

The Royal Society  
*of Literature*



# A Legacy to Literature

# A word from our President

The Royal Society of Literature honours English writing at its finest. Through talks, debates and readings we help to celebrate the past and vitalise the future. But our work can never be taken for granted. We rely not only on membership subscriptions, but on the generosity of donors. Legacies bequeathed in a will, even modest ones, can be especially important.

I myself will be bequeathing to the Royal Society of Literature the earnings from my books. I feel sure there could be no recipient more worthy. Others who I am aware have made provision for the RSL in their wills include the President Emeritus, Michael Holroyd, and Giles St Aubyn, who will be leaving a substantial sum to fund grants for writers of non-fiction early in their careers.

For those who value the beauty and expressiveness of the English language, a legacy to the RSL is an apt and lasting contribution. Please give it thought. The Society – and countless others – will be deeply grateful.

**Colin Thubron**  
President



J.R.R. Tolkien's signature in the RSL Roll Book

“Britain’s literature, both past and present, is unrivalled, and the Royal Society of Literature is the only organisation devoted to ensuring that it remains so. Its work has never been more important”  
**Michael Holroyd,**  
**President Emeritus**

“The RSL offers the best, and best-value, programme of literary talks and discussions in London – a unique blend of literary seriousness and lively comment”  
**Maggie Gee,**  
**former Chair**

Polly Toynbee and Aminatta Forna at “What’s the Use of Literature?”, June 2011



NICK CUNARD

# Leaving a legacy

**By leaving a gift to the Society in your will, you could help to secure the future of the following**

## The RSL programme of lectures, discussions and debates

“In recent years the RSL has placed itself at the centre of debate on literary culture. Its events have become noted for bringing readers and writers together in lively engagement.”

### Hilary Mantel, CBE

There is an option to leave money towards administering titled RSL lectures. Please see “How to leave a legacy” for further information.

## RSL masterclasses

“Ali Smith’s recent masterclass in Brighton opened my eyes to the endless possibilities that seemingly simple tasks could bring to my writing, and helped me overcome my reluctance to share my work. Having a world-class author comment on my work was fantastic.”

### Priya Khanchandani

## Work with schools

“Children should not only read great writers, but meet them in the flesh. The RSL’s new Schools Outreach Programme, which will make this possible, is a thrilling initiative.”

### Michael Morpurgo, OBE



RICHARD CANNON

From top:  
Hilary Mantel,  
Priya Khanchandani  
and Michael  
Morpurgo



CHARLIE HOPKINSON

From top:  
Alice Albinia,  
Kate Clanchy  
and Edmund  
de Waal



HANNAH JAMES

## Awards, prizes and grants

“Receiving this award was a wonderful, unforeseen boon... It is an unusual prize, awarded as it is before a book is done. So it buys a writer time – and gives them a sweet serendipitous cup of adrenalin and morale.”

### Alice Albinia, winner of an RSL Jerwood Award

“There are many wonderful things about the V. S. Pritchett Prize: it is very prestigious, it is very literary, it celebrates the longer short story. The most wonderful thing for me, though, was that it was open to all comers, with no entrance criteria. That meant that someone with no reputation in short fiction could find herself sharing a platform with Helen Simpson and Penelope Lively.”

### Kate Clanchy, winner of the RSL V.S. Pritchett Memorial Prize for short-story writing

“I am truly honoured to have received this prize. There are very few prizes given by writers to writers and this makes the RSL Ondaatje Prize particularly special. My book is haunted by the meaning of place and the experience of exile and I feel that the award is a public recognition of the complexity that place can engender.”

### Edmund de Waal, winner of the RSL Ondaatje Prize

# How to leave a legacy

Should you choose to remember the RSL in your will, there are three types of gift for which you might make provision. It is very important to take independent professional advice when writing your will. You will find below suggested wording which might be helpful:

## Pecuniary legacy

**A pecuniary legacy allows you to specify an amount of money you would like to bequeath. You could choose to leave money towards administering our titled lectures: a one-off lecture for £2,000, a five-year series of lectures for £10,000, or an annual lecture in perpetuity. Please contact us if you are interested in endowing a lecture in perpetuity.**

I give the sum of £ (In words and figures) to The Royal Society of Literature (Registered Charity Number 213-962) of Somerset House, Strand, London WC2R 1LA for its general charitable purposes and I declare that receipt by the Secretary of the RSL will be full and sufficient discharge to my Executors.

## Residuary legacy

**A residuary legacy is the term used when the remainder of an estate is left after family and friends have been taken care of. Proportionally a residuary legacy will not devalue over time.**

I give the residue (or percentage of the residue) of my estate to The Royal Society of Literature (Registered Charity Number 213-962) of Somerset House, Strand, London WC2R 1LA for its general charitable purposes and I declare that receipt by the Secretary of the Royal Society of Literature will be full and sufficient discharge to my Executors.

## Specific legacy

**A specific legacy is a particular asset such as property, personal possessions or shares.**

### The tax implications of including a charity in your will

As The Royal Society of Literature is a registered charity, no inheritance tax is payable on the amount of your donation, as charities are exempt from paying this tax. There are also tax implications of leaving the residue of your estate to a charitable beneficiary. We suggest you consult a professional adviser for further information on these issues.

### How legacies are recorded or acknowledged

All legacies over £1,000 are recorded in the Society's Annual Report and Accounts and are publicly acknowledged on our website, unless the donor requests anonymity. If you would like any further information or would like to discuss any aspect of making or changing your will please contact Maggie Fergusson, either by telephone (020 7485 4676) or by email (maggie@rslit.org). All enquiries will be treated in strictest confidence.

Jeremy Treglown,  
Sara Wheeler,  
Michael Holroyd  
and Hilary Spurling  
ahead of an  
RSL discussion  
on biography



“People need to feel in their very bones that the whole of English literature from Beowulf to Byron to Benjamin Zephaniah is theirs by right of inheritance. The RSL exists to show people what belongs to them and to welcome them into it”  
**Philip Pullman, CBE**

“At the heart of the RSL are its Fellows, and as Chair my aim is to link them, our best writers, with readers so that their remarkable talents are shared as widely as possible”  
**Anne Chisholm, Chair**



Seamus Heaney at a celebration of his work, February 2010

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# The Royal Society of Literature

If you have already remembered the RSL in your will, or are considering doing so, we would greatly appreciate it if you could let us know by filling in this form. The form is simply a statement of intent, is not legally binding, and does not prohibit you from changing your will in the future.

**Name (Mr/Mrs/Miss/Other)**

**Address**

Postcode

**Telephone**

**Email**

**Date**

Please tick as appropriate

I have left a pecuniary legacy to the RSL

I am considering leaving a legacy to the RSL and I would like someone from the organisation to contact me

I have left a residuary legacy to the RSL

I do not wish to receive any further mailings on this subject

If you felt able to give some indication of the value of your legacy we would be very grateful

This form will be treated in strictest confidence.

Please post it, once completed, to:

Maggie Fergusson, The Royal Society of Literature,

Somerset House, Strand, London WC2R 1LA

Alternatively, please call 0207 845 4677

or email [Maggie@rslit.org](mailto:Maggie@rslit.org)