



THE KEATS Foundation

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THE KEATSIAN

The Newsletter of the Keats Foundation January 2020

Keats Foundation Annual Lecture, Keats House, Hampstead, Saturday 7 March at 5 pm.

Alexandra Harris: 'Between the Downs and the Sea: Romantics in Sussex'

The author and scholar Professor Alexandra Harris explores the relationship between place and poetry, in particular the role which Chichester played in inspiring Keats, Blake and William Collins.

'Nothing worth speaking of' happened on Keats's 1819 excursion over the South Downs to Chichester and then to Bedhampton – nothing except most of *The Eve of St Agnes* and *The Eve of St Mark*. William Blake referred to his Sussex years as a 'slumber on the banks of the ocean', but it was a fruitful sleep in which Chichester appeared as a version of Jerusalem. William Collins, who spent most of his life in Chichester, catches the music of his 'native plains' in some of his most influential odes. This lecture will consider Keats and his predecessors in this small part of Sussex, and will explore more broadly the relationship between place and poetry.

Alexandra Harris is the author of *Weatherlands: Writers and Artists under English Skies* and *Romantic Moderns: English Writers, Artists and the Imagination, from Virginia Woolf to John Piper*.

Free to attend, booking strongly recommended on Eventbrite. Go to

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/between-the-downs-and-the-sea-romantics-in-sussex-tickets-84877664379>

Keats Bicentenary Conference at Keats House, 15-17 May 2020

For full information, please go to

<https://keatsfoundation.com/conference/>

Keats and Consumption

Wednesday 5 February – Sunday 5 July 2020

A new exhibition at Keats House, Hampstead explores the nature of this deadly disease and how it shaped Keats's life.

On 3 February 1820 Keats realised he had consumption, now known as tuberculosis. At the time there was little understanding of this common illness and no known cure.

Keats nursed both his mother and brother Tom until their deaths from the disease, experiences which affected him deeply and influenced his writing.

While he probably contracted the illness in 1818 while caring for Tom, the disease lay dormant throughout 1819 allowing time for his most creative and brilliant writing. However from 1820 his health deteriorated, destroying his hopes for success and he wrote no more poetry.

'Bring me the candle, Brown; and let me see this blood'. After regarding it steadfastly, he looked up in my face, with a calmness of countenance that I can never forget, and said, - 'I know the colour of that blood; - it is arterial blood; - I cannot be deceived in that colour; - that drop of blood is my death-warrant; - I must die.'

Charles Brown, 'Life of John Keats', 1830s, published 1937

Keats 200 Essay Competition

To celebrate the 200th anniversary of Keats's stay in Winchester during the late summer and early autumn of 1819, the Keats Foundation joined Winchester College and the University of Winchester in running two essay competitions, one for local sixth formers, the other for undergraduates of Winchester University. The prizes for the best three essays in each category were:

- 1st – £100 (plus a copy of Professor Nicholas Roe's *John Keats: A New Life*),
- 2nd – £50 and
- 3rd – £30.

The sixth form essays were short-listed by Heads of English Departments at participating colleges, and then judged by members of the Arts Faculty of the University of Winchester. Undergraduate essays were judged by Nicholas Roe and Dr Toni Griffiths of the Keats Foundation

The prizes were awarded at a special Symposium held at Winchester College on 19 October 2019 where Dr Gary Farnell (Senior Lecturer of the University of Winchester) and Professor Roe both gave talks. The prizes for undergraduates were provided by the Keats Foundation.

Winning essays and photos of (five of) the winners are at:

https://keatsfoundation.com/news/keats-bicentenary-essay-competition/?fbclid=IwAR29GfK_TXmVG91WQv_LPsoBtA2rqZ5Eju9nVyhX8aIhSEcogNPILORwE8

The Eve of St Agnes

On Monday 20 January 2020 the Keats Foundation and Keats House presented a reading of Keats's 'The Eve of St Agnes' by the actor Matthew Coulton (who we filmed last year reading Keats's Odes, which you can see on YouTube via the Keats Foundation website). Guests were offered wine on arrival, with treats to come (see below).



Matthew and Peter Phillips gave a short introduction to the poem to put it in context, and to explain that the version of the poem which existed in January 1820 was not the one which was published in the summer. Although Matthew didn't follow all of the January version, he did read the extra stanza Keats had written to explain the legend and the rituals which the heroine Madeline follows. When he read out the details of the 'candied apple, plum and quince and gourd' which Porphyro lays out for Madeline as well 'manna and dates in Argosy transferred from Fez', the audience were given candied fruits, dates and Turkish Delight (transferred from exotic lands in paper baking cups).



Future Events at Keats House

20 Feb, 6.30pm Damian Walford Davies 'Keats's Killing Breath: Poetry and Theories of Consumption'

5 March, 6.30pm Drummond Bone 'What is Poetry – thoughts by Byron (and Keats)' in partnership with the Byron Society

16 April, 6.30pm Andrew Rudd 'Charities in Keats's London'

14 May 6.30pm

Deborah Lam, "'More and still more": "Overwork" in Keats and the Pre-Raphaelites'

21 May 6.30pm

Emily Paterson-Morgan, "'Duet Dialogues": Byron and the Adultery Letter'

For all events, please go to Eventbrite:

https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/o/keats-house-4777597709?gclid=EAIaIQobChMI7Oap8_vG5wIVBbTtCh0DYALZEAAYASAAEgL_DfD_BwE



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