

SCOTTISH CENTRE FOR GEPOETICS

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

Newsletter 22

2007 promises to be another active and productive year for the Scottish Centre for Geopoetics. This Newsletter contains full details of our forthcoming events as well as a review of the Kenneth White poetry reading last year at The Bakehouse in Gatehouse of Fleet.

Walk and AGM in South Queensferry

Our AGM will take place on Saturday 3 February 2007 at 2 pm in the Hawes Inn, South Queensferry.

We will meet at the Hawes Inn at 10.30 am for a guided walk along the shore towards Cramond, followed by lunch at the Inn at 1 pm. A report and agenda are attached, and nominations are invited from members for our Office-bearers and Council. Of added interest is that there is a room dedicated to Robert Louis Stevenson at the Hawes Inn, where he is thought to have written part of *Treasure Island*. For catering purposes please let us know by 26 January if you can attend what should be a very enjoyable day.

Geopoetics.co.uk Website

The first ever geopoetics internet website in English is currently being constructed for us by differentia.co.uk. Your suggestions for any text, photographs, quotations, and links which you think would be suitable for our site should be e-mailed ASAP to Norman Bissell.

Geopoetics Exhibition: Advance Notice

Expressions of interest are invited from artists to a proposal for an exhibition of artwork in response to a piece of writing (poem or prose) by Kenneth White (proposal attached). These and any comments/suggestions regarding the proposal should be sent ASAP to Bill Taylor at bill-taylor@hotmail.co.uk.

January 2007

Geopoetics Day Course Saturday 3 March

A one day course on Geopoetics: Deepening our Understanding will take place on Saturday 3 March from 9.30 am to 4.30 pm at the University of Edinburgh Office of Lifelong Learning 11 Buccleuch Place.

This course will feature new lectures which will go more deeply into geopoetics and its past and future development and perspectives, and is aimed at those who have attended previous courses as well as those wishing to learn about it for the first time. Members and others interested in learning more about geopoetics should enrol ASAP to ensure that the course goes ahead. The cost is £40 (no concessions) but contact us if you require financial assistance to enable you to attend. Tel. 0131 650 4400 for more information and to book your place.

Geopoetics, Science and Nature Lecture and Discussion on Tuesday 3 April at 7 pm in the Quaker Meeting House 7 Victoria Terrace Edinburgh EH1 (off High Street near the National Library).

Bill Eddie will lead a discussion on the relationship between science, nature and geopoetics which will take place during the Edinburgh Science Festival.

International Conference on Geopoetics: The Map as Point of View at the University of Quebec, Canada 12 -15 April

La Traversée – Atelier québécois de géopoétique is hosting this international conference and will provide accommodation. For full details of this and their publications contact la_traversee@uqam.ca or bouvet.rachel@uqam.ca ASAP or go to www.geopoetique.com under Carnet de Bord.

Natural Life on Luing Weekend, Friday 4 to Monday 7 May.

Our second visit to the Isle of Luing in Argyll will include talks, discussion and walks which focus on the bird life, flora and fauna of Luing and the west coast, as well as a buffet, ceilidh, accommodation and plenty of time to explore the island for just £20 per night. It is intended to publish a booklet of creative responses to Natural Life on Luing after the Weekend. See the draft programme attached. Accommodation is again likely to be in great demand so to secure your

place send a deposit for £20 (cheques made out to Scottish Centre for Geopoetics) to Norman Bissell at the address below.

Geopoetics and the Visual Arts Discussion Thursday 21 June at 7 pm in the Quaker Meeting House 7 Victoria Terrace Edinburgh EH1. Bill Taylor will lead a discussion which will be of great value both to practising artists and those interested in the visual arts.

Well Worth Reading

***On the Atlantic Edge* by Kenneth White published by Sandstone Press** is prominently available in all Waterstone's bookshops as part of their 3 for 2 offers until the end of January, and is also available at the reduced price of £6.95 including p&p from Sandstone Press at PO Box 5725 1 High St Dingwall IV15 9WJ or from Norman Bissell.

Tony McManus Essays

Tony McManus's *Philistinism and Cultural Renewal: Essays on Education* are still available and well worth downloading from

<http://www.institute-of-governance.org/onlinepub/mcmanus/index./html>.

His detailed essay *Paths of Perception* traces interconnections in Scottish and European thought including Pelagius, Buchanan, Geddes, Maxwell, MacDiarmid and White. Sandstone Press intends to publish his introduction to the work of Kenneth White, *The Radical Field* in spring 2007. Watch out for details of launches etc.

The island booklet *two days on Luìng* with poems, photographs, artwork and two essays, as well as a preface by Kenneth White, is still available by sending a cheque for £6 (£10 for annual subscription) including p&p made out to *island* to Essence Press 8 Craiglea Drive Edinburgh EH10 5PA. See also many images of Luìng on the Essence Press website at www.essencepress.co.uk.

***Grounding a World. Essays on the work of Kenneth White* edited by Gavin Bowd, Charles Forsdick and Norman Bissell.** To order a copy send a cheque for £9.95/£9 for members (including p&p) made out to Alba Editions, to Graham Urquhart at the address below.

Kenneth White and the Awkward Squad by Hugh Learmont only £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.

Review of Kenneth White Poetry Reading at The Bakehouse, Gatehouse of Fleet, August 2006 in the Galloway Gazette.

Kenneth White Inspires A Full Bakehouse

The renowned poet-thinker Kenneth White gave a scintillating, inspirational reading from his *Open World: The Collected Poems 1960-2000* to a capacity audience at The Bakehouse in Gatehouse of Fleet last Saturday night.

The evening began in dramatic fashion with White's disembodied voice reciting *In The Nashvak Night* to the accompaniment of a howling wind, a quickening drum beat and the cry of a shaman, before he made his entrance. From there he took us on an epic poetic journey which began in his native Scotland with his great signature poem *Scotia Deserta* ("all those kyles, lochs and sounds"), sailed with Brandan on his 'Last Voyage', wandered from the Pyrenees up the Atlantic coast to Brittany (where he now lives) on to Norway, the Indian Ocean, China, Japan, over the Pacific to the Americas, and ended in a series of haiku.

On the way we met some of his companions - mountain scholars, the Chinese poet Li Po, a Native American shaman, a turtle laying its eggs on a beach, sea birds and other wildlife - and, of course, White himself. He is a poet of open spaces, of places where land meets sea: "walking the coast ... seeking out the lines of the earth ... a walk along the shoreline in the snow".

As a reader of his work he oozes charisma, combining the rich west coast accent of his youth with expressive gesture and good humour born of living in France for nearly forty years. He carries his profound learning lightly and over time has devised and developed 'a wave and wind philosophy' he calls *geopoetics* which imbues his poetry and his creative life with intellectual muscle. It is a world outlook which has inspired an international movement, including a Scottish Centre for Geopoetics, of writers, artists, scientists, philosophers, ecologists and others applying it to their individual and collective work.

After the reading he discussed with John Hudson, editor of *Markings* magazine, the lamentable state of contemporary culture ("cultural production without the culture"), the phi-

losophical work of Nietzsche, Heidegger and Einstein, and how radical cultural renewal can be achieved by the theory-practice of geopoetics, for example, starting here in Gallo-way by studying the migration of birds, the growth of a river, or continental geological connections. He also engaged in discussion with the audience on travel and writing, his connection with Hugh MacDiarmid, and issues of identity and other cultures in a session that lasted well over an hour. In both reading and discussion he certainly lived up to his billing as 'an intellectual nomad of genius' and 'a seminal figure in European writing'. With such great value for money at The Bakehouse the only unanswered questions in the minds of a discerning full house were when is he coming back and how can I get a ticket?

Norman Bissell

Online Discussion Forum

Our online discussion forum is up and running to encourage an ongoing dialogue amongst members about all aspects of geopoetics. If you cannot access it or do not have e-mail and wish to participate, contact Graham Urquhart.

Benefits of SCFG Membership

You will receive:

- Newsletters at least four times a year
- access to our online discussion forum for members
- advance news of and discounts on books relating to geopoetics
- advance news of Kenneth White and geopoetics events
- invitations to all our meetings and field visits
- the satisfaction of assisting the development of our geopoetics work and publications
- encouragement to develop your own understanding of and creative response to geopoetics.

Subscriptions: New and Due

Please send your name, postal and e-mail address with a cheque for £10/£5 unwaged, payable to the Scottish Centre for Geopoetics, to Graham Urquhart, secretary. **All annual subscriptions are now due unless paid since January 2006.**

Contacts:

Norman Bissell, director, currently at Mo Dhachaidh 51 Cul-lipool Isle of Luing Argyll PA34 4UB tel. 01852 314322 or at normanbissell@btinternet.com or

Graham Urquhart, secretary, 16 Main Street Limekilns Fife KY11 3HL tel. 01383 872907 or at gurquhart@madasafish.com.

For previous Newsletters and links check out the International Institute of Geopoetics website: www.geopoetique.net.

Please forward or copy this Newsletter to others who may be interested.