

Speakers and guest poets

Bryan Lovell is Senior Research Fellow in Earth Sciences at Cambridge University, studying the effects of mantle convection on elevation of Earth's surface and maintaining longstanding consultancy interests. He studied geology at Oxford and Harvard during the 1960s, lectured at Edinburgh University in the 1970s, then worked with BP Exploration from 1981-1996. Lovell contested Edinburgh South for the Scottish Liberal Party in May 1979. He was awarded an OBE in 1989 for services to Anglo-Irish relations. His *Challenged by Carbon: The Oil Industry and Climate Change* was published by Cambridge University Press in 2009. He is currently President of the Geological Society of London.

Francis Gilbert was educated at Sussex University, Cambridge University and completed an MA in Creative Writing at the University Of East Anglia, studying under Malcolm Bradbury and Rose Tremain. Since the early 1990s, he has taught in a variety of comprehensives in London. He gave up teaching in 1998, but resumed his teaching career in 2001; shortly afterwards he became Head of English, a post he held for six years before stepping down to devote more time to his family and writing. He currently teaches part-time English and Media at a comprehensive and has just published a novel, *The Last Day Of Term*. He has published five other books, written extensively for the national press, and appeared as a commentator on all the major TV channels and radio stations.

www.francisgilbert.co.uk

Matthew Griffiths is in the third year of his PhD at Durham University, researching the poetics of climate change. His own poems have appeared in magazines such as *Stand*, *The Wolf*, *Anon*, *the Red Wheelbarrow* and *The Delinquent*, and he has also published several science fiction stories.

Alyson Hallett is a poet who is currently working as a fellow with the Royal Literary Fund at the University of Exeter. Prior to this she was the U.K.'s first poet to be resident in a geography department for a year. This residency was funded by the Leverhulme Trust and took place on the University of Exeter's Tremough Campus in Falmouth, Cornwall. Amongst other things Alyson participated in a field trip to Iceland with physical geographer Chris Caseldine and their book, *Six Days in Iceland*, which combines poetry, photographs and scientific text, has just been published. Alyson lives in Falmouth and enjoys the thriving poetry community there, which was founded by Penelope Shuttle and Peter Redgrove more than thirty years ago. www.thestonelibrary.com

Matthew Hollis was born in Norwich in 1971. *Ground Water* (Bloodaxe, 2004) was shortlisted for the Guardian First Book Award, the Whitbread Prize for Poetry and the Forward Prize for Best First Collection. He is co-editor of *101 Poems Against War* (Faber, 2003) and *Strong Words: Modern Poets on Modern Poetry* (Bloodaxe, 2000), and editor of *Selected Poems of Edward Thomas* (Faber, 2011). *Now All Roads to France: the Last Years of Edward Thomas* (Faber, 2011) is his first prose book and has been recognised with a Royal Society of Literature Jerwood Award for non-fiction and has been shortlisted for the H.W. Fisher Best First Biography Prize. www.matthewhollis.com

Michael McKimm works in the Geological Society Library. The author of *Still This Need* (Heaventree Press, 2009), he won an Eric Gregory Award in 2007 and was British Council Writer-in-Residence at the University of Iowa in 2010. www.michaelmckimm.co.uk

Helen Mort was born in Sheffield in 1985 and brought up in nearby Chesterfield. She has published two pamphlets with tall-lighthouse press, *the shape of every box* and *a pint for the ghost* (a Poetry Book Society Choice for Spring 2010). From 2010 to 2011, she was poet-in-residence at The

Wordsworth Trust, Grasmere, where she published *Lie of the Land*, a series of poems inspired by living and working in the Lake District. Her first full collection *Division Street* is forthcoming from Chatto & Windus. She is currently doing PhD research at Sheffield University. www.helenmort.com

Gordon Peters graduated in Geography with Geology from Edinburgh University in the 1960s. A career in public administration, social policy and social work, including as a director of social services in inner-city London, led to many years overseas as a development consultant. In 2004 he joined the Scottish Centre for Geopoetics, with particular interest in the early ecological work of Patrick Geddes.

Eric Robinson graduated from King's College Newcastle in 1953 and taught in University College London until 1999, during which time he became closely involved with the Geologists' Association in its mission to take geology to a wider public. Part of this saw his move from micropaleontology towards an interest in the geology of buildings. His publications include the popular *London Illustrated Geological Walks* (1984) and *The geology of Watchet and its neighbourhood, Somerset* (Geologists' Association, 2006).

Penelope Shuttle has lived in Cornwall since 1970. She is the widow of the poet Peter Redgrove (1932-2003). Her most recent collection *Sandgrain and Hourglass* (Bloodaxe Books, 2010) was a Recommendation of The Poetry Book Society. *Redgrove's Wife* (Bloodaxe Books, 2006) was short-listed for the Forward Prize for Best Single Collection, and for the T S Eliot Award. In 2007 she was awarded a Cholmondeley Award for Poetry. She is a Poetry Tutor for The Arvon Foundation, Almaserra Vella in Spain, Le Moulin in France, The Poetry School, Second Light Network and Ty Newydd. A member of Lapidus, her work has been recorded for The Poetry Archive and The Harvard Poetry Room.

Rebecca Welshman is a Phd researcher at the University of Exeter, where she is postgraduate representative on the Thomas Hardy Society Council of Management and Richard Jefferies Executive Council of Management. She works closely with both societies and the cultural sector, including local trusts and charities, in promoting opportunities for study and experience of landscape and literature. Last year as part of the International Thomas Hardy Conference and Festival she led a literary tour of archaeological sites in the southwest, and co-organised an exhibition of paintings from Hardy's life and work by local artist David Brackston. In 2011 she co-organised the Richard Jefferies Festival. She is the co-author, with Patrick Tolfree, of *Thomas Hardy and the Jurassic Coast* (The Thomas Hardy Society, 2010)

Colin Will was born in Edinburgh in 1942. He has had a long and distinguished career in librarianship and in senior management, being the British Geological Survey's Edinburgh librarian from 1973 to 1988, thereafter joining the Royal Botanic Garden as Chief Librarian, before becoming Director of Corporate Services. He has an Open University degree with a distinction in geology and geochemistry, and was awarded a PhD in information science by the University of Strathclyde in 1991. He has had five full poetry collections published, the latest being *The floorshow at the Mad Yak Café* (Red Squirrel Scotland 2010). A sixth – *The Propriety of Weeding* – is due from Red Squirrel in 2012. He has chaired the boards of the StAnza Poetry Festival and the Scottish Poetry Library, been President of the Scottish Library Association, and he is webmaster for Poetry Scotland. He is also a publisher, under the name Calder Wood Press. He is currently Makar to the Federation of Writers (Scotland).

Jan Zalasiewicz is a Senior Lecturer in Geology at the University of Leicester, having previously worked at the British Geological Survey. A field geologist, palaeontologist and stratigrapher, he teaches both undergraduate and postgraduate students, and researches into fossil ecosystems and environments. Jan has long association with the Geological Society of London, having served on its Council and Science Committee, and is a member (formerly Chair) of the Society's Stratigraphy Commission. He has written two popular science books, *The Earth After Us* and *The Planet in a Pebble*, articles for journals such as *New Scientist* and the *Education Guardian*, and has a regular column in the *Palaeontological Association Newsletter*. He discovered poetry in his student years and it has never gone far away.

Artists

Jean Slee-Smith was brought up in Ulverston, near the Lake District. She went to Lancaster College of Art and the Royal College of Art in London, and worked for a year with the designers Robin and Lucienne Day. She later took a degree in earth sciences at the Open University. An interest in geology is the basis of all her later work in art, especially lino printing. With more time to think than most people she developed an interest in haiku, a series of which will be projected in the Lecture Theatre during the lunch and tea breaks. Jean's lino prints are also used on the poster for today's event. www.jeansleesmith.co.uk