

East Coker Poetry Group

Newsletter August 2008

Tuesday 30th September 'Travel'

Caroline Mornement hosts an evening of travel poetry with a display of textiles from around the world to accompany the verse.
Readers including James Nash

Tuesday 21st October Poetry Competition 2008

This Year's subject – 'TIME'

Entry deadline is 1st October

We hope to read all the entries for this year's competition at the meeting. They will be read if possible by the writer but if you are unable to attend or prefer not to read, then our "resident" readers will read your poem for you.

Note - this meeting is booked for the Apple Loft at the Helyar Arms.
The meeting date is the **21st October** – the competition rules suggested a different date for the meeting

Tuesday 25th November 'Night Poetry'

Diana Turton hosts this intriguingly titled evening.
The nights draw in for winter and evening of poetry will be just what is needed.

All these meetings at the Helyar Arms, Moor Lane, East Coker
7.30pm

Poetry Picnic

Despite the best efforts of the British weather to dampen the spirits of the poetry group, our poetry picnic on the 16th August was hastily re-located to the tiny but atmospheric Sutton Bingham Church. Many thanks to all who helped to make the evening the success that it was.

Iona Lambe wrote this poem specially for the poetry picnic:-

Sutton Bingham

The green fields fall
Like folds in fabric,
Down to the silken water.
Satin, tweed,
Trimmed with hedges
Fringed by trees,
Dipping their hem-line,
Trailing it along the edge
Of Sutton Bingham.

Something jumps and plops
And circles spread,
Exhaust themselves and fade.
Reflected clouds reform
On water flat as foil,
Imperfect as old glass.

A moorhen trails a vee,
And grebes absent themselves
For travels underwater
At Sutton Bingham.

The luscious pastures lay
Their vivid swags in swathes
Down valleys, 'til they brush
The water's clear, cool face.
Swallows curl and rush
Across the evening water.
Sipping on the wing,
They stitch the sky
To Sutton Bingham.

Iona Lambe

Iona also wrote these amusing lines when she was working on last year's competition on the subject of 'The Weather' :-

That weather man on the T.V.
Said tonight it would be minus three.
Now every muscle is sore
Shifting pot-plants indoors,
And it feels like the tropics to me.

Anne Bingley got carried away when writing an entry for this year's competition and sent me two extra poems on 'Time' in addition to her entry. Here is her Haiku:-

Tick tock, watch the clock.
Time controls my wakeful hours
Set me free to sleep.

In the last newsletter I posed the question – **What is poetry?**

Anne Bingley wrote "the best I can come up with is that poetry is an infinitely variable way of expressing the inexpressible". She also enclosed a cutting from the *Daily Telegraph* where Daisy Goodwin's muses about choosing a poet laureate. Daisy writes "...poetry in this country is less popular than Sudoku, but...people don't do puzzles at funerals – they read poems. This is because poems are, as Samuel Taylor Coleridge said, *the best words in the best order*".

Geoffrey Cradock from Gillingham saw our website and sent us this poem:-

The Tournament

The crowds are assembled, the covers are off
The courts lie green in the sun,
For the next two weeks only tennis speaks
At Wimbledon NW1.

We must all of us pray there will be no delay
On account of bad weather and rain
But should it occur we need not demur
They can always start again

Line judges and ball boys make haste to repair
To their places set out on the court
As the umpire climbs to his seat on the chair
To insure they all do as they ought.

Then the players appear dressed all in white
And no one must break the rule
It may seem absurd but they have the last word
When all's said and done white is cool

In the women's game almost every name
Has an east European flavour
With the lovely Ivanovic facing the net
Against Russia's miss Ova or Eva

It all goes back to a bygone age
To those days in Victorian times
When croquet and tennis were all the rage
And the favourite drink gin and limes

The umpire calls play and the battle begins
At a furious rollicking pace
With the thwack of the racket and fizz of the ball
As the server sends down his first ace

It is six games all and the tiebreak is nigh
A hush falls over the crowd
Hopes for their hero still ride high
Shouts of "c'mon Andy" ring out loud

While outside the courts on Henman Hill
The fans are enjoying the fun
As they swig their beer and raise a cheer
Every time a shot is won

And so it goes on as day follows day
Of entrancing elegant sport
With a changing scene which began all green
But by now there's no grass on the court

It is down to the semi- finals
And our hero is still in the game
Can he make it this year? Alas, not, we all fear
But we yell for him just the same.

And then at last the final scene
When champion and challenger meet
The stands are packed from front to back
And there isn't an empty seat

The battle lasts for five long sets
Will the champion hold his crown?
The bookies have already laid off their bets
In case it comes tumbling down.

Then the match is over, the cup is won
His name inscribed in the hall
The duke presents it in fading light
And they're off to the champion's ball.

All of a sudden, silence descends
The crowd has dispersed and flown
As a solitary pigeon looks down from the roof
On a scene which is all its own.

Geoffrey Cradock

NEWS SNIPPETS

Sue McKerracher, founder of the East Coker Poetry Group, has written a book about her family's exploits in Europe before they settled in Australia.

E-poets **Frances Bathgate** and **Anne Cunningham** came to East Coker recently on the T.S. Eliot trail. They were excellent company and told me about the poetry group they run on the internet that encourages members to put pen to paper (or finger to keyboard) and write poetry on different subjects set by the group each month. They hope to have a website up and running soon and I hope to have details for our next newsletter.

The **Yeovil Community Arts Association** has asked the East Coker Poetry Group to run a 'poetry café' at the Octagon Theatre (Johnson Suite) early next year. This could be an interesting event – watch this space!

Ever wanted to **publish your own book** or collection of poems? The choice these days is huge –

Poet and 'book artist' **Ama Bolton** produced her exquisitely crafted hand-made books for Jane Williams' collection of poetry recently.

The book to accompany Catherine Simmonds and Gini Astley's "We have heard Ravens" was printed in Ilminster by **Terry Wright** on an original Heidelberg letterpress.

Sue McKerracher, at the other end of the technology spectrum, has found that **www.lulu.com** can produce books and lots of other printed material over the internet and their site is quite an eye-opener.

Back in March, the **Alpha House Gallery** in Sherborne hosted a poetry performance by local Dorset poet **Elizabeth Bletsoe**. She has had several collections published and has recently been interviewed on Radio 3. I thought it enterprising for the Art Gallery to host this poetry event and perhaps others similar evenings will follow?

What would you like our Poetry Group to do next year ?

Are there meetings you have particularly enjoyed ? Any you have disliked ? 2009 seems a long way off, but if anyone has ideas for meetings or events for next year then do let me know.

For more information about the East Coker Poetry Group, contact
David Cloke, Group Co-ordinator, Tel. 01935 862623
or Joyce Best 01935 862317
Email info@eastcokerpoetry.org.uk
Our website - www.eastcokerpoetry.org.uk