



The Literary London Society

LLS Newsletter – Autumn 2012

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1. General News

Founded in 2011 to "foster interdisciplinary and historically wide-ranging research into London literature in its historical, social, and cultural contexts," the Literary London Society continues to go from strength-to-strength and already enlisted over eighty new members – thank you for your interest in and support of the Society.

On another note, you may have seen emails going around for a Literary London Symposium being held at the The Oxford and Cambridge Club in December at a registration cost of £645. We would like to assure you that this has nothing to do with us. We do not know the organisers, we have not heard of their organisation, and their publications are unknown to us. All events organised by the Literary London Society will be advertised on the Society's website:

www.literarylondon.org

2. Conference News

The Call for Papers for 'Literary London 2013: Representations of London in Literature, An Interdisciplinary Conference' is now open.

Hosted by the Institute of English Studies, University of London and organised by The Literary London Society, the conference will take place on 17-19 July 2013.

Confirmed Keynote Speakers:
Vic Gatrell

Proposals are invited for papers, comprised panels, and roundtable sessions, which consider any period or genre of literature about, set in, inspired by, or alluding to central and suburban London and its environs, from the city's roots in pre-Roman times to its imagined futures. While the main focus of the conference will be on literary texts, we actively encourage interdisciplinary contributions relating film, architecture, geography, theories of urban space, etc., to literary representations of London. Papers from



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postgraduate students are particularly welcome for consideration. While papers on all areas of literary London are welcomed, the conference theme in 2013 is 'London in Crisis and Disorder'. Topics that might be addressed are:

- Civil disorder: riots, protest and disobedience
- Industrial unrest
- Political intrigue and corruption
- Plague, Fire, Blitz
- Criminality and vice; policing and justice
- Housing, financial and environmental crises
- Unruly sites: docks, markets, fairs
- Night-time London

Please submit all proposals for 20-minute papers, comprised panels, and roundtable sessions through the Literary London Society website (<http://www.literarylondon.org/conference/cfp.html>).

Deadline 1 March 2013

For further information please contact Martin Dines at m.dines@kingston.ac.uk

3. LLS Journal

Founded in 2003, *The Literary London Journal (LLJ)*, is the first and only journal to provide a common forum for scholars and students engaged specifically in the study of London and literature. It is fully peer-reviewed and published four times a year, in Spring, Summer, Autumn and Winter, and is indexed by the MLA International Bibliography. It appears online only and is free to all. For more information about the Journal, or to read the current or past editions, please follow this link:

<http://www.literarylondon.org/london-journal/>

The next issue will be out very soon so watch this space!

If you are interested in submitting a paper, please contact the editor, Susan Fischer: journal@literarylondon.org.

Or, if you would like to write a review for the journal, please contact Susie Thomas: reviews@literarylondon.org.

4. The Reading Group

After the huge success of the Reading Group last year, it kicked off again this year with a session spent delving into the ruins of blitzed London (thanks to Sebastian Groes for



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giving a great talk on Bowen and Macaulay). And the Group is very pleased to announce that Andrew Whitehead will be introducing the second event: 'Trouble in Porter Street: a rent strike manual in fictional form.' This will take place on **Tuesday, 20th November from 6:00-7:30pm in Senate House Room 234.**

When the communist novelist John Sommerfield was asked to write an account of how to organise a rent strike, he decided to do so in the form of a short story. The result was *Trouble in Porter Street* (1939), set in a working-class street in Chelsea. It sold in tens of thousands as a twopenny pamphlet - and was republished in the 1950s. Does it work as agitprop literature? What does it say about the Communist Party's approach to propaganda? How does Sommerfield engage with a city on the brink of war? Whatever happened to the political pamphlet?

For further details visit: <http://www.literarylondon.org>

5. Events/Conferences of interest to LLS people

- Queer London Conference: Call for Papers

Saturday 23rd March, 2013

Department of English, Linguistics and Cultural Studies, University of Westminster

Keynote Speaker:

Dr. Matt Cook (Birkbeck College, University of London)

This one-day conference is dedicated to a consideration of London and its role in creating, housing, reflecting and facilitating queer life. It aims to bring together scholars from a variety of different disciplines and backgrounds to consider representations of queer London and how London itself represents queers.

That London is a focus and centre for queer life and culture can be seen on its stages; in its bar and club scenes; in its film festivals and its representations in film; in its performance art; in its political life; in its gyms; in its history; in its book groups and book shops; and in its representations in the contemporary queer fiction of writers like Alan Hollinghurst and Sarah Waters. That London is a hub and an axis goes without saying. What the 'Queer London' conference aims to do then is to offer an opportunity for further analysis and investigation of these representations/representational platforms and to consider the socio-cultural role that London plays in queer life.

The conference will focus on the period 1885 to the present and welcomes interdisciplinary proposals and those from a wide range of disciplines, including: Literature, History, Art, Cultural Studies, Theatre and Performance Studies.



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Potential topics might include, but are not limited to:

- Mapping queer London
- Lesbian Londons
- Queers of colour and London
- Queer modernisms
- Queer institutions and structures
- Literary representations of queer London
- Films of queer London
- Queer drama and performance in/on London
- Queer histories of London
- London's queer temporalities
- Queer flâneurie
- London's AIDS narratives
- Queer urban subcultures
- London's queer festivals
- Queer sex workers
- London's queer activism
- Heterosexual and homosexual London, meeting points and overlaps

Please send abstracts of 500 words, or proposals for panels of three linked papers, by Friday 30th November 2012 to Dr. Simon Avery and Dr. Katherine M. Graham at the University of Westminster. Abstracts should be sent as Word attachments to s.avery@westminster.ac.uk and k.graham1@westminster.ac.uk, and should include details of your current affiliation and a very short author bio.

<http://queerlondonconf.wordpress.com/>

- BFI are holding a season of Ealing films throughout November. Entitled 'Dark Ealing', it will look at a very English strand of comic whimsy, who also produced tough, cynical and challenging portraits of British life. Mark Duguid introduces our look at the dark side of this national institution.

Also, BFI films have released a few more in their series on London, including:

1) British Transport Films Volume 10: London on the Move

2) Wonderful London

Parkinson, Harry B; Miller, Frank; Release date 23 July 2012

From Hackney to Chelsea in the company of the great 1920s British travelogue. Across two series and over 20 films the directors of Wonderful London captured some of the most evocative images of the capital in the mid-1920s. These simple films contrasted different aspects of city life - East End and West End, poor and rich, natives



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and immigrants - often looking beyond the stereotypes to show surprising views of the city. As well as familiar landmarks of London town - the Thames, Big Ben, Tower Bridge and St Paul's - Wonderful London reveals its less well illustrated quarters; the over-populated districts of Clerkenwell, London's original Chinatown or the South Asian and African seaman who worked in the Port of London. We can wander past the long vanished Crystal Palace and the recently vanished gates of the White City and London's first Olympic stadium now lying under the new Westfield Shopping Centre. We can take a trip on a barge from Limehouse to Paddington Basin, via King's Cross and the Zoo and peer into everybody's back gardens. We can check out the street markets on a Sunday and wander down crazy little alleys, past pot-bellied pubs, inns of court and the buildings that Dickens knew. And we can see generations of Londoners - all now gone but strangely still like the Londoner of today.

6. Notices of any new publications of interest to LLS people

- Tony Murray, *London Irish Fictions: Narrative, Diaspora and Identity* (Liverpool University Press, 2012)

This is the first book about the literature of the Irish in London. By examining over 30 novels, short stories and autobiographies set in London since the Second World War, *London Irish Fictions* investigates the complex psychological landscapes of belonging and cultural allegiance found in these unique and intensely personal perspectives on the Irish experience of migration. As well as bringing new research to bear on the work of established Irish writers such as Edna O'Brien, John McGahern and Emma Donoghue, this study reveals a fascinating and hitherto unexplored literature, diverse in form and content.

By synthesising theories of narrative and diaspora into a new methodological approach to the study of migration, *London Irish Fictions* sheds new light on the ways in which migrant identities are negotiated, mediated and represented through literature. It also examines the specific role that the metropolis plays in literary portrayals of migrant experience as an arena for the performance of Irishness, as a catalyst in transformations of Irishness and as an intrinsic component of second-generation Irish identities.

Furthermore, by analysing the central role of narrative in configuring migrant cultures and identities, it reassesses notions of exile, escape and return in Irish culture more generally. In this regard, it has particular relevance to current debates on migration and multiculturalism in both Britain and Ireland, especially in the wake of an



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emerging new phase of Irish migration in the post-‘Celtic Tiger’ era.

Further details about the book can be found here:

http://www.liverpooluniversitypress.co.uk/index.php?option=com_wrapper&view=wrapper&Itemid=54&AS1=9781846318313

- Members might also be interested in knowing that the Society’s President, Brycchan Carey, has recently published a book entitled, *From Peace to Freedom: Quaker Rhetoric and the Birth of American Antislavery, 1658-1761* (Yale University Press).

Investigating in detail the origins of antislavery thought and rhetoric within the Society of Friends, it shows how the Quakers turned against slavery in the first half of the eighteenth century and became the first organization to take a stand against the slave trade.

Through meticulous examination of the earliest writings of the Friends, including journals and letters, the book reveals the society’s gradual transition from expressing doubt about slavery to adamant opposition. Centering on Quaker communities in London, Barbados, and Philadelphia, *From Peace to Freedom* examines the writings and lives of antislavery Friends such as George Fox, John Hepburn, Benjamin Lay, John Woolman, and Anthony Benezet. It shows that while progression toward an antislavery stance was ongoing, it was slow and uneven and that it was vigorous internal debate and discussion that ultimately led to a call for abolition. *From Peace to Freedom* is "a major contribution to the history of the rhetoric of antislavery and the development of antislavery thought as explicated in early Quaker writing.

More information about *From Peace to Freedom* is available at:

<http://www.brycchancarey.com/bookshop/fptf.htm>