

Report on the Poems and Pints night, 30th May, 2008

As usual, an excellent evening was hosted by our favourite poet (Cheshire Poet laureate, 2004), **John Lindley**. The event rolled smoothly on thanks to John's unique blend of charm, humour and amusing anecdotes. And, of course, we were treated to three of his poems: a top-speed celebration of our canine friends entitled "Don't you just dig dogs", a sideways glance at the realities of life with "Certainties" and finally a celebration of water in the Lake District with "Closed for restoration". You can find out more about John on www.johnlindley.co.uk

John guided us through a whole gamut of emotions with the contributions from the other readers too. The poems that were read were moving, meaningful and, well, some were frankly ludicrous!

Many timeless poets were represented during the evening, for example, **Walt Whitman, Dylan Thomas, Pam Ayres, Seamus Heaney, Ted Hughes** and **T.S.Eliot**. Some of the most moving poetry, we are pleased to say, was original and read by the poets themselves. We heard **Pat Borthwick** read "Stone", a poem about fate, **Tanya Ravenswater** (a Kelsall poet) read a eulogy to her brother with "The Elvis clock", **Gill McAvoy** read "Milestone" and **Simon Clarke** remembered his daughter's childhood in "Finding a four-leaved clover", and his poem "Conversion" gave two Manchester United fans something to cheer about!

Some poems can be interpreted on several levels. The poet **Jane Harland** read "The Knight" by T.S. Eliot and her own poem called "Drawing a straight line" a poem about Cheshire writer Alan Garner. Another reader chose **Edmund Blunden's** "Forefathers" a deceptively simple poem about the previous generations in a village, and we heard **Seamus Heaney's** "Digging", a poem which reflects on the skill and dignity of work in a bygone age.

Then there was the humour – which we enjoyed in bucket loads. Some examples were: **Marge Piercy's** "A story wet as tears" about princesses and frogs, **Pam Ayres** "Don't kiss me" and "Call the mountain rescue", **T. S. Eliot's** "Macavity the mystery cat", the ridiculous "Ready, steady, ping" by **Elvis McGonagall** from Radio 4's 'Saturday Live' programme, and **Ray Bolton's** creation about his family tree, entitled "Unusual tree". Do you think that he really is related to Ronnie Biggs?

This review couldn't end without mentioning our own talented quartet, the **Ravenswater** family. Mum Tanya, dad Richard and children Hannah and Rory all contributed to the evening. Of special note were Hannah's own poems including the wonderful "Frosted canvas" and "River's journey". Rory (age 8) revealed his obvious love of wildlife with his own poems about snails and **Charles Causley's** poem "The frog". Tanya read from her own marvellous collection of poems about Kelsall entitled "Around the Green"

which will be available for you to buy soon, with proceeds going to the Kelsall Green Project. A sample to whet your appetite is reproduced below.

A big “thank you” to them, and to all the poets, readers and listeners who attended. This marvellous evening only costs £3 per person. There are opportunities to buy from a selection of poetry books and books about the history of Kelsall. If you can come along to the next event you will experience a pleasant and stimulating evening and at the same time you will be supporting two worthy projects in the village.

The next event will be on Friday, 11th July at 8pm in the upstairs room at the Oak, Chester Rd, Kelsall. Entrance costs £3 per person.

If you would like to receive information about future events by email, or if you have any queries about the “Poems & Pints” or about Kelsall Community Library, please contact me at linda.clarke@btinternet.com or telephone 01829 752899.

Many thanks and hope to see you soon,
Linda Clarke,
Event organiser & Library Manager.

Here are two of the poems that were read at the event. Thank you to both poets for their permission to reproduce them here.

Wally's

His name's Wallace Dutton.
Not so famous for mutton
as for Minted Lamb Burgers,
sweet steaks, late, at the side door
and sausages, unrivalled for flavour

His name's Wallace Dutton.
Not so famous for mutton
as for his fresh Hot Chickens,
luxurious, but lean mince,
and fine stock of counter assistants.

His cakes come from Tarporley.
Plump Eccles, well-filled Custards
and giant iced ginger men

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FINDING THE FOUR LEAVED CLOVER

She doesn't want 'help' any more
Happy to squat
On the green squidge.

Lawns are vast, prairie like
At that age
Move on from teddy bears and dolls
Or games of chase the cat

Dandelions, laid out
The not-so-deadheads
Shredded in a ring
Petals for 'emergency supplies'
Busy fingers bright
The yellow grime right
Underneath the skin

So soon to be grown up.
Each veined leaf
With softer touch she learns
In search
Minutes stretch to years
Her three hour vigil out there at the front
Close forensic evening eyes down
Fast another summer
Turns.

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