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| Library  Newsletter  May 2014 |  |

**Please note: All our libraries will be closed on the following dates:**

**Monday, 5 May**

**Monday, 26 May**

**Tuesday, 27 May**

**‘Into the Trees’ – a talk by award-winning author Robert Williams**

**Blackburn library – Wednesday, 7 May at 7pm**

Robert Williams was born in Blackburn before moving to Clitheroe, where he grew up and went to school. After university he worked for a while as school librarian at Witton Park High School before moving to Manchester, where he has worked as a bookseller for Waterstones before turning to writing full time. He has also written, released and performed music under the name The Library Trust. His first novel, ‘Luke and Jon’, won a Betty Trask Award, was translated into six languages and acclaimed as ‘a hugely impressive debut’ in the Daily Telegraph. His second novel, ‘How the Trouble Started’, was shortlisted for the Portico Prize for Fiction.

‘Into the Trees’, his new book, is the compelling story of Ann and Thomas Norton, whose baby, Harriet won’t stop crying. Exhausted, they are being driven close to insanity and only one thing will help. Mysteriously, Harriet is only calm when she’s under the ancient trees of Bleasdale forest. The Nortons sell their town house and move into an isolated barn, deep in the forest, where they are finally getting some peace – until one night a group of masked men comes through the trees, ready to disrupt their lives and threaten their fragile security.

Robert will talk about the inspiration for his writing and sign copies of his books at Blackburn library on Wednesday, 7 May at 7pm. Admission £1. Tickets available from Blackburn library. Call 01254 661221 or email [library@blackburn.gov.uk](mailto:library@blackburn.gov.uk) to reserve a place.

**‘Surf over Sand’ – Maggie Grimshaw launches her debut novel**

**Darwen library – Thursday, 8 May at 6.30pm**

Maggie Grimshaw grew up in Darwen, where her parents, Rendall and Mary Allen ran a successful jewellery business. After 10 years as a secondary school teacher in Yorkshire, Maggie moved to France with her family where they have lived ever since. She started writing as a hobby, spending her spare time jotting down and developing ideas, mainly to please herself. She began writing her novel during school holidays, but since she retired from the French education system in 2013, she has been able to devote much more time to it, and now writes full time.

In ‘Surf over Sand’, she tells the story of Lydia McIntyre, a downtrodden woman who is constantly criticised and vilified by her mother, utterly dominated by her husband and hasn’t seen her father for many years. She finally decides on a radical solution to her problems but her plans are thwarted when she witnesses a shocking incident. Throughout the ordeal which follows she discovers that despite the passage of time, she is able to depend on one unlikely person.

Maggie will return to her home town to talk about her book and how it came about, at Darwen library on Thursday, 8 May at 6.30pm. Admission £1. Tickets available from Darwen library. Call 01254 706021 or email [darwen.library@blackburn.gov.uk](mailto:darwen.library@blackburn.gov.uk).

**Festival of wonders – Mystery history**

**Blackburn library – Thursday, 15 May 4.30pm - 6pm**

**Darwen library – Friday, 16 May 4.30pm - 6pm**

Blackburn with Darwen libraries are taking part in the Museums at Night Festival of Wonders once again. This annual event showcases aspects of history in an engaging way that families can enjoy. In Blackburn and Darwen libraries there are Mystery History workshops where families can turn detective and discover the ways the Victorians used a range of weird and wonderful implements. There will also be quizzes, photos and maps of old Blackburn and Darwen to examine, along with some of our old records that are stored away behind the scenes. Admission to the workshops, which includes light refreshments, is 50p per child with accompanying adults free. To book a place at Blackburn library, call 01254 661221 or email [library@blackburn.gov.uk](mailto:library@blackburn.gov.uk) or to attend the workshop at Darwen library, call 01254

706021 or email [darwen.library@blackburn.gov.uk](mailto:darwen.library@blackburn.gov.uk)

**Exhibitions at Darwen library**

**Exhibition room**

Until 9 May: Drawings and paintings by David Tomlinson

10 – 30 May: Paintings by Mr Gudgeon

**Foyer**

10 – 30 May: Photographs of the North West region

**Main library**

Until mid-May: Photographs of Old Darwen curated by Darwen Days and the Friends of Darwen library (FODL) with related quiz competition. £1 entry with proceeds going to FODL

Mid-May – 30 May: Examples of James Morton’s early works, curated by FODL

The next meeting of FODL is on Monday, 12 May at 5.45pm. New members are always welcome.

**Baileys’ Women’s Prize for Fiction short list announced**

Previously known as the Orange Prize, the Baileys’ Women’s Prize for Fiction is one of the most prestigious literary awards of the year. Launched in 1996, the Prize celebrates excellence, originality and accessibility in women’s writing from across the world. The winner receives a cheque for £30,000 and a bronze figurine known as a ‘Bessie’, created by the artist Grizel Niven. The judges have recently announced the short list for the prize, prior to the winning book being announced on 4 June. The six titles in the running are:

Americanah by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie

Burial Rites by Hannah Kent

The Lowland by Jhumpa Lahiri

The Undertaking by Audrey Magee

A Girl is a Half Formed Thing by Eimar McBride

The Goldfinch by Donna Tartt

**Reading groups**

This month we have two new reading group sets from publishers:

**Blossom Street Brides by Debbie Macomber 416 pages 10 copies**

As three very different women meet in their local knitting store, they find strength in friendship to help them through their problems. Lydia is happily married but worried about her adoptive daughter and the future of her business; Bethanne is suffering the strain of maintaining a long-distance relationship and Lauren longs for marriage and a family but has a boyfriend who won’t commit.

**Longbourn by Jo Baker 448 pages 10 copies**

Inspired by Jane Austen’s Pride and Prejudice, Jo Baker tells the story of the domestic staff who work below stairs to keep the Bennett household running smoothly, giving an insight into the lives of the ordinary classes that Austen barely mentions.

**Book reviews by our readers**

**Five past midnight in Bhopal by Dominique Lapierre and Javier Moro**

This account of the horrific accident at an Indian chemical plant in 1983 reads like fiction, but sadly the horrors are all too real. The authors bring to life the realities of slum life and how a series of agricultural failures had brought so many poor people to the city in search of work. The American company, Union Carbide, thought of itself as the saviour of Indian agriculture when it brought its insecticide, Sevin, to the sub-continent but the ingredients proved to be extremely toxic and a gas escape one fateful night killed over 30,000 people and blighted the lives of many more.

The arrogance of American industry is clear throughout, only slightly tempered by the almost missionary zeal of a few individuals, but cost cutting and a slow decline had led to basic safety measures being ignored. Far from being their saviour, the factory was the destroyer of the people of Bhopal, not only in 1983 but even today, as children continue to be born with dreadful defects caused by the still contaminated environment. It is truly scandalous that the victims have not received any compensation as the companies that have since taken over Union Carbide deny any responsibility. If you read this book it will break your heart!

**Andrea**

# **Burial Rites by Hannah Kent**

This novel is set around the true story of Agnes Magnusdottir, the last woman to be executed in Iceland in 1830. The construct of the novel uses translations of official documents and poetry in a minor way but the majority of the novel is fictional. There are multiple points of view throughout so you get Agnes’s view as well as those of her priest, Toti, and also through those of a narrator, yet the narrative flows throughout.

The way this book is constructed, and the subject matter of a young woman condemned to die because of her crime, reminds me forcibly of Alias Grace by Margaret Atwood.

This is a very dramatic story told well. The difficult Icelandic names of people and places were daunting at first but soon became a minor factor as the story carries the reader along. Characters are developed well and the homes and scenery, while not overly described, soon imprint on the reader’s imagination.

**Barbara**

# **The Rosie Project by Graeme Simsion**

The narrator of this story is an Australian University lecturer called Professor Don Tillman. Don is socially dysfunctional and to some extent could be said to have some form of Asperger’s. However, Simsion writes this tale from Don’s point of view with a very light touch and full of humour.

Don has decided, as he approaches his 40th birthday, to look for a wife. Being logically minded he sets about this in a logical way with questionnaires within a dating agency and amongst people he meets at other times. He has a friend, Gene, also a lecturer, who decides to help him in his quest. Gene, however, has an ulterior motive for this. Don also has one more friend, Gene’s wife Claudia, who helps him in other, better ways with his social ineptitude. Into this triangle of friendship comes Rosie, who disrupts Don’s whole existence. To explain more would spoil the joy and pleasure of this story.

Provided your reading approach to this story is accepting that, although the narrator is different, he is not stupid but ‘wired atypically’ then there is a great deal of pleasure in this book. The narrative flows, never for one moment falters, and is almost impossible to put down. It is funny as well as being heart-warming.

For me this approaches the subject of Asperger’s sufferers, and I think they do suffer because they are ‘different’, in a way that helps others understand what it is like. A book that can stimulate discussion and therefore a good group read.

**Barbara**

**The holiday by Jane Green**

This book is a compendium of three stories, one each by Jane Green, Jennifer Coburn and Liz Ireland. Each of the stories has a Christmas theme, in that they all take place around that time. All the stories are very light and what I would describe as chick-lit. I generally prefer something a bit more thought provoking but I can see that it might be just the job if you want something mildly entertaining that doesn’t require too much effort or concentration, particularly around Christmas time. It passed the time pleasantly for me in a hospital waiting room but it hasn’t stuck in my memory as a riveting read.

**Jill**

**Calendar of events: Adult events, Children’s/family events, Young children’s events**

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| Thursday  1 May | Story time for young children, 10.45am – 11.15am, Mill Hill library, Tel: 266380 |
|  | Work club, 1.30pm – 3pm, Darwen library, Tel: 706021 |
| Friday  2 May | ICT drop-in session, 10am – 12 noon, Darwen library, Tel: 706021 |
|  | Rhyme time for young children, 2.15pm – 2.45pm, Roman Road library, Tel: 682347 |
| Saturday  3 May | Internet and email drop-in session, 10am – 12 noon, Blackburn library, Tel: 661221 |
|  | Read and rhyme for young children, 11am – 11.30am, Livesey library, Tel: 209442 |
| Tuesday  6 May | Carers’ IT group, 10am – 12 noon, Blackburn library, Tel: 661221 |
|  | Virtual library café, 10am – 2pm, Darwen Aldridge Community Academy, Tel:819500 |
|  | Tuesday reading group, 10.15am – 11.45am, Blackburn library, Tel: 661221 |
|  | Basic IT drop-in session, 12.30pm – 1.30pm, Blackburn library, Tel: 661221 |
| Wednesday  7 May | IT skills for jobs drop-in session, 10am – 12 noon, Blackburn library, Tel: 661221 |
|  | Rhyme time for young children, 10.30am – 11am, Livesey library, Tel: 209442 |
|  | Rhyme time for young children, 11am – 11.30am, Darwen library, Tel: 706021 |
|  | Coffee morning, 11am – 12 noon, Livesey library, Tel: 209442 |
|  | Books @ the pub reading group, 6pm – 7.30pm, The Postal Order, Tel: 661221 |
|  | Into the Trees – a talk by author Robert Williams, 7pm – 8pm, Blackburn library, Tel: 661221 |
| Thursday  8 May | Story time for young children, 10.45am – 11.15am, Mill Hill library, Tel: 266380 |
|  | Work club, 1.30pm – 3pm, Darwen library, Tel: 706021 |
|  | Surf over Sand – a talk by author Maggie Grimshaw, 6.30pm – 7.30pm, Darwen library, Tel: 706021 |
| Friday  9 May | ICT drop-in session, 10am – 12 noon, Darwen library, Tel: 706021 |
|  | Story time for young children, 2.15pm – 2.45pm, Roman Road library, Tel: 682347 |
| Saturday  10 May | Read and rhyme for young children, 11am – 11.30am, Livesey library, Tel: 209442 |
| Monday  12 May | Story time for young children, 1.30pm – 2pm, Blackburn library, Tel: 661221 |
|  | Coffee afternoon, 2pm – 3pm, Livesey library, Tel: 209442 |
|  | Introduction to computers course, 2pm – 4pm, Darwen library, Tel: 706021 |
|  | Friends of Darwen library meeting, 5.45pm – 7pm, Darwen library, Tel: 706021 |
| Tuesday  13 May | Carers’ IT group, 10am – 12 noon, Blackburn library, Tel: 661221 |
|  | Virtual library café, 10am – 2pm, Darwen Aldridge Community Academy, Tel:819500 |
|  | Tuesday reading group, 10.15am – 11.45am, Blackburn library, Tel: 661221 |
|  | Basic IT drop-in session, 12.30pm – 1.30pm, Blackburn library, Tel: 661221 |
| Wednesday  14 May | IT skills for jobs drop-in session, 10am – 12 noon, Blackburn library, Tel: 661221 |
|  | Story time for young children, 11am – 11.30am, Darwen library, Tel: 706021 |
|  | Coffee morning, 11am – 12 noon, Livesey library, Tel: 209442 |
| Thursday  15 May | Story time for young children, 10.45am – 11.15am, Mill Hill library, Tel: 266380 |
|  | Work club, 1.30pm – 3pm, Darwen library, Tel: 706021 |
|  | Introduction to computers course, 2pm – 4pm, Blackburn library, Tel: 661221 |
|  | Mystery history – fun workshop for all the family, 4.30pm – 6pm, Blackburn library, Tel: 661221 |
| Friday  16 May | ICT drop-in session, 10am – 12 noon, Darwen library, Tel: 706021 |
|  | Story time for young children, 2.15pm – 2.45pm, Roman Road library, Tel: 682347 |
|  | Mystery history – fun workshop for all the family, 4.30pm – 6pm, Darwen library, Tel: 706021 |
|  | Internet and email drop-in session, 10am – 12 noon, Blackburn library, Tel: 661221 |
| Saturday  17 May | Chatterbooks book club for children aged 8+, 10.30am – 11.30am, Blackburn library, Tel: 661221 |
|  | Read and rhyme for young children, 11am – 11.30am, Livesey library, Tel: 209442 |
| Monday  19 May | Story time for young children, 1.30pm – 2pm, Blackburn library, Tel: 661221 |
|  | Coffee afternoon, 2pm – 3pm, Livesey library, Tel: 209442 |
|  | Internet basics course, 2pm – 4.30pm, Darwen library, Tel: 706021 |
| Tuesday  20 May | Carers’ IT group, 10am – 12 noon, Blackburn library, Tel: 661221 |
|  | Virtual library café, 10am – 2pm, Darwen Aldridge Community Academy, Tel:819500 |
|  | Tuesday reading group, 10.15am – 11.45am, Blackburn library, Tel: 661221 |
|  | Basic IT drop-in session, 12.30pm – 1.30pm, Blackburn library, Tel: 661221 |
|  | Chatterbooks book club for children aged 8+, 3.45pm – 4.45pm, Mill Hill library, Tel: 266380 |
| Wednesday  21 May | IT skills for jobs drop-in session, 10am – 12 noon, Blackburn library, Tel: 661221 |
|  | Rhyme time for young children, 10am – 10.45am, Blackburn library, Tel: 661221 |
|  | Story time for young children, 11am – 11.30am, Darwen library, Tel: 706021 |
|  | Coffee morning, 11am – 12 noon, Livesey library, Tel: 209442 |
|  | Chatterbooks book club for children aged 8+, Darwen library, Tel: 706021 |
| Thursday  22 May | Story time for young children, 10.45am – 11.15am, Mill Hill library, Tel: 266380 |
|  | Work club, 1.30pm – 3pm, Darwen library, Tel: 706021 |
|  | Internet basics course, 2pm – 4.30pm, Blackburn library, Tel: 661221 |
| Friday  23 May | ICT drop-in session, 10am – 12 noon, Darwen library, Tel: 706021 |
|  | Story time for young children, 2.15pm – 2.45pm, Roman Road library, Tel: 682347 |
| Saturday  24 May | Internet and email drop-in session, 10am – 12 noon, Blackburn library, Tel: 661221 |
|  | Read and rhyme for young children, 11am – 11.30am, Livesey library, Tel: 209442 |
| Wednesday  28 May | IT skills for jobs drop-in session, 10am – 12 noon, Blackburn library, Tel: 661221 |
|  | Coffee morning, 11am – 12 noon, Livesey library, Tel: 209442 |
| Thursday  29 May | Work club, 1.30pm – 3pm, Darwen library, Tel: 706021 |
|  | Using email course, 2pm – 4.30pm, Blackburn library, Tel: 661221 |
| Friday  30 May | ICT drop-in session, 10am – 12 noon, Darwen library, Tel: 706021 |
|  | Internet and email drop-in session, 10am – 12 noon, Blackburn library, Tel: 661221 |
|  | Health day, 9.30am – 4pm, Blackburn library, Tel: 682037 |
| Saturday  31 May | Read and rhyme for young children, 11am – 11.30am, Livesey library, Tel: 209442 |

Please note: Any opinions expressed in this newsletter are the contributor’s own and are not necessarily endorsed by Blackburn with Darwen library and information service.

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