

Report and financial statements  
year ended September 30 2018

[www.barnesliterarysociety.org.uk](http://www.barnesliterarysociety.org.uk)

**Barnes Literary Society**  
**Report and Financial Statements for the year ended 30 September 2018**

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**Society information**

Patrons	Isla Blair Julian Glover Roger McGough Patrick Neate Jan Pieńkowski Fiona Smith
Committee	Jane Skerrett (Chairman & Acting Hon. Secretary from April 2018) David King-Farlow (Vice Chairman) Noel Davison (Hon. Secretary to April 2018) Patrick Harvey (Hon. Treasurer to April 2018) Sue Pandit (Hon. Treasurer from April 2018) Sarah Kearney (Membership Secretary to April 2018) Kathy Owles (Membership Secretary from April 2018) Louise Carr Caroline Kelsall Jo Weinberger
Principal address	PO Box 28868 London SW13 9XH
Bankers	HSBC 172 Upper Richmond Road Putney London SW15 2SH
Independent examiner	John Forbes "Nova Cura" 1 Ibis Lane London W4 3UP

**Barnes Literary Society**  
**Annual Report for the year ended 30 September 2018**

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This has been an exciting year for the BLS with a range of excellent speakers and a good turnout for all our events. We started the season with a visit from Jeremy Paxman (and dog) who talked about his autobiography and, rather touchingly, about his mental health problems and difficult relationship with his father. Jeremy was interviewed by broadcaster, journalist and Barnes resident Geeta Guru-Murthy who took on the task of interviewing Jeremy at short notice: thank you Geeta.

Our next speaker was the American novelist Lionel Shriver best known for her book *We need to Talk about Kevin*. Lionel arrived at BLS after cycling all the way from her home in SE London on a horrible November evening to talk about her recent novel *The Mandibles*. This is set in the USA in a dystopian future after the financial system has gone into meltdown and society has broken down. Lionel was interviewed by the talented Viv Groskop, herself a writer and comedian (and resident of SW London). This made for a lively evening.

In January our speaker was Gillian Slovo, daughter of South African activists Ruth First and Joe Slovo who talked about her book *10 Days* based on the 2011 London riots. Gillian also touched on the experience of being raised by parents who were both political activists: the struggle always came first.

The mood changed in February when James Runcie novelist, film maker, producer and son of the Archbishop of Canterbury, Robert Runcie, talked about his Grantchester mysteries which are such a regular slot on ITV programming. James was one of the funniest speakers we have had at BLS with endearing stories about his experiences as the son of the most senior cleric in the Church of England.

April was a very special occasion as journalist, author and Barnes resident Ann MacMillan was in conversation with her sister Margaret MacMillan, the distinguished Canadian historian. The sisters talked about their childhood, parental influences and their careers as part of a high achieving family. By happy fortune later in 2018 Professor MacMillan delivered the BBC Reith lectures so BLS was privileged indeed to have her to speak at this event.

In May author and broadcaster Jonathan Croall came to talk about his books on the two greatest male roles in Shakespeare, Hamlet and King Lear, and his interviews with both actors and directors.

In March we organised a literary walk in Clerkenwell with a guide from the official tour guides of the Mayor of Islington. Little did we know when we chose the date we would encounter some of the horrible weather that the Beast from the East visited on London. The guide was interesting and well informed and those hardy souls who completed the walk enjoyed it.

Happily better weather was on offer for our sold out summer soiree at the day centre on Barnes Green in early June. The BLS committee provided a superb meal – less labour intensive than the 900 canapes of the previous year but as delicious– and we were fortunate to have Philip Collins, journalist for *The Times*, author and Barnes resident to provide the

## **Barnes Literary Society**

### **Annual Report for the year ended 30 September 2018**

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after dinner talk about his book on famous speeches *When They Go Low, We Go High*. Philip was funny, inspiring and informative: simply perfect.

Events such as these take a lot of organising: although all committee members helped out with the summer party I would like to thank particularly Louise and Nick Carr for taking on the organisation of the food and drink, Kathy and Peter Owles for their cooking skills and all the men, either husbands of committee members or committee members, for their efficient and good humoured work in serving wine, doing the dishes and generally clearing up.

All in all it has been a terrific season with good attendance and a great response from our speakers who recognise that a BLS audience is intelligent and well informed.

Membership was full for the 2017/18 season and demand for seats was consistently high. The BLS continues to be something of a phenomenon: while there are large numbers of literary festivals I have not been able to find another organisation which follows the BLS model, pioneered by Fiona Smith our founding chairman and her committee, of offering a programme of speakers over a period of some months for a very modest annual subscription. If you attend all 6 events as a single member you pay £5 for each event. While we have kept to our promise to hold the membership fee for the 2018/19 season I cannot promise the same for the 2019/20 season. The membership fee has not been increased since 2014/15. We are aiming to make some further changes in 2019 including to our website and will keep you informed in the usual way via our website and emails, Prospect and the Barnes Bugle.

In my report I always mention if there is a local connection for any of our speakers: it is to acknowledge and celebrate how lucky we are to live in this area where there is such a wealth of talent.

I would like to thank our patrons, Isla Blair, Julian Glover, Roger McGough, Patrick Neate, Jan Pieńkowski and Fiona Smith for the interest and support they have given to BLS and for attending some of our events. We were particularly pleased to see Isla and Julian at the event kindly hosted by outgoing committee member Sarah Kearney for all BLS committee members, past and present, by way of a thank you and recognition of all their hard work.

We are grateful to the Barnes Community Association (BCA) for providing coverage of our events in their monthly magazine Prospect, to the OSO Arts Centre, the e newsletter Barnes Bugle, and the charity Arts Richmond for their coverage and to all the local shops, businesses, libraries and organisations which take our publicity. We would like to thank the BCA for organising annual Societies Day so efficiently. I am particularly grateful to the BCA for their donation of £500 to the cost of upgrading our website and would like to thank the outgoing chairman of the BCA, Steve Mindel, for his support for and interest in BLS.

I would like to thank Venetia Vyvyan the owner of our local bookshop. Venetia has continued to support BLS not only with a regular raffle prize but also by organising the books sales for all our events with speakers. Barnes is very fortunate to have such a friendly and excellent independent bookshop.

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**Annual Report for the year ended 30 September 2018**

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I would like to thank our terrific sound engineer Alan Trewitt at AT Sound for his hard work and skill in ensuring the sound quality of our events which is always appreciated by our speakers and audience. I would like to thank the staff, trustees and volunteers at the OSO Arts Centre and I would also like to thank St Mary's Church, Barnes who were kind enough to let us use the church for the very popular event with Jeremy Paxman with special thanks to the choir for moving out on their regular choir practice evening.

I would like to thank Anne Cotgreave of Skinnycat Design for managing our website with skill and efficiency.

I would like to thank my fellow committee members for the work they do and the enthusiasm they bring to the smooth running of BLS. Thank you too to all our members: BLS could not exist without your support.

I would like to report on some changes to the BLS committee. Both Sarah Kearney and Patrick Harvey resigned at the 2018 AGM after nearly 10 years of service on the committee. Sarah was co opted in October 2009 and has been membership secretary since March 2011. Patrick was co opted in September 2009 and has been treasurer since March 2013. We are grateful for their hard work and commitment to the BLS: they have been an important part of the BLS and its success.

We are delighted to welcome to the committee Sue Pandit, as our new treasurer, and Jo Weinberger as a committee member. We are fortunate to have them on the committee.

Finally I would like to focus on Noel Davison. Noel joined the BLS committee in April 2015 and made a substantial contribution to the work of BLS: he brought humane, intelligent good sense to whatever was under discussion. Noel also had a lively and well informed interest in literature as was shown by his studies at Oxford University after his retirement. He was particularly fond of the poetry of Seamus Heaney. Noel too was from Northern Ireland.

Noel knew that I wanted him to take over from me as BLS chairman: I mentioned this after he had served on the committee for a while. This was not to be. Last year Noel was too unwell to continue on the BLS committee and resigned at the April 2018 AGM. He died from cancer on 1 July 2018. We miss him. He would have been so pleased to see BLS going from strength to strength.

Jane Skerrett  
Chair  
Barnes Literary Society



**The Barnes Literary Society**  
**Income and expenditure account for the year ended 30 September 2018**

	<b>2018</b>	<b>2017</b>
<b>INCOME</b>		
Subscriptions	8,641	8,171
Guest fees	745	418
Ticket event fees	2,720	2,312
Bank interest	4	2
Extraordinary income	682	499
<b>Total</b>	<b>12,792</b>	<b>11,402</b>
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>		
Room Hire	1,467	1,383
Regular events		
-Sound system hire	2,310	2,880
-Speaker fees	1,340	1,240
-Chair Hire		500
Special events	1,544	1,658
Printing, stationery & publicity		
-Stationery, postage, PO Box rental	554	373
-Printing, copying	646	552
-Speaker & venue flowers	0	0
-Advertising	302	136
Grants and Bursaries	0	0
Website	731	510
Insurance	226	209
Accountancy	300	290
Bank charges	0	0
Sundries	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>9420</b>	<b>9,731</b>
<b>Net surplus/(deficit) for the year</b>	<b>3,372</b>	<b>1,671</b>
Reserves brought forward at 1 October 2017	5,698	4,027
<b>Funds carried forward at 30 September 2018</b>	<b>9,070</b>	<b>5,698</b>



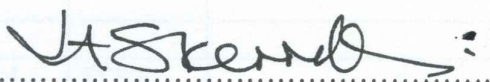
**The Barnes Literary Society**  
**Balance Sheet as at 30 September 2018**

		2018		2017
<b>Current assets</b>				
Cash at bank - current account	8,677		6,075	
Cash at bank - deposit account	4,023		4,019	
		13,000		10,094
Prepayments		300		0
		13,000		10,094
<b>Creditors</b>				
Accrued expenses	300		290	
Subscriptions in advance	3,630		4,106	
		(3,930)		(4,396)
<b>Net current assets</b>		<b>9,070</b>		<b>5698</b>
<b>Represented by:</b>				
<b>General reserves</b>		<b>9,070</b>		<b>5,698</b>

**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 11 February 2019 and signed on its behalf by



Chairman



Treasurer



**The Barnes Literary Society**

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

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As described on page 7, you have approved the financial statements for the year ended 30 September 2018 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.



John Forbes  
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