

# Earlsdon Literary Magazine 186

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

**Next meeting:** Thursday 12 May 8pm

**Venue:** Earlsdon Library

**Book for discussion:** *The Siege of Krishnapur*— J. G. Farrell

## Mixed Feelings

*Our April Book*

### ***Lighthousekeeping*— Jeanette Winterson**

It's safe to say that *Lighthousekeeping* received mixed reviews which tended towards the 'Not Mad About It' side.

Readers enjoyed the background and incidental information about lighthouses and lighthouse-keeping, and found Winterson's main characters "likeable and contrasting". It was generally felt that it was a 'Book of Two Halves' of which the first was far better than the second – "[it was] good until Pugh left the Lighthouse" – although the battle with the librarians was a highlight!

Less favourable were the opinions about Winterson's lack of respect for the traditional beginning, middle and end linearity of The Novel, although the 'mini-chapter' structure of this brief offering made it an easy read. It was described as,

for example: "a non-linear collection of stories", "cursory and strange vignettes" and "six or seven small ideas [loosely] knitted together."

Winterson's ambiguous use of pronouns was also regarded as irritating, as was her "self-conscious cleverness".

**Christine Miller**

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).

### **Our next book is**

*Life After Life*—Kate Atkinson

and we will discuss it on 9 June 2016

## What to Read Next

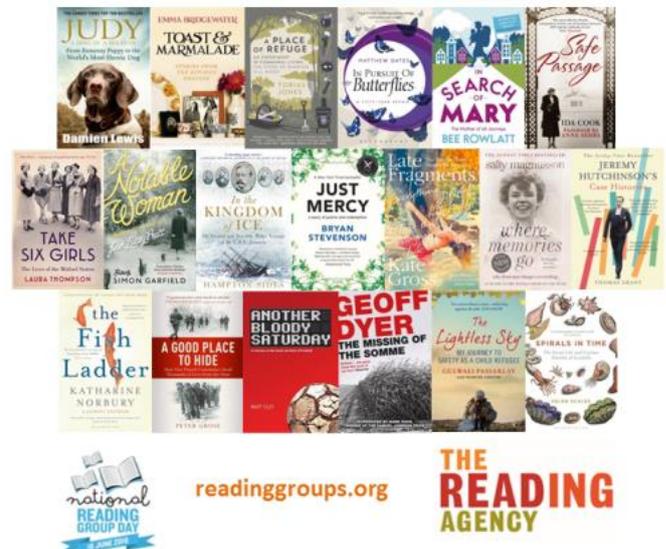
In the additional material at the back of this edition of *Lighthousekeeping*, Jeanette Winterson explains that she tries to do something different with each of her novels. For example, her debut *Oranges are not the Only Fruit* (widely considered to be an LGBT classic) was biographical and *Sexing the Cherry* tends towards fantasy. Therefore, if you were on the 'Not Mad About It' side, don't let it put you off the others and, if you were on the 'Quite Liked It Actually' side approach a different Winterson novel with caution!

Those of us who read *The Lighthouse Stevensons* by Bella Bathurst back in September 2013 were able to relate what we had learnt from that to this story and, given how positive our assessment of it had been (see ELM 157), were of course ready to suggest it to newer members of the group.

One of the themes that touched a chord with readers was that of isolation – not just the physical isolation of Silver and Pugh in their tower, but also the separation of the lovers and Silver's later detachment from society. It seems that a coastal setting is an appropriate place to explore these themes: Annie Proulx's *The Shipping News* springs to mind, along with WG Sebald's peregrination of the Suffolk coast in *The Rings of Saturn*. The latter is full of musings on the landscape and things it brings to the author's mind and Fenella has recommended Jean Sprackland's *Strands: A Year of Discoveries on the Beach*, which is described on Amazon as 'a series of meditations prompted by walking on the

wild estuarial beaches of Ainsdale Sands between Blackpool and Liverpool' and being 'about what is lost and buried then discovered, about all the things you find on a beach, dead or alive, about flotsam and jetsam, about mutability and transformation - about *sea-change*.' Sara Maitland pulls together these ideas of retreat from the world and change in *A Book of Silence* which is a thoughtful biography to read slowly for its reflections on the things which the author has decided are important in life.

Have your say – vote for your favourite  
Real Life Read #NRGD16



## What's On

Local author **Dennis Carey** will be at **Central Library** on **Wednesday 18 May** from **12.30pm to 1.30pm**. He will take questions and talk about his new book, *An Untilled Field*, which is – according to an Amazon reviewer who gave it five stars – a story of survival in the west of Ireland and London in the Victorian era. Signed copies of the book will be available to buy on the day at £7.99.