

Newsletter – March 2009

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



Photo copyright: Anvil

Poetry Live!

For poetry lovers, there is a lot to look forward to, and some exciting things happening right now. At the time of writing there is just a handful of tickets left for our event on Friday 13th March (and no, I hadn't realised it was Red Nose day!) with Carol Ann Duffy. Thanks to everyone who has supported this event, and for really helping to put Wenlock on the Poetry map. I'm so looking forward to the event, and will let you know how it goes if you're not coming!

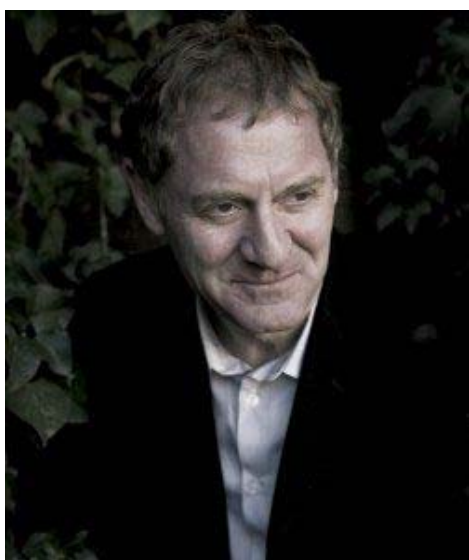


Photo credit: Johnny Ring

In June, the excitement continues with a visit from the Poet Laureate himself, Andrew Motion. We're really thrilled that Andrew wants to come to Wenlock. Andrew's laureateship ends in April this year, so this will be a timely occasion on which to reflect upon his time as Poet Laureate.

*Andrew will introduce his latest book of poems, **The Cinder Path** published by Faber, 1st May 2009 and a new collection of essays, **Ways of Life: On Places, Painters and Poets**. He will talk about his acclaimed autobiography **In the Blood - A Memoir of My Childhood** and answer questions about his writing and his role as Laureate. Andrew Motion was appointed Poet Laureate in 1999. "I see myself as town crier, can-opener and flag-waver for poetry." His poetry has received the Arvon/Observer Prize, the John Llewelyn Rhys Prize and the Dylan Thomas Prize. He is Professor of Creative Writing at Royal Holloway and recently co-founded The Poetry Archive.*

Friday June 12th at the Edge, tickets £12.50 - or £10 concessions. Please do support this important literary event.



Photo credit: www.carpenterturner.co.uk

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. Doubtless the Darwin Society will be keen to attend this event, Ruth's only engagement in Shropshire this year, so don't delay in booking your tickets.

Our new Poetry Club for children has got off to a brilliant start. I hadn't expected that a poetry group would be riotous, but this one is! We are reading widely; Ted Hughes, Alan Ahlberg, and many others, old and new, and the children are also bringing in their own poetry to read. It's such a joy for me to see children loving poetry - rhyme, rhythm and words - so much. They have a real appetite for it and their enthusiasm is infectious! We have now met for two of our five sessions; still to come - Steve Matthews and for poems and pictures, and Susan Schaller - signing poems for deaf children.

Due to popular demand, I am also going to run a poetry club for older children, 11 - 15 year olds,; April 21st, 28th, May 12th, 19th and 26th. All children in this age group welcome - just let me know you are coming! 5 - 6pm. £2 to include drink and biscuits.

There will be another poetry club for 7 - 11 year olds starting on Tuesday 9th June and running for six weeks until Tuesday July 14th (inclusive). This group will start at 5 o'clock, for one hour. The cost is £2 to include drink and biscuits.

Lastly, in our poetry section, just to let you know that our Poetry Reading Group for adults is going from strength to strength. We meet approximately six times a year in Little Wenlock for supper, followed by a presentation and analysis of two poems, one from Ruth Padel's 52 Ways of Looking at a Poem, and one other selected by a group member. The group is limited to twelve, and there is an initial joining fee payable to the bookshop. Please talk to me in the bookshop if you are interested.



World Book Day

The winner of our competition is Eloise Moore from Much Wenlock Primary School. Eloise nominated the author Gwyneth Rees as next Children's Laureate - we'll have to wait and see who actually becomes the new Laureate, but well done to Eloise for her excellent entry. Eloise won £25 book tokens.

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.

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, Halldor 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 14th 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

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.)



On Friday March 6th, the children's reading group will be meeting to talk about our reading of JM Barrie's classic story of **Peter Pan**. Last month the children read a selection of books from the Blue Peter Book Awards short-list. We had a very lively discussion, with the group quite evenly divided between *Shadow Forest* by Matt Haig, and *Abela* by Berlie Doherty as favourites. The over-all winner on Blue Peter (announced today) is *Shadow Forest*.

On Saturday March 21st a group of us from the children's reading group are going to the Birmingham Rep to see Philip Pullman's *His Dark Materials*.



The Reading for Pleasure book of the month this month is a collection of short stories by Mollie Panter-Downes, **Minnie's Room**, published by Persephone Books. We will meet in the afternoon (2pm) and the evening (7pm) of Wednesday 11th March.



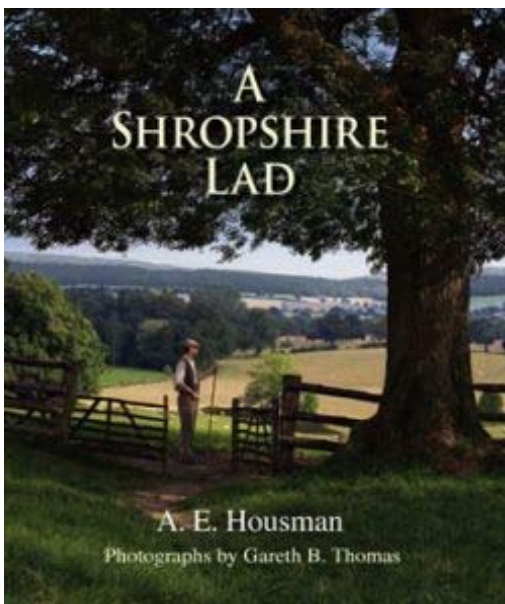
Reader's Retreat 2009

From Wednesday 25th - 1st March we held our third annual Reader's Retreat at Broniwan, near Llandysul in west Wales. We enjoyed glorious weather, and walked each morning on the Cardiganshire Coastal path - some parts of which are newly opened. Afternoons were spent quietly, reading, writing, drawing or resting, and in the evenings we enjoyed lively discussions of stories taken from Geoffrey Eugenides' *My Mistress' Sparrow is Dead* a collection of stories about love. There will be many more photos on the blog (as soon as ever I can get to it!) at www.wenlockbooks.co.uk then choose the blog button.



Coffee Morning – Slightly Foxed

We are very pleased to announce that one of our customers, Brian Wood, has an article published in the Spring edition of *Slightly Foxed*, a quarterly journal for readers which many of you will know. Brian's article is about Alice Munro Williamson and Charles Norris Williamson, who in the early twentieth century - before WWI - undertook motor tours of Europe and then wrote about them. We will be holding a coffee morning with Brian and his wife Dorothy from 11 o'clock: please join us. (RSVP please so I can order our cake from the Copper Kettle!) £2 per person.



Book Launch: A Shropshire Lad

On Friday April 3rd in the Guild Hall, Much Wenlock, Wenlock Books is proud to launch the latest edition of Housman's famous poem ~ *A Shropshire Lad*, published by Ludlow publisher Merlin Unwin. I have seen an advance copy and can tell you that it is very beautiful. It is the first edition of *A Shropshire Lad* to be illustrated with photographs, and Ludlow photographer Gareth Thomas (who will also be present) has provided stunning photos of Shropshire. We will be celebrating this important publishing event with David Lloyd - who has provided an introduction to the book - David will give a short talk on A E Housman. For tickets and further information, please contact the bookshop.

Creative Writing Workshop

On Friday April 24th we are delighted to have Peter Diamond hosting a creative writing workshop at the bookshop from 6.30pm till 10pm. There will be a sandwich supper, wine and coffee. The cost is £10. All are welcome, but places are limited to ten. Peter taught creative writing for the Open University and Birmingham University. Please ask me for more details if you are interested; this will book up very quickly.



Morville Flower Festival 2009

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 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 will be out in time for Easter - just right for Easter presents - 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) has won the bid to 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. Tickets will be available from the bookshop, or from Birmingham Library.

Reading Supper

Our next Reading Supper in Little Wenlock is on Friday May 29th and the book in question is Olive Schreiner's The Story of an African Farm. Only twelve places. Book at the shop please.



Circle Dancing

When I'm not in the shop or reading, chances are I'm dancing! On Sunday March 15th, with musicians Zemerchora, I shall be leading a day of dances, mainly from Eastern Europe. We shall be dancing in the village hall at Clunbury, just the other side of Craven Arms, about 45/50 minutes drive from Wenlock. Dancing starts at 11 o'clock, but come half an hour earlier if you fancy coffee first. We have lunch from 1 - 2pm (bring vegetarian food to share) and finish at 4 o'clock. During the afternoon tea-break there will be an exchange of gifts to celebrate the spring, so please bring a (small) gift for the circle. If you can walk you can dance - if you think you might like to try it, you will be made very welcome. All the dances are taught first and are suitable for beginners, or for those with more experience. You can have a look at our flier at http://www.wenlockbooks.co.uk/news_and_events.html

Reader's Club

Our Reader's Club launched very successfully last month. It's based on an idea Ruth came back from America with ~ 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.*

Best wishes,

Anna