



The Literary London Society

LLS Newsletter – Winter 2013

Contents

1. [General News](#)
 2. [Conference News](#)
 3. [Review of Literary London 2012 Conference](#)
 4. [News about the Journal](#)
 5. [Reading Group Schedule](#)
 6. [Events/conferences of interest to LLS people](#)
 7. [Notices of any new publications of interest to LLS people.](#)
-
1. [General News](#)

Established in 2011, the Literary London Society continues to go from strength to strength and is pleased to claim over 80 members and counting. Many of these members, we hope, will attend or present a paper at the annual conference, the deadline for which (1 March) is fast approaching (see below for further details). If you haven't decided whether to register yet, perhaps Holly Prescott's review of last year's conference, included in this issue of the Newsletter, will persuade you to. Reflecting on the wide gamut of topics covered and the high calibre of speakers, Holly reveals how 'the Literary London Conference continues to showcase engaging and innovative work in the field of London Studies, and provides a wonderful forum for the exploration of literary representations of London, past and present'.

Also included in the Winter 2013 Newsletter, but sent as a separate attachment, is Nicolas Tredell's review of Martin Amis' *Lionel Asbo: State of England* (2012). Both it – and Holly's review – should be regarded as a preview of the forthcoming journal issue, and a sign that the Literary London Society does indeed serve as a forum for research into London literature in its historical, social, and cultural contexts.

For more, check out the newly-updated LLS webpage:
<http://www.literarylondon.org/index.html>

2. [Conference News](#)

The Call for Papers for 'Literary London 2013: Representations of London in Literature, An Interdisciplinary Conference' is now open, and the deadline (1 March) for proposals is fast approaching. Please make sure you don't miss out on the opportunity to present a paper at this popular event. Vic Gatrell (Cambridge) and Matthew Rubery (QMUL) are already confirmed speakers.



The Literary London Society

This year's conference theme is 'London in Crisis and Disorder'. Thus, although proposals are still invited for papers, comprised panels and roundtables sessions that consider any period or genre of literature about, set in, inspired by, or alluding to central and suburban London and its environs, papers that address the following topics are particularly welcome:

- 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

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.

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

Or visit <http://www.literarylondon.org/conference/cfp.html>.

[3. Literary London: Representations of London in Literature 2012](#) [Conference review by Holly Prescott](#)

Between 4-6 July 2012, the *Literary London* conference returned to the Institute of English Studies in Bloomsbury's Senate House for its annual celebration of literature in, of and about London. A few weeks earlier than usual (due to the 'Big Sports Day' kicking off at the end of July), this year's conference nevertheless promised to be an intellectual event of Olympic proportions, with the theme of 'Sports, Games and Pastimes' uniting many of the diverse papers on offer.

With the support of the newly-fledged Literary London Society, the conference opened to a real buzz with a poetry reading from the charismatic Michael Rosen whose chosen poems for the Literary London audience were family-centric pieces, including 'Solomon the Cat' and 'The Torch,' through which Rosen locates himself within the suburbs of the capital through a series of witty and poignant observations from his London childhood.

The rest of the conference kicked off with similar verve with Norma Clarke's plenary address 'Oliver Goldsmith and the legacy of Grub Street,' setting up two days of fascinating and wide-ranging panels each bringing their own richness of interpretation to the games, pastimes and leisure theme. The wide gamut of topics ranged from 'Slums and Slumming' through 'Swordplay and Renaissance Drama' to 'Leisure and Pleasure in the 20th and 21st Centuries,' with other panels exploring the salience of sport, subcultures and hedonism in the ways in which London has come to be represented through literary and artistic media.



The Literary London Society

Of particular note was one of the opening panels of the conference entitled 'Critical Hedonism,' which saw a trio of papers from Rebecca Warren-Heys (Royal Holloway), independent scholar Lynsey Blandford and Mita Choudhury (Purdue University Calumet) explore the character and pursuits of Falstaff, the Elizabethan gallant, and sports and riots in the eighteenth century respectively. Especially engaging was Warren-Heys' examination of Falstaff, seeking to reclaim Shakespeare's comic character from readings which limit him to the bounds of the vulgar and lecherous and to re-construct him as representative of the vitality of the city.

Also fascinating was the Childhood and History panel featuring papers from Holly Forsythe Paul (University of Toronto Mississauga), independent scholar Anne Harvey and Literary London regular Candy Wood (Union College, Kentucky). Forsythe Paul's paper examined the overtly London-esque iconography in Allan Ahlberg's definitive children's book *Peepo*, presenting the book as an observation of Blitz life from a baby's perspective. Candy Wood's talk explored the subtle ways in which children's playful re-appropriation of museum spaces features as a recurring motif in children's fiction, whilst Anne Harvey spoke movingly of the London childhoods of Eleanor, Harry, Joe and Bertie Farjeon. An emotionally-engaging panel exploring the overlaps between public and private literary Londons, the Childhood and History panel summed up one of the most rewarding subtleties of the Literary London phenomenon: namely, the way in which our academic engagement with London necessarily interacts and conflicts with our own experience of and emotive attachments to the city itself.

The Literary London Conference thus continues to showcase engaging and innovative work in the field of London Studies, and provided a wonderful forum for the exploration of how our conceptions of leisure-time and our playful and often subversive urban pursuits can help us to interrogate how we understand London, its literary representations, its pasts and its futures. The Literary London initiative therefore continues to prove that, to customise the words of Samuel Johnson, when one is tired of Literary London, one is tired of life!

About the author: Holly Prescott completed An AHRC-funded PhD in English at the University of Birmingham in 2011, writing on the narrative, affective and memorial roles of abandoned and subterranean spaces in contemporary British writing. She now works in Postgraduate Recruitment (UK and EU) for the University of Birmingham and has held the post of Early Career Representative on the committee of the Literary London Society. When she isn't travelling with work, reading or writing, she performs stand-up comedy across the West Midlands.

4. [LLS Journal](#)

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



The Literary London Society

literature. It is fully peer-reviewed and published 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/>

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. Susan also welcomes reviews on films, exhibitions or plays about London.

5. [The Reading Group](#)

The Literary London Reading Group seeks to explore the processes (whether of exploration, appropriation, myth-making, derangement or disavowal) that contribute to creation and destruction of an imagined city and its fictional territories. Throughout the course of the year sessions will aim to foster an enriched understanding of London as a city comprised of a multiplicity of sites out of which narratives are woven and bound. Whether a text is situated in Pall Mall, Eel Pie Island or in an imagined dystopian future, part of the skill of writing urban experience arises from successfully 'siting' a narrative and capturing that elusive sense of place that grounds it in particular setting.

The Literary London Reading Group meets regularly throughout the academic year. Details of upcoming events will be posted on this page, at the IES website, and on Twitter, so make sure you keep checking for updates.

Reading for each session, and a record of past sessions, can be found at the Reading Group's blog at <http://literarylondonrg.wordpress.com/>

All meetings will take place at the Institute of English Studies, Senate House, University of London, Malet St, London, WC1E 7HU. For more information, contact Literary London or get in touch with the group's organisers, Peter Jones and Lara Atkin, directly at literarylondonrg@gmail.com

Reading Group Dates:

Tue Mar 19th 2013
6.00-7.30pm - Senate House, Room 234
Nadia Valman (Queen Mary, University of London)
Title TBC

Tue Apr 16th 2013



The Literary London Society

6.00-7.30pm - Senate House, Room 234

Claire Lozier (University of Leeds)

"London through the eyes of a Frenchman: L.F. Céline's underworld, 1915-1916"

Tue 18th Jun 2013

6.00-7.30pm - Senate House, Room 234

Speaker TBC

6. [Events/Conferences of interest to LLS people](#)

- Queer London Conference

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.

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

- Cultural Intersections: Ireland/London, Writing and the Arts
Centre for Irish Studies, St Mary's University College and Leeds Metropolitan University

Saturday 23 February 2013

Irish Cultural Centre, Hammersmith, London

What happens in the intersection between cultures? This conference explores the myriad intersections between Ireland and Britain in one particular location, London.



The Literary London Society

Cosmopolitan capital and circuit-board of cultural connection, how has London's writing and arts culture been shaped by its intersection with generations of Irish creative migrants? How is such cultural activity organized and what forms does it take? How has London featured in the cultural history of Ireland? How has the nature and significance of this cultural traffic been transformed in recent decades?

Keynote Speakers

Prof. Declan Kiberd (University of Notre Dame)

"Writing London, Reading Ireland"

Dr. Ellen McWilliams (University of Exeter)

"Reading the Irish Diaspora: London to New York"

The day will explore these questions through keynotes, panels and audience discussion on literature, film/visual arts, theatre and music, a roundtable debate, a dual book launch reception, and a music session. Registration includes lunch/tea/coffee and entrance to reception. For more information and to register contact:

Wendy.bushnell@smuc.ac.uk

Tel: 0208-240-4249

7. [Notices of any new publications of interest to LLS people](#)

Collection of programmes on London from the BBC archives on BBC iPlayer to the LL network: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/bbcfour/collections/p00synd3/london>