



# The Literary London Society

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## LLS Newsletter – Summer 2015

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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. The Society now has over one hundred members and is delighted to welcome two new committee members: Matthew Beaumont (UCL) and writer Nicholas Tredell. The 2015 conference, organised by Peter Jones, was a huge success and next year's, which (in a nod to the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Shakespeare's death) addresses the theme '**The City and the Globe**', promises to be equally exciting. Further details and a CFP to follow soon!

2. [Literary London Conference 2015](#)

Thanks to all those who attended and contributed to the Literary London conference in July and helped to make it such a dynamic and enjoyable event. Speakers offered a range of illuminating and striking responses to the topic 'London in Love' and the quality and depth of the papers illustrates the current vitality of work going on in the field of London Studies.

The committee would like to express its gratitude to our splendid triptych of plenary speakers. The poet Imtiaz Dharker delivered an enchanting reading which tapped into the idiosyncrasies of what it means to love in a city that shades into other geographies and timescapes (Bombay, Glasgow and Britain in the Ice Age). Dr Gregory Dart spoke eloquently of 'pastoral's spurious promises' along with the consolations to lost love that Charles Lamb found in the prosaic landscapes of the city. On the final day, Professor Kate Flint set forth a highly compelling genealogy for the concept of topophilia and the 'love for London'.

The committee would also like to congratulate the winner of the President's Prize, Charlotte Stroud (University of Roehampton), for her paper on the female flâneur in Sarah Waters's *Tipping the Velvet*, and the three recipients of PG bursaries: Allan



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Rae (University of Stirling), Patrick Preston (University of East Anglia) and Emma Hayward (University of Liverpool).

A Storify page for this event is [here](#). This is well worth browsing because it gives an insight into some of the highlights of 'London in Love'.

### 3. [CFP: Literary London Journal](#)

The [Journal](#) will consider all submissions that meet the aims of the Literary London Society, which is to 'foster interdisciplinary and historically wide-ranging research into London literature in its historical, social, and cultural contexts, to include all periods and genres of writing and representation 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'.

All submissions are blind peer-reviewed by experts in the field. This means that articles are published on the quality of the research rather than on the reputation of the author. We therefore welcome excellent articles from contributors at all stages of their career, from graduate student to emeritus professor. We also welcome proposals for edited special editions of the journal.

All submissions and proposals should be addressed to the Editor using the following email address: [journal@literarylondon.org](mailto:journal@literarylondon.org)

Or, if you would like to write a review for the journal, please contact the Reviews Editor: [reviews@literarylondon.org](mailto:reviews@literarylondon.org)

### 4. [Reading Group](#)

[The Literary London Reading Group](#) will be running six sessions during the forthcoming academic year. Topics for 2015-16 include Musical London, London and Children's Literature, and Post-War London Fiction. We're also planning another London Walk (but for a warmer and dryer time of year).

Details of upcoming events will be posted at the [IES website](#), and on our [Twitter page](#), so make sure you keep checking for updates.

All meetings will take place at the Institute of English Studies, Senate House, University of London. For more information, please get in touch with the group's organisers, Lisa Robertson and Eliza Cubitt, at [literary.londonrg@gmail.com](mailto:literary.londonrg@gmail.com)

As always, the Literary London Reading Group is free and open to the public. Please spread the word, and we hope to see you there!



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## 5. [Publications of Interest to Members](#)

- Ged Pope, [Reading London's Suburbs: From Charles Dickens to Zadie Smith](#) (Palgrave Macmillan, 2015).

'This book offers a lively overview of London suburban fiction over the last 180 years. Close readings and discussion of work by Dickens, the Grossmith brothers, H. G. Wells, and on through Orwell, Stevie Smith, V. S. Naipaul and Zadie Smith, provides a comprehensive account of key recurring approaches and themes. Suburban fiction highlights the complex connections between place and writing, and focuses on the activities individuals necessarily undertake to make place legible and habitable. Much fiction, looking in at the suburbs from without, anxiously tends to present the popular mass suburb as comprising a key set of problems associated with modernity: as being unknown and unknowable social space, as soullessly repetitive and empty, as lacking familiar co-ordinates of specific place and cultural tradition. This book explores why the suburb, in much fiction, is seen to fail in its primary function of offering a knowable, habitable landscape, a home, or even a tenable sense of identity' (Palgrave website)

- Mary Shannon, [Dickens, Reynolds and Mayhew on Wellington Street: The Print Culture of a Victorian Street](#) (Ashgate, 2015).

'Mary L. Shannon's informative book offers an entirely new way to think about print culture. In focusing on Wellington Street off the Strand, where important Victorian writers such as Dickens, Mayhew, and Reynolds maintained their offices, she demonstrates the significance of geography for understanding the print networks that developed in midcentury London' (Anne Humpherys, City University of New York)

- Nick Bentley, [Martin Amis: Writers and Their Work](#) (Tavistock: Northcote House, 2015).

'Martin Amis is one of the most important and distinctive writers of the last thirty years and his work continues to provoke controversy and debate. From his first novel, *The Rachel Papers* (1973), to his most recent his fiction has engaged with the major movements in literary and critical theory over the last four decades. His experimental approach to the novel form, his creation of complex and memorable characters, and his acute awareness of the relationship between fiction and reality mark out the distinctive elements of Amis's work. In addition, his often-controversial representations of class, gender and race make him an important and provocative figure for contemporary literary studies. This book provides a critical survey and evaluation of his major works, identifying his commitment to stylistic expression and experiment alongside the ways in which his novels have engaged with social, cultural and political issues'



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- 'London Issue' of the Irish literary magazine [The Stinging Fly](#) 31.2 (2015)
- Members might also be interested in [a new digital research project](#) which explores London in the Romantic period using Richard Horwood's 'PLAN of the Cities of LONDON and WESTMINSTER the Borough of SOUTHWARK, and PARTS adjoining Shewing every HOUSE' (produced between 1792 and 1799).

The [website](#) includes a detailed, zoomable version of the Plan layered over contemporary maps and uses annotated markers to put Horwood's attempt to clarify and organise the city into conversation with a series of other curations from the period. Currently, these annotations include the images from the *Microcosm of London* (1808-10); plates and text from *Modern London* (1804); and text from *Fores's New Guide for Foreigners* and the 1788 edition of Harris's *List of Covent-Garden Ladies*.

## 6. [Events of Interest to Members](#)

- **LONDON: REAL DREAMS, UNREAL CITY: an illustrated talk with Richard Martin.** Monday 7 September. 18.30pm. BFI Reuben Library.

'Writer and lecturer Richard Martin (author of *The Architecture of David Lynch*) discusses how filmmakers have explored the dreams, fantasies and illusions of London life. Martin will consider how London has been a site for both apocalyptic terror and utopian speculation for directors such as Derek Jarman, Patrick Keiller and Danny Boyle, and he'll assess the relationship between their urban imaginings and the material history of the city. Details and bookings at <https://whatson.bfi.org.uk/Online/londonrealdreamsunrealcity>.

- **'Reinterpreting Cities', the 13th International Conference on Urban History.** Helsinki, Finland, 24 – 27 August 2016, organized by the European Association for Urban History (EAUH)

'Literary and cultural representations of cities are much more than the secondary or tertiary responses they are sometimes made to be in urban historiography. Cities in literature (and other media) are not to be understood only in terms of traditions cut off from the actual sites and experiences they appear to describe – although questions of genre, period and literary ethos will always have to be acknowledged. This session wants to examine the materiality of literary representations of the city. To what extent do they reflect on, and (re-) produce the material, as well as the



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social realities in actual cities in a European and global context? Possible examples of case studies addressing these questions range from reappraisals of slum writing in nineteenth- and twentieth-century cities to the interaction between utopian city narratives in literature and urban planning, and the literary roots of current rhetoric of public housing, urban redevelopment, and place making.

The organizers invite 300-word abstracts of paper proposals, to be submitted by 31 October 2015. Abstracts must be submitted via [the EAUH website](#)

- **Adaptations and the Metropolis: 10th Annual Conference of the Association of Adaptation Studies.** Senate House, London, 24-25 September 2015



'In the past century the expansion of industrialised cities has seen a significant increase in urbanisation and non-rural lifestyles. Whilst literature quickly sought to document these changes, substantial technological advancements in cinema also enabled the metropolis to be presented through a variety of visual spectacles. Visions of urban sprawl are present in an assortment of media, but it is through their adaptations and remediations that we can trace society's ongoing relationship with the city, modernisation and globalisation. Furthermore, the presentation of the metropolis in past, present and speculative adaptations enable us to understand aspects of our changing lifestyles, the effects of urbanisation on literary and visual art, national identity, social inequalities, territorial displacement, environmental destruction, utopias and dystopias, and our social and psychological relationship with architecture and city development'.

Visit the [website](#) for further details.