Runnymede International Literary Festival 2014

Public Events Programme: Royal Holloway campus, Egham

Monday, March 3

**Lecture:** Professor Tim Armstrong: **The ‘Men of 1914’**

When we think of poetry in relation to the 1914-18 war, we tend to think of those combatant poets – Robert Graves, Wilfred Owen, Edward Thomas, Isaac Rosenberg, Siegfried Sassoon – many of whom died in the trenches, who showed the nature of modern warfare and revealed the suffering of soldiers at the Front to the home readership. In this lecture Professor Armstrong will address another group of writers who, during this period, produced a quite different kind of poetry, prose and art. The ‘Men of 1914’ as Wyndham Lewis referred to Pound, Joyce, Eliot and himself are now commonly regarded as the central literary figures of this time.

Professor Armstrong is the author of *Modernism, technology and the body* (Cambridge University Press, 2005) and *Modernism: A Cultural History* (Polity, 2005). He is currently working on a monograph on *Micromodernisms*. He is one of the co-editors of the Edinburgh University Press series, Edinburgh Critical Studies in Modernist Culture, and one of the organisers of the London University Modernism Research Seminar.

**5.00: Windsor Building: WIN-05**

Friday, March 7

**Lecture:** Professor Robert Hampson, FEA, FRSA: **Under Fire: The First World War in Contemporary Prose**

In this lecture, Professor Hampson addresses the prose writers of the First World War. He will discuss three works written by combatants: Robert Graves's autobiography, *Goodbye to All That*; Frederick Manning's fictionalised documentary narrative, *Her Privates We*; and Ford Madox Ford's great, war novel, *Parade’s End*. He will compare these three very different ways of writing about the war, each based on the author's direct experience of front-line fighting, and then consider the work of a non-combatant, Virginia Woolf, and how she addresses the experience of the war.


**5.00: Windsor Building: WIN-05**
Monday, March 10

Workshop: Dr Betty Jay: Edmund Blunden’s Undertones of War

Edmund Blunden’s Undertones of War (1928) is one of the most significant memoirs of the war years. In it, the experience of trench warfare—by now so familiar to generations exposed to the works of Sassoon and Owen—is rendered in a style which is sometimes difficult, more often arresting but also unique. In this seminar/workshop we will look at how Blunden writes his war experience and what the poetic sensibility he articulates might tell us about us about the relationship between memory and violence, suffering and representation, war and remembrance.

Dr Jay is the author of Weird Lullabies: Mothers and Daughters in Contemporary Film. She has a particular interest in feminist and psychoanalytic theory.

5.00: Windsor Building: WIN-05

Friday, March 13

Lecture: Dr Ruth Hemus: Dada’s Women and War

Dada began in 1916 with a call to Cabaret, rather than a call to arms, by the expatriate German writer Hugo Ball. The young men he gathered in neutral Zurich would go on to export the movement to Paris and Berlin. But what of the young women? This lecture will highlight three individuals - Emmy Hennings, Suzanne Duchamp and Hannah Hoech - focusing on their artistic reactions to war in those three geographical locations.

Dr Hemus is the author of Dada’s Women (Yale University Press, 2009). She is a Senior Lecturer in the School of Modern Languages, Literatures and Cultures at Royal Holloway.

5.00: Windsor Building: WIN-05

Monday, March 17

Lecture: Professor Christopher Townsend: The British War Painters and the Modernist Idiom
Although the First World War was often depicted in the traditional, heroic terms of history painting, many of its most striking visual representations are made by artists experimenting with the radical styles of recent European modernism. Yet, amongst the painters appointed by the British War Propaganda Unit, very few had subscribed to such styles before the war. This essay takes as its case study the British painter Paul Nash. Before 1914, when he volunteered for the Artists' Rifles, Nash - a member of the 'golden generation' of the Slade School of Art of the 1910s - had been a romantic landscape painter deeply influenced by Rossetti, and working within a conservative tradition. After lengthy training, and brief service in the Hampshire Regiment, Nash returned to the Ypres Salient as a war artist in time for what became known as the Battle of Passendaale. Yet his stunning representations of the devastated battlefield, such as *We Are Making a New World*, are rendered in something close to a Futurist aesthetic: brutality of style matched brutality of fact. Yet Nash's choice of idiom was strategic: within a few years of the war's end he would move back towards a traditional "English" vision of nature. This lecture explores the influences and experiences that led Nash towards his distinctive wartime style.

Professor Townsend's research examines the way in which artists corrode the boundaries between media, particularly within modernism in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. His recent publications have concentrated on the activity of the Parisian avant-garde in relation to ideas of intermediality and simultaneity in the 1910s and 1920s, including studies of Francis Picabia, Henri-Martin Barzun and Ricciotto Canudo. He is currently completing a book *The Mirror of Contingency: Modernism, Death and the Reclamation of Identity* which examines how modernism responds to death in mass culture through translation and displacement between media and modes.

5.00: Windsor Building: WIN-05

Friday, 21 March

**Lecture:** Lord David Owen: [CH PC FRCP MB BChir](mailto:CHPCFRCPMBBChir) - *Hidden Perspectives: The Military Conversations 1906-1904*

Lord David Owen's new book centres on the military and diplomatic conversations that took place in the run up to World War I, beginning with January 1906, when the Prime Minister, Campbell-Bannerman, and the Foreign Minister, Edward Grey, agreed to allow the General Staff to talk with the French High Command about sending an expeditionary force to France in the event of a German attack. Neither the Cabinet nor Parliament was informed. In Spring 1912 Haldane, the Secretary for War, went on a mission to Berlin to see if an agreement could be reached to slow German naval expansion. Sadly to no avail - despite Harcourt, the Colonial Secretary, promoting a land deal for Germany in Africa as an incentive. Recently
unearthed historical evidence has shown that a further attempt to negotiate with Germany was under way when the war started. All this time, however, there was a hidden perspective of key diplomats, alongside the Foreign Minister Grey, that contributed to the feeling that there was a moral commitment to send troops to the continent. There are obvious echoes of the run-up to the 2003 Iraq War.

Lord Owen will talk about these hidden perspectives and his conclusion, as a former Foreign Secretary, that the carnage of World War 1 was avoidable: the war could have been prevented or stopped much earlier.

Lord Owen served as British Foreign Secretary from 1977 to 1979. He became the European Union co-chairman of the Conference for the Former Yugoslavia, along with Cyrus Vance, the former US Secretary of State; together they produced the Vance-Owen Peace Plan in January 1993. He was the Chancellor of the University of Liverpool from 1996 to 2009. His publications include Balkan Odyssey (1995) and The Hubris Syndrome: Bush, Blair and the Intoxication of Power (2007). He sits in the House of Lords as a crossbencher.

5.00: Management Building Lecture Theatre
Anthology Launch:

The MA in Creative Writing at Royal Holloway is directed by Professor Sir Andrew Motion. In its comparatively short existence, it has already made a name for itself through a series of anthologies of writing produced on the MA, called *Bedford Square* (published by John Murray), and through the successes of its individual students. Tahmima Anam’s novel, *The Golden Age*, was short-listed for the Orange Prize; Joe Treasure, Myrlin Hermes and Penny Rudge are just some of the students who have had novels published after completing the MA.

Tonight sees the launch of the most recent anthology. The launch will be accompanied by readings from current Creative Writing PhD students at Royal Holloway and from recent graduates of the MA. The evening has been curated by Kate Williams and Declan Ryan.

6.00 pm: Centre for Creative Collaboration, 16 Acton Street
FRIDAY, 28 March

(a) Poetry and Prose from Current Students from the MA in Creative Writing

The MA in Creative Writing has a number of pathways including poetry, prose, environmental writing and life writing. Teachers include Sir Andrew Motion, Jo Shapcott, Susanna Jones and Kate Williams. This is an opportunity to come and hear poetry and prose written by students currently on the MA in Creative Writing. The evening has been curated by Susanna Jones and Jamie Michaels.

6.15 p.m. Centre for Creative Collaboration, 16 Acton Street

(b) Reading: Sarah Perry and Anna Whitwham

Sarah Perry was born in Essex in 1979, and grew up in a deeply religious home. Kept apart from contemporary culture, she spent her childhood immersed in classic literature, spiritual music and the King James Bible. She has a PhD in creative writing from Royal Holloway which she completed under the supervision of Sir Andrew Motion, has been writer-in-residence at Gladstone's Library, and is the winner of a Shiva Naipaul award for travel writing. She lives in Norwich. She will be reading from her novel, After Me Comes The Flood, which is due out from Serpent's Tail in June.

Anna Whitwham was born in London in 1981. She has a PhD in Creative Writing from Royal Holloway, which she completed under the supervision of Sir Andrew Motion. Boxer Handsome, which came out earlier this year, is her first novel. It has been widely reviewed and well-received. The novel describes a world she knows well: her grandfather, John Poppy, was a featherweight boxer at the Crown and Manor Boys Club in Hoxton. He is the inspiration behind the book.

8.15 p.m. Centre for Creative Collaboration, 16 Acton Street
Saturday, 29 March 2014:

12.00-1.00. Poetic Practice:

Readings and performances by students from the MA in Poetic Practice.

Since it was founded ten years ago, the MA in Poetic Practice (directed by Redell Olsen) has produced a steady stream of students who have made a name for themselves in the field of innovative poetry including Sophie Robinson, Frances Kruk, Stephen Willey, Becky Cremin and Prue Chamberlain. From 2014, Poetic Practice will become a pathway in the MA for Creative Writing.

Come and hear/see the work of current students on the MA in Poetic Practice: Carrie Foulkes, Sophia Fratianne, Christian Groves, Kaori Maeda, and Heather Rimington.

2.00-3.15. Poetry Reading: Rod Mengham, Ben Hickman, Holly Pester

Rod Mengham lives and works in Cambridge. He is the editor of the Equipage series of poetry pamphlets – an important, sustained contributor to poetry publishing over a number of decades. He was co-editor and co-translator of an anthology of contemporary Polish poetry, *Altered States* (Arc, 2003). His own poems were published in *Unsung: New and Selected Poems* (Salt, 2001) and (with photographs by Marc Atkins) in *Parleys & Skirmishes* (Ars Cameralis, 2007). His more recent prose poems have appeared in *Blackbox Manifold* and elsewhere.

Ben Hickman is a poet and critic living in Canterbury. He is the author of *John Ashbery and English Poetry* (Edinburgh, 2012), and Lecturer in Modern Poetry at the University of Kent. His poems have been published in *Poetry Review, Tears in the Fence, Shearsman, Molly Bloom, Blackbox Manifold* and elsewhere.

Holly Pester is a sound poet and multidisciplinary writer. Her doctoral research examined the poetics of noise, the effects of broadcast and transmission media on the voice. Her performances and sound installations have featured at international events and festivals, including a British Council funded visit to Mexico City, an artist's residency at the dOCUMENTA 13 art fair in Kassel, Germany, the Text Festival in Bury, Manchester and performances at the Serpentine Gallery, London. Holly Pester’s poetry collection, *Hoofs*, was released with *if p then q press* in 2011 and her next collection, *Folkslop* is due out with Veer Books early 2014.
3.30-4.45. Poetry Reading: Frances Kruk, Aimee Le, Marcus Sleaze

Frances Kruk’s recent publications include *DWARF SURGE* (yt communication, 2013), *Down you go, or Négation de bruit* (Punch Press, 2011), and *A Discourse on Vegetation & Motion* (Critical Documents, 2012). Her work is featured in *Infinite Difference: Other Poetries by UK Women Poets* (Shearsman, 2010), and selected concrete poems are included in *Shift & Switch: New Canadian Poetry* (Mercury Press, 2005). She has contributed to numerous literary journals, exhibited visual art in Canada and the UK, and performed poetry and music around Europe and North America. Her next full-length collection, *lo-fi frags in-progress*, is forthcoming from Veer Books in Spring 2014. She lives in London.

Aimee Le is a Vietnamese-American poet and artist from Ann Arbor, Michigan. She is co-author of the poetry collection *Feral Citizens* (Red Beard Press, 2011). Her spoken word performance has been featured on HBO and the Kennedy Center's Millennium Stage series *An American Playlist*. She is currently a PhD candidate in Poetics and Practice-based Research at Royal Holloway, University of London. Marcus Sleaze is a London-based poet.

5.15-6.30. Poetry Reading: Robert Sheppard, Rob Holloway, and Peter Hughes

Robert Sheppard has taught at Edge Hill University since 1996. He is the author of two important critical works: *The Poetry of Saying: British Poetry and Its Discontents* (Liverpool UP, 2005) and *When Bad Times Made for Good Poetry* (Shearsman, 2011). He has published a number of books of poetry including the major work, *The Complete Twentieth-Century Blues* (Salt, 2008) and the sonnet sequence *Warrant Error* (Shearsman, 2009). More recent work includes *Berlin Bursts* and *A Translated Man* – both from Shearsman.

Rob Holloway is a London-based poet and teacher. His first book *PERMIT* was published by the US-based poetry collective Subpress in 2009 (http://www.durationpress.com/subpress/). A sample from his ongoing sequence *FLESH RAYS* was published by Crater Press in Dec 2010. From Nov 2002 to March 2004 he hosted the radio show "Up for Air" on Resonance FM. In 2004 he launched the poetry CD label Stem (http://llpp.ms11.net/stem/).
Peter Hughes is a poet, painter and the founding editor of Oystercatcher Press. He was born in Oxford in 1956, based in Italy for many years and now lives on the Norfolk coast. *Nistanimera, The Summer of Agios Dimitrios, The Pistol Tree Poems* and *Selected Poems* have been published by Shearsman, as has ‘An intuition of the particular’: some essays on the poetry of Peter Hughes, edited by Ian Brinton. *Allotment Architecture* recently came out from Reality Street who will also be publishing Peter’s translations of Petrarch’s sonnets.

All events free.