

## The Handheld Newsletter

March 2021

### Latchkey Ladies

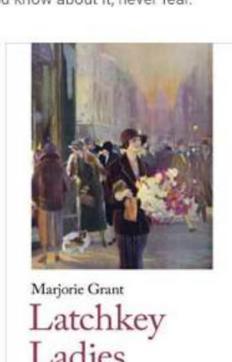
We open with a new cover! *Latchkey Ladies* opens in the Mimosa Club in 1918, a women's hostel in central London where young women office workers and ladies on declining incomes find refuge from the tedium of war work and the chilliness of impending poverty. Anne Carey is a secretary and engaged to a soldier, but she is bored of him and bored of the war. When she meets Dampier, a man unlike anyone she has ever met before, they begin an affair. When he is away with his wife and children at Easter, Anne realises that the unthinkable has happened.

*Fear woke her in the defenceless hour of dawn. She sat up in bed, and faced it at last, shivering so that her teeth chattered, but valiant. She was certain that she was going to have a child.*

Anne's stratagems for managing her pregnancy, the baby's birth, and her subsequent life, with or without her lover, are as relevant and heartbreaking today as they would have been a century ago. This novel is remarkable for its period in ignoring moral judgements and for showing the contemporary reader the realistic choices that an educated and practical woman has to make when she is thrown on her own resources with an illegitimate baby at the end of the First World War.

*Latchkey Ladies* (1921) was the first novel by the Canadian author Marjorie Grant. She lived in the UK for most of her adult life, moving back to Canada intermittently for long visits. She was a prolific and influential reviewer for the *Times Literary Supplement*, and published seven novels. She was close friends with [Rose Macaulay](#), for over forty years, whose own secret affair with a married man may have provided the background for Anne Carey's story.

Sarah LeFanu, author of our forthcoming memoir *Dreaming of Rose*, will be writing the introduction. *Latchkey Ladies* will be published in March 2022, and will be available for preorder after summer 2021. We'll let you know about it, never fear.



### New books!

We have been packing books like mad, as [Valentine Ackland](#) is in the house. First, we sent Frances Bingham her author's copies, then we posted the review copies that have already been requested by the big-name magazines. We've sent a sheaf of emails to potentially interested reviewers to ask if they would like review copies, and now we are starting on the preorders. The office scissors had to be destickified over the weekend.

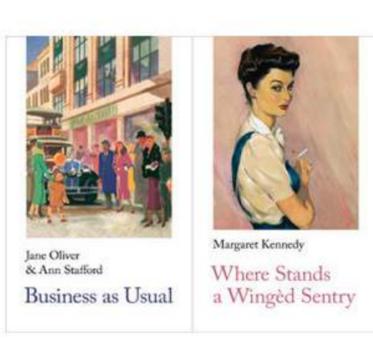


### Recent reviews

We appear to have crossed the language divide with a review of *Business as Usual* in a French blog, in which we discover that nous sommes une 'maison spécialisée dans la redécouverte de pépites oubliées'!

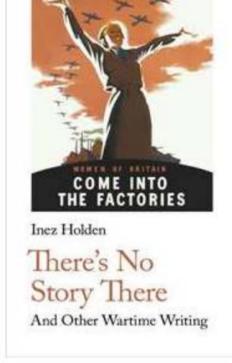
The [Locus Solus](#) blog continues: 'Vive, spirituelle et drôle, Hilary est aussi une irrésistible gaffeuse.' We have now added gaffeuse to our vocabulary because it is an inexpressibly charming word.

The *Times Literary Supplement* published not one but two features about our forthcoming memoir by Margaret Kennedy, *Where Stands A Wingèd Sentry*, in its issue of 19 February. One was by Faye Hamill, author of the Introduction; the other was by the TLS's own Michael Caines who probed the TLS archives to find out why this title had not been reviewed by them in 1941 when it was published. (There was a war on, and it was only published in the USA.)



### New videos

We have two new videos, of Kate talking about *Where Stands A Wingèd Sentry* and Inez Holden's *There's No Story There* both due out on 23 March. Spot the hand-knitted jumper and an unexpectedly good lockdown haircut by David.



### Don't forget the book launch!

Both *There's No Story There*, and Margaret Kennedy's *Where Stands A Wingèd Sentry* will be launched with an online hour of conversation with Faye Hamill and Lucy Scholes, who wrote the introductions. We will be discussing women's writing in wartime, and the forcefulness of truth that will not be censored. Join us! The book launch will be at 19.30 UK time on Monday 22 March, and you can [arrange your free registration here](#).



### The Handheld Book Club

We had a TERRIFIC Book Club in March, with Kristin Bluemel and Jerry White talking about Inez Holden's *Blitz Writing*, and some very welcome contributions from Ariane Bankes, Inez Holden's literary executor. The [video is now on our YouTube channel](#) for everyone to enjoy.

Our next Book Club will be on 13 April at 19.30 UK time / 14.30 EST, on *Women's Weird*, with editor [Melissa Edmundson](#) in conversation with Gothic / Weird scholar [Amy Sturgis](#), discussing the recovery of classic supernatural short fiction by women, and what the short stories in *Women's Weird* have to say about women writing about horror and supernatural then, and how they can be read now. You can [register for your free ticket here](#).



### Almost a convention

Handheld will be in the Dealers' Room at Confusion 21, this year's incarnation of Eastercon, now held online. You can buy tickets for this annual [British convention of science fiction and fantasy here](#), and we will all learn how to interact online using our Gather Town avatars.

### Almost a book fair

The States of Independence publishing fair will take place online on Saturday 24 April 2021, and Handheld will be part of the throng of independent publishers taking part in this event.

Following the very popular live model held in Nottingham for the past five years, this alternative Book Festival In a Day will bring together a gathering of indie publishers, writers, book lovers and students. Hosted by the DeMontfort University Writing Centre and Dahlia Books, States 2021 will be open to the public and FREE to all. The headline session will be a panel to celebrate and showcase the resilience of indie presses. There will be a combination of live sessions and pre-recorded material, chat streams for networking, workshop opportunities and web resources.

[Check their Facebook page](#) for the programme of events; we'll post more details in the April Newsletter.

### News from the garden

Kate has not been able to see as much of the garden as usual this month, as she moved the Handheld office out of the house at the beginning of March to a rented studio in Trowbridge, across the county line in Wiltshire and 20 minutes away by train. This move is temporary, caused by having just too many people working from home in the same small house at the same time. The office will move back, and normality will resume. The temporary office is in an old workers' cooperative building over the Bristol-Portsmouth railway line, now an art gallery with artists' studios, across the road from the former jazz club frequented by her parents and uncles in the 1950s, which is rather nice.

The night camera has been showing us a lot of fox action, especially after David dumped the peanuts that the birds were eschewing onto the grass as bait. Badgers seemed less interested, or were canner at not triggering the camera. One of the strangest events the camera caught was one that we all witnessed: startling animal screams at 22.10 on a Thursday evening. We in the house assumed it was a deer getting aggressive, or possibly an owl we hadn't heard before. Those screeching sounds did not issue from a human throat. And then we found that the camera trap had been triggered at the same moment, when a fox was in mid-chomp of the peanut treat. The fox actually stopped eating to look around, indicating that whatever it was had not been a normal woodland sound.

Kate & David

Handheld Press