

## Keith Carabine (1940 - 1925)

We are very sad to announce the death of Keith Carabine. Keith was the Chair of the Joseph Conrad Society (UK) for almost twenty years. He is well known to many Conradians for his energy, and for his friendly and forthright manner. Keith will be remembered, in particular, for the way in which he encouraged new scholars at conferences and welcomed them into Conrad studies. For many Conradians, he was their first contact with the Conrad Society, and, since the news of his death, many have recalled how they benefitted from his kind and helpful support. He was always a lively presence at Conrad conferences, from his first Conrad conference in Italy, where he strode in (in shorts and sandals), a fugitive from the very different world of Ernest Hemingway conferences. He will be fondly remembered for his generosity of spirit and his enthusiastic and charismatic leadership.

Keith had a deep love and knowledge of Conrad, and he made a significant scholarly contribution to the study of Conrad's life and fiction, most notably in the case of *Under Western Eyes*, his favourite Conrad novel. He also maintained connections with the owners of Conrad's houses in Kent, and those lucky enough to have visited these houses in past years during Conrad Society conferences he organised at the University of Kent owe those wonderful occasions directly to him.

Keith was born in Manchester and remained a loyal (and vocal) supporter of Manchester City FC throughout his life. After completing a BA in English at the University of Leeds (1961-64), Keith went on to gain a PhD in American Studies at Yale (1964-67). He was subsequently appointed to a lectureship at the University of Kent, where he taught English and American Literature (1967-2005). Many will also remember his active work as an external examiner of PhDs. On his retirement, he was appointed a Senior Honorary Research Fellow at the University of Canterbury. He has been a committee member of the Joseph Conrad Society (UK) since 1986 and was the Chair from 1996-2015, succeeding the Society's founder, Juliet McLauchlan.

In 2011, he was awarded the Joseph Conrad Society of America's Ian P. Watt Prize for Excellence in Conrad Studies. The testimonial noted that he had been 'a major force guiding and shaping Conrad studies worldwide' for over twenty years. His monograph *The Life and the Art: A Study of Conrad's Under Western Eyes* (1996) was rightly described as 'one of the select major critical texts that has brought the novel *Under Western Eyes* to the fore of Conrad studies in recent years'. It remains an essential text for understanding that novel.

Keith also contributed to Conrad studies as an editor. From 1994 he was the General Editor of Wordsworth Classics, for which he edited several volumes, including *The Selected Stories of Joseph Conrad*, a volume which provides students with a perfect introduction to Conrad's skills as a short-story writer. The testimonial for the Ian P.

Watt Prize described his introductions to and editions of many texts, including the Wordsworth *Joseph Conrad: Selected Short Stories* and the Oxford World's Classics edition of *Nostramo*, as models of 'scholarship, combining lucid and suggestive insight with judicious selection'. In addition, alongside several volumes he coedited in the Conrad Eastern and Western Perspectives series, his four-volume *Conrad: Critical Assessments* (Helm Information, 1994) is 'a landmark, monumental, and permanently enduring resource of Conrad scholarship'. Appropriately enough, he was also part of the editorial team (along with Roger Osborne, Paul Eggert and Jeremy Hawthorn) of the Cambridge edition of *Under Western Eyes* (2013), for which he also wrote the Introduction. His final publications were 'Some Reflections on Jessie Conrad's Correspondence' (*The Conradian*, 48.2 [Autumn 2023]) and 'Conrad in my Life', the text of his address at the end of the 40th Anniversary International Conference of the Joseph Conrad Society (UK), which displayed the humanity and humour that characterised his leadership of the Society. (This is the final chapter in *Joseph Conrad's Cultural Legacy*, 2024.)

In recent years Keith was seriously unwell, but it was very good to have seen him (albeit briefly) at the 2024 Annual International Conference at St Mary's, Twickenham, and later that summer at Conrad's grave in Canterbury for the centenary of Conrad's death. He was well enough to attend the coffee and cake afterwards at Oswalds, an entertainment for which his own sociability had originally paved the way. We shall miss him.

**Robert Hampson**