

## Newsletter - May 2008

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



### **Alternative Booker Shortlist**

*On 1st May at 5.30pm we will be meeting to discuss Moon Tiger by Penelope Lively at 5.30pm for an hour in the bookshop. This is part of our "Alternative Booker Shortlist" which comprises Heat and Dust by Ruth Praver Jhabvala (already discussed), The Famished Road by Ben Okri on May 15th and Disgrace by JM Coetzee on May 29th. Feel free to join us for the remaining discussions, OR just let us know what you think of any of these titles. The official Booker shortlist for the Best of the 40 Years will be announced in July.*



### **The Morville Hours by Katherine Swift**

**Radio 4 book of the week from May 5th.**

*We are incredibly proud that Katherine's book is the Radio 4 Book of The Week beginning May 5th; do listen out for it! The book will be for sale at the Morville Flower Festival over the Spring Bank Holiday weekend of May 3rd, 4th and 5th and Katherine will be available for books signings at twelve o'clock and three o'clock on each of those three days. We will, of course, be stocking this wonderful book in the shop. The champagne reception at Morville Hall is completely sold out.*



### **How Fiction Works**

*Our weekly seminars on how fiction works, led by Betty James and based on James Wood excellent new book, How Fiction Works, come to an end on May 20th. We have all enjoyed the seminars immensely, what a treat it has been to be taught by someone as erudite, learned and fun as Betty! At the time of writing we are applying our new found knowledge to Rose Macauley's The Towers of Trebizond which we are having great fun with. We are planning to run these seminars again in the autumn; please sign up for them soon, two places have gone already, and the group is limited to ten.*



## Creative Writing Workshop

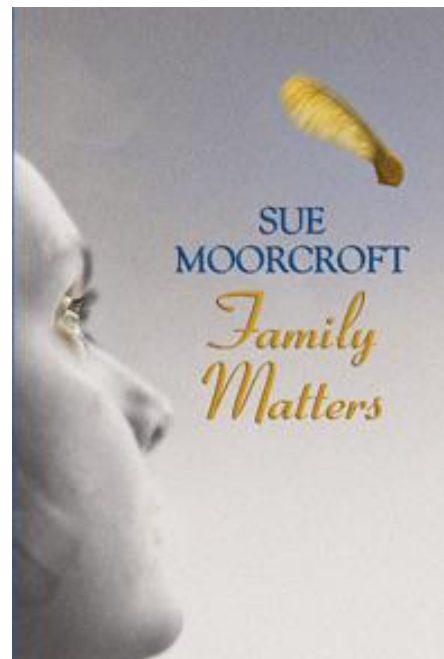
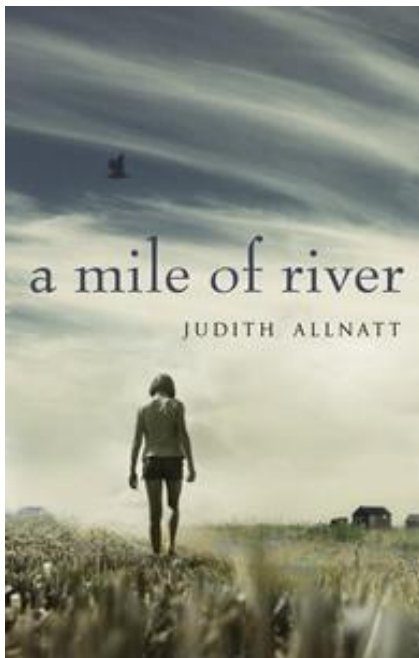
We recently held a creative writing workshop in the shop, with Roz Goddard, author of many books of poems, the latest being *How to Dismantle a Hotel Room*. Roz was Poet Laureate of Birmingham, some years ago. We had a "sandwich supper" courtesy of the Copper Kettle, and a couple of bottles of wine to get the creativity flowing: our inspiration was the bookshop itself as Roz introduced writing exercises that used the abundance of books around us as our starting point. We had a wonderful time, and are keen to offer occasional writing circles in the bookshop in future, so do watch out for that happening, or put your name down in advance if you'd like to be notified of future writing groups.

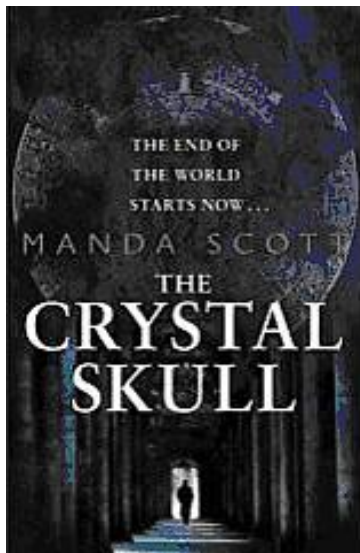
## Reading for Pleasure

We shall be discussing *Half of a Yellow Sun* by Chimamanda Adichie Ngozi in the afternoon of May 9th and the evening of May 21st. Our children's reading group will meet on May 9th at 4.30pm to discuss *Roar, Bull, Roar* by Andrew Fusek Peters. Andrew will be visiting the children's group on June 13th to discuss his work. Our next Persephone Group is June 18th at 2pm and June 25th at 7pm. We are looking for new members and welcome men as well as women.

## New Authors Tour

Susan Moorcroft and Judith Allnatt will be in conversation round the tea table (which will be groaning with tea and cake!) on Saturday May 17th. Do come and take tea with us and listen to these exciting new authors talk about their books, *Family Matters* and *A Mile of River* (recently mentioned in the *Observer*). No charge!

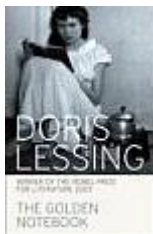




## Return visit from Manda Scott

We are delighted that Manda Scott is coming back to Wenlock to talk about her latest book *The Crystal Skull* in the Guild Hall on Friday May 23rd at 7pm.

Manda's book is currently in the Tesco Top 10 and the Sainsbury's Top 25, so I think this probably counts as our first visit from a "Best selling author!" I have a limited number (only three left now!) of hardback first editions of *The Crystal Skull*, which are available at a very special price for people attending the event; first come, first served; otherwise, there will be paperback copies available. We do ask that people read the book before the event so that the evening can take the style of a reading group. However, if this is not possible, do come along anyway. Places cost £7.50 and are limited to 25 so early booking is advised.

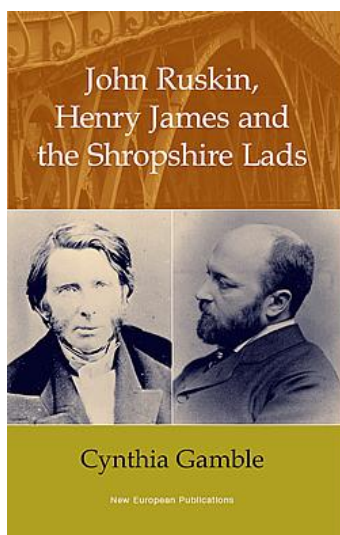


## Reader's day

Our next reader's day at Brook Cottage, Clungunford on Sunday May 25th will look at Doris Lessing's *The Golden Notebook*. Re-issued last summer this is widely regarded as one of the most influential books of the 20th Century. We will also read at least one story from Lessing's first volume of African stories; *This Was the Old Chief's Country*. We will meet at 11 o'clock for coffee and home made shortbread, followed by discussion. Please bring vegetarian food to share for a lunch-time feast, which will be followed by further discussion in the afternoon: and finishing off with freshly baked scones and tea at four. Cost is £15.

## Looking ahead

**June 11th Wenlock Festival presents:** World Premiere Book Launch of *John Ruskin, Henry James and the Shropshire Lads* by Cynthia Gamble. At 2pm in Holy Trinity Church. Afternoon tea and a short talk. No charge. "This book is informative, evocative, scholarly and at the same time accessible. The author has picked her way through the intricate relationships brilliantly." Jeffrey Richards, Professor of Cultural History, Lancaster University.



**Dr Cynthia Gamble** was born and brought up in Shropshire and now lives and works in London. She brings to this new book *John Ruskin, Henry James and the Shropshire Lads* both her local knowledge and her expertise in the works of Ruskin and many other Victorian writers. She is the author of *Proust as Interpreter of Ruskin: the Seven Lamps of Translation* (2002) in which she explores how Ruskin changed Proust's life. She is a Visiting Fellow of the Ruskin Centre at Lancaster University and the Secretary of the Ruskin Society. She has taught French at both school and University levels and is widely in demand as a lecturer in Britain and throughout Western Europe. She is one of the leading authorities on Ruskin.

### **June 20th: An Evening with Persephone Books.**

*As part of Wenlock Festival, founder of the Persephone Publishing Company, Nicola Beauman, will be launching her new "Persephone Classics" at Acton Round House, courtesy of Huw and Sue Kennedy. We will serve Pimms and smoked salmon sandwiches. We now have the three Persephone Classics in stock, do come and have a look.*

### **14th September: The Atonement Tour at Stokesay Court 2.30pm**

*This trip is now fully booked.*

### **Poetry Workshops**

*Future dates are June 6th, September 26th and December 5th. 7 - 10pm in Little Wenlock. Due to popular demand, there will also be a "second stream" of poetry workshops, running on June 27th, October 17th and January 9th. Please contact the bookshop for further details. The text accompanying this series of workshops is Ruth Patel's **52 Ways of Looking at a Poem**.*



### **By the way!**

- *We shall be supporting the Pudding Trail on Saturday May 24th: do come along and enjoy a slice of pud at many of the cafés here in Wenlock!*
- *Clungunford Open Gardens June 14th and 15th. There will be many gardens open (including mine!) and - weather permitting - there will also be an outdoors book festival, supporting local authors on our front lawn. Do come if you can. There will also be other attractions such as ice-cream, cream teas, and, of course, some very lovely gardens.*

*Thanks as always for your continued support, in this, our anniversary year!*

*Anna*