

President's Report AGM, January 3, 2026 – Janey Runci

Honouring HHR in Chiltern and Leipzig

It always seems particularly fitting that the first HHR Society event for the calendar year is the birthday picnic tea here in Chiltern. In many ways it is our main event, this chance to meet and celebrate our shared interest in the writer and her work. It struck me when I was preparing for today and considering our time last year in Chiltern and in Leipzig in Germany that there was a link between the two places. We visit both these places to honour the writer, and both of these places inspired some of her most powerful and moving fiction - in the case of Leipzig her first novel *Maurice Guest*, and in the case of Chiltern in the third volume of the Richard Mahony trilogy – *Ultima Thule*.

Society activity in 2025

1. Our year began with the annual picnic tea. The Society congratulates the people of Chiltern for maintaining this tradition for 56 years in an unbroken line, and we are grateful for the chance to participate in and share this event when we can.
2. After the picnic tea 3 main events dominated the Society calendar in 2025. First the long-awaited visit of Angela and Patrick Neustatter, Richardson's great niece and nephew, from England and the US respectively. Society member, Faye O'Carroll arranged a stimulating and enjoyable visit to the school she co-founded - Fitzroy Community School. The school staff were able to reflect with the Neustatters on their shared interest in the Summerhill school in England, founded by A S Neill and Lil Neustatter, Richardson's sister and Angela and Patrick's grandmother. A lively afternoon was held at the Lyceum Club in Melbourne where Angela spoke about the book she is writing about the two sisters. At PLC as part of the school's 150th anniversary celebrations both Angela and Patrick spoke about the experience of being members of Richardson's family. A third speaker, playwright Christine Croyden spoke about her play *Henry* especially commissioned by PLC for the anniversary.
3. In July we attended a performance of the play *Henry* at PLC.
4. In October a group of Society members travelled to Leipzig (where Richardson studied music) to attend events in her honour, and especially for her first novel, *Maurice Guest*, recently retranslated into German by Stefan Welz and Fabien Dellemann. We attended a concert titled 'An Australian in Leipzig' and heard passages from *Maurice Guest* read in German by the actor Dominique Horwitz and accompanied by the Leipzig Greig Quartet and Australian pianist, Tonya Lemoh. We also attended a concert by Masters students at the Conservatorium singing a number of songs composed by Richardson. The Society expresses its

deep gratitude to Stefan Welz and Sebastian Fink for the long hard work they put in to make these events happen.

Plans for 2026

In 2026 the Society will continue to maintain and develop awareness and interest at HHR sites as opportunities arise. We hope to complete the walking tours of these sites and convert them to a form that can be downloaded from our website through a QR code as required.

We look forward to working more with our Leipzig members who have further plans to promote Richardson in their city.

The statue subcommittee continues to work on the possibility of a lasting memorial for Richardson. We will continue to produce the newsletter 4-5 times a year

Thank you to committee members

I want to thank all the hard-working members of the HHR Society committee – the Vice President, Graeme Charles, Secretary Helen Macrae, Treasurer, Carolyn Mooney and ordinary members – Brigid Magner, Dot Charles, Di Parsons, Ric Pawsey and Gloria Banks.

And lastly thanks to our members who make up such a vibrant and enjoyable community.