly sought her level-headed advice, which I valued enormously. I will miss her greatly as a colleague and as a friend. I also know that the best tribute we can pay to Linda is to see the ALS move forward and to face the challenges ahead, and I am wholly committed to doing so as long as I am chair.

Marty Ross

Desperately Seeking a Secretary

The ALS is currently without a secretary. We hope someone will come forward to join the committee and undertake this critical role.

The ALS committee meets just twice a year, and we have decided that going forward from the pandemic, one meeting will be held via Zoom and the other face-to-face. Our base has been Birmingham, but we are hoping next October's meeting will take place in Oxford. Committee meetings normally last around two hours and are relaxed and enjoyable occasions.

Having served as ALS secretary for five years before becoming chair about 18 months ago, I am well prepared to guide a new secretary step by step through the work involved: arranging meetings, preparing agendas, writing the minutes, dealing with correspondence, sending out the AGM papers. While I found it a demanding job, I also found it extremely enjoyable and rewarding.

Please let me know if you would like to be considered by contacting me at martyross73@gmail.com.

Marty Ross, Chair

ALS AGM 2022 – Philip Larkin’s Coat of Many Colours

We do enjoy Alliance of Literary Societies AGM weekends, in that they start out in expectation as little more than a change of scenery, sometimes in a town of little intrigue, and featuring a literary figure of uncertain interest for us. I thought I knew Hull to be a dour, northern town with a smell of fish and of industry in general decline. I knew of Philip Larkin to be a glum, no-nonsense writer and poet, of relatively recent times. Both sets of beliefs were confounded over the 20-22 May 2022 weekend conference.

Firstly, to Kingston-on-Hull (to give it its full name). It turns out that the 2017 City of Culture, rather than being a cruel joke, actually represented a highly beneficial label, providing growth in tourism and activity, generating a lively regeneration. The city continues to see HLF and other grant monies coming its way. On the Saturday morning, before the AGM proper, we heard from Graham Chesters, Chair of the Philip Larkin Society and James Underwood, Researcher at Huddersfield University, and an expert on the Larkin archive, speaking positively about how Hull had used such grant monies to improve its vitality. Amongst the city’s splendid architecture, there are statues to other prominent local figures – Andrew Marvell, William Wilberforce and Amy Johnson – as well as lively and interesting street art.

Then to Philip Larkin. The Larkin archive at Hull University contains many of his manuscripts and includes his correspondence with other literary figures. James Underwood’s keynote lecture was ‘Magic, Meaning and Mystery – Researching the Larkin Archive’. The first M referred to the number of original manuscripts and records, and the magic involved in researching them. The second M was how the documents provide knowledge and understanding of the writer. The Mystery referred to how some unfinished works and correspondence contributed to the greater knowledge of the writer’s psyche. Larkin’s early prose and drama revealed his early life and influences. He records, at 17½ (with Adrian Mole intensity in relation to the fraction’s significance), that he wrote out a manuscript of prose, poetry and drama written up to that point. However, he subsequently revisited this anthology with both pencil and pen, to add sarcastic and stock-taking updates and comments, as his perspectives changed.

Five of Larkin’s earliest works (novellas, essays and poems) were written under the name of Brunette Coleman. Therefore, as a 21-year-old man, he used a heteronym of a 50-year-old, lesbian woman. The first of the five works channelled through Brunette Coleman was *Trouble at Willow Gables*, a novella that was not particularly well received. The last was *Sugar and Spice*, a collection of six poems that suggested Larkin (or Coleman) was to be better appreciated for poetry than prose.

Although Larkin destroyed some of his work of the 1940s as well as most of his diaries, he kept his letter correspondence with other literary contemporaries, such as Kingsley Amis, with whom he discussed his emotions and his creation of Brunette Coleman. Larkin died in 1985 and James Underwood maintained that the publication of his correspondence in the 1990s was part of his posthumous downfall: revealing his racism, sexism, strong Thatcherite views and anti-trade union beliefs.

However, his collections of poetry, most notably *The Whitsun Weddings* and *High Windows*, continue to grow in reputation and sell in large quantities. James Underwood added that Larkin was important as a librarian and archivist at the University of Hull and that this side of his life should not be disregarded.

In respect of the AGM’s business itself, Linda Curry (John Clare Society) had resigned as Chair at last year’s AGM, when Marty Ross Smith (Johnson Society of Lichfield) took over. The Secretary

re-elected was Mark Green (Trollope Society) with Jeremy Mitchell (Edward Thomas Fellowship) as Treasurer. Claire Harman addressed the meeting as ALS President for the last time after five years. She highlighted the library retention campaigns.

The ALS website now features a Society of the Month to help focus on individual society efforts and encourage more membership their way. The AGM finished with the traditional fund-raising raffle, which normally features books and sound recordings of ALS authors. This year there was a donated jacket, possibly owned by Larkin (there was an authenticity letter with it from the donor). Philip Larkin was typically pictured in sombre, black, insurance-manager jackets. The prize one was an orange, green and brown, heavy-checked, wool jacket; far more flamboyant in colour. It may dispel the belief that Larkin was generally dull.

At the end of the AGM there was a walk with Paul Schofield, local historian and tourism guide. This took in the aforementioned statues, much of the Larkin Trail, some of the Fish Trail (26 fish prints in the pavement, one for each letter of the alphabet), but also a number of the 40 giant, sponsored toad designs around the city. Larkin wrote 'Toads' and then 'Toads Revisited', so they are particularly suited to Hull.

Saturday night saw the group visiting the Larkin-frequented Minerva pub, in the newly developed marina and right on the Humber estuary: a magical area by nightfall. Members carried on their tradition of readings following the evening meal.

On Sunday, the Philip Larkin Society laid on a trip to the Hull University library, with a visit to the art gallery and Larkin's office. Some Larkin artifacts had been put on display for us, including a well-used ashtray, a caffeine-stained mug and the iconic, thick black glasses. The following walk with local members took in the house he purchased, now privately owned, but complete with plaque and a giant toad on a balcony, painted to look like Larkin. The tour finished at Pearson Park with a look at his previous address, where he wrote *High Windows*, inspired by his view of people in the park.



The 2023 AGM is to be held over the weekend of 21-23 April at Winchester, hosted by the Charlotte M. Yonge Fellowship, partly on the campus of St Swithun's School. We will hopefully be in attendance at the AGM and I plan to wear an orange, green and brown, heavy-checked, wool, Philip Larkin jacket that I won, recently, in a raffle.

Colin & Donna Greatorex Johnson (Lichfield) Society

Now We are 50...An ALS Free for All

On January 31st 2023 we broke new ground. While virtual events are no novelty and ALS has held several committee meetings (and even an AGM) online, this was our first live/virtual event. I'm happy to report that nearly 40 people from around 30 societies (it's hard to keep track of people onZoom) met together to share news and ideas, to network and to raise a glass (real/virtual) to the ALS to mark our 50th anniversary year.

The purpose of the ALS can be found in our name, 'Alliance'. Our aim is to bring societies together to share our love of our authors. Embracing 21st century technology offers both challenges and opportunities in that regard. Most of you will have experienced both over the past

few years. People turned to Zoom early in 2020 and many had reached Zoom fatigue late in 2021. While nothing can replace meeting live, Zoom offers significant opportunities to an organisation such as ours for bringing people together who may never otherwise get the chance to meet. So it's time to embrace Zoom, seeing it for what it is, a communication tool which allows us to spend quality time together in pursuit of shared interests.



Attendance at our first event suggests that Zoom (and possibly YouTube) are going to offer us a great way to share and network. We had positive feedback regarding online workshops, networking events and a book club, hosted by different societies in turn. Starting in April with a 'Meet the President' event, we'll be hosting a series of events online to which all are welcome. Information will be forthcoming both on our website and in emails sent to our society contacts. Please keep your eye on both and please do pass on links and information from newsletters as widely as you can among your own society membership.

I received many notes of thanks 'to those responsible' for hosting the event – which made me laugh as I felt largely 'irresponsible' while handling things for the first time – especially when I got myself locked in a breakout room, unable to work out how to return to the main arena! I'd like to thank all those who attended, especially for their patience as I learned the ropes. I don't think Zoom is ever plain sailing, but then nothing worth having ever comes really easily, does it? I look forward to meeting many more folk in the months ahead.

Cally Phillips, Digital Subcommittee (Galloway Raiders)

LitHouses 2022: 'Parallel People – It's About Everyone Else'

Bankfield Museum, Halifax, 28 October 2022

Calderdale has become Sally Wainwright's patch; or if you prefer, the stomping ground of Gentleman Jack. But it has other literary connections as well: the childhood home of Ted Hughes in Mytholmroyd and Sylvia Plath's grave high on the hillside in Heptonstall above Hebden Bridge. This year's LitHouses conference took me to Halifax for the first time. It was a pleasure to meet once again with friends old and new (including Antoinette Fawcett and Glenn Lang of the Norman Nicholson Society), and to network with them about ways in which the ALS is able to work with and support our literary museums. Those societies who are lucky enough to have a literary home – as my own Johnson Society of Lichfield does – know the value of working closely with that museum, so it was particularly appropriate that I was also representing, informally, the Johnson Birthplace Museum. In the context of the conference theme, I spoke briefly about the extraordinary story of Francis Barber, a Black man who was born a slave in Jamaica and who became, after long years of service with Johnson, his principal heir. After Johnson's death Frank Barber moved to Lichfield with his family and opened his own school. We believe he may have been Britain's first Black schoolteacher, though this is nigh on impossible to prove.

Many literary museums are, of course, still working to come back from the pandemic. The day was concluded with the publication of a survey, by Dr David Rudrum of the University of Huddersfield and Dr Helen Williams of Northumbria University: *UK Literary Heritage Sites and Covid-19*. The most dramatic effect was on footfall, with numbers down 84.3%, and the resulting loss of income. Museums which normally receive high numbers of visitors were the worst hit and

were forced to make staff redundant (nearly half of those surveyed). In those museums with medium or smaller levels of visitor numbers, the smaller number of staff involved were perhaps more adaptable, taking on different roles, and in many cases, curators ended up washing dishes or undertaking front-of-house duties. There was a suggestion that some museums had grown their visitor numbers beyond the optimum, at the expense of visitor experience, and that this was being re-examined for future practice. Positive outcomes from the pandemic included a renewed engagement with the local community, an important turn to digital outreach and the use, where possible, of outdoor facilities. Abbotsford saw a 400% rise in visitor numbers to its extensive grounds.

Most museums reported that they emerged from the pandemic 'as a more versatile and adaptable organisation, and/or as a more resilient and robust one'. The sector was described as 'full of indomitable resilience and irrepressible creativity'. Reports from members in the course of the day certainly reinforced these conclusions. We heard about the 250th anniversary of 'Amazing Grace', being celebrated by the Cowper-Newton Museum in conjunction with the Open University; the Gaskell House in Manchester introducing a pack of Top Trumps, featuring the 'other people' in Elizabeth Gaskell's life; and versions of Minecraft available at Milton's Cottage and the Wordsworth Trust.

The conference was hosted by Calderdale Museums and held in the Bankfield Museum, formerly the home of one of Halifax's textile magnates, Edward Ackroyd, which contains toys and games, local and military history, and an outstanding collection of textiles and fashion. So, it is appropriate that its star attraction is currently the costumes from *Gentleman Jack*. Angela Clare, Collections Manager, gave us a wonderful talk on Anne Lister, her copious journals (26 volumes plus 14 volumes of travel notes), which are still being transcribed and deciphered, and the scholarship that has brought to light the life of one of the first explicitly lesbian women known. It was a real treat to visit Anne Lister's home, Shibden Hall, the following morning. As anyone who has seen *Gentleman Jack* will know, Shibden itself is a character in Anne Lister's story – she loved it with all her heart. It is a beautiful house, Tudor in origin, with gorgeous stained glass and a warm wood interior, largely installed by Lister herself. Amusingly, her very small bedroom was reconstructed in a Leeds television studio, as it was too small for filming. Then the actual bedroom looked nothing like the studio version, so it was refurnished, with a bed on which visitors are invited to sit, sprawl, bounce up and down, or pose for selfies with the iconic top hat. We learned that Anne Lister never wore a top hat – disillusioning, but not surprising.

I finished my visit to Calderdale by visiting Sylvia Plath's grave on a chilly, foggy afternoon. It was hard to find – it has been defaced so frequently that signs are not provided – but the only other visitor, a local man, asked, 'Are you looking for Sylvia?' and pointed me in the right direction. He also explained that it had been her birthday a few days earlier, and fresh flowers (tulips, of course) had been laid on her grave, which I found really touching. When I was an undergraduate at a women's college close to Plath's Smith College and where she was still vividly remembered, we were all reading *Ariel* and *The Bell Jar* with something like shock and awe. It was a strange and moving experience to see the grave of this fellow American woman, so amazingly gifted, so sadly flawed, whose journey ended on this foggy hillside in Yorkshire.

Actually, I lie...I ended my weekend by getting back to Halifax in the late afternoon and legging it across town to a wonderful independent bookshop in the Piece Hall, where I bought a stack of books.

Marty Ross

Society Codes of Conduct

We all remember the infamous Handforth Parish Council Zoom meeting of December 2020 that produced the now familiar line, 'You have no authority here, Jackie Weaver', and I'm sure many of us greeted it with a weary nod of familiarity. Meetings often bring out the worst in people; being forced together in either a stuffy office or blinking at each other online, often after a long day of work, family and general life stuff, they can be just as fraught as any parish council's.

Looking specifically at literary societies, many of our committees or trustee boards will only be meeting three or four times a year and so these gatherings can be very intensive with a packed agenda. We are all there because we are passionate about our writer and society, but that does not mean we all share the same vision, or even the same aims for that one meeting. Many societies are now meeting via Zoom or Teams, taking advantage of opportunities to recruit new members that are no longer geographically connected, but also taking on the added challenges of glitchy technology. This can make the role of the Chair less of a steady hand on the tiller and more of an umpire, settling arguments, clock watching and putting us all into timeout when discussions get a little 'heated'.

So how can we make our committee meetings more productive and less combative? Some societies have spoken to the ALS about adapting a Code of Conduct to address just this. It's a brave step that takes some very honest self-reflection and acknowledgement that we are not getting the best out of our time together. But by addressing these issues, it demonstrates a commitment to using our time as productively as possible for society members. If you are a registered charity, Charity Commission guidelines are very clear about the importance of working together to make decisions. Once in place, a code of conduct can really help to embed positive ways of getting things done, and can show all members that their committee is doing the best job that it can.

There are lots of websites from various business and charity organisations that offer templates and content for Codes of Conduct. The main point that comes across from them all is that in order for meetings to be effective, everything has to be set up properly: everyone has the right information in advance, the meeting is held in an appropriate setting, the length and timing of the meeting works for everyone, there is good chairmanship and encouragement of a culture where challenge is offered and accepted courteously. Everyone should be committed to coming to a meeting alert and able to concentrate, with a copy of the agenda and relevant notes, ready to take part. But what any committee includes in their own Code of Conduct could also address specific issues that are pertinent to you as a group. Do you know you have a tendency to overrun? Make it part of the code that you finish on time. Get easily distracted and go off topic? Add in a point about avoiding side conversations and instead sticking to the agenda. Once the Code of Conduct has been written and agreed then everyone is empowered to challenge (politely) anyone who is not sticking to this. It's very useful for getting new committee members involved and even if the Code of Conduct is not universally welcome at the beginning, it does seem -- from what our members tell us -- to have a positive impact long term.

So next time your treasurer decides to bring her knitting, your secretary checks the cricket score on his phone, or your events secretary appears to be overloading the agenda with talk of raffle prizes (I'm exaggerating of course...), maybe that's the moment to kindly offer to put together a Code of Conduct to help make the best use of everyone's precious time. The ALS would love to hear from any societies who have done this or are considering it or if you have any comments or resources we could share.

Lyn Lockwood, ALS Committee (Philip Larkin Society)

Getting Published – Two experiences.

1. Hilary Temple, Angela Thirkell Society. As literary societies we are of course at liberty to originate documents for our own membership and, if appropriate, make them available to a wider public. The Angela Thirkell Society is only small, but has a long history not only of publishing its annual journal and its thrice-yearly newsletter, but one-off publications that have merit in throwing extra light on Angela Thirkell and her world. If *A history of the Angela Thirkell Society 1980-2010* might be regarded as navel-gazing, others such as *Barsetshire celebrates the Queen's 80th birthday* focus on scenarios using Thirkell's original characters and surroundings, while volumes of autobiography by her Australian-born son Lance and his defence of his mother against unwarrantedly savage personal criticism give an insight into her family's life.

The appearance of all these publications, while neat and suitable for a select audience, are not designed to catch the eye. But an alternative to our customary 'produce it on the word-processor and send it to the local printer' presented itself at a key moment when we were sent a file of correspondence dating back to the First World War and centred upon Thirkell's family. Born Angela Mackail and granddaughter of Georgiana and Edward Burne-Jones, our author surprised her family by marrying a bisexual lieder singer, James McInnes. They had two sons and a daughter, but by the time the third child Mary was born, the marriage was on the rocks and Angela sought and obtained a divorce. And baby Mary was terminally ill, so the twofold stress on her mother was almost unbearable.

A century later, out of the blue, a box of letters to the children's nanny, Barbara Parson, was offered to the society in 2017 by a granddaughter of 'Nanny'. Ironically, they only existed because of Mary's death, as they were mainly condolences addressed to the woman who was in effect Mary's substitute mother. The ATS committee read the transcripts of the letters and decided that these should be made public, provided that agreement of copyright holders could be obtained and that nobody's sensibilities would be offended.

At this point, in the midst of the pandemic, a new committee member, Anne Thomas, mentioned that she was in process of publishing a book she had just completed through FeedARead and was planning to use it for her other works. Fear of the unknown was somewhat mitigated, especially when it became clear that the production values of the *Nanny Letters* would be noticeably higher than our traditional publications and – even better – Anne was willing to use her skills as an artist to create the book's cover.

So, committee members checked out the website: www.feedaread.com. It was reassuring that the service is funded by the Arts Council to help writers get into print who might otherwise struggle. Copyright remains with the author(s) and this is stated on the back of the title page with the usual British Library C.I.P. statement. Anne assured us that we would not be locked into a contract until all the parts had been completed according to the FeedARead [FaR] rubric and the 'Agreed' box ticked. In effect we had a dialogue which didn't allow us to forget anything. At every stage the creator can enter and leave the system, changing text and ensuring that, for instance, page-breaks occur appropriately, while being able to see exactly what else remains to be completed. There were two page-size options – 5" x 8" or 6" x 9" – and we could choose white or cream paper. There is even provision to buy one or more sample copies before finalising the text and layout as this makes it so much easier to spot errors as well as seeing the overall effect.

We could have the cover in colour but not the illustrations within the book, though the latter option may be made available in future. So decent quality black and white or greyscale images are needed. Fortunately this was not important for our Nanny letters as our illustrations were family photographs from WWI and a pen-and-ink drawing by Colin MacInnes – the second of Angela's sons who changed the spelling of his name for clarity in countries outside the UK.

Templates are helpful as well as limiting. Books can be hardback or paperback but for the former must have more than 70 pages or it will not be possible to have the title printed on the spine. The

minimum number is 40 pages and the system will spot any shortfall in this! The page templates save one from straying outside the printable margins.

A great advantage from the society's point of view was that there was no need to resort to Amazon to get print-on-demand as their mark-up would make it excessively expensive. FaR have printing arrangements in the UK, mainland Europe, Australia and the USA, thus reducing postage costs. This was particularly useful as a substantial number of our members are in the USA. We could set our own price; and there was a clear explanation of the need to cover the markup demanded by sellers such as Amazon. Pricing was easy for us for this title because we were using it initially as a gift to all our UK members, on the basis that the material had been donated and showed a side of Angela Thirkell that had not previously been apparent. And despite the Burne-Jones, Kipling and Colin MaclInnes connections we assumed that the market would not be a large one. For an initial bulk order to supply our members – and some of the society's friends – we got a discount. The ordinary selling price is a very reasonable £4.00 with £2.77 delivery; our society price is slightly less than the P&P, at £2.74! If we did get many orders, royalties would be paid out via PayPal once the amount topped £25, so a society would have to have an account or a member who could make the transfer.

For the smaller societies in the Alliance this is certainly an option worth considering, especially if your members, like ours, regard a 'real book' as their medium of choice.

2, *Cally Phillips, Galloway Raiders.* The Galloway Raiders was born out of a (re-)publishing decision. Over two years 32 texts were edited and prepared for an ambitious launch to mark the centenary of S.R. Crockett's death (April 1914). But that was just the start of the adventure. Thus, as an addition to the excellent article above, it's worth mentioning that alternatives to both FeedaRead and Amazon exist. The one which has been most useful to Galloway Raiders over the years in terms of print publication is IngramSpark (<https://www.ingramspark.com>). In the decade since we published 'The Galloway Collection' in 32 volumes, the title 'self-publishing' has become better understood to include 'independent' publishing (small scale), which is what other small literary societies might recognise as their status/use case scenario.

I could go on for hours about the ins and outs of print and digital publishing for literary societies – if there is enough interest from ALS members it might be worth sharing a Zoom session on the topic.

Suffice it to say, as the Angela Thirkell Society have found, it is now entirely possible to republish works by authors who are out of print, having been consigned to the 'marginalia' of book history. So if it's something your Society is interested in doing, there are those of us who have gone before you, happy to share our experiences.

The Thomas Hardy Society Outreach Programme

The Thomas Hardy Society has been in operation since 1968 when a festival was organised to celebrate the great man and his works, attended by delegates from all over the world. Out of this event was born a committee dedicated to promoting Hardy's legacy. The Council of Management, on which I perform various roles, though my main one is that of Secretary and Website Director, has seen many incarnations over the last 55 years, each committee member bringing new ideas to the table. However, while we have over 1,000 members worldwide – outside of the UK and the US our largest demographic is India, followed by China and Japan – attracting new blood and keeping our members interested is a constant concern. To this end we have an Academic Director responsible for liaison with schools who organises free events to encourage teenagers here in Dorset to want to learn more about their 'most famous son'. We have a Student Representative, changing every couple of years, who is working towards an MA or a PhD in Hardy-related studies and who is responsible for attracting our newest academic members. Our Secretary is constantly organising events such as an annual study day devoted to a particular Hardy work, attended by an

average of 60-70 delegates each time, ranging from the general enthusiast to internationally renowned professors. Other annual events include the Hardy birthday weekend, the AGM weekend, and the London Lecture, usually held at Birkbeck College. There are also regular walks and tours, and our international biennial conference/festival which lasts for nine days. We produce a journal three times a year: two are more general in content, the autumn issue being particularly academic in content.

Along with our work in schools to attract younger audiences, we are also actively seeking collaborations with other literary societies. In the past we have held joint conferences with the Philip Larkin Society, the latest of which took place in 2019. Last year we held a weekend conference devoted to Hardy and Gothic Wessex, which featured not only talks and seminars but also a ghost walk of haunted Dorchester, a performance by Don't Go Into the Cellar Theatre Company, and a trip to Bournemouth to visit St Peter's Church and the Shelley graves. We heard papers regarding writers such as Robert Louis Stevenson, M.R. James and Mary Webb, all with links to Dorset and/or Hardy.

Hardy's life was long-lived: he died in his 88th year, and his social milieu was large. We are therefore actively fostering connections with other literary societies representing members of that vast milieu. This year we are holding a joint conference day with the T.E. Lawrence Society. We are also in negotiations with the Sylvia Townsend Warner Society, the Edward Thomas Fellowship, the Powys Society and the Barnes Society. And of course we are hosting the ALS AGM weekend in 2028, which will mark the centenary of Hardy's death. We would also like to reach out to members of the Siegfried Sassoon Fellowship, the Rudyard Kipling Society, and all other groups representing Hardy's many correspondents.

Tracy Hayes, Thomas Hardy Society

Norman Nicholson House News

The Norman Nicholson House project team has pulled off a remarkable success by raising £20,000 towards the overall cost of the scheme, hours ahead of a deadline set by the Architectural Heritage Fund to double their money.

The result of an online crowdfunder means the House project will benefit to the tune of £40,000, thanks to the AHF's pledge to match all funds raised to a maximum of £20,000 by January 31st 2023.

Chair of the Norman Nicholson House project Charlie Lambert said: 'I can't quite believe it but people have been incredibly generous and really got behind our crowdfunder in this last week as the AHF's deadline closed in. It's been humbling to see the donations coming in from a wide range of people. Whether the amount has been small or large we know that it's a tough time for people economically and we really appreciate every single donation'.

The crowdfunder, hosted on www.GoFundMe.com, is titled 'Breathe New Life into Norman Nicholson's house' and raises money towards the cost of buying and renovating the lifelong home of the Millom poet who died in 1987. Charlie said: 'This fundraising achievement makes a massive statement and will show major funding organisations how much support we have as we approach them for the significant additional funds we need in order to realise our ambitions'.

The project intends to turn the ground floor of the three-storey Victorian terraced house into a café and community hub, with the two upper floors becoming home to a lively museum interpreting Nicholson's work for a modern audience.

Digital Copyright Workshop

Back in 2022 an ALS member experienced a claim from an organisation (PicRights), who in turn claimed to be acting on behalf of copyright holders, for a payment in excess of £200 for an alleged (which was in fact actual) breach of copyright over use of an image on their website.

Our member contacted the ALS to ask if we had any experience in this area. Through pro-bono help the ALS was put in contact with Marriott Harrison (MH) who have specialism in this area of work.

MH are aware of PicRights and the manner in which they operate. They did, however, confirm that there was a breach of copyright on this occasion, although as the member society had already removed the image upon receipt of the notification it was no longer current. They suggested the society write to PicRights with a payment of the standard fee required by the copyright holder, rather than the fee they were demanding.

This particular situation has been left at that stage, but it started me thinking about offering members some scenario training around potential copyright situations – both where a third party uses members material without permission and where a member uses third party material. I followed this up with MH and the solicitor, Joshua Little, who had helped us with the initial enquiry.

Between us we have come up with the following thoughts around a workshop in July 2023, if there is interest from members of the ALS:

- This could be expanded to include Intellectual Property, Trademarks and Branding – and looking at both sides of the coin (so to speak).
- ALS members provide some typical subject areas/scenarios which we would put to MH.
- MH would then scope possible responses to these situations for theoretical case studies – being clear this is NOT advice but a response and signpost the type of advice that may be required and where to get it.
- MH would look at delivering one interactive workshop of about an hour in July 2023.
- MH would consider providing this free of charge to the ALS as a PR exercise – perhaps with a link from our website to MH for societies to follow (if they so wished) on any occasion when advice is required.
- The workshop outcomes could be held on our website (member-only access?) with the link above to MH.

Next Steps

- To take this forward MH now require from us:
 - Scenarios/Subjects from ALS members
 - Format – webinar or interactive based on scenarios using breakout rooms where members discussed the scenario, possible solution and then compared with MH response.

If you are interested in this please contact Jeremy Mitchell, treasurer.als@outlook.com with scenarios/subjects as above – ideally by the end of March so MH have time to start planning their own input.

Many thanks and I look forward to hearing from you.

Jeremy Mitchell, Treasurer

Society of the Month

If you want to be featured in Society of Month, we have six slots available for the second half of 2023. These are filled on a first come, first served basis, but if you have a particularly significant month then please submit your profile asap, let us know your preferred date and we will try to accommodate you. We're looking for around 200 words on your society, to include a brief paragraph about your author, and titles of the 'classic', 'best for beginners' and 'best biography'. This is an excellent chance to promote your society. Look at those already posted for further guidance on style: <https://allianceofliterarysocieties.wordpress.com/society-of-the-month/>

Please submit your article (or express interest) to allianceoflitsocs@gmail.com with the subject header SOCIETY OF MONTH.

Events Calendar

If you have events to submit for the Events Calendar, please follow the submission guidelines <https://allianceofliterarysocieties.wordpress.com/event-calendar/> and send your submission with the subject header EVENTS to allianceoflitsocs@gmail.com

ALSO 2023

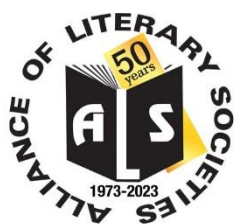
Don't forget the deadline of May 1st to submit for the 2023 journal. This year's theme is **'BETTER DROWNED THAN DUFFERS': Adventures by Land, Sea, Air and Imagination.**

Riding a fighting bear in the Arctic, flying to Neverland, disappearing down a rabbit hole, travelling with Johnson and Boswell in the Hebrides, sailing with the Swallows and Amazons, crossing the Alps on foot...the possibilities are endless. Please sharpen your pencils and tell us about your writers' adventures in reality or on the page. We welcome articles of around 1,000 words, presented as Word documents (please see our style sheet on the ALS website) and sent to r.healey709@btinternet.com by 1 May 2023.

2023 AGM

You should all have received the email with details and links for the ALS weekend. If not, please check out the [website](#). And please pass on the information to your society members. The deadline for registration is March 30th, but the sooner the better. The AGM is held on Saturday afternoon, April 22nd. We are especially keen to hear from anyone interested in taking up the vacant position of Secretary, as well as for people willing to serve on the ALS committee. As a volunteer-run organisation we can only be as good as the participation of our member societies allows. So if you have skills and a bit of time to spare, we'd love to hear from you.

Spread the Word



In our 50th anniversary year we're committed to reaching out to those in your society active in the areas of events, promotions and social media. If we have contact with your 'movers and shakers' we can help you get the most from your ALS membership. Some societies find it useful to have a dedicated ALS liaison member.

We rely on you to share our information with your members. So we'd love it if you could share the following (or edit to suit) with your wider membership (either as a regular part of your news to members or on your website, or both!). Feel free to copy the following text (also available on our website here: <https://wp.me/P8lD4l-wQ> (You can also download an ALS 50th anniversary logo in jpeg format from that page).

As a member of our society you are also a member of the Alliance of Literary Societies. This umbrella organisation exists to share, promote and advocate for literary societies and is a great place to network with like-minded people. No author writes in a vacuum and exploring the ALS website is a great place to start finding other authors whose work you may enjoy.

The ALS is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year. As well as providing resources for literary societies in areas of best practice, we provide a twice yearly newsletter, an annual journal (both available for download from the website) and hold an annual weekend, hosted each year by a member society. This year it is the Charlotte M. Yonge Fellowship (April 21-23).

As part of the ALS 'Now We Are 50' celebrations there will be a variety of digital events throughout the year open to all members. Please bookmark the ALS website www.allianceofliterarysocieties.org.uk and make use of this great addition to your society membership.

Subscriptions

This edition of *Not Only, But ALS*o is yet another example of the benefits of belonging to an organisation such as the Alliance of Literary Societies.

Such benefits invariably carry a cost and the ALS is no exception. The annual membership fees fall due in April. As a reminder, these are the current membership bands:

1 to 24 members £5
25 – 99 members £10
100 to 499 members £15
500 to 999 members £20
1,000 + members £25

For overseas membership, please add £4 to the above.

We are thrilled to have over 100 member organisations at present; however, currently payment by members is spread throughout the year and I am sure many of you reading this article and who are responsible for collecting subscriptions from your own members, will acknowledge the challenges and confusion this can cause from time to time.

So, may I make two pleas for 2023, please:

1. Look out for an invoice from me (or ask your treasurer to) (treasurer.als@outlook.com) during March, which will quote a membership fee based on our current understanding of your society's membership; and
2. Check your payment date and change it to one in April please if at any other time of the year.

Payment may be made by Standing Order (preferred), bank transfer or cheque and details will be on the invoice.

If paying from overseas and you do not have a UK bank account please contact me for alternative payment methods.

Many thanks

Jeremy Mitchell, Treasurer

treasurer.als@outlook.com*

*I understand that emails from outlook.com email addresses are notoriously prone to appear in email junk or trash. Please may I ask that you check these email boxes regularly during March if nothing appears in your inbox.

And finally... We welcome your feedback and information.

The deadline for copy for the next newsletter is 1 August. Please send any contributions to allianceoflitsocs@gmail.com with the subject header NEWSLETTER

ALS Contacts

Please contact us at allianceoflitsocs@gmail.com using (where possible) an appropriate subject heading. This helps to direct your email to the correct person.

Website content, events, newsletter: Cally Phillips (Galloway Raiders)

Chair: Marty Ross (Johnson Society (Lichfield))

Treasurer: Jeremy Mitchell (Edward Thomas Fellowship)

