

PRESS RELEASE:

Writer and LGBTQ+ pioneer Sylvia Townsend Warner will be Dorchester's first non-royal statue of a woman.

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From: Visible Women UK – 1188919

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Photo Call: 2nd November 2024, 11:30 am, outside Gould's Fashion Department Store, where the statue will be located.

Join us, along with our patron, Tracy Chevalier, Susie the Cat, and Sylvia herself, for a photo call in town.

Sylvia Townsend Warner

Following our public vote, we are happy to announce that the remarkable writer and poet Sylvia Townsend Warner will finally be honoured with a long-overdue statue, enriching Dorchester's literary and visual heritage. She will be the town's first non-royal statue of a woman, joining the six statues of men that Dorchester already proudly displays.



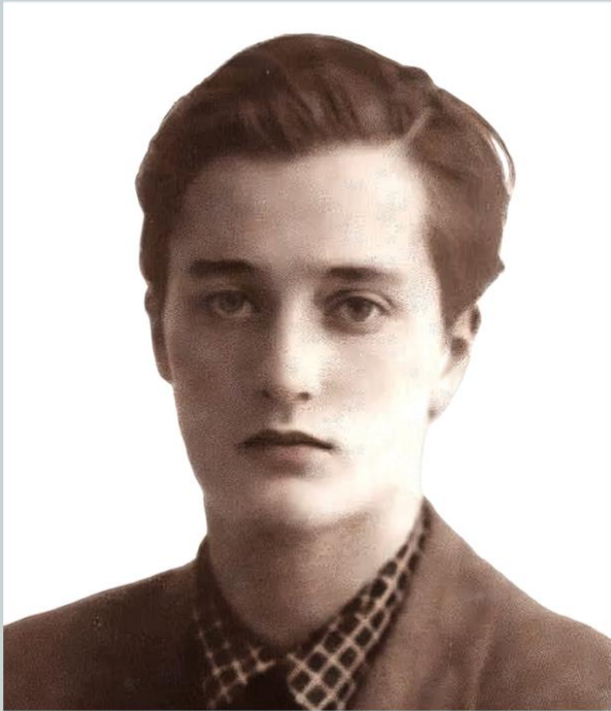
"Sylvia Townsend Warner was a prolific writer and poet whose career spanned six decades, producing some of the most varied, witty, and revolutionary work of her time. Yet, despite her remarkable contributions, her name is rarely mentioned and remains absent from Dorset's literary landscape."

Mark Chutter – Chairman and Academic Director of the Thomas Hardy Society

LGBTQ+ Trailblazer

Townsend Warner's personal life was just as remarkable as her literary achievements. She spent most of her adult life in rural Dorset with poet Valentine Ackland, her long-term partner. At a time when same-sex relationships were heavily stigmatised, their partnership defied societal expectations, positioning both Townsend Warner and Ackland as pioneers for LGBTQ+ visibility and acceptance.

'When people think of Dorset writers, they tend to think of men. Thomas Hardy and the poet William Barnes; that's why I'm so delighted that there is going to be a statue of Townsend Warner, who spent most of her life in Dorset. I think it's great that she is finally going to be acknowledged alongside the men.'
Tracy Chevalier – Author and Patron



"Sylvia lived her life as her true self, something many still find impossible due to prejudice and ignorance. She is a modern-day role model, allowing young people to see themselves in what she achieved all those years ago. I can't wait to shake things up a little with a beautiful statue dedicated to such a talented and remarkable woman."

Anya Pearson – Trustee of Visible Women UK

The Statue & Susie the Cat

We will be working with Denise Dutton again. In 2022, she created the beautiful Mary Anning statue in Lyme Regis. Below is her initial drawing of how the sculpture could look, including a cat. Sylvia was an avid cat lover, and over the years, she was often photographed with her cherished feline companions. Naturally, we felt it fitting to include a cat in her sculpture, and who better to serve as the model than Dorchester's famous Susie the Cat?

