

## The Handheld Newsletter

May 2022

### Fifth Birthday offer

On Thursday 9th June Handheld will be officially five years old, as decreed by Companies House. To celebrate we are doing a few things. One is that we will have a three-for-two offer on all Handheld books bought through our website, valid for **6th to 10th June**. Place your order for two books at [www.handheldpress.co.uk](http://www.handheldpress.co.uk) in the usual way, and in the notes section on the page where you add your address and posting details, tell us which third book you would like, and we will confirm this by email.

Our usual p&p rates apply: free in the UK, and £8 per book in the USA and Canada. Sadly we cannot offer free p&p for the free third book to the USA and Canada as the postage rates are simply extortionate: we will have to ask you to make a separate payment for that once we've sorted out your order.

### Kate talks at Toppings

On Friday 10th June at 7.30pm Kate will be giving one of her celebrated illustrated talks, in person at Topping & Co Booksellers of Bath. [You can find the ticket details here](#): we are really quite pleased about this. Topping recently moved into the former Quaker Meeting House in Bath, which is a splendid columned neo-classical building on York Street that deserves to be better known. (It was originally built for the Freemasons, who are showier than Quakers.) Kate will be galloping through the first five years of Handheld Press, will many colourful slides, telling some of the good stories about our lovely books.



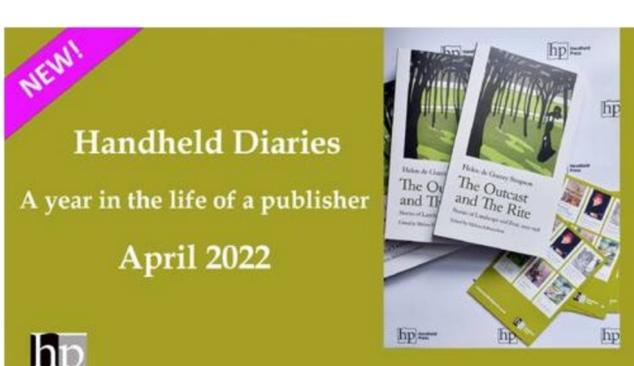
### Live in Clevedon

And finally, on Saturday 11th June Kate and Handheld Daughter no. 1 will be running a book stall at the Clevedon Literary Festival, merely an hour's drive from Bath and a delightful place to sniff the sea air and buy books. Kate will also be giving a talk: *Lost Authors and What To Do With Them*: you can see [all details and ticket information here](#).



### The April Diaries

The April edition of the Handheld Diaries is now available, in which Kate rounds up the news for the month, including explaining how algorithms make life very annoying for publishers, the joys of haggling with agents and how the best pick-me-up after a long day at work is reading magazine columns from the 1970s. [You can view the April Diaries here](#).



### More events online: *The Outcast and The Rite*, and *From the Abyss*

We had a nice bijou book launch online for our latest book, Helen de Guerry Simpson's *The Outcast and The Rite*, on 10th May. Kate and Melissa Edmundson fancied about Helen Simpson's writing and the themes in the collection that Melissa put together. This was attended by three of Helen's granddaughters, and we caught a glimpse of a family painting of Helen from the 1930s, and a terrific framed photograph of Helen and her great friend Dorothy L Sayers. The link for that recording will be posted soon on our website, and we'll let you have it in the June newsletter.

On **13th July** at 5pm in the UK (12 midday EST) Kate and Melissa will be talking about *The Outcast and The Rite* and *From the Abyss*, our forthcoming collection of supernatural stories by D K Broster. This is a talk for Westminster Libraries, and will be recorded: you can find [the link for free ticket registration here](#), and we'll post the link for the recording in a future newsletter.

And on **8th August** at 7.30pm in the UK (2.30 pm EST) Kate and Melissa will launch the publication of *From the Abyss* with an online talk: 'Horror, but make it ladylike'. This too will be recorded, and you can [register for your free ticket here](#). Tickets were already being snapped up mere minutes after posting the registration page on Eventbrite!

Handheld Press: *From the Abyss* and *The Outcast and The Rite*

### Catch up with *Latchkey Ladies*

You may remember that Kate and Sarah LeFanu did a talk for Westminster Libraries in March, about Bohemian London and single women, focusing on Marjorie Grant's marvellous novel of 1921, *Latchkey Ladies*: you can [see the recording here](#), free of charge.

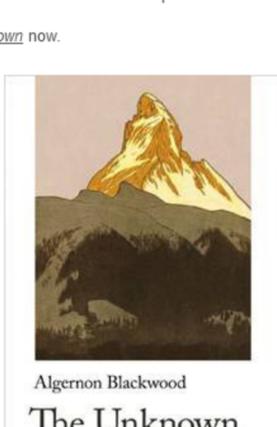


### Our new cover: *The Unknown*, by Algernon Blackwood

We have a new title to announce. Our March 2023 book will be a collection of (guess what?) supernatural short stories! (Actually, that's the only supernatural title we'll be publishing in 2023: the end is in sight, all you non-fantasy fans). But we [have](#) to publish Algernon Blackwood. He's a giant of the genre, and his essays are as interesting as his fiction is dramatically, exuberantly Weird. Henry Bartholomew of the University of Plymouth first approached us with a proposal to publish a new edition of one of Blackwood's lesser known novels. We read it, and were not impressed enough, as it seemed like a short story stretched out long past its natural limit. So we asked Henry to curate a collection of Blackwood's shorter pieces, both non-fiction and fiction, to include some of the less easy to find stories.

The result is *The Unknown*, and it's a remarkable assemblage of nature writing and terrifying stories of man (it usually is men) in the wild, and what the wild and nature do to them. Lots of mountaineering, and strange stories set in the deep forests of Canada. Brrr.

You can preorder [The Unknown](#) now.



### Unexpected sighting in Chicago

Just as we were going to press we had the delightful surprise of hearing from Madison Street Books in Chicago, who will be featuring a selection of their favourite Handheld titles for eight weeks in their Small Press Feature program. Kate immediately handed them a packet of postcards and bookmarks to help decorate the shelf. You can check [their website here](#).

### Garden news

This month has been the month of bluebells and cowslips popping up all over the place. Irises and roses are coming into bud, and the lupins are looking fat. Once again (skip this para if you've heard this before) we are stunned at how many wildflowers appear, with more each year. The previous owner must have been throwing weedkiller everywhere, or perhaps was an obsessive mower of lawns. We use no weedkiller and David mows the grass only when necessary, and the flowers are just delightful.

The garlic mustard with its pretty white flowers and nettle-like prickless leaves has been very obvious in the last few weeks. We swither between designating it as a weed (springs up everywhere, grows fast and tall, flops over plants nearby to take their sun) or a useful wildlife plant (apparently butterflies love it but we haven't seen many butterflies on it, their two seasons don't seem to be coinciding). So Kate pulls it up when it's in the way, and leaves it alone when it looks nice where it is.

In the vegetable garden we have been netting the blossom, or trying to stop the birds eating the gooseberries and raspberries (our first) because their fruit is definitely on the way. We sewed small sacks of black netting with garden twine down the sides, put one over each bush and pegged them to the ground. So far, so good. This weekend the damsons and the cherries also have to be netted, a much more fiddly task. Kate checked her trays of bean seeds in the shed, and found that a mouse has been feasting on them. So the trays have been moved outdoors to the potting shed table and now sit in the sun and rain, protected from mice and pigeons by a set of elderly net and wire bounce-back covers that were retired from kitchen last summer. The potting table is also retired: it was formerly the family dining table, bought with wedding present money from Turnout in Guildford 28 years ago, and was persuaded to take up gardening duties when it hibernated to be too big for the house we live in now.

Young female blackbirds have been practising their nest-gathering skills by excavating the potted plants. They perch on the edge, dig in, and fling compost and twigs everywhere. Once they've grabbed a selection of matted sticky compost in their beaks they extracted by the birdbath, drop the compost to have a good splash, and then fly away, leaving chaos, compost and leaf litter everywhere. On dark nights the tawny owls hoot repeatedly, alarmingly close to the house. And two days before typing this we heard a cuckoo, the first cuckoo we've heard since moving to this house. He would have been difficult to miss because he went on, and on, and on, for about fifteen minutes of solid cuckooing.

Enjoy the Maytime

Kate & David

Handheld Press