



Philadelphia Branch of The English-Speaking Union

Courier

1221 Locust Street, Box 502 Philadelphia, PA 19107

October 2023

Annual Garden Party celebrating the Coronation of His Majesty King Charles III

It was a picture perfect day at The Highlands Mansion & Gardens in Fort Washington as members, friends and those wishing to celebrate the Coronation joined together for this historic occasion. Joining us to celebrate was Hannah Young, Deputy Consul General of the British Consulate, New York, and Oliver St. Clair Franklin, CBE. Proceeds from this event supported the Philadelphia Branch of The English-Speaking Union and The Duke of Edinburgh International Award.



www.esuus.org/philadelphia/



President's Column

Hello Dear Members,

As summer draws to a close it is time to report on our very successful events that we've enjoyed these past few months. Our Garden Party in Celebration of the Coronation was just fantastic with a great turn out and truly magnificent surroundings and weather. The Gardens at The Highlands were beautiful and our guests enjoyed our usual bounty of food and libations. Our special guests included His Majesty's Honorary Consul, Oliver Franklin CBE and Deputy Consul General Hannah Young who came down from New York City just for this event. As always, a big thank you to our Judith who always makes the details of this very busy day look so easy. The annual summer dinner at The Corinthian Yacht Club was very well attended and the weather could not have been better. And, the Wrench Speaker event on September 19 at Carpenter's Hall was equally well attended with Andrew Lownie providing highlights from his book on The Duke and Duchess of Windsor. For our fall and winter seasons, we are again busy putting together entertaining and informative programs and events for our membership. Our very popular Lecture Luncheon Series at The Philadelphia Club continues and this past week we enjoyed listening to and meeting Bob Pisani from CNBC. Great talk and, as it turns out, he and his lovely wife Suzanne live right in Philadelphia in the Washington Square West section of the city! Royal Oak Lectures are also returning with one LIVE lecture happening on Wednesday, October 18. Robert Sackville-West, 7th Baron Sackville will be speaking on Knole: One of Britain's Great Houses. Only New York City and Chicago receive this same live lecture option. We are also exploring musical ideas and are very happy to be able to offer a limited number of tickets to The Orpheus Club's Christmas Concert at Verizon Hall. We are moving this year's holiday celebration to Twelfth Night so this is a wonderful way to enjoy the holiday season in both December and January.

Thank you to all of our members for your continued support of our branch and we so look forward to seeing you this coming season. With all best wishes to everyone,

Very Truly Yours,

Debbie Smith Webster

President



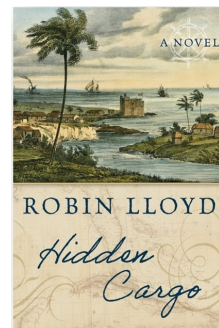
Philadelphia Club Distinguished Speaker Series and Catalog/Book Signings

We have been privileged to be invited by The Philadelphia Club (1301 Walnut Street, Philadelphia) to attend their Luncheon Speaker Series. The speaker luncheons are during the week and include the lecture and lunch, including coffee and dessert. Wine will be available for purchase. ESU members will receive on-line invitations with the ability to register on-line or by mailing a check. Payment must be received in advance of the lecture to reserve your place. Please contact philaesu@gmail.com if you would like to attend the following lecture.

**Reception at 11:30 a.m., Presentation at noon,
Lunch to follow
Friday, October 20, 2023
Robin Lloyd *Hidden Cargo***

ESU members, their spouses and guests are cordially invited to an illustrated talk by **Robin Lloyd** on his latest historical novel, *Hidden Cargo*, a suspense mystery set in Key West and Cuba in the months following the Civil War. The fighting is over and American slavery is no more, but the wounds from the conflict are far from healed.

Hidden Cargo focuses on an actual forgotten, shadowy chapter of post-Civil War history. In the Fall of 1865 and in 1866, alarming reports from reliable sources were reaching Washington that American freedmen from Florida and Louisiana were being kidnapped and taken to Cuba where they were being re-enslaved on the sugar plantations there. The book's fictional hero, Navy Lieutenant Everett Townsend, is sent from his base in Key West to Cuba to find out more about these reports. There he navigates his way through the storm brewing between native Cubans and their imperial Spanish rulers. His secret mission for the American government involves uncovering some unpleasant truths about the war's end even as he comes to terms with his own family's involvement in Cuba's then thriving slave plantation economy.



Robin Lloyd's talk will focus on the history and research behind this novel and explain how he first came across the reports of kidnappings while reading about the aftermath of the Civil War in Florida. His research led him to Army Intelligence officers' files stored in the National Archives and to dispatches from American diplomats writing back to Washington about mysterious landings of people on the north coast of Cuba. With illustrations and photographs of the plantations in Cuba at the time, Lloyd will explain how the end of slavery in the United States and the defeat of the South impacted Spanish colonial Cuba, marking the end of its plantation economy. Slavery in Cuba would continue for another twenty years, but the fight for equal rights

The lecture starts with a reception and book-signing in the Bar at 11:30 a.m., the live presentation will begin promptly in the Morgan Room at noon, followed by lunch in the Main Dining Room.

Please let me know in advance if you plan to purchase a book so we can make sure there are enough.

Lecture & Lunch: \$60 Book: \$25

ROYAL OAK LECTURE

Knole: A Private View into One of Britain's Great Houses

Robert Sackville-West, 7th Baron Sackville

Wednesday, October 18 | 6:30 p.m.

The Union League

140 S. Broad Street, Philadelphia

The Sackvilles have inhabited Knole, one of Britain's greatest houses, for more than 400 years. In his talk, Robert Sackville-West, the 13th generation of the family to live at Knole, will take Royal Oak members on a personal tour of this "calendar house," with its legendary 365 rooms, 52 staircases, 12 entrances, and seven courtyards.



Lord Sackville will illustrate the smoldering spirit of Knole, from the state rooms—with the finest collection of 17th c. Royal Stuart furniture in the world and outstanding tapestries—to the private apartments filled with portraits by Van Dyck, Gainsborough, Sir Peter Lely, and Reynolds. He will include a trip behind-the-scenes into the labyrinth of cellars and show attics filled with family mementos. He will describe his ancestors who inhabited his family home—the grave Elizabethan statesman, the good-for-nothing gadabout at the seedy court of James I, the Restoration rake, the 3rd Duke of the ancien régime—who inhabited his family home and were described by Vita Sackville-West (born at Knole) as "a race too prodigal, too amorous, too weak, too indolent, and too melancholy." Lord Sackville will talk about the way his family has shaped and furnished the house, and describe how Knole itself has shaped the Sackvilles, influencing their lives and their relationships up to the present day. The stunning images of the interiors were taken by Ashley Hicks for *Knole: A Private View of One of Britain's Great Houses*, published by Rizzoli 2022.

Robert Sackville-West, 7th Baron Sackville
Robert Sackville-West, 7th Baron Sackville, studied history at Oxford University and went on to work in publishing. He now chairs Knole Estates, the property and investment company that, in parallel with the National Trust, runs the Sackville family's interests at Knole. He is a board member of The Royal Oak Foundation.



The Royal Oak Foundation is the American Partner of the National Trust of England, Wales and Northern Ireland. Their mission is to encourage Americans to learn about, experience and support places of great historic and natural significance throughout the United Kingdom. Our members receive unlimited entry to all National Trust UK properties.

Our branch has received the honor of being listed as a co-sponsor of these events to recognize the steadfast support they receive from our membership. **Location: The Union League of Philadelphia, 140 S. Broad Street.** Lectures are \$40. Lectures with dinner are \$110. Registration is required:
<http://www.royal-oak.org/lectures> or 800-913-6565, ext. 201 *use code **ESUPHL23** to receive a discounted price.

What I Know About Shakespeare and Why It Matters

Guest Speaker: Jeff Watkins



Artistic Director
Atlanta
Shakespeare
Company



Wednesday, October 11th at 4 PM (EDT)

Sponsored by the ESU Atlanta Branch

Jeff Watkins, the founding Artistic Director of the Atlanta Shakespeare Company (ASC) at the Shakespeare Tavern Playhouse, will investigate the idea that Shakespeare changed his life, and the life of the Atlanta Shakespeare Co. ASC developed an understanding of what Shakespeare's original practices were and how they could revolutionize our production and performance of his works. In simpler terms, Jeff will ask and answer the question of how his approach to rehearsing and performing Shakespeare has changed over the last 25 years. This Happy Hour is sponsored by the ESU Atlanta Branch. All ESU Happy Hour programs are online, free, and open to all members and Friends of ESU.

Jeff Watkins was born and raised in Dallas, Texas. He studied theater with Paul Baker at Trinity University where he received his degree in theater and mass communications in 1978. After training and working throughout the United States and Europe, Jeff brought his Elizabethan expertise to Georgia. Since 1984, he has been the Artistic Director of the Atlanta Shakespeare Company. Jeff adds, "No one knows precisely what was in Shakespeare's heart or mind as he wrote. But I can assure you this amazing company of actors gets to the heart of what Shakespeare originally intended. My role as director is less about creating a vision to be executed than it is creating the atmosphere and crafting the process necessary for the company to succeed in our quest, specifically, the communion of actors and audience through poetry."

For more information and to register for the on-line lecture, go to www.esu.org and click on *News and Events, Happy Hour Series*.

Evelyn Wrench Speaker Program



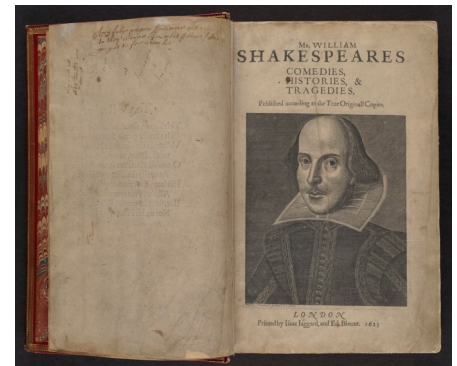
The Evelyn Wrench Speaker Series, named for ESU founder Evelyn Wrench, provides speakers to ESU Branches throughout the United States over the course of one to two weeks. Wrench Speakers have been renowned historians, politicians, and authors, presenting their work for ESU members and the general public. Lectures cover a wide range of topics, including but not limited to: current events; history; language and literature; art and architecture; and travel.

On September 19th, Wrench Speaker, Andrew Lownie flew in to give a talk about the 1936 Abdication Crisis, when Edward VIII gave up his throne for the women he loved, and what happened after. We were hosted by Carpenter's Hall. Andrew arrived early to inscribe his books for those who purchased them and meet and greet the guests in the historic Carpenter's Hall that recently opened after a renovation.



Annual Meeting

The Annual Meeting of the Philadelphia Branch was held at the Library Company on September 11th. Edwin Wolf 2nd Director Michael Barsanti spoke about the place Shakespeare held in colonial America and his place at the Library Company. What plays were most popular with early shareholders? What was the first volume of Shakespeare acquired by the Library Company? Who were the biggest lovers of Shakespeare among our early community and what place does Shakespeare occupy in our present understanding of the culture of early America? There was a brief reception following the meeting. We welcomed new members, Olga Pastor and Lillian Green. We also welcome new ESU Board member, Catharine Klaus.



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MEMBERSHIP

If you know anyone who wants to join, please direct them to our website at www.esuus.org/philadelphia/ or have them email philaESU@gmail.com to request a paper application. **We appreciate your support!!**

37th ANNUAL SHAKESPEARE COMPETITION

We are excited to announce that the 2024 Shakespeare Competition will once again be sponsored by the Museum of the American Revolution. It is our goal to increase the number of students who participate which means increasing the number of schools that should receive information about the competition. If you know a teacher or principal of a high school in the Philadelphia or surrounding area, please provide our information to them or give Judith their contact information so she can invite them to participate.

