

Surrey Poetry Festival,

SATURDAY 9th May 2015

It was bright and sunny here this morning and we watched the eclipse by holding up a colander in front of the stairwell window, producing multiple small images of the moon's silhouette across the sun. I thought afterwards I could have traced them, or taken a photo, but it was more interesting just watching.

John Bevis

Welcome to the 5th Surrey Poetry Festival which will begin at one minute past midday on Saturday 9th May in The Ivy Arts Centre, at the University of Surrey, Guildford.

A diverse array of writers - from New York, Shropshire, Cataluña, Hastings and beyond, - will perform for 25 minutes; there will also be collaborations and an open house rendition of Bob Cobbing's seminal *abc of sound* to fire up the evening.

Tickets are £12.00 all day, and £6.00 for students.

Individual sessions £6, £4.00 students.

The festival is supported by the University of Surrey, School of English and Languages.

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JOHN BEVIS, DAVID ASHFORD, JOHN SEED

12.00- 1.30

JOHN BEVIS worked in visual and book arts at Coracle Press, and later in printing at the Victoria & Albert Museum. A study of birdsong, *Aaaaw to Zzzzzd*, was published by MIT Press. His writing on art includes *Certain Trees, Printed in Norfolk*, and *The Suburban Fauvist*. Poetry includes *Some Alternatives to Flock* and *Window Paintings*, a 'cold-war narrative' to accompany the monochrome paintings of Stephen Skidmore.

DAVID ASHFORD's poetry includes *Postcards From the House of Light* and *Xaragmata*. His account of literary and artistic responses to underground travel, *London Underground*, is a cultural geography. He runs Contraband Press. He launched the University of Surrey's new wave of public-oriented poetry events five years ago. A large collection of poetry in translation called *Code Talker Paradox* is nearing completion.

JOHN SEED is author of *Manchester: August 16th & 17th, 1819*, (Intercapillary Editions, 2013) and *History Labour Night* (Pig Press, 1984). His early poetry featured in *A Various Art* (Carcanet). *Brandon Pithouse* is due this winter from Smokestack Books. He has written on 18th-19th century religious dissenters, and migrants' history in London. *That Barrikins, Pictures from Mayhew II*, was published in October 2007.

"Brief lives, a moment in time – costermongers, coalheavers, sewer men, seamstresses, soldiers, shopkeepers, domestic servants, old-clothes dealers, rag-and-bone men, petty thieves, prostitutes, street people and casual workers of all kinds, old and young, male and female, thousands of unnamed and unremembered people of mid-nineteenth century London fill Mayhew's pages."

JOHN HEALY

A reading from *The Grass Arena*, followed by Q & A with the author

2.30 - 3.30 pm

In 1988 Faber and Faber published *The Grass Arena*, an award winning and now almost universally acclaimed autobiography of a former vagrant alcoholic, **JOHN HEALY**, who spent 15 violent years in a wino jungle when begging carried an automatic prison sentence. In prison Harry the Fox taught Healy to play chess. Out of prison he was a lookout for a mob that used to run scams on post office books, using the washroom of a public toilet as their office.

Healy won ten major British chess tournaments, forcing a draw from the Soviet grandmaster Rafael Vaganian, at that time graded the second best player in the world. His *Coffeehouse Chess Tactics* was short listed for The Guardian 'Chess Book of the Year' in 2010. *The Grass Arena* is now a Penguin Modern Classic.

EMILY CRITCHLEY & JOHN HALL

4.00 - 5.00 pm

EMILY CRITCHLEY has published many poetry chapbooks, including *Hopeful for Love Are Th'Impoverish'd of Faith* and *Who handles one over the Backlash*. Her selected writing, *Love /All That / & OK*, was published by Pinned in the Margins (London, 2011). She is editor of the forthcoming *Out of Everywhere 2: Linguistically Innovative Poetry by Women in North America & the UK* (Reality Street).

PATRICK MCGUINNESS & NICHOLAS JOHNSON

5.30 - 6.30 pm

PATRICK MCGUINNESS “has written the great book on Belgium and modern memory, *Other People’s Countries*, winner of the 2014 Duff Cooper Prize. He takes his place among those singers and painters of the haunted, the melancholy, the diminished, the caricatural, the humdrum: Ensor, Rodenbach, Sax, Huysmans, Simenon and Magritte.” Michael Hoffman

Patrick McGuinness is that vanishing figure: the multi-lingual, multi-cultural, pan-European literary polymath. He is the poet of *The Canal of Mars*, translator of Mallarmé’s *For Anatole’s Tomb*. He has edited exemplary editions of poets T.E.Hulme, Marcel Schwab and Lynette Roberts. His first novel *The Last Hundred Days* was set during the fall of Ceausescu. He is a Chevalier des Arts et des lettres.

NICHOLAS JOHNSON's poems and assemblages include *The Lard Book*, a gargantuan visual book on tracing paper in a silver case. This was occasioned by the upside-down handwriting of clairvoyant NY poet Hannah Weiner and the 1996 BSE crisis.

Listening to the Stones is a post-colonial poem about French occupation in New Caledonia, which led to the Heinghene and Ouvéa massacres.

Cleave tells of the carnage of Foot and Mouth, from a rancid farm in Tyneside to Highampton in Devon, the first agricultural plague of 21st century Europe.

Haul Song is his best known work, a lyric poem set in the slower, older, rural world, the bankruptcy corridor of 1970s farming Devon.

If the words aren’t to hand then he makes them up, gaps and misalignment working as render for his meter.

Andrew Kötting

Bob Cobbing: *an abc in sound*

Performed by STEPHEN MOONEY and friends

& special guests **JESSICA PUJOL DURAN,**
HOLLY ANTRUM,
SIMON PETTET

7.30 pm to close

Poet and gameing theorist **STEPHEN MOONEY** herds together performers from the wild verges, audience and collaborators from the day, to give blast, trumpet and tongue to Cobbing's 50 years young poem!

Give *abc in sound* a great gulley of voice.

Stephen Mooney's poetry works include *Shuddered*, *DCLP* and *The Cursory Epic* and he is co founder of the unique Veer Books, nearing its 100th publication.

JÈSSICA PUJOL DURAN is the editor of *Alba Londres*, a magazine on translation focused on British, Spanish and Latin American literature. She has written and translated extensively in Catalan, English and Spanish.

Her poetry and translations have been published in anthologies such as *The Dark Would: anthology of language art* and the Catalan anthology *Donzelles de l'any 2000*. She has two chapbooks in English: *Now Worry* (Department, 2012) and *Every Bit of Light* (Oystercatcher Press: 2012).

HOLLY ANTRUM's *Catalogue* featured in her first solo exhibition *A Diffuse Citizen*, at Grand Union, Birmingham in 2014.

Hovering our attention between near and far, seriousness and humour, Jennifer Pike (93) recites *ABC in Sound* (1964) by her late husband, Bob Cobbing. This film portrait draws attention to a lesser-known Pike, pivotal to a group of experimental artists and performers. *Catalogue* features sound from Bow Gamelan Ensemble and Lol Coxhill.

By exploring a 'catalogue' of work and the question of how one might take shape, the film overlaps with questions of growing old as an artist. Gently overlaying analogue and digital references Antrum thinks about the relationship between the artist-as-subject and the artist-filmmaker.

Holly Antrum's 16 mm work takes into account film's accrued digital, mechanical and 'performative' qualities with sound and colour footage. Antrum looks for people, places and lives which somehow create a narrative cross-hair, captured and embedded to a material awareness of a narrative film.

SIMON PETTET *"A former English waif but for decades a pillar of the St. Mark's Poetry Project, the core of all that is New York about the New York School, Simon Pettet in As a Bee offers a collection of tough, fragile musings. Like the lizard in 'Some Musings in the Solarium', the reader will find "health and warmth in the depth/ of winter/ and this is not what lizard expects." Elsewhere Pettet advises, "Have faith / The show / is about to spiral - And it does." John Ashbery*

HEARTH, his *Collected Poems* (so far) appeared recently from Talisman. Pettet edited *Selected Art Writings* (Black Sparrow, 1998) of the poet James Schuyler.

'Adventure, Aventure, Aventereure, Adventure' – the iconic opening words of Bob Cobbing's ABC in Sound. Over 22 minutes, beginning with A and ending with Z, Cobbing recombines letters, words and sounds to effectively rewrite the linguistic institution of the English language. It is a mythic rebeginning – : Cobbing had precedents in the continental Avant Garde of Apollinaire, Marinetti and Schwitters; and was of a milieu that included, among many others, Henri Chopin, Eric Mottram, Dom Sylvester Houédard, John Latham, Jeff Nuttall and Ernst Jandl.

Jonathan P Watts