

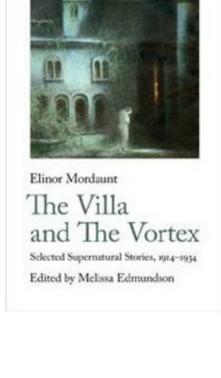
The Handheld Newsletter

September 2021

Well, we seem to be living in speeded-up times. How have we reached the 15th of the month again so soon? Has anything happened in the past month?

Book news

Our edition of Elinor Mordaunt's supernatural short stories, *The Villa and the Vortex* was launched the day we wrote this, and sets fair to be as popular as our earlier spooky story anthologies. We held a terrific book launch and Q&A online with the book's editor, Melissa Edmundson, being interviewed by Gothic Weird specialist Amy Sturgis. We'll be releasing the video in the next week or so.



Baking

We ordered and received a debosser. Kate had this idea that now we are about to begin live and in-person books stalls again, we will offer home baking to lure the customers closer to our table. She has bought the roll-out icing (pink, and purple), and will be practicing debossing to achieve this level of perfection. Then she will be baking flat-surfaced biscuits on which to gently glue (with lightly heated apricot jam) the edible corporate icing. If that doesn't sell more books we don't know what will.



Banners

We also decided to spruce up our book stall accessories. Our old banner is so old that we no longer sell two of the books depicted on it, so we had two new ones made. We will recycle the base of the old one, and use the plasticised fabric on a compost heap in the garden. The new ones, in the meantime, will bewitch all comers.

So, where will these delicious bakes and banners be? At [Bristolcon](#) On 30th October. We're hoping for a good turnout. Otherwise we'll have to eat all the baking ourselves.

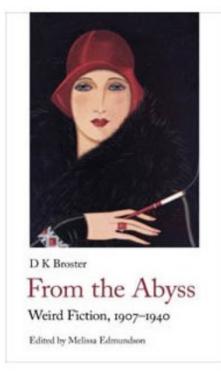


Broster

As well as the baking and banners, Kate has been editing. May we introduce our latest book? A new anthology of the best of D K Broster's supernatural short stories, *From the Abyss*, is now available for preorder! We will be publishing this fine book on 9 August 2022. *From the Abyss* contains eleven stories, including:

- 'The Window', in which a deserted chateau takes revenge on anyone who opens one particular window.
- 'The Pavement', in which the protectress of a Roman mosaic cannot bear to let it go.
- 'Clairvoyance', in which the spirit of a vengeful Japanese swordmaster enters an adolescent girl.
- 'From the Abyss', in which the survivor of a car crash is followed out of the gorge by her doppelganger.

Dorothy Kathleen Broster was born in 1877 near Liverpool. She earned a degree in Modern History at Oxford and worked as a nurse in the First World War. Her name as a novelist was made by her bestselling Jacobite trilogy, *The Flight of the Heron* (1925), *The Gleam in the North* (1927), and *The Dark Mile* (1929). Most of her supernatural fiction appeared in two collections: *A Fire of Driftwood* (1932) and *Couching at the Door* (1942). She died in 1950.



Brilliant Three-for-Two Offer

To celebrate the Halloween season as it should be we will be offering a three for two offer on our supernatural fiction during October. Buy two copies of any of *Women's Weird*, *Women's Weird 2* and *British Weird* during October through our website, and receive a third title from those three free of charge. (Tell us which one you want in the Note section of the order page.) P&P will be free to UK addresses, and the usual rates for the USA and Canada.



Be Better at Writing

As announced previously, our June [Science Fiction and Fantasy](#) writing retreat was such a success that The Dell House in Malvern 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?' Liz Williams will be offering optional online tutoring and writing feedback. For all details, [please look at the Dell House website](#).

And, if that's not quite your cup of tea, consider coming to the retreat on [Fiction, Nature and Travel](#), with a guest talk from novelist and critic Alice Jolly in January 2022, or our retreat on [Life Writing, Biography and Memoir](#), with Sarah LeFanu as your tutor and speaker, in March 2022.

Babbling by Kate

Kate will be hosting or giving talks about publishing in the next couple of months. Do check [our Events page](#) to find the Eventbrite links for free tickets:

- Online at Westminster Libraries, on LGBTQ+ fiction with Frances Bingham on 15 September.
- Online at Westminster Libraries, on disability in fiction with sociologist and bioethicist Tom Shakespeare on 13 October.
- At the Guildhall Library online or in London, on London through the decades through five of Handheld's titles, on 10 November.

Balloons

In the last days of the hot weather a sound returned to our side of the hill outside Bath that we had long missed: the sound of balloons. Bath and Bristol have thriving hot-air balloon businesses, and in the Before Times we regularly watched balloons surging past our house along the valley first thing in the morning, or in the evening light, or overhead as they circumnavigated the golf course beside the university. They all made the same noise, a roaring turbo-charged burning noise, as if your gas boiler had turned into a dragon. But after lockdown began 18 months ago, the balloons stopped coming.

There was one glorious weekend in the spring, we think, when a festival did manage to happen and we saw four balloons in the skies at once, as we drove down into Bath to the north. But sightings have been rare since then. We saw this glorious beast in June, but that was it until sometime at the beginning of September, when we definitely heard another, roaring out of sight behind the trees when we were gardening. The balloons have all gone away for the season. We hope to see them again next year.



High hopes for a crunchy autumn underfoot.

Kate & David

Handheld Press