

BARNES LITERARY SOCIETY



Report and financial statement year ended 31 July 2025

Presented at the AGM 18 November 2025

www.barnesliterarysociety.org.uk

Registered Charity No. 1197046

Barnes Literary Society
Report and Financial Statement for the year ended 31 July 2025

Contents

Annual Report	Page 3
Income and Expenditure Account	Page 7
Balance Sheet	Page 8

Society Information

Patrons	Isla Blair Gyles Brandreth Harriett Gilbert Julian Glover Roger McGough Fiona Smith Joanna Trollope Venetia Vyvyan
Trustees	Sue Pandit (Chair) Kathy Owles (Vice Chair and Membership) C Elaine Redler (Secretary and Publicity) Kathy Kock (Treasurer) Fina Mason (Authors) Louise Carr (Hospitality) Belinda Darnton (Events) Philippa McEwan (Grants) Claudia Catelin (Marketing)
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Barnes Literary Society

Annual Report for the year ended 31 July 2025

Following our 20th Anniversary year in 2023/24 we have continued to deliver an excellent programme of authors to our members. We have expanded our grant giving activities and have welcomed three new trustees. We have also enhanced the quality of our author events in the church with additional technical support. We held a great summer party in June. Following the agreement to increase our membership fee at the last AGM we have introduced a new payment procedure for members which was launched after the end of the financial year that this report covers.

Trustees

Reka Czegledi-Brown who was our Secretary stood down during the year and we thank her for the support she gave the BLS. C. Elaine Redler has taken on the role of Secretary.

We welcome three new trustees:

Philippa McEwan who has taken on the role of managing our grant giving activities. Philippa joins us from a career in publishing as a longstanding senior publicist and is a great support for Fina in identifying and facilitating the booking of authors for us. She is also a local resident.

Belinda Darnton who is a longstanding member of the BLS and local Barnes resident.

Claudia Catelin who is Head of Policy at the Publishers Association and local Barnes resident

Author Events

We had a fabulous group of speakers over the 2024/25 season covering an impressive range of genres including contemporary biography and autobiography, historical and contemporary crime fiction, political humour, contemporary fiction, and a state of the nation novel. We now have 7 author events each season.

Our opening speaker in September 2024 was Robert Hardman, renowned writer and broadcaster, specialising in royalty and history for more than 25 years. He talked about his latest book *Charles III*. This book charts the challenges faced by the new King as he takes on the role as sovereign resolute in making his mark.

In October we had Kate Mosse with us. She had been due to speak at the BLS in 2023 but was unwell so we were delighted that she was able to come in 2024 to talk about *The Map of Bones*, the concluding novel in *The Joubert Family Chronicles*. Kate was in conversation with our Chair, Sue Pandit, and gave a fascinating insight into this novel as well as the earlier books in the series. Kate was well-known to many in the audience as an award-winning novelist, playwright, memoirist and non-fiction writer. She is also the Founder Director of the Women's Prize for Fiction and for Non-Fiction.

In November Matt Chorley gave a very amusing talk based on his latest book '*Planes, Trains and Toilet Doors: 50 Places That Changed British Politics*'. Matt has spent almost two decades covering Westminster; interviewing prime ministers, mocking ministers and

chronicling the serious, and sometimes unintentionally absurd events that act as unlikely turning points in the direction of a nation. He is a BBC Radio 5 Live and Newsnight presenter.

In January Stephanie Merritt, who writes under the pseudonym of SJ Parris, came to talk about her historical thriller series based in Tudor England featuring Giordano Bruno. She also discussed her contemporary thrillers including *While You Sleep* with crime writer Victoria Dowd.

In February best-selling author Jo Jo Moyes, who has twice won the Romantic Novel of the Year Award, was with us to talk about her latest novel, *We All Live Here*, with Victoria Dowd who valiantly stood in at the last minute to take on this role.

In April Andrew O'Hagan came to discuss his latest novel *Caledonian Road* with Harriett Gilbert, a patron of the BLS and presenter of A Good Read on BBC Radio 4. Andrew has been nominated three times for the Booker Prize for previous novels including *Mayflies*. He and Harriett had a fascinating conversation about *Caledonian Road*, his unputdownable state-of-the-nation novel about the UK today.

We concluded our 2024/25 programme with Monica Macias who spoke about her autobiography *Black Girl from Pyongyang: In Search of My Identity* with Jim Hoare a retired diplomat who was the first British representative in Pyongyang. This was a fascinating insight into Monica's life in North Korea as the daughter of the first President of Equatorial Guinea.

We held our summer party in June at the Barnes Green Centre. 80 members enjoyed an excellent meal provided by local caterer Jane Sutherland and her team. We were entertained by Bertie Pearce with his table-to-table close-up magic during the meal and then his inspiring and amusing talk on Charles Dickens.

Membership

Membership for the year totalled 385.

The single membership fee for 2024/25 remained at £30. We agreed at the 2024 AGM to increase this to £40 from 1st August 2025. This increased fee has now been successfully implemented. We now have a new payment system in place, Membermojo, which has greatly improved how we manage our membership data. Standing orders have been phased out and direct payments are now made via the BLS website.

We have decided to introduce for the 2026/27 season a new annual 'member plus one' category for a fee of £80. This will enable members to bring along a partner, other family member or friend to whichever events are of particular interest to them.

BLS supporters

There are a number of people I would like to thank.

We are lucky to have supportive patrons at the BLS, several of whom regularly attend our events. We are delighted that Gyles Brandreth has agreed to join us as a patron.

I would like to thank Sarah Arthur who manages our website and features BLS news in the Barnes Bugle, the Barnes Community Association for providing coverage of our events in their publications, and all the local shops, businesses, and libraries who take our publicity posters.

We are very grateful to be able to have our events in St Mary's Church and thank Cheryl Cole for facilitating this. We are extremely grateful for the support that we now have from AV specialist Mark Thornton, he has taken a great burden off our shoulders as we were trying to navigate the new AV system at the church. He can be with us for most of the author events over the year.

We would like to thank Venetia and her team from Barnes Books who continue to support our author events in the church plus the promotional support they provide in the bookshop.

We have continued to work with the OSO this year. They have been handling the promotion and bookings for the Creative Writing Courses. At present, there are no courses offered but we hope to offer them again in due course.

Treasurer's Report

I would like to comment briefly on the Treasurer's Report on income and expenditure, attached below. This account has been prepared on a cash basis in line with the requirements of the Charity Commission and has been submitted to the Charity Commission as required as part of the Annual Return. We delivered a surplus before grants of £7,869 compared to the previous year's surplus of £4,128. After making donations of £5,500 in grants we ended the year with a net surplus of £2,369. We aim to distribute between £5,000 and £7,500 a year in grants. Given the very strong reserves that we have built up over recent years we are confident that this level of grant giving is sustainable.

Reserves at 31 July 2025 were £34,720, represented by cash at bank. Our financial position remains strong and as a charity we may now apply for gift aid from the HMRC which increases the funds for further grant giving activities.

Grants: A total of £5,500 was awarded to eight recipients from across the borough. These included:

- Barnes Children's Literature Festival to enable them to rent two digital visualisers for their schools' outreach programme
- Mortlake Community Association, books for Santa's Grotto and presents for the Mortlake Scouts Group

- Arts Richmond to support their annual Young Writers competition,
- Barnes Primary School to purchase bilingual and inclusion books
- ADHD Embrace funds to support their schools outreach programme
- Russell Primary School Richmond to purchase books for a reading hut
- Buckingham Primary School to purchase a reading hut
- Thomson House Primary School East Sheen to pay for an author visit

We particularly want to strengthen our relationship with the local state primary schools and charities and are very grateful for the work that trustee Philippa McEwan is doing on this front.

Sue Pandit
Chair of Trustees
Barnes Literary Society

Barnes Literary Society

Income and Expenditure Account: Year ended 31 July 2025

	2025	2024
	£	£
INCOME		
Membership Fees	11830	11310
Guest Fees/Ticket Sales	3340	3125
Profits from the bar	860	964
Tax reclaimed on gift aid	1685	1625
Bank interest	1045	546
Other event income	140	120
	18900	17690
Expenditure		
Venue hire and rental costs	2090	1250
Speaker costs /other event expenses	4614	3489
Subsidy of creative writing course	405	1540
Postage, Printing and Stationery	1085	920
Insurance	168	148
Bank charges etc.	284	358
Software	144	132
Website	1685	460
Special event costs	0	2760
Publicity	456	2370
Other costs	100	135
	11031	13562
Surplus before grants	7869	4128
Grants for charitable purposes	-5500	-4382
Net surplus/(deficit)for year	2369	-254
Reserves brought forward	32351	32605
Reserves carried forward	34720	32351

Barnes Literary Society
Balance Sheet: 31 July 2025

	2025	2024
	£	£
Assets		
Cash at bank	34720	32351
Net Assets	34720	32351

Represented by

General reserves	34720	32351
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These accounts have been prepared on the cash basis as allowed by the Charities Commission

Approved by the committee and signed on their behalf

Chair:

She Pandit