

# Earlsdon Literary Magazine 172

*The newsletter of the AVID Readers Group, based at Earlsdon Library*

**Next meeting:** Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> January 8pm  
**Venue:** Earlsdon Library  
**Book for discussion:** *Me Before You* — JoJo Moyes

## Close to the Bone

### Our December Book

*Death du Jour* — Kathy Reichs

Kathy Reich is a forensic anthropologist in Quebec. She is also a professor of anthropology at the University of North Carolina in Charlotte. She divides her time between Charlotte and Montreal. She also writes crime novels featuring Temperance Brennan, who is a forensic anthropologist in Montreal and a professor in Charlotte ...

It is rare for writers to give their main character exactly the same profession and lifestyle as their own. Although Reich says Temperance is not her, we can reasonably assume that she has drawn on some of her real-life cases when writing her novels. She certainly goes into great detail when describing what Tempe does to the bodies (although she does not describe boiling up the bones in this one). Some readers found these parts interesting.

As always happens, our hero gets involved in lots of murder cases. The story begins in Toronto where she is exhuming the bones of a nun who is being considered for sainthood. While there, she is called upon to help with bodies found in a house fire – and attractive Detective Ryan is also assigned to the investigation. Soon after her return to Charlotte, she is contacted by Ryan, who has found a link to Beaufort, a place not too far from Charlotte. She agrees to meet him and, while visiting an island nearby with her daughter, finds, guess what? Two bodies!

Danger is never far away. Tempe suffers attacks in the street in Toronto and there are strange happenings in Charlotte. The end is horrifying. Well, sort of. We know, of course, that nothing really bad will happen to her. (There would be no scope for more books if she were killed.)

Like many protagonists of this ilk, she is single, has had a problem with alcohol, lives alone and never has any food in the fridge. Apparently unconnected events turn out to be connected and vital to the case and Tempe's actions are crucial to the solving of it. Eventually, after many twists and turns, all is resolved. I do wonder whether forensic anthropologists are really so closely involved with the detective part of murder inquiries, rather than just the examination of the bodies.

Some readers quite enjoyed the book, but one at least would not read another. Most agreed that it did not have that gripping quality that made you want to continue reading. There was no variation in tempo; it had an even pace throughout. One reader pointed out that the chapters were all fairly short, so that you could reach a point where it was easy to stop reading, possibly indicating that it was designed to be read in snatches.

Many felt there were too many murders and other threads, which meant that the

story jumped around a lot. You often had to think for a minute to remind yourself what was happening. Cliffhangers at the end of chapters irritated one reader, especially as it was some time before there was some sort of explanation. Another felt there was no depth to the characters. One fan of the

genre does not consider Kathy Reichs to be one of the best crime writers.

So, overall, quite a good read, but Kathy Reichs did not gain any new readers.

Chris Wilkin

**Next month we will be reading:**

*Some Kind of Fairy Tale* — Graham Joyce

The date for discussion of this book is Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> February.

## How to Cook a Good Detective Story

### Ingredients

- 20lb of a good author
- 10lb of a start, a middle and an end of a story
- 10lb of mystery and intrigue
- 10lb of good believable characters with personality
- 10lb of believability
- 10lb of imagination
- 5lb of interesting locations
- 10lb of solving solution by the reader
- 5lb of good ripe clues
- 5lb of humour
- 5lb of cheek
- a pinch of red herrings



Mix together the good author and the start, middle and an end of a story until it all melts together.

Then add the good believable characters with the mystery, intrigue and imagination. This binds everything together and is the basis for the cooking of the story.

Add the interesting locations.

Now add the good ripe clues to concoct the solving solution by the reader so it can all be swallowed up with believability.

Add the humour, the cheek and the pinch of red herrings and mix it all together until it all forms the perfect consistency for A Good Read. Beware of too much mixing which will lead to boredom and disinterest and cause the whole mixture to crumble and mean it has to be discarded.

Now all that's left is too bind it together in a hard case with good bold black words that read:

## **A GOOD DETECTIVE STORY**

Eve Stephens

## What's On

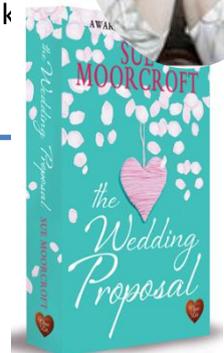
We are delighted and honoured that **Jeff Towns** is coming to speak to the **Coventry Cambrian Society** – and this after he promised his wife that, following the huge celebrations of the Dylan Thomas centenary in 2014, he would ease up a bit. He might even have said he'd give it a rest for a year. Just about every Dylan Thomas film you have seen, every talk on the radio you have listened to, will have mentioned Jeff in the credits (if he wasn't actually in the programme). There can be no better introduction to Jeff than his website <http://www.dylans.com> (see copy of homepage below).

Jeff's illustrated talk, *Dylan Thomas – Dispelling the Myths*, will be at the **Beechwood Tennis Club**, Beechwood Avenue, Earlsdon, Coventry CV5 6FQ on **Friday January 16<sup>th</sup> at 7.30pm**. Tickets £4 (£3.50 for Cambrian Society members) from Cambrian Society committee members or me on 024 7671 1397. We do hope to see you there.



**Choc Lit** publishes 'a fabulous range of stories, all with a romance at the heart'. **Margaret Kaine** and **Sue Moorcroft**, two of their bestselling authors, will be at **Central Library** on **Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> January at 2pm**. They will be talking about their books with a Q & A session and book signing. This is a free event and no booking is required.

**Peter Lockyer**



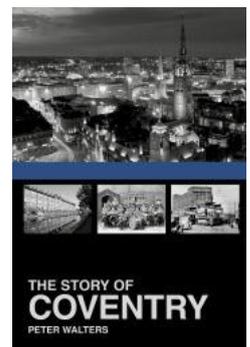
**Peter Walters**, author of *The Story of Coventry*, will be visiting the following libraries to talk about his book:

- Foleshill – Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> January at noon
- Central – Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> February at 2pm

Well known for his numerous newspaper features and active role in local heritage local author, Peter, shows that there is a great deal more to the history of Coventry than first meets the eye!

The event is free but please check for booking details at

[www.coventry.gov.uk/libraries](http://www.coventry.gov.uk/libraries)



If you have any other reviews or recommendations, tales of literary events, or anything else you think other AVID readers would find interesting, please send them to

Catherine Fitzsimons  
[cathfitz5317@yahoo.com](mailto:cathfitz5317@yahoo.com).



Jeff Towns is one of the world's leading Dylan Thomas experts. An antiquarian book dealer by trade, based in the poet's home town of Swansea, Jeff was originally known, both locally & globally, as 'Jeff the Books'. He is now known simply, affectionately and professionally as **'The Dylan Thomas Guy'**

Why? Well it probably has much to do with 40 odd years of seeking and searching and scouting and scouring, procuring, securing, digging up & dusting off the treasures left behind by Dylan Thomas ...

This labour of love has left Jeff with a wealth of Dylan Thomas knowledge, extensive contacts and many, many manuscripts, notes, letters, pictures and books by and about Dylan Thomas.

Jeff's Dylan Thomas collections sit in museums and institutions from Kyoto in Japan, to Texas, via San Francisco and all the way from Abertawe to Aberystwyth & the National Library of Wales...



His Dylan Thomas exhibitions have hung in Barcelona and at the Royal National Theatre in London and are a permanent fixture in The Dylan Thomas Centre Swansea.

He has sold rare Dylan Thomas books and manuscripts to Mick Jagger, Bill Clinton, Jimmy Carter, Prince Charles, Peter Blake, Cerys Matthews, Catherine Zeta Jones & Allen Ginsberg ...

When it comes to Dylan Thomas Jeff has been there, seen it, read it, loved it, borrowed it, begged for it, bought it and even gotten the tattoo...seriously it's on you tube!! (see film of Jeff getting his Dylan Thomas Tat on you tube)

Jeff is still an active and evergreen antiquarian bookseller, a published author, a public speaker, documentary maker, regular media commentator across the written press, TV & radio, and more recently an artistic consultant specialising in all things Dylan ... hopefully this site will assist you in finding out where Jeff, AKA 'The Dylan Thomas Guy' can best help you ...

