Vol. 1, No. 36 Published by the Francis Bacon Society est. 1886 November 2026

The Society has been established to encourage for the benefit of the public, the study of the works of Sir Francis Bacon, his character and his life, to encourage the general study of the evidence in favour of Sir Francis Bacon's authorship of the plays commonly ascribed to Shakespeare and to investigate his connection with other works of the Elizabethan period.

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The Francis Bacon Society provides a platform for the discussion of subjects connected with the Objects of the Society, but the Council does not necessarily endorse the opinions expressed by contributors or correspondents.

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Image: Thanks to Rob Fowler

The 2026 edition of *Baconiana*, the Journal of the Francis Bacon Society, is currently in full production.

It will be published online on Sunday 8th November and a link will be sent to all members.

Science and arts combine in this November newsletter with an exhibition, a book, a petition, a new epitaph, presentations, a new library and a forthcoming Christmas classic!

Sally Gibbins

MAJOR NEW FRANCIS BACON SCIENCE EXHIBITION AT THE BODELIAN

Many thanks to member John Dixon for informing us about a major exhibition at the Bodleian Library, Oxford.

Plain Things Wonders
5th November 2026 - 29th August 2027

"The Bodleian Libraries announce details of their forthcoming exhibition, **Plain Things Wonders, which marks 400 years since the publication of Francis Bacon's *Sylva Sylvarum***, one of the most influential texts in the development of experimental science.

Sylva Sylvarum turned natural history away from curiosities and marvellous beasts, in favour of the wonder of plain things. In his introduction to *Sylva Sylvarum*, William Rawley wrote that Bacon's ambition was **"to make wonders plain, and not plain things wonders".** Bacon did so, paradoxically, by inviting his readers to be curious about the most ordinary of things: how sugar gleams when scraped by a knife; how breath evaporates from a window pane; what happens to fruit left out in hot weather.

Plain Things Wonders examines the legacy of Bacon's turn to the everyday, tracing how close attention to the natural world has shaped scientific discovery, natural illustration, and artists' books over the centuries.

At a time when attention is being prized as an essential human resource, the exhibition considers what we might discover by directing more of it towards the world around us. From the familiar to the microscopic, **Plain Things Wonders** invites visitors to look again at the seemingly ordinary and discover the extraordinary within it."

More details **Here**

BOOKS

Staying on the subject of science, we'd like to recommend a book that we were invited to write a foreword to at the beginning of the year as part of the Bacon 400 commemoration.

A New Way To Know captures the wonder and curiosity of Francis Bacon as a boy and whilst growing up and his planning of a 'Universal Reformation'. It is beautifully written, and whilst it's aimed at children 8-

12 years, it crosses over to adult readers with its universal themes.

The author Jeremy Scholz is an award-winning author, educator, and lifelong storyteller based in Arizona. Before entering the world of professional writing, Jeremy dedicated 25 years to science education, a career distinguished by his recognition as County Teacher of the Year.

Part historical adventure, part scientific discovery, part coming-of-age story, *A New Way to Know* is the story of a boy who would grow up to change how the world learns forever.

"A New Way to Know, is an empowering and inspirational read and will clearly speak to young readers of a world where all things are possible. For adults it provides a powerful re-examination of Bacon's life and legacy and serves as a catalyst to perhaps recapture the wonder and hope of our youth."

Order here: **Amazon** **Barnes & Noble**

EDUCATION

Petition to Make Drama a Mandatory Subject for all 11–14-year-olds

Petitions
UK Parliament and UK Government

As an educational charity the Society is always interested in reaching out to young people and as Francis Bacon recognised, drama and theatre has a key role in people's education and development.

Every young person deserves the chance to find their voice, build confidence and feel that their ideas matter. That's why we are keen to support a recent petition asking the Government to make Drama a mandatory subject within the National Curriculum for all pupils age 11-14 in England, with appropriate curriculum time, guidance and support for its delivery.

Drama offers more than an opportunity to perform. It helps young people communicate, think creatively, understand different perspectives and work together. Through Drama, pupils can develop confidence, empathy, critical thinking and collaboration, skills they can carry into their learning, future work and everyday lives.

Yet in the UK, access to Drama remains inconsistent across schools, leaving some pupils without these opportunities, particularly those from lower-income backgrounds. Making Drama mandatory would help ensure that a young person's access does not depend on which school they attend.

It's surely important that every young person has the opportunity to be heard, connect with others and discover what they can achieve.

Sign the petition to make drama a mandatory subject for all young people: **Here**

Theatre Educator Jono Freeman

POETRY

Welcome to new FBS member Shawn Hamilton from Sacramento who has put quill to paper to pen an 'alternative' Shakespeare epitaph.

Dig the Dust Enclosed Here
By Shawn Hamilton

To think we deified You, poacher of deer,
Poacher of Mysteries,
Barely educated businessman exalted upon the faulty altar of public opinion.

Twain called you a fraud—
And those who worship you,
"Blatherskites" and
"Stratfordolaters."

The Greatest Writer in the World,
You never left a scrap of Your holy writ,
Not a play or manuscript in the entire
Inventory of Will.

You signed legal papers though,
Willing your wanton wife your "second-best" bed.

Scholars created your Lordship, Twain tells us,
From nearly airy nothingness,
Erecting a grand Brontosaurus
From a slight shard of bone.

But Shakespeare signifies the Common Man,
Not secret son of a virgin queen and cultured earl,
Whose loves' labours were lost upon
A nescient knavery.
We want to believe Him.
We want to believe that he, our country cousin,
Could stroll courts with lords,
Speak divinely with gods,
Having never graduated
From a reputable school.

Honorificabilitudinitatibus,
Shakespeare.
You're a mask, a disguise,
A bought bard,
Paid well to welter forth
Teachings of the Invisible College.

We bear you no malice
That you sold your name,
But you should have asked your patrons
(You were in a good position)
To write for you
A decent
Epitaph.

SHAKESPEARE AUTHORSHIP

Sunday 22nd November

In person event at London's Marylebone Theatre.

Francis Bacon is to be well represented at this Year's Shakespearean Authorship Trust Conference.

SAT Trustee Sir Mark Rylance will open the conference in the morning, FBS longtime member Peter Dawkins, Founder & Principal of the Francis Bacon Research Trust, will give the keynote speech, and Sally Gibbins will present for Francis Bacon in the afternoon candidate presentations.

Full Day Schedule

11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. • **FREE EVENT** • No registration necessary

An Introduction to the Shakespeare Authorship Question, with Sir Mark Rylance and **Dr. Ros Barber**

1 to 2 p.m.: **Keynote by Peter Dawkins**

2 p.m. to 2:30 p.m.: **Edward de Vere • by Dr. Eddi Jolly**

2:30 p.m. to 3 p.m.: **Christopher Marlowe • by Donna Murphy**

3:30 to 3:50 p.m.: **"Rudolf Steiner and Shakespeare,"** presented by **Alexander Gifford,** Artistic Director of the Marylebone Theatre

3:50 to 4:20 p.m.: **Mary Sidney • by Dr. Kristin Bundesen**

4:20 to 4:45 p.m.: **John Florio • by Marianna Iannaccone** (recording)

4:45 to 5:15 p.m.: **Francis Bacon • by Sally Gibbins**

5:15 to 5:25 p.m.: **Dr. Ros Barber** on Results of the SAT's Inaugural Essay Competition

Closing by Professor William Leahy

Full details and booking **Here**

SHAKESPEARE LIBRARY OPENS AT THE GLOBE ON BANKSIDE

London's only dedicated Shakespeare library and archive has recently opened to the public.

It holds over 6,000 books on Shakespeare, early modern literature, and drama, alongside nearly 500 rare 16th- and 17th-century works (including an original 1632 second folio edition) and recordings of every production staged at the Globe since the mid-1990s.

Dr Will Tosh, who leads higher education and research at the Globe, said:

"We want anyone with an interest to come and enjoy this space. In a time when libraries tend not to open, they tend to close, and we're in a real crisis of library provision and also a crisis of reading,

I'm extremely proud at the Globe that we are putting our name and our energy into the importance of books and libraries."

More details: **Here**

THEATRE

DICKENS, SHAKESPEARE & A CHRISTMAS CAROL

A Christmas Carol at St Olave Hart Street

Friday 18 December 2026 1.00pm

We can forgive Dickens' largely negative view of Francis Bacon because, like many Victorians, he was influenced by Thomas Babington Macaulay, a brilliant writer but considered by some later historians as a 'systematic falsifier of history'. Sadly, his false and uninformed views of Bacon became standard fare before readers had more accurate information to turn to.

Ironically, Dickens deeply admired and was profoundly influenced by Shakespeare throughout his life and quoted or alluded to his works hundreds of times in his own writing. Shakespearean echoes appear frequently in Dickens's novels—such as *A Christmas Carol* containing references to *Macbeth* and *The Merchant of Venice*, and *Oliver Twist* drawing subtle parallels to Duncan's murder in *Macbeth*.

As a child, Dickens walked past Gads Hill Place in Kent, a site famously associated with Falstaff in Shakespeare's *Henry IV, Part 1*. He vowed to own it one day, eventually buying the estate in 1856 and living there for his final decade.

Longtime Society member West End actor and singer Gary Cordice performed readings from Dickens at Gads Hill, and it is at St Olave's Church in London (Dickens was a regular worshipper here) that he is to present *A Christmas Carol* this December.

Blending dramatic storytelling, characterisation and song, Gary's one-man performance captures the humour, humanity and enduring message of Dickens' great Christmas tale.

Gary is a seasoned professional actor and singer whose West End credits include *Starlight Express*, *The Lion King* and *Five Guys Named Moe*. He is also a writer and composer, with his new one-man play, *Mislike Me Not, For the Benefit of Samuel Morgan Smith*, due to premiere in 2027.

St Olave's hosts an afternoon of ghosts, redemption and Christmas cheer, accompanied of course, by mince pies and mulled wine!

Book **Here**

That's all folks for another month, apart from to say, hope you've enjoyed reading The Francis Bacon Society's November 2026 Newsletter and please send in any contributions, photos, recollections, reviews, forthcoming events, book launches etc., that you feel may be of interest to our members. **francis.bacon.society@gmail.com**

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