

The Persephone Biannually

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*Self Portrait by Helen Hansen c.1932 © Sally Hunter Fine Art/
in a private collection*



OUR BOOKS FOR AUTUMN/WINTER 2013–14

The *Squire*, Persephone Book No. 103, was published 75 years ago yet it remains unique: it is the only novel ever written about having a baby. Of course other novels focus on pregnancy, birth and motherhood; but there isn't another about the last few days before birth and the first few days afterwards. 'I thought if I could get it right they might read it in China or India,' Enid Bagnold wrote. 'I wanted to pin down the quality of the pain and the love and the surprise and the effect of the birth on the mother, on the other children, on the nurse and on the servants.'

The *Squire* is dedicated 'To the Creators and Inspirers of The Babies Club, Chelsea: Harold Waller MD and Ethel Raynham Smith.' Harold Waller was Enid Bagnold's doctor and Ethel Raynham Smith was the midwife who delivered all but the first of her four children. The Babies Club was set up in Chelsea in 1928; *Recipes for Food and Conduct* came out in 1943. It had eighteen chapters covering topics such as Weaning, Fresh Air ('in summer 12 or 16 hours can be passed in the open'), Recipes, and The Babies Club and its Work and Aims. The drawing on the front was by one of the

members of the Executive Committee – Enid Bagnold herself.

Her first book, *A Diary without Dates*, about her nursing experiences during the First World War, had been published in 1918 when she was 29. In 1920, the year her first novel appeared, she married Sir Roderick Jones, Chairman of Reuter's, and her life became a whirlwind of sociability as she and her husband moved between their houses at 29 Hyde Park Gate and North End House, Rottingdean (which had been lived in by Edward Burne-Jones and was decorated by Lutyens and is where *The Squire* is set). Then came *Serena Blandish* and *Alice and Thomas and Jane* (illustrated by the author herself) and in 1935 her most famous book, *National Velvet*. *The Squire* was published in 1938: Enid Bagnold was by then 39 and had four children (cf. the photo on p. 9).

'I married when I was thirty,' she said in 1954. 'Since then I have coped with all that comes, running two houses, the batch of terrible servants you find in *The Squire*, having the children (which was a wild surprise for me and a demonic absorption for a



The pink and blue endpaper for *The Squire* is 'Magnolia', designed by Marion Dorn for Edinburgh Weavers in 1936 © V & A



The endpaper for *The Two Mrs Abbotts* is 'Last Waltz', a 1942 printed cotton dress fabric by Tootal Broadhurst © V & A

long time), trying to write ... never letting a day go by in all these years that I didn't somehow do some writing from ten a.m. till one. Housemaids used to give me their notice as I tried to climb the stairs to my writing room, but I would shake them off.'

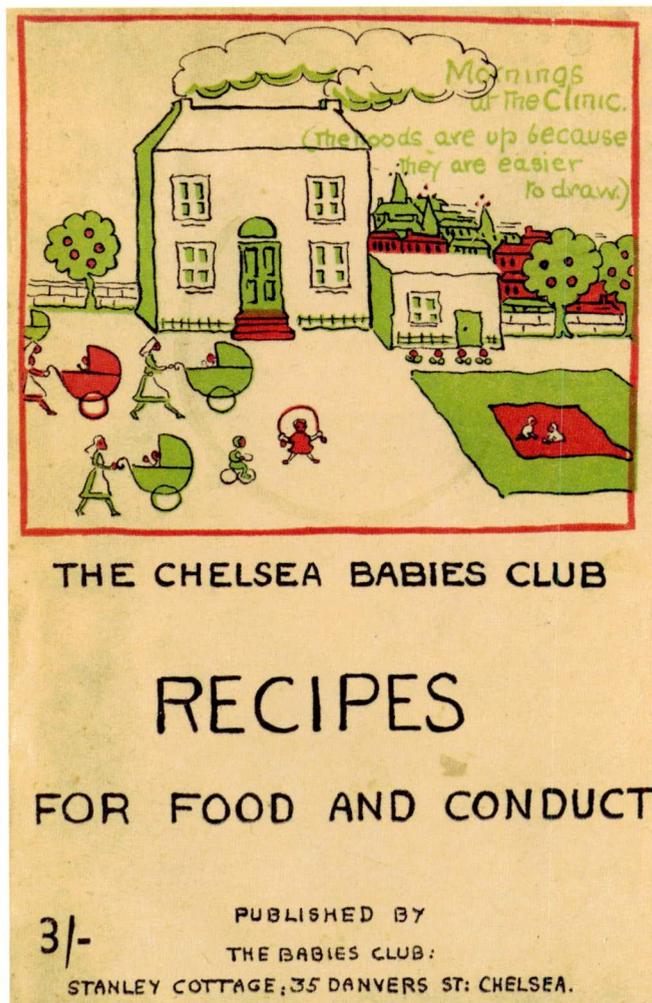
She wrote one more novel after *The Squire* and then concentrated on writing plays. One of these, *The Chalk Garden* (1955), was revived to great acclaim in 2008 (with Felicity Jones, who later starred in the film of *Cheerful Weather for the Wedding*). Margaret Drabble wrote about the play in the *Guardian* and described *The Squire*:

'Imagine *To the Lighthouse* written by Mrs Ramsay expecting her fifth child, and you get something of the spirit of this intense and passionate novel, which is unlike anything else ever written about pregnancy. This is maternity and childbirth twenty years before Sylvia Plath. The eponymous "squire", whose husband is abroad on business, happily awaits the arrival of the Unborn in a country house; sensuous descriptions of her own body, her garden, her greed for food and port wine, and her sharply differentiated children, merge with her thoughts about the new baby, about middle age and pain, about her quarrelling staff, and about the waning of the sexual imperative. The arrival of the midwife, an old and tested friend and a dedicated professional, initiates some extraordinary conversations about babies, gender, vocation and the maternal impulse. The relation-

ship of these two women, as they go through one of the most ordinary yet astonishing rituals of life, is portrayed with a tender affectionate care and a deep respect. This is a very surprising book for its time, for any time.'

And as Anne Sebba wrote in her 1986 biography of Enid Bagnold (now in print as a Faber Find): 'What the book lacks in construction it makes up in its poetic vision of motherhood. Plotless, it meanders gently along

until the reader is brought up sharply by a highly original turn of thought or the acute characterisation of the children... Enid's open discussion of a taboo subject was courageous.' In her Preface to a reprint of *The Squire* in 1987, now republished in the Persephone edition, Anne Sebba observes that 'although always described as a novel, the serious effort to discover the motivations of a mother and the instincts of children leads *The Squire* close to the realms of documentary'; and



Cover of the 1943 handbook drawn by Enid Bagnold..

she concludes by quoting Enid Bagnold's remark that "if a man had a child and he was also a writer we should have heard a lot about it. I wanted *The Squire* to be exactly as objective as if a man had had a baby." It is, nevertheless, a romantic book, but toughly romantic and never sentimental.'

The feminist weekly (yes, in those days there was a feminist weekly) *Time and Tide* reviewed *The Squire* in 1938 and called it 'a really important book, a mark in feminist history as well as a fine literary feat. Here at last is a portrait of a woman in her essentially feminine phase of life and yet neither siren nor appendage. The Squire works at her unceasing material task, not with the worried air of the silly conscientious modern mother, but rather with the easy splendour of a tigress.'

Enid Bagnold once described the Chelsea Babies Club as 'a West End Club to teach rich mothers East End Wisdom.' The villagers in *The Two Mrs Abbotts* by DE Stevenson, Persephone Book No. 104, could have been taught some East End Wisdom but alas the evacuees they were sent were not terribly wise and the villagers were not terribly receptive. This is in fact quite a common theme of Persephone Books (for example of *Saplings* and *Doreen*): that the new arrivals from London do not fit in very well with village life and that the long-standing inhabitants are not willing to be taught. As in *Saplings*, in *The Two Mrs Abbotts* the evacuees return to London because they are so homesick; but then one of them, a twelve year-old girl called Elmie Boles, runs away from the East End and makes her way back to Mrs Abbott's house. Here she had

been well looked after, had been taught how to cook and clean and to take pride in doing both these things, so she consequently seized the chance to leave her East End home and return to the country. (Just as at the end of *Doreen* one can imagine her running away from London and going back to 'her' family in the country—much to the distress of her mother.)

The Two Mrs Abbotts (1943) is the third book in a series. In the first of the trilogy, *Miss Buncle's Book* (1934), Persephone Book No. 81, Miss Buncle, gloriously, wrote a novel about the village she lived in and then had hastily to depart because the true identity of 'John Smith' was about to be revealed. In *Miss Buncle Married* (1936), Persephone Book No. 91, she becomes the wife of her publisher and leaves Hampstead for Wandlebury, a village within commutable distance of London. *The Two Mrs Abbotts* starts with one of the characters in *Miss Buncle's Book* arriving in the village to give a talk for the Women's Institute and to stay with Mrs Abbott, not knowing that it is her old friend Miss Buncle, mother by now of two children. And after that there is the usual intensely readable round of events, none of them earth shattering, none of them pertaining to 'great literature', but the novel is wonderfully enjoyable and although perhaps not quite as witty and fun as *Miss Buncle's Book*, it is a very good and entertaining read.



FW Elwell (1870–1958) *The Firstborn* 1913 Fevens Art Gallery, Hull

Also the details about daily life in the war are interesting and in this respect *The Two Mrs Abbotts* can join Persephone's collection of WWII books (there are seventeen of them in Categories on the website – go to Books/Latest Books to find a total of 36 Categories) because it reflects community life during WWII. Thus the quotation on the flap describes the young Mrs Abbott, Jerry, being suddenly upset because her handyman/gardener is sitting in the harness room having a comfortable supper, whereas every other man she knows is overseas. “No,” said Jerry. “No, Rudge, it won't do. If you can get exemption that's all right – that's your affair, not mine – but I can't keep you here.... Why should you be exempted? I'm probably quite mad – but I just can't bear it.” And this is why the fabric used on the endpapers is especially appropriate – it is 1942, the year the book was written, and is called 'Last Waltz'.)

But there is a host of other delightful characters. There is Dorcas again and Markie and Archie and Jerry (the second Mrs Abbott) herself, as well as the first Mrs Abbott and her husband. Barbara Abbott is rather unwillingly drawn into a love affair between Lancreste Marvell (who appeared in *Miss Bunclie Married*) and a not very appealing girl called Pearl. There is also a rather fascinating storyline about a successful romantic novelist who is completely under the thumb of her sister.

Several bloggers have written about *The Two Mrs Abbotts* (the Persephone edition has been eagerly awaited). Heaven Ali thought it 'hugely readable... DES may not be a great literary talent, but I think her writing is underrated: she creates a charming yet believable world and her characters are adorable.' While Jeanette's Books said that 'from the opening page I found myself smiling and laughing and enjoying this book's lighthearted tone, charm and humour as much as I did in the first Miss Bunclie book.'

And in the 1940s the *Chicago Tribune* said about D E Stevenson (who sold an amazing 4 million copies of her books in the UK and 3 million in the USA): 'She has built a wide readership by writing books that deal entertainingly with the ordinary events in the lives of intelligent, bright people.'

Miss Bunclie's Book and *Miss Bunclie Married* have been translated into German, Italian and Spanish (cf. p.25). We are working on the French!



'Evacuee Play Centre' by Elsie Hewland (1901-79) 50" x 40" exhibited at the Royal Academy 1941, whereabouts now unknown

LUNCH WITH WENDY BRAY

Wendy Bray was interviewed at the shop by Rachel Cooke; here are our notes on what she said.

Wendy was born in 1931 and went to the Old Palace School in Croydon where art teaching was not much encouraged even if not actively hindered. During the war her father worked in the Admiralty in Portsmouth while Wendy, her mother and her two sisters were evacuated to Hove. She remembers, in 1940, going up on to Devil's Dyke and seeing the tiny boats bringing in the soldiers from Dunkirk. The family returned to London in 1944, during the flying bombs – their own house was bombed. Rachel asked whether utility clothing (black and brown and drabness) made Wendy want to be a textile designer. But she said it was a surprisingly creative period: you knitted, you made things, you kept busy. Her father (b. 1891) was extremely Victorian and did not really want her to go to art school. However, in 1948 she managed to enrol at Croydon School of Art. Here she discovered her love of textiles, and that she had a feeling for placing, balance and colour. This was in a way not surprising as her father was originally a Huddersfield man, his family had been in the textile industry, and he too had an affinity with the decorative aspect of textiles; so he liked the textile aspect of art school as it was associated with industry and therefore the prospect of finding a job.

Wendy loved art school, learnt a great deal and had lots of fun. She passed round a picture of herself at the Chelsea Arts Ball and also a picture in a 1951 *Tatler* of her and her then boyfriend. She was wearing a blue shot-silk evening-dress which cost £13 (£350 in today's money), her entire grant for the term. Her everyday clothes were a very textured tweed skirt and a big white blouse with a large floppy black silk bow at the neck. After her exams in July 1951 she saw

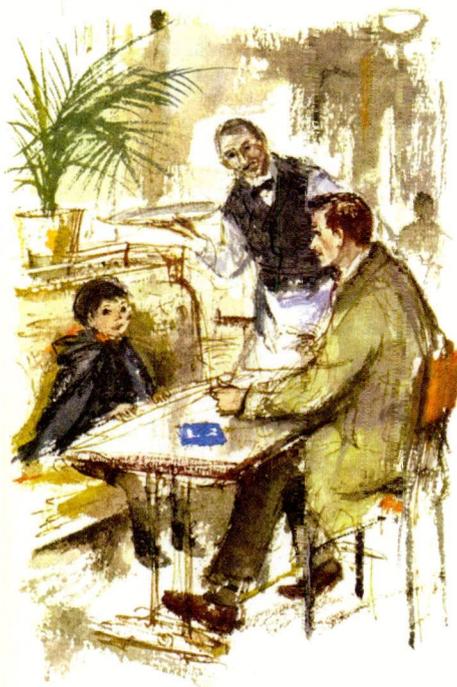


an ad for a job at Courtauld's and was taken on. Here she did a bit of everything. She showed us an article headed 'Pretty Girls in London Offices: Wendy is 22.' (At the end it said 'More Pretty Girls in London Offices Tomorrow!') She designed coat linings, eiderdown fabric and corset cloths, and cloth for West Africa. She also went to a factory in Essex to learn about the industrial process, 'a textile mill being the noisiest place you can imagine'. At this time the Utility CC41

range was still in place – it was very restrictive with small, not dramatic repeats. Wendy can remember the thrill of having her own pay packet. It meant that in one year she spent £99 (£2250 in today's prices) on clothes – she has the list at the back of an old diary – two coats, a suit, five dresses, five jumpers, a red party dress, two hats, a bag.

In 1955 Wendy married and it was understood that you gave up work – women were expected to free the job market for men. She became a pay, pack and follow wife and had four children. Then in 1976 in New York she started designing again, taking an art school course to reinstate herself in the design world: big, bold designs, not neat little 1950s ones. She couldn't sell them in New York but back in the UK she managed to sell duvet cover and towel designs. Thirty years later she is having a renaissance: after people rediscovered 1950s designs again she sold a couple of designs for rugs. These were advertised in *World of Interiors* in December 2010. She rang the editor, Rupert Thomas, and told him about her work; he wrote a six-page article about her. Since then 'my world has turned on its head'. Various notebooks have been produced using fabric designs from the '50s and '70s, her favourite being a grey pattern she originally called 'Origami' but re-named 'New York'. We sell all the notebooks in the shop for £10.

LITTLE BOY LOST



Un petit garçon perdu (Little Boy Lost) translated by H  l  ne Claireau in 1968, illustrated by Jean Reschofsky (in colour and black and white). The French translation of Little Boy Lost is not in print at the moment; but the Italian one is available as Il bambino perduto..

BIRTH ANCIENT & MODERN

‘New baby? Don’t forget to look after yourself too – for both your sakes.’ The recent newspaper headline certainly caught my attention and for several reasons [*writes Lynne Hatwell, aka dovegreyreader, and a former Health Visitor*].

How sad, was my first thought, that women needed to be reminded of something so fundamental – something that would have been the norm even in my memory: those ten-day hospital stays in our small rural maternity home. The baby was gently whisked away when you arrived from the bigger general hospital, and returned, sweet-smelling, wearing an old-fashioned gown accessorised with a huge, fluffy terry-towelling nappy and with a side parting in any hair they may have had. The days became a blur of soothing kindness and baths, compulsory afternoon siestas, visitors kept at bay, tea and homemade cake when you woke up. Screaming, unsettled babies were whisked off at 3 a.m., and long before you had burst into tears of desperation, to what the staff lovingly called the Naughty Babies Room... a nursery with the heating turned up to get them all off to sleep, swaddled to the nines, or lying on their tummies, whatever worked. Lasting friendships were forged as we all lazed on our beds being waited on, and hardly believing that this was happening, but with time to lie and stare at our babies

in their bedside cots, and slowly come to terms with the new ‘us’. We had crossed the divide into motherhood but we felt safe and protected, the midwives bridged that divide, and though none of us wanted to leave, when we did we were perfectly set up for the next stage.

Recently, following the birth of Prince George, the airwaves and the media were full of advice for the Royal couple about those early post-natal days, and I was pleased to hear my own personal recommendation to new mothers of ‘Stay in your nightie as long as you can’ getting a good airing. How good to hear, too, that the Duchess of Cambridge would be dispensing with a maternity nurse and going to her family home for at least six weeks after the birth; under the circumstances that would have been my next suggestion. How lovely to imagine someone she loves and trusts saying to Kate, ‘You go and have a nice soak in the bath. I’ll sort out this heir to the throne!’

Thirty years spent working as an NHS community-based Health Visitor, and the last four years as an online Health Visitor for a big UK parenting website, but now thankfully ‘retired’, and I think I may have seen just about every fashion and fad come and go, and funnily enough, come round again; so reading Enid Bagnold’s *The Squire* once more has been a real pleasure. Now

that I am no longer registered with the Nursing and Midwifery Council I can say it, and it would seem to be nothing new because Enid Bagnold says likewise: ‘The book of instinct has long, long been closed,’ observes the midwife, and even in the 1930s ‘the science-guided baby’ was already becoming the norm. But while we know so much more, and that has to be a good thing, the days of instinct and experience can seem even more distant in the 21st century: someone somewhere must have run a trial and published a paper before the advice can be offered. Now, in the case of babies overheating because they have been ‘roasted’ off to sleep on their tummies in a Naughty Babies Room, well, how grateful we all are that, thanks to the research, we know the dangers, yet for all the evidence-based advice that is offered, little has changed when it comes down to the fundamentals. In many ways, knowing so much seems to have made being a parent even more difficult. As I would knock on a door to do a new-birth visit, the questions would still be the same: the baby would have been crying inexplicably at some point and the anxieties that engendered would be little different.

Enid Bagnold knew it too: Mothers need time and space to come to terms with a birth and to recover from it, time to establish feeding, and time to get

to know the new little person in their arms, and in a world where women are home from hospital within hours I always valued working in partnership with a caring but no-nonsense midwife who advised the mothers that if she caught them in the supermarket on Day Two there would be trouble. For all the evidence-base we work from now, and though perhaps impractical and nigh on impossible to emulate some seventy-five years on, there are nuggets of true wisdom in Enid Bagnold's ideas; ideas that research shows would still pass muster and that still resonate for their common sense.

Few women extend to five births these days, but how fortunate was the Squire to have the help that allowed her time apart from her children, and as she sits 'supporting the inhabited stomach with both hands', to enter a period of intense reflection before becoming 'two people'. We take safety and survival for granted, making it easy to forget what a high-risk endeavour childbirth still remained in the 1930s. For those dramatic improvements in maternal mortality rates that coincided with the arrival of antibiotics, we can only be thankful, and it is only in recent years that the service of Churching of Women, with thanks for 'the safe deliverance and preservation from the great dangers of childbirth' has been removed from the Church of England's Book of Common Prayer.

Ante-natal preparation would today entail attending a class, meeting other parents-to-be and writing a birth plan, but the Squire uses the time to acknowledge a sense of achievement and wonder as the birth approaches, a preparation that will create a secure foundation for what it is to follow. With the arrival of the midwife, a beatific, almost holy being, with her dreams of running a 'convent clinic... a palisaded place far in the country', the Squire can submit herself to someone else's care. 'Even a cat is left undisturbed,' says the midwife as she effectively curates mother and baby, protecting them fiercely from the intrusions of the world. Her role was clearly defined by Enid

Bagnold, to set order into the baby's life, to create peace, watching, reflecting, adjusting; any trouble must be the midwife's, 'all the heaven was the Squire's.'

Then quietly and discreetly the midwife must let go, the baby has been 'unpacked from his mystery and put into family life', she has given her 'loving service to their welfare', slipping away when her work is done, and the Squire plunges back, fortified and prepared, into the melée of family life... 'And with a deep female pride, she felt herself an archway through which her children flowed...' Melodramatic it may seem to us these days, but there is true wisdom in this lovely book.



Enid Bagnold in 1932 with her daughter and three sons, then aged 11, 8, 6 and 2.

OUR BLOGGERS WRITE

‘**H**eat *Lightning* is exactly the sort of book I associate with Persephone (and then I’m constantly surprised by how varied their list is). The preface raises interesting points about the American search for a national identity in the face of a lack of common tradition, and the changing fortunes of ‘domestic’ and ‘feminine’ fiction. When Helen Hull’s novels were described as ‘women’s books’ reviewers meant that they were written on controversial topics from a woman’s point of view. By the 1930s though it became a somewhat more pejorative term, it still is, but really – why should it be?’ Desperate Reader

‘**T**he *Exiles Return* hones in on every aspect of what it means to lose, to remember, to ‘belong’, and to ‘re-belong’. Plenty happens and Elisabeth de Waal eventually weaves the plots together, cleverly. No reading of a Persephone book is complete without paying close attention to the textile endpapers, this one is a 1953 furnishing fabric designed by Jacqueline Groag – I find I use them as an integral part of the read because I know they are chosen with great care to be both contemporaneous, but, I feel sure, also expressive of the book itself.’ Dovegreyreader

‘**T**eresa’s story is engaging, and I enjoyed following her on the boat across to India. *The Far Cry* becomes something

extraordinary, however, when she and Mr Digby arrive, at last, at Ruth’s bungalow. Ruth is one of the most chilling, distressing, affecting characters I have ever come across. Really this is an astonishing book. Emma Smith has an uncanny way of penetrating to the heart of each of her characters, with all their myriad differences.’ Emily Books

‘**T**his is such a wonderful novel. I don’t know how Persephone keep discovering books that are so essentially Persephone books. The latest *Biannually* compares *Heat Lightning* to Dorothy Whipple’s novels and I would have to agree. Both authors write books that are unputdownable. The atmosphere of small town life is portrayed so exactly. On a purely aesthetic note, this is such a beautifully presented book, an absorbing novel in a beautiful package.’ I Prefer Reading

‘**E**lisabeth de Waal’s writing has an intelligence and a political and philosophical curiosity that reflects a wider European tradition, Elias Canetti’s *Auto-da-Fé* or Iris Murdoch. She shares a cosmopolitanism with Stefan Zweig and Joseph Roth, whose work also mourns the loss of an Empire, which brings a weight of culture and heritage to her writing. And she has the understanding that you find in Elizabeth Taylor’s novels. *The*

Exiles Return is a fascinating read and an ideal Persephone book. It introduces a female voice (and perspective) that has been left absent from history, through a writing style made up of compassion, wit and grace.’ Bookmunch

‘**S**omeone at a *Distance* could easily have been a soap opera, but for the astonishing perceptiveness of Whipple’s insights into the characters and their motivation. The breakup of Avery and Ellen’s happy marriage is almost unbearable at times. By focusing on the mundane effects, Dorothy Whipple creates so much more power and depth, and the sense of aching loss her characters feel, than if she had focused on screaming matches or sobbing fits.’ Furrowed Middlebrow

‘**I** loved every single page of *Mariana* and was completely lost in Mary’s life. There are plenty of laughs, there are also moments of sadness and despair, and often the two are combined to great effect. It has elements of the real social history of the time, only fictionalised, and is a proper story of our heroine growing into adulthood and all the highs and lows that this brings.’ Savidge Reads

‘**B**etty Miller’s writing is excellent. In *Farewell Leicester Square* she slyly exposes petty everyday racism

that is of course in fact far from petty, it's destructive; in Alec it breeds a kind of paranoia – which blights his life. Miller's portrayal of both middle class English life and the suffocating limits of Alec's family home in Brighton is brilliantly done. Such writing deserves recognition, and I am glad Persephone books saw fit to re-issue it.' Heaven Ali

'There's nothing more exciting for readers like me than discovering a new and wonderful author. And Helen Hull is one such. Published in 1932, *Heat Lightning* is a novel about the melting pot of America, social class, morality and belief. Quite a lot to encompass in a mere 327 pages, but Helen Hull does it with the utmost subtlety and skill. Rather than an American Dorothy Whipple I'd call her an American Elizabeth Bowen. I am so glad I read this great novel.' Harriet Devine

'*The Victorian Chaise-longue* could well be described as sci-fi horror, but it's both easier to read and more deeply soul-searching than that implies. It works brilliantly as a horror story because at first you think the only question is when will Milly get back to her own present, but then you realise that the details of her situation mean there are other dangers here. It's genuinely scary, which is not something I say often!' Nose in a Book

'*William – An Englishman* is a book that has a fire in its belly for the everyman and

a passion that is completely reflected in its prose – especially in all the parts of the book where we are at the heart of the war. I thought it was a very skilful and unusual look at WWI and one that has a sense of hindsight far ahead of the years in which it was published. Heartily recommended.' Simon Savidge

'*The Exiles Return* is a novel that is appreciated all the more for understanding the life of the author herself. For the period in which it was written, I find it compelling and modern. Not like *The Hare with Amber Eyes*, but an important part of that story and an excellent companion novel; what a privilege that we now have the opportunity to read Elisabeth de Waal's work.' Word by WordL

'*Lady Rose and Mrs Memmary* was lovely, and I felt that I had fallen into a fairy-tale. The story and most of all the heroine never lost their hold on my heart. I was involved, and I cared, so very much. The visitors left, and Mrs Memmary was left in her beloved house. There was a gentle twist in the tale, that wasn't entirely surprising but was entirely right, and the final words brought tears to my eyes. This is a beautiful, moving, romantic story, told by a consummate storyteller, and I am so pleased that I met Lady Rose, a heroine as lovely as any I have met in the pages of a Persephone book' Fleur Fisher

'Betty Miller was 25 when she wrote this, which is remarkable. The structure of *Farewell Leicester Square* is cleverly done to echo Alec's profession as a film maker. This is essentially a novel about identity and the growth of a boy into a man; daring and thought-provoking, it is beautifully and perceptively written with flashes of real artistic brilliance and some wonderful observations.' Book Snob

'I can only be thankful that Persephone Books decided to bring Helen Hull back into the limelight. Her characterisation is precise and occasionally merciless. *Heat Lightning* is a book that deals masterfully with both the remarkable and the mundane. Most of all, though, it is a fantastic representation of family, and love.' Running in Heels

'Much has been written about the terrible years during the war, yet in *The Exiles Return* Elisabeth de Waal is rare in portraying what happened next, in asking what it was like to come back – a 'world of tomorrow' after Stefan Zweig's *World of Yesterday*. She captures the fragility of a city trying to rebuild itself on uncertain foundations, the difficulty of going about daily life without being able to look at anything too closely, the burden of the terrible unsaid. It is an important story and now, at last, it has been told.' *The Spectator* Blog

THE PERSEPHONE 104

1. William – an Englishman by Cicely Hamilton Prize-winning 1919 novel about the effect of WW1 on a socialist clerk and a suffragette. Preface: Nicola Beuman

2. Mariana by Monica Dickens This funny, romantic first novel, which came out in 1940, describes a young girl's life in the 1930s. Preface: Harriet Lane

3. Someone at a Distance by Dorothy Whipple 'A very good novel indeed' (*Spectator*) about the destruction of a formerly happy 1950s marriage. Preface: Nina Bawden, R4 'Book at Bedtime' 2008

4. Fidelity by Susan Glaspell 1915 novel by a Pulitzer-winning writer brilliantly describing the long-term consequences of a girl in Iowa running off with a married man. Preface: Laura Godwin

5. An Interrupted Life by Etty Hillesum From 1941–43 a woman in Amsterdam, 'the Anne Frank of grown-ups', wrote diaries and letters: they are among the great documents of our time. Preface: Eva Hoffman

6. The Victorian Chaise-longue by Marghanita Laski A 'little jewel of horror': 'Melly' lies on a chaise-longue in the 1950s and wakes as 'Milly' eighty years before. Preface: PD James

7. The Home-Maker by Dorothy Canfield Fisher Ahead of its time 'remarkable and brave 1924 novel about being a house-husband' (Carol Shields). Preface: Karen Knox

8. Good Evening, Mrs Craven: the Wartime Stories of Mollie Panter-Downes Superbly written short stories, first published in *The New Yorker* from 1938–44. Five of them were read on R4 twice, and on R7. Preface: Gregory LeStage **Also available as a Persephone audiobook (unabridged) read by Lucy Scott**

9. Few Eggs and No Oranges by Vere Hodgson A 600-page diary, written from 1940–45 in Notting Hill Gate, full

of acute observation, wit and humanity. Preface: Jenny Hartley

10. Good Things in England by Florence White 'One of the great English cookbooks, full of delightful, delicious recipes that actually work.' Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall

11. Julian Grenfell by Nicholas Mosley A biography of the First World War poet, and of his mother Ettie Desborough. Preface: the author

12. It's Hard to be Hip over Thirty and Other Tragedies of Married Life by Judith Viorst Funny, weary and wise 1960s poems about marriage, children and reality. Preface: the author

13. Consequences by EM Delafield By the author of *The Diary of a Provincial Lady*, this 1919 novel is about a girl entering a convent after she fails to marry. Preface: Nicola Beuman

14. Farewell Leicester Square by Betty Miller Novel (by Jonathan Miller's mother) about a Jewish film-director and 'the discreet discrimination of the bourgeoisie' (*Guardian*). Preface: Jane Miller

15. Tell It to a Stranger by Elizabeth Berridge Funny, observant and bleak 1947 short stories, twice in the *Evening Standard* bestseller list. Preface: AN Wilson

16. Saplings by Noel Streatfeild A novel by the well-known author of *Ballet Shoes*, about the destruction of a family during WW2; a R4 ten-part serial. Afterword: Jeremy Holmes

17. Marjory Fleming by Oriel Malet A deeply empathetic novel about the real life of the Scottish child prodigy who lived from 1803–11; published in France; was a play on Radio Scotland.

18. Every Eye by Isobel English An unusual 1956 novel about a girl travelling to Spain, highly praised by Muriel Spark: a R4 'Afternoon Play' in 2004. Preface: Neville Braybrooke

19. They Knew Mr Knight by Dorothy Whipple An absorbing 1934 novel about a man driven to committing fraud and what happens to him and his family; a 1943 film. Afterwords: Terence Handley MacMath and Christopher Beuman

20. A Woman's Place by Ruth Adam A survey of women's lives from 1900–75, very readably written by a novelist-historian: an overview full of insights. Preface: Yvonne Roberts

21. Miss Pettigrew Lives for a Day by Winifred Watson A delightful 1938 novel about a governess and a nightclub singer. Read on R4 by Maureen Lipman; now a film with Frances McDormand and Amy Adams. Preface: Henrietta Twycross-Martin. **Also available as an unabridged Persephone audiobook read by Frances McDormand**

22. Consider the Years by Virginia Graham Sharp, funny, evocative WW2 poems by Joyce Grenfell's closest friend and collaborator. Preface: Anne Harvey

23. Reuben Sachs by Amy Levy A fierce 1880s satire on the London Jewish community by 'the Jewish Jane Austen' who was a friend of Oscar Wilde. Preface: Julia Neuberger

24. Family Roundabout by Richmal Crompton By the *William* books author; 1948 family saga contrasting two matriarchs and their very different children. Preface: Juliet Aykroyd

25. The Montana Stories by Katherine Mansfield Collects together the short stories written during the author's last year; with a detailed publisher's note and the contemporary illustrations. Five were read on R4 in 2002.

26. Brook Evans by Susan Glaspell A very unusual novel, written in the same year as *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, about the enduring effect of a love affair on three generations of a family.

- 27. The Children who Lived in a Barn** by Eleanor Graham A 1938 classic about five children fending for themselves; starring the unforgettable hay-box. Preface: Jacqueline Wilson
- 28. Little Boy Lost** by Marghanita Laski Novel about a father's search for his son in France in late 1945, chosen by the *Guardian's* Nicholas Lezard as his 2001 Paperback Choice. A 'Book at Bedtime' on R4 read by Jamie Glover. Afterword: Anne Sebba
- 29. The Making of a Marchioness** by Frances Hodgson Burnett A very entertaining 1901 novel about the ensuing melodrama after a governess marries a Marquis. A R4 Classic Serial in 2007. Preface: Isabel Raphael, Afterword: Gretchen Gerzina. Also available as a Persephone audiobook (unabridged) read by Lucy Scott
- 30. Kitchen Essays** by Agnes Jekyll Witty and useful essays about cooking, with recipes, published in *The Times* and reprinted as a book in 1922. 'One of the best reads outside Elizabeth David' wrote gastropoda.com
- 31. A House in the Country** by Jocelyn Playfair An unusual and very interesting 1944 novel about a group of people living in the country during WW2. Preface: Ruth Gorb
- 32. The Carlyles at Home** by Thea Holme A 1965 mixture of biography and social history which very entertainingly describes Thomas and Jane Carlyle's life in Chelsea.
- 33. The Far Cry** by Emma Smith A beautifully written 1949 novel about a young girl's passage to India: a great Persephone favourite. R4 'Book at Bedtime' in 2004. Preface: author
- 34. Minnie's Room: The Peacetime Stories** of Mollie Panter-Downes 1947–1965: Second volume of short stories first published in *The New Yorker*, previously unknown in the UK.
- 35. Greenery Street** by Denis Mackail A delightful, very funny 1925 novel about a young couple's first year of married life in a (real) street in Chelsea. Preface: Rebecca Cohen
- 36. Lettice Delmer** by Susan Miles A unique 1920s novel in verse describing a girl's stormy adolescence and path to redemption; much admired by TS Eliot. A novel in verse sounds unappealing – but we highly recommend this book.
- 37. The Runaway** by Elizabeth Anna Hart A Victorian novel for children and grown-ups, illustrated by Gwen Raverat. 'There never was a happier book' (*Country Life*, 1936). Afterwords: Anne Harvey, Frances Spalding
- 38. Cheerful Weather for the Wedding** by Julia Strachey A funny and quirky 1932 novella by a niece of Lytton Strachey, praised by Virginia Woolf. Preface: Frances Partridge. Also available as an unabridged Persephone audiobook read by Miriam Margolyes
- 39. Manja** by Anna Gmeyner A 1938 German novel, newly translated, about five children conceived on the same night in 1920, and their lives until the Nazi takeover. Preface: Eva Ibbotson (the author's daughter)
- 40. The Priory** by Dorothy Whipple A much-loved 1939 novel about a family, upstairs and downstairs, living in a large country house. 'Warm, witty and realistic' (Hatchards). Preface: David Conville
- 41. Hostages to Fortune** by Elizabeth Cambridge 'Deals with domesticity without being in the least bit cosy' (Harriet Lane, *Observer*): a remarkable fictional portrait of a doctor's family in rural Oxfordshire in the 1920s.
- 42. The Blank Wall** by Elisabeth Sanxay Holding 'The top suspense writer of them all' (Chandler). A 1947 thriller about a mother shielding her daughter from a blackmailer. Filmed as *The Reckless Moment* (1949) and *The Deep End* (2001); a R4 serial in 2006.
- 43. The Wise Virgins** by Leonard Woolf This wise and witty 1914 novel contrasts the bohemian Virginia and Vanessa with Gwen, the girl next door in 'Richstead' (Putney). Preface: Lyndall Gordon
- 44. Tea with Mr Rochester** by Frances Towers Magical, unsettling 1949 stories, a surprise favourite, that are unusually beautifully written; read on R4 in 2003 and 2006. Preface: Frances Thomas
- 45. Good Food on the Aga** by Ambrose Heath A 1933 cookery book written for Aga owners which can be used by anyone; with numerous illustrations by Edward Bawden
- 46. Miss Ranskill Comes Home** by Barbara Euphan Todd An unsparing, wry 1946 novel: Miss Ranskill is shipwrecked and returns to a completely changed wartime England. Preface: Wendy Pollard
- 47. The New House** by Lettice Cooper 1936 portrayal of the day a family moves into a new house, and the resulting adjustments and tensions. Preface: Jilly Cooper
- 48. The Casino** by Margaret Bonham Short stories by a 1940s writer with a unique voice and dark sense of humour; they were read on BBC Radio 4 in 2004 and 2005. Preface: Cary Bazalgette
- 49. Bricks and Mortar** by Helen Ashton An excellent 1932 novel by a very popular pre- and post-war writer, chronicling the life of a hard-working, kindly London architect and his wife over thirty-five years.
- 50. The World that was Ours** by Hilda Bernstein An extraordinary memoir that reads like a novel of the events before and after the 1964 Rivonia Trial. Mandela was given a life sentence but the Bernsteins escaped to England. Preface and Afterword: the author
- 51. Operation Heartbreak** by Duff Cooper A soldier misses going to war – until the end of his life. 'The novel I enjoyed more than any other in the immediate post-war years' (Nina Bawden). Afterword: Max Arthur
- 52. The Village** by Marghanita Laski This 1952 comedy of manners describes post-war readjustments in village life when love ignores the class barrier. Afterword: Juliet Gardiner
- 53. Lady Rose and Mrs Memmary** by Ruby Ferguson A 1937 novel about Lady Rose, who inherits a great house,

marries well – and then meets the love of her life on a park bench. A great favourite of the Queen Mother. Preface: Candia McWilliam

54. They Can't Ration These by **Vicomte de Mauduit** A 1940 cookery book about 'food for free', full of excellent (and now timely) recipes.

55. Flush by **Virginia Woolf** A light-hearted but surprisingly feminist 1933 'life' of Elizabeth Barrett Browning's spaniel, 'a little masterpiece of comedy' (*TLS*). A 'Book at Bedtime' on BBC R4. Preface: Sally Beaman

56. They Were Sisters by **Dorothy Whipple** A 1943 novel by this wonderful writer, contrasting three different marriages. Preface: Celia Brayfield

57. The Hopkins Manuscript by **RC Sherriff** What might happen if the moon crashed into the earth in 1946: a 1939 novel 'written' by a delightful anti-hero, 'Mr Hopkins'. Preface: Michael Moorcock, Afterword: George Gamow

58. Hetty Dorval by **Ethel Wilson** First novel (1947) set in the beautiful landscape of British Columbia; a young girl is befriended by a beautiful and selfish 'Menace' – but is she? Afterword: Northrop Frye

59. There Were No Windows by **Norah Hoult** A touching and funny novel, written in 1944, about an elderly woman with memory loss living in Kensington during the Blitz. Afterword: Julia Briggs

60. Doreen by **Barbara Noble** A 1946 novel about a child who is evacuated to the country during the war. Her mother regrets it; the family that takes her in wants to keep her. Preface: Jessica Mann

61. A London Child of the 1870s by **Molly Hughes** A classic memoir, written in 1934, about an 'ordinary, suburban Victorian family' in Islington, a great favourite with all ages. Preface: Adam Gopnik

62. How to Run Your Home Without Help by **Kay Smallshaw** A 1949 manual for the newly servantless housewife full of advice that is

historically interesting, useful nowadays and, as well, unintentionally funny. Preface: Christina Hardyment

63. Princes in the Land by **Joanna Cannan** A novel published in 1938 about a daughter of the aristocracy who marries an Oxford don; her three children fail to turn out as she had anticipated.

64. The Woman Novelist and Other Stories by **Diana Gardner** Short stories written in the late 1930s and early 1940s that are witty, sharp and with an unusual undertone. Preface: Claire Gardner

65. Alas, Poor Lady by **Rachel Ferguson** A 1937 novel, polemical but intensely readable, about the unthinking cruelty with which Victorian parents gave birth to daughters without anticipating any future for them apart from marriage.

66. Gardener's Nightcap by **Muriel Stuart** A 1938 pot pourri: a huge variety of miniature essays on gardening – such as *Dark Ladies* (fritillary), *Better Gooseberries*, *Phlox Failure* – which will be enjoyed by all gardeners, keen or lukewarm.

67. The Fortnight in September by **RC Sherriff** Another novel by the author of *Journey's End*, and of *The Hopkins Manuscript*, Persephone Book No. 57, about a family on holiday in Bognor in 1931; a quiet masterpiece.

68. The Expendable Man by **Dorothy B Hughes** A 1963 thriller about a young doctor in Arizona which encapsulates the social, racial and moral tensions of the time. By the author of *In a Lonely Place*. Afterword: Dominic Power

69. Journal of Katherine Mansfield The husband of the great short story writer (cf. *The Montana Stories*, Persephone Book No. 25) assembled this journal from unposted letters, scraps of writing etc: a unique portrait.

70. Plats du Jour by **Patience Gray and Primrose Boyd** A 1957 cookery book which was a bestseller at the time and a pioneering work for British cooks. The line drawings and the endpapers are by David Gentleman.

71. The Shuttle by **Frances Hodgson Burnett** A 1907 page-turner about Rosalie Vanderpoel, an American heiress who marries an English aristocrat, whose beautiful and enterprising sister Bettina sets out to rescue her. Preface: Anne Sebba

72. House-Bound by **Winifred Peck** This 1942 novel describes an Edinburgh woman deciding, radically, to run her house without help and do her own cooking; the war is in the background and foreground. Afterword: Penelope Fitzgerald

73. The Young Pretenders by **Edith Henrietta Fowler** An 1895 novel for adults and children about Babs, who lives with her uncle and aunt and has not yet learnt to dissemble. Preface: Charlotte Mitchell

74. The Closed Door and Other Stories by **Dorothy Whipple** Ten short stories drawn from the three collections (now extremely hard to find) that Dorothy Whipple published during her lifetime. Five of them were read on BBC R4 in 2007 and recently on R4 Extra.

75. On the Other Side: Letters to my Children from Germany 1940–46 by **Mathilde Wolff-Mönckeberg**. Written in Hamburg but never sent, these letters provide a crucial counterpoint to *Few Eggs and No Oranges*. Preface: Ruth Evans

76. The Crowded Street by **Winifred Holtby** A 1924 novel about Muriel's attempts to escape from small-town Yorkshire, and her rescue by Delia, alias Vera Brittain. Preface: Marion Shaw

77. Daddy's Gone A-Hunting by **Penelope Mortimer** This 1958 novel is about the 'captive wives' of the pre-women's liberation era, bored and lonely in suburbia. Preface: Valerie Grove

78. A Very Great Profession: The Woman's Novel 1914–39 by **Nicola Beauman** A mixture of literary criticism and historical evocation, first published in 1983, about the women writers of the inter-war period.

79. Round About a Pound a Week by **Maud Pember Reeves** A study of working-class life in Lambeth in the early years of the C20th that is witty, readable, poignant and fascinating – and relevant nowadays. Preface: Polly Toynbee

80. The Country Housewife's Book by **Lucy H Yates** A useful 1934 book, suggested to us by the owner of a working farm, on topics such as the storeroom and larder, using garden produce, and game.

81. Miss Buncle's Book by **DE Stevenson** A middle-aged woman writes a novel, as 'John Smith', about the village she lives in. A delightful and funny 1934 book by an author whose work sold in millions. Preface: Aline Templeton

82. Amours de Voyage by **Arthur Hugh Clough** A novel in verse, set in Rome in 1849, funny and beautiful and profound, and extraordinarily modern in tone. Preface: Julian Barnes

83. Making Conversation by **Christine Longford**. An amusing, unusual 1931 novel about a girl growing up which is in the vein of *Cold Comfort Farm* and *Persephone Book No. 38 Cheerful Weather for the Wedding*. Preface: Rachel Billington

84. A New System of Domestic Cookery by **Mrs Rundell** An 1806 cookbook – we have reprinted the 1816 edition in facsimile – which is long, detailed and fascinating. Preface: Janet Morgan

85. High Wages by **Dorothy Whipple** Another novel by Persephone's bestselling writer about a girl setting up a dress shop just before the First World War. Preface: Jane Brocket

86. To Bed with Grand Music by **Marghanita Laski** A couple are separated by the war. She is serially unfaithful, a quite new take on 'women in wartime'. Preface: Juliet Gardiner

87. Dimanche and Other Stories by **Irène Némirovsky** Ten short stories by the author of *Suite Française*, written between 1934 and 1942. 'Luminous, extraordinary, stunning' was the verdict of reviewers.

88. Still Missing by **Beth Gutcheon** A 1981 novel about a woman whose six year-old son sets off on his own for school and does not return. But his mother never gives up hope...

89. The Mystery of Mrs Blencarrow by **Mrs Oliphant** Two 1880s novellas about women shockingly, and secretly, abandoned by their husbands, that were favourites of Penelope Fitzgerald. Afterword: Merryn Williams

90. The Winds of Heaven by **Monica Dickens** This 1955 novel by the author of *Mariana* is about a widow with three rather unsympathetic daughters who eventually finds happiness. Afterword: AS Byatt

91. Miss Buncle Married by **DE Stevenson** A hugely enjoyable sequel to *Miss Buncle's Book* (No. 81): Miss Buncle marries and moves to a new village. Afterword: Fiona Bevan

92. Midsummer Night in the Workhouse by **Diana Athill** 'Funny, engaging and unexpected' (*Paris Review*): 1950s stories by the editor and memoir writer. Preface: the author, **who also reads six of the stories as a Persephone audiobook**.

93. The Sack of Bath by **Adam Fergusson** A 1973 polemic, with numerous black and white photographs, raging at the destruction of Bath's C18th artisan terraced housing. Preface: the author

94. No Surrender by **Constance Maud** A fascinating 1911 suffragette novel about a mill girl and her aristocratic friend. Preface: Lydia Fellgett

95. Greenbanks by **Dorothy Whipple** A 1932 novel by our most popular author about a family and, in particular, a grandmother and her granddaughter. Afterword: Charles Lock.

96. Dinners for Beginners by **Rachel and Margaret Ryan** A 1934 cookery book for the novice cook telling her everything in exacting and rather punishing detail: eye-opening and useful.

97. Harriet by **Elizabeth Jenkins** A brilliant but disquieting 1934 novel about the 1877 murder of Harriet Staunton. Afterword: Rachel Cooke

98. A Writer's Diary by **Virginia Woolf** Extracts from the diaries, covering the years 1918–41, selected by Leonard Woolf in 1953 in order to show his late wife in the act of writing. Preface: Lyndall Gordon

99. Patience by **John Coates** A hilarious 1953 novel about a 'happily married' Catholic mother of three in St John's Wood who falls 'improperly in love'. Preface: Maureen Lipman

100. The Persephone Book of Short Stories Thirty stories to celebrate our 100th book: ten by Persephone authors, ten from the last decade's *Biannuals* and ten that are newly reprinted.

101. Heat Lightning by **Helen Hull** A young married woman spends a sultry and revelatory week with her family in small-town Michigan; a 1932 Book-of-the-Month Club Selection. Preface: Patricia McClelland Miller

102. The Exiles Return by **Elisabeth de Waal** A novel, written in the late 1950s but never published before, about five exiles who return to Vienna after the war: a meditation on the theme of 'going back' as well as a love story. Preface: Edmund de Waal

103. The Squire by **Enid Bagnold** A woman gives birth to her fifth child: a rare, if not the only, novel (written in 1938) about the process of birth. Preface: Anne Sebba

104. The Two Mrs Abbotts by **DE Stevenson** The third 'Miss Buncle' book, published 1943, is about Barbara Abbott, as she now is, and the 'young' Mrs Abbott, keeping the home fires burning in Wandlebury during WWII.



'MISS ANSTRUTHER'S LETTERS'

BY ROSE MACAULAY

Miss Anstruther, whose life had been cut in two on the night of May 10th 1941, so that she now felt herself a ghost, without attachments or habitation, neither of which she any longer desired, sat alone in the bed-sitting room she had taken, a small room, littered with the grimy, broken and useless objects which she had salvaged from the burnt-out ruin round the corner. It was one of the many burnt-out ruins of that wild night when high explosives and incendiaries had rained on London and the water had run short: it was now a gaunt and roofless tomb, a pile of ashes and rubble and burnt, smashed beams. Where the floors of twelve flats had been, there was empty space. Miss Anstruther had for the first few days climbed up to what had been her flat, on what had been the third floor, swarming up pendent fragments of beams and broken girders, searching and scrabbling among ashes and rubble, but not finding what she sought, only here a pot, there a pan, sheltered from destruction by an overhanging slant of ceiling. Her marmalade for May had been there, and a little sugar and tea; the demolition men got the sugar and tea, but did not care for marmalade, so Miss Anstruther got that. She did not know what else went into those bulging dungaree pockets, and did not

really care, for she knew it would not be the thing she sought, for which even demolition men would have no use; the flames, which take anything, useless or not, had taken these, taken them and destroyed them like a ravaging mouse or an idiot child.

After a few days the police had stopped Miss Anstruther from climbing up to her flat any more, since the building was scheduled as dangerous. She did not much mind; she knew by then that what she looked for was gone for good. It was not among the massed debris on the basement floor, where piles of burnt, soaked and blackened fragments had fallen through four floors to lie in indistinguishable anonymity together. The tenant of the basement flat spent her days there, sorting and burrowing among the chaotic mass that had invaded her home from the dwellings of her co-tenants above. There were masses of paper, charred and black and damp, which had been books. Sometimes the basement tenant would call out to Miss Anstruther, 'Here's a book. That'll be yours, Miss Anstruther'; for it was believed in Mortimer House that most of the books contained in it were Miss Anstruther's, Miss Anstruther being something of a bookworm. But none of the

books were any use now, merely drifts of burnt pages. Most of the pages were loose and scattered about the rubbish-heaps; Miss Anstruther picked up one here and there and made out some words. 'Yes,' she would agree. 'Yes, that was one of mine.' The basement tenant, digging bravely away for her motoring trophies, said, 'Is it one you wrote?' 'I don't think so,' said Miss Anstruther. 'I don't think I can have...' She did not really know what she might not have written, in that burnt-out past when she had sat and written this and that on the third floor, looking out on the green gardens; but she did not think it could have been this, which was a page from Urquhart's translation of Rabelais. 'Have you lost *all* your own?' the basement tenant asked, thinking about her motoring cups, and how she must get at them before the demolition men did, for they were silver. 'Everything,' Miss Anstruther answered. 'Everything. They don't matter.' 'I hope you had no precious manuscripts,' said the kind tenant. 'Books you were writing, and that.' 'Yes,' said Miss Anstruther, digging about among the rubble heaps. 'Oh yes. They're gone. They don't matter...'

She went on digging till twilight came. She was grimed from head to foot; her only clothes were ruined; she stood

knee-deep in drifts of burnt rubbish that had been carpets, beds, curtains, furniture, pictures, and books; the smoke that smouldered up from them made her cry and cough. What she looked for was not there; it was ashes, it was no more. She had not rescued it while she could, she had forgotten it, and now it was ashes. All but one torn burnt corner of notepaper, which she picked up out of a battered saucepan belonging to the basement tenant. It was niggled over with close small writing, the only words left of the thousands of words in that hand that she looked for. She put it in her notepad and went on looking till dark; then she went back to her bed-sitting room, which she filled each night with dirt and sorrow and a few blackened cups.

She knew at last that it was no use to look any more, so she went to bed and lay open-eyed through the short summer nights. She hoped each night that there would be another raid, which should save her the trouble of going on living. But it seemed that the Luftwaffe had, for the moment, done; each morning came, the day broke, and, like a revenant, Miss Anstruther still haunted her ruins, where now the demolition men were at work, digging and sorting and pocketing as they worked.

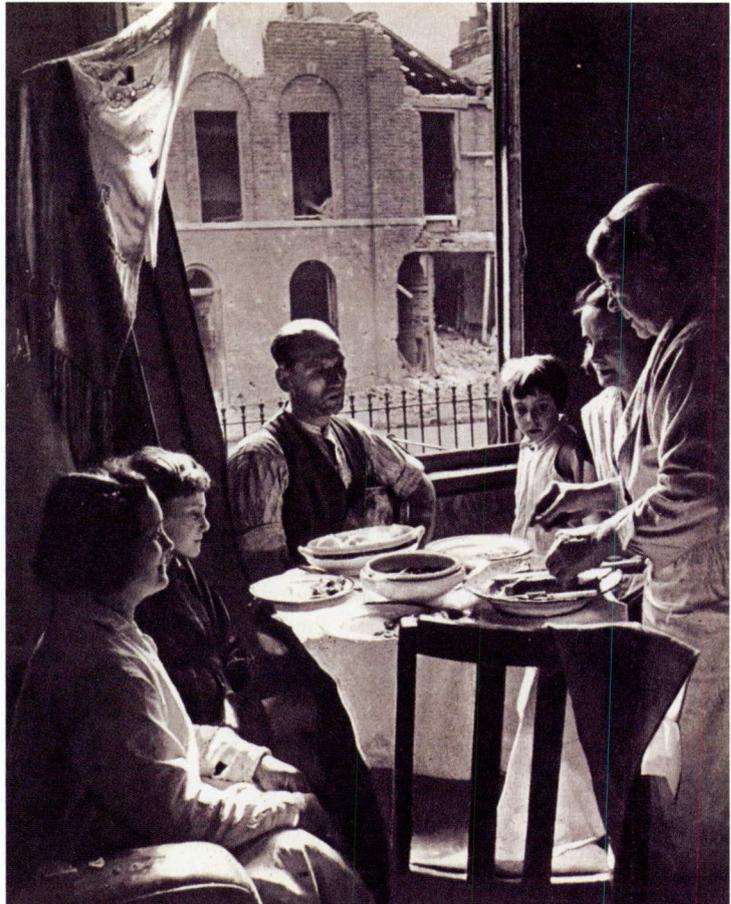
'I watch them close,' said a policeman standing by. 'I always hope I'll catch them at it. But they sneak into dark corners and stuff their pockets before you can look round.'

'They didn't ought,' said the widow of the publican who had kept the little smashed pub on the corner, 'they didn't ought to let them have those big pockets, it's not right. Poor people like us, who've lost all we had, to have what's left taken off of us by them...it's not right.'

The policeman agreed that it was not right, but they were that crafty, he couldn't catch them at it.

Each night, as Miss Anstruther lay awake in her strange, littered, unhomely room, she lived again the blazing night that

had cut her life in two. It had begun like other nights, with the wailing siren followed by the crashing guns, the rushing hiss of incendiaries over London, and the whining, howling pitching of bombs out of the sky onto the fire-lit city. A wild, blazing hell of a night. Miss Anstruther, whom bombs made restless, had gone down once or twice to the street door to look at the glowing furnace of London and exchange comments with the caretaker on the ground floor and with the two basement tenants, then she had sat on the stairs, listening to the demon noise. Crashes shook



'The Family Must Eat' from Front Line 1941 subtitled 'the official story of the Civil Defence of Britain'

Mortimer House, which was tall and slim and Edwardian, and swayed like a reed in the wind to near bombing. Miss Anstruther understood that this was a good sign, a sign that Mortimer House, unlike the characters ascribed to clients by fortune-tellers, would bend but not break. So she was quite surprised and shocked when, after a series of three close-at-hand screams and crashes, the fourth exploded, a giant earthquake, against Mortimer House, and sent its whole front crashing down. Miss Anstruther, dazed and bruised from the hurtle of bricks and plaster flung at her head, and choked with dust, hurried down the stairs, which were still there. The wall on the street was a pile of smoking, rumbling rubble, the Gothic respectability of Mortimer House one with Nineveh and Tyre and with the little public across the street. The ground-floor flats, the hall and the street outside, were scrambled and beaten into a common devastation of smashed masonry and dust. The little caretaker was tugging at his large wife, who was struck unconscious and jammed to the knees in bricks. The basement tenant, who had rushed up with her stirrup pump, began to tug too, so did Miss Anstruther. Policemen pushed in through the mess, rescue-men and a warden followed, all was in train for rescue, as Miss Anstruther had so often seen it in her ambulance-driving.

‘What about the flats above?’ they called. ‘Anyone in them?’

Only two of the flats above had been occupied, Miss Anstruther’s at the back, Mrs Cavendish’s at the front. The rescuers rushed upstairs to investigate the fate of Mrs Cavendish.

‘Why the devil,’ enquired the police, ‘wasn’t everyone downstairs?’ But the caretaker’s wife, who had been downstairs, was unconscious and jammed, while Miss Anstruther, who had been upstairs, was neither.

They hauled out the caretaker’s wife, and carried her to a waiting ambulance.

‘Everyone out of the building!’ shouted the police. ‘Everyone out!’

Miss Anstruther asked why.

The police said there were to be no bloody whys, everyone out, the bloody gas pipe’s burst and they’re throwing down fire, the whole thing may go up in a bonfire before you can turn round.

A bonfire! Miss Anstruther thought, if that’s so I must go up and save some things. She rushed up the stairs, while the rescue men were in Mrs Cavendish’s flat. Inside her own blasted and twisted door, her flat lay waiting for death. God, muttered Miss Anstruther, what shall I save? She caught up a suitcase, and furiously piled books into it – Herodotus, *Mathematical Magick*, some of the twenty volumes of *Purchas his Pilgrimes*, the eight little volumes of Walpole’s letters, *Trivia*, *Curiosities of Literature*, the six volumes of Boswell, then, as the suitcase would not shut, she turned out Boswell and

substituted a china cow, a tiny walnut shell with tiny Mexicans behind glass, a box with a mechanical bird that jumped out and sang, and a fountain pen. No use bothering with the big books or the pictures. Slinging the suitcase across her back, she caught up her portable wireless set and her typewriter, loped downstairs, placed her salvage on the piled wreckage at what had been the street door, and started up the stairs again. As she reached the first floor, there was a burst and a hissing, a huge *psst-psst*, and a rush of flame leaped over Mortimer House as the burst gas caught and sprang to heaven, another fiery rose bursting into bloom to join that pandemonic red garden of night. Two rescue men, carrying Mrs Cavendish downstairs, met Miss Anstruther and pushed her back.

‘Clear out. Can’t get up there again, it’ll go up any minute.’

It was at this moment that Miss Anstruther remembered the thing she wanted most, the thing she had forgotten while she gathered up things she wanted less.

She cried, ‘I must go up again. I must get something out. There’s time.’

‘Not a bloody second,’ one of them shouted at her, and pushed her back.

She fought him. ‘Let me go, oh let me go. I tell you I’m going up once more.’

On the landing above, a wall of flame leaped crackling to the ceiling.

‘Go up be damned. Want to go through that?’

They pulled her down with them to the ground floor. She ran out into the street, shouting for a ladder. Oh God, where are the fire engines? A hundred fires, the water given out in some places, engines helpless. Everywhere buildings burning, museums, churches, hospitals, great shops, houses, blocks of flats, north, south, east, west and centre. Such a raid never was. Miss Anstruther heeded none of it; with hell blazing and crashing round her, all she thought was, I must get my letters. Oh dear God, my letters. She pushed again into the inferno, but again she was dragged back. 'No one to go in there,' said the police, for all human life was by now extricated. No one to go in, and Miss Anstruther's flat left to be consumed in the spreading storm of fire, which was to leave no wrack behind. Everything was doomed – furniture, books, pictures, china, clothes, manuscripts, silver, everything: all she thought of was the desk crammed with letters that should have been the first thing she saved. What had she saved instead? Her wireless, her typewriter, a suitcase full of books; looking round, she saw that all three had gone from where she had put them down. Perhaps they were in the safe keeping of the police, more likely in the wholly unsafe keeping of some rescue-squad man or private looter. Miss Anstruther cared little. She sat down on the wreckage of the road, sick and shaking, wholly bereft.

The bombers departed, their job well done. Dawn came, dim and ashy, in a pall of smoke. The little burial garden was like a garden in a Vesuvian village, grey in its ash coat. The air choked with fine drifts of cinders. Mortimer House still burned, for no one had put it out. A grimy warden with a notebook asked Miss Anstruther, have you anywhere to go?

'No,' she said, 'I shall stay here.'

'Better go to a rest centre,' said the warden, wearily doing his job, not caring where anyone went, wondering what had happened in North Ealing, where he lived.

Miss Anstruther stayed, watching the red ruin smouldering low. Some time, she thought, it will be cool enough to go into.

There followed the haunted, desperate days of search which found nothing. Since silver

and furniture had been wholly consumed, what hope for letters? There was no charred sliver of the old locked rosewood desk which had held them. The burning words were burnt, the lines, running small and close and neat down the page, difficult to decipher, with the o's and a's never closed at the top, had run into a flaming void and would never be deciphered any more. Miss Anstruther tried to recall them, as she sat in the alien room; shutting her eyes, she tried to see again the phrases that, once you had made them out, lit the page like stars. There had been many hundreds of letters, spread over twenty-two years. Last year their writer had died; the letters were all that Miss Anstruther had left of him; she had not yet re-read them; she had been waiting till she could do so without the devastation of unendurable weeping. They had



'Norfolk Afternoon' by Olive Cook (1912–2002) © Fry Art Gallery/PCF

lain there, a solace waiting for her when she could take it. Had she taken it, she could have recalled them better now. As it was, her memory held disjointed phrases, could not piece them together. Light of my eyes. You are the sun and the moon and the stars to me. When I think of you life becomes music, poetry, beauty, and I am more than myself. It is what lovers have found in all the ages, and no one has ever found before. The sun flickering through the beeches on your hair. And so on. As each phrase came back to her, it jabbed at her heart like a twisting

bayonet. He would run over a list of places they had seen together, in the secret stolen travels of twenty years. The balcony where they dined at the Foix inn, leaning over the green river, eating trout just caught in it. The little wild strawberries at Andorra la Vieja, the mountain pass that ran down to it from Ax, the winding road down into Seo d'Urgel and Spain. Lerida, Zaragoza, little mountain towns in the Pyrenees, Jaca, Saint Jean Pied-du-Port, the little harbour of Collioure, with its painted boats, morning coffee out of red cups at Villefranche, tramping about

France in a hot July; truffles in the *place* at Perigueux, the stream that rushed steeply down the village street at Florac, the frogs croaking in the hills about it, the gorges of the Tarn, Rodez with its spacious *place* and plane trees, the little walled town of Cordes with the inn courtyard a jumble of sculptures, altar-pieces from churches, and ornaments from châteaux; Lisieux, with ancient crazy-floored inn, huge four-poster, and preposterous little saint (before the grandiose white temple in her honour had arisen on the hill outside the town), villages in the Haute-Savoie,



'Evacuees' oil painting by Leila Faithful 1941 Arts Council Collection

jumbled among mountain rocks over brawling streams, the motor bus over the Alps down into Susa and Italy. Walking over the Amberley downs, along the Dorset coast from Corfe to Lyme on two hot May days, with a night at Chideock between, sauntering in Buckinghamshire beech-woods, boating off Bucklers Hard, climbing Dunkery Beacon to Porlock, driving on a June afternoon over Kirkdale Pass...Baedeker starred places because we ought to see them, he wrote, I star them because we saw them together, and those stars light them up for ever...Of this kind had been many of the letters that had been for the last year all Miss Anstruther had left, except memory, of two-and-twenty years. There had been other letters about books, books he was reading, books she was writing; others about plans, politics, health, the weather, himself, herself, anything. I could have saved them, she kept thinking; I had the chance; but I saved a typewriter and a wireless set and some books and a walnut shell and a china cow, and even they are gone. So she would cry and cry, till tears blunted at last for the time the sharp edge of grief, leaving only a dull lassitude, an end of being.

Sometimes she would take out and look at the charred corner of paper which was now all she had of her lover; all that was legible of it was a line and a half of close small writing, the o's and a's open at the top. It had been written twenty-one years ago, and it said, 'Leave it at that. I know



A block of flats in Kennington Road, Lambeth 8 September 1940 from Front Line.

now that you don't care twopence; if you did you would'...The words, each time she looked at them, seemed to darken and obliterate a little more of the twenty years that had followed them, the years of the letters and the starred places and all they had had together. You don't care twopence, he seemed to say still; if you had cared twopence, you would have saved my letters, not your wireless and your typewriter and your china cow, least of all those little walnut Mexicans, which you know I never liked. Leave it at that.

Oh, if instead of these words she had found light of my eyes, or I think of the balcony at Foix, she thought she could have gone on living. As it is, thought Miss Anstruther, as it is I can't. Oh my darling, I did care twopence, I did.

So each night she cried herself to sleep, and woke to drag through another empty summer's

day.

Later, she took another flat. Life assembled itself about her again; kind friends gave her books; she bought another typewriter, another wireless set, and ruined herself with getting necessary furniture, for which she would get no financial help until after the war. She noticed little of all this that she did, and saw no real reason for doing any of it. She was alone with a past devoured by fire and a charred scrap of paper which said you don't care twopence, and then a blank, a great interruption, an end. She had failed in caring once, twenty years ago, and failed again now, and the twenty years between were a drift of grey ashes that once were fire, and she a drifting ghost too. She had to leave it at that.

'Miss Anstruther's Letters' first appeared in London Calling (1942) edited by Storm Jameson

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OUR REVIEWERS WRITE

‘Elisabeth de Waal’s depiction of Vienna in the 1950s is horrific and hopeful. The city’s partition into four left it heartless and still largely in ruins. The greatest hope in *The Exiles Return* lies, as so often in life, in the least expected quarter: the non-practising Jew Kuno and the deeply devout Christian Nina.... A novel at once of its time and pertinent to ours.’ *The Tablet*

‘The elegant Persephone imprint has unearthed an absolute jewel, *Heat Lightning* – first published in 1932, and uncannily foreshadowing Jonathan Franzen’s contemporary classic *The Corrections*. In the boiling summer after the Great Crash of 1929, Amy Norton steps off a bus in the run-down Midwestern town where her family were once the biggest people around. But now, she sees the signs of decay and imminent disintegration. Hull, who spent her life as an academic and died in 1971, has a Franzen-like instinct for the dynamics of family relationships. Sublime.’ Kate Saunders *The Times*

‘*The Exiles Return*, a remarkable novel with a remarkable history, has now been published within the elegant grey covers of Persephone Books. It is its only true first edition – and is a worthy addition to their excellent list. Elisabeth de Waal (née Ephrussi), as described in her grandson Edmund’s moving

introduction, was a woman of extraordinary character and I expected an inward-looking, ruminative meditation on the aftermath of conflict. What I found instead was a bold, gripping and highly political novel. It’s not surprising that Elisabeth de Waal failed to find a publisher for this novel in the decades immediately following the end of the Second World War. It deals frankly with anti-Semitism and the lingering stench of the Holocaust. Abortion and homosexuality are also tackled head-on – this very modern novel is a sensitive and compelling portrayal of a country and its citizens struggling toward redemption and transformation. On the 75th anniversary of the Anschluss this brilliantly contemporary novel deserves a wide readership.’ Erica Wagner *Moment Magazine US*

‘Elisabeth de Waal wrote poetry and prose, including this dark, vivid novel. *The Exiles Return* is a rewarding study of loss, and a fine snapshot of a city and society standing ravaged at the crossroads.’ *Guardian*

‘It is a sign of the change in attitude brought about by the likes of Adam Fergusson that what is recorded in *The Sack of Bath* now seems almost unbelievable. Even at the time what was proposed, and then carried out, was met, at least in some quarters, with incredulity. Who

(or what) was to blame? Simply to impeach the developers was not enough and the question is pursued in a number of ways in the book. Mr Fergusson’s new preface has warnings for today. But while there are still people like him willing to take up cudgels on behalf of the beauties of the built environment we can feel heartened. And this is an oddly heartening book.’ *The Betjermanian*

‘*The Exiles Return* stands as a worthwhile addition to post-war European literature. It beautifully particularises the tension between those remaining and those returning within a city shaken by the psychological ruptures of war; there’s an uncomplicated intensity to the depiction of exile that feels strongly autobiographical.’ *Metro*

‘The poetic distance and simplicity of the writing of *The Exiles Return* conveys the undercurrents of unsaid struggles rather wonderfully. There’s something in the sparseness that allows it to capture the horror of an alienating home-coming in a way that surpasses its specific context. Through the main characters, but also through the journey the novel took to reach publication, the reality of exile as both a temporal and spatial disjuncture are captured. This is a novel worth both owning and reading.’ *The Grid*

PERSEPHONE & MODERNISM

M*FS Modern Fiction Studies* recently published 'Making it New: Persephone Books and the Modernist Project' by Urmila Seshagiri, Ass. Professor of English, University of Tennessee. Extracts follow: the article may be accessed through JSTOR at any library.

Persephone Books reprints writings by women who 'fell out of view, fell out of print, fell out of the canon'. These are still peripheral to modernist scholarship. However, they form an aesthetically diverse literary corpus that sheds invaluable light on the sometimes separate, sometimes overlapping spheres of C20th feminism, women's modernity and the culture of modernism. By promoting under-read C20th literature through the dynamic modes of C21st publishing, Persephone reminds us that the ongoing process of canon-formation cannot be disjoined from feminist inquiry, and that the apparently simple designations 'important' and 'insignificant' (*A Room of One's Own*) retain a complex sway over female authorship. It publishes fiction by canonical writers (Virginia Woolf, Susan Glaspell, Katherine Mansfield), by non-canonical but once-esteemed writers (Mollie Panter-Downes, Norah Hoult, Marghanita Laski) and by writers virtually unknown until Persephone rediscovered them (Winifred Watson, Frances Towers, Margaret Bonham).

Consider the temporal double helix of Persephone's titles. Each book belongs to a diffuse modernist past and, simultaneously, to the contemporary moment of republication. The scrupulous attention to the circumstances of a work's original publication and reception restores individual titles and authors to a modern literary genealogy. At the same time, the very expansion of that genealogy gives rise to an unexpected



version of modernism. By reprinting mid-century women's writing, Persephone reveals that apparently innocuous spheres of domesticity – the 'feelings of women in a drawing-room' (*A Room of One's Own*) – staged intense cultural dialogues usually attributed to avant-garde, transnational, or cosmopolitan artists. The dominant strands of modernist literature – the metropolis, Empire, the First and Second World Wars, women's suffrage, class tensions, madness, psychology, the identity of the artist – are amply represented by

the nuanced intricacy of Persephone's domestic terrain, which is always artistically original and never formulaic. And if domestic fictions have long been the disjecta of modernist and feminist literary history, Persephone assimilates these fragments of women's modernity in a vital, detailed narrative of English cultural history. It has accomplished this feat by merging modernist cultural practices with the demands of literary culture in the C21st. First, as a feminist institution of modernism it continues the crucial work of resurrecting out-of-print-women's writing from the early C20th; second, the range of titles establishes the domestic as an under-recognised locus of modern artistry in Great Britain during the first decades of the C20th; third, it publishes a metamodernist little magazine whose essays, reviews and archival material describe a century of literary debates and furnish rare, often stunning examples of modern visual culture; fourth, the endpapers bring a new visibility to modern textile production. Finally, the shop fosters a thriving international literary culture (annual lecture, lunches, reading groups).

Persephone locates intellectual, political and artistic originality in domestic and middlebrow literature, endowing hitherto unfamiliar

texts with a visibility and respect that publishers, critics, and even feminist scholars have been reluctant to confer. The Preface to *Consequences* defends the difficult, complex feminism that such writing conveys: 'In virtually every Persephone book, women are starved of personal freedom but choose to conform. They do so for love of their families and, just as much, from an unwillingness to tackle society head on; and they take refuge in humour, in self-deprecation, in "keeping busy", in "mustn't grumble". Yet, and this is a very important yet, these books are still deeply feminist. Each and every one of them is asking – does it have to be like this?' This question and its often-dissonant answers echo in Persephone titles that take up the conceptual uncertainty attending home and family in the wake of staggering changes in English public life. Yet almost all Persephone titles are still tangential (if not invisible) to modernist as well as feminist literary scholarship. That these works 'fell out of print' necessitates a reconsideration of the forces responsible for canonisation and literary obscurity: how do we come to remember a few authors while forgetting scores of others? Theorists of the canon diverge in their answers to this well-worn question; Persephone harnesses the divergences into a productive equilibrium.

The self-conscious artistry of these books establishes literary materiality as a feminist concern. The striking austerity of

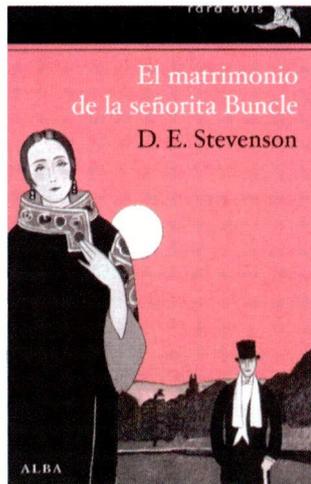
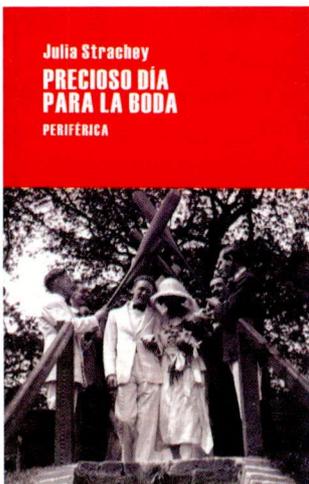
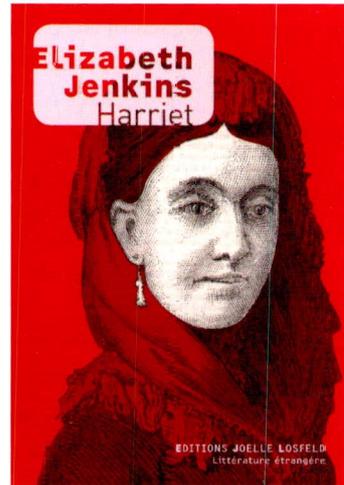
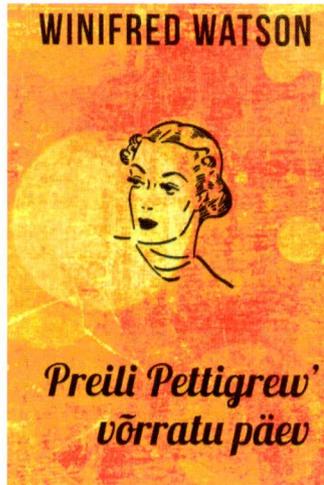
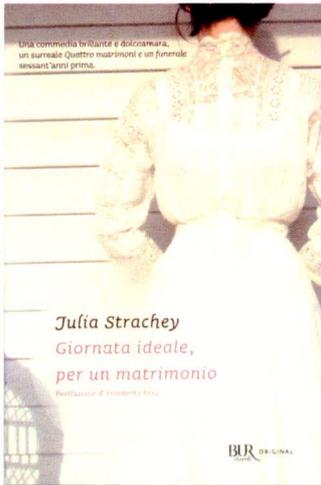
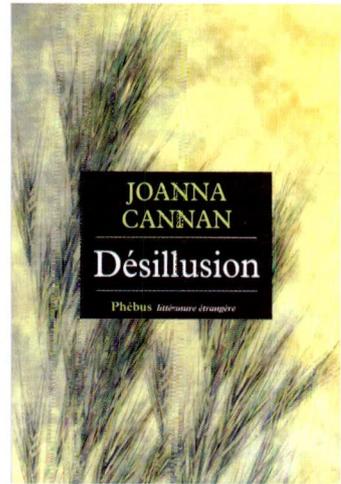
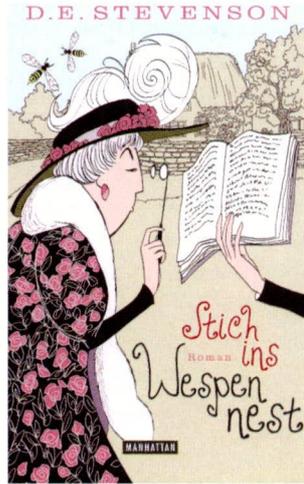
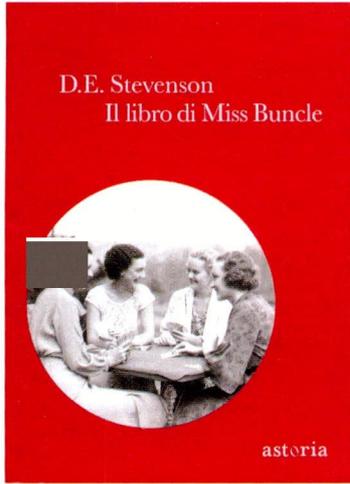
a grey Persephone book renders visuality inseparable from textuality while the colourful endpapers capitalise on the cultural affinity of the terms 'text' and 'textile'. Both derive from the Latin *texere*, to weave or intertwine, an etymological overlap rich with feminist and historical possibility. The textile-based endpapers deploy the medium of fabric as a convergence point for the everyday and the artistic. Textiles, perhaps more than any other art form, demonstrate how modernism diffused itself into the private and public culture of daily life: form and function, décor and utility, come together in furnishing fabrics.

The astutely balanced weight of literature, artistry and marketing has helped Persephone establish a surprisingly widespread presence, and in cultural arenas that would seem entirely unrelated. The books pop up in unexpected places, their widely recognised feminist-modernist aesthetic signalling, in the word of one museum curator 'a world of intellect, depth, humour and revolution' (Sarah Griffin of Roche Court, Persephone Letter 15/02/2010) when Persephone books were exhibited alongside works by Edmund de Waal and Matthew Hilton. A girl in a Match.com TV advertisement reads a Persephone book while a boy serenades her at a train station. Grey-jacketed books are arrayed behind Sarah Waters in a photo-portrait for the NPG's 2009 *Gay Icons* show. A Piccadilly

branch of Waterstones displays Persephone books under a coy sign declaring 'One Shade of Grey'. The hipster British reality show *Made in Chelsea* filmed a scene in the Persephone shop. Perhaps most significantly, the film director Joe Wright chose a Persephone book to signal a modern woman writer's literary success in the final frame of *Atonement* (2007). Just as the original design for Persephone books was inspired by the French tradition of uniform book-binding and by the grey and white colour scheme of a Dean & DeLuca coffee cup, the cameo appearances of these books in contemporary English culture point to the untroubled conjunction of art-object and commercial commodity.

By routing its feminism through multilayered conversations with general readers, scholars, and the commercial literary establishment, this visionary enterprise shows us how the work of modern women writers contributed to the dissolution of boundaries between high and low culture. Most importantly, Persephone Books has made modernism *matter*. Academic discourse about modernism, however insightful, speaks largely to itself; museum exhibits, however richly curated, confine modern art to frames and pedestals. But the modernism of Persephone Books circulates widely, taking its place in the everyday life that defines the publisher's feminist ethos.

PERSEPHONE TRANSLATIONS



BATH FORTY YEARS ON

When *The Times* sent me down to Bath to see what the fuss was about in 1973 [said Adam Fergusson at a talk in Bath this summer] it was inconceivable that *Persephone Book* No. 93, *The Sack of Bath*, would still be relevant today. I went there then as a journalist and returned as a crusader, profoundly shaken by what I had seen and heard. The bulldozers were still destroying swathes of what had been a complete Georgian town – not the grandest bits like the Crescents where the visitors stayed, but, in their thousands, the little houses of the true C18th Bathonians.

The articles I wrote then became a book, and the book described that scandal. And the preface to the latest Persephone edition covers the extraordinary outcry that followed its publication. Now, in the context of preserving our heritage, urban and rural, I want to talk about words: how words can be employed to warn or to inspire – but also to confuse, to disguise and to mislead.

Take the *Bath and North-East Somerset Core Strategy Development Plan*'s offshoot, now two years old: the *Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report*. This informs us that: 'wider issues of sustainable construction are now covered in a specific sustainable construction policy which

includes standards for sustainable design for residential and non-residential development.' This word 'sustainable': we know what it means when economists tell us that Britain's spending on welfare is not sustainable. But what does it mean when used by planners? It seems that if they declare that a plan, a proposal, a strategy is sustainable, then there need be no argument.

In 2009 came the now defunct effusion with the snappy title *The Bath & North-East Somerset Core Strategy Spatial Options Consultation*, mostly written in the tautological, impenetrable, mind-numbing planning-speak which persuades the most diligent lay reader that it has something to hide. It was long on words like 'visioning' and 'locational' and 'place-based' and 'vibrancy' and 'parameters'. It had plans (or were they strategies?) for 'delivering the vision', to 'deliver Strategy Objectives' and even (once) to 'facilitate delivery of facilities'. The later *Core Strategy Development Plan* also has its own excursion into cultural responsibility, and referred to 'the green setting of the City in a hollow in the hills' – though turgidly continuing that the World Heritage setting 'includes a range of elements such as views [goodness me!] and historical, landscape and cultural relationships . . .' – and giving the assurance that 'proposals will

be assessed against Policy 4B which seeks to ensure that the impact of development will be properly considered'.

Notice how the tone changes as the written argument moves on from obscurantism to recognition – in the case of Bath – of its architectural and historical importance. And not just the tone changes – the style, the English – ah! that 'hollow in the hills'. Then tremble again when you hear words like strategies (especially spatial ones), or impact assessments, or outreach, or synergy, or modules, or ballparks, or bottom lines, or stakeholders. Those expressions are not the language of Ruskin or Austen or Dickens; nor of a Christopher Wren, a Robert Adam or a John Wood. They are the language of the Philistine and the Vandal with whose cultural or spatial problems one may sympathise but whose judgment one dare not trust.

If I were the Minister, or the Secretary of State, or his Inspector, reviewing proposals for Bath, I would say this: 'Don't come back to me to approve any development in the countryside until every brown-field acre in this world-heritage site has been used up; and every existing building properly occupied. And don't then bring me a plan which isn't written in plain, simple English.'

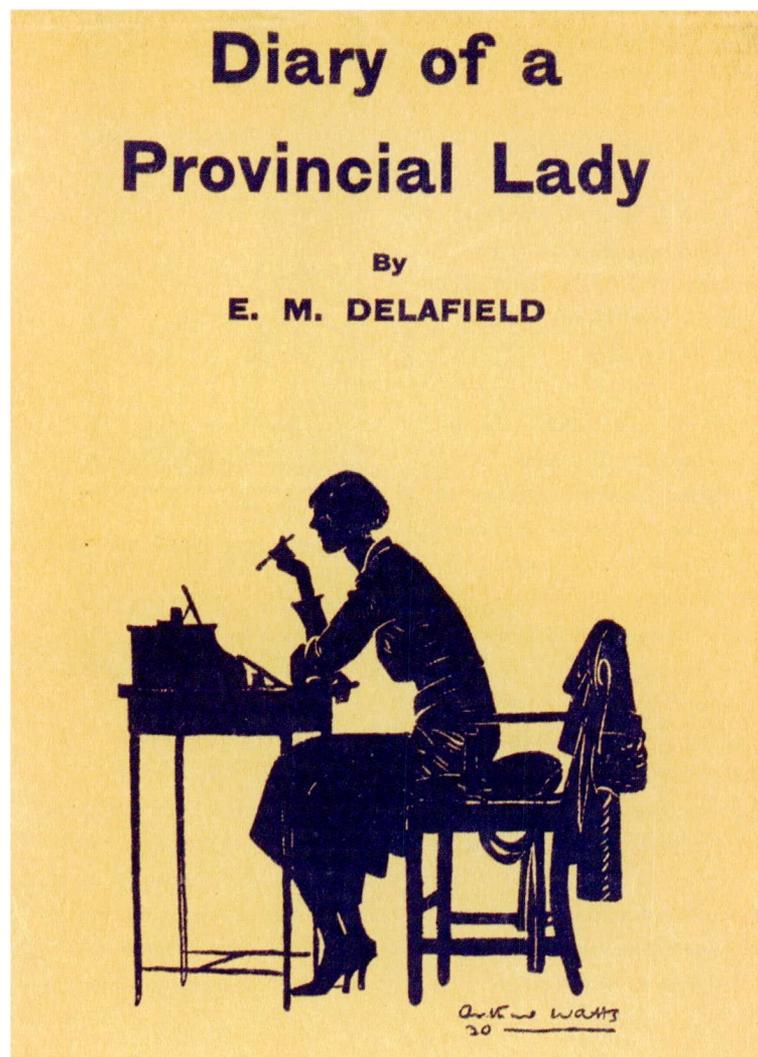
AND ANOTHER THING

We have devoted a page to Wendy Bray because she spoke so beautifully at a lunch and is such a good friend to Persephone Books. But let's not forget all our other textile designers, some anonymous but probably mostly women (women have always excelled in fabric design). For example, the endpaper for *The Squire* is by Marion Dorn (1899–1964) who also designed the endpaper for *Saplings* and for *Miss Pettigrew*. Urmila Seshagiri writes (cf. pp 23–4) that the fabric for *Saplings* 'captures the hovering threat of aerial warfare as well as the war's power to denaturalise and re-order a child's experience of the world. In *Saplings*, and Persephone's other titles, textile design provides an immediate context for the literary work, a graphic extension of a fictional or authorial world.' An American who worked in London, Dorn became an extremely fashionable designer (Enid Bagnold would have certainly had examples of her work in her house in London or Rottingdean) but was forced to leave the UK when war broke out and never completely re-established her career.

Next spring's books are a superb First World War novel *Wilfred and Eileen* written in 1976 by Jonathan Smith, author of *Summer in February*, and set in 1913–15. There is a new afterword by the author. And *Into the Whirlwind*, the extra-

ordinary memoir by Eugenia Ginzburg, written in Russian and translated into English in 1967. The Afterword is by the former British Ambassador to Moscow, Sir Rodric Braithwaite. We also thought we would offer Persephone readers one of the great classics of domestic literature, the first volume of *The Diary of a Provincial Lady* with the original illustrations by Arthur Watts. After all, if you buy

two books, the third is half price. And we thought that even though some Persephone readers will have the *Diary* already, no one will be able to resist a copy of EM Delafield's wonderful book for an additional £6. The Afterword is the original Preface Nicola Beauman wrote for the Virago edition in 1984. The endpapers are never-before reprinted colour illustrations by Arthur Watts.



EVENTS

Persephone Books will be at the *Country Living Fair* from **Wednesday October 30th–Sunday November 3rd**. Our stand will be P22, it will be quite small, but one of us will always be there, looking forward to chatting to anyone who can make it. We have a special affection for the *Country Living Fair* because we launched there in the spring of 1999.

On **Saturday November 2nd at 4 pm** we shall be at the *Burnham Market Book Festival*. After the talk the Whitehouse Bookshop will be selling a selection of Persephone books.

We shall be at the *Art Fund Christmas Fair* on **Thurs 7 November** from **10–4.30**. This takes place at Carswell House, near Burford, OX18 3NJ.

There will be a **Lunch at 12.30** on **Thursday November 14th** when **Rachel Cooke** will talk about her own book *Her Brilliant Career: Ten Extraordinary Women of the 1950s* ('plucky and ambitious, they left the house, discovered the bliss of work, and ushered in the era of the working woman'). One of the ten women is **Patience Grey**, co-author of *Plats du Jour*, Persephone Book No. 70; several other Persephone authors feature.

On **Thursday November 28th** **Anne Sebba**, biographer and NADFAS lecturer will give

the *Ninth Persephone Lecture*, *The Pram in the Hall: Edith Bagnold, Writer and Mother*. This will take place at the October Gallery 24 Old Gloucester Street, off Queen Square, WC1N 3AL at **6.30**. A glass of wine and cheese straws will be served at 6 o'clock and again afterwards.



PERSEPHONE BOOKS
020 7242 9292

On **Thursday December 12th** from **10–8** there will be a (free) **Open Day** at the shop when mulled wine and mince pies will be served all day and books may be bought gift-wrapped at no extra charge. **Jane Brocket** (yarnstorm.blogs.com) will be

there, knitting, sewing and selling a selection of her own books. And you will be able to buy our mugs, cushions, lampshades, enamel beakers and notebooks.

On **Tuesday January 28th at 6 pm** the American actress **Susan Stein** will present her one-woman play based on the letters and diaries of **Etty Hillesum**, author of Persephone Book No. 4, *An Interrupted Life*. This play, which lasts an hour and only uses Etty's own words, has been touring all over the world (details at ettyplay.org); we are very pleased that the shop can be the venue for this inspiring and important piece of theatre.

On **Wednesday February 12th** we shall show *Without a Trace*, the excellent 1983 film of *Still Missing*, Persephone Book No. 88, at the British Film Institute 21 Stephen Street W1T 1LW. A salad will be served at 1 pm and the film shown at 2.

Finally, please don't forget to look at the daily *Post*, the fortnightly *Letter* and the monthly *Forum* (scroll down on our Home Page). Also do try and come to one of our book groups on the **first Wednesday** of the month at **6.30** or the **second Thursday** of the month at **3.30**. Please ring us for further details. The book groups cost £10, the lunches, film and lecture £20.

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If we have failed to acknowledge something that appears in the *Persephone Biannually*, please let us know.

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