



THE BECKFORD NEWSLETTER



NO 41 SEPTEMBER 2014

THE BECKFORD LECTURE

PROFESSOR DIDIER GIRARD

*William Beckford and the Poetics of Kult:
Addressing the Currently Unknown*

FRIDAY 28 NOVEMBER 2014

AT 6.30 PM

THE TRAVELLERS CLUB
106 PALL MALL, LONDON, SW1

TO BE FOLLOWED BY DINNER

DRINKS WILL BE SERVED FROM 6.00 PM

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Some forty members attended the Annual General Meeting held in Bath at the Holburne Museum on Saturday 31 May.

The Treasurer reported that although there had been a deficit in 2013/2014 the Society's finances were generally in good shape. 'Gift Aid' status had recently been granted which would enable the Society to reclaim tax on subscriptions made by UK taxpayers.

Philip Hewat-Jaboor who had served for many years on the committee and done much to further Beckford studies was elected as a Vice-President. Dr Amy Frost, curator of Beckford's Tower was elected to the Committee.

Mike Fraser reported that the website had received 1,000 visits each month. It was hoped to streamline the site to make the downloading of the membership form easier. Early issues of the Beckford Journal would be added to the site.

After lunch, Dr Richard Wendorf gave a talk 'Living with Beckford' which engagingly described his experiences of living in Beckford's house at 20 Lansdown Crescent.

During a reception at Lansdown Tower, Amy Frost showed members a selection of objects from the tower's collections which are not normally on display.

DR A. R. A. HOBSON FBA (1922-2014)

It is with great sadness we record the death of Anthony Hobson our President since 1998.

Anthony was a distinguished scholar and bibliographer. After war service in the Scots Guards, he worked in the Book Department at Sotheby's and was head of the department for over twenty years.

He was a leading bookbinding historian best known for his work on Italian fifteenth and sixteenth century bindings.

His articles on Beckford's library and binders are essential reading for anyone interested in these subjects.

He was often at our meetings and visits, came on the first excursion to Portugal, and regularly attended the Beckford Lecture and dinner at the Travellers Club.

A tribute will appear in the 2015 Beckford Journal.

BECKFORD LECTURE 2014

This year's Beckford's Lecture 'William Beckford and the Poetics of Kult: Addressing the Currently Unknown' will be given by Professor Didier Girard at the Travellers Club in London on Friday 28 November.

Didier Girard is a literary editor, translator and essayist. He is Professor of European Literature at the University of Francois Rabelais, Tours and general co-ordinator of the Erasmus Mundus joint doctorate in the humanities at the University of Bergamo. He is the author of *William Beckford: Terroriste au Palais de la Raison* (1993) and has edited many of Beckford's works for the French publisher Jose Corti.

The lecture will be followed by dinner.

A booking form is enclosed.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2015



Wenceslaus Hollar, Salisbury Cathedral

Next year's AGM will take place in Salisbury on Saturday 6 June. We have chosen this city for our venue as it will give members an opportunity to see the Turner exhibition (see next page).

Full information about the meeting will be included in the next Newsletter.

***Gift Aid* – UK MEMBERS**

As announced at the AGM, we have now secured *Gift Aid* status from HMRC

It will increase our revenue and greatly help our work, if UK taxpayers would agree to complete the enclosed form. This will be much appreciated.

TURNER'S WESSEX: ARCHITECTURE AND AMBITION



Fonthill engraved by T Crostick
after J M W Turner, 1829

Next year, Salisbury Museum will be holding the first ever exhibition devoted to J M W Turner's drawings and paintings of Salisbury Cathedral, the city and its surroundings. The exhibition will concentrate on Turner's responses to the Cathedral and town, particularly the commissions from Sir Richard Colt Hoare of Stourhead; secondly, on the views of Fonthill Abbey he painted for William Beckford; and finally, works recording the Wessex landscape.

SALISBURY MUSEUM,
THE KING'S HOUSE,
65 THE CLOSE, SALISBURY

22 MAY - 27 SEPTEMBER 2015

TERROR AND WONDER: THE GOTHIC IMAGINATION



From *The Castle of Otranto*, 1765

This autumn, the British Library is presenting *Terror and Wonder: The Gothic Imagination* a major exhibition of Gothic literature to mark the 250 years since Horace Walpole's *Castle of Otranto* was published. It will celebrate many literary masterpieces produced in Britain since, as well as modern interpretations of the Gothic in popular culture today. Paintings by Henry Fuselli, William Blake and Philip James de Louthembourg will be included.

Various events will support the exhibition. A Gothic study day will be held on Saturday 6 December.

BRITISH LIBRARY
3 OCT 2014 – 20 JAN 2015

BECKFORD TOWER EVENTS



BECKFORD BIRTHDAY LECTURE : *TERROR AND WONDER*

This year's Annual Beckford Birthday Lecture will be given by Tim Pye, the British Library's Curator of Printed Literature 1501-1800, and lead curator of the library's *Terror and Wonder* exhibition.

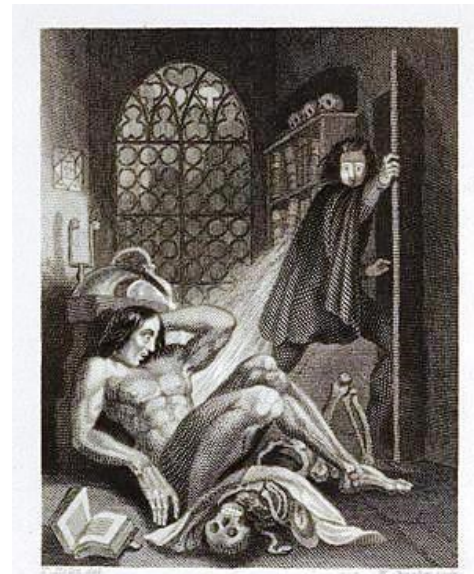
WEDNESDAY 22 OCTOBER

The Building of Bath Collection,
Countess of Huntingdon's Chapel,
The Vineyards, Bath. 6.30pm

Tickets £10 each in aid of the
tower's building repairs.

BOOK GROUP

New quarterly book group exploring the writings (loosely) related to the work of William Beckford. Members do not need to have read the book, but just be interested in enjoying an evening of talks from experts and a discussion with tea/coffee (maybe wine).



Frankenstein, 1831

First book:

Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*

Guest speaker:

Prof William Hughes, Professor of
Gothic Studies at Bath Spa
University.

Thursday 6 November 7.00 pm

Beckford's Tower £5.

Bookings/enquires about these
events. beckford@bptrust.org.uk
or telephone 01225 460705

BOOKS AND ARTICLES

John Evans, *A Quite Remarkable Man: The Life of Patrick Brydone and his family* (Amberley Books, 2014)

A biography of Patrick Brydone (1736-1818) who after military service, established a business as travelling preceptor. William Beckford of Somerley was one of those who travelled under his leadership. In 1773, Brydone published *A tour through Sicily and Malta, in a series of letters to William Beckford Esq., of Somerley in Suffolk* which was the most widely-read of all eighteenth-century travelogues.

Stephen Clarke, 'Beckford and Nimby Pamby. William Beckford's Notes in Horace Walpole's Works'. *The Book Collector*. 63/1 (Spring 2014)

An essay which considers Beckford's response to Horace Walpole and lists Beckford's annotations in his copy of Horace Walpole's *Works* (1798), now in the Lewis Walpole Library. (The article was the subject of the *TLS* 'NB' column on 19 March 2014).

Caroline Dakers, 'Round about a great estate: the Morrisons at Fonthill since 1829'. *Sarum Chronicle*, 13 (2013), pp 80-97

An account of the Morrison family and their ownership of the Fonthill estate.

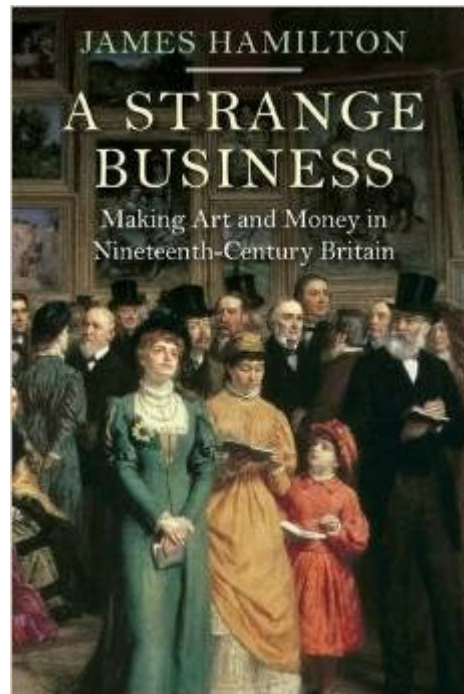
Miranda Neville, *The Ruin of a Rogue* (Avon Books, 2013).

The principal characters in this historical romance make a brief visit to William Beckford at Fonthill Abbey.

Michael Schmidt, *The Novel: A Biography* (Harvard University Press, 2014).

William Beckford features in 'The Eerie', Chapter 11 of this seven hundred year, 1,200 page history of the novel in English.

James Hamilton, *A Strange Business: Making Art and Money in Nineteenth Century Britain* (Atlantic Books, 2014).



William Beckford is included in this investigation of the vibrant exchange between culture and business in nineteenth century Britain. Hamilton explains how art was made and paid for in this kaleidoscopic portrait of the business of culture.

LIMITED EDITION CLUB *VATHEK*



Charles Agvent of Mertztown, PA, USA is offering for sale the publisher's archive with the original art for the Limited Editions Club, New York, 1945 edition of *Vathek*, illustrated by Valenti Angelo (1897-1982). It comprises a complete set of the original art together with progressive and repro proofs. Price £5,890.

IN THE AUCTION ROOM

WILLIAM COURTENAY'S CANNON

A pair of two-pounder cannon once owned by William Courtenay will be sold by James D Julia in a firearms sale at Fairfield, Maine on 7 October. They are part of a set of twelve made in London by the founder T. English. The breech marked with a 'C' surmounted by a viscount's coronet. Found in upstate New York they may have been taken to America by Courtenay when he lived on the Hudson River. Another pair survive at Powderham Castle.

BIBLIOTHECA PARISIANA

Chiswick Auctions sale of printed books and manuscripts on 25 June, including Part III of the Hans Fellner Collection, offered as Lot 11 *Bibliotheca Parisiana. A Catalogue of a Collection of Books, Formed by a Gentleman in France ... 1791*. This catalogue of the collection of Jean Baptiste Paris de Meyzieu, sold in London in March 1791, has almost every lot priced in manuscript together with, in many instances, buyers' names, including 'Mr Beckford'.

A REISSUE OF THE 1891 'MINERVA LIBRARY' EDITION OF BECKFORD'S WORKS

Towards the end of the nineteenth century Richard Garnett, Keeper of the Department of Printed Books at the British Museum and author of 'Beckford, William' in the *Dictionary of National Biography*, persuaded George Bettany to reprint Beckford's *Dreams, Waking Thoughts and Incidents* for the first time since the suppression of the work on the eve of publication in 1783. *Dreams* (without Letter XXVII, but including eight whole-page illustrations of places mentioned) duly appeared in Ward, Lock's invaluable 'Minerva Library of Famous Books' edition of 1891, together with *Vathek*, [Mont] Salève from the end of volume 1 of *Italy; with Sketches of Spain and Portugal* (1834), the whole of volume 2 (Portugal and Spain), and *Recollections of the Monasteries of Alcobaça and Batalha*. It was handsomely bound in bottle green cloth, and later there was a remainder binding in blue/green cloth. What may not be as well known is that Ward, Lock reissued the anthology in red cloth with bevelled boards and gilt edges, but without any mention of 'Minerva Library'. The title page is a cancel, as is the portrait frontispiece, but the text in both editions is identical. Although undated, the reissue cannot have appeared before 1897, when Ward, Lock & Co added Limited to their name, as is the case on the title page here.

JON MILLINGTON

ROBERTSON'S VIEWS IN JAMAICA



The Bridge crossing the River Cobre near Spanish Town

William Beckford of Somerley commissioned a series of paintings of his Jamaican estate from the artist George Robertson. These were engraved and published as *Six Views in the Island of Jamaica*, J. Boydell, London, 1778.

Four plates from this volume are being sold on 8 October 2014 by Christie's South Kensington.

William Beckford of Somerley (1744-1799) was the son of the Alderman's brother Richard. His book *A Descriptive Account of the Island of Jamaica*, was published in 1790.

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Items of Beckfordian interest are always welcome.