

Masefield Matters is a three-year project celebrating the life and work of John Masefield, culminating in 2028 on the 150th anniversary of his birth

Two exciting milestones Match-funding achieved and finalists shortlisted

We're delighted to announce that we have achieved a major funding milestone. As part of our National Lottery Heritage Fund award, we were required to raise an additional £22,000. Thanks to the success of recent fundraising events, this target has now been met.

We will continue fundraising to support an exciting programme of activities and events until June 2028.

Following a public consultation, Ledbury residents chose a Town Trail as the preferred way to celebrate Masefield's legacy. Designers from across the UK were invited to submit proposals, and we have now shortlisted three finalists: **Joseph Hillier, Kevin Killen, and Platform 1**. Find out more about them on our website.

Their designs will be unveiled at 'The Long Trick' (6 & 7 November 2026, The Market Theatre). The public will be invited to view the designs and vote for their favourite.



SIMON PEBERDY AND MARK LE BROCC

World class music and a world premiere A celebration of Masefield's life and works, Friday 27 March 2026

By kind invitation of Nat and Laura Hone, we hosted a special evening of music and words at Bosbury House. Tenor Mark Le Brocq performed a programme inspired by Masefield's life and poetry, accompanied by pianist Simon Peberdy and interwoven with readings and insights from our fellow board member and Masefield expert Dr Philip W. Errington. A highlight of the evening was the world premiere of Roderick Williams' setting of *On Eastnor Knoll*. Guests enjoyed drinks and canapés, while a lively Chinese auction, expertly led by Nat Hone, helped raise £2,500.



SOME OF OUR BRILLIANT MARATHON READERS

Record-breaking public reading Masefield Marathon, St Michael's Church, Saturday 4 July

A unique eight-hour marathon of readings of John Masefield's works as part of Ledbury Poetry Festival, attracted 322 visitors and raised more than £1,000 for Masefield Matters. Sixty-two volunteer readers took part in what is believed to be the largest public reading of Masefield's work ever staged. Audiences enjoyed a wide-ranging programme including an 80-minute complete performance of *The Everlasting Mercy*, the poem, set in Ledbury, for which Masefield is most famous.

"We were delighted with the response to our Marathon. People who knew only one or two poems by Masefield at the most discovered the tremendous breadth, beauty and originality of his writing. They also were reminded that Masefield never forgot his early life in Ledbury. Even as an old man, he was able to recall people and events in the town. He also had a deep love for the Herefordshire countryside and the people who worked the land. We were delighted to have the chance to give a public performance to so much wonderful writing that has been neglected for decades." **Tim Keyes (Masefield Matters Board Member and organiser of Masefield Marathon)**

Shakespeare and John Masefield

The Power of Place

Burgage Hall, Church Lane, Ledbury, HR8 1DW
Thursday 17th September, 14:00 - 16:00 (4 rolling talks)
& 16:15 - 17:15* (free, un-ticketed)

What connects William Shakespeare, John Masefield and the places they called home?

This illustrated presentation reveals how Shakespeare inspired Masefield, and Masefield shaped Stratford's cultural life as Poet Laureate. Through archive material, photographs and collection highlights, discover the enduring relationship between these two remarkable places.

This programme, developed in collaboration with Shakespeare Birthplace Trust, reflects a shared commitment to exploring the literary and cultural connections between Ledbury and Stratford-upon-Avon.

*16:15 17:15 virtual talk from Reverend Dr Paul Edmondson



Ledbury students visit Stratford

We joined forces with Shakespeare Birthplace Trust to take 20 high school/Sixth Form students for a curated day of fun and learning about Shakespeare and how he inspired and shaped Masefield's work. Students visited many historical sites, enjoyed some engaging lectures, and were invited to write poems about memorials.

Upcoming Events

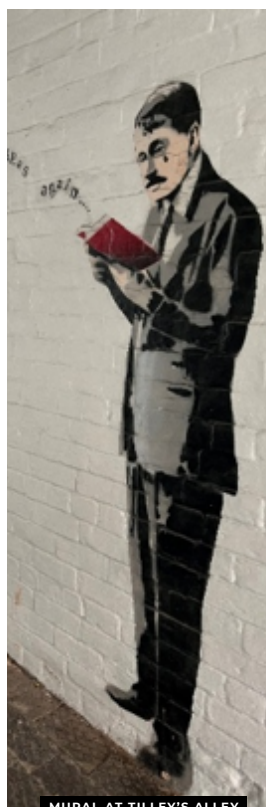
The Long Trick – a new play exploring Masefield's life and works
Friday 6 & Saturday 7 November 2026
The Market Theatre

Ledbury Choral Society Christmas Concert – featuring a world premiere of a Box of Delights inspired work
Saturday 12 December 2026
St Michael's Church

John Masefield High School celebrates their eponym!
Tuesday 23 March, 2027

Civic Society Talk – an update on the Masefield Matters project
Friday 27 March 2027, 7.30pm
Burgage Hall

The Wanderer – a concert performed by Refugium and JMHS Chamber Choir with music by John Frith and David Cowell
Wednesday 30 June 2027, 7.30pm
Pauntley Church and Court



MURAL AT TILLEY'S ALLEY

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Stay in Touch

Sign up to our mailing list to receive updates on the project.

Get in touch if you would like to get involved in any of our events or activities.

Let us know if you are part of a group that would like to join the celebrations - other organisations planning events to celebrate Masefield's 150th anniversary include Ledbury Area Cycle Forum and our amazing post box topper knitters.

Website and blog

ledburytowncouncil.gov.uk/masefield

Email

reception@ledburytowncouncil.gov.uk

Instagram

@masefield_matters

Facebook

Masefield Matters





The **Long Trick**

An Appreciation of **John Masefield**

FRI & SAT 6TH & 7TH NOVEMBER
AT 7:30PM

The Market Theatre, Ledbury.



Standard: £15
Student: £10

Book tickets via the box office
or at www.themarkettheatre.com

