



# The Persephone Biannually

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*Consuelo, Duchess of Marlborough, daughter of the American millionaire Cornelius Vanderbilt. Photograph taken from Country House Camera by Christopher Simon Sykes, Bramley Books 1987, opp. p162*



# OUR SPRING & SUMMER 2007 BOOKS



'Tulip Tree', a 1903 fabric by Leona F. Drey, used for *The Shuttle*



1941 watercolour design by Eric Ravilious, used for *House-Bound*

**T***he Shuttle* was first published exactly a hundred years ago. It was begun in 1900 but frequently abandoned while its author, Frances Hodgson Burnett, wrote several other books, including, most famously, *The Making of a Marchioness* and its sequel *The Methods of Lady Walderhurst*. Nowadays these are referred to together as *The Making of a Marchioness*, and this is the title of one of our bestselling titles, Persephone Book No. 29; it was billed as a 'delightful and occasionally dark romance' by the *Radio Times* when broadcast over Easter as a two-part BBC Radio 4 Classic Serial starring Lucy Briers, Joanna David, Miriam Margolyes and Charles Dance.

**T***he Shuttle*, Persephone Book No.71, is about American heiresses marrying English aristocrats; by extension it is about the effect of American energy, dynamism and affluence on an effete and impoverished English ruling class. Sir Nigel

Anstruthers crosses the Atlantic to look for a rich wife and returns with the daughter of an American millionaire, Rosalie Vanderpoel. He turns out to be a bully, a miser and a philanderer and virtually imprisons his wife in the house. Only when Rosalie's sister Bettina is grown up does it occur to her and her father that some sort of rescue expedition should take place. And the beautiful, kind and dynamic Bettina leaves for Europe to try and find out why Rosalie has, inexplicably, chosen to lose touch with her family. In the process she engages in a psychological war with Sir Nigel; meets and falls in love with another Englishman; and starts to use the Vanderpoel money to modernise 'Stornham Court'.

**B**ut *The Shuttle*, which is five hundred pages long and a page-turner for every one of them, is about far more than the process by which an English country house can be brought back to life with the injection of

transatlantic money (there is some particularly interesting detail about the new life breathed into the garden). It is mainly about American energy and initiative and get-up-and-go; this is symbolised by G Selden, the typewriter salesman on a bicycling tour of England, who meets, and charms, Bettina and her sister and, back in New York, their father. And it is about the excellent relationship that, curiously enough, many of the heiresses enjoyed with their multi-millionaire fathers.

**A**bove all it is about Bettina Vanderpoel. She is the reason why this is such a successful, entertaining and interesting novel – one could almost say that she is one of the great heroines, on a par with Elizabeth Bennet, Becky Sharp and Isabel Archer. This is because she is so intelligent and so enterprising – she has the normal feminine qualities but a strong business sense, inherited from her father, and instinctive management skills (as we would now call

them). If every man in England married a girl like Bettina Vanderpoel, we are meant to think, England's future would be as glittering as America's.

And this is what many wanted to do. An American magazine, *Titled Americans: A list of American ladies who have married foreigners of rank*, was published specifically to cater to the market in heiresses; it included: 'A carefully compiled List of Peers Who are Supposed to be eager to lay their coronets, and incidentally their hearts, at the feet of the all-conquering American Girl.'

But, as Anne Sebba writes in her *Persephone* Preface, 'money was only one recommendation; being young and beautiful – able to invigorate the bloodlines – counted too', so that by the time *The Shuttle* was published, as Ann Thwaite points out in her recently re-issued life of Frances Hodgson Burnett, 'it was to be estimated that more than five hundred American women had married titled foreigners and some \$220 million had gone with them to Europe.'

The book's title refers to ships shuttling back and forth over the Atlantic (Frances Hodgson Burnett herself travelled

between the two countries thirty-three times, something very unusual then) and also to the weaving of the alliance between America and Britain. 'As Americans discovered Europe, that continent discovered America. American beauties began to appear in English drawing-rooms and Continental salons... What could be more a matter of course than that American women, being aided by adoring fathers sumptuously to ship themselves to other lands, should begin to rule these lands also?'

One of the first and best known of all the Anglo-American matrimonial alliances



*Frances Hodgson Burnett at the time she was writing The Making of a Marchioness and The Shuttle*

was that of Jennie Jerome to Lord Randolph Churchill (Anne Sebba's new biography of Jennie will be published this autumn); their son, Winston Churchill, was to be the most illustrious offspring of all such transatlantic matches. Another well-known American heiress was Consuelo Vanderbilt, whose picture is on the cover of this *Bianually*. When she married the 9th Duke of Marlborough (Winston Churchill's cousin) in 1895, her dowry was said to be in the region of two and a half million dollars, and was used to renovate Blenheim Palace.

All during the ten years of the Marlboroughs' life together at Blenheim – they separated in 1907 – the newspapers were full of gossip about them, gossip which Frances Hodgson Burnett would certainly have read. And although the house lived in by 'Sir Nigel Anstruthers' and his wife is small in comparison with Blenheim, some of the details came from there; the actual model for 'Stornham Court', however, is Great Maytham Hall, near Rolvenden in Kent. This had, and still has, a wonderful garden which, in *The Shuttle*, Bettina sets about restoring and which, in 1911, inspired the walled garden in *The Secret Garden*.





Winifred Peck

Our second Spring/Summer book is Winifred Peck's *House-Bound*, Persephone Book No.72. We first read this in 1985 when, in a feature in the *Times Literary Supplement*, the novelist and critic Penelope Fitzgerald, Winifred Peck's niece, chose it as one of the books she would like to see reprinted. This was a repeat of the 1977 feature in which Lord David Cecil and Philip Larkin both chose Barbara Pym as the novelist they thought most unjustly neglected, cf. the piece about Barbara Pym on p.8 of this *Biannually*.

Penelope Fitzgerald wrote: 'If I could have back one of the many Winifred Peck titles I once possessed I would choose *House-*

*Bound*. The story never moves out of middle-class Edinburgh; the satire on genteel living, though, is always kept in relation to the vast severance and waste of the war beyond. The book opens with a grand comic sweep as the ladies come empty-handed away from the registry office where they have learned that they can no longer be "suited" and in future will have to manage their own unmanageable homes. There are coal fires, kitchen ranges and intractable husbands; Rose is not quite sure whether you need soap to wash potatoes. Her struggle continues on several fronts, but not always in terms of comedy. To be house-bound is to be "tethered to a collection of all the extinct memories... with

which they had grown up... how are we all to get out?" I remember it as a novel by a romantic who was as sharp as a needle, too sharp to deceive herself.'

Penelope Fitzgerald, who died in 2000, agreed in 1998 to write about *House-Bound*; however, we waited to publish the book, and her Preface, because we wanted a good length of time to elapse between its publication and that of the rather similarly-titled *The Home-Maker*, Persephone Book No.7. So the publication of *House-Bound* is a celebration not only of Winifred Peck but of Penelope Fitzgerald.

Winifred (nee Knox) was sister to *The Knox Brothers*, the title of a 1977 book Penelope wrote about her father Evoc Knox and her uncles Dillwyn, Wilfred and Ronald. It is a pity that Winifred hardly appears in that book and in fact it has been difficult to find out anything about her, bar the fact that she was brilliant, like her brothers, was one of the first forty pupils at the pioneering (and still outstanding) Wycombe Abbey School and went to Lady Margaret Hall, Oxford to read History. She married when she was 29 and over the next forty years, as well as having three brilliant sons, wrote twenty-five books, mostly novels.

*House-Bound* was written during the war and the war is both in the background and foreground: one of the questions

that the reader is asked throughout the book is – what is courage? This is another book, like *Few Eggs and No Oranges*, Persephone Book No.9 and *A House in the Country*, Persephone Book No.31, which gives an incredible picture of life during the war as it actually was rather than viewed with hindsight.

**H**ouse-Bound also contains a more unusual theme: Rose's daughter Flora is difficult, petul-

ant and horrible to her mother, which is not something often written about in fiction (for obvious reasons, but perhaps Winifred Peck felt able to write about Flora because she had no daughters). Flora finally turns a corner; but it is painful to read about her until that happens.

**W**inifred Peck is also funny and perceptive about Rose Fairlaw's decision to manage her house on her own. For years her

family 'had been free of nine or ten rooms in the upper earth, while three women shared the exiguous darkness of the basement.' But, like Mollie Panter-Downes or Lettice Cooper, Winifred Peck could foresee the future and wrote informatively and amusingly, not complainingly, about the need for middle-class women to run their home without help, the title of one of our books and a key theme of many of them.



*'A Knitting Party' 1940 by Evelyn Dunbar, taken from Gill Clarke's 2006 biography p104. Evelyn Dunbar was commissioned by the War Artists Advisory committee and was the only salaried artist painting women's activities on the home front. 'Rose had spent the afternoon at a Red Cross working-party,' we are told on page 50 of House-Bound, 'and Rose would sit there knitting...' on page 258.*

# OUR REVIEWERS WRITE

In the *Journal of Katherine Mansfield*, said Hermione Lee in the *Guardian*, her ‘startling, vivid, intimate voice still comes pouring off these pages... She is always driving herself along, with the utmost rigour. These are formidably self-lacerating, self-critical diaries. She knows, when she admits to it, that she is writing against the clock, saying of one of her best stories, “The Daughters of the Late Colonel”, “I wrote as fast as possible for fear of dying before the story was sent.” As her admirer Elizabeth Bowen wrote, in a tribute to her in 1956, “there is never enough of the time a writer wants – but hers was cut so short, one is aghast.” Mansfield’s writing, says Bowen – and it is truest of all of the *Journal* – often feels “interrupted... momentarily waiting to be gone on with. Page after page gives off the feeling of being still warm from the touch. Fresh from the pen. Where is she – our missing contemporary?”

And the *Daily Mail* said about the *Journal*: ‘You’ll find none of the vanity, score settling or tittle-tattle that mars so many journals. Though Katherine Mansfield bemoans the rain, her persistent illness, even her writing, it’s impossible not to love Mansfield’s candour and be drawn in by her impassioned voice. An elegant reissue of an essential writer.’

*The Literary Review* called *The Expendable Man* ‘a painfully vivid portrait of the American South in the Sixties, deftly written and interesting. Blink and you’ll miss the one vital piece of informat-ion.’ While *The Gloss* described it as ‘a gripping thriller.’

‘One of my favourite publishers at the moment,’ Sarah Waters wrote in *The Times*, ‘is Persephone Books, whose list of reprinted women’s fiction contains some small masterpieces. Elisabeth Sanxay Holding’s tense *The Blank Wall* is perfect for crime fans. Dorothy Whipple’s *They Were Sisters* and *Someone at a Distance* are compelling stories of domestic trauma. The books look great, too.’

Rachel Cooke in the *New Statesman* chose as one of her books of the year ‘Persephone Books’ lovely new edition of *Plats du Jour* by Primrose Boyd and Patience Gray. When it was first published in 1957, this sold 100,000 copies. It was also one of Jane Grigson’s favourite cookbooks, which should be recommendation enough for anyone.’ Tom Jaine in the *Guardian* thought that this ‘remarkable description of bourgeois cooking as it should be from the 1950s leaves current [cookery book] authors standing’; *Country Life* called the recipes ‘delightful and full of period charm. *Plats du Jour* did not

deserve to disappear, and Persephone has done us a service in rediscovering it’; while in the *New Statesman* Kate Taylor admired its historical value, seeing it as an early example of the lifestyle cookery book: ‘it can feel inaccessible – for one thing old measurements such as gills have not been updated – but if you persevere, the *plat du jour* principle yields some wonderful food. My first efforts, *poulet a la savoyarde* (chicken braised with ceps) and *la garbure*, a thick Basque soup, were not half bad.’

India Knight told readers of *She* magazine’s ‘On My Bookshelf’ column: ‘I love reprints of old books like the ones produced by Persephone Books. Its edition of *Miss Pettigrew Lives for a Day* by Winifred Watson is just my favourite; it’s a delight to look at and to hold, and it’s also the one I turn to when I want to be uplifted and cheered. It’s about a mousy little governess who is sent to the wrong address for a job interview and ends up becoming a companion to an exotically glamorous nightclub singer. Miss Pettigrew’s life is transformed. It’s sweet, but not sugary, and just leaves you feeling so happy. R’s what the best books do.’

Lastly, *Compass* (for garden designers) said that ‘anyone who is an enthusiastic gardener’ will enjoy the ‘quirky and whimsical’ *Gardener’s Nightcap*.



# MOP TILL YOU DROP

It began with an argument about Hoovering [wrote Cassandra Smith in the *Sunday Express* 'S' magazine on March 25th].

'How am I supposed to hold down a job and clean the house and cook a decent meal in the evening?' I demanded. 'There just aren't enough hours in the day.'

'That's what you think,' replied by partner Michael. 'Kay Smallshaw doesn't agree.'

'Well, why doesn't she come round and do it?' I huffed.

'That might be difficult,' he said. 'She wrote this in 1949.' And with that he tossed me a copy of *How to Run Your Home Without Help*.

Recently reprinted by Persephone Books, this non-nonsense tome explains the art of keeping house in the age of slow food, rationing and elbow grease. And, bless his undarned socks, my partner had bought a copy for me.

'What do you think?' he asked, after I'd studied it for a bit.

'Right,' I replied, sensing that the rubber glove had been thrown down. 'I'll give it a go. For a week.'

**Saturday** Feel the first of many pangs of shame. I'm used to coming home and declaring, this

place looks like a bomb's hit it,' but Smallshaw lived in a Britain where that was literally

true. Resolve never to talk of 'a quick blitz on the kitchen' again.

**Sunday** Cancel yoga class because I have to go shopping for seven different brushes,

brooms and mops, in addition to dusters, cloths and a cornucopia of cleaning materials. Exhausted, I take the rest of the day off.

**Monday** Am I 'avoiding unnecessary journeys by arranging my furniture to maximise the speed at which I can move around'? Decide I will do a test run when I get home at 7.30pm. Eat microwave lasagne in front of the telly. No journeys, unnecessary or otherwise.

**Tuesday** Begin the 'morning round' with my brand new brushes. Ask if Michael might like to plump the duvet. He says the socio-cultural

climate of 1949 meant that, while progressive men might fettle the boiler, the house was still the woman's domain. For our experiment to work, I must do the cleaning while he puffs Woodbines

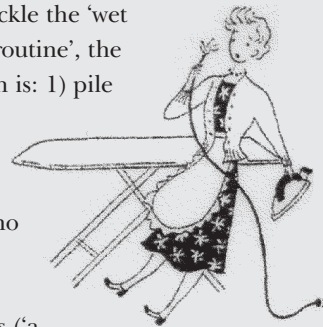
and plays cards with his pals.

**Wednesday** Tackle the 'wet and dry jobs routine', the order of which is: 1) pile all the breakfast dishes (no breakfast, so no dishes – hurrah!); 2) make the beds ('a pleasant interlude from the dusting and sweeping') 3) dust and sweep all the rooms (not too bad as I did them yesterday 4) sweep the kitchen 5) start the wet jobs.

**Thursday** I think I'm now ready for the 'weekly clean'.

Oh dear – on closer reading of Chapter 7, it appears that the weekly cleaning should be happening every day, and I should be 'turning out' each room in rotation. Stomp off to bed exhausted and check my watch hopefully for the arrival of feminism.

**Friday** Thank goodness it's Friday, as they probably said in those days. My house is immaculate, a casserole is bubbling on the hob, and I have a new sense of respect for my grandma and all her generation. On the other hand, I am faint with exhaustion and I think I'm getting housemaid's knee.



# BARBARA PYM

Thirty years ago, in January 1977, Barbara Pym's literary career was resurrected by Lord David Cecil and Philip Larkin: in the *Times Literary Supplement* both chose her as 'the most underrated novelist of the century', 'and suddenly,' wrote the *Boston Globe* columnist Katherine A Powers earlier this year, 'her published novels were back in print, and those that had been rejected by countless publishers were accepted and greeted with praise.' What happened as well was that Barbara Pym joined writers such as Jane Austen, Mrs Gaskell and EF Benson who engender fans, a following, as well as societies, newsletters, conferences, even weekends.

We are of course very grateful when Persephone readers mention books they would like to see brought back into print, and among the authors most frequently suggested are Stella Gibbons, Ann Bridge, Angela Thirkell – and Barbara Pym. Yet why have we always resisted reprinting her?

'Her neglect is so in keeping with the tenor of her novels that it almost seems of a piece with them,' went on Katherine A Powers, 'for her great topic is the shabby deal the world hands a certain kind of woman: the unmarried woman over 30 or the taken-for-granted helpmeet of some clergyman or scholar.'

'Intelligent and keenly observant, Pym's women are both condescended to and exploited as useful resources, but with the

surprising result that we feel less pity for their dun-coloured selves and more malicious pleasure in how meagre those who use them appear in their self-regard and indecent presumption. It is in this light that I like to think of the publishing pooh-bahs who dismissed Pym's novels as passé.'

Nevertheless, we still agree with AS Byatt. She wrote in 1986: 'Why in the last few years has there been such a sudden blossoming of attention to Barbara Pym's oeuvre? Why the PhD dissertations, the academic conferences, *La Narrativa di Barbara Pym*, "Text and Subtext in the novels of Barbara Pym", etc?'

'In England, a curious combination of unlikely allies brought her to our attention. First came Lord David Cecil, followed by fogies of various ages, all of whom feel a nostalgia for the memorable manners and habits of small folk in the days of England's greatness, or anyway England's certainty of its own cultural identity. With this kind of pleasure in comic self-deprecation goes the English terror of anything that could possibly be called pretentious, phoney or pseud. Malice is all right, as long as it's unpretentious and not too loud.'

'Pym's most persuasive advocate was, of course, Philip Larkin. In the preface to his own novel *Jill* he remarked with approval of his own wartime generation that events had cut them ruthlessly down to size. Pym was also of that generation who were cut down to size; a

good joke is socially acceptable, but a romantic gesture, unless heavily disguised with irony and deprecation, is not.

'In 1937 QD Leavis, in the pages of *Scrutiny*, fulminated against Dorothy Sayers for pretensions to literary merit when she was only writing vulgar bestsellers: Mrs Leavis could not understand Miss Sayers's vogue amongst intelligent readers in Common Rooms. Whereas Barbara Pym wanted, we are told, to write novels like Angela Thirkell, a good comic library novelist who disrupted her own comfortable world with shrill hostility to the 1945 Labour Government.

'In the end, I think, Miss Pym does belong with Sayers and Thirkell. She lacks Muriel Spark's metaphysical wit and icy eye for moral and spiritual inadequacies. She lacks the mad logical rigour and the tolerant detachment of Fay Weldon's moral satire. Her prose lacks the flexibility of all of these; too much of it is good school-magazine jokiness. She appears gentler than Spark or Weldon but is also infinitely less generous, humane and imaginative. Good relaxing reading is a matter of personal choice, pace Queenie Leavis. I'd rather have cloth-of-gold wedding dresses, quotations from *Urne Buriall* and tigerish passion in crime writers acquitted of murder, than brown frocks, knitted socks in clerical grey, and cauliflower cheese.'



# TWO REVIEWS

This is the second time *The Fortnight in September* has been reviewed in the *Spectator* [wrote Matthew Dennison]. On its first appearance, my predecessor applauded ‘more simple human goodness and understanding ... than in anything I have read for years’. The year was 1931. Three-quarters of a century has passed, and what to that earlier reviewer was a study in contemporary ordinariness has become a period piece. But the passage of time and the disappearance of the novel’s mise-en-scène – the interwar world of seaside boarding houses – have not altered its impact. My own verdict and that published in these pages seventy-five years ago overlap entirely.

Mr and Mrs Stevens have three children, a cat and a canary. They live in Dulwich, in sight of the train line. ‘For twenty Septembers, wet and fine, hot and cold’ they have spend an annual fortnight by the sea – at Bognor Regis, in a boarding house, ‘Seaview’, belonging to Mr and Mrs Huggett (and latterly to the widowed Mrs Huggett alone). On one of these trips we accompany them.

The novel is simply written. In his autobiography, RC Sherriff claimed that, on completion, he considered it so simply written that he worried that its style might be better suited to a children’s book than a novel for adults. Its plot, too, is simple: a day-by-day account of two weeks’

holiday in which the days merge and the family’s perfect day consists of “morning cricket, with half an hour’s interval in the sea, a deliciously lazy afternoon, dozing... then a peaceful ramble along the sands.”

Into this framework Sherriff introduces elements of small-scale tragedy. He does so with a completely assured touch, without sentiment, archness or coyness, lacing the novel with passages of pathos that are almost unbearably moving. The Stevenses are wholly believable and, as intended by their creator, wholly ordinary. But their goodness and decency – revealed consistently in little things – raise them to heroic status. *The Fortnight in September* remains a masterpiece – one that surprises through its understated but irresistible power to move.

Persephone Books have reissued the *Journal of Katherine Mansfield* [Kate McLoughlin said in the *Times Literary Supplement*] in covers of sleek dove-grey, the endpapers taken from Roger Fry’s ‘Amenophis III’, the result is a pleasing object that Mansfield herself might have kept on her night-table alongside the volumes of Chaucer and Shakespeare, the automatic pistol and the black muslin fan.

This is a facsimile of the edition first published in 1927, and again in 1954, by Mansfield’s

husband, John Middleton Murry, who doled out her unpublished work for years after her death at the age of thirty-four. The *Journal* is Murry’s invention: a hotchpotch of diary entries, writing experiment and unposted letters, very loosely held together by his ‘necessary words of explanation’, which mainly catalogues Mansfield’s restless travels between England, the south of France, Italy, Germany and Switzerland as she sought ease for her body, corroded by gonorrhoea and TB, and for her mind, that she might write.

Like a magic lantern, the *Journal* brings bright images into brief focus before returning them to the dark again. Colours, so important to Mansfield’s art, flash vividly: a tree with its ‘purple cones against the blue’, a swallow’s dark head and golden breast, the ‘green-gold’ light of Switzerland. The grotesques etched in the short stories are here scored in a few lines.

The brightness flares and is gone. Mansfield writes of days spent ‘in hell’, of dreadful tiredness, despair and limitless suffering, of feeling ‘swept here and there by the sea’. Of all her anguished, contradictory longings, the desire to write is the most keenly felt and the most cruelly thwarted. Five years before her death she wrote, ‘How unbearable it would be to die – leave “scraps”, “bits”... nothing real finished.’

# FROM THE BLOGS

‘Joanna Cannan’s *Princes in the Land* is an excellent book but an uncomfortable read. It looks at what happens when expectations and reality do not match, and it explores identity, specifically how a woman’s identity may be given away (willingly) for love and then subsumed under the layers of life as a wife and mother. It is a story full of compromise and disaffection, charting a mother’s selflessness and what she is left with when her children are grown and have to live with their own ill-advised choices. It could be about every woman, and none, but it’s a stark story, carefully and poignantly told.’ *Cornflower*

‘*The New House* by Lettice Cooper, a domestic story first published in 1936, is about one family and the day they move – the day they downsize. It follows a domineering mother, two daughters, one son and one daughter-in-law and all the many issues they have been dragging around for decades. Everyone has hopes and disappointments to bring along with them which result in this being one of the best books about family drama that I have ever read. It’s only one day – ONE DAY – but there’s a lifetime of reading in here. Just wonderful – like everything at Persephone.’ *Chasing Ray*

‘I can recommend lots of books from the 1940s, I have just read one by Dorothy Whipple which Persephone has reissued

called *Someone at a Distance*. It was amazing. It is about a woman in a very happy middle-class marriage and her husband has this affair and it completely f\*\*\*s everything up and is awful. It is terribly poignant.’ *Sarah Waters talking to Danuta Kean in newbooksmag.com*

‘*Miss Pettigrew Lives for a Day* (1938) is one of literature’s secret gems. I read it in two sittings, but I wanted to drag it out longer because I couldn’t bear it to end. I’ve never quite read anything like it. Joyous without being cloying, light-hearted and fun without being frothy, are just two ways of summing it up. Throughout the book Winifred Watson’s writing is confident and remarkably modern. The dialogue crackles and sparkles and drives the narrative forward without wasting a word, as does the structure in which each chapter is divided into hourly time periods. This is pretty much a perfectly written tale about one woman’s second chance at life. Do add it to your collection if you’re looking for something a little on the enchanting side.’ *Kimbofo*

‘I have found a new obsession – Persephone books. My first two books arrived today and I am in love. I had been reading about Persephone books all over the place, from BookGirl’s Nightstand, Random Jottings of an Opera and Book Lover, Too

Many Books and A Work in Progress. After going through the catalogue for a month, I finally placed my order for *Someone at a Distance*, *They Knew Mr. Knight* and *Mariana* last week. Despite my choosing the least expensive shipping available, two out of the three came pretty quick. The jackets are so simple yet elegant. Really. I love the endpaper for *They Knew Mr. Knight*. After touching them, smelling them, petting them... I decided that I must purchase the whole set!’ *Amelia’s Passion*

“Oh, the bliss of Persephone Books!” says India Knight in her own treat of a book, *The Shops...* her recommendation of Persephone Books’ collection of forgotten twentieth century classics is something I truly thank her for. These are very much recovering-from-flu books – a certain surface sweetness containing considerable depth. I have just finished Dorothy Whipple’s *They Were Sisters*. Utterly compelling with more bite than Eastenders on a VERY good day, with rogues, a truly evil villain, sweet souls, despair, studies of fecklessness and empty vanities.’ *Mopsa at Ramblings*

‘*Greenery Street* is another great read from Persephone: a wonderful insight into the trials and tribulations of inter-war life and the social pressures of the time.’ *Pompey princess*

# THE PERSEPHONE 72

1. **William - an Englishman** by **Cicely Hamilton** Prize-winning 1919 novel about the effect of WW1 on a socialist clerk and a suffragette. Preface: Nicola Beauman
2. **Mariana** by **Monica Dickens** First published in 1940, this very funny first novel describes a young girl's life in the 1930s. Preface: Harriet Lane
3. **Someone at a Distance** by **Dorothy Whipple** 'A very good novel indeed' (*Spectator*) about the tragic destruction of a formerly happy marriage (pub. 1953). Preface: Nina Bawden
4. **Fidelity** by **Susan Glaspell** 1915 novel by a Pulitzer-winning author brilliantly describing the long-term consequences of a girl in Iowa running off with a married man. Preface: Laura Godwin
5. **An Interrupted Life** by **Etty Hillesum** From 1941-3 a young woman in Amsterdam, 'the Anne Frank for grown-ups', wrote diaries and letters which are among the great documents of our time. Preface: Eva Hoffman
6. **The Victorian Chaise-longue** by **Marghanita Laski** A 'little jewel of horror': 'Melly' lies on a chaise-longue in the 1950s and wakes as 'Milly' 80 years before. Preface: PD James
7. **The Home-Maker** by **Dorothy Canfield Fisher** Ahead of its time 'remarkable and brave 1924 novel about being a house-husband' (Carol Shields). Preface: Karen Knox
8. **Good Evening, Mrs Craven: the Wartime Stories of Mollie Panter-Downes** Superbly written short stories, first published in *The New Yorker* from 1938-44. Five of them were twice read on R4. Preface: Gregory LeStage
9. **Few Eggs and No Oranges** by **Vere Hodgson** A 600-page diary, written from 1940-45 in Notting Hill Gate, full of acute observation, wit and humanity. Preface: Jenny Hartley
10. **Good Things in England** by **Florence White** This comprehensive 1932 collection of recipes inspired many, including Elizabeth David.
11. **Julian Grenfell** by **Nicholas Mosley** A biography of the First World War poet, and of his mother Ettie Desborough. Preface: author
12. **It's Hard to be Hip over Thirty and Other Tragedies of Married Life** by **Judith Viorst** Funny, wise and weary 1960s poems about marriage, children and reality. Preface: author
13. **Consequences** by **EM Delafield** By the author of *The Diary of a Provincial Lady*, this 1919 novel is about a girl entering a convent after she fails to marry. Preface: Nicola Beauman
14. **Farewell Leicester Square** by **Betty Miller** Novel (by Jonathan Miller's mother) about a Jewish film-director and 'the discreet discrimination of the bourgeoisie' (*Guardian*). Preface: Jane Miller
15. **Tell It to a Stranger** by **Elizabeth Berridge** 1947 short stories which were twice in the *Evening Standard* bestseller list; they are funny, observant and bleak. Preface: AN Wilson
16. **Saplings** by **Noel Streatfeild** An adult novel by the well-known author of *Ballet Shoes*, about the destruction of a family during WW2; a R4 ten-part serial. Afterword: Jeremy Holmes
17. **Marjory Fleming** by **Oriel Malet** A deeply empathetic novel about the real life of the Scottish child prodigy who lived from 1803-11; now published in France; was a play on Radio Scotland.
18. **Every Eye** by **Isobel English** An unusual 1956 novel about a girl travelling to Spain, highly praised by Muriel Spark: a R4 'Afternoon Play' in 2004. Preface: Neville Braybrooke
19. **They Knew Mr Knight** by **Dorothy Whipple** An absorbing 1934 novel about a man driven to committing fraud and what happens to him and his family; a 1943 film. Preface: Terence Handley MacMath
20. **A Woman's Place** by **Ruth Adam** A survey of C20th women's lives, very readably written by a novelist-historian: an overview full of insights. Preface: Yvonne Roberts
21. **Miss Pettigrew Lives for a Day** by **Winifred Watson** A delightful 1938 novel about a governess and a night-club singer. Read on R4 by Maureen Lipman; published in France last year; to be a film in 2008. Preface: Henrietta Twycross-Martin
22. **Consider the Years** by **Virginia Graham** Sharp, funny, evocative WW2 poems by Joyce Grenfell's closest friend and collaborator. Preface: Anne Harvey
23. **Reuben Sachs** by **Amy Levy** A fierce 1880s satire on the London Jewish community by 'the Jewish Jane Austen' who was a friend of Oscar Wilde. Preface: Julia Neuberger.
24. **Family Roundabout** by **Richmal Crompton** By the *William* books author, 1948 family saga contrasting two matriarchs and their very different children. Preface: Juliet Aykroyd
25. **The Montana Stories** by **Katherine Mansfield** Collects together the short stories written during the author's last year; with a detailed publisher's note and the contemporary illustrations. Five were read on R4 in 2002.
26. **Brook Evans** by **Susan Glaspell** A very unusual novel, written in the same year as *Lady Chatterley's Lover*, about the enduring effect of a love affair on three generations of a family.



- 27. The Children who Lived in a Barn by Eleanor Graham** A 1938 classic about five children fending for themselves; starring the unforgettable hay-box. Preface: Jacqueline Wilson
- 28. Little Boy Lost by Marghanita Laski** Novel about a father's search for his son in France in 1945, chosen by the *Guardian's* Nicholas Lezard as his 2001 Paperback Choice. A R4 'Book at Bedtime' read by Jamie Glover. Afterword: Anne Sebba
- 29. The Making of a Marchioness by Frances Hodgson Burnett** A wonderfully entertaining 1901 novel about the ensuing melodrama when a governess marries well. A R4 Classic Serial in April 2007. Preface: Isabel Raphael, Afterword: Gretchen Gerzina
- 30. Kitchen Essays by Agnes Jekyll** Witty and useful essays about cooking, with recipes, published in *The Times* and reprinted as a book in 1922. 'This is one of the best reads outside Elizabeth David' wrote gastropoda.com
- 31. A House in the Country by Jocelyn Playfair** An unusual and very interesting 1944 novel about a group of people living in the country during WW2. Preface: Ruth Gorb
- 32. The Carlyles at Home by Thea Holme** A 1965 mixture of biography and social history which very entertainingly describes Thomas and Jane Carlyle's life in Chelsea.
- 33. The Far Cry by Emma Smith** A beautifully written 1949 novel about a young girl's passage to India: a great Persephone favourite. 'Book at Bedtime' in 2004. Preface: author
- 34. Minnie's Room** The Peacetime Stories of Mollie Panter-Downes 1947–1965: Second volume of short stories first published in *The New Yorker*, previously unknown in the UK.
- 35. Greenery Street by Denis Mackail** A delightful, very funny 1925 novel about a young couple's first year of married life in a (real) street in Chelsea. Preface: Rebecca Cohen
- 36. Lettice Delmer by Susan Miles** A unique 1920s novel in verse describing a girl's stormy adolescence and path to redemption, much admired by TS Eliot.
- 37. The Runaway by Elizabeth Anna Hart** A Victorian novel for children and grown-ups, illustrated by Gwen Raverat. 'There never was a happier book' (*Country Life*, 1936). Afterwords: Anne Harvey, Frances Spalding.
- 38. Cheerful Weather for the Wedding by Julia Strachey** A funny and quirky 1932 novella by a niece of Lytton Strachey, praised by Virginia Woolf. Preface: Frances Partridge. Read on two cds or two cassettes by Miriam Margolyes; to be a film with Emily Blunt and David Tennant.
- 39. Manja by Anna Gmeyner** A 1938 German novel, newly translated, about five children conceived on the same night in 1920 and their lives until the Nazi takeover. Preface: Eva Ibbotson (daughter of the author)
- 40. The Priory by Dorothy Whipple** A much-loved 1939 novel about three generations of a family, and their servants, living in a large country house. Preface: David Conville.
- 41. Hostages to Fortune by Elizabeth Cambridge** 'Deals with domesticity without being in the least bit cosy' (Harriet Lane, *Observer*), a remarkable fictional portrait of a doctor's family in rural Oxfordshire in the 1920s.
- 42. The Blank Wall by Elisabeth Sanxay Holding** 'The top suspense writer of them all' (Chandler). A 1947 thriller about a mother who shields her daughter from a blackmailer; filmed as both *The Reckless Moment* in 1949 and *The Deep End* in 2001. A BBC R4 serial in 2006.
- 43. The Wise Virgins by Leonard Woolf** This is a wise and witty 1914 novel contrasting the bohemian Virginia and Vanessa with Gwen, the girl next door in 'Richstead' (Putney). Preface: Lyndall Gordon
- 44. Tea with Mr Rochester by Frances Towers** Magical and unsettling 1949 stories, a surprise favourite, that are unusually beautifully written; read on R4 in 2003 and 2006. Preface: Frances Thomas
- 45. Good Food on the Aga by Ambrose Heath** A 1932 cookery book for Aga users which can nevertheless be used by anyone; with numerous illustrations by Edward Bawden.
- 46. Miss Ranskill Comes Home by Barbara Euphan Todd** An unsparing, wry 1946 novel: Miss Ranskill is shipwrecked and returns to wartime England. Preface: Wendy Pollard
- 47. The New House by Lettice Cooper** 1936 portrayal of the day a family moves to a new house, and the resulting tensions and adjustments. Preface: Jilly Cooper.
- 48. The Casino by Margaret Bonham** Short stories by a 1940s writer with a unique voice and dark sense of humour; they were read on BBC Radio 4 in 2004 and 2005. Preface: Cary Bazalgette.
- 49. Bricks and Mortar by Helen Ashton** An excellent 1932 novel by a very popular pre- and post-war writer, chronicling the life of a hard-working and kindly London architect over thirty-five years.
- 50. The World that was Ours by Hilda Bernstein** An extraordinary memoir that reads like a novel of the events before and after the 1964 Rivonia Trial. Mandela was given a life sentence but the Bernsteins escaped to England. Preface and Afterword: the author
- 51. Operation Heartbreak by Duff Cooper** A soldier misses going to war – until the end of his life. 'The novel I enjoyed more than any other in the immediate post-war years' (Nina Bawden). Afterword: Max Arthur
- 52. The Village by Marghanita Laski** This 1952 comedy of manners describes post-war readjustments in

village life when love ignores the class barrier. Afterword: Juliet Gardiner

**53. Lady Rose and Mrs Memmary by Ruby Ferguson** A romantic 1937 novel about Lady Rose Targenet, who inherits a great house, marries well – and then meets the love of her life on a park bench. Preface: Candia McWilliam

**54. They Can't Ration These by Vicomte de Mauduit** A 1940 cookery book about 'food for free', full of excellent (and now fashionable) recipes.

**55. Flush by Virginia Woolf** A light-hearted but surprisingly feminist 1933 'life' of Elizabeth Barrett Browning's spaniel, 'a little masterpiece of comedy' (*TLS*). Preface: Sally Beauman

**56. They Were Sisters by Dorothy Whipple** The fourth Persephone book by this wonderful writer, a 1943 novel that contrasts three very different marriages. Preface: Celia Brayfield

**57. The Hopkins Manuscript by RC Sherriff** What might happen if the moon crashed into the earth in 1946: 1939 science fiction 'written' by 'Mr Hopkins'. Preface: Michael Moorcock, Afterword: the late George Gamow

**58. Hetty Dorval by Ethel Wilson** First novel (1947) set in the beautiful landscape of British Columbia; a young girl is befriended by a beautiful and selfish 'Menace' – but is she? Afterword: the late Northrop Frye

**59. There Were No Windows by Norah Hoult** A touching and funny novel, written in 1944, about an elderly woman with memory loss living in Kensington during the blitz. Afterword: Julia Briggs.

**60. Doreen by Barbara Noble** A 1946 novel about a child who is

evacuated to the country during the war. Her mother regrets it; the family that takes her in wants to keep her. Preface: Jessica Mann

**61. A London Child of the 1870s by Molly Hughes** A classic autobiography, written in 1934, about an 'ordinary, suburban Victorian family' in Islington, a great favourite with all ages. Preface: Adam Gopnik.

**62. How to Run Your Home Without Help by Kay Smallshaw** A 1949 manual for the newly servantless housewife full of advice that is historically interesting, useful nowadays and, as well, unintentionally humorous. Preface: Christina Hardymont

**63. Princes in the Land by Joanna Cannan** A novel published in 1938 about a daughter of the aristocracy who marries an Oxford don; her three children fail to turn out as she had hoped.

**64. The Woman Novelist and Other Stories by Diana Gardner** Short stories written in the late 1930s and early 1940s that are witty, sharp and with an unusual undertone. Preface: Claire Gardner

**65. Alas, Poor Lady by Rachel Ferguson** A 1937 novel, which is polemical but intensely readable about the unthinking cruelty with which Victorian parents gave birth to daughters without anticipating any future for them apart from marriage.

**66. Gardener's Nightcap by Muriel Stuart** A huge variety of miniature essays on gardening – such as Dark Ladies (fritallary), Better Gooseberries, Phlox Failure – which will be enjoyed by all gardeners, keen or lukewarm. First published in 1938.

**67. The Fortnight in September by RC Sherriff** Another novel by the author of *Journey's End*, and *The Hopkins Manuscript*, Persephone Book No. 57, about a family on holiday in Bognor in 1931; a quiet masterpiece.

**68. The Expendable Man by Dorothy B Hughes** A 1963 thriller set in Arizona by the well-known American crime writer; it was chosen by the critic HRF Keating as one of his hundred best crime novels. Afterword: Dominic Power

**69. Journal of Katherine Mansfield** The husband of the great short story writer (cf. *The Montana Stories*, Persephone Books No. 25) assembled this journal from unposted letters, scraps of writing etc, to give a unique portrait of a woman writer.

**70. Plats du Jour by Patience Gray and Primrose Boyd** is a 1957 cookery book which was a bestseller at the time and a pioneering work for British cooks. The superb black and white illustrations and the coloured endpapers are by David Gentleman.

**71. The Shuttle by Frances Hodgson Burnett** A 1907 page-turner by the author of *The Making of a Marchioness* (Persephone Book No. 29) about Rosalie Vanderpoel, an American heiress who marries an English aristocrat and whose beautiful and enterprising sister Bettina sets out to rescue her. Preface: Anne Sebba

**72. House-Bound by Winifred Peck** This 1942 novel describes a middle-class Edinburgh woman who decides, radically, that she must run her house without help and do her own cooking; the war is in the background and foreground. Afterword: the late Penelope Fitzgerald



# NINE YEARS IS A LONG TIME

## BY NORAH HOULT

author of *There Were No Windows*,  
*Persephone Book No.59*

It wasn't until October was well under way that she began to wonder that she had had no word from him. Even then she didn't actually worry. He had probably gone on some business trip. Men in a good position, like he certainly was, often went away on business looking after their affairs. He might have gone to London: he was a member of some swell club there. That she did know, for he'd let out one day something about an important call being put through to his club in town, and he had had to return to Rotherfield sooner than he had expected.

All the same she found herself watching the posts, watching for the appearance of the telegraph boy – he usually wired. All the time she was watching. When she dusted the front room, or went to fetch anything from the cupboard, she would find herself come to a standstill in front of the window, and staring up and down the road. By the end of the month she admitted that it was a good piece over his usual absence.

Her husband thought it funny too. They had a talk about it one evening when their daughter, Irene, was out at her shorthand class.

She started the subject herself.

She said: 'What do you think about it, Harry? What's your real opinion? You can say right out what's in your mind, you know?'

They were sitting in the kitchen over the fire. He took up the poker, and knocked the coal about with it making a better blaze, before he answered. Then he said in a very thoughtful voice: 'Well, of course, he might be dead.'

She nodded her head. 'I've thought of that myself.' So she had. But to have it put into words from him made it more real. Like hearing a thunder-clap when before you had just wondered if there mightn't be a storm about.

He added, leaning back in his chair, and looking at her out of small eyes blinking over their comfortable creases: 'He could die sudden and you not a penny the wiser seeing that you don't know his name or address or anything about him.'

'I'll tell you this much,' she said a little sharply, 'if he did die, there'd probably be half a column at the least about him in the *Rotherfield Telegraph*. He'd be one of their leading citizens; there's no doubt about that. I wouldn't mind betting that he's the director of several companies.'

'Well, what of it? You'd be none the wiser, since you don't know his name. There's several leading

Rotherfield men died lately; about his age, too. I don't know that you'd do much good if you went over to Rotherfield, and looked up the papers. You wouldn't know, see, would you?'

She looked into the fire. 'I suppose I wouldn't.' She thought a little, then she said: 'Tell you what. I wouldn't be surprised if his name started with a "Mac". He had a Scotch accent all right. Though he wasn't mean.'

No, he wasn't mean. Three pounds a time came in very useful to help out. She was going to miss it, if it stopped. And so would Irene, and Mr Scott. Mr Scott was how she always thought of her husband.

He agreed with her this time. 'Oh, no. I wouldn't say that he was mean. But reserved. Scotch people, of course, are like that. That was why he never let out a word about himself or his occupation.'

The flames from the fire were beginning to scorch the front of her legs. She rubbed her hands up and down them. Then, crossing one leg over the other, she hazarded: 'I often had the idea that ship-building was his line. Else, what brought him to Merseyhead so regular? I mean he came here before he met me.'

'Very likely,' said Mr Scott.



‘Quite likely, I’d say.’

He took out his pipe and his pouch, and began to press tobacco into the bowl.

She watched his red face bent forward with some hostility. If her Rotherfield friend didn’t turn up soon, he’d feel it. He’d have to go without tobacco. All she had now was Irene’s pound a week and about a pound profit on Miss Halpin, their paying guest, who had a good post as manageress of Bailey’s, the big drapers. Two pounds a week didn’t go far towards keeping them well fed, and with good fires. Seeing as he was the one who was out of a job, who didn’t contribute nothing, it was only fair he should give up things.

‘So that’s what you think, that he’s dead?’ she asked, resuming the conversation, but as if she were attacking him.

He took a draw at his pipe, before answering. He was always one like that, one to take his time over things. It would annoy you if you didn’t know him. It annoyed you when you did know him, too.

‘I didn’t say that he was dead, for I don’t know. What I said was that he might be dead, for all you know, or that I know, or for all that we would know.’

He stopped and looked at her, as if hoping that at last she had got the position clear. Deciding to take no risk he added patiently, ‘Because, you see, you are not in possession of his name, or of his address, or anything about him except that he lives, or lived, at Rotherfield. So that you can’t find him, or satisfy your mind.’

‘I know that. I don’t need you

to tell me that.’

‘Well, then...’

‘And I tell you, Mr Scott, you’ll find it no bloody joke us losing three quid a month.’

‘I know that.’ His mouth pursed into lines of bitter resignation. ‘How long is this going on, I wonder?’

What he meant was, how long before his father kicked the bucket? Before their two minds was a picture of an old paralysed man. Just sitting in a big chair holding on grimly to life. When he died there’d be money coming to Mr Scott as his only son. *When* he died. All over the world there were people waiting for other people to die, and settle their financial problems for them. And it seemed like that the longer you waited, the longer you had to wait.

Mr Scott said what they’d each of them said many a time: ‘You’d think that with nothing to do, nothing to live for as you might say, he’d be glad to go. I’m sure I should in his place.’

She nodded her head. But that topic was threadbare.

Her mind went back to her own problem. Why didn’t her Rotherfield friend write? Wasn’t she going to see him again ever?

The fire was too hot on her other leg now. So she reversed her position. Then she held out both legs in front of her. She used to have good legs; they were a little on the fat side now. She’d put on eight pounds this last year. Eleven stone ten was her weight.

‘Do you think I’ve got to look much fatter lately?’ she asked him.

Mr. Scott looked at her

indifferently. ‘I don’t know. Maybe you have.’

‘My legs are fatter, aren’t they?’

‘You always had a good calf.’

‘Yes, but my ankles were slim.

I used to be able to get my thumb and middle finger to meet round. Now I can’t.’

She showed him. There was a good inch of flesh-coloured stocking to spare over the squeezed flesh.

‘Hmmm.’ He stared. Then he said: ‘Thinking of slimming or what?’

‘Doctors say it’s very bad for you. Besides, it wasn’t as if I was a big eater. And heaven knows I get my share of exercise with all the housework.’

‘I’d leave it. I don’t think it makes much difference. Nature intended there to be two kinds of women, big and small. I like the modern slim woman myself.’

She had heard him say this till she was tired of hearing him. Whenever he came in from the pictures, he’d go on talking about some lovely slim little girl till you’d think he was daft. Getting into his dotage he was. Pinning pictures of girls up on his bedroom walls; just legs and scraps of lingerie. Sixty! An old man really. She could ask him, why he married her then? Of course she’d been slimmer then, but she’d always had a figure.

She said: ‘My Rotherfield friend said he always liked a woman with a figure. Something to get hold of.’

‘Some men do,’ he agreed, nodding his head in deep assent, so that you could see the thin hair brushed neatly across the top.

‘There was a time, I remember it well, when most men liked them big. Fashions change in women like they do in everything else. I think Edward liked them on the full-figured side. But I believe the Prince of Wales likes them skinny.’

‘Go on with you! What do you know about what the Prince of Wales likes in the way of women?’

‘As much as anybody else, I suppose. Why only the other day I walked back from the library with a man who knew someone who knew...’

‘You told me that bit before. Anyone can pretend they know anything, can’t they? Well, I’d better get Irene’s supper.’

She got up from her seat with a jerk. Anyhow it was no good worrying. Worrying never did any good. She might hear from him tomorrow.

But she didn’t hear. Nor the day after. Nor the day after that...

A depression settled slowly and abidingly on her spirit. It was a bad time in the garden. You couldn’t do anything with it just now, but prop up the chrysanthemums against the wind. And the daily housekeeping round, making the list for Mr Scott to go to the shops, cooking meals, washing clothes, ironing, dusting, and for diversion talking to Miss Halpin – who was as dull as ditchwater, and had probably never had a man in her life – hung heavily. When she lay down after clearing up from the one o’clock dinner, she didn’t go to sleep, but her thoughts went round in a dull painful question. It seemed to rain every day, so that you had no heart in you to

go for a bit of a walk or up to see the shops. It was a pity, because they said there was nothing like a walk or a change to take your mind off things – and walking reduced the weight too.

What she was really missing was the change her Rotherfield friend made, she decided. It had been a sort of holiday when she got his wire or letter. Then Mr Scott knew that he’d have to manage everything himself. She’d be the rest of the morning having a bath, and dressing herself with special care. The last touch was a drop or two of Coty’s *Chypre*, that was too expensive to use for any but very special occasions. Then after a light lunch – no steak and onions – off to the Queen’s, where they always met. She liked sitting in the lounge of the Queen’s, with well-dressed people about her, and having a drink and a chat, and then another drink before they went off to the hotel.

They were nearly always able to have the same bedroom, with the red curtains and the alabaster vases on the mantelpiece, so that it was really homelike in its familiarity. Mrs. Weston always had the gas-fire lit for them ready.

It wasn’t that her Rotherfield friend really attracted her in the way one or two men – no, really only one man in her life – had attracted her. But still a woman wanted to get into bed with a man now and then. It was only natural. She had always felt better in herself afterwards. Mrs. Weston sent them tea up, or if they preferred they had it downstairs in the lounge. You’d see quite a

good class of people having their tea, too; you’d be surprised. Mrs. Weston knew some really famous theatrical people, like the time when Daisy Allen had stayed with her. Handy the place was. And central. Well Mrs. Weston would be wondering what on earth had happened to her.

Almost every month – he’d missed now and again, of course – as regular as regular for nine solid years.

It *had* been a change. He went off pretty soon afterwards. Had some dinner engagement usually, he said. And she’d meet Irene coming out from the office, and they’d go off to the pictures, and have a little bit of supper somewhere afterwards. It always seemed to her that when she went into Spinetti’s with Irene men used to look at her with increased attention. They looked at her a damn sight more than they did at Irene, pretty and slim and young as she was. Anyhow she always felt pleased with herself and warm and comfortable inside.

Now, if he never came to see her again, or if she never saw him again, life would just go on as if it were a wet November all the time.

She began to spend more time in front of her looking-glass. One morning she went out, and recklessly bought a special pot of expensive skin food. Irene saw it when she came back from the office.

‘What’s that? Is that yours?’

‘Yes. I treated myself for a change. Mrs Rosenbaum was telling me that it’s terribly good

for the skin. Works marvels. So it should at the price.'

'Well, I just hope to goodness, mother, you are not going to start making yourself up the way Mrs Rosenbaum goes on. I think it's disgusting. An old woman like that.'

'She's not an old woman. She's only about fifty.'

'Well, I do think there's nothing more repulsive than to see a woman of that age trying to make herself look young. They never do; they just look repulsive, revolting. Why should a woman when she's past forty go on fussing about herself?'

'I suppose you'd like me not to use powder or lipstick, even?'

'Well, I don't say I mind a little powder, but...'

She stopped, and shrugged her shoulders. Standing there scornful and young, with her smooth skin and hard eyes. She was always bossing her now. Last time they'd gone out together, she'd said: 'Mother, you've got too much rouge and lipstick on,' rubbed it off herself. And she wouldn't let her smoke on top of trams: when once she had wanted to light up – 'Please don't, mother. If any of the girls at the office should get on!'

The whole thing was that she was beginning to put on airs and graces, to fancy herself. But Irene wasn't a bit like an ordinary girl, like she'd been when she was eighteen. She said she hated men. Once she had told her straight: 'Well, if it hadn't been for some of my men friends, you'd have had a thin time when you were a kid, I can tell you.'

It wasn't your father supported you and him at the war.'

Did her good to be told straight out. Of course, young people were like that, very intolerant. They thought no one should look nice but themselves. She said, and now there was anger in her voice: 'Well, if you think I'm going to look dowdy just to please you.'

'I don't want you to look dowdy. But if you have a lot of stuff on your face with your red hair – and honestly, mother, it suits you better if you'd stop henna-ing it so much – if you put on a thick cream and lipstick with your hair and big figure, it makes you look conspicuous, that's all.'

'You're jealous. Because when we're out together more men look at me than they do at you.'

'I'm not at all jealous...' Irene looked at her mother as if she were going to say hard words, then she went out of the room with her lips tightly pressed together.

Mrs Scott sat down in front of the fire, holding the skin food in her hand. There was a pain at her heart which she tried to banish by getting up quickly and putting a record on the gramophone:

*There's a lovely lake in London...*

'Pom pom pom-pom pom pom pom-pom' she hummed to herself defiantly, but her thoughts went on all the same. So Irene thought she was too old to bother about herself, that she looked fast when she took a bit of trouble with her appearance. She wasn't too old. She tried to cheer herself up thinking of the story her Rotherfield friend had told her about the old man who was asked

at what age sexual desire had left him. But the smile faded, because it took her thoughts back to him again. Why *hadn't* she heard from him?

Had he got tired? Might as well face it, Irene thought of her as old and fast-looking. Had he come to think that about her? She got up and took down the oval mirror that hung over the mantelpiece and examined her face intently; then she held it farther away, so that it included the reflection of part of her figure as well.

She couldn't see that she looked so old. There was something cheeky and attractive about her face, especially when she made her eyes laugh. Experienced, of course. Well, why not? Well, wouldn't she be a fool at her age if she didn't look as if she had had something to do with men? Withering on the virgin thorn – somebody, not her Rotherfield friend, somebody else had used the phrase once, and she remembered it with satisfaction. That wasn't her line. Though it just about suited her lady lodger.

Of course she was on the plump side. That was upstairs. Her hips were still slim, and, thank God, she didn't stick out behind. And her friend had always said...

She heard Irene's steps in the hall, and replaced the mirror quickly. The hall door banged. She had gone back to work without saying 'goodbye'. Bad-tempered. Not got over her buying something for herself. What she was going to do



straight off was to go upstairs, and give her face a good massage with the skin food.

She came down to the afternoon cup of tea in a good temper. Her skin felt as soft as velvet to her touch, and the lines from nostrils to the corners of her mouth showed a lot less. Even Mr Scott noticed it. He said: 'You do look smart.'

He said that because she had on her best satin blouse and men always liked satin. Satin or velvet. But he wouldn't have said anything, if she hadn't done her face up. They chatted amiably, and when he said: 'Do you know Bessy Morris is on at the Palace: I wouldn't mind seeing her,' she surprised herself by saying: 'Let's go.'

'But what about her ladyship's supper?'

'Let her have it cold for once. I'll do her up a nice salad and leave the coffee, so that it only wants heating.'

'And Irene?'

'It just won't do that girl any harm to get her own eats for once. She's getting above herself.'

'Haven't I said she puts on too many airs? Ever since she went to that office she's been a changed girl. And you always stick up for her.'

'Well, I did stick up for her. But as a matter of fact you're right for once. She's getting to think there's no one in the world but herself.'

'That's just what I've often said.'

'I know that, and I'm agreeing with you. See?'

Pleasantly they set off for the

Palace. It wasn't often that she went out with her husband. Not likely. It was treat enough for her to give him the money to go to the pictures. But he didn't look so bad when he was dressed nicely, with his hat brushed and everything. Irene would think she'd gone off her chump going out with him. It would show Miss Scott that she wasn't everybody.

She did it in style, too. At the interval, she slipped him half a dollar, and they went into the saloon, and had a Scotch and splash. He passed her back the change, and it warmed you up, so that you enjoyed the second half better.

Still, wasn't it funny, even in the Palace, a place he'd never be likely to go to, unless compelled by some business function, she found herself looking for her Rotherfield friend. Once she really thought she saw him, looked a bit like at the back, and her hand stiffened, ready to clutch Mr Scott's arm. But when the man turned, it wasn't a bit like him really.

Bessy Morris sang one of her old songs. She sang: '*I don't want to get old; I don't want to get old; I want to stay just as I am...*' Running furiously up and down the stage, and making everyone die laughing. '*I want to come home at half-past four and have a row with the woman next door; I don't want to get old...*'

She laughed a lot; and she also laughed loudly at the jokes of the comedian who followed. Thank God, she had a sense of humour and could enjoy a saucy story. A man in front, a very nice-

looking, well-dressed fellow, too, kept looking round and trying to catch her eye. She didn't take any special notice: after all it wasn't playing the game to give a man encouragement when you were out with another – even if it happened to be only her husband, and she was paying for him.

All the same it just showed that she wasn't quite on the shelf whatever Irene thought. When they stood up for *God Save The King*, he just stared and stared at her. Mr Scott noticed it. He whispered: 'Would you like me to slip away quietly?' but she shook her head. No, she didn't feel like it, and after all she had given all that up.

When they were sitting in the tram, she slipped out the mirror attached to her hand-bag, and was satisfied. There was a green light in her grey eyes that beckoned. Putting it back she hummed: '*I don't want to get old; I don't want to get old...*'

The next day wasn't so good. To begin with she had found herself with the definite expectation that she would hear from her friend that morning, and by twelve o'clock, when nothing had come – he was considerate; he always let her know before twelve – her spirits went down, plop, and she as definitely decided that it was the finish, and that she might as well face the fact. She stood at the window, and told herself so in good round language. Then she stared up and down.

It was one of those not infrequent days when without actually raining, it looked as if it

were going to rain, that it would rain if the weather wasn't too indifferent and spiritless to be able to do anything so positive. It *should* rain. A grocer's van passed; the woman from two houses up went by on her morning's shopping. Mrs Scott's eye followed her critically. What a way to go out, shoes all muddy, old mackintosh... oh, who cared! An errand boy wheeled by on a bicycle, whistling cheerfully. Let him whistle. He knew damn all about life.

Yes, he must be dead, and if he was dead, that was that, she couldn't do anything about it. Or he'd found another woman, younger and better-looking than she was. But that didn't seem reasonable. After all if he'd stuck to her for nine years, when he could have any girl he wanted as any rich man could, why should he change now? Nine years showed that he was the faithful sort. Or he'd made it up with his wife; of course there was a wife somewhere; she knew that though he kept his mouth close. Perhaps she'd been in a lunatic asylum, and been let out cured. And he was sticking to her. That was another thing about married men. They might be ever so bitter about their wives, say they'd spoil their lives, and all that stuff. And the very next thing, for the sake of his children, or for the sake of his home, or for the sake of his bloody position, or his bloody conscience, he'd turn you down as if you weren't flesh and blood at all.

Still, nine years was a long

time, and she'd have thought he'd have done it before if he were going to do it.

Well, everything went in time, and it was no good moping about it. 'The best of friends must part,' as the old saying was. It wasn't as if she'd actually been in love with him, still you got used to having a man. At this very moment, she wouldn't mind... it was last night's outing, and being near her period. That was why she felt so depressed, too.

Depression or not, no good standing there. Mr Scott would be wondering when he was going to get his dinner. Dinner-time was what he spent all *his* morning waiting for. Like his blasted cheek, but there it was.

When they were sitting over a cup of coffee and Irene had gone back to work, Mr Scott said suddenly: 'Do you know when I was coming back I saw a telegraph boy cycling up the road this morning, and I made sure he was going to turn in here. He just went a few doors on: I think it would be for Tilson's.'

'Who the hell would be sending us a wire? The Sweep isn't on now. Did you think your father had died at last?'

'Not likely!' Mr. Scott sniffed contemptuously through his nose. 'No, *he'll* never die. I thought it was from your friend, of course.'

'Well, you can give up thinking about him. It's over three months now.' She put her cup on the table, and then turning towards him, raised her voice emphatically. 'I shan't hear from him again. Not never. See?'

'I don't know. Christmas is coming. That might bring you something. Why are you so sure of a sudden?'

'I couldn't tell you why I'm so sure. I just know it today. I feel it in my bones. Somebody has been making mischief, saying that I'm a married woman, not a widow, like I told him, and my friend is so straight that he wouldn't go with a married woman. He told me that once, and I remember it now. Somebody might easily have seen me and him at the Queen's, and known us both. Or else he's dead. Or else... anyhow I just know I shan't see him again. So that's enough about that.'

Mr Scott looked at her face. She was getting quite worked up about it. He sought for sympathetic words. 'Well, no wonder you're upset. It must be – I was working it out in bed last night – must be a good nine years since you first ran into him – just by the Arcade, wasn't it? – and he turned out so lucky. Ah well, no use crying over spilt milk.' He waited for her to speak, but as she said nothing he went on tentatively: 'Dare say you could easily pick up someone else if you fancied?'

She gave him a hard look. 'Could I? Well, I might. But you know damn well that having Irene going to an office, I can't do what I please. Besides, after being so regular with just the one man...' She stopped and her lips began to be unsteady. Horrified, she comprehended in a lightning flash that she had got the habit of being faithful. Why, if that chap last night had spoken to

her, and she'd been on her own, she'd have behaved like a silly kid and rushed away. She had just got out of the way of all that... pretty awful to think that she, Sally Scott, had dwindled into a Miss Prim and Steady for the rest of her life. Not a single man in her life, for you wouldn't count Mr Scott. Past work and past everything he was. She choked back a sob. That's what her Rotherfield friend had done to her. That's what a woman got for being so blasted loyal. She took out her handkerchief.

'Don't take on about it,' said Mr Scott, rising uncomfortably. 'Course I can understand your feeling sore. Nine years is a long time.'

'Oh, shut up, can't you? Don't you know any other words? Shut up, can't you?'

The tears were coming. She couldn't stop them. Aghast at herself, she got up; and turned her back, trying for self-control.

Mr Scott stood a few seconds contemplating her back, her downcast head. Her hair looked pretty when it caught the sun. It wasn't like Mrs Scott to give way. If it were Irene it would be different. She often threw fits about nothing at all. But, whatever her faults, Mrs Scott was generally a sensible cheerful woman. Why couldn't she see that she'd been lucky to keep her friend as long as she had done? Should he pat her shoulder?

Better not. She might only fly out at him.

Mrs Scott put an end to his dilemma by saying: 'Hadn't you better put the kettle on for washing up?'

'Right you are,' said Mr Scott, and shuffled rapidly away into the scullery.

Mrs Scott replaced her handkerchief, and took out her flap-jack. She dabbed her nose with powder, saying under her breath: 'That's that.' Then, moving briskly, she started to collect the dishes and bring them into the scullery.

© *Selected Stories* by Norah Hoult, Maurice Fridberg, 1946, first published in *Nine Years is a Long Time & Other Stories*, 1938

## OUR SPRING/SUMMER ENDPAPERS

The fabric used for the endpaper for *The Shuttle* is 'Tulip Tree', a roller-printed cotton designed by Lewis F Day for Turnbull and Stockdale in 1903. The tulip tree is native to eastern North America. It is very long-

lived and is often planted in the gardens of English stately homes; the flowers do not appear until the tree is twenty-five years old.

The fabric for *House-Bound*, which was first published in October 1942, is taken from a

1941 watercolour design by Eric Ravilious (b. 1903, d. September 1942) for a textile commissioned by the Cotton Board as a way of persuading cotton manufacturers to produce economical fabrics in wartime conditions.

## OUR AUTUMN/WINTER BOOKS

Persephone Book No.73 will be *Saturday Afternoon and Other Stories*, a new collection of ten stories by a favourite Persephone author, four of whose novels we have in print. Dorothy Whipple is one of the most unjustly neglected writers of the last century, everyone who reads *Someone at a Distance*, *They Knew Mr Knight*, *The Priory* or

*They Were Sisters* is amazed by her qualities, which these ten stories will further confirm. (We will publish a fifth novel by Dorothy Whipple in 2009.) Persephone Book No. 74 will be *On the Other Side* by Mathilde Wolff-Monckeberg. These are letters written to her children abroad by a woman living in Hamburg during the war; they

were never posted, and indeed were not read by anyone during her lifetime, and were then translated into English and first published, twenty-one years after her death, in 1979. The letters give a picture better than any history book or novel of the realities of life in wartime Germany for the ordinary citizen.

# OUR READERS WRITE

‘I loved Margaret Bonham’s *The Casino* and Diana Gardner’s *The Woman Novelist and Other Stories* but I reeled at Frances Towers’s *Tea with Mr Rochester*. These pieces are works of the most exquisite, painful genius, written in clear acid on a bruised soul. Decades, probably half a century ahead of her time, her awareness of the most inner psychology, and the restrained yet intense prose she employs to reveal it, are an absolute object lesson. “Spade Man from over the Water” carries the same frisson as a perfectly structured ghost story.’ *Tanith Lee, St Leonards on Sea*

‘I enjoyed *The Expendable Man* if anything more than *The Blank Wall*. The narrative device whereby a key fact about the protagonist is withheld from us is clever but it goes beyond being a clever piece of trickery. The book derived its strength from its psychological insight, allowing us to experience the dangers which would face even a well-educated, well-off professional like Dr Densmore.’ *Rosemary Hall, Coventry*

‘I recently bought *There Were No Windows* by Norah Hoult from you. It certainly is “the saddest story”, but also one of the most painful I have ever read. When I reached the end of the first section I wondered how the story could be maintained to the end, and expected some sub-plot to be brought in, but it went

relentlessly on and the more I read the more I was drawn into Claire Temple’s world. Her half-world of fears, shafts of bright memory, the bubbling up of words & people long known, the nagging apprehension of a coming disaster, dislike of those around her and yet moments of distancing and ironic humour. All this became mine. I don’t think I have ever read a book that so completely pulled me into the place and the mood it was describing. So painful, yes, and disturbing that she is surrounded by greed and malice and utter incomprehension, but at the same time there is something uplifting here. Claire is gallant, and brave, and tries so hard to deal with her troubles. The image of her wandering about the dark house at night is, in some strange way, hopeful. She is wounded but still searching for vitality. Perhaps the real poignancy of Claire’s situation is expressed when she walks through the streets in her slippers. “Here was a woman who had no defences.” It is a deeply disturbing book, and I am very glad I have read it. Thank you for finding and reprinting it.’ *GN, Drumnadrochit*

‘I have just finished reading *The Carlyles at Home* by Thea Holme. What an utterly delightful book! I learned a great deal about the Carlyles, especially the inimitable Jane, and about everyday Victorian life, while enjoying every page.’ *EW, Twickenham*

‘I just wanted to say how much I enjoyed *The Fortnight in September* – and am grateful to Persephone for republishing this lovely, compassionate novel. There is nothing dated about the characters, their hopes and fears and disappointments – they are as real today as they were for readers seventy-five years ago.’ *Anne Outram, St Andrews*

‘The story of the Stevens family in *A Fortnight in September* is both entertaining and moving, exploring as it does life’s changing relationships and expectations.’ *Barry Lord, Much Wenlock*

‘I loved *Doreen* – I thought it was so beautifully observed – she picks her way so delicately through the intricacies of feeling, and depicts all the very different characters so meticulously, and of course she has a particular sensitivity to the emotions of childhood shame, embarrassment and helpless inarticulate love.’ *TH, St Alban’s*

‘The *Hopkins Manuscript* is one of the most readable and thought-provoking sf novels I have ever read. I asked someone who has his address to send it to Al Gore. Let’s hope he reads it! He’ll certainly see that a book about the moon crashing into the earth in 1945 can be read today as a book about climate change.’ *SR, Los Angeles*



# WILLIAM – AN ENGLISHMAN

When we first decided to publish Cicely Hamilton's *William – an Englishman* in 1998 there were only two copies in the world that we knew of, one in the British Library and one in the London Library. So we are very pleased that a book which must have had a very small print run in 1919 – or why would original copies be as rare as hen's teeth? – has now sold five thousand copies to Persephone readers.

Cicely Hamilton was 42 when the First World War broke out and was already well-known as an actress, a playwright and as a suffragette. She had achieved particular success with the 1908 *Diana of Dobson's*, which has just finished a very successful run at the Orange Tree Theatre in Richmond. It 'explores the gross financial and sexual inequalities of a supposed golden age' wrote Michael Billington in his *Guardian* review, going on to compare the play to Harley Granville-Barker's *The Madras House*, which is also about 'the iniquities of the living-in system by which female shop employees were kept as commercial slaves' (the theme of Dorothy Whipple's novel *High Wages*, which we publish in 2009). The review concluded: 'Hamilton is unsparingly honest both about the virtual imprisonment of female shop workers and the ruthlessness of the "ornamental" classes... The real pleasure lies in discovering a lost writer who

was a key player in early 20th-century feminism.'

Cicely Hamilton's most important contribution to the feminist movement was perhaps *Marriage as a Trade* (1909), in which she argued that women were brought up to look for success only in the marriage market and that this severely damaged their intellectual development. As she wrote in her autobiography in 1935: 'I never attempted to disguise the fact that I wasn't wildly interested in votes for anyone. My personal revolt was feminist rather than suffragist.' Yet her plays often ended in reconciliation between the sexes in terms of mutual respect and honesty.

During the first two and a half years of the war Cicely Hamilton worked at the Auxiliary Hospital at Royaumont Abbey, driving an ambulance and nursing men wounded in the battles of Northern France. After the spring of 1917 until the end of the war she and the suffragette/actress-manager Lena Ashwell formed a repertory company to put on plays for soldiers in Abbeville and Amiens and it was during this period of her life that, in the time left over from entertaining the

troops, that *William – an Englishman* was written.

In March 1919 it was given a lead review in *Punch*. The reviewer wrote: 'I shall begin by saying straight out that Miss Cicely Hamilton's new book is one of the finest war-stories that anyone has yet given us. You know already what qualities the author brings to her writing; you may believe me that she has done nothing more real, more nobly conceived, and by consequence more moving than this short tale.

'It opens in a style of half-humorous irony, with an account



of the youth, early life and courtship of William who, with the girl whom he married, belonged to the vehement circles of the Labour-Suffragist group, spending a cheerfully ignorant life in a round of meetings, in hunger-strking and whole-hearted support of the pacifism that “seeks peace and ensures it by insisting grimly, and even to

blood, that it is the other side's duty to give way.”

“The tragedy that follows William and Griselda's departure on their honeymoon in a remote valley of the Belgian Ardennes in July 1914 is so finely told and so horrible (the more so for the deliberate restraint of the telling), with an almost grim avoidance of sentimentality, that

I will say nothing to weaken its effect. From one scene, however, I cannot withhold my tribute of admiration – that in which William, alone, broken-hearted, and almost crazed with the ruin of everything that made up his life, creeps home to find his old associates still glibly echoing the platitudes in which he once believed...’

## THIS AND THAT

This is the first issue of the twenty-four page *Persephone Biannually* (we use the word biannually in the sense of twice a year rather than every other year). It will appear in April and October this year and next, while the *Persephone Classics*, our bestsellers to be published in a different format and sold in bookshops, are established.

The *Persephone Catalogue* will be sent out next October as usual. If by any chance you do not have the last catalogue or would like a second, do ring the office. Also don't forget that the thirty-two back issues of the *Persephone Quarterly* are available for £1 a copy including postage or £25 for the set.

Shooting for the film of *Miss Pettigrew Lives for a Day* begins in April: Frances McDormand is Miss Pettigrew and Amy Adams is Miss La Fosse. We are very pleased that the film is to be made, and set, in England. The script is by David Magee (*Finding Neverland*) and Simon Beaufoy (*The Full Monty*) and the director is Bharat Nalluri (*Spooks*).

Also this summer, filming is planned of *Cheerful Weather for the Wedding*, starring Emily Blunt and David Tennant.

And, if you find yourself near Bath between now and October, do try and go to a small exhibition at the American Museum, Claverton Manor, which is on the theme of Frances Hodgson Burnett's *The Shuttle*. It is called Dollar Princesses: American Heiress to Peeress in Late Victorian and Edwardian Britain,

At the end of June the *New Yorker* writer Adam Gopnik's book *Through the Children's Gate*, published in America last autumn, comes out in the UK. It is about his family's life in New York and, more broadly, about New York family life in the early twenty-first century. At the end of the book he writes about Molly Hughes's *A London Child of the 1870s* (Persephone Book No. 61), for which we asked him to write the Persephone Preface.

When he and his wife Martha first read Molly Hughes's 'beautiful memoirs of Victorian family life' they found 'that they

overlapped, in ways at once obvious and occult, with our own experience of early-1980s New York.' In his Preface, and in his own book, Adam Gopnik writes about Molly Hughes's relevance to his life nowadays. 'I am not connected to Molly by the strange serendipity of things. I am not connected to her because our lives are alike. I am connected to her because there are no ordinary lives.'

Finally, for those of you with access to the internet, do try and look at our *Fortnightly Letter* which has been appearing for the last eighteen months on the 15th and 30th of every month. It is not meant to be a personal blog but contains items that we hope are of interest to Persephone readers: reports on the Persephone Book Group on the first Wednesday of the month, exhibitions that might be of interest, literary discussions or indeed spats, news from Lamb's Conduit Street. We are happy to print out the current issue of the Letter and send it by post to any reader who does not have a computer.

# EVENTS

On Thursday May 17th we celebrate the publication of Winifred Peck's *House-Bound* with an event in Edinburgh, where it is set: there will be a **Tea at Annabelle's** 27 Sciennes Road, Newington (just south of the university) from 3.30-5.30. Nicola Beauman will give a short talk about Winifred Peck and the book; cucumber sandwiches and Annabelle's famous meringues will be served; and of course there will be an opportunity to meet other Edinburgh Persephone readers.

On Wednesday June 20th, from 3.30-5.30 there will be a **Tea at Great Maytham Hall** near Rolvenden, Cranbrook, Kent to celebrate Frances Hodgson Burnett's *The Shuttle*, which was written and largely set there. Tea and lemon cake will be served in the drawing room or on the terrace; there will be a talk about the book and a chance to walk round the garden which features both in *The Shuttle* and in *The Secret Garden*. (The nearest station to Maytham is Staplehurst and we will organise some taxis from the station and back again.)

On Friday June 22nd there will be a **Persephone Tea at Helmsley Walled Gardens** in Helmsley, North Yorkshire, 25 miles north of York, again from 3.30-5.30; Nicola will give a short talk about Persephone, the books will be for sale at £9 instead of £10 (as usual at these events, if we

do not have the book you want we will send it post-free on the Monday morning) and of course we shall be able to stroll round this beautiful C18th walled garden which has 52 types of Yorkshire apples, 34 Victorian vines and over 250 varieties of clematis.



On Thursday June 28th the writer Ali Smith, who has recently been writing about *Katherine Mansfield*, will talk about *The Montana Stories* and the *Journal* at a **Lunch** in the shop from 12.30-2.30. Salads from Tutti's in Lamb's Conduit Street will be served.

On Thursday July 5th, from 3.30-5.30, there will be a **Tea at Abbots Langley** (in Hertfordshire, just north of Watford) to celebrate Marghanita Laski and in particular her novel *The Village*. By kind permission of the owners of the house where she lived during the war, and which is the setting for the novel, we will be able to see inside the house; there will be a talk about the book and

its author; tea will be served in the adjacent barn; and we will be shown round the village.

On Thursday September 20th the potter and tile-maker **Annabel Munn**, who makes the beautiful Persephone mugs, sugar bowls and vases that are sold exclusively in our shop in Lamb's Conduit Street, will talk about her work at a **Lunch** in the shop. Included in the price of the lunch will be one of Annabel's Persephone beakers (tiny handleless mugs in grey with a red decoration). Annabel will also demonstrate how she makes these by showing us how she rolls out the clay and decorates it.

On Thursday October 4th there will be a showing at the **British Film Institute** 21 Stephen Street W1 of two WW2 films, *Went the Day Well?* (1942) and *Diary for Timothy* (1946). There will be a talk beforehand setting the films in the context of wartime Persephone books such as *Few Eggs and No Oranges*, *Saplings*, *A House in the Country* and *Miss Ranskill comes Home*.

Finally, a date for your diary: the **Third Persephone Lecture** will be on Tuesday November 20th

To book for the above events please phone the shop. The teatime events cost £15 and the lunchtime events £28.

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If we have failed to acknowledge something that appears in the Persephone Biannually, please let us know.

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