



SHEFFIELD UNIVERSITY WOMEN'S CLUB



Salts Mill, Saltaire

NEWSLETTER No. 61

January 2023

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Dear Members and Friends,

Welcome to the January 2023 Newsletter. Following the resignation of Alison Allen-Booth, I have taken over the role of Newsletter editor. Many thanks are due to Alison for her wonderful work; she has filled the role very professionally for many years and will be a hard act to follow.

The enclosed reviews will remind you of the interesting talks and events which we have enjoyed this year and the previews will, hopefully, whet your appetite for a variety of future events. They include amongst others: L du Garde Peach and the Great Hucklow Players; Pam Enderby's talk on the different styles of communication by women and men; Judy Simons' talk on the History of a Provincial Jewish Family and a visit to Saltaire which should be both interesting and fun.

Details of all forthcoming events are in the Newsletter so please put them in your diaries. A reminder of each event will be sent out in advance. We have decided to continue with the arrangement whereby you will not be asked to complete an online booking form for the talks at Tapton Hall. Booking forms will only be used for events that have a limit on numbers or where payment is required.

This edition of the newsletter will be offered by email to all members and in print form to those who have expressed a wish for a hard copy. Members are asked to collect their copies at meetings, wherever possible, to save on postage. We are considering whether in future, with a view to saving postage, to offer printed copies of the newsletter only to those who do not have email access.

The SUWC's chair and committee send you best wishes for 2023 and hope you enjoy the programme planned for you.

RECENT EVENTS IN 2022

26th September: Coffee Morning

The season of mists and mellow fruitfulness had certainly come upon us as we variously made our ways to Tapton Masonic Hall through the first flurries of autumnal leaves, winter wardrobes hastily unearthed, for the annual coffee morning, the first meeting of the Club's year.

Over coffee and biscuits, ladies stood and chatted or sat at tables, familiar friends in contact after the long summer break, friendships started, a new member recruited. Now that subscriptions can be settled online, the event is no longer the focus for paying dibs and dues that it once was, resulting in a more relaxed affair. There was happy reminiscing about our trip to Gill Bagshaw's lovely cutting garden at Eyam; tantalising mention was made of the Club's proposed trip to Saltaire next summer, with a planned recce in the offing.

As requested, members brought books for the sales table, and the donations for them amounted to £30, added to SUWC funds. The unsold copies were taken to Oxfam.

All in all, a good start to the Club's programme for the coming year.

19th October: AGM, Chair's report



This is my second year as Chair, the first year being defined totally by Covid, this year we seem to have moved into the 'Living with Covid' era!

We have mourned the loss of our much-loved Queen Elizabeth II and await the Coronation of King Charles III scheduled for the 6th May 2023. Happily, it does not conflict with a SUWC event!

We have continued to deliver a varied programme of talks and events, against a difficult background:

- We started in October 2021 following the last AGM with a talk by June Isles, about her father. The talk entitled 'Lloyd George

Higgins ‘A Happier Lowry’” included slides and introduced us to his wonderful paintings and gave us an affectionate insight into some of the characters in them.

- We heard Helen Mort speak on ‘Moving from Poetry to Fiction’ and her love of climbing.
- We had a joyful Christmas lunch in December at the Hallamshire Golf Club. Michael Dowse entertained us hugely, with his engaging style and information about the antique items which he had brought with him. Thanks to Margaret Stoddard for organising that for us.
- Bob Russon delivered his talk ‘A Closer Look at Nature’ to us in January 2022. He shared his photographs which were taken mainly at Redmires. The quality of the close-ups was astonishing.
- The Director of City and Culture, Professor Vanessa Toulmin, enlightened us about The Made Together programme, in Sheffield outlining plans for the city centre. These will hopefully, eventually transform Fargate.
- In March, Michael Collins talked about ‘Lead Poisoning in Sheffield 1880 to 1920’ with particular reference to Redmires reservoir. I learned about a blue line on your gums as a sign of lead poisoning. The drought period which we had in the summer left me rather conflicted about the need to run the tap before filling up the kettle, first thing in the morning!
- I was disappointed to miss Professor Tammy Hervey’s talk in April. Mike and I had Covid. I know Tammy and find her an impressive person and I am sure she made an impression on you too, as she talked about how the Brexit bus changed her life.
- In May, Jean Thornton introduced us to the Hawley Collection, housed in Kelham Island Museum and after lunch, a group joined local historian, Anders Hanson, for a walking tour of Kelham Island area, which was very well received by all who went along.

- The month of June brought another delightful sunny garden visit this time to Maria and Narendra's garden. The garden was a feast of beautiful, interesting plants and people supported very generously Maria's chosen charity, the Red Cross appeal for Ukraine.
- The SUWC programme came to an end in July, with a trip to Gladstone and Etruria Museums. It was a bit of a struggle to get enough people to cover the cost of coach hire but we did manage and an extremely enjoyable and interesting day was had, many people resolving to return to learn more. Many thanks to Alison Allen-Booth for organising that.

Final membership numbers are not yet known and people are asked to send any outstanding forms directly to me. Final figures will be circulated to members in due course. Meanwhile, thanks to Nikki Kearsley for her offer of assistance with spreadsheets.

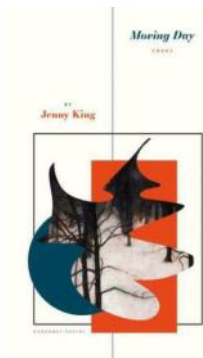
I offer thanks to the committee for their continuing support and to Alison Allen-Booth who is stepping down. Alison has served the committee so generously and produced the newsletter for a number of years. She has worked tirelessly and cheerfully in many different capacities, always for the wellbeing and smooth running of the club. I shall miss you being there at the committee meetings, Alison. You have always been so willing to help.

If you can provide useful input to the committee then please do approach any member of the committee to find out more about joining us.

We have a good programme arranged for the forthcoming year which I hope you will enjoy.

The AGM was followed by a Talk by Jenny King - A Life with Poetry

Jenny told us a bit about herself and her life as a poet. She began early, encouraged by her parents who recognised her enthusiasm and in wartime found cartridge paper which her mother sewed into a book in which Jenny could write her poems. Jenny read English at Cambridge (Newnham College) and has taught in Sheffield for many years. After retirement she did a Masters Degree in Contemporary Poetry at The University of Sheffield. The poems read in this talk ranged from ‘Milk’



(looking back to 1948) to ‘Moving Day’ - reflections on her recent move with her husband from the family home in Ecclesall to their new home in Ranmoor. This poem is also the title of her first full collection of poetry.

Jenny read the first and last poems and two others. Six poems were shared between two other readers, and this variety of pitch and tone was one of the many delights of this talk, also enhanced by relevant photographs of people places and views. Of course the poems were the thing, and for these the text was shown while they were read. It was like being at the Opera.

In each poem Jenny generously and skilfully opens a window in our minds and lets us all see with recognition a profound delight and meaning in everyday life. My quotes, scribbled down during the talk, are possibly not exact, and I have made a few comments, but don't feel the need to explain what each quote means to me. After all, you of the audience will have your own store of illuminating and memorable moments from these poems.

Milk – ‘the burden of peace’ ‘waiting in dampness’. I also liked the later milkman ‘worried about his rent’

Waves – ‘these days I watch for the pauses’

German Exchange ‘his friend with the Umlaut’ ‘moving into the future’

Walking Through Slack – ‘clouds cantering across the fields’. ‘The midday peace was warm and edible’. I still keep thinking about how right this is, but I can’t put my finger on why.

1912 – I was entranced by the photograph. There is grief here, one boy survives, of three, we are told. Little Winnie’s outgoing attention is focussed on the only boy, Fred. I wonder what Winnie is saying. This boy’s survival later brings Jenny her husband, ‘the only surviving boy, my father in law’ and three aunts including Winnie return 30 years later. ‘and still they speak and see’ – a redemption.

Midsummer – ‘consider the year in its fullness, before it slips away, one step at a time’

Swimsuit – ‘I thought my choices were the best’ ‘her own choice allowing her to grow up’ ‘confidence to swim across the pool, far from my sunbed’

Point of Balance – ‘why this lampshade wobbles’ ‘when tea should be ready’ ‘United have won’ September yellows softly in’ ‘our world must turn some more before dark’ ‘my focus switching slowly sideways as the moments pass’

Moving Day – ‘when we get home – but we are home’ ‘the unencumbered squirrel’

I hope these quotes or memories will renew in those who were present the great enjoyment which this presentation brought. If you weren’t able to attend – (or if you were there, but forgot to buy it) get Jenny’s book ‘Moving Day’ available at Rhyme and Reason.

17th November: Talk by Peggy Fearne - A Creative Journey through Geometry



For most of us geometry is a bit of a turn off, but in the eyes and hands of local textile artist Peggy Fearne it becomes a thing of beauty. In this presentation, Peggy told us how, since she first started working with textiles in the early 1990s, her work has evolved. We heard how, taking her inspiration from bridges and

bones, seeds and scaffolding, the work of architects and sculptors, and with a nod to origami, she uses fabric and fibres, stitches and knots, to create ethereal geometric structures. Many of the works have been exhibited in various galleries over the years and, assisted by our very own in-house technical team, we were treated to a wonderful series of images on screen as well as a small display of her work. In Peggy's hands, stiff white fabrics and the occasional piece of paper and copper pipe, threads, wire and transparent nylon fishing line are intricately folded, twisted and stitched into cubes, triangles, spheres, spirals, pentagons, hexagons and ziggarats. Most are white, with just the odd touch of colour, and their simplicity is breath-taking. Some of her pieces are like large sculptures, many are suspended. Other hallmarks of her work are repetition and pattern and some of the pieces also incorporate notions of the impact of genetic modification as well as geometry. Whilst many of us regret the passing of John Lewis, for Peggy it was the source of the white organdie fabric she uses, but fortunately she bought up plenty of it before they closed! Alongside her own creative work, Peggy has also taught, and several of those present had benefitted from her expertise.

We all came away with a new outlook on the geometric shapes that surround us and a certain amount of awe at the way that one very creative person sees and transforms them.

7th December: Christmas Event - Talk by Ann, The Bustle Lady



Fashions in dress are always changing and that was no less the case in Victorian times as it is now, and one of the major fashions of the late 1800s was the Bustle Dress. And who better to explain its importance and popularity than Ann, The Bustle Lady, an expert on Victorian life and times, who arrived for her talk beautifully attired in a Bustle Dress of her own making. She explained that before the Bustle Dress there was the Crinoline, which looked like an upturned bell, held out by hoops. It wasn't a very practical fashion but it was realised that if you cut the crinoline in half, you could have the fashionable silhouette, slim at the front, with all the volume at the back. At first, women made their own Bustles, simply a stuffed pillow or cushion with straps to fasten it to the body. All kinds of material were used to stuff the Bustles; cotton, wool and even hay. However, they weren't very comfortable when you sat down and the next improvement was a steel frame which collapsed for sitting. Most of the steel that went into those frames was made by a local company, Samuel Fox of Stocksbridge, who exported it all round the world.

The Bustle Dresses were only for the wealthy, being made with up to 10 metres of materials like silk and velvet, costing the equivalent of £700 to £1,000 each. The basic shape of the dress was usually elaborately embellished with lace, ruffles and beading, all hand sewn, and the elegant dress worn by Ann showed how effective this was. She showed us the elaborate process of putting on your Bustle Dress, starting with a linen chemise, followed by silk stockings, then drawers, petticoat and corset plus a cover over the corset so you couldn't see the steel bones and finally the dress itself. Victorian houses were very cold and all those layers of undergarments helped to keep the wearers warm.

In spite of its popularity the Bustle Dress, like many others, was a short-lived fashion, lasting just from 1875 to 1888. Samuel Fox had built a special mill to produce the steel for the Bustle frame but when the

fashion ended, being a canny businessman, he adapted the process to make umbrella frames.

But as you passed by the original Victorian part of Tapton Hall on your way home after the talk and festive refreshments, perhaps you might have heard a faint rustle of silk as a lady dressed in her best Bustle finery arrived to attend a lavish Christmas party!



FORTHCOMING EVENTS IN 2023

at 2.15 p.m. at Tapton Masonic Hall unless otherwise stated

Tuesday 17th January: Talk and Demonstration by Ron Jarman – Tai Ji Quan (Tai Chi), its History, Practice and Benefits

During this talk Ron, together with the assistance of his wife, Liz, will cover the following: What taijiquan is; a potted history of taijiquan; its health benefits interspersed with demonstrations of taijiquan movements; an invitation for a few minutes of audience participation which members will be free to take up, or not, and demonstrations of taijiquan's martial art roots in action.

Thursday 23th February: Talk by Peter Miles - L du Garde Peach and the Great Hucklow Players



Lawrence du Garde Peach was born in Sheffield in 1890 and went on to serve in military intelligence in World War 1. On discharge, he became an author and playwright for radio, stage and screen. He wrote humorous pieces for Punch and other magazines as well as plays for the radio. He wrote over 30 works in the Adventure from History series published by Ladybird Books. He wrote extensively for the stage and was a great supporter of community amateur dramatics. In 1927, L du Garde Peach formed an amateur theatre group, The Great Hucklow Players, who performed in the Unitarian Holiday home from 1927 until 1938, when they moved to a converted old lead mining cupola barn which became the new playhouse. The Players achieved a notably high standard attracting audiences from near and far. It had a theatre for 40 years, which was run by Dr L. du Garde Peach and the actors and staff were from the local area.

Peter Miles, who lives in Great Hucklow, and is an actor himself, will tell us about the fascinating life of Lawrence du Garde Peach and the Great Hucklow Playhouse.

Tuesday 14th March: Talk by Emeritus Professor Pam Enderby – Men Speak, Women Communicate - a non-evidence-based comparison'



Whilst there is substantial evidence that there are gender differences in styles of communicating which may be based on neurophysiological, environmental and nurturing differences there are also personal observations which, whilst not being

evidence-based, can assist with explaining the frequent misunderstandings experienced between men and women!

Pam Enderby has a background in speech-language therapy and a long history of being interested in communication styles and differences. Her talk will cover what is known about gender differences in speaking, talking, listening, and communicating but will go beyond that!

Pam is Emeritus Professor of Community Rehabilitation, ScHARR, University of Sheffield and remains involved in research and representing Speech and Therapy at the World Health Organisation.

Monday, 24th April: Spring Event - Demonstration of Willow Basket Weaving and Lunch. 9.30 a.m. Whiteley Woods Outdoor Activity Centre, Common Lane, S11 7TG

You may remember that a few years ago the SUWC spent a most enjoyable day at the Whiteley Woods Outdoor Activity Centre. This April we return there for a Spring event featuring a craft demonstration and lunch. Local basket maker Rachel Hutton will be demonstrating her skills with willow and you'll get the chance to make your own item to take home

Gather from 9.30 a.m. for the demonstration, followed by coffee and biscuits before you have a go at willow weaving, after which you'll enjoy a buffet lunch, prepared and served by volunteers from the Centre. After lunch you will be free to explore the grounds of the Outdoor Activity Centre and stay for a cup of afternoon tea. The cost will be £20 for the day to include the demonstration, your own willow item and refreshments. A booking form will be sent out nearer the time.



Wednesday 24th May: Talk by Emeritus Professor Judy Simons – The Northern Line – the History of a Sheffield Jewish Family



When her mother died shortly before her hundredth birthday, Judy discovered a treasure chest of papers hidden at the back of the wardrobe. Reading them, she realised she had unearthed a gripping family saga, including the sad story of her great-aunt Sarah (pictured). The resulting research took her into immigrant ships from the Pale of Settlement, Manchester sweatshops, Victorian lunatic asylums, and the horrors of the concentration camps. This was the unseen backdrop to her suburban childhood. The resulting book – ‘The Northern Line’ - throws fresh light on a forgotten part of Sheffield history, the early days of its Jewish community and its role as a sanctuary for refugees fleeing from the pogroms in the 1880s and from Nazi persecution in the 1930s.

Judy is Emeritus Professor of English at De Montfort University Leicester and Research Fellow at the University of London. Born and brought up in Sheffield, she is a former editor of Sheffield Jewish Journal.

Tuesday 13th June: Garden Party

Shelagh and Geoff Marston are kindly hosting this year's Garden Party at 62 Endcliffe Hall Avenue, S10 3EL. Further details on access will be circulated later. Part of the one acre garden is an oak wood, named as Smith Wood on a map of 1600. The stream, Oak Brook, runs through it. An old pre-1830 stone wall which runs the length of the garden was the dividing wall between the estates of steelmakers John Brown of Endcliffe Hall and Mark Firth of Oakbrook. Much of the garden is wild so if you want to explore wear stout shoes and bring a stick if you need it as there are many slopes. However, you do not need to do that to have tea as the lawn near the house is flat.

Thursday 13th July: Summer Outing to Saltaire including a guided Tour of the Village founded by Victorian Mill Owner Titus Salt



Saltaire Cottages

Our summer visit this year will be a coach trip to Salts Mill and Saltaire in Bradford. This promises to be a full day with plenty of options as to how you decide to spend your time. We have a tour of Saltaire booked already and there will be the opportunity to see the world's largest collection of David Hockney works together with enjoying the fantastic book and poster store and perhaps some shopping in the magnificent shop as well as enjoying a delicious lunch! This is now a UNESCO World Heritage Site and such a fascinating location with plenty of history.

The website - <https://salthairevillage.info> - is excellent if you would like to do your own research. Details will follow in the New Year and I would recommend putting the date in your diary.

Monday 25th September 10 a.m. to 12 noon Coffee Morning

Our autumn programme for 2023 starts with an informal get together where members can meet up and exchange news after the summer. Guests are very welcome to join us and as, on previous occasions, we hope to have a stall for books.

OUR SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS INCLUDE:

The Walking Group

The walking group meets on the first Tuesday of every month, Members take it in turns to lead a walk of about 4/5 miles or 2/3 hours (not a fast pace). Visitors and new members are always welcome. Details are sent out a few days in advance so just ask to join our emailing list.

Short Walking Group

This group meets at 10.00 a.m. opposite 26 Riverdale Road on the first Tuesday in the month for a short walk through Endcliffe Park to a local coffee shop.

New members would be very welcome.