

# *The Philip Larkin Society*

## **Nineteenth Annual General Meeting**

### *The Parcel Yard*

**London Kings Cross Station  
on Saturday 7th June 2014 at 2.30 pm**

**12.30pm Unveiling of Martin Jennings' new Philip Larkin Roundel  
at London Kings Cross Station  
By Baroness Virginia Bottomley**

**1.00pm Complimentary Lunch at *The Parcel Yard***

**2.30pm 19<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting at  
*The Parcel Yard* at Kings Cross Station**

#### **AGM AGENDA**

- 1 Chairman's Welcome
- 2 Apologies
- 3 Approval of the Minutes of the 2013 AGM (To be tabled)
- 4 Matters Arising from the Minutes
- 5 Presentation of the Annual Report for 2013-14 (To be tabled)
- 6 Presentation of the Accounts for 2013-14 (To be tabled)
- 7 Membership Fees for 2014-15
- 8 Committee for 2014-15
- 9 Motions submitted by Members (To be tabled)
- 10 Any Other Business appropriate for an AGM
- 11 Date of 2015 AGM
- 12 Close of Formal Business

**3.30 pm Close of Proceedings**

# *The Philip Larkin Society*

## **Minutes of the Eighteenth Annual General Meeting Held at 12.00 pm on Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> June 2013 *The Lawns Centre, University of Hull***

Present: 34 members of the Society and their guests attended the meeting.

### **1. Chairman's Welcome**

Professor Edwin Dawes, Chairman of the Society, welcomed members and guests to the meeting. He mentioned that it was the tenth anniversary of the death of Maeve Brennan. He also acknowledged the untimely death, since the last AGM, of our former Merchandising Officer Amber Allcroft who was a former library colleague of Philip Larkin in Hull. He particularly welcomed the High Sheriff of the East Riding, Stephen Larard.

### **2. Apologies**

Apologies for absence were received from Wendy Cole, Audrey Hall, Anne Holbrook, Gloria Gaffney and Mike Wilson.

### **3. Approval of the Minutes of the 2012 AGM**

A copy of the Minutes of the 2012 AGM were been given to all members present and they were adopted *nem con* as a true and correct record.

### **4. Matters Arising from the 2012 AGM Minutes**

There were no matters arising.

### **5. Presentation of the Annual Report for 2012/13**

Andrew Eastwood, the Society's General Secretary, spoke to his Report on the year's activities:

#### **I A Review the Year's Activities**

Due to time pressures of the London 2012 Olympics and the Diamond Jubilee, Miriam Porter said she was unable to host a ***Garden Event*** last July but I am pleased to say that another garden event is planned for **27<sup>th</sup> July 2013 at 7.30 pm**. Please contact Miriam directly as per the directions in *About Larkin 35*.

The weekend of **8<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> September 2012** saw four short, Larkin-related tours of part of the ***Larkin Trail*** as part of the ***English Heritage Open Day*** led by committee members Graham Chesters, Belinda Hakes, James Booth and Andy Bagley – all of whom are thanked. We hope to arrange a similar event beginning just from the Royal Station Hotel this coming September.

Over the weekend of **5<sup>th</sup> - 7<sup>th</sup> October 2012**, the return joint ***Thomas Hardy-Philip Larkin Society Weekend*** took place, under the title ***Friday Night (and Saturday and Sunday) in the Royal Station Hotel***, based surprisingly at the Royal Station Hotel! This was a great success with over 30 members attending. Tony Fincham (Chairman of the Thomas Hardy Society) wrote about the weekend in *AL35*.

On 7<sup>th</sup> **October 2012** – **The Eye Hospital Project** launch took place. This project is an interesting collaboration involving a photographic display of Larkin's Toads and three pairs of his spectacles (which the Society acquired on the death of Monica Jones in 2001) in the waiting area of the Hull Eye Hospital. Rt Hon Alan Johnson MP opened the installation and Consultant Colin Vize provides an insight (no pun intended) into *Larkin's Refraction* in *AL35*.

On 2<sup>nd</sup> **December 2012**, on the second anniversary of the unveiling of Philip Larkin's Statue we held an **Unveiling of a Teak Seat** to complement both the Martin Jennings' Statute and Roundels in the Hull Paragon Interchange. This year the weather was fine and a good crowd of members and guests attended including the Lord Lieutenant and the Lord Mayor of Hull. The noise of trains did tend to overshadow the event but that's a station for you! We'll have a PA system next year – I promise! The Committee is working on next year's event – wondering what we can unveil next - suggestions on a postcard please !

On 8<sup>th</sup> **March 2013**, a music event *Larkin in Song I* took place at the University's Middleton Hall with a good audience enjoying new settings of Larkin's poems to music. This formed part of the *20<sup>th</sup> Century British Poets in Music Festival*. The second Larkin Society part -sponsored event takes place in Beverley Minster very soon.

Over the week-end of 1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup> **June 2013** the **AGM of the Alliance of Literary Societies** took place at St Hilda's College Oxford marking the 100<sup>th</sup> birthday Barbara Pym. James Booth spoke on *Larkin and Pym: An Elective Affinity*.

On **Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> June 2013**, as part of the *Bridlington Poetry Festival*, the winner of the third *Philip Larkin East Riding of Yorkshire Poetry Prize* will be announced with £1000 prize money donated by our Society, at Sewerby Hall in Bridlington. I am glad that the organisers have managed to arrange this year's prize so there is no clash with today's AGM. We very much hope that the Society can continue this prize beyond this year to make the award a significant, on-going annual prize.

On **27<sup>th</sup> June 2013 at 1.15 pm**, *Larkin in Song II* with *Portumnus Ensemble* will be held in Beverley Minster – this is also part of the *20<sup>th</sup> Century British Poets in Music Festival* - admission is free.

And so we come to today's *Distinguished Guest Lecture* – with our HVP **Professor Archie Burnett – *Editing Philip Larkin***. We very much appreciate him finding time during his trip to the UK from Boston, Massachusetts to speak to us this afternoon.

## II Membership and Website

The membership of the Society has reduced slightly when compared to last year at around 215.

Please remember that you can use the *Gift for a Friend* scheme to buy a membership for friends' birthdays or Christmas! Details too are on the website.

Our excellent website continues under our Webmaster Jim Orwin and is well visited. We introduced the ability to pay subscriptions and purchase merchandise via the website with *PayPal* and a new application form for 2013-14 can now be completed on line. We also introduced our third (Bank Card style) membership card, designed by Andy Bagley and new fourth design is planned for the coming year.

### III Publications

*About Larkin* has continued to be a wonderfully creative, informative and internationally-renowned showcase of the Society and something which members value very much. Some even joined the Society this past month just to get their copies of Editions 34 and the recent 35! Both have been excellent and varied in their content, with excellent colour photographs of some of our events, due to the wonderful and dedicated editorial work of Janet Brennan in Totnes and Prof James Booth in Hull. Thanks go to all our many and varied contributors - whom I thank on behalf of us all.

### IV Personnel

I am pleased to confirm that, following my recent request for new members to join the Committee sent out with *About Larkin 35*, **David Thompson** of nearby Hedon and **Dr Philip Pullen** of Lincoln both volunteered (genuinely with no arm-twisting) and attended their first meeting two weeks ago and still live to tell the tale! Any more volunteers would still be welcome.

Andy Bagley, our Merchandising Officer, has continued in that role to great effect for the third year – my how time flies! Thanks go to him. We await his new membership card design with huge anticipation!

I must now take the time to thank all the other members of the Society's Committee for their hard work over the year but once more I particularly thank Prof Eddie Dawes, who remains the Society's only ever Chairman and Jackie Sewell whose hard work as our Treasurer has been equally appreciated.

I also wish to thank Carole Collinson whose skills in events organising makes today's event – along with so many others over the years, possible.

Once again thanks go to Kate Girking at Beverley Minster Primary School who has provided admin support for the Society's copying needs this year, saving the Society hundreds of pounds.

And finally, Thank you all for attending.

### 6. Presentation of Accounts for the Year to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2013

The Society's Treasurer Jackie Sewell, introduced the Accounts for the past year. These showed an excess of income over expenditure of £2893, which compared slightly less favourably to the larger excess of £3986 on the previous year's activities. The Statue Account has a current balance of £4688. Jackie outlined some of the details in the finances and answered questions.

The Chairman thanked the Treasurer for all her continued work for the Society. A motion to adopt the accounts was passed *nem con*.

### 7. Membership Fees

The General Secretary mentioned at the 2012 AGM, with a 30% increase in postal charges from 30 April 2012, that we may need to look at an increase in subscriptions today. A lengthy discussion ensued, with various views expressed on both sides of the case and **it was resolved** that fees should stay the same.

However, the General Secretary agreed to arrange to send out regular correspondence by email to those members with that facility, which should save money to offset the further expected rise in postage due in April 2014. The overall situation will be reviewed at next year's AGM. It was also agreed that the Committee would review Institutional membership fees (currently £50 in the UK and £60 overseas) and Student Membership (currently £6 in the UK, which does not cover the costs incurred to the Society).

## **8. Committee**

It was agreed that the Committee be re-elected *en bloc* with the addition of Dr Philip Pullen and David Thompson.

## **9. Motions Submitted by Members**

No motions had been received for the meeting.

## **10. Any Other Business appropriate for an AGM**

- (a) Carole Collinson gave forward details of another joint *Thomas Hardy/Philip Larkin Society* weekend in Oxford on 28<sup>th</sup>-30<sup>th</sup> March 2014 based at St Anne's College. The cost will be around £300. Details will follow.
- (b) Professor Graham Chesters mentioned the Committee was planning a special AGM event at King's Cross Station to mark the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the publication of *The Whitsun Weddings* following a train trip from Hull – the cost of a possible steam train journey was prohibitive at £35,000. Plans include unveiling another roundel by Martin Jennings which would cost around £10,000. Agreement in principle has been made but other permissions are awaited. The balance of the Statue Account would need to be enhanced by a public appeal to make up the rest.
- (c) He also mentioned that the 2013 *English Heritage Day* would be on 15<sup>th</sup> September 2013 in Hull with tours leaving just from the Station. The anniversary event on 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2014 would be *An Afternoon Tea with Betty Mackereth* at the Royal Station Hotel.

## **11. Date of the 2014 Annual General Meeting**

The Chairman confirmed that next year's AGM would be held on Saturday 7th June 2014 at a venue still to be finalised but hopefully in London.

There being no other business, the Chairman thanked the members for their attendance and closed the meeting.

# The *Philip Larkin* Society

## General Secretary's Report to the 2014 Annual General Meeting

### I A Review the Year's Activities

Before mentioning the events, it is clear that the Society played a part in the successful bid for Hull's *City of Culture* status in **2017**. *HIP HIP HURRAY FOR HULL* I hear you all say !!!

**27<sup>th</sup> July 2013** saw another **Garden Event** at 105, Newland Park given by the ever-generous Miriam Porter. Member-attendance was, for some reason, unusually disappointing.

The period **6<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> September 2013** saw a very successful *Larkin in 25 Objects* exhibition at the Hull Central Library. This comprised photographs of Larkinalia taken by Dennis Lowe with accompanying text by the organiser Prof Graham Chesters and Prof James Booth. Quite a large proportion of the framed photographs have now been sold.

The weekend of **15<sup>th</sup> September 2013** saw the second series of short, Larkin-related tours of part of the *Larkin Trail* as part of the *English Heritage Open Day* led by committee members Graham Chesters, Belinda Hakes, James Booth, Philip Pullen and Andy Bagley – all of whom are thanked. A similar event beginning from the Royal Station Hotel will be held this coming September.

On **Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2013**, on the third anniversary of the unveiling of Philip Larkin's Statue we held a fully-booked *Afternoon Tea with Betty Mackereth* in the Royal Station Hotel. Attended by a record number of over 100 people, Betty was interviewed by Profs Graham Chesters and James Booth and her reminiscences were enjoyed by all those present.

Over the weekend of **28<sup>th</sup>-30<sup>th</sup> March 2014**, another joint *Thomas Hardy-Philip Larkin Society Weekend* took place, under the title *Friday Night* which took place at **St Anne's College in Oxford**. This proved to be a great success with events including the Poet Laureate Carol-Anne Duffy reading her own poetry, lectures by Dr Timothy Hands, Dr John Osborne and Dr Phillip Mallet; a walk through Oxford led by Don Lee and Tony Fincham, an excellent quiz compiled by Carole Collinson and an open-mike poetry-reading session, where I actually read *This Be The Verse* – appropriate as I retire in the summer after 40 years in education!

Yesterday, **6<sup>th</sup> June 2014**, saw *The Whitsun Weddings: A Performance on a Train* - an 50<sup>th</sup>-anniversary train journey from Hull to Kings Cross which had originally been planned for today but could not be arranged because of expected engineering works on the line! Re-enactments of 1964 wedding parties – by the group *Ensemble 52* took place at Hull, Brough, Doncaster, Retford and Grantham stations along the route, with poems read by Bill Nighy and some of Larkin's beloved jazz music along the way.

This lunchtime we saw the **Unveiling of the new Martin Jennings' roundel on the wall** here at Kings Cross to help mark the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the publication of *The Whitsun Weddings*. It was near-run thing getting permissions and making arrangements. We thank all those who have contributed to this roundel. Thanks also to Prof Graham Chesters and Carole Collinson for their negotiating skills and to Baroness Virginia Bottomley for unveiling it.

Next week-end on **Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> June 2014 at 12.30 pm**, as part of the *Bridlington Poetry Festival*, which runs from 13<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> June at Sewerby Hall, the winner of the fourth *Philip Larkin East Riding of Yorkshire Poetry Prize* will be announced with £1000 prize money donated by our Society, at Sewerby Hall in Bridlington. Last year's winner was Linda France. We are very glad that the Society has been able to continue the prize this year to make the award a significant, on-going annual prize.

## II Membership and Website

The membership of the Society has fallen again slightly when compared to last year at around 185.

Our trial of sending membership renewals by email, in order to save money, sadly did not go as well as hoped and the Committee has decided to revert to paper renewals this coming year. We will still use emails for sending out general information etc. We introduced our fourth membership card, designed by Andy Bagley. The Committee has, however, decided that to reduce costs, we shall not be issuing a card for the coming year. Should finances improve, then we will consider re-introducing one.

Please remember that you can use the *Gift for a Friend* scheme to buy a membership for friends' birthdays or Christmas! Details too are on the website.

Our excellent website continues under our Webmaster Jim Orwin and remains well visited. Please send him your *Poem of the Month* for inclusion there. Having already introduced the ability to pay subscriptions and purchase merchandise via the website with *PayPal*, last year we introduced the ability to complete the 2013-14 application form on line.

## III Publications

*About Larkin* has continued to be that wonderfully informative, creative and internationally-renowned showcase of the Society which members value very much. Once again, some even joined the Society this past month just to get their copies of Editions 36 and the very recent 37! Both have been excellent and varied in their content, with excellent colour photographs of some of our events, due to the wonderful and dedicated editorial work of Janet Brennan in Totnes and Prof James Booth in Hull. Thanks go to all our many and varied contributors – some of whom are here today - whom I thank on behalf of us all.

## IV Personnel

I am pleased to say that Philip Pullen's presence on our Committee during this past this year has been refreshing – any more volunteers who can attend our meetings at the University of Hull would be welcomed. Please contact me on **01964 533324** for any information.

Thanks go to Andy Bagley, our Merchandising Officer, who has continued in that role to great effect for the fourth year – my how time flies when you're having fun! We have extended our merchandise under his guidance and will continue to do so. Sadly, he could not be here today and so our usual AGM Book Stall is missing too.

I must now take the time to thank all the other members of the Society's Committee for their hard work over the year but once more I particularly thank Prof Eddie Dawes, who remains the Society's only ever Chairman and Jackie Sewell whose hard work as our Treasurer has been equally appreciated. The hours she has just spent on our HMRC Gift Aid application form has been remarkable!

As always, I also wish to thank Carole Collinson for organising events through the year including today's very special visit to London. This has been especially difficult for her following the recent passing of her husband Chris, who is fondly remembered by so many students and colleagues at Hull University and members of the Society.

Kate Girking the wonderful Bursar at Beverley Minster Primary School, has once again provided administrative support for all the Society's copying needs this year, thereby saving the Society many hundreds of pounds – but I do give her bottle of red wine!

And finally,

Thank you all for attending this rather special AGM in London. Next year will be 20<sup>th</sup> AGM!

*Andrew Eastwood*

General Secretary