

The Handheld Newsletter

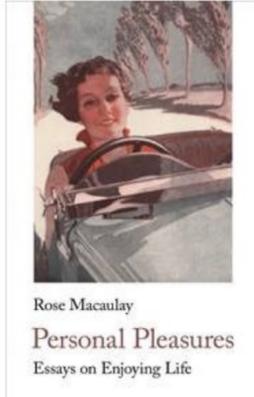
August 2021

Personal Pleasures book launch

We're still doing our book launches online, and last Monday Sarah LeFanu did Kate the honour of grilling her about Rose Macaulay's *Personal Pleasures*, which we published on 10 August. [The video is here](#), and is quite a short one, about the length of a slice of cake and coffee, rather than the three-course meal length our launch videos usually are. Sales are doing nicely for the book, and we have heard some interesting hints about big name reviews in the offing.

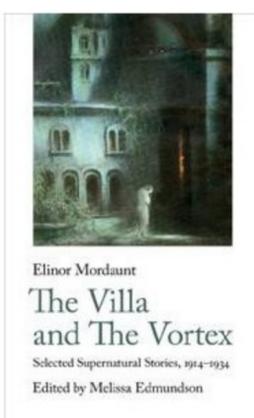
Personal Pleasures in church

As part of our crafty marketing plan we sent essays from *Personal Pleasures* to the Quaker magazine *The Friend* (an essay on attending a Quaker meeting, with lightly caustic remarks about woolly ministry), and the *Church Times* (on attending an Anglican service, with something tart to say about the sermon). Both publications printed the essays, and preorder sales jumped up in a very pleasing way. We hear that the *Church Times* will be recommending *Personal Pleasures* in its monthly reading group selection, with questions specially created, some time in the autumn. As a very loyal if conflicted Anglican, Rose would have been pleased.



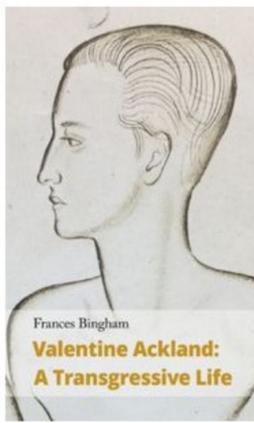
Elinor Mordaunt awaits you

Our next book to be published, Elinor Mordaunt's spectacularly good collection of supernatural stories from 1916 to 1924, *The Villa and The Vortex*, will be published on 14 September. Melissa Edmundson will be interviewed by Amy Sturgis that day in our online book launch, at 2pm EST / 7pm UK time. Tickets as usual are free, and [you can register here](#).



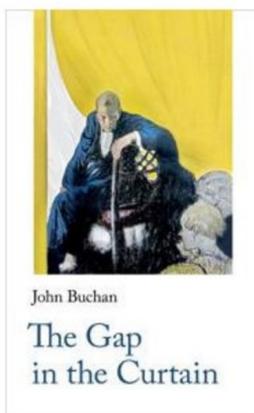
Our next talk with Westminster Libraries

On Wednesday 15 September Kate will be in conversation with Frances Bingham, author of *Valentine Ackland*, online from 5 to 6pm. They will be discussing the practicalities of getting LGBTQ+ writers into print, and recommending some authors from Handheld and elsewhere for viewers to try out. [Registration is free, here!](#)



Book stalls!

Now that vaccination levels are rising and public health restrictions are being cautiously reduced, we are so much looking forward to attending book fairs again. We will be at the John Buchan Society's AGM in Derby on 2 October, and still plan to attend [BristolCon](#) on 30 October. Both stalls will feature early copies of John Buchan's *The Gap in the Curtain* which we'll be publishing on 9 November.



The next SFF writing retreat

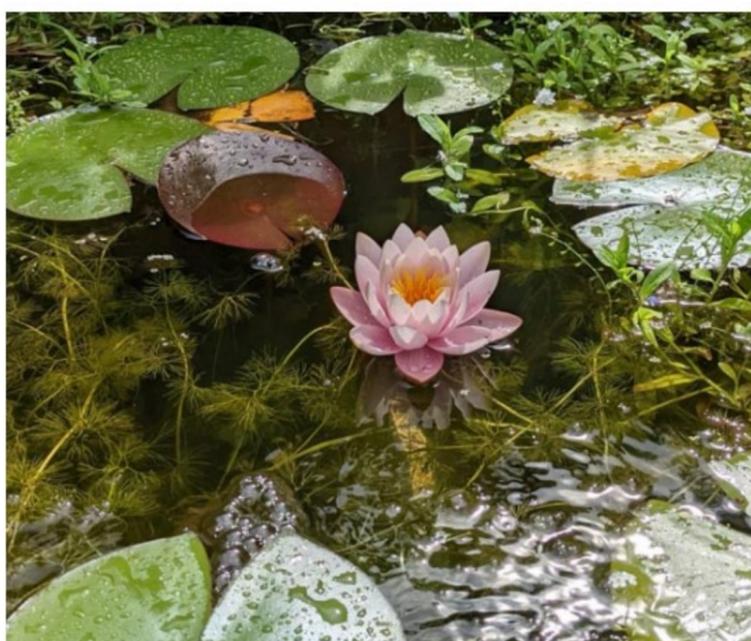
As announced previously, our June SFF writing retreat was such a success that Dell House will be running them regularly from now on, in collaboration with Handheld. Our next retreat will run from 1 to 4 November, offering (almost) fully catered protected writing space with optional tutoring and no chores. Kate will be in attendance, running a workshop on How to Pitch Your Book, Or, I've Written It, Now What Do I Do With It?. For all details, [please look at the Dell House website](#).

News from the garden

David had several weeks of leave, so the garden has been mown, dug, planted, remodelled in bits and transformed. The over-engineered frame to keep deer off the cherry tree has been simplified, and the new project – ornamental cardoons! – seems to be going well, with hearty seedlings in three new beds. A row of lavender plants lines the new path and also in a new little bed adjoining and shoring up a very old bed we inherited which was in danger of collapsing down its own slope. The pond is looking fabulous, with a second lily flower appearing this week. We await the arrival of a new tool shed – ordered months ago – so we can finally move the chaos of potting paraphernalia to a better location than where it is right now.

The mange tout came to the end of its natural life, one of the few things we can plant that don't get slugged. The broad beans are looking expectant. The tomato plants that Kate picked up almost as an afterthought at the WI plant swap are healthy and their fruit is delicious. The Lone Fig is still there, and the Lone Apple on the new tree is, amazingly, also still there. (The apples from the old tree are already giving us windfalls but they're not that great to eat). The damsons are getting bigger. We've also spotted a new fruit tree in the hedge near the house, which our neighbour's uninterest in cutting the hedge on his side has allowed to flourish. They're moving in a few months, so we should be able to negotiate with the new neighbour in due course, once we've worked out what the tree is. The fruit is a small red spherical plum-like thing, ripening in August rather than earlier in the summer, and the leaves look like plum as well. Its probably a plum.

We have new visitors: a mother roe deer and her fawn have started to arrive in the mornings in search of windfall apples. They come down to the lower lawn to browse the Virginia creeper in the hedge, and the fawn, still a bit spotty on its sides, is absolutely unafraid. They both have massive ears, easily half the length of their skulls.



Enjoy the tail end of summer

Kate & David

Handheld Press