



The British Society for LITERATURE and SCIENCE

*Dr Barri J. Gold (U of Pennsylvania), Chair; Adele Guyton (KU Leuven), Secretary;
Dr Laura E. Ludtke (U of Oxford), Treasurer; Dr Jordan Kistler (U of Strathclyde), Communications Officer;
Dr Louise Benson James (U of Ghent), Membership Secretary; Prof. Sharon Ruston (Lancaster U), Book Reviews Editor.
Members at Large: Sara Cole (Lancaster U); Dr Lloyd Meadhbh Houston (U of Cambridge),
Dr Olivia Krauze (U of Cambridge).
Overseas Representative: Dr Liliane Campos (Sorbonne Nouvelle U).*

BSLS SMALL GRANTS EVENT 2024, 4-5 SEPTEMBER 2024

At the EVENT 2024 conference held by the British Association for Victorian Studies at the University of Stirling on the 4th and 5th September we, Rebecca Hamilton, Dr Helena Ifill, and Claudia Sterbini, presented a panel on 'Sex and Sexology at the *Fin de Siècle*'. We were extremely lucky to have been supported and funded by both the British Society for Literature and Science and the Victorian Popular Fiction Association.

Our panel showcased some of our work looking at the construction of sexuality as an "event" in late-Victorian and *fin de siècle* popular fiction and sexology. We argued that the increased attention paid by sexology, medicine, and popular fiction and nonfiction at the *fin de siècle* constructs sexuality as a locale where self-identity, race, and gender are contested. The panel explored how science and literature contributed to, and co-produced, constructions of sexuality as compulsory and pathological understandings of non-heterosexual intercourse. The papers also reflected on the long

history of the *fin de siècle* conceptualisation of sex, revealing the ways in which late-Victorian gender and sexual stigmas continue to affect contemporary discourses on the topic.

The panellists discussed, respectively, the topic of sexual violence in *Dracula* and its relation to the sexological representation of rape as detached from humanity, resulting in its erasure (Rebecca Hamilton); the representation of the wedding night as a contested, anxious moment in both marital manuals and gothic short stories (Dr Helena Ifill); and the construction of nonsexuality as a pathological non-event in the writing of sexologist Havelock Ellis (Claudia Sterbini). It was an amazing opportunity to put our research in relation to one another, and we were surprised by all the points of communion between our papers.

Generally, the conference was a perfect fit for the panel, as it promoted interdisciplinarity: for example, the panel 'Esoteric Events' highlighted the interrelation of sexuality, religion and medicine; the brilliant 'Events on/as Criminal Trial' brought literary methods in the discussion of law; and 'Diluvial Events' considered the way in which art and science respond together to natural catastrophes. It was brilliant to see the topics that characterise the BSLS thriving and to have interdisciplinary conversations with other participants.

The separate hubs held by BAVS across the world were a great idea, as it meant that the event was smaller and more personalised, allowing us to network more effectively. It has also been fantastic to read fellow

The BSLS promotes interdisciplinary research into the relationship between science and literature in all periods.

Autumn 2024 Newsletter

researchers' papers from other hubs through the COVE online annotation platform. Overall, it was a fun and intimate couple of days that allowed us to get to know academics in our locale.

—Claudia Sterbini

The BSLS Newsletter is published quarterly in February, May, August, and November, with submissions deadlines typically the last Friday of the preceding month.

Editor: Jenni G Halpin

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

Brychan Carey, *The Unnatural Trade: Slavery, Abolition, and Environmental Writing, 1650–1807* (Yale University Press, 2024). Hardcover Price: UK £49.00, US \$65.00. ISBN: 9780300224412

Observing that almost all descriptions of the slave trade and plantation slavery readily available to British readers before 1760 were written either by naturalists or by travellers with a strong interest in natural history, this book reveals that the origins of abolitionism were as much in science as in economics or humanitarian sensibilities.

Bringing together ideas and findings from a variety of research areas including history, literary studies, and the environmental sciences, *The Unnatural Trade* offers original readings of some of the most important writings in antislavery and natural history including work by naturalists Griffith Hughes, Richard Ligon, and Hans Sloane; abolitionists Anthony Benezet, Thomas Clarkson, and Olaudah Equiano; and poets William Cowper, Thomas Day, and James Grainger.

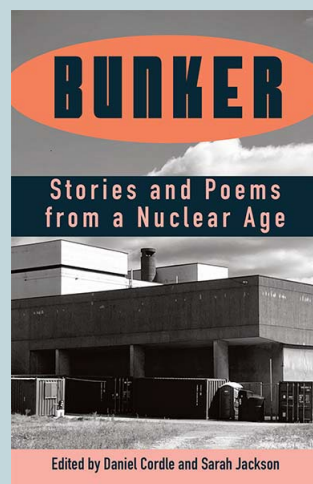
More information at <https://www.brychancarey.com/bookshop/unnaturaltrade.htm>

Daniel Cordle and Sarah Jackson (eds). *Bunker: Stories and Poems from a Nuclear Age* (Five Leaves Publishing, 2024)

Hidden away in a patch of wasteland in suburban Nottingham, a Cold War relic lies abandoned. This is Regional Seat of Government 3, a nuclear bunker from which a Regional Commissioner would have presided over a society and landscape devastated by nuclear war. This book ([available for £10 from Five Leaves Publishing](#)) is the outcome of a critical-creative project led by Daniel Cordle and Sarah Jackson and is what happened when the bunker opened its steel doors to a group of writers and experts, giving them privileged access to this strange and haunting space before the developers moved in. Its stories and poems wander the windowless corridors and offices, kitchens and canteens, dormitories and washrooms of a place from a terrible alternate reality.

Contributors: Jon McGregor (International Dublin Literary Award; 3 times longlisted for the Booker Prize), Ailbhe Darcy (Wales Book of the Year; Pigott Prize for Poetry), Sarah Jackson (Seamus Heaney Prize for Poetry; BBC New Generation Thinker), Jay Gao (Michael Murphy Memorial Prize; Eric Gregory Award; Somerset Maugham Award), Anthony Cropper (BBC Alfred Bradley Award), Helena Hunter, Hannah Cooper-Smithson (shortlisted for Rebecca Swift Women Poets' Prize and the Manchester Poetry Prize), Delphine Grass, Phil Leonard, Jonathan Hogg, Maria Gil Ulldemolins, Andrew Taylor and Daniel Cordle. It is illustrated with photographs by architectural photographer, Martine Hamilton Knight.

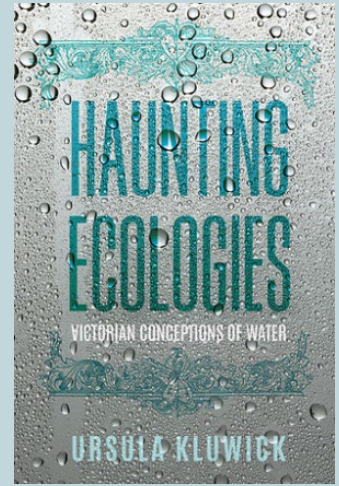
In addition, Daniel Cordle has spoken about the bunker and its significance to ITN Central News, the BBC, Left Lion magazine, and the Daily Mail.



Ursula Kluwick, *Haunting Ecologies: Victorian Conceptions of Water* (University of Virginia Press, June 2024)

Water matters like few other substances in people's daily lives. In the nineteenth century, it left its traces on politics, urban reform, and societal divisions, as well as on conceptualizations of gender roles. Drawing on the methodology of material ecocriticism, Ursula Kluwick's *Haunting Ecologies* argues that Victorian Britons were keenly aware of aquatic agency, recognizing water as an active force with the ability to infiltrate bodies and spaces.

Kluwick reads works by canonical writers such as Braddon, Dickens, Stoker, and George Eliot alongside sanitary reform discourse, court cases, journalistic articles, satirical cartoons, technical drawings, paintings, and maps. This wide-ranging study sheds new light on Victorian-era anxieties about water contamination as well as on how certain wet landscapes such as sewers, rivers, and marshes became associated with moral corruption and crime. Applying ideas from the field of blue humanities to nineteenth-century texts, *Haunting Ecologies* argues for the relevance of realism as an Anthropocene form.



LITERATURE AND SCIENCE EVENTS

BIOMOLECULAR HUMANITIES WORKSHOP

15 NOVEMBER 2024, 2.15-5.30

2:15 p.m. UK time

- General introductions
- Ester and Jerome to introduce the idea of Biomolecular Humanities

2:30-3:15

- Tom Booth from the Francis Crick Institute on 'The Genealogical Turn in Archaeogenetics'
- Christine Lehnen from Exeter University on 'Vikings, Reality, Bioarchaeology'

3:30-4:30

- Toine Pieters from Utrecht University on 'Breaking paradigms by bridging the humanities and the natural sciences: biomolecular humanities scholarship helps shifting research priorities in leprosy research'
- Derek Gatherer from Lancaster University on bioinformatics and corpus linguistics
- Jess Thompson from the University of Cambridge on 'What makes a body? Proposals for thinking about the body across the biomolecular sciences and humanities'

4:45-5:30

- Ana Peraica from Atelier Peraica on 'Copyright, Market and Photogenetics'
- Tim Stinson from North Carolina State University on Book Microbiomes
- Final discussion



Centre for the
Humanities and
Health



UK Research
and Innovation



PLEASE SAVE THE DATE FOR SLSAEU 2025

THE LIFESPAN: PERSPECTIVES ON AGEING AND THE LIFE COURSE FROM THE MEDICAL HUMANITIES, THE HEALTH SCIENCES AND AGE STUDIES

Conference of SLSAeu
European Society for Literature, Science and the Arts
and
The Sciences of Ageing and the Culture of Youth

4–6 June 2025

The Great Hall, King's College London

Dr Aura Heydenreich (President SLSAeu), Dr Martina Zimmermann (SAACY Programme Lead)

Ageing is too often seen as an inevitable period of decline at the end of our lives. The UKRI-funded research programme [The Sciences of Ageing and the Culture of Youth \(SAACY\)](#), based at the [Centre for the Humanities and Health](#) at King's College London, looks at how we can overcome this cultural pessimism by understanding ageing as a lifelong process of change. SAACY explores how we talk and think about ageing in scientific research, medical practice and wider culture, and how the way we do so can affect our experiences of ageing, the meaning we assign to growing older, and the decisions we make about older people.

This three-day conference will be held at King's College London. We hope to provide limited hybrid options with a strong preference for papers to be presented in person. We are keen to foster conversations across disciplines within individual panels, encouraging contributions on lifespan/lifecourse approaches to ageing from disciplines such as Anthropology, Cultural Studies, Dementia Studies, Disability Studies, Epidemiology, Evolutionary Science and Medicine, Gender Studies, Geriatrics, Gerontology, Health Economics, Languages and Literatures, Narrative Medicine, Neuroscience, Philosophy, Postgenomic Sciences, Psychiatry, and Public Health.

The Call for Papers and further information on fees and bursaries will be circulated soon; for updates see also: <https://www.kcl.ac.uk/events/slsaeu-2025saacy-conference>.

Confirmed plenary speakers and round table discussants include:

[Sally Chivers](#), Trent University, Canada
[Ulrike Draesner](#), Leipzig University, Germany
[Des O'Neill](#), Trinity College Dublin, Republic of Ireland

[Susan Pickard](#), University of Liverpool, UK
[Oliver Robinson](#), Imperial College London, UK
[Kavita Sivaramakrishnan](#), Columbia University, USA
[Aagje Swinnen](#), Maastricht University, Netherlands

FUTURE BSLs CONFERENCES

BSLS 20, LANCASTER, 10-12 APRIL 2025

BSLS 21, STRATHCLYDE, 2026

The Society invites conversations with members interested in hosting upcoming annual conferences. Please contact the chair, Barri Gold (gold@sas.upenn.edu).

bsls.ac.uk

RECENT LITERATURE AND SCIENCE EVENTS

40TH ANNIVERSARY SCREENINGS OF LANDMARK BBC DRAMA, *THREADS*

On 23 September, Daniel Cordle arranged and introduced a 40th anniversary screening of the BBC's landmark depiction of nuclear war, *Threads*, at Broadway Cinema, Nottingham. He also introduced the film at a screening for Greater Manchester and District CND at Cross Street Chapel, Manchester, on 3 October.

KEYNOTE SPEAKER FOR CHRISTIAN CND

Daniel Cordle was keynote speaker for the annual conference of Christian CND (the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament) in Leicester on 19 October. His talk was titled, 'Of Endings and Beginnings: The Stories We Tell About the Nuclear Age.'

RECENT BSLS REVIEWS

Lavanya Arora reviewed Olga V. Lehmann and Oddgeir Synnes (eds), *A Poetic Language of Ageing* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2023).

Ashitha B. Arun reviewed Kersten T. Hall, *Insulin – The Crooked Timber: A History from Thick Brown Muck to Wall Street Gold* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022).

Sravya Darbhamulla reviewed Debapriya Sarkar, *Possible Knowledge: The Literary Forms of Early Modern Science* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2023).

Barri J. Gold reviewed Melissa Bailes, *Regenerating Romanticism: Botany, Sensibility, and Originality in British Literature, 1750-1830* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2023).

Shahira A. Hathout reviewed Tana Jean Welch, *Advancing Medical Posthumanism through Twenty-First Century American Poetry* (Palgrave MacMillan, 2024).

Frank A. J. L. James reviewed Aileen Fyfe and Colin Kidd (eds), *Beyond the Enlightenment: Scottish Intellectual Life, 1790-1914* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2023)

Bruna Lopes Resende reviewed Georges Vigarello, *Le Sentiment de soi. Histoire de la perception du corps* (Éditions du Seuil, 2014).

Dougie Morgan reviewed George Estreich, *Fables and Futures: Biotechnology, Disability, and the Stories We Tell Ourselves* (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2019).

Alan Rauch reviewed Conor Mark Jameson, *Finding W. H. Hudson: The Writer Who Came to Britain to Save the Birds* (London: Pelagic Publishing, 1923).

Kirsten Shepherd-Barr reviewed Steve Abbott, *The Proof Stage: How Theatre Reveals the Human Truth of Mathematics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2023).

Thabata Tosta reviewed David N. Livingstone, *The Empire of Climate: A History of an Idea* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2024).

WANT TO DONATE TO BSLS?

HERE IS [A LINK TO DO SO ON PAYPAL](#)

https://www.paypal.com/donate?token=vNNjXhvKrfBDKGFx39PdmzEkgrNU7eapjr5DKlKN44m3LjeXnO_bPfx6tZ5i4LoK4SQ-RwzxFwwHzLN

More information on hardship fund donations is available at <https://www.bsls.ac.uk/funding/>

CALLS FOR REVIEWERS

BSLS REVIEWS

We have the following books for review, some in hard copy and others in pdf. Please contact Sharon Ruston, BSLS Reviews Editor, at bslsreviews@gmail.com if you would like to review one of these books or any other book.

- Anderson-Tempini, Gemma and John Dupré, *Drawing Processes of Life: Molecules, Cells, Organisms* (Intellect Books, 2023)
- Arni, Caroline, *Of Human Born: Fetal Lives, 1800-1950* (Princeton UP, 2024)
- Carey, Brycchan, *The Unnatural Trade: Slavery, Abolition, and Environmental Writing, 1650-1807* (Yale UP, 2024)
- Chi, Chieyn, *Madness, Psychiatry, and Empire in Postcolonial Literature* (Palgrave, 2024)
- Deniston, Steve, *Settlers*, (Steve Denison, 2024)
- Desmond, Adrian, *Reign of the Beast: The Atheist World of W.D. Saull and his Museum of Evolution* (Open Book Publishers, 2024)
- Dimick, Sarah, *Unseasonable: Climate Change in Global Literature* (Columbia UP, 2024)
- Epstein, Hugh, *Hardy, Conrad and the Senses* (Edinburgh UP, 2020)
- Fyfe, Paul, *Digital Victorians: From Nineteenth-Century Media to Digital Humanities* (Stanford UP, 2024)
- Gupta, Suman, and Peter H. Tu, *The Practical Philosophy of AI Assistants: An Engineering-Humanities Conversation* (World Scientific, 2024)
- Howick, Jeremy, *The Power of Placebos: How the Science of Placebos and Nocebos Can Improve Health Care* (Johns Hopkins UP, 2023)
- Kiryushina, Galina, Einat Adar and Mark Nixon, eds., *Samuel Beckett and Technology* (Edinburgh UP, 2021)
- Love, Heather A., *Cybernetic Aesthetics: Modernist Networks of Information and Data* (Cambridge UP, 2023)
- Malazita, James, *Enacting Platforms: Feminist Technoscience and the Unreal Engine* (MIT P, 2024)
- Sutton-Mattocks, Julia, *Cures for Modernity: Medicine in Interwar Russian and Czech Literature and Cinema* (Peter Lang, 2023)
- Taylor, Michael A., and Ralph O'Connor, eds., *The Old Red Sandstone or New Walks in an Old Field* by Hugh Miller (National Museums Scotland, 2022)
- Topham, Jonathan, *Reading the Book of Nature* (U of Chicago P, 2022)
- Wong, Amy, *Refiguring Speech: Late Victorian Fictions of Empire and the Poetics of Talk* (Stanford UP, 2023)

The next deadline for funding applications is 30 January 2025

- The Small Grants Scheme is intended to support organizing literature and science events, especially those with a public-facing component. Contact Sara Cole (s.cole@lancaster.ac.uk) with queries and/or to apply; please put 'BSLS Small Grant' in the subject heading of e-mails.
- The Postgraduate and Early Career Conference Fund is intended to support PGRs/ECRs presenting literature and science scholarship at conferences other than that of the BSLS. Contact Liliane Campos (liliane.campos@sorbonne-nouvelle.fr) with queries and/or to apply; please put 'BSLS PGR/ECR Fund' in the subject heading of e-mails.
- The Research Grants are intended to support archival research and similar activities, particularly those undertaken by PGRs, ECRs, and others who are under-funded or precariously employed. Contact Sharon Ruston (s.ruston@lancaster.ac.uk) with queries and/or to apply; please put 'BSLS Research Grant Fund' in the subject heading of e-mails

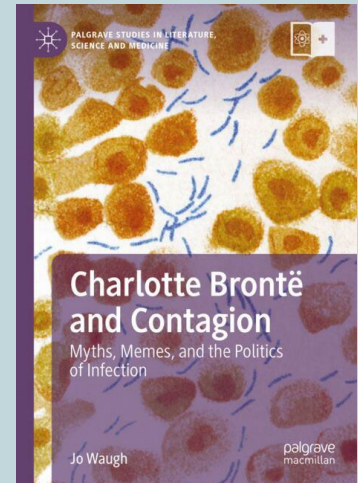
Throughout the year the application deadlines for these funds are 30 January, 15 May, and 30 September.

PALGRAVE STUDIES IN LITERATURE, SCIENCE, AND MEDICINE

RECENT TITLES

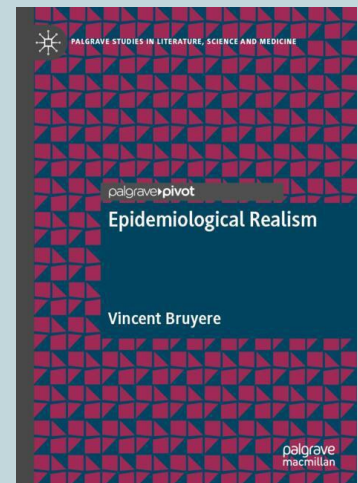
Jo Waugh, *Charlotte Brontë and Contagion: Myths, Memes, and the Politics of Infection*

This book argues for the significance of contagious disease in critical and biographical assessment of Charlotte Brontë's work. Waugh argues that contagion, infection, and quarantining strategies are central themes in *Jane Eyre* (1847), *Shirley* (1849), and *Villette* (1853). This book establishes the ways in which Charlotte Brontë was closely engaged with the political and social contexts in which she wrote, extending this to the representation and metaphorical import of illness in Brontë's novels. Waugh also posits that although miasmatic theories are often assumed to have been entirely in the ascendant in the late 1840s, the relationship between miasma and contagion was a complex one, and contagion in fact remained a crucial way for Charlotte Brontë to represent disease itself, as well as to explore the relationships between the individual and social, political, and cultural contexts.



Vincent Bruyere, *Epidemiological Realism*

This book examines what it means to live in an epidemiological reality, exploring the worldbuilding properties of epidemiology through the lens of critical theory, literary analysis, and visual culture. Whether we want it or not, we live in a world made of statistical correlations, risk factors, and social determinants of health, animal reservoirs and spillovers, containment strategies and curves to be flattened, prophylactic measures, and syndromic surveillance systems detecting in real-time potential outbreaks. This book uses a series of vignettes to show that we have lived in a version of that reality for quite some time now, even before the formalization of epidemiological tools and concepts at the beginning of the twentieth century.



MEMBERS' NEWS

NEW WEBSITE ANNOUNCEMENT

Daniel Cordle has a new online home for his research, after leaving Nottingham Trent University. It is <https://danielcordle.com/>.

CALL FOR PAPERS

BRITISH SOCIETY FOR LITERATURE AND SCIENCE

TWENTIETH ANNUAL CONFERENCE

LANCASTER UNIVERSITY, 10-12 APRIL 2025



Abstracts Due 15th November 2024
Early Bird Registration ends 6th January 2025

The twentieth annual conference of the British Society for Literature and Science will take place at [Lancaster University](#) on 10th – 12th April 2025 in person.

Keynote talks will be given by: Dr Kanta Dihal (Imperial College London), Sydney Padua (Buckinghamshire New University), and Professor Michael Whitworth (Merton College, Oxford).



Lancaster University campus

Please see below for registration details. If there is sufficient interest, there will also be the opportunity to visit [The Wordsworth Trust](#), in Grasmere, on Sunday 13th April.

The conference will continue online on Thursday 8th and Friday 9th May to enable wider participation; those who attend the in-person conference are welcome to also attend the online conference. The online keynote talk will be given by Dr Debapriya Sarkar (University of Connecticut). There will be a fee of £10 for the online conference to cover admin costs.

The BSLS invites proposals for twenty-minute papers, or panels of three papers, or roundtables, on any subjects within the field of literature (broadly defined to include theatre, film, and television) and science (including medicine and technology). The BSLS remains committed to supporting and showcasing work on all aspects of literature and science.

Conference bursaries: the in-person conference fee will be waived for two PGR members in exchange for written reports on the conference, to be published in the BSLS Newsletter. If you are interested in being selected for one of these awards, please mention this when sending in your proposal. You must be registered for a PhD at the time of the conference.

About the Conference: the in-person conference will be held at [Lancaster University](#), which is a campus university, and we have booked a number of ensuite rooms for delegates onsite. All talks, tea breaks and lunches will take place in the fully accessible George Fox Building (more details here: [George Fox Building - accessibility](#)). The conference dinner will take place onsite at Barker House Farm. Delegates can apply for a pre-school place for childcare at [Lancaster University Pre-School Centre](#).



The George Fox Building – Conference Venue

Membership: all conference delegates are required to be members of the BSLS in order to attend the conference (£26 waged/£11 unwaged): <https://www.bsls.ac.uk/membership/join-us/>. There will also be the opportunity to join or renew membership when you register for the conference.

For further information and updates about the conference, please contact Professor Sharon Ruston at BSLS2025@lancaster.ac.uk or visit the website: [Conference – The British Society for Literature and Science \(bsls.ac.uk\)](https://www.bsls.ac.uk/conference).

Registration is now open:

- Please book for **Registration:** refreshments and lunch are included, but please note, Thursday and Friday Evening Dinners need to be purchased separately, (see next item below). [The British Society for Literature and Science - BSLS Conference 2025 - Early Bird Registration - deadline date: 6th January 2025](https://www.bsls.ac.uk/conference/early-bird-registration)
- Please book if you wish to attend the **Thursday Evening Dinner of Street Food and/or the Friday Evening Conference Dinner**, here: [The British Society for Literature and Science - BSLS Conference 2025 - Street Food Dinner 10th April and Conference Dinner 11th April | Lancaster University Online Store \(lancaster-university.co.uk\)](https://www.lancaster-university.co.uk/online-store)
- If you would like to stay on site, in **Lancaster University campus Bed & Breakfast guest rooms**, please book here, using Promotion Code: **BSFLSC25**: <https://www.conferences.lancs.ac.uk/bedandbreakfast/>
- You are required to be a member of BSLS in order to attend the Conference. £26 Waged / £11 Unwaged/PG. **Please join or renew your membership to BSLS** here: [BSLS Membership](https://www.bsls.ac.uk/membership)
If you wish to **donate to the BSLS Hardship Fund**, please do so here: [Donate to the BSLS Hardship Fund, Lancaster University Online Store \(Lancaster-university.co.uk\)](https://www.lancaster-university.co.uk/online-store)
- **Directions to Lancaster University:** <https://www.lancaster.ac.uk/about-us/maps-and-travel/> More detailed instructions to the Conference Venue; the George Fox Building, will follow in early January 2025.



The Wordsworth Trust, Grasmere.