

The Handheld Newsletter

June 2021

This is a slightly earlier Newsletter than usual because we want to make sure you know about offers and excitements happening this month before our usual mid-month mailing.

Booksellers' Association summer catalogue

The BA (which looks after the interests of British booksellers) has for the first time issued a summer reading catalogue, and we're in it! Naturally we pay for the advertising, but the advertisers' books are selected by booksellers, who know what will make a really attractive catalogue. This summer they plumped for both *Valentine Ackland* AND *Margaret Kennedy*, and you can find them on pp8-9 of the catalogue. Available at all good bookshops.



Valentine has been Booklaunched

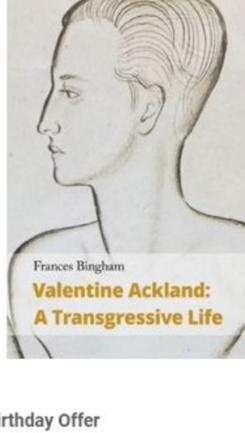
Valentine Ackland is also featured in the May 2021 issue of *Booklaunch*, a very get-up-and-go free books magazine distributed to subscribers of the *New Statesman*, *Church Times*, the *Spectator*, and so on. It's also available free online: do have a look at the latest issue, and enjoy the extended extract from our book.

More outings for Valentine

As well as the *Valentine Ackland* book launch proper hosted by Gay's the Word: you can view [the video of the launch here](#). On publication day itself Frances Bingham was in an excellent conversation with Sian Norris of the Bristol Festival of Ideas. You can see the whole interview on Crowdcast [via this clip here](#).

We also [made our own video about Valentine](#), foolishly forgetting that the sun and clouds do not stand still even for a Handheld filming session.

On 23 June Frances will again be in conversation about Valentine in an online event at the British Library: you can register for [a free ticket here](#).



Our Annual Three for Two Birthday Offer

This month Handheld will be four, according to Companies House, so we are making our now annual celebration of a three-for-two offer on all our published paperbacks, during the weekend of **12 and 13 June** inclusive. Just order two books in the usual way [through our online shop](#), and add a note to say which free paperback you would like. Offer restricted to those books we have actually published; only applicable to orders dated 12 and 13 June 2021. Enjoy the shopping frenzy from the safety of your own browser!



Westminster calling ...

On Wednesday 16 June at 17h Westminster Libraries will be hosting the first of four online events for Handheld Press. Kate will be talking about setting up Handheld, how the books are chosen and what makes a good and a terrible book cover. [Click here to register](#) for free tickets.

On Wednesday 7 July Kate will be in conversation with Lucy Scholes of the Virago Books podcast *Our Shelves*, and regular contributor to *The Paris Review*, *Financial Times*, *Times*, and the *Telegraph*, for the second Westminster Libraries talk. They will be chatting about retrieving women's voices from the library vaults, and what makes a modern best-seller of women's novels that are already generations old. They will be discussing Inez Holden, Rose Macaulay, Elizabeth von Arnim, Zeldia Fitzgerald and Margaret Kennedy, and the hitherto entirely unknown Jane Oliver and Ann Stafford. [Find the registration link here](#) (and if it's not here when you look, try again a few days later: it'll go up as soon as we have it).



Try *The Caravans*

On 29 June it will be Kate's mum's birthday so we would like to offer a one-day discount on *The Caravans*, which she loves because it's so funny, and so very true to life. Please celebrate Mrs Macdonald's birthday with her! Use code MrsM to claim £2.99 from this outstandingly good book, for 29 June only.



News from the garden

The near-constant rain we had throughout May has created a lush green meadow on the upper lawn where the fruit trees are. The docks and cuckoo-flowers are approaching knee-height, and we have found a baby oak tree hiding shyly in the long grass, partway between the fig tree and the compost heaps. It now has its own miniature fence to keep deer and people off.

We've been planting new veg plants (kale, brussel sprouts and beans, guarded by marigolds and spring onions) because all the borlotti bean seedlings got scooped by slugs. The mange-tout are doing well, as are the three strawberry plants we forgot about from last year. Four celeriacs were harvested but only about 5% of their mass was edible: won't be growing them again. The rhubarb that we put under the forcer has gone into a total sulk: not one leaf showing, and the other plants are looking pretty feeble too. What have we done wrong?

The real work in the garden this month is being done by the long-awaited landscapers. Stephen and The Lad have dug a 2.4m long garden pond on the flattest bit of the lower lawn through clayey soil, a layer of almost solid stones, a mixture of clay and stones, and now they're down to solid pale-brown sticky clay. (There is no access for machinery: all the digging has to be done by hand.) The pond has three depths (six feet is the deepest), and will be covered in a layer of sand and then a membrane to line it. Our friend Caroline brought excess plants from her pond at the weekend, so we have yellow flag iris and a water lily already. Eventually we hope for newts, dragonflies and frogs, but no fish.

Martin is building a paved path along the sticky slope where the path goes up and round a corner at the same time. They have already completed the new concrete pad for the new toolshed, whence all the heavy tools will be rehoused, freeing up the shed for the potting paraphernalia, of which there is a LOT, currently collected in an unsightly working area right outside the dining-room windows.

And then there is the New Rat. The Old Rat was found in a rather decayed state some weeks ago, but his relative has moved in to pick up the food thrown wantonly on the ground by the messy bird eaters. As we complained recently on Twitter the garden is a bit like a bird toddlers' playground at the moment: throwing their food around, crashing into each other, yelling for their mums, behaving rashly and dangerously. The New Rat is taking full advantage of the chaos to eat its fill, in broad daylight on the grass.

Enjoy the sun,

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.