

Celebrating 50 years of growing the Arts



The
Cookham
Festival
Stanley
Spencer
Poetry
Competition
2017



Neighbours, 1936 Stanley Spencer Gallery, Cookham.
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"Stanley Spencer was before all else a poet for whom the natural beauty of the world—meadows, gardens, trees in blossom, rivers—was the primary fact"
Guy Davenport



About



The Cookham Festival was first staged in 1967. Based in the beautiful Thames-side village of Cookham in Berkshire, home of the celebrated British artist Stanley Spencer, the festival provides a packed and diverse two week programme of Arts events, from Shakespeare to stand-up comedy, from sculpture to knitting, from painting to flower arranging. There is music from rock to baroque, from orchestras and choirs to small groups and soloists, with performers aged from 9 to 90. Works from established authors and composers are performed alongside world premieres of new works. The Festival has a proud record of commissioning and showcasing new works, in line with its ambition of Growing the Arts.

To celebrate its Golden Anniversary in 2017, the Cookham Festival is launching an international Poetry Competition. Organised in collaboration with the Stanley Spencer Gallery, Cookham, the University of Reading and Two Rivers Press, The Cookham Festival Stanley Spencer Poetry Competition will form an important part of the 2017 Festival and attract entries from the UK and overseas.



Prizes

The Festival will be offering **three major prizes, a first prize of £2,500 and two runners-up prizes of £500 each**. All works selected for the shortlist, from which the final three winners will be chosen, will be published by Two Rivers Press in a special anthology. Each published poet will receive, free of charge, a copy of the anthology, which will go on general sale during the Festival in May 2017.




Sir Stanley Spencer (1891 – 1959)

Stanley Spencer was undoubtedly one of the most admired and influential English painters of the 20th Century. He was born in Cookham and spent much of his life there. Indeed, Cookham was a major influence on both Spencer's life and his painting and his reference to Cookham as "a village in Heaven" is reflected in his famous series of paintings of Biblical scenes, set in Cookham and featuring local people. But Spencer's work during the First and Second World Wars is also of very great significance. The Great War of 1914-18 is represented in his paintings of his time serving with the Royal Army Medical Corps in Macedonia and, later, in his colossal undertaking to paint the interior of the Sandham Memorial Chapel in Burghclere. During the Second World War Spencer worked for the War Artists' Advisory Committee in the Lithgows Shipyard in Port Glasgow, producing a powerful record of the life of the civilians working there.

Spencer has often been used as a theme in Cookham Festival events inspiring painting and drama, but never as a stimulus for poetry.

Spencer's life and work, embracing a powerful and unconventional approach to everything he did and thought, continues to offer strikingly original promptings for further creative work. The Cookham Festival's 2017 Competition warmly invites poets to find inspiration for their own art in the work of this remarkable man.



Details of how to enter the competition can be found on the back page of this brochure. These details, together with entry forms, can also be found on the Cookham Festival website at www.Cookhamfestival.org.uk

The Judges

The competition will be judged by a panel led by two distinguished poets and a specialist in the art of Stanley Spencer, under the chairmanship of Professor Peter Robinson from the Department of English Literature at the University of Reading. The profiles of the three judges are set out below. The Cookham Festival is most grateful to the Department of English Literature for assistance provided to the judges in completing their work of selection.



Professor Peter Robinson



Peter Robinson spent much of his early life in Liverpool and was educated at the universities of York and Cambridge. After eighteen years teaching in Japan, he returned to the UK in 2007 as Professor of English and American

Literature at the University of Reading. Since 2010 he has also served as the poetry editor for Two Rivers Press. He is the author of many books of poetry and verse translation including *The Returning Sky* (2012) and *Buried Music* (2015), for some of which he has been awarded the Cheltenham Prize, the John Florio Prize, and two Poetry Book Society Recommendations. Peter has also published collections of aphorisms, prose poems, memoirs, and four volumes of literary criticism, as well as a book of eleven short stories called *Foreigners, Drunks and Babies*. His first novel, *September in the Rain*, is published in 2016 and his *Collected Poems 1976-2016* the following year.



Jane Draycott



Jane Draycott's poetry collections include, from Carcanet Press, *Prince Rupert's Drop*, *The Night Tree and Over* (T S Eliot Prize shortlist 2009). A 'Next Generation' poet 2004 and nominated three times for the Forward Prizes

for Poetry, other collections include *Christina the Astonishing* (with Lesley Saunders and images by Peter Hay), and *Tideway* (images by Peter Hay),

both from Two Rivers Press. Her translation of the medieval dream-elegy *Pearl* (2011) was a Times Stephen Spender Prize-winner and in 2014 she was winner of the Hippocrates Prize for Poetry and Medicine. Jane was a 2013 Writer in Residence in Amsterdam hosted by the Dutch Foundation for Literature, researching an audio piece and new poem on the trail of the great 20th-century Dutch poem *Awater* by Martinus Nijhoff. She teaches at Oxford University and the University of Lancaster. Her forthcoming collection *The Occupant* is due from Carcanet Press later in 2016.



Carolyn Leder



An internationally recognised scholar on Stanley Spencer, Carolyn Leder is a Trustee of the Stanley Spencer Gallery, for which she writes the exhibition catalogues. Other publications include a book on Spencer's *Scrapbook*

(*Stanley Spencer: The Astor Collection*, 1976). Carolyn has appeared on radio and television, is featured in *Who's Who in Art*, and acted as Historical Advisor to BBC2 Television and Arts Council films on Spencer. A panel member at a forum on Spencer (National Trust's Somerset House exhibition, 2013), she also appeared at the Henley Literary Festival (Unity Spencer and Carolyn Leder), 2015. She is a Consulting Editor to the forthcoming three-volume Spencer 'autobiography', edited by his grandson, John Spencer (Unicorn Press, 2016-18). Recent commitments include: a lecture at the Hepworth Wakefield's Spencer Exhibition, 2016, and in August 2016, as international keynote speaker at a study day in Carrick Hill, Adelaide, Australia for their exhibition on Stanley Spencer.

The Cookham Festival Stanley Spencer Poetry Competition 2107

Rules, Terms & Conditions of Entry

- 1 The Competition is open to any person aged 18 or over.
- 2 There will be three awards made by the judging panel, with a first prize of £2,500 and joint runners-up prizes of £500 each. The awards will be made for original and previously unpublished poems, not exceeding 54 lines, in English, or in any recognised dialect of English. Poems that have won or are under consideration for other prizes are not eligible, nor are poems which are translations of another author's work.
- 3 Poets may submit as many poems as they wish, but each one will constitute a separate entry. Each individual poet is only able to win one of the three main awards (in order that the Competition Prizes may recognise as many poets as possible), but may have more than one poem published in the Competition Anthology of shortlisted poems.
- 4 To be accepted for judging, poems must address the theme of Stanley Spencer; his work, his life, his themes, influences or beliefs. The poems will be judged by an expert panel of three judges. There will be an initial screening process conducted by the Department of English Literature at the University of Reading, under the supervision of the judges, to produce a shortlist of up to 75 poems. The judges will each read every poem on the shortlist before choosing the three winners. The judges' decision is final and no correspondence will be entered into regarding the results.
- 5 The shortlisted poems, including the final prize winners, are to be published as an anthology by Two Rivers Press Ltd. Every poet reaching the shortlist will receive a copy of the anthology free of charge (and be entitled to purchase further copies at a discount). Copyright in the individual poems remains with their authors but Two Rivers Press will own the copyright in the book itself and its reproduction and licensing rights. The publisher reserves the right to publish, free of charge, the winning poems along with all shortlisted poems in any format whatsoever for up to one year from the closing of entries, and to retain non-exclusive rights in the recording of the poems read by their authors for publication on the websites of Two Rivers Press and the Cookham Festival. Two Rivers Press reserves the right to make minor amendments to texts to ensure they are of suitable quality for publication and will be responsible for all aspects of preparation of print-ready files and their delivery to the printer, to include: publishing project management and scheduling, copyediting, layout design and typesetting, cover design, proof reading and delivery of files in appropriate format to the printer.
- 6 There is an entry fee of £10 for each poem entered. Where poets are submitting more than one poem they must pay a separate fee for each poem. Poems will not be considered for judgement unless and until payment is received. Details of how to pay the entry fee are included on the Entry Form.
- 7 Poems must be submitted electronically as typed, single spaced A4 pages, and must not bear the name of the author. They must, however, have a minimum six character Personal Entry Code, chosen by the entrant, which enables the poem to be cross referenced to the separate accompanying Entry Form and payment. If a poet wishes to submit more than one poem, the same Entry Code must be used on each. The Entry Forms will be used by the Festival administration and will not be seen by the judges until after their final decisions have been made. **The Entry Form can be downloaded from the Cookham Festival website: www.Cookhamfestival.org.uk**
- 8 **Poems and Entry Forms should be submitted by email to: spencerpoetry@cookhamfestival.org.uk**
- 9 At their absolute discretion, the organisers of the Competition reserve the right to return poems and their corresponding entry fees without the poems being considered.
- 10 There will be a poetry reading during the Festival at which the anthology will be launched. Shortlisted authors will receive an invitation to this event, which will take place at a date to be confirmed during the week commencing 8th May 2017. The three prize winning poets will be expected to read their poems aloud at the formal prize giving at the Stanley Spencer Gallery in Cookham on the evening of 19th May 2017.
- 11 The competition opens on Friday 13th May 2016 and the closing date for entries is midnight on 30th September 2016.