

What's On at Wenlock Books: July 2007

Harry Potter!

Seven books, One story....

Although Harry Potter tests my organisational skills to the full (and thank you to my dear customers who have been called upon to help me with the spreadsheet!) it is nevertheless just the greatest fun. For the past two or three weeks I have been "Harry Pottering" all day and every day; plotting and planning; enjoying people's excitement when they realise they *have* managed to get tickets, and as yet, no disappointed latecomers, though I guess that will happen, too. In one of my emails to people coming on the train I asked them how excited they were on a scale of 1 – 10: one replied, "I've just asked my children how excited they are on a scale of 1 – 10, and they said 4 million!" I also had a very clever "9 ¾": its all good fun.

Reading for Pleasure

On June 3rd Manda Scott joined us for our morning discussion of her Boudica books, and then stayed on for a shared lunch in the garden. It was a lovely day, and it was fascinating to be able to have all our questions answered, and to hear a writer talk so movingly about how and why she wrote. If you haven't read the Boudica books (there are 4 of them) yet, they would make ideal summer reading when life slows down...

On June 6th we discussed Mollie Panter-Downes' *One Fine Day*; an elegant, thoughtful and moving evocation of a time gone by, never to be the same again.... It shares the honour of being only the second ever book to be unanimously enjoyed by all members of both groups (the other book was *The Kite Runner*). The language of the book is beautiful: we admired the author's ability to draw a character with the lightest of brush strokes, and although Laura's – the central character – experience of the war and its aftermath was not overtly tragic or dramatic, nevertheless, her experience, representative as it was of the upper middle class at that time, is valid and should not be forgotten.

Last month, in the children's reading groups, we began reading the first of Michelle Pavers' *Chronicles of Ancient Darkness* series: *Wolf Brother*. Atmospheric, dramatic and well-written, the children could hardly bear to stop when time was up (me too!).

In July, we are reading *How I Live Now* by Meg Rosoff in the monthly groups on the 4th at 2pm and on the 18th at 7pm. On July 11th in the *Persephone* group, we shall be reading *Saplings* by Noel Streatfield at 2pm and 7pm and on July 15th, there will be the last of the Reading Days at

Brook Cottage of this year. The books we'll be discussing on this occasion will be *Not the End of the World* by Geraldine McCaughrean and *Boating for Beginners* by Jeanette Winterson, with the *Poisonwood Bible* by Barbara Kingsolver as "background reading". There are places available, so get in touch of you'd like to come. £15, to include homemade biscuits and scones, a shared lunch in the garden, and excellent company.

Exhibitions

From July 14th, we shall be hosting an exhibition of work by photographer Judy King. Judy has travelled widely in South Africa, America and New Zealand and her photographs – which have also been made into cards and prints – are fabulous.

Readers of the *Wenlock Herald* are invited to Judy's private viewing at the bookshop on Friday 13th; do come and join us for a glass of wine. (It would be very helpful if you could let us know if you are planning to come on the 13th, thanks).

Tea and Talk

I am very pleased to announce that on Saturday July 28th local author Paul Francis will be joining us to read from his latest

Sadly, I was not able to get Barbara Kingsolver to come to Much Wenlock, though I am very hopeful that she will visit us on her next UK trip. I am going to see her in London, at the kind invitation of Faber Publishing, in early July, and will let you know all about it in next month's *Herald*.

Anna.