

OXFORD RUSSIA FUND
SEMINAR ON CONTEMPORARY ENGLISH FICTION, 2015
Perm State University, 10th-11th September 2015

Participants:

Co-directors: Karen Hewitt (Oxford University)

Professor Boris Proskurnin (Perm State National Research University)

From Britain:

David Edgar (British Playwright)

Professor John McRae (Nottingham University)

Mary-Kay Wilmers (Editor, *The London Review of Books*)

Jeremy Harding (Contributing Editor, *The London Review of Books*)

From Russia and Belarus

Participants from 69 universities.

PROGRAMME Thursday 10th September

9.00 Registration.

10.00. – 10.40. The Rector of Perm State University will open the Seminar, followed by an introduction by Boris Proskurnin and a discussion of the book supply by Karen Hewitt.

10.40 – 11.30 Short talks on some of our novels by our British speakers

11.30 -11.50 COFFEE

11.50 – 12.40 David Edgar: Postwar British Theatre

12.-40 - 12.50 p.m. Questions and discussion on the talk

12.50 – 1.25. Karen Hewitt: The Commentaries with special reference to *Testing the Echo* (David to contribute).

1.25 – 2.15 LUNCH

2.20 – 3.10 Teachers in groups to discuss the experience of teaching the novels with newcomers to the project; the British participants will move from group to group as requested.

3.15 to 4.15 Workshops on four topics:

David Edgar on How playwrights structure plays

John McRae on Literature in Language Teaching

Jeremy Harding: Close reading of English poetry

Karen Hewitt on Time shifts and confusions in recent fiction.

4.20 – 4.40 COFFEE

4.40 – 5-10 Boris Proskurnin 'Hilary Mantel's *Wolf Hall* and *Bring up the Bodies*' with discussion

5.15– 5.50 Jeremy Harding 'The Migrant Voice in literature' with discussion

5.50 - 6.30 Play-reading by the British team

6.30 *Some universities to collect books.*

FRIDAY 11th September

9.15 – 10.05 John McRae: How literary language works.

10.05-10.15 Questions and discussion on the talk.

10.15-11.00 Short talks on some of our novels by our British speakers

11.00 – 11.20 COFFEE

11.20–12.25 Seminar exercise on ‘Reading Fiction carefully’.

12.25 – 1.10. Mary-Kay Wilmers on Editing *The London Review of Books*

1.10 – 1.25 **Karen Hewitt and Boris Proskurnin** on Editing *Footpath*.

1.25 to 2.15 LUNCH

2.15 - 3.05 Karen Hewitt on ‘Is literature moral?’

3.05-3.15 Questions and discussion on this talk.

3.15 to 4.15 Workshops on four topics:

David Edgar on Political Theatre;

John McRae: Literature in Language Teaching;

Karen Hewitt on Irony: not saying what you mean;

Jeremy Harding and Mary-Kay Wilmers on Literary Journalism.

4.20 – 4.40 COFFEE

4.40 – 5.40 A Question and Answer session on ‘**Aspects of British Literature today**’.

7.15 Final dinner and party

David Edgar has written plays for the National Theatre and for Royal Shakespeare Company, including a noted adaptation of Dickens’ *Nicholas Nickleby* (1980). He wrote a trilogy of plays about Europe after the Cold War, which have been performed internationally. He founded Britain’s first university playwriting course, published *How Plays Work* (2009) and was President of the Writers’ Guild of Great Britain from 2007 to 2013. During the last academic year he was Humanitas Visiting Professor of Drama at Oxford in 2014-15.

John McRae was Professor of Language in Literature Studies at the University of Nottingham from 1992, and is now Senior Teaching Fellow. Since the publication of *Reading Between the Lines* (CUP) in 1984 he has worked at the language and literature interface. He has written or edited over fifty books, and has directed a wide range of plays from Shakespeare to Samuel Beckett across the world. With Ronald Carter he has edited the *Routledge History of Literature in English: Britain and Ireland*.

Mary-Kay Wilmers began a career in publishing at Faber & Faber when T.S. Eliot still sometimes came into the office. She then worked on the BBC weekly paper, *The Listener*, until 1974, and at *The Times Literary Supplement* from 1974 to 1979. *The London Review of Books* was founded in October 1979 where she began as Deputy Editor. Since 1992 she has been Editor. She first visited Russia in 1958 as part of an Oxford student delegation.

Jeremy Harding is Contributing Editor to *The London Review of Books*. He reviews widely on literary and political issues around the world and is the author of *Border Vigils* about the plight of migrants and the politics of immigration. He has also written a memoir, *Mother Country*, about his own family.