



Adult Learning Within Reach

Member Lecture – 18 March 2021

Shelley as a revolutionary in life and poetry

Ron Marks, WEA tutor and Chair of WEA Eastern region

Questions answered post-lecture.

Q1 Was Shelley condemned from the pulpit?

I cannot, at the moment, find any reference to a public denunciation of him from the pulpit, though of course the High Tories at Oxford withdrew the Defence of Atheism pamphlet from the bookshops. Shelley and Hogg has mischievously sent copies to various bishops etc. I suspect they would not have wanted to draw attention to it, just suppress it. See Chapter 3 in 'Red Shelley' on his atheism

<https://www.amazon.co.uk/RED-SHELLEY-Paul-Foot/dp/0906224136>

Q2 Coincidentally, I watched Mike Leigh's film 'Peterloo' last night. Do you feel it captured the period well?

On the whole, I thought it did. There is (was?) a lecturer at the University of Essex who delivered one of the WEA Essex Federation Summer Schools a few years ago (bicentenary year 2019) on 'Peterloo', what led up to it and what followed it.

Q3 Given Shelley's campaigns and relationship with strong women, do you think he would have supported the women on Clapham Common?

My guess is that he would, if only in writing from the Mediterranean!