

Newsletter – July / August 2008

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

Looking back, June was such a busy month I hardly know how we got through it - but it was all marvellous, and here's a quick look back before we look forward to July and August.



The Children's Reading Group...

...has been busy recently: Andrew Fusek Peters - a very tall poet - came to talk to the group about his latest book the Skateboard detectives. He was absolutely tremendous fun and the children had a really great time with him



Author Barbara Mitchelhill - long-time friend of the children's reading group- came to talk to them about her latest book Storm Runners: again, a fabulous time was had by all of us

These events are super opportunities for the children to meet authors in an intimate and friendly setting - and hopefully will be something they remember all their lives.

Lastly, we visited Katherine Swift's Dower House garden for a rainy picnic! Katherine is the author of The Morville Hours - which is a wonderful book about her life and garden at Morville. Katherine held a picnic in her kitchen - talked to the children about her research for the book, and showed them around her garden. We had a wonderful time.

[See more photos](#)



Wenlock Festival

We were very happy to be part of the Wenlock Festival on two occasions this year. We held the launch of Cynthia Gamble's book *John Ruskin, Henry James and the Shropshire Lads* in the church. Cynthia gave a fascinating short talk about the book and signed copies afterwards. [See more pictures on the Blog.](#)

Our second Festival event was a literary evening with the founder of Persephone Books, Nicola Beauman. Our hosts were Sue and Huw Kennedy of Acton Round Hall. We had a lovely evening of sunshine, Pimms (thank you Carol!) and smoked salmon sandwiches (thank you Claire!)

[Photos of the evening are on the blog.](#)



The Morville Hours

As you must know by now, *The Morville Hours* is our best ever selling book, outselling Harry Potter by a very long way! It's a book that I love, and so do lots of other people: It's a book where once someone has read it they come back for copies for friends, neighbours, family- in other words a real word of mouth bestseller. It was, of course, helped by the beautiful adaptation on Radio 4's Book of the Week, but solid and continuing sales are down to the fact that everyone who reads it has loved it. We are tremendously lucky to have Katherine on our doorstep, and Katherine has been most generous with her house, her garden and her time in helping me to promote the book. We will be planning another event with Katherine in the autumn; do let me know if you would like to be informed of the details. To see photos of the reading group visit to the garden please [visit the blog](#)



You can also [see photos](#) of the champagne reception hosted by Chris and Sara Douglas at Morville Hall to celebrate the book's launch:

What else?

We had a small but lovely book fest at the **Clungunford Open Gardens**. Toby Neal; Manda Scott; Julia Ionides; Judy Smith and Mike Bliss all set up their stalls in my neighbour's garden and we had a super weekend of sunshine, organic ice-creams and cream teas: sold a few books too; thereby raising money for our parish church.

The **poetry reading group** led by Marilyn Pietroni has gone from strength to strength and is now fully subscribed (but do let me know if you are interested and I'll let you know if the situation changes.)

A small but stalwart group of us read as many of the **Booker short listed books** as we could manage. We had a split vote, *Moon Tiger*, *The Ghost Road* and *The Conservationist* all found favour, but *Disgrace* was our over-all winner. It's too late to vote now, as the winner will be announced on July 10th; but you can use this link to see who the winner is: <http://www.themanbookerprize.com> We shall celebrate by having supper at The Feathers at Brockton on the 10th - our guess is that *Midnight's Children* will have won.

An even smaller - and possibly even more stalwart bunch - group has just finished reading volume one of **Proust!** This is a closed group (the only reading group at the bookshop that is not open to all) and meets every couple of weeks or so to discuss a chosen classic. In the autumn we shall have a break from Proust's search for lost time, and instead read Henry James' *Portrait of a Lady*. How much of a "break" that will turn out to be remains to be seen - I'll let you know!

Speaking of Henry James makes me think of Venice! Our next visit is early June 2009, and the programme is nearly finalised! If you're wondering whether to join us, you might like to read Lys Pead's [account of the first time we went](#).

Author Visits

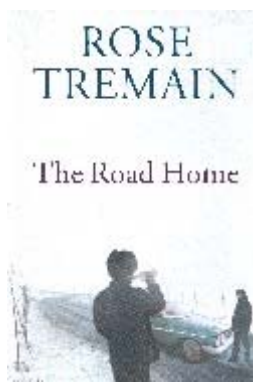
First-time novelist Poppy Adams came to the Guild Hall to talk about her novel; *The Behaviour of Moths*. Poppy's book has been published to widespread popular and critical acclaim, and is now published in America too. Poppy gave a fascinating talk about writing her book (at the same time as giving birth to three children!) - the ideas behind the book, and what it has been like for her since it has been published. For pictures please [go to the Blog](#).

OK - so that was June, and now for July / August!



Paddington Bear is 50 years old!!

Come and celebrate Paddington's birthday! There will be a special Paddington Story-Time for all Paddington fans on Saturday July 12th at 11 o'clock and again at 3 o'clock. Fun things to do, goodies to give away, balloons and special Paddington face-painting! If you have a battered old suitcase bring it along (with a label with your name on it to create an on-the-spot window display; the best one will win a jar of marmalade! Also, any Paddington Bears will be given a very special welcome! Our children's reading group members will be on hand to look after your little ones (with your help!); they will read to them, help them draw and make things, and generally have a fun time: do come!.



Orange Prize for Fiction

We will meet to discuss Rose Tremain's winning book; *The Road Home*. We will have supper and discussion and the price will be £10. August 29th. Contact the bookshop for further details..

Poetry Appreciation

Next dates are September 26th (group 1) and October 17th (group 2).

Reading for Pleasure

July 2nd 2pm: *Their Eyes Were Watching God* by Zora Neale Hurston.

July 4th 4.30pm: *Storm Runners* with author, Barbara Mitchelhill (Children's Reading Group)

July 16th 7pm: *Their Eyes Were Watching God* by Zora Neale Hurston.

August 8th: 11 - 3pm. Reading Day for the Children's Reading Group: please contact Anna for more information about the children's day.



September 19th

Jackie Kay is an award-winning writer of fiction, poetry and plays, whose subtle investigation into the complexities of identity have been informed by her own life.

Jackie will be visiting Much Wenlock to celebrate the publication of her latest book, *The Lamplighter*: a radio and stage play and a multi-layered poem which is a journey into the heart of slavery. More details from the bookshop.



October 3rd

Gillian Clarke is the national poet of Wales, author of many fine collections of poetry, and a new volume of prose which explores her life and writing. This date has now been confirmed and will be at the Edge Arts Centre, Farley Road, Much Wenlock. Tickets are £7.50 (students MUCH cheaper!!) and can be bought from the shop or the Edge.

How Fiction Works

We are signing up now for the 7 week course to be held this autumn with seminar leader Betty James. The dates are October 7th; 14th; 21st; November 4th; 11th; 18th and 25th. 2 - 3pm. £2 per session. You will need your own copy of *How Fiction Works* by James Wood, and *The Good Soldier* by Ford Madox Ford. For photos please [go to the blog](#)

Future visits:

we are planning visits from Carol Ann Duffy and Andrew Motion so watch this space! (You can always register your interest for any of our events so that we can be sure you get the details.)

Future holidays:

Our next [trip to Venice](#) is June 2nd - June 6th 2009. Bookings need to be in by the end of the year. Our next Readers' Retreat in west Wales will be held from February 25th - 28th 2009. Both these holidays are likely to book up very quickly. To see photos of this year's Readers' Retreat, please [visit the Blog](#)



Hughley Church:

this beautiful and historic Grade 1 listed church believed to date from the 12th Century, is in need of major repairs to the roof and tower. Without undertaking the repairs the church is likely to close. For more information about how to help this lovely church survive, please go to the bookshop's website or email the treasurer at hkjobber@ukonline.co.uk

Thanks, as always, for all your support. Do join us for anything that catches your eye. Have a lovely summer.

PHEW!!!..... holidays here I come!

Anna