



THE KEATS Foundation

*Ever truly yours
John Keats*

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THE KEATSIAN

Newsletter of the Keats Foundation - June 2016

This issue of 'The Keatsian' brings you news of recent Keats Foundation activities, including the third Bicentenary Conference held at Keats House, Hampstead, in May. It looks forward to the Keats House Lecture on 6 September, along with other forthcoming events at Keats House for the autumn. Watch out, too, for the '2017 Keats Bicentenary Diary' – especially good value if purchased six months early. Finally, the Keats Foundation website will be undergoing an extensive upgrade over the coming weeks, to present the Keats Foundation and its activities in a fresh and attractive format. Please visit us often and encourage others to do so too.

Dates for your diary:

31 October at 10.30 am – John Keats birthday wreath-laying at Poets' Corner, Westminster Abbey.
20 January 2017 – the Keats Foundation annual St Agnes' Eve celebration.

Third John Keats Bicentenary Conference at Keats House, Hampstead, 20-22 May 2016

Among the many highlights of the 2016 Keats conference was an opportunity to explore the Keats House on an early summer's evening with a glass of wine while listening to jazz. The academic programme was wonderfully rich and varied, gravitating towards the themes of Keats, place, and the people he interacted with. A number of panels, on islands, on sculpture and antiquity, and on influences, gave an enticing nod to the events of 1817 and the next bicentennial Keats conference – Keats seeing the Elgin Marbles for the first time and his visit to the Isle of Wight, for example. The standard of the papers was consistently high,



among them keynote lectures by Professors Grant F. Scott, Fiona Stafford, and Michael O'Neill. Scott's lecture, intriguingly titled 'Keats's American Ode', sought profitably to re-situate Keats's 'Ode to Psyche', reading the poem not as a prelude to the other great odes but in line with the order of the 1820 volume and in the context of the poet's relationship with his sister-in-law, Georgiana Keats. Fiona Stafford's lecture, the brilliantly titled 'Keats, Shoots and Leaves', examined the plants and flowers that generated a poetic framework, or 'wreathed trellis', for Keats's 'working brain'. The final keynote, given by Guest of Honour Michael O'Neill, was a tremendously deft reconsideration of the relationship between Keats and Shelley, absorbing the audience in an exploration of the creative interplay between these two poets.

Dr Sarah Wootton is author of *Consuming Keats: Nineteenth-Century Representations in Art and Literature*



Keats called them the 'nothing of the day', but it was the 'thinginess', the materiality, of velocipedes that struck many at Keats House when Captain Roger Street and his regiment, the Dandy Chargers, trundled up on the Saturday of the conference. Brightly painted with brass fittings, refulgent in the May sun, the velocipedes – pedal-less, two-wheeled precursor of the modern bicycle – captivated delegates and visitors to Keats House alike.

The 'pedestrian accelerator' had its faddish heyday in 1819, when it fell foul of Keats's sense of the dandy-esque absurd. However, all who witnessed Captain Rog, Corporal Jones and Wendy Street scudding around the stone paths and close-cropped lawns, or tried a velocipede out for themselves, agreed that their comeback was long overdue. I had expected the vehicle to be a slightly ponderous, cumbersome contraption, but Leigh Hunt was right when he declared them supremely productive of

‘delightfulness’. Although heavy, they are surprisingly manoeuvrable and fleet, and do not feel at all half-done, or merely ‘on the way’ to becoming a bicycle. I’m certain that if, like Coleridge, Keats had only tried one for himself, he would have enjoyed it.

Conviviality, renewal and rigour were the (now familiar) hallmarks of the third Keats Foundation ‘John Keats’ conference. We’re pleased that this bicentennial event has firmly established itself in the academic calendar, and attracts delegates from around the world. It is, though, sobering to think that next year’s conference in 2017 will mark the halfway point in these bicentenary celebrations, reminding us how brief was Keats’s sojourn in the realm of poesy, and on the green-hill’s side. This year’s conference papers – featuring a healthy mix of established and new voices – were collectively of a very high standard. The majority of papers appeared to have been written specifically for the conference, and attended closely to its pedal note, ‘Keats in London; Keats out of town’, resulting in tightly focused panels as well as happy resonances and productive parallels between sessions. Willing to unsettle old orthodoxies



while attending sensitively to the complex registrations of Keats’s poetry, the conference speakers identified productive new areas of provocation around Keats and place, and showed yet again the contemporary pertinence of the poet’s life and work to the ‘events of this wide world’.

Prof Richard Marggraf Turley is the author of *Keats’s Boyish Imagination*

The 2017 Keats Bicentenary Diary

Peter Phillips (who has given papers at each of the Foundation’s Keats Bicentenary Conferences) has produced a *John Keats Bicentenary Diary* for 2017. Each week of 2017 has the dates and space for diary entries (as you’d expect) on the right-hand page. Facing it is the equivalent week in 1817, with information about Keats’s activities and an extract from what he was writing at the time. The diary is A5 hardback with 126 pages.

Price including Post & Packing within the UK: £11.99

Price including Post & Packing for the rest of Europe: £15.50

Price including Airmail Post & Packing for other countries: £18

To order, please send a cheque to: A. P. Phillips, 57 Station Road, Romsey, Hampshire, SO51 8DP

The 2016 Keats Foundation Keats House Lecture

Robert White: “I LOOK UPON FINE PHRASES LIKE A LOVER”

Keats’s Shakespearean quotations and association of ideas’



Robert White is Chief Investigator, Australian Research Council Centre of Excellence for the History of Emotions 1100-1800, and Winthrop Professor of English at The University of Western Australia, Perth.

2016 offers the occasion for two celebrations – two hundred years after Keats’s first published poem, and four hundred after the death of his ‘great presider’, Shakespeare. This paper unites the two, reflecting on how Shakespeare’s words became an intimate part of Keats’s own modes of thinking in his letters and poems, partly evidencing the ancient ‘art of memory’ or *ars memorativa*, which was undergoing a revival in the Romantic period through the influence especially of Coleridge and Hartley.

Tuesday 6 September. 7 pm Free for Keats Foundation Steadfast Supporters. If you plan to attend this event please email keatsfoundation@gmail.com and let us know.

Negative Capability

In November 2015 Keats Foundation Trustee Toni Griffiths and psychotherapist Margot Waddell gave a highly successful evening presentation about ‘Negative Capability’ in the Nightingale Room. By popular request the ‘Negative Capability’ evening will be repeated on Wednesday 17 May 2017. Further details to follow.

Special events at Keats House

An Update from Frankie Kubicki, Senior Curator

We welcome Susannah Herbert of the Forward Prizes as she discusses what makes good poetry criticism with performance-maker Paula Varjack, poet Ian Duhig, Sunday Times critic Jeremy Noel-Tod and Spoken Word educator Peter Kahn on Tuesday 28 June, 7– 8.30pm. Want to know more about how Keats's admirers saved his work from obscurity? Join poets Julia Bird and Mike Sims on Sunday 3 July for a picnic – with games, gifts, tea and cake – as they explore Keats's enduring legacy. To book tickets for these events and to find out what else is on at Keats House, please visit www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/keats.

Keats and Shakespeare House Trail

To commemorate 400 years since Shakespeare's death, Keats House is displaying a special trail highlighting key exhibits that tell the story of Shakespeare's influence on Keats. Don't miss this rare opportunity to see Keats's annotated copies of Shakespearian works on display for the first time in nearly twenty years. The trail will run until Sunday 30 October.

Changed opening hours

We are pleased to announce that our summer hours are now Wednesday-Sunday, 11am-5pm, giving you more time to enjoy Keats House.

Heritage Lottery Fund Grant

Keats House has been awarded a grant of £41,300 from the Heritage Lottery Fund in partnership with north London performance space, Jackson's Lane. Awarded through the HLF's Young Roots Scheme, which encourages young people to explore their heritage, the grant will be used to fund OMG Keats! An exciting new project led by youth groups in north London which will enable young people to interpret the House through a series of creative activities. This will be running from June 2016 to March 2017.