

Arbeitsgemeinschaft Literarischer Gesellschaften und Gedenkstätten e.V.

Panorama and Perspectives.

Literary Societies and Literary Museums in Europe

Panorama und Perspektive. Literarische Gesellschaften und Literaturmuseen in Europa

Newsletter 1 – 07/2009

■ Germany

Dear colleagues!

Here is the *first newsletter* following our meeting in February. From now on we would like to publish the news for our group approximately every three months.

Summary “Europa-Workshop”

■ In February 2009, *participants from 19 countries met in Berlin* to discuss the possibilities for cooperation and networking between literary societies and museums. The focus was on providing an opportunity for institutions to get to know one another and on sharing ideas and experience.

Topics discussed included ... ■ specific problems and individual national approaches in dealing with the literary heritage ■ working conditions ■ financial support ■ cooperation projects / partnerships.

It was agreed to ... ■ establish close and continual cooperation at the European level ■ expand the group ■ set up a website for the project ■ publish a newsletter.

The ALG is committed to establishing closer links between literary societies and literary museums, whereby we wish to bring new impetus in achieving an integrated European cultural area and thus contribute to the further vitalisation of Europe’s literary landscape.

Further news

■ Our European project is now called “Panorama und Perspektive. Literarische Gesellschaften und Literaturmuseen in Europa” / “Panorama and Perspectives. Literary Societies and Literary Museums in Europe”. An *information/promotion booklet* (German/English) with this title is in press.

■ We are preparing the *publication of the papers of the workshop* which we would like to present at the annual general meeting of the ALG (10th-13th September 2009, Leipzig) and at the ICLM meeting in Budapest in the same month which Peter Böthig will attend.

■ *Our group has already expanded* – the publication will include articles from the following umbrella organisations: Antwerp Letterenhuis/Platform for Curators of the Flemish Literary Heritage – Belgium, LitHouses – Literary Homes and Museums of Great Britain, Fédération des maisons d’écrivain & des patrimoines littéraires – France.

■ We have decided to include also literary societies and museums in *Norway and Iceland* in our CD-ROM directory. We would therefore be grateful for hints on experts/institutions we could contact.

Gesa Schubert | Arbeitsgemeinschaft Literarischer Gesellschaften und Gedenkstätten e.V. |

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■ Bulgaria

■ On 26th May 2009 *The Institute of Literature celebrated its 60th anniversary*: A jubilee conference with the title "Literary Science as Responsibility" was held. An exhibition "The Institute of Literature: 21st Century" presents the Institute's achievements as an important centre for preserving and studying the literary heritage in Bulgaria and its high reputation on a national and international level.

Verina Petrova | The Institute of Literature, Bulgarian Academy of Science | www.ilit.bas.bg | veryna@abv.bg ■

■ Czech Republic

Projects 2009: 1. Exhibitions

■ March-May 2009 (New show-room, Chrudim) – *Casual Meeting* (exhibition of collages, from the collection of Museum of Czech literature - V. Preissig, K. Teige, A. Hoffmeister, Vl. Holub, J. Kolar, E. Julis, I. Wernisch, M. Korycan, M.Singer)

■ **May-October 2009** (Summer-pavilion Hvezda, Prague) – *Literature without Frontiers* (multimedial exhibition about famous Czech writers K. Capek, J. Hasek, V. Havel, B. Hrabal, J. Seifert), catalogue

2. Books and periodicals

■ *Literary Archive*: Annual of Museum of Czech Literature Nr. 40, Legions and Muses 1914 - 1920, January 2009, Prague.

■ *Prague-Madrid-Rome Promote Six Poets*, (anthology of Czech, Italian and Spanish poets in translations), April 2009, Prague.

■ *The Best Czech Books 2008*, (catalogue of competition), April 2009, Prague.

Alena Petruzelkova | Museum of Czech Literature, Prague | www.pamatniknarodnihopisemnictvi.cz | petruzelkova@pamatnik-np.cz ■

■ Denmark

■ A new literary society devoted to the poet Martin A. Hansen (1909-1955) is active since Spring 2009 (www.martinahansen.dk): Already 20 literary evenings have been arranged, further 37 are planned plus activities around the Danish Classics Day on 22nd September 2009. Martin A. Hansen has been chosen Classic of the Year.

■ **8th August 2009** – *Great Bookday at Hald*, with this year's theme "Home". Several literary societies will be present with exhibitions and lectures.

■ **November 2009** – 10th anniversary of the *Convention of Literary Societies in Denmark* (Samrådet for de Litterære Selskaber i Danmark); planned is an anniversary exhibition at the Royal Library.

■ *Publication of Søren Sørensen's fourth novel "Sisyphos i Slotsvagt"*

Denmark, Sweden, Finland etc.

■ **21st–23rd August 2009** – *Conference of the Nordic umbrella organisations* in Biskops Arnö, Sweden, with the participation of several Danish literary societies as well as literary societies from Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden. The conference will be arranged by the DELS (Sweden) and The Nordic Society; the theme will be "Nordic Classic Literature".

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■ Great Britain

■ **16th-20th July** –the Tennyson Society will be hosting their “*Young Tennyson*” conference in the medieval cathedral city of Lincoln. Lincolnshire is the county of Tennyson's birth, and the County Council are hosting a fascinating *exhibition of pictorial representations of the poet's work, “Tennyson Transformed”* (<http://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/eventDetails.asp?eventcode=45170>). There you can see everything from Tennyson trivia to the Queen's daughters' naïve watercolour versions of Tennyson's *Idylls of the King*. But great masterpieces are also on show by the British pre-Raphaelite artists. In addition to pictures by Millais, Holman Hunt and Rossetti, there are two versions of J.W. Waterhouse's “*Lady of Shallot*”, the sketch for which graces the handsome book which accompanies the exhibition, edited by Jim Cheshire and published by Lund Humphries (<http://www.ashgate.com/default.aspx?page=297>). Enthusiasts of 19th Century photography will in particular be drawn to the famous photographs of the poet by Julia Margaret Cameron, pioneer of Victorian art photography. The Tennyson Research Centre in Lincoln (<http://www.tennyson2009.co.uk/>) contains the largest collection of Cameron photographs in the world, as well as the libraries of Tennyson, his father and his brothers, along with many manuscripts and family letters.

■ **6th August 2009** – will mark the *200th birthday of Alfred Tennyson*, Queen Victoria's poet laureate and writer of elegy and epic. A highly-successful international conference to celebrate his work has already happened this year in Oxford.

■ **3rd October** – *Annual Tennyson Society wreath-laying* at Tennyson's grave in Poets' Corner in Westminster Abbey, London.

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<http://community.lincolnshire.gov.uk/thetennysonsociety/> | m.campbell@sheffield.ac.uk ■

■ **23rd November 2009** – The *LitHouses Group 2009 Conference* at The Royal Institution in Albemarle Street, London. The theme will be “Anniversaries and Audiences: Engaging an Audience with Modern Media and Marketing”. The conference will be followed by an early evening reception at Dr Johnson's House in Gough Square.

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■ Hungary

■ The *Petőfi Literary Museum* has recently been awarded the “*Museum of the Year Award*” as part of the celebration of the World Museum Day (18th May). This award is the most prestigious one in the Hungarian museum circles. The justification of the prize included the perfect organisation of programmes throughout the year and the innovative representation of our exhibitions including a mobile exhibition installed in a bus that visited 83 towns and villages in Hungary and appealed to more than 42 000 visitors. Nothing like this has taken place in Hungary before. As a result of the project the museum has become well-known and gained professional respect all over the country.

Another national project, the *Revival of the Hungarian Literary Memorial Houses*, must have contributed to this success. The website of the project (www.emlekhazak.hu) is up and running now in Hungarian, and the English version is to follow soon.

■ **21st-23rd September 2009** – Our museum will host the *ICLM Annual Conference* in Budapest. This is a great opportunity for international networking between literary and music museums. All interested colleagues are welcome.

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■ Italy

■ On 22nd and 23rd May 2009, a seminar entitled “*Literary Societies. An Exchange between Italy and Germany*” was held in Verona - organised by Verona’s Società Letteraria with the support of the Regione Veneto and in collaboration with the German umbrella organisation ALG. Participants from Germany included the President and the Managing Director of the ALG as well as Axel Kahrs, co-author of the book “*Literarischer Führer Deutschland*”, recently published by Insel Verlag.

Some of the most eminent literary institutions in Italy were represented by Diana Toccafondi (Associazione Case della Memoria), Maria Letizia Sebastiani (Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana, Venezia), Luisa Finocchi (Fondazione Arnoldo e Alberto Mondadori, Milano), Aurora Di Mauro (Ufficio Musei, Regione del Veneto), Davide Banzato (Casa Museo di Francesco Petrarca, Arquà), Claudio Rorato (Casa Museo di Goffredo Parise, Ponte di Piave), Dorothee Hock (Casa di Goethe, Roma).

Francesca Ghersetti reported on the results of the ALG “Europa-Workshop” held in Berlin this past February.

The objective of the meeting in Verona was to compare two very rich but very diverse realities. Unlike in Italy, in other countries – and especially in Germany – there is a much higher awareness of the fact that places of literary culture (archives, libraries, museums) are to serve not only academic specialists but also the community, i.e. users whatever their educational background or cultural level might be. Thus, a considerable amount of work is carried out to promote initiatives open to a wider public, and exhibitions display the ongoing research and conservation work.

Umbrella organisations like the ALG in Germany play an important role in this. Institutions of this kind are unfortunately still missing in Italy, where literary societies possess a wealth of material and organise countless activities, but are scattered throughout the national territory. They concentrate more on conservation and scientific activity than on divulging and valorising their precious heritage.

The seminar in Verona entailed an accurate and lively in-depth exchange between the participating institutions. For Italy, the promotion of similar initiatives might be in the near future the best way to foster the country’s literary institutions and the awareness that all of them carry out a similar kind of work, including goals that are at once scientific and civil. Thus, the founding of a national and an European coordinating network which would guarantee an ongoing exchange, would constitute both a stimulus and an essential asset for our country.

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■ Slovenia

■ **2nd-6th September 2009** – the *24th Vilenica International Literary Festival* (www.vilenica.si) will be held, organized by the Slovene Writers' Association and the Vilenica Cultural Society. On the evenings before the Festival, with events in Ljubljana, Gorizia (Italy), Maribor, Koper, Celje and Pliškovica – as well as during the regular and accompanying programme in Lipica, Trieste, Štanjel, Sežana, Bilje and in the Vilenica Cave – the Festival will play host to approximately 40 authors from more than 20 countries; in addition, there will be a number of academics, editors, publishers and cultural mediators from Central European and other countries. Besides the grand prize – the Vilenica International Literary Prize – several other prizes will be awarded.

The theoretical component of the festival will revolve around the motto “Who chooses?” The mechanisms for choosing books for a market and in the media will be held under the

microscope during the Central European Initiative round table and the 7th International Comparative Literature colloquium, and during the Festival's accompanying programme we will discuss who it is that selects young authors.

Literature from Flanders will be in the foreground and presented within the framework of the project "Lesser-Known Literatures of Europe at Vilenica." Authors' visits will be accompanied by the publication of an anthology entitled "Ruimte". After presenting the literary activities of Slovenian minorities we will, with the presentation of Slovenian-Argentine literature, devote ourselves this year to literary creation by Slovenes elsewhere in the world.

Among new books readers will find the "Vilenica Almanac 2009", the English translation of the novel "Struggle for Spring" by Boris Pahor as well as a translation of works by the 2008 Vilenica prize winner Andrzej Stasiuk in two languages.

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■ Newsletter 2

Our *next newsletter* is planned to appear after the summer break, *in October*. Please send us continually news you would like to communicate to the group. We are prepared to publish a newsletter at an earlier date, if required.

Suggestions for improvement are welcome as well as hints on persons who could be interested in receiving our newsletter. Please send them to: **schubert@alg.de** ■

**"In summer the song
sings itself"**

– William Carlos Williams,
The Botticellian Trees

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