

A photograph of a decorated Christmas tree in a library. The tree is green and covered in red and gold ornaments, including round balls, pinecones, and a star on top. It is surrounded by wooden bookshelves filled with books. The floor is made of light-colored wood. Overlaid on the image is pink text.

SPEAKS VOLUMES

37

December 2023

the magazine of

THE LEEDS LIBRARY

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#### **OPENING HOURS**

Monday—Wednesday:	10AM-6PM
Thursday:	10AM-7pm
Friday:	10AM-5PM
Saturday:	10AM-4PM
Sunday:	CLOSED

## Announcing the appointment of the new CEO

As you may have seen from our recent announcement, the Trustees of the Leeds Library are delighted to confirm the appointment of our next CEO.

Following the formation of a Nominations Committee of trustees to oversee the recruitment process, Nina Corey will be joining the team.



Nina joins the library from her current position as Director of the Shire Hall Museum in Dorchester. She has seventeen years' experience working in heritage, including at National Trust properties including Arlington Court and the Carriage Museum; The Workhouse, Southwell, Notts; and Tattershall Castle, Lincoln. She holds an MA in Classical Studies from the Open University. Nina has a special interest in social history, presenting thought-provoking personal stories, and making heritage sites relevant to a diverse range of audiences.

After extensive advertising of the position and a shortlisting process, trustees were presented with very strong candidates for this crucial role. Staff, members, and volunteers were given the opportunity to meet the potential appointees and inform the panel's decision. We anticipate that Nina will be fully in-post in February next year.

I'm sure you will join with trustees and staff in welcoming Nina to the library.

*with best wishes*

Paul Ellis

Chair of Trustees

## Update from Jane and the Library Services team

### New titles coming soon!

Don't forget to reserve your favourites, by adding your membership number to either the fiction and DVD list at the Counter, or in the non fiction ledger. These are just some of the books coming soon and their publication dates:


<b>AUTHOR</b>	<b>TITLE</b>	<b>DATE</b>
<b>FICTION</b>		
ATWOOD (Margaret)	Fourteen days	February 2024
CORNWELL (Patricia)	Unnatural death	November 2023
FFORDE (Jasper)	Red side story	February 2024
LA PLANTE (Lynda)	Alibi	December 2023
MCCALL SMITH (Alexander)	The love story of Herb de la Fouche	August 2024
Based on a play by Alan Bennett and starring Judi Dench	Allelujah DVD	November 2023
Based on the novel by Rachel Joyce and starring Jim Broad- bent and Penelope Wilton	Unlikely pilgrimage of Harold Fry DVD	June 2024
<b>NON-FICTION</b>		
BEARD (Mary)	Emperor of Rome (N059311)	In stock
CELLAN-JONES (Rory)	Ruskin Park : Sylvia, me and the BBC (N059328)	In stock
LEON (Donna)	Wandering through life (N059324)	In stock
PALIN (Michael)	Great-Uncle Harry : a tale of war and empire (N060012)	In stock
STEWART (Patrick)	Making it so (N059979)	In stock

### Booklists

Our bumper Christmas Booklist will be out soon, so do look out for it!

#### Member Suggestions

We have added the forthcoming Fiction and DVD list to the website. It can be found under Search the catalogue – View latest acquisitions:



We add around 1,500 items to our catalogue each year and to highlight new stock we produce *Book Lists* each quarter and supplementary lists called *Titles Just in* in each month. You will see highlighted books on our homepage too. Our latest lists are below.

- [Latest Booklist 206 Summer 2023 – including Titles Just in for April, June & August](#)
- [Booklist 205 Spring 2023 – including Titles Just in February 2023](#)
- [Booklist 204 Autumn 2022](#)
- [Titles Just in September/October 2022](#)
- [Titles Just in August 2022](#)
- [Booklist 203 Summer 2022](#)
- [Titles Just in Play/June 2022](#)
- [Booklist 202 Spring 2022](#)

Click [here](#) for the latest copy of our List of Members' requests, forthcoming fiction titles, audio books and DVDs. If you would like to add your number to any of the items suggested, please email [counter@theleedslibrary.org.uk](mailto:counter@theleedslibrary.org.uk)

## ...Update from Library Services continued...

### Craft Club

If you're a crafter, why not join us at our regular Club? We meet twice a month, and as well as giving you the opportunity to work on your own projects, you will be able to meet other Members and staff, in a relaxed and creative atmosphere and share advice and swap ideas. We provide free tea and coffee, and all we ask is that your craft is portable as we can't store things for you.

These are the dates of the next meetings:

**Friday 15 December : 12.00 to 14.00**

**Monday 8 January : 17.00 to 19.00**

**Friday 19 January : 12.00 to 14.00**

**Monday 5 February : 17.00 to 19.00**

**Friday 16 February : 12.00 to 14.00**

### Members' Film Club



The Film Club celebrates its 4<sup>th</sup> Christmas Big Night In on Saturday 9 December. We are showing the classic **A Christmas carol** with Alastair Sim as Ebenezer Scrooge, a short film, and there will be a buffet and drinks. Tickets are £15.00 and can be booked on Eventbrite [HERE](#).

We will then return on Saturday 6 January with a new season of feel good films starting with Ice cold in Alex (PG), followed on Wednesday 17 January by another Dickens classic, Great expectations (PG). **All members are welcome, and the listings are available at the Counter.**

## ...Update from Library Services continued...

### Exhibitions

Hello. I'm Finn, the member of staff who put together the animals, pets and zoology exhibition that has been on display throughout November. I've never done a full exhibition before, but when I saw that animals were the subject I jumped at the opportunity – I'm a lifelong animal enthusiast and spent a lot of time volunteering at dog kennels and wildlife rescue centres before I worked at the library. I am also a fan of animal-themed literature, one of my favourite novels being Richard Adams Watership Down. I wanted my enthusiasm for the subject to come through in the exhibition, and chose an arrangement of works to showcase this.

Frankly, I was spoiled for choice. The library has an extensive zoological catalogue, including many rare and antiquated books. I was only able to showcase a small handful of this collection, but tried to diversify things by selecting works from parallel subjects under the broad umbrella of zoology. These were cryptozoology, entomology and xenofiction (animal-themed literature). Once everything was together I felt the display was a bit sparse, so I filled up the cabinets with many laminated illustrations from the books themselves, showcasing their contents. This task proved unexpectedly time-consuming, but I think the final effect was well worth the additional effort. Thank you for you many kind and thoughtful comments on the display, and I hope that next year I can match or exceed it with another!



**My dogs Artie (right) and Frank (left) were also a motivating factor – it's no mystery why so many of the books I chose focussed on dogs!**

### Christmas Critters!

You may have noticed that we are selling knitted Christmas decorations. These have been made by Jane's Auntie Alice, and **all** the profits are going to the Library.

Alice is a big reader, but living in Hampshire makes it quite a trek to visit, so she is helping with our fund raising campaign by getting her needles out! So, please do think about buying one or two before they head off to help Santa in his workshop.



## **...Update from Library Services continued...**

Jane's Auntie has been beavering away for the library, and has so kindly knitted us a Santa and a reindeer. For a £1 at the Members' Christmas Party (Santa) and the Family Christmas Party (reindeer) you will have the chance to guess their names—the winner of each random draw gets to take one of them home! Thank you Jane's Auntie!



## **Book Chat—a new club for members**

Do you like talking about books but don't want to join a book club?

If you don't have time to read the books you want, never mind the books that other people want you to read, then why not join us at the launch of Book Chat on Friday 12 January at 2pm.

We will meet once a month on a Friday for an hour and talk about the books we're reading and share what we love and what we don't love, and each time we meet, Jane or one of the team will bring out one of the library's treasures to show you.

All members welcome! No need to book.

## **Spring clean closure**

The library will be closed On Friday 23rd, Saturday 24th, and Monday 26th February 2024 for a Spring clean.

## **The Idler Academy needs you**

Since 2011, the Idler Academy has produced nearly 80 online courses, on a vast array of subjects, ranging from Dante to public speaking. These courses have been part of the Leeds Library's digital resources since the library had to close during the COVID years. Recently the Idler Academy has contacted all subscribers to find out what courses they should programme in the future. If you felt the Dante course didn't reach the levels of Paradise you'd hoped for, let them know. The Idler Academy hopes that with the input of subscribers, the courses they provide will develop further, and allow people to engage with education in a fun and interesting manner.

## **...Update from Library Services continued...**

If you wish to make a recommendation to the Idler Academy, all you must do is sign up to the Academy using the links provided in the Digital Resources email sent to you by the library. Please contact the library if you would like a new copy of the Digital Resources email.

## **Updates from the trustees**

### **Meet the Library's patrons...**

The Library is honoured to have four eminent patrons who have agreed to be our special supporters. All have close links with Leeds and are proud to be associated with the Library.

Barbara Taylor Bradford OBE became a patron in November 2021. Many of you will know that she was born in Upper Armley and enjoys a hugely successful US-based literary career. Her most recent and 40th novel—*The Wonder of it All*—was published in November 2023.

In October, the Library hosted the first of what will be a series of annual lectures in her name to focus on literary issues pertinent to women.

Caryl Phillips is also a US-based author who accepted the role of a patron to enable him to reconnect with Leeds—his home city from the age of 4 months—having been born in St Kitts. He has written widely on issues of slavery, origins, belonging and exclusion; been the recipient of numerous awards; and is also the patron of the David Oluwale Memorial Association.

Poet Laureate Simon Armitage is our third patron. Yorkshire-born Simon is developing plans for a National Poetry Centre in Leeds to mark his laureateship, and to bring poetry in line with other national art forms. He is also Professor of Poetry at Leeds University.

And Nima Poovaya-Smith OBE has had a successful career as a curator, art historian and poet who has focussed on transcultural and post colonial South Asian museum collections in Bradford.

Moving forward, the trustees are exploring how we can work constructively with our valued patrons to benefit the Library, making the best use of what they can contribute.



## **...updates from the trustees continued...**

### **Leave a legacy to the Leeds Library**

*Philip Walker (Vice-chair of the Board of Trustees) explains how leaving a legacy to the Library helps to ensure Library and it's collections are safeguarded and continue to thrive.*

#### *Why leave a legacy?*

Leaving a legacy is one of the most personal ways in which you can choose to support the Library. Legacies play a vital part in allowing our heritage story to be told by helping to safeguard our unique collections, and buildings and maintaining our expertise and knowledge.

#### *How legacies help*

The Leeds Library costs in excess of £500,000 to operate each year and every legacy, no matter the size, makes a difference. Whether it is to help cover some of our running costs, or is used in a specific project or purchase, legacies provide crucial annual income which help to ensure the Library, our collections and our work is safeguarded. Over recent years the Library has undertaken a number of major development projects, including the improvement of the foyer and basement, the replacement of the Library flooring, the conservation of over 1,000 heritage books and the purchase of a digital scanner. Many of these projects would not have been possible without the support and generosity of donors. A legacy to the Library makes a positive contribution to the lives of the Library's community, our visitors, partners and the city of Leeds.

#### *What kind of gift can you make?*

There are three main types of legacy that you can make in your will.

Firstly, there is a pecuniary legacy which is a fixed sum of money decided by you. There is a residuary legacy which can be a bequest of the remainder, or a proportion of the remainder, of your estate after other legacies, inheritance tax, debts and expenses have been paid. Finally, there is a specific gift which is the gift of something such as stocks or shares, literary rights, books, art and antiques.

## **...updates from the trustees continued...**

You can leave either an unrestricted legacy, the applications of which are left at the discretion of the library's Trustees and can be used wherever the need is greatest, or you might wish to direct your legacy towards a key area of the Library's work that you particularly want to support. Some examples of projects currently requiring support include:

Online cataloguing

Furniture restoration

Educational outreach

Book conservation and collection development

Archive and rare book digitisation.

### *How to leave a legacy to the Library in your will.*

We know that leaving a legacy is a personal matter and that you will want to think it through properly and we recommend that you discuss your will and the type of legacy you might like to leave to the Library with your solicitor. The value of your gift will be deducted from your estate before inheritance tax is applied, meaning leaving a legacy can be a cost-effective way of giving which may reduce the overall tax charged on your estate. Your solicitor will be able to discuss how this may affect your estate and beneficiaries.

## Niimi's Archive Highlights

Hello again! As many of you know, I'm Niimi—the Library's Archives and Collections Assistant. Though delving through the archives takes up much of my time, I thought we could take a little break from our archives explorations to turn instead to one of my favourite books in the Library's historic collections: George Walker's *The Costume of Yorkshire* (1814).

Behind its unassuming leather cover are forty beautiful full-colour engravings depicting all sorts of lives lived in Georgian Yorkshire. It's a beautiful time capsule, showing how clothes can tell stories about those who wear them; as you'll see below!

The first engraving I wanted to highlight depicts a group of Knurr and Spell players. A storied Yorkshire tradition, Knurr and Spell fell out of favour in the late 20th Century and isn't well known outside of Yorkshire today. Its origins have been traced back to the 14th Century, but it reached the peak of its popularity in the 18th and 19th Century (when it was depicted above). The 'spell' is a levered wooden trap, which launches the 'knurr'—the ball, usually wooden—into the air for players to hit as far as possible. Distances were often marked with wooden pins, 20ft apart. It was a popular pub game, so would have been familiar for many at the time *Costume of Yorkshire* was being produced.



## ...Niimi's Archive Highlights continued...



This second engraving is titled 'The Cranberry Girl'. Its eponymous subject is a young woman foraging for cranberries on the Yorkshire moors. Her garments are a lovely contrast to the high-society fashions most modern eyes are exposed to through Jane Austen adaptations, though the silhouettes are the same: a high waist, long straight skirt, and bonnet.

Her layers are well-adapted for hours spent in the wind, and apron clearly a useful basket!

Our third engraving depicts 'Factory Children'. Though these figures seem cleaner and happier than we'd expect of a 19th Century working child, their presence in this collection is a significant marker of the industrial revolution's emergence during this period. They aren't the only You may have seen 'The Collier' (the third plate in the book) elsewhere, famous for its depiction of Middleton Colliery in South Leeds. The smoking chimneys in the background here also loom close—a portent of the shape of the coming century.



## ...Niimi's Archive Highlights continued...



Last but not least: 'Woman Making Oatcakes', perhaps my favourite of the bunch. There's lots to love here if you're interested in domestic history; the stockings drying over the fire in the leftmost corner, or what looks like a cat curled up near the warmth below them. I find the children particularly interesting: they're a prime example of the popularisation of 'children's clothing' during this period, a turn away from the previous century's fondness for dressing them like miniature adults (wide skirts and silk suits included). The short hair on both the boy and girl child is another notable feature – a practice that crossed class lines, kept that way for ease of cleaning and upkeep!

If you have any questions about this issue's highlight, please email me at:

**[day-goughn@theleedslibrary.org.uk](mailto:day-goughn@theleedslibrary.org.uk)**.

Until next time!

# Children's Book Project

As you may have read in previous issues, the Leeds Library is a collection point for donations to the Children's Book Project. This seeks to tackle book poverty and to give every child the opportunity to own their own book. The National Literacy Trust's 'Book Ownership in 2022' report found that one in three disadvantaged children across the UK has fewer than ten books of their own at home, and one in ten has none at all.

Thank you to everyone who has donated books so far—we received this lovely certificate and letter from them last week. We are taking donations on an ongoing basis; so if you have books in good condition, for any age from birth to teen, please leave them at the counter. They will be gratefully received.



## **Book reviews**

### **The Tenant of Wildfell Hall by Anne Brontë**

*Reviewed by Christine Stead*

This novel was chosen by the Tuesday Book Club for its August meeting.

It was first published under the pseudonym “Acton Bell” in 1848 by Thomas Newby, who bought the copyright for £25. The year before, Newby had also published Anne’s first novel, “Agnes Grey” alongside Emily Brontë’s “Wuthering Heights.” However, Anne’s second novel was much greater in scope and ambition than her first.

From the start, “The Tenant” sold extremely well and almost immediately went into its second edition. Anne didn’t have long, however, to enjoy its success, dying in Scarborough in 1849 at the age of 28.

On the whole, the critical reception was very hostile. For example, the Spectator warned its readers, especially lady readers, against being “tempted to peruse it” and referred to “profane expressions, inconceivably coarse language, revolting scenes and descriptions by which its pages are disfigured.”

Anne’s sister Charlotte attempted to explain away the novel by describing Anne as a “quiet, naïve and simple spinster” who lived a life of isolation—in other words, Anne was not fully aware of what she was doing! Anne herself, however, defended the novel in a preface to its second edition. “I wished to tell the truth, for truth always conveys its own moral to those who are able to receive it.”

The Tenant is a love story in which two of the main protagonists, Gilbert Markham and Helen Graham fall in love and eventually marry. But the central action on which the novel turns and one that offended against contemporary mores most, was the fact that Helen had left her drunken and adulterous husband Arthur Huntingdon, (generally acknowledged to be modelled in part on Branwell Brontë) to prevent his corruption of their young child. She does so without his permission, before going into hiding and trying to support herself through her own efforts.

Later, when Arthur becomes mortally ill she returns to him and cares for him until his death from alcoholic poisoning.

Most modern readers will find Helen’s return to her husband incomprehensible, but it is fully in line with her views on her Christian duty, and the possibility of repentance and reform. The whole novel is imbued with the need to act on moral imperatives and Anne Brontë’s belief in the possibility of universal salvation of the soul.

## **...book reviews continued...**

This novel stimulated a lot of discussion within the group. It was generally felt to be too long, locked into a three volume format as it was. Helen was seen by some as a prig and some of Gilbert's actions seen as brutal and callous. However, it was generally agreed to be a novel of exceptional interest, particularly in showing a woman prepared to act as an autonomous being, and in doing so challenging the notions of how women (and men) should behave within marriage in the mid-nineteenth century.

### **Mothering Sunday by Graham Swift**

*Reviewed by Anne Suter*

For our June meeting we discussed 'Mothering Sunday' by Graham Swift, really a novella, as it numbers only 149 pages.

Graham Swift is an English author of numerous books winning the Booker prize for 'Last Orders' and The Hawthornden prize for 'Mothering Sunday'

The book deals with events on Mother's day 1924 when Jane Fairchild, an orphan, who is working as a maid, does not go home to see her mother (as does all the other staff). Instead she meets her secret lover Paul Sheringham (the only surviving son) at his house on the adjacent estate.

The novella produces a vivid picture of the both a single morning and the life that turns around it and the consequences that will change Jane's life forever.

Martin Staniforth gave us an excellent introduction: saying that the book was a romance and a fairy story. The first sentence is 'Once upon a time 'to set the scene and an epigram 'You shall go to the ball' to make the point plain. Mr Niven (Jane's employer) is the good fairy and Paul is the bad fairy. The writing was extremely clever both in its use of plot and narrative and brilliant style and prose. There was homage to Conrad's book 'Youth'

The story makes use of multiple narrators and its telling is subtle and complex looping backwards, casting forward, from the young girl of twenty two in 1924 to the recollections of her older self - a ninety old successful novelist.

What did we think? Most of the group really liked the book; with comments like 'What a brilliant book 'and 'I really loved it'. They liked the style of writing and the prose and mentioned that the book was suffused by nostalgia 'A romance undercut by uncertainty'.



### **...book reviews continued...**

There was a great sense of loss permeating the book and a sense of how personalities and identities are built up by what people think of us. There is also a recurring disparity between experience lived and experience recalled: 'Looking into a perfect March air she could not see, or would not remember seeing, any flaw'. Seeing and remembering are always at odds.

A few members of the group, though, didn't agree, commenting that the book was tedious with an overdone formulaic theme. One person thought it was repellent and there was coldness and complaisance in the writing.

On the whole the novella was greatly liked but we did remain divided as to its merits. Perhaps the best idea is to read it yourself and make up your own mind.



## Famous last words

In each issue, we feature the last lines of a well-known book—guess the book; but you'll have to wait until the next issue to find out the answer. No googling!

Of course, there have been quite a few books published, so each Famous Last Words will feature a quote with a connection to the edition of *Speaks Volumes* in which it appears. Happy guessing!

Last issue's conundrum was: "The gun, Bill Roach had finally convinced himself, was, after all, a dream."

This is the last line of *Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy* by John le Carré. Admittedly, this was a somewhat more abstract reference to the opening up of the entranceways between 15 and 18 Commercial Street. You might say that the (Berlin) Wall came down...Apologies—this issue's clue is definitely related directly to something in this issue. The Famous Last Words conundrum for this issue is:

"We are just now looking forward to the advent of you and Rose, for the time of your annual visit draws nigh, when you must leave your dusty, smoky, noisy, toiling, striving city for a season of invigorating relaxation and social retirement with us."