

Newsletter – April-May 2009

Reading Groups: please enquire at the shop if you are interested in joining any of the reading groups listed below.

Poetry Live!



200 people attended the poetry reading at The Edge with the wonderful Carol Ann Duffy - what a very special night it was. Our presence in the poetry world has grown and grown over the last few years and we are now able to attract "big names" to Wenlock. Each of the poets or authors we have hosted has been deeply impressed by the Wenlock experience, commenting for example on how lovely the town is, how special is the book shop, but above all, remarking that the 'quality of attention' from their audience has been so very special. Consequently, the word has gone around - and when I approached Andrew Motion to see if he would come to Wenlock the response was immediately positive.

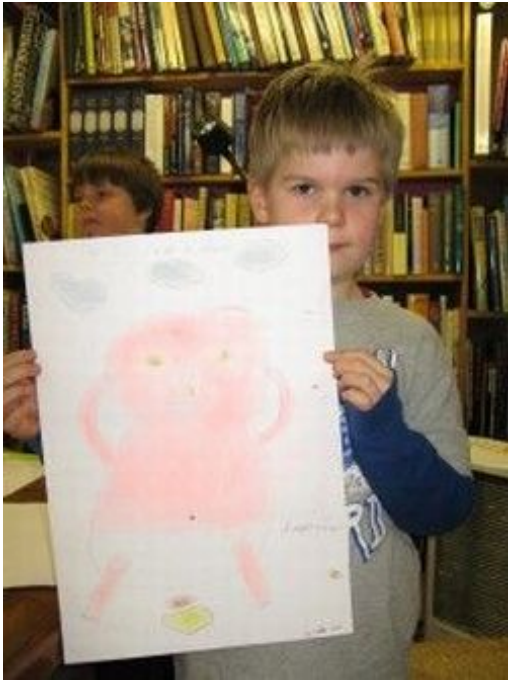


So, on June 12th, the retiring Poet Laureate, Andrew Motion, will be at The Edge Arts Centre. The evening will be in two parts: in the first half, Andrew will read from his poetry and from his newly-published auto-biography *The Cinder Path*. In the second half, he will take a Question and Answer session. Anyone who heard Andrew recently on James Naughtie's Radio 4e Book Club programme will know what a thoughtful and engaging speaker Andrew is: we are really looking forward to him being with us. This event will be held in the auditorium at the Edge, and so will be a smaller, more intimate gathering than for Carol Ann. For this reason, we advise you to get your tickets in good time as they will soon sell out! £12.50 - or £10 concessions. Please do support this important literary event.



And there's still more! On Friday October 2nd, Ruth Padel, great, great-grand-daughter of Charles Darwin will be at the Edge talking about her latest book, *Charles Darwin A Life in Poems*. If you've heard Ruth recently on Desert Island Discs, or during her series of Radio 4 programmes about Darwin, you'll know that we are in for a real treat.

Children's Poetry Club



Pictured left is Freddie, proudly displaying the picture of "Baby" that he did to illustrate his chosen poem. We had a session with Steve and Sharon see <http://www.petalpowerpublishing.co.uk/news> for more pictures, and we also learnt how to 'sign' a poem when we met with Susan Schaller www.susanschaller.com. We had the most wonderful time and I really can't wait to see all the children again.

Poetry Club Dates:

For older children (11 - 15): Tuesdays

April 21st

April 21

April 28th

May 12th

May 19th

May 26th



All children in this age group are welcome, just let me know you are coming!

For younger children (7 - 11) Tuesdays

9th June

16th June

23rd June

30th June

7th July

14th July

Both groups will start at 5 o'clock, for one hour. The cost is £2 to include drink and biscuits.

Reading For Pleasure Group (Meetings 2pm and 7pm)	
January 14th: The Book Thief by Marcus Zusak	July 8th: A Month In The Country by J.L. Carr
February 11th: Independent People, Halldór Laxness	August - NO MEETING
March 11th: Minnie's Room, Mollie Panter-Downes	September 9th: Consequences by Penelope Lively
April 8th: Notes From An Exhibition, Patrick Gale	October 19th: Things Fall Apart, Chinua Achebe
May 13th: Orlando by Virginia Woolf	November 11th: Lullabies For Little Criminals by Heather O'Neill
June 10th: The Good Soldier, Ford Madox Ford	December 9th: Mr. Pip by Lloyd Jones

Reading Groups

For details of all the reading groups, suppers, days and holidays please visit the website at www.wenlockbooks.co.uk and click on the reading groups page. This is the best way to keep up to date with what's on offer.

To clarify, all events and groups are open to everyone and anyone; events need to be booked in advance to make sure of a place, but the regular reading groups can be more flexible. It is quite possible to attend a particular group because you like the look of the book, without having to commit to the whole programme. It's a good idea to let me know you intend to come in case there are any changes to the schedule. (The only exception to this is the weekly classics reading group which is a closed group.)

Children's Reading Groups

We now have two reading groups for children - our original group for 9 - 12 year olds is now for 9 - 11 year olds, and we have added a group for 11 - 15 years olds. The younger group will continue to meet on the **first Friday** of each month.

The older group will tackle books more appropriate for their age group, for example, our first two books will be *No Shame No Fear* by Ann Turnbull and *Noughts and Crosses* by Malorie Blackman. This group will meet on the **third Friday** of each month.

Both groups will meet from 5 o'clock till 6 o'clock and the cost is £2.50, to include drinks and biscuits. There are spaces in both groups at the time of writing.



On Saturday March 21st a group of us from the children's reading group went to the Birmingham Rep to see Philip Pullman's *His Dark Materials*. This was six hours of amazing theatre with not a fidget from any of the children! If you get the chance to see this production, do go: it was wonderful.



Reading for Pleasure meets on the **second Wednesday** of each month. In April we read *Notes from an Exhibition* by Patrick Gale - it got a thumbs down, I'm afraid - and in May we are reading Virginia Woolf's playful mock 'biography' of *Orlando: a wry commentary on gender roles and modes of history*.

The Persephone reading group meets on the **third**

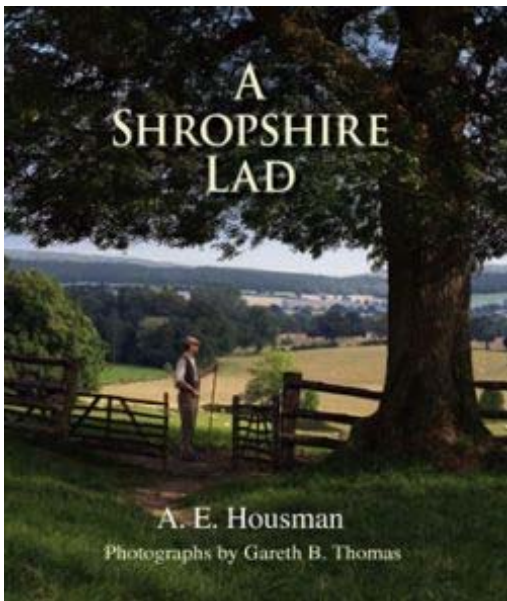


Detail from the inner sleeve of *The Montana Stories* by Katherine Mansfield, published by Persephone Books.
<http://www.persephonebooks.co.uk>

Wednesday of every third month. This month (April) we are reading *Family Roundabout* by Richmal Crompton, better known for the *Just William* books. The next Persephone meeting will be on **Wednesday July 15th**, when we shall be reading *The Montana Stories* by Katherine Mansfield.

There are a few places available at the Persephone group and the evening Reading for Pleasure group.

The next Reading Supper in Little Wenlock will be on Friday May 29th at 6pm. The book is *The Story of an African Farm* by Olive Schreiner. Please contact the bookshop if you are interested.



Book Launch: A Shropshire Lad

On Friday April 3rd in the Guild Hall, Much Wenlock, Wenlock Books launched the latest edition of Housman's famous poem ~ *A Shropshire Lad*, published by Ludlow publisher Merlin Unwin. David Lloyd - who has provided an introduction to the book - gave a fascinating short talk on A E Housman; Merlin Unwin spoke about publishing the book, and Gabrielle Drake read four of the poems from the sequence. It was a lovely event, and this book does indeed make the perfect gift.

Creative Writing Workshop

On Friday April 24th we are delighted to have Peter Diamond hosting a creative writing workshop at the bookshop. Peter taught creative writing for the Open University and Birmingham University. This event is fully booked, but do please let me know if you are interested in future creative writing events.



Morville Flower Festival

This year's flower festival takes place on the May Bank Holiday, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th May at Morville Hall. The theme of the festival this year will be "The Morville Hours" in celebration of Katherine Swift's beautifully written and highly regarded book of that name. Since publication last May the book has gone on to sell over 10,000 copies and has been reprinted seven times. Published to great critical acclaim and popular reception the book has become an instant classic and will hold an important place in our literary heritage for years to come. The paperback edition of the book is now out and I shall be at the festival with both hardback and paperback copies of the book for sale. Katherine will be available for signings. Do come and celebrate this triumph of seriously good writing - and enjoy a traditional village fair at the same time. Teas. Gardens open. Church open. Plant stalls. Book stalls. Village entertainments.

ORANGE Prize for Fiction



*The West Midlands Readers' Network (of which the bookshop is a member) will host this year's Orange Prize for Fiction event. The date for your diary is May 9th and it will take place in Birmingham, chaired by Kate Moss (Labyrinth, Sepulchre). The event will see a celebration of the very best contemporary writing in English by women from all over the world. A selection of authors from this year's long and short-lists will be invited, as well as former winners and judges. The WMRN will be sponsoring the event, and tickets are just £5, available from the bookshop, or from Birmingham Library. I am hoping to take maybe a coach-load of readers - if you would like to come, please let me know ASAP! We plan to go for an early supper after the event - **all very welcome!** This is a great opportunity to meet many established and new writers (almost) on the doorstep. Let's help make it a success for the west Midlands. More details at www.orangeprize.co.uk*

Venice

Our next trip to Venice leaves Wenlock on June 2nd. I shall attempt a daily blog while we're away so do check the website for updates!



Mollie and Beth



Beth has worked in the bookshop for many years now - starting as a young teenager working Sunday afternoons for Perce. Recently, she has worked for me during her holidays from university while she did her speech therapy degree, and over the last few months while she has been preparing to get married and job-hunting, she has been helping me out a lot more. Luckily for Beth, she has now found 'a proper job!' so I shall be sadly losing her any day now. I shall miss working with her hugely, and I know many of you will miss her too. Do come and say good-bye if you get the chance.



Another big loss is Mollie - who will be leaving in June for gap-year adventures. Mollie has also clocked up many years in the bookshop - starting, of course, as a baby when Perce, her Dad, had the shop, and then working for me on Saturdays and after school since she was about thirteen. Mollie has been the most amazing Saturday girl/manager (yes really!) and I shall miss her more than I can say. For the first part of her gap-year she is going to India to work on a community placement programme organized by Sangam - the international Girl Guide Centre in Pune. Mollie has worked hard to raise most of her funding for this, but could still do with some help; if you would like to give Mollie a farewell gift before she leaves for India, that would be most appreciated. Hilary and I will be holding an Open Garden Party at Brook Cottage, Clungunford, on Sunday June 28th 2 - 6pm: teas, cakes, raffle, entertainments - to help raise some funds for her - do come if you can: more details next time. *To be confirmed - please check!*



Reader's Club

Annual membership is £10 per person or £15 per couple - payable by cash, cheque or credit card. In return you get:

- ❖ *10% discount off all your books and CDs**
- ❖ *A Wenlock Books china mug and silk book-mark on joining*
- ❖ *Regular newsletters by email or post*
- ❖ *Early-bird notification on forthcoming events*
- ❖ *Personalised pre-publication information on your favourite authors*
- ❖ *A Wenlock Books tote bag each time you renew*

your annual membership
❖ Other offers and rewards as time goes by

*there may be some specialist books on which we are unable to offer this discount. Please ask at the shop if you would like to join.

Feedback please!



Thanks to Jacky Kay for this fab cartoon. To see more of Jacky's work go to <http://www.jackyfleming.co.uk>

Some of my best friends have told me that my newsletters are too long ☹. So if you've got this far, well done! I hope that by being directed to the News & Events page before you get to the newsletter you can pick out the headlines that interest you, and therefore just scroll to those items? Or maybe it would be helpful if there was a list of highlights at the top of the newsletter itself, with hyperlinks to the related article? (I don't know if that's possible, but will find out!) Let me know what you think would help. As a cost-cutting and time-saving exercise I am experimenting with a bi-monthly newsletter, but we'll see how that goes. There would be updates on the web-site in between times as necessary.

In the meantime, I welcome any feedback regarding any aspect of the newsletter; length; style; format; timing etc. It is costly to produce, both in time and money, so I want it to be as effective as possible. If you have a minute, please let me know what you think.

Best wishes,

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