

# SCOTTISH CENTRE FOR GEPOETICS

affiliated to the International Institute of Geopoetics founded by  
Kenneth White in 1989

## Newsletter 18

### **Kenneth White Lectures in the North**

**Kenneth White** will give three new lectures in late October 2005 on the theme *The Geopoetics Project* as part of the Hi-Arts International Fellowship 2005 Creativity and the North. They are: *North Atlantic Investigations* in the MacPhail Hall in Ullapool on Saturday 29 October at 5 pm; *Return to the Territory - A Highland Reconnaissance* in the Beaufort Hotel in Inverness on Sunday 30 October at 7 pm; and *A Sense of High North* in Orkney College in Kirkwall on Monday 31 October at 7 pm. Please contact us if you can go to any of these in case transport can be shared, and forward details to any contacts you may have in these areas.

### **Geopoetics Weekend Course**

This is a great opportunity to explore geopoetics in depth, so book now to attend the **Weekend Course - Geopoetics: Place, Culture, World on Saturday 19 and Sunday 20 November 2005 from 9.30 - 16.30 at the Edinburgh University Office of Lifelong Learning.**

This introductory two-day course is the first one of its kind in Scotland. It is of significance in this

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period of transition following devolution, since it focuses on the problems of globalisation, and offers a means of radical cultural renewal. It will trace the development of geopoetics in the poetry, essays and way-books of Kenneth White, and will also discuss its relationship to a general critique of modernity that includes ecological post-modernity and deep ecology. Key aspects in the history of the arts and sciences will be used to illustrate White's contention that a "new epoch of being is possible".

The origins of geopoetics are in earlier critiques of modernity, and in key developments in the history of Western and Eastern cultures. These diverse developments will be brought together in this presentation of geopoetics which will include lectures and discussion on such themes as modernity and its critics, the wanderer and his charts, grounding a world, poetic intelligence - the great work-field, a new way of being in the world, embracing the real, and opening a new cultural space. This interdisciplinary course on geopoetics, linking many branches of the Arts and Sciences, is most

timely and ought to have a wide appeal.

The lecturers will be Bill Eddie, Norman Bissell, Rachel Blow and Jim McCarthy. There are still some places left on the course which costs £75 for two full days, so phone 0131 650 4400 now to enrol.

### **Walk and AGM in Birnam**

**Our AGM will take place on Saturday 3 December at 2 pm in the Birnam Institute near Dunkeld.**

We will meet at the Institute at 10.30 am and walk through the Birnam Woods, followed by lunch and our AGM back at the Institute. Reports and an agenda will be issued to members nearer the time, and nominations are invited for our office-bearers and Council. Please let us know if you can attend what should be an enjoyable day.

### **NEW PUBLICATIONS**

***Grounding a World. Essays on the work of Kenneth White*** edited by Gavin Bowd, Charles Forsdick and Norman Bissell. Please order your own copy and/or ask your local library and bookshop to order copies from Graham Urquhart at the address below (cheque for £10.95 post free made out to Alba Editions).

***Kenneth White and the Awkward Squad*** by Hugh Learmont,

a reply to the Scottish Review of Books' review of Kenneth White's poetry and prose, £2; ***Adventures of a Bibliomaniac*** by Kenneth White £4.50; ***Fras magazine*** £4; all post free (cheques made out to John Herdman), are available from *Fras* Publications, Atholl Browse Bookshop by the Station, Blair Atholl, Perthshire PH18 5SG.

A special issue of ***island magazine*** resulting from our Islands Weekend on Luing is in preparation. Check out the [www.essencepress.co.uk](http://www.essencepress.co.uk) website to view visual images of the weekend. A new pamphlet ***SLANT*** by Roger Bygott which was inspired by the weekend is available from him, cheques for £5.00 post free, payable to Roger Bygott, (contact details below).

***Mementoliths*** by Colin Will is a collection of poems triggered by a rock or mineral from different parts of the world with each poem preceded by a brief geological description – “a most satisfying richness and variety of texture in both thought and language”: Stewart Conn. Colin was our most helpful guide to the geology of Dunbar on the John Muir Trail last year and copies can be obtained from Calder Wood Press 1 Beachmont Court Dunbar EH42 1YF, £3.50 post free, cheques should be made out to Colin Will.

***A Feather on a Finger: Selected***

***Poems*** by Matthew Ewart has been described by Benjamin Morris in *Textualities* as a "marvellous collection ...this guiding poetic sensibility is spacious, ecumenical – there is plenty of room here to stretch one's legs and drink in the crisp, cold air."

Matt Ewart, who died last year, was a founding member of the Scottish Centre for Geopoetics, a keen student and reviewer of Kenneth White's work who filmed many of his lectures, and the organiser of a celebration of his work at Glasgow University. His collection can be obtained from Ruth Donaldson 1 Aytoun Road Glasgow G41 5RL, £5.50 post free, cheques should be made out to Ruth Donaldson.

***Au rythme des vents et marées...*** and ***Le refuge comme traverse***

are the first two Carnets de navigation from La Traversée – Atelier québécois de géopoétique. These beautifully produced booklets contain prose, poems, photographs and artwork based on two geopoetic weekends, one on an island, the other in hill country, in Canada in 2004. For more information, or if you wish to order them, e-mail [la\\_traversee@hotmail.com](mailto:la_traversee@hotmail.com).

**English Network for Geopoetics**

If you would like further information about the English Network for Geopoetics (ENG) you should contact Ian Prior tel. 0121 447 8518 e-mail [ianjprior@aol.com](mailto:ianjprior@aol.com) or Roger Bygott tel. 01457 871897

or also by e-mail to [roger@bygott0.wanadoo.co.uk](mailto:roger@bygott0.wanadoo.co.uk) for more details. Contact Roger also if you are interested in obtaining a CD of the talks at the geopoetics conference in Manchester in March. A pamphlet of the talks should be available in the near future.

**Gary Snyder**

*High Peak Haikus*, a detailed profile of the American poet and ecologist Gary Snyder by James Campbell in the Guardian this summer, can be accessed at Guardian Unlimited at <http://books.guardian.co.uk/review/story/0,,1529389,00.html>.

**Notes for the Geopoetics visit to Falkland, 18 June 2005 by Tess Darwin**

**Cultivating a space in the world**

"Geopoetics is concerned, fundamentally, with a relationship to the earth and with the opening of a world." *Kenneth White*

Falkland is a good place to be what Kenneth White calls a 'geopoetician'. I only came to

live here in December 2004, but I already feel a deep sense of belonging. This place is special in many ways. There are good reasons why people have lived here since prehistoric times. It's about more than the essential natural resources of stone, wood and water. It's also a healing place, a sacred place, dominated by the beautifully breast-shaped Falkland Hill.

A world is opening for me in Falkland; here I am finding a way of being in the world, the way I want to be in the world. I have become part of what Kenneth White talked about at my first Geopoetics meeting (in Edinburgh, August 2003) - an association of individuals concerned with

discussion and debate, in a coordinated, collective enterprise: the stewardship of the land and its community of people and wildlife.

There's also a close link here to the thinking of Patrick Geddes, who believed that geography and philosophy "should actually be connected. Really there is only Geosophy". As Murdo Macdonald has pointed out, Geddes' stained glass image of the Valley Section could be "a model of the village of Falkland in the shadow of the Lomond Hills, with its water courses irrigating the farmland of the plain of the Eden and eventually reaching the sea". The Latin words inscribed below

the Valley Section translate as 'microcosm of nature ~ abode of human beings ~ theatre of history ~ good place of the future'; how could Falkland be described more succinctly?

Geddes said, "This is a green world, with animals comparatively few and small, and all dependent on the leaves. By leaves we live" - not by money but the fullness of our harvests. In Falkland, the fullness of harvests is what we see around us today - the fruit of generations of labour and care that we have a responsibility to sustain for the coming generations.

As Kenneth White says, "A world is a place, a space that one cultivates. And in order to be up to that world-cultivation, one has to cultivate oneself". I am finding my place here, cultivating my way of being in this world, by walking, every day, getting to know the seasons, the stone, wood and water, the wildlife - using all my senses to become attuned to the natural world and develop my relationship with the more-than-human world that surrounds us.

I am primarily an ecologist, and Falkland is a good and very challenging place to try and live by my beliefs. As Kenneth White says, Geopoetics goes further than ecology: it is not only concerned with the relationship between humans and

our environment, but also the expression of that relationship – which is the poetics; and brings in a cultural approach. I am trying to express this through writing and finding ways to share what I love about Falkland with others.

Equally important, in a very practical sense, I am trying to share responsibility for the future of this place, for managing the land and caring for biodiversity.

Ninian Crichton Stuart, as the Steward of Falkland, is creatively seeking ways to share stewardship of not just the land but also

the diverse communities that have an interest in this place.

It is exciting to be living here and seeking ways to follow Kenneth White's challenge of being able to open out beyond our humanity into a geopoetic way of being in the world – cultivating bodymind, being connected, getting outside oneself, an expansion of the mind.

### **Subscriptions: New and Due**

**All annual subscriptions are now due unless paid since October 2004.**

Please send your name, address, e-mail and phone number with a cheque for £10/£5 unwaged, payable to the Scottish Centre for Geopoetics to either contact below.

### **Contacts:**

Norman Bissell, director, 340 Lincoln Avenue Glasgow G13 3LP tel. 0141 959 6033 or at [norman@rbissell.fsnet.co.uk](mailto:norman@rbissell.fsnet.co.uk)

Graham Urquhart, secretary, 16 Main Street Limekilns Fife KY11 3HL tel. 01383 872907 or at [gurquhart@madasafish.com](mailto:gurquhart@madasafish.com).

Previous Newsletters and links can be found on the International Institute of Geopoetics website: [www.geopoetique.net](http://www.geopoetique.net).

**Please copy this Newsletter to others who may be interested.**