

# *Lolly Willowes* at 100

University College London, 29<sup>th</sup>-30<sup>th</sup> May 2026

The Sylvia Townsend Warner Society

## Conference schedule

### Friday 29th May

10.15 – 11.00 Registration

#### 11.00 – 12.30 Panel 1

Melissa Zeiger: 'Rebecca Random's garden'

Hilary Bedder: 'Sylvia Townsend Warner's irrational and corporeal vegetal women'

Nicholas Birns: "'A deeper voice in the murmuring leaves": The sacred, the secular, and possibility in Sylvia Townsend Warner'

12.30 – 13.30 Lunch

#### 13.30 – 15.00 Panel 2

Ronald Hutton: 'Witchcraft in British novels between the wars'

Diane Purkiss: 'Sylvia Townsend Warner and Hope Mirrlees'

#### 15.15 – 16.30 Panel 3

Liz Kendall: 'The Devil's gift of idle hands: leisure as spiritual practice in *Lolly Willowes* and life'

Carol Dow: 'A feminist Paganism – the awakening of Laura in Sylvia Townsend Warner's *Lolly Willowes*'

16.30 – 17.15 Tea

#### 17.30 – 19.00 Plenary lecture

Adam Mars-Jones: 'Taking to the (magnetic) air: Sylvia Townsend Warner in the Kingdoms of Elfin'

19.00 – 21.00 **Drinks reception**, sponsored by UCL Press

## Saturday 30th May

### 10.00 – 11.30 Panel 4

Sarah Potts Jones: 'Green celibacies: Esoteric and ecological intimacy in Sylvia Townsend Warner's *Lolly Willowes*'

Claire Mabey: 'Trees, witches and work: how *Lolly Willowes* inspired my novel for children'

Sandra Unerman: 'Dancing with the Devil: Lady Hatton and other Victorian folk legends'

### 11.30 – 12.00 Coffee

### 12.00 – 13.15 Musical interlude

Michael Alec Rose: "I, Laura Willowes": The Witch Discovers Her Voice'

### 13.15 – 14.15 Lunch

### 14.15 – 15.45 Panel 5

Michael Caines: 'Sylvia and Theo: An unorthodox dialogue'

Helen Tyson: "'A life of one's own": Witches in Sylvia Townsend Warner and Marion Milner'

Ailsa Granne: "'A small rosary as neat as a snake": Sylvia Townsend Warner, religion and the supernatural'

### 15.45 – 16.15 Tea

### 16.15 – 17.45 The Writers' Panel

Philip Hensher, Juliet McKenna and Deryn Rees-Jones in conversation about Sylvia Townsend Warner and their practice as writers.

### 17.30 – 19.00

Concluding thanks and drinks

### 19.00

Conference dinner

## Booksellers

The Conference is very glad to welcome Treadwells Books from nearby Store Street, the leading London specialist in esoteric books, talks, classes, tarot readings (but mainly books). Treadwells will be in attendance on both days of the conference.

We are also very pleased to welcome Quair Books, which specialises in modern literary and visual cultures, particularly alternative, different and radical authors/artists, presses and histories. They also hold a small general stock, with a focus on unusual, interesting and beautiful books, as well as significant titles in the history of ideas. Like other collectors and bibliophiles, they are drawn to unique books and important pedigrees, but also appreciate the broad spectrum of collecting, having a particular fondness for politically pertinent series such as Virago Modern Classics, the Gay Men's Press and The Women's Press. Quair Books will be selling books on the Friday only.