



The Literary London Society

Minutes

LLS Committee Meeting, 16 January 2016

- 1) **Welcome**
- 2) **Apologies:** Matthew Beaumont, Brycchan Carey, Adam Hansen, Susan Fischer

In attendance: Jenny Bavidge, Nick Bentley, Eliza Cubitt, Martin Dines, Simon Goulding, Peter Jones, Adele Lee, Craig Melhoff, Lisa Robertson, Susie Thomas, Nicolas Tredell

- 3) **Minutes of previous meeting:** approved
- 4) **Matters arising:** none
- 5) **Items for Report:**
 - a) **President:** Reflects on the pressing need to update the Society's website but welcomes the efforts of our new Web Editor, Craig Melhoff (position yet to be ratified), in addressing current problems and giving the site a much-needed facelift. Also reflects on the need to find a replacement for the current Journal Editor, Susan Fischer, and welcomes suggestions from the Committee.
 - b) **Vice President:** States that he has received many nominees for the President's Prize this year and the overall standard is very high. The decision is a tough one but the winner will be announced within the next 4-5 weeks.
 - c) **Secretary:** Reports that she has finally signed up for a free Chimpmail account which she will use to circulate the next Newsletter and another CFP this week.
 - d) **Treasurer:** Reports that the Society is financially healthy and the current balance of funds is £3887.10 (up over £500 since last year despite increased expenditure). The Society had 107 members last year and the current number of fully paid-up members is 31. The total number of members past and present now stands at an impressive 309. A new Auditor might be needed, however, and the Treasurer is currently looking for someone to replace Philip Tew.
 - e) **Journal Editor:** Reiterates intention to step down and informs Committee that the next issue of *LLJ* will be co-edited with a potential new editor, though the search for a replacement continues.
 - f) **Reviews Editor:** Reflects on the current imbalance between articles and reviews and the need for more of the former and less of the latter (there were 10 reviews in the last issue). Regrets that the journal didn't include a conference review this year and suggests two postgraduates are allocated this task in future. The Reviews Editor also suggests we start including some reviews in the Newsletter. Both suggestions were accepted by the Committee.
 - g) **Conference Organiser:** Reflects on success of the 2015 Conference, in particular the high standard of the papers and the generally convivial, informal atmosphere. Pleased to confirm that Brian Chikwava (author of *Harare North*) has agreed to

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deliver the Annual Lecture on Wednesday 6 July and Rachael Gilmour (QMUL) is confirmed for the plenary on the 7th. A panel including the authors of *Shakespeare and London* - Hannah Crawforth, Sarah Dustagheer and Jennifer Young – has also been arranged. He has received 15 – 20 paper proposals so far and will continue to promote the event via social media and other networks.

- h) **Web Editor:** Reports that he has now familiarised himself with the current website and is consulting with Silke Vanbeselare on ways to update and improve the Society's online presence. See below for details.
- i) **Overseas Reps:** no report
- j) **Postgraduate and Early Career Reps (including LLS Reading Group):** Inform that they have had three of their six annual sessions so far and all have been well attended with a minimum of 12 attendees. In October, Luke Seaber (UCL) led a discussion of Orwell's *Down and Out in Paris and London*; Michael McCluskey (UCL) introduced a Mass-Observation, and this past week Laura Wood (Warwick) led the first children's literature reading group on Edith Nesbit's *The Story of the Treasure Seekers*. The Group are looking forward to the remaining sessions and continue to aim for diversity in the texts but also texts that will appeal to a broad audience. Future speakers include Andrew Glazzard (Royal Holloway), Emma Whipday (KCL) and Rebecca Hahn (Tuebingen) and the Group are already thinking about next year, when they hope to focus more on theory and plan to invite both Lisa Mullen, who works on spatial theory and thing theory, and Luke Davies, who has worked on Critical Theory. Both Reps are happy to continue working on the LLRG but are on the lookout for successors. Finally, although the Reps are happy with the service provided by IES, claiming back expenses (namely, dinner for speakers) is proving complicated.

6) Items for Discussion

- a) **The Conference:** Plans for the 2016 conference, 'London and the Globe', are well underway and confirmed speakers include Brian Chikwava and Rachael Gilmour. The Organiser would also like to add a performance (theatrical or musical) to this year's programme. This would replace the often rather poorly-attended roundtable discussion and end the conference on a more energetic note. It would be open to the wider public. A performance of early modern street songs / ballads was a particularly popular idea and the Committee was invited to make enquiries into this. It was also agreed that the Friday morning plenary be moved the later time of say 10.30 or 11am. The need for more publisher stands this year was also raised and the Organiser is going to get in contact with Housmans, London Books and Bloomsbury etc. The President also suggested we offer advertising space in the conference programme. One ordinary member brought to the attention of the Committee problems with the online booking form. This is something else the Conference Organiser will investigate. Re. fees for Committee Members, after some discussion, it was agreed these be waived for PGs/unwaged etc. and the others pay

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a flat rate (tbc). The booking system this year will therefore be rejigged to include in the drop box a special rate for Committee Members. It was further agreed that the Conference Organiser put together a post-conference survey/questionnaire to allow delegates to provide feedback on their experience. Re. the 2017 Conference on 'Fantastic London', it was agreed that China Miéville would make for a perfect plenary speaker.

- b) **The Website:** Plans to migrate to Wordpress are underway, despite a number of difficulties. In particular, the existing platform is proving difficult to update or to upload new material onto due to database problems, security settings and the fact the current site is linked to other sites. That said, Silke Vanbeselare and the Web Editor are keen to migrate to a new platform soon (this will entail an additional cost of £2/month) and members are to email the Web Editor with samples of websites they would like the LLS website to model itself on. Jenny Bavidge, Martin Dines, Nick Bentley and Lisa Robertson will form an 'advisory board' to the Web Editor. It is hoped the new website will go live on 1 June 2016. It is also hoped that the Society will have a new logo, based on a sketch by Simon Goulding, by then. To that end, Martin Dines is to get in contact with his friend Francesca 'Orsa' Komel, a designer, to refine and professionalise the logo. Finally, it seems to be the case at the moment that journal articles exist in two different formats – HTML and PDF – and need to be standardised/all made searchable.
- c) **The Journal:** President proposes that the journal be published twice annually in future and take the form of one general issue and one special issue. The special issue will be tied into the Literary London conference theme and put together by a guest editor(s). This proposal was unanimously embraced by the Committee.
- d) **Future roles and responsibilities:** The Society is still in need of a second Overseas Rep. Rebecca Hahn and Jason Finch's names were mentioned and the Secretary agreed to get in contact with them. Re. a potential new Auditor, David Rogers was suggested by Martin Dines. The search for a new Journal Editor continues.

7) **AOB:** As a final note, the President expresses the desire for LLS to form links with other, similar societies and to plan collaborative events, perhaps with the Museum of London, in the future. In short, the Society should aim be to more outward-facing and the Committee as a whole should work towards forging sister links with other Societies devoted to the study and promotion of urban fiction.

Action Points

President	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Present Editor with the proposal that <i>LLJ</i> appear twice annually in the form of one general and one special issue ▪ Help the Treasurer find a new Auditor
Vice President	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Choose the winner of the President's Prize ▪ Send river-based logo to designer friend.

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Secretary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Send out another CFP ▪ Get in contact with potential new Overseas Reps.
Treasurer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Secure a new Auditor ▪ Contact Journal Editor re getting PDF version of last issue of Journal
Conference Organiser	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Make enquiries into arranging an end-of-conference performance ▪ Approach Housmans, London Books and Bloomsbury etc. re. publisher stands ▪ Look into the possibility of offering advertising space in the conference programme ▪ Contact IES about online booking form ▪ Include Committee Member option on booking form ▪ Put together a post-conference survey/questionnaire. ▪ Try to book China Miéville for the 2017 Conference
Web Editor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ask Silke Vanbeselare to produce templates before the end of February
Reviews Editor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Make enquires into arranging an end-of-conference performance ▪ Commission a conference review from two PGs.
All Committee Members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Think about ways of forging connections with other, similar Societies ▪ Email the Web Editor with good samples of websites

8) **Date of the next meeting:** 6 July 2016

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