

# SCOTTISH CENTRE FOR GEPOETICS

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

**Newsletter 19**

**February 2006**

In 2005 we made significant advances in terms of our publications, courses and membership involvement (see AGM report and minutes). This year we will reprint *Geopoetics: place, culture, world*, offer further geopoetics courses and contribute to the Geopoetics Project in the North.

## **See Hooper Swans**

Our next event will be a **visit on Saturday 4 March to the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust Centre in Caerlaverock** on the Solway Firth to see hundreds of hooper swans and thousands of barnacle geese before they migrate north again. Check out [www.wwt.org.uk](http://www.wwt.org.uk) and email Bill Eddie at [weddie1@staffmail.ed.ac.uk](mailto:weddie1@staffmail.ed.ac.uk) if you want to go and would like more details.

## **Discussion Forum**

We now have our discussion forum up and running to encourage an ongoing dialogue amongst members about all aspects of geopoetics and the works of Kenneth White. We can see threads developing such as

## **Island magazine**

The special issue of *island* magazine containing work from our weekend on Luing will be out next month. To order a copy send a cheque for £5 (£9 for 2 issues) to Essence Press 8 Craiglea Drive Edinburgh EH10 5PA. See also many great images of Luing by members on [www.essencepress.co.uk](http://www.essencepress.co.uk). An *island works* exhibition, a talk by its editor Julie Johnstone and a discussion on poetry, land and ecology will take place at the Stanza poetry festival from 16-19 March. See [www.stanzapoetry.org](http://www.stanzapoetry.org).

## **Hi-Arts Lectures in the North**

At the end of October 2005, Kenneth White gave a unique series of three lectures in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland. Details about each of the lectures can be found on the Hi-Arts Website [http://www.hi-arts.co.uk/geopoetics\\_project.html](http://www.hi-arts.co.uk/geopoetics_project.html). Each lasts for over an hour and contains a wealth of material and ideas. They can be listened to/downloaded from the Hi-Arts site. Follow the link above and scroll down to the bottom of the page to access all three lectures. In addition, there is a further useful feature on Kenneth White at: [http://www.hi-arts.co.uk/dec05\\_feature\\_kenneth\\_white.html](http://www.hi-arts.co.uk/dec05_feature_kenneth_white.html).

It is hoped that these and other essays by Kenneth White will be published in book form later this year by a Highland publisher.

These important developments will be followed up at **the Changing Scotland weekend event at the Ceilidh Place in Ullapool when Norman**

Kenneth White's books (by title), 'The Geopoetics Project' lectures on the Hi-Arts website, the creative expression of geopoetics, ideas for future events etc. It's up to members how it develops and we are hopeful that with a bit of creative anarchy we will build up a searchable archive for future reference. Members who have joined or renewed within the last 12 months (from January 2005) have received an invite to join the forum. Those whose *annual* subs have lapsed should renew ASAP (£10/£5 unwaged) to either of the contacts below in order to participate in the forum. Any member who does not have email and wishes to participate in the forum should contact Graham Urquhart.

**University of Glasgow one day course on the poetry of Kenneth White**

**Saturday 20 May 10.00-16.00.**

Kenneth White's poems will be studied to explore what emerges from the contact between the human mind and the universe. They will be compared to poems by WB Yeats and John Donne. Tutors: Anne Scott and Norman Bissell. Cost £22.50. Enrol now tel. 0141 330 1853.

**Bissell will talk about The Geopoetics Project on Saturday 18 March** and will lead a discussion about setting up a geopoetics group there on **Sunday 19 March**. Transport from Glasgow is available, tel. 01854 612103.

**The Hermitage**

I

Pouring pounding roaring  
drumming thrumming gurning  
foaming churning creaming  
spraying smoking steaming  
streaming gushing flushing  
flashing flailing thrashing

II

December day of rain  
never fully light  
trees vague in the mist  
bare birches delicately hung  
with diamond droplets  
old oaks tinselled  
with lustrous lichen  
vibrant in the soft grey morning.

Tess Darwin

3 December 2005

Geopoetics visit

**Books Still Available**

***Grounding a World. Essays on the work of Kenneth White*** edited by **Gavin Bowd, Charles Forsdick and Norman Bissell** has been favourably reviewed in *Markings* magazine and the Scottish Educational Journal.

To order a copy send a cheque for £9.95 (including p&p) made out to Alba Editions, to Graham Urquhart at the address below.

***Geopoetics: place, culture, world*** by Kenneth White (first edition) is still available, but not for long. Send £6 incl. p&p to Alba Editions c/o Norman Bissell before the last few copies go.

***Kenneth White and the Awkward Squad*** by Hugh Learmont, a reply to the Scottish Review of Books' review of Kenneth White's poetry

**Gardens in Brittany and Galloway**  
**20-21 May**

A weekend of talks, garden visits and museum events in Galloway. For more information contact John Hudson at j.hudson@btinternet.com.

**Kenneth White and Geopoetics Foundation**

The opening of the Kenneth White and Geopoetics Foundation at the Abbaye de Bonport, Pont de l'Arche on the banks of the Seine near Rouen in Normandy on **27 May 2006** will provide a permanent exhibition of his itinerary and work and a programme of conferences, seminars, temporary exhibitions, concerts, study groups etc.

Some of us will be attending this very significant event, so if you are interested in going please contact Norman Bissell ASAP for information about flights and accommodation.

**Alistair Scott**

The death of Alistair Scott in December 2005 was a great loss to all who knew him. A former director of the Forestry Commission and author of *A Pleasure in Scottish Trees* and much else besides, he was a founder member of the Scottish Centre for Geopoetics who

and prose, £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.

**Among the Stones at Meall an Tionail**

*'at the heart of the ontological landscape'*  
*Kenneth White: For MacDiarmid*

Billions of years  
of sleep,  
now this; this  
freak chance  
that has set us down,  
from our dream  
up there in the stars,  
among the granite stones;  
not knowing  
whether this is retreat  
or a beginning,  
but filling us with its power,  
ready to fly  
the Cosmic bird.

Brian Lawrie

**Other Poetry Events**

**8 March at 7.30pm** Meg Peacocke/Colin Will. Two poets with a strong sense of place who find vivid inspiration in the life around them. Scottish Poetry Library, Edinburgh. £3/2.

**21 March at 5.30pm The Poetry Papers**

Christopher Whyte talks about the EU collection of manuscripts by modern poets including W.S Graham, Sorley Maclean, Norman McCaig and Hugh MacDiarmid.

In Edinburgh University Library Brenda Moon Room George Square, Edinburgh.

**Contacts:**

Norman Bissell, director, 340 Lincoln Avenue Glasgow G13 3LP tel. 0141 959 6033 or at

expressed great interest in geopoetics and the work of Kenneth White. If you would like to contribute any words or images to a booklet in Alistair's honour please email [janet.frances@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:janet.frances@tiscali.co.uk).

[norman@rbissell.fsnet.co.uk](mailto:norman@rbissell.fsnet.co.uk) or Graham Urquhart, secretary, 16 Main Street Limekilns Fife KY11 3HL tel. 01383 872907 or at [gurquhart@madasafish.com](mailto:gurquhart@madasafish.com).

Previous Newsletters and links can be found on the International Institute of Geopoetics website: [www.geopoetique.net](http://www.geopoetique.net).

***Mementoliths*** by Colin Will is a collection of poems triggered by a rock or mineral from different parts of the world with each poem preceded by a brief geological description – “a most satisfying richness and variety of texture in both thought and language”: Stewart Conn. Copies can be obtained from Calder Wood Press 1 Beachmont Court Dunbar EH42 1YF, £3.50 post free, cheques payable to Colin Will.

***A Feather on a Finger: Selected Poems*** by Matthew Ewart has been described by Benjamin Morris in *Textualities* as a “marvellous collection... this guiding poetic sensibility is spacious, ecumenical – there is plenty of room here to stretch one's legs and drink in the crisp, cold air.” Matthew was a founding member of the Scottish Centre for Geopoetics, a reviewer of Kenneth White's work who filmed many of his lectures, and the organiser of a celebration of his work at

Glasgow University. His collection can be obtained from Ruth Donaldson 1 Aytoun Road Glasgow G41 5RL, £5.50 post free, cheques payable to Ruth Donaldson.

### **Save Dalkeith Park**

The campaign continues to prevent a bypass road from cutting the Park in two and destroying wildlife habitats. Check out the website [www.save-dalkeith-park.org.uk](http://www.save-dalkeith-park.org.uk) to see how you can help.

**Members are invited to nominate themselves for our Council which meets four times a year in Edinburgh.**

### **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 Geopoeitics, to Graham Urquhart, secretary.

**All annual subscriptions are now due unless paid since February 2005.**

**Please copy this Newsletter to others who may be interested.**

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