

## The Handheld Newsletter

April 2024

### Hello Malvern!

By the time you read this Handheld Press will have moved to Malvern, a two-hour drive north from Bath on the west side of the main island of Britain, near(ish) the Welsh border. This newsletter was written before the packers arrived, before chaos descended, and before the internet was cut off. Bath has been a good place to live and work, but our circumstances have changed a bit, and so we wanted to move to a slightly bigger house with a flatter garden. Malvern, a small town tucked underneath the massive ridge of the Malvern Hills, has at least four bookshops (two new, two second-hand, and that's not counting the charity shops), a very lively board game scene, and is nearer to some of our family members than we were before (and further away from others). We've liked it for a long time and are very happy to be moving there. If you live in the area, do say hello!

### Moving-In Sale

To help us sort out our stock of Handheld books in their new private but quite jumbled attic boxroom, and to help us explore the different post office options in the area, we're having a brief but exciting sale on all Handheld titles, from 15 to 17 April inclusive. Use code MOVE in our website and receive a £2.99 discount on all titles, with no upper limit on how many you buy.

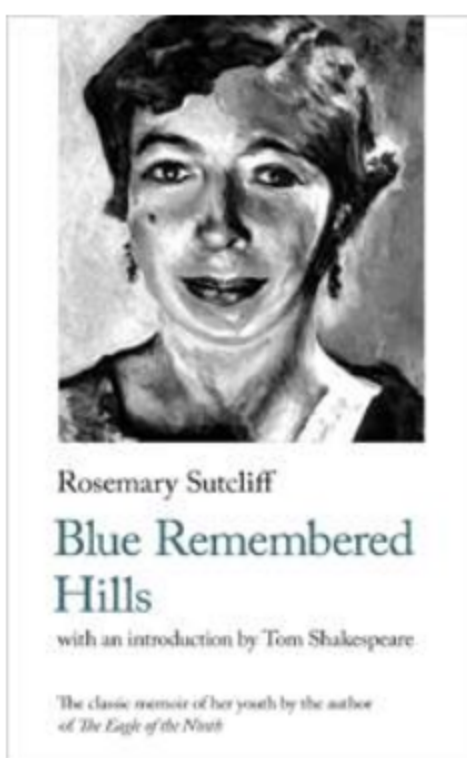
### Diary of a Publisher

With the winding-down of business (though we still have three books yet to publish; don't forget!) Kate has begun writing *Diary of a Publisher*, the story of how Handheld was set up and evolved, from the beginning to the end. She's using her 23 files of work logs, in which she records every Handheld thing she does every day as a way of keeping track of all the multi-tasking, and to be able to check later on whether she sent X to the *Bookseller* or asked Y to do Z. She's one year in now, and is finding the process surprisingly mournful. Her log book notes are quite terse but also good at triggering memories and the feelings that different events produced. We've just got past her first London Book Fair in 2018. My, she has a lot of things to say about that.

### Rosemary Sutcliff: whoops

Unfortunately, Kate's talk about Rosemary Sutcliff's historical novels for Westminster Libraries, to celebrate our new edition of her memoir *Blue Remembered Hills*, was accidentally not recorded on Zoom. Sara, the librarian in charge, is very apologetic, and it won't happen again. However, you can read most of Kate's notes on the subject on her series of six blog posts [beginning here](#).

While she was researching the talk Kate discovered, to her embarrassment, that she has got some of Sutcliff's bibliography wrong. As we have already had to reprint our edition (sales have been amazing, thanks to the *Times* review) we have corrected the bibliography in the new edition. The corrections are relatively minor, and only of interest to Sutcliff completists, making clearer that some titles are short stories, and where they were reprinted in collections.



### Hilda is in the *Times Literary Supplement*

After many months of waiting our *Hilda Matheson* was finally reviewed in the TLS. It's a fairly but not wholly positive review, mainly because the reviewer wanted a different book, and criticised our edition for not being that book. So there we are: we can't do anything about that. Kate managed to extract a few positive words from the review for publicity purposes, and we note that late sales have perked up a little (a *very* little) anyway.



### What we've been reading this month

Kate has been utterly gripped by Rory Stewart's travel memoir of walking from Herat to Kabul in winter shortly after the Taliban left power in Afghanistan, *The Places in Between*. It gave her some quite disturbed dreams, and she won't forget many of the people and animals and places he writes about.

David has been reading Michael Kennedy's elderly but fascinating *Portrait of Elgar* and now understands why a composer who lived into his 70s produced relatively little music. It seems that Elgar was constantly moving house and therefore had little time for anything else. A boon for the blue plaque industry.

### Garden news

David kept bemoaning the flowers that the buyers of our house will miss when they arrive: the primroses, the white violets, the daffodils, the chaenomeles. We will miss the cuckoo-flower and the peonies, so I hope the new garden has some of those. We were only taking plants that are already potted up, but now we might also take some hellebore seedlings as these appear to be rampant in the front garden this year. The Solomon's Seal, which has been in a pot for two or three years, was mistakenly (possibly deliberately? we are not certain about this) planted in a border when David emptied the last of the bags of home-made compost, and is already doing much better there than it did in the pot. So we'll leave it there.

Meanwhile the squirrel with the broken tail is still alive and bouncing around the grass, and the deer have found a way to reach the roses in their pots. It's been very scenic watching the deer stroll about the top of the upper garden among the trees, but we will not miss their flower-chomping habits.

See you in May,

Kate & David

Handheld Press