

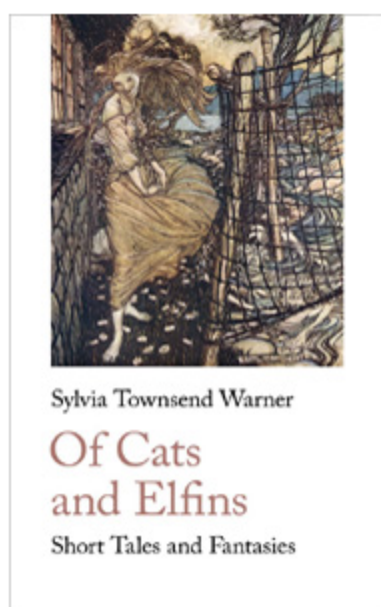
The Handheld Newsletter

January 2020

A kerfuffle

Here's a story from behind the scenes in publishing. While we were delighted with Frank Cottrell-Boyce's willingness to help launch our new collection of Sylvia Townsend Warner's fantasy stories *Of Cats and Elfin's*, we had not reckoned with a *deus ex machina*. Frank has a long-standing engagement every year to launch the BBC Radio 2 500 Words writing competition, which means filming a piece for TV on the morning of 16 January, and so his diary told him it would be fine to come to Forbidden Planet that evening to launch our book, as he'd be in London anyway. Three weeks before the 16th, the BBC sent him the shooting schedule ... for Salford. The BBC have been moving a lot of their production works to Salford, which is two and half hours away from London by train. So poor Frank emailed us very apologetically, kicking himself for not realising that he'd not be filming where he has been for the last nine years. So, we cancelled the launch, as teleportation has not been invented yet.

But it's an ill wind that blows no good ... we had been worried that Forbidden Planet wouldn't want our books after all, but no! They sent the books to their Liverpool branch where Frank is signing them as we type, and they will be sent out to all the eager readers who have ordered them. We tweeted our sadness about the launch cancellation, and twelve minutes later The Second Shelf asked if they could host it for us. The resulting twitter frenzy resulted in a new high of searches for the book on our website, a good lot of pre-orders, and now we have a new date for the book launch, on 23rd January, when Kate will be interviewed about how the book was put together, and why Warner wrote so many hitherto unknown stories about cats. [Tickets available here!](#)



Our Bristol Festival of Ideas panel: women in science fiction and fantasy

On 23 February Kate will be in conversation with four outstanding women in science fiction at Foyles, Cabot Circus, Bristol, as part of the [Bristol Festival of Ideas](#). With sff authors Emma Newman, Emma Geen, and Liz Williams, and sff critic Cheryl Morgan, Kate will lead this celebration of female geekery and science fiction creativity, to unknot the bonds of unknowing and illuminate the best of feminist science fiction and fantasy. Cheryl will be bringing one of her Hugo Awards with her.

Bristol Festival of Ideas /

Our latest cover for January 2021

Behold the latest cover, for our next Inez Holden title, *There's No Story There*. This is a wartime novel by the author of the two works in *Blitz Writing*, set in a secret munitions depot in Yorkshire.

[The Paris Review](#) published an excellent discussion of the novel last year, which we had put them onto, since we were at that moment signing the contract with Holden's estate.

We hope to be publishing some of Holden's wartime reportage in the same volume, as her gift for reporting the unusual and the everyday, with a clear-eyed and unsentimental approach, makes absolutely stunning reading. She brings the past to life, and we are delighted to be publishing more of her work.

The cover uses a World War Two poster from the Ministry of Labour (we would welcome more information about this) exhorting women to get into munitions work.



News from the garden at Handheld Towers

It has been an astonishingly good month for spotting wildlife in our moments of non-publishing leisure. First, we saw a weasel in the garden, not three feet from the dining-room window, clearly checking out the mouse smell. It was much smaller than we'd imagined, and very fast, popping its head up to look around, rather like a miniature meerkat, then giving us a cool stare, and then zipping back behind a slab of wood to reappear several feet away. We haven't seen it since.

Then, one lunchtime, a sparrowhawk swooped down and took one of the longtailed tits from the bird feeder. Since our mouths were full of bread and cheese we could only squeak wordlessly at this outrage. It was clearly lunchtime for all levels on the food chain.

And finally, David bought himself (or us) a Christmas present of a camera trap, which we have strapped to one of the big trees at the top of the garden on the edge of the wood, to film the roe and muntjac deer, foxes, and badgers wandering about there at night. The badger action has been so exciting that David has edited it into a film on Vimeo: [do watch it and enjoy](#).

Kate & David

Handheld Press

The Handheld newsletter is only sent to readers who have expressed an interest in receiving news from us. Our aim is to be informative and useful, and to keep you in the picture about what we're up to, offers and promotions.

Please rest assured that your details will never be passed on to any third parties nor used for any other purpose.

Should you wish to not receive any further email newsletters from us then we'll be disappointed, but we'll understand.