



THE JOHN MASEFIELD SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER FEBRUARY 2026

I saw the racer coming to the jump,
Staring with fiery eyeballs as he rusht,
I heard the blood within his body thump,
I saw him launch, I heard the toppings crusht.
And as he landed I beheld his soul
Kindle, because, in front, he saw the Straight
With all its thousands roaring at the goal,
He laughed, he took the moment for his mate.
Would that the passionate moods on which we ride
Might kindle thus to oneness with the will;
Would we might see the end to which we stride,
And feel, not strain in struggle, only thrill,
And laugh like him and know in all our nerves
Beauty, the spirit, scattering dust and turves.

‘The Racer’
(*King Cole and other poems*, 1923)

A NOTE FROM THE CHAIR

This is my first newsletter since taking over the Chair from Bob Vaughan last year. Bob has stepped down after 10 years. He brought huge enthusiasm and efficiency to the role and will be a hard act to follow! I am grateful that he has agreed to remain on the committee as our membership secretary, and for his guidance.

We are delighted that we are now registered for gift aid, thanks to our Treasurer’s perseverance in seeing the process through. We will shortly be updating our forms and website to reflect this.

We hope to increase contact with our members. Don’t forget our website (<https://www.johnmasefieldsociety.org/>)! Also, with limited funds at our disposal, emailing out future newsletters and updates would help us to concentrate funds. The *Journal* will, of course, continue to be printed and mailed out as usual. However, if you’d like to be emailed newsletters and updates in future, please let us know; otherwise we will continue to post. Our email address at the moment is still: robert.vaughan@leonardocompany.com

With the ‘Masefield Matters’ project (<https://www.ledburytowncouncil.gov.uk/en-gb/john-masefield-memorial-project>) raising John Masefield’s star again in Ledbury and beyond, we have now a golden opportunity for recruitment. We need more members!

Finally, with reference to Ledbury Town Council’s project, now is the time for anyone to register their views on the final form you would like the memorial to take. Details of how to do this can be found elsewhere in this newsletter. Please take some time to give your views.

APOLOGIES FOR THE DELAY IN PRODUCING THE 2025 JOURNAL

We are sorry that the next issue of *The Journal of The John Masefield Society* has been delayed.

We are, however, happy to state that the next volume for 2025 and 2026 (combined) should be sent to all members in the first part of this year.

We’re thrilled that we’ll include a significant article on John Masefield’s son, Lewis. Our chair, Caroline Magnus, has been working on Lewis for several years and will present the first detailed picture of her first cousin once removed.

OPENING THE BOX OF DELIGHTS

Members will hopefully be familiar with Philip Errington’s book on *The Box of Delights* entitled *Opening The Box of Delights* which was first published in 2020.

We are happy to report that a third edition of the book was published by Herne Books at the end of last year.

The third edition features a new dust-jacket design (featuring Judith Masefield’s artwork) and the endpapers present artwork from the jackets of the first and second editions.

The ISBN is 978-1-917665-16-2 and the RRP is £20. The book is available from www.hernebooks.com

THE BOX OF DELIGHTS ON STAGE IN ST ALBANS

Piers Torday’s adaptation of *The Box of Delights* – previously at Wilton’s Music Hall and the Royal Shakespeare Theatre – was last seen at the Abbey Theatre in St Albans.

The ‘Company of Ten’ presented the play between 19 December and 28 December 2025. Our archivist saw the final performance and reports that it was a hugely entertaining and exciting show.

Let’s hope that other amateur companies take on the challenge of this wonderful adaptation.

SCROBBLEFEST 2025

Philip Errington was invited to Facebook's *The Box of Delights* Appreciation Society's Christmas event held on 22 November last year. The venue was the Dudley Canal and Caverns which was one of the filming locations for the BBC TV serial.

Philip gave a short talk on adaptations of *The Box of Delights* before the BBC TV series. He also joined a panel discussion with Alan Taylor (responsible for the BBC TV sound), hosted by Paul Emmine of 'The Pod of Delights' podcast.

Any fans of the book or the adaptations of Masfield's Christmas classic are encouraged to join 'The Box of Delights Appreciation Group' on facebook!

FULL TEXT AUDIOBOOK READINGS OF *THE MIDNIGHT FOLK* AND *THE BOX OF DELIGHTS*

Last year *The Midnight Folk* and *The Box of Delights* moved publisher from Farshore to HarperCollins (where they are now part of the 'HarperCollins Children's Classics' series).

As part of the move, new full text audiobooks have been released and are available on audible.com

The books are read by the actor Caius Nicholas, a young actor who graduated in 2022. Reviews are a little disappointing so far, but we invite members to listen and let us know what you think!

MASEFIELD MATTERS

The Masfield Matters memorial project is reaching the end of the initial consultation phase and views are now being sought on what form the final memorial should take. JMS members can register their views on the final form the memorial should take, either by following through the link which appears on the website: (<https://www.ledburytowncouncil.gov.uk/en-gb/john-masfield-memorial-project>) or via the QR code below which takes you straight to the survey.

The Masfield Matters Blog contains lots of items which will be of interest to everyone with an interest in Masfield. Members who are based in Ledbury may be interested in the events that are scheduled to take place during the coming year. Details can be found on the Masfield Matters home page of Ledbury Town Council's website. A warm welcome awaits you.

COMMITTEE MATTERS

We'd love to hear from anyone who might be interested in joining our small committee. We meet annually, both in person or online for those further afield.

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Scan the QR code to tell us the type of memorial you would like to see



Masfield
Memorial

Have your say

