

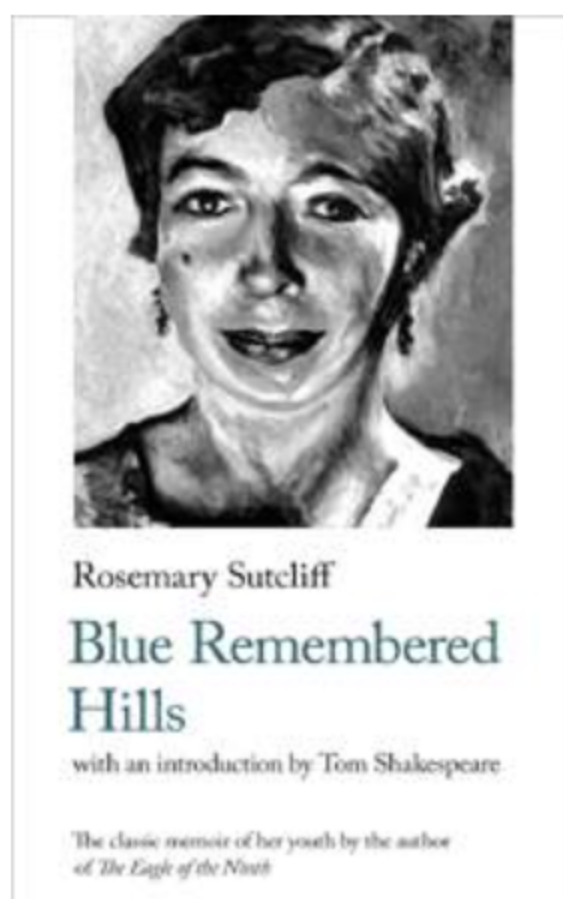
The Handheld Newsletter

March 2024

Rosemary Sutcliff is in *The Times*

Our new edition of Rosemary Sutcliff's fine memoir *Blue Remembered Hills* is now out! We had a lovely long review of it in *The Times* on Saturday 2nd March, and sales have been climbing ever since. We're not sure if any other reviews will emerge, but one in *The Times* is good enough for anyone.

Kate has been rereading Sutcliff novels for weeks, preparing her talks for the Guildhall Library London and Westminster Libraries. You'll be able to see the Westminster Libraries talk as a recording in a few weeks when it goes up on our YouTube channel. And if you want to read the talk she been posting it in sections on [her own blog page](#).



Yet more talks lined up

Our continuing series of recorded talks about our books continues.

Our YouTube channel now has [the recording of Kate's talk with Esther Rutter about her book *This Golden Fleece*, and about knitting](#), yarn, sheep and British knitting traditions.

Tuesday 14th May 2-3pm, and [Wednesday 22nd May 5-6pm](#): Kate will be talking about our tenth and last Weird, *The Ghost Stories of E Nesbit*. Melissa Edmundson will be joining Kate on 22nd May, and this talk will be recorded by Westminster Libraries.

Tuesday 11th June, 2-3pm, and Wednesday 19th June, 5-6pm: To celebrate the publication of *Tatting and Mandolinata* Kate will be talking about Faith Compton Mackenzie and her remarkable writing life. The 19th June talk will be recorded by Westminster Libraries.

Wednesday 10th July, 5-6pm: Kate will be talking about the long career of Sylvia Thompson, and her wonderful wartime novel *The Gulls Fly Inland*. This will be recorded by Westminster Libraries.

Thursday 11th July, 2-3pm: *The Gulls Fly Inland*, our last book, will come out with a proper, in-person book launch event at the Guildhall Library London, which will also be streamed, so you can watch online, or come to see us in person. Kate will be in conversation with Faye Hammill, who wrote the introduction, and some members of Sylvia's family may be in the audience.

Free registration [links for all these talks will be on our website](#) by the time this newsletter goes out.

And there's a cancellation ...

... because we're moving house

We kept this secret from you because of tempting Fate and all that, but, touching wood and all things going well, we will be leaving Bath in mid-April to move to Malvern, Worcestershire, about two hours drive further north from where we are now.

We did try to stay in Bath and its environs, but we could only find the right house in the wrong location, or vice versa, or completely unaffordable houses. Then we looked at Hay on Wye (it has a few bookshops, a top criterion), but there are very few houses there on the market. So then we looked again at Malvern, which we like a lot, it has four bookshops, we visit often for board game weekends, it's closer to some family members, and (a flash of long-forgotten memory) when the children were small we had a holiday in the area and liked Malvern so much we started joking about retiring there. Twenty years later, perhaps we are.

However, the moving date is so close to Kate's scheduled talk for the Guildhall Library on fashion history books that we have no idea if we'll have the broadband switched on or not. So we have cancelled that talk, which may reappear in the autumn. The April newsletter may also be a bit scrappy!

News from the garden

It seems pointless doing anything in the garden now except tidy up in a dilatory way, and clear out the sheds ready for moving, which is a bit sad. We'll miss a season of planting. Perhaps we'll get some late seeds in in the new garden (the new house has a kitchen garden and a front garden, both quite flat) by May.

David's tidying up produced the discovery that old compost bags (we had a large collection) can now be recycled! Do check yours as well, and take them (washed out) to a supermarket recycling point.

In the meantime we've been watching out for the squirrel with the broken tail. It appeared in February, quite perky and active, but with a definite kink in its tail, which it couldn't lift off the ground, so something has broken it. Dragging a tail in the wet grass is not going to do it any good. Even though the filaments of squirrel hair are very fine and should dry quickly, if they're in a soggy matted clump, they won't. So we hope that the squirrel can find all the food it needs above ground and has a warm drey to dry off in.

The creature that is digging deep holes in the grass beside tree stumps continues its nocturnal activity, which we think must be looking for worms to eat. The holes don't seem big enough for badgers, which are steadily wrecking the turves on the grass steps leading to the top end of the garden, in very distinctive tearing-down and rending-apart actions. We don't have rabbits (due to the badgers, and foxes, and being on a limestone hill). It might be foxes? But it seems unlikely. It doesn't eat the daffodils or primroses which are scattered about the garden looking lovely. Perhaps we might still be here when the violets come out.

See you in April,

Kate & David

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