

BARNES LITERARY SOCIETY



Report and financial statements year ended September 30 2020

www.barnesliterarysociety.org.uk

Barnes Literary Society
Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 30 September 2020

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Society Information

Patrons	Isla Blair Julian Glover Roger McGough Patrick Neate. Jan Pieńkowski. Fiona Smith	Venetia Vyvyan Rhidian Brook Harriett Gilbert
Committee	Jo Weinberger (Chair) Kathy Owles (Vice Chair, Membership Secretary) Kathy Kock (Secretary) Sue Pandit (Treasurer) Caroline Kelsall (Events Secretary) Louise Carr (Hospitality) Penny Beck (Publicity) Caroline Storey (co-opted February 2020)	
Principle address	PO Box 28868 London SW13 9XH	
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Independent examiner	John Forbes Nova Cura 1 Ibis Lane London W4 3UP	

Barnes Literary Society

Annual Report for the year ended 30 September 2020

2019/20 was an unusual year for everyone, including the BLS.

We opened with a fascinating talk from Tracy Chevalier about her novel *A Single Thread*. Tracy painted an intimate picture of the difficulties of life as a single woman between the wars.

In November, we welcomed novelist, human rights activist and academic, Elif Shafak. Elif talked about her book *10 Minutes, 38 Seconds in this Strange World* and gave us an insight into the trauma suffered by women following sexual violence in a strict patriarchal society.

We hosted a very full church for our January event when Isabella Tree came to talk about her book, *Wilding – The Return to Nature of a British Farm*. Isabella gave us a wonderful presentation describing her and her husband's successful attempt to re-wild their land at Knepp in West Sussex. We also heard about current efforts to re-wild other parts of England and the importance of systems such as hedgehog highways, something we know all about here in Barnes.

In February, Mick Herron discussed the latest novel in his Slough House series, *Joe Country*. We learned more about veteran agent Jackson Lamb and where Mick finds inspiration for his novels.

And then, unfortunately, the arrival of Covid-19 and lockdown meant we had to cut short our programme.

We had been due to welcome Tom Holland to talk about *Dominion: The Making of the Western World* in March, and Tom Bower to talk about *Dangerous Hero: Corbyn's Ruthless Plot for Power* in May, but both events had to be cancelled. Very kindly, both authors offered to postpone their visits until the following season.

The lockdown also meant we had to cancel our outing for the season and our Summer Soirée. However, a window between lockdowns meant we were able to host our postponed AGM in September. Very kindly, Roger McGough offered to come along and read some of his very entertaining lockdown poems. And they were fantastic; he certainly offered us the pick-me-up we all needed.

Although we were forced to cancel three of our in-person events of the season we made every effort to remain in contact with members during the lockdown, seeking to offer a literary focus for those that wanted it. We initiated a blog on the BLS website, and a BLS book group on the Facebook page.

Regarding membership, the move to St Mary's allowed us to remove the cap on member numbers in place due to the limited capacity of our previous venue. Membership for this season reached 420.

Our single membership fee remained at £30 equating to £5 a talk. This is still, we believe, fantastic value for money for the opportunity to listen to such high-quality speakers. The 2020/2021 season has seen us continue with a subscription fee of £30 per single membership and we shall not be increasing subscriptions for the coming season.

We are very lucky to have such supportive patrons at the BLS and three new patrons joined us towards the end of this season. I would like to extend a big thank you to Isla Blair, Julian Glover, Roger McGough, Patrick Neate, Jan Pieńkowski, Fiona Smith, Venetia Vyvyan, Rhidian Brook and Harriett Gilbert. I would particularly like to thank Roger for stepping in at our postponed AGM in September.

I would like to thank the Barnes Community Association (BCA) for providing coverage of our events in their online monthly magazine, *Prospect Plus*, and in their hard copy *Prospect* magazine. I would also like to thank Sarah Arthur for including us in the *Barnes Bugle*; *Arts Richmond* for their coverage; and all of the local shops, businesses, libraries and organisations which take our publicity.

The beginning of this season saw the unveiling of our new website and email provider. This was the result of a generous legacy bequeathed to the Society by Noel Davison, previous Committee member and Honorary Secretary. We are very grateful to Noel for his gift. I would like to thank Sarah Arthur for setting up the new website and for her continued help in supporting us with it.

We would like to thank Venetia Vyvyan at the Barnes Bookshop for offering the raffle prize at each event and organising the book sales for our authors. We would also like to thank St Mary's for allowing us to use the church and Phil Bladen for his help and support with the tech.

All of the events put on by the BLS take a lot of organising, which is facilitated by our marvellous committee of volunteers. I should like to thank all of them for their enthusiasm and hard work.

There are some changes to the Committee. Caroline Kelsall and Penny Beck both stepped down at the end of this season. Caroline was an incredible asset, working for a great many years as events secretary, and Penny did a sterling job with our publicity. We are very grateful for all their hard work. We were delighted to co-opt Caroline Storey onto the Committee in February.

I would like to comment briefly on the treasurer's report, attached. This shows a net surplus for a fourth season running. A net surplus is good news for the Society bearing in mind that fees for authors, venues and equipment can all change. It also provides some protection against unforeseen circumstances.

At the beginning of this season we set aside some funds to actively ensure that the objectives of the BLS constitution were being met to the best of our ability.

To enable members of the community who might otherwise have had difficulty accessing our events we initiated a trial using the FiSH bus. The trial was a success and our intention was to try and extend this service for the rest of the season. Covid-19 and the lockdown prevented this from happening.

To broaden our reach within the Barnes community we hosted a short story competition to raise funds for the Barnes Castelnau Centre. This community centre serves the North Barnes area, which is an area of higher relative deprivation. The BLS organised the competition, funded the prizes and planned to print an anthology of the winning entries plus those commended by the judges. We were also planning to host an awards ceremony for the competition at the Castelnau Centre, which we hoped would advertise the BLS to the North Barnes community. However, both the anthology and the awards ceremony had to be cancelled because of Covid-19 and the lockdown. The anthology of winning entries was posted on the BLS website instead of as a printed anthology due to Government guidance of the time.

We did manage to raise nearly £300 for the Castelnau Centre, and I would like to thank the judges of the competition, Roger McGough, Fiona Smith, Jenny Hartley and Jane Skerritt, for gifting us their valuable time.

Moving forward, the Committee has decided to register the BLS as a charity. This will enable us to use our funds more efficiently in achieving the Society's objectives. In order to register as a charity, we need to replace our current BLS constitution with one of the Charity Commission's model constitutions. The model constitution we have chosen is very similar to our current constitution. This new proposed constitution was posted on the BLS website on 18 June 2021 for all members to peruse before the AGM.

We gave notice of our intention to proceed with a motion to amend the constitution at our last AGM, on 22 September 2020, and again in an email to all members on 7 June 2021.

We also gave notice regarding proposing a motion to adjust the dates for the financial year so that the year end is July rather than September.

Jo Weinberger
Chair
Barnes Literary Society

The Barnes Literary Society

Independent Examiner's Report to the Committee of The Barnes Literary Society

As described on page 7, you have approved the financial statements for the year ended 30 September 2020 set out on pages 6 and 7. In accordance with the Constitution, I have examined these financial statements without carrying out an audit, and confirm that they are in accordance with the records and the information and explanations supplied to me.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'John Forbes', with a stylized, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

John Forbes
"Nova Cura"
1 Ibis Lane
London
W4 3UP

The Barnes Literary Society

Income and expenditure account for the year ended 30 September 2020

	2020	2019
INCOME		
Subscriptions:	12,140	9,570
Guest fees	1,160	870
Ticket event fees	0	3,099
Bank interest	6	8
Profits from the bar	681	1,408
Total	13,877	14,955
EXPENDITURE		
Room Hire	1,900	1,749
Regular events		
-Sound system hire	0	1,416
-Speaker fees	1,200	1,509
-Chair Hire	0	
Special events	0	1,711
Printing, stationery & publicity		
-Stationery, postage, PO Box rental	258	657
-Printing, copying	365	347
-Advertising	100	170
Website	669	2,280
Insurance	321	313
Accountancy	300	300
Bank charges		0
Grants and bursaries	270	0
Total	5,383	10,452
Net surplus/(deficit) for the year	8,604	4,503
Reserves brought forward at 1 October 2019	13,573	9,070
Funds carried forward at 30 September 2020	22,177	13,573

Balance Sheet as at 30 September 2020

		2020		2019
Current assets				
Cash at bank - current account	20,710		16172	
Cash at bank - deposit account	4,037		4031	
		24,747		20203
Prepayments		0		0
		24,747		20,203
Creditors				
Accrued expenses	300		300	
Subscriptions in advance	2,270		6,330	
		(2,570)		(6,630)
Net current assets		22,177		13,573
Represented by:				
General reserves		22,177		13,573

Basis of accounting

The accounts have been prepared under the historical cost convention and in accordance with applicable accounting standards.

Approved by the committee on and signed on its behalf by

Josephine Weinbarger

Chairman

K. E. Koek

Hon Treasurer