

Welcome to the October Newsletter!

October might have been a cold and stormy month but that hasn't stopped us from getting on as usual – with an abundance of literary events, new podcast episodes, and behind-the-scenes reading! Here are some highlights from our month.

Short Story Seminar

by Annika Dahlman

Ringwood was very excited to host a Short Story Seminar at Hillhead Library on Sunday October 22nd, and even more excited to see so many people attending and enjoying themselves.



A good turnout at Hillhead Library

Ringwood's 2022 Short Story Competition winner, Maureen Cullen, had pre-recorded a very interesting talk on her experience with getting started as a writer and what it taught her about the art of short story writing. Award-winning short story writer and CWA longlisted novelist Rob McInroy also joined us over Zoom to kindly share with us a whole array of incredibly helpful advice for writing, and answered some of the audience's questions.

With all that insightful advice fresh in mind, the attendees of the seminar were then invited to put said advice to practice straight away. Divided into small groups, each one led by a Ringwood intern, the attendees completed a series of creative writing exercises, ranging in both kind and difficulty. You can find the exercises [on our website](#).



Intern Annika Dahlman explains the Creative Writing Exercises

To round off, we spoke about our Short Story Competition and our prizes, the deadline for which is December 1st, and urged the attendees to let this seminar inspire them to keep on writing and submit their work.

Chatting about all they'd learned from Maureen and Rob and the things that had come out as they put pen to paper, the attendees stepped out of Hillhead Library into a sunny Sunday afternoon, and the Ringwood team sent them off happily in the confidence that among them might have been some talented, budding writers, and perhaps even our next Short Story Competition winner.

The Bone on the Beach Launch Events

by Rosie Hall

In case you somehow missed it, over the course of October we at Ringwood have

been celebrating and promoting our newest release, Fiona Gillan Kerr's magical debut novel *The Bone on the Beach*. At the end of September, we launched the novel at Ness Book Fest in the Highland capital. Our next stop was to bring the book back to the place that inspired its creation, with an event at Thurso Library on the 13th October.



Intern Ashleigh Tucker and author Fiona Gillan Kerr waving the Ringwood banner up North.

At this event, we had the pleasure of having Fiona Mackenzie from the Strathnaver Museum join us to discuss Highland cultural history with the author Fiona Gillan Kerr – how literature and novels like *The Bone on the Beach* can communicate the joy and vibrancy of Highland life and culture whilst being mindful of its stormy past. We had a great local turnout, and a fantastic evening – thank you to all who came along.



Fiona Mackenzie and Fiona Gillan Kerr.

After the event in Thurso, we brought *The Bone on the Beach* to the Scottish capital with an event in indie bookshop Typewronger Books in Edinburgh.



Typewranger Books in Haddington Place.

For this event, we were joined by Gaelic student Ailsa Morgan, who talked to Fiona about the Highlands language and arts in the book, drawing from her experiences in her studies and living in a Gaelic-speaking community on Uist for a portion of the year! We had a fantastic time hearing readings, hearing Fiona answer questions, and

sharing stories of the Highlands, myths, and magic. Thank you so much to all who made it along, and to Typewronger for hosting us!



Fiona Gillian Kerr and Ailsa Morgan.

There is also a small supply of signed copies of *The Bone on the Beach* available at Typewronger – run, don't walk, to get your copy today!



Copies of the Bone on the Beach available at Typewronger Books.

Missed out on these events? Don't worry – we have one more coming up! Rounding up our event schedule, we have our final launch event for the Bone on the Beach happening on the evening of the 14th November in Glasgow, at the beautiful Arlington Baths.

This event will be part of Book Week Scotland, and so marks just one of the fantastic literary events happening up and down the country between the 13th and the 19th of November. Don't miss out! Book your free spot [here](#).

Celebrating Leela Soma and Murder at the Mela
by Megan Gibson



Join us at the **Hillhead Library** at **2pm** on the **19th November** for our event: *Celebrating Leela Soma: Discussions on Women's Crime Fiction, Tartan Noir, and Writing in the Wider Glasgow Communities*.

This event will feature a fascinating panel of guests to talk about Leela Soma, the wider themes of her novel, *Murder at the Mela*, and Women's Crime Fiction. Our panel will include:

Anjana Sen (poet, writer, and Secretary of the Scottish Association of Writers), Mridula Sharma (Leela's former Ringwood support worker), Anne Pettigrew (Ringwood author), and Isobel Freeman (Ringwood's Chief Editor).

Come and join us to learn more about the novel that BookRiot cited as one of the '9 Best Contemporary Scottish Books You Need to Read', and the author behind it. You won't want to miss it!

This event is free and open to everyone. Please visit our social media pages for more information.

Get to Know Our Interns: Eleni Koumentakou

by Megan Gibson



Publishing is a hard industry to break into—nearly impossible to get a job without experience, and hard to get experience without a job—but that’s where

Ringwood comes in. Ringwood operates with an Intern model, meaning it's a chance for aspiring publishers to get the necessary experience.

Each month, we chat with one of our interns at Ringwood Publishing, to hear about the variety of roles and experiences our interns are having. This month, Megan Gibson talks to Eleni Koumentakou. Eleni has been at Ringwood for 6 months, and currently acts as Submissions Secretary, as well as the Lead Editor for one of our upcoming releases, *Kitten Heels*.

Tell us about your background and how you came to Ringwood.

Well, there is not much to tell really. I moved to Edinburgh about five years ago to start a master's programme on Comparative Literature and after I graduated I knew that I wanted to work in the book industry. I am myself a writer, so I spent my time reading and writing poetry for a while before I decided to join the publishing industry. I have had a few poems published in *Inkwell* and *Outcrop* magazine, and am still working to get more of my work out there. I found out about Ringwood through a friend who had done the internship in the past, and I thought it might be a good idea to try different roles and see if publishing is the right field for me. And honestly, I am so glad I did! It has been an amazing experience, quite challenging at times, but it has offered me such great opportunities to test myself and enhance my skills in multiple hands-on projects.

What is your role at Ringwood?

That is probably the best thing about this internship—at Ringwood I was involved in many aspects of publishing and tried to find what fits better to my skills and interests. I have been involved in marketing and creating a strategy for one of Ringwood's titles, *Bodysnatcher*, and have been involved in assisting with events planning.

Currently, I am mainly working in the editorial side, as Submissions Secretary. I am responsible for reviewing submissions and keeping in touch with authors, as well as creating reports for the manuscripts as part of our reviewing process. I am also a member of the Editorial Committee, helping out in making the decisions concerning which submissions make the final shortlisting into publication.

Finally, I am the Lead Editor of one of our newest titles, *Kitten Heels*, to be launched

later this spring. This, I have to say, is one of the most exciting tasks I have taken on so far, and I am so happy that I had the support and trust to be offered this role.

What are your favourite genres of books?

I read pretty much everything I can get my hands on—my bookshelves are filled to the brim and I am slowly powering through all of the 327 books I own. I usually like reading modern fiction that deals with different aspects of real life. I like reading books that move me, that touch my heart in ways that even after years have passed, I can still feel it and that makes me recommend the book to other people. Personal favourites that I read this year—I do not dare say favourites in general—have been *Love in the Big City* by Sang Young Park, *On Earth We Are Briefly Gorgeous* by Ocean Vuong, *Lanny* by Max Porter and *How to be Both* by Ali Smith.

What do you most enjoy about working in publishing and what are your goals for the future?

I really enjoy working in editorial, I think editing and reviewing submissions is absolutely what I love in the industry. You know the best thing about being in this line of work is when you have a pile of 15 manuscripts that you have to go through, and then suddenly one sparks that joy, that you read and read and cannot put it down in fear of missing out. It is the most amazing feeling I have experienced, discovering that golden nugget, as they say, and knowing that you can be a part of bringing this work into the world and the lives of other people.

The events would be another thing I really enjoy in the industry. Being part of organising and making sure they run well from the backstage—I am not a front of scenes, chairperson myself—is very fulfilling. I think in events like these, I have had the most interesting and inspiring conversations with people from the literary world, either in publishing, authors, artists, or other book lovers, etc. That kind of exchange of ideas and sharing these narratives is only possible through events like these and being a part of making them happen was one of the most fulfilling aspects of my role in Ringwood.

I will, definitely, try to be a part of the publishing industry after this internship. If one thing has become clear during my time with Ringwood is that I absolutely love this work and I am confident I am good at it, so I will persevere. I also plan on focusing more time on my poetry and developing my writing, attempting to publish a few of my


works myself. Here's to hope, you know!

What would you like to see more of in the Scottish publishing industry?

I think the publishing industry as a workplace definitely needs more diversity, considering aspects like age, background, gender, sexuality, etc. Representation is everything in society and what better way to explore different perspectives in literature than through the people who have these experiences.

And that applies to any new Scottish literature that I would love to see launched. Stories of everyday life of LGBTQ+ people is something that I have found missing in Scottish literature, especially children's books. As a queer woman myself, I would give anything to have had books growing up that made me feel seen and validate my experiences, let alone help me understand that my own feelings were something that I am not going through alone. So that would definitely be something I would like to see developing within the Scottish publishing industry and potentially try to contribute in any way I can from within the industry.

Thank you for your time, Eleni!



New Podcast Episodes

by Jiyuan Li



A wee reminder that the Ringwood Publishing Podcast has returned with an exciting Season 2! If you haven't already, I assure you it's worth a listen. With our amazing hosts Matilda and Jess, Ringwood has brought forth four new episodes in October, featuring author of *The Bone on the Beach* Fiona Gillan Kerr, Ringwood short story competition winner-turned-judge Maureen Cullen, previous Ringwood intern and current bookseller at Typewronger Books Namitha Iyer, and Ringwood author Allan Nicol.

Don't miss out on the spooky season spirit and give the episode with Fiona a go, where she shares her source of inspiration and tells us about the writing process behind her debut novel, *The Bone on the Beach*, a tale of Highland haunting with roots in Celtic Myths! Or, if you have a great short story at hand or want to try your hand at writing one, or even if you know someone who does— we got you covered! In her episode, last-year-winner and this-year's-judge of the Ringwood Short Story Competition, Maureen Cullen shares all her best writing advice. Joining us in the penultimate episode of the month, Namitha Iyer brings some fresh insight into her

days at Typewronger and how it's like to be working in bookselling. In October's final episode Allan Nicol joins us for a chat on all things True Crime and on his latest book on Sheila Garvie. Make sure to stay tuned for more exciting episodes!

As usual, you can catch up on us on Apple Podcasts, Spotify, or wherever you get your podcasts!

Bodysnatcher Events

by Eleni Koumentakou

On the other side of the pond, Carol Margaret Davison joined Nav Nanwa on CBC's *Windsor Morning* on the 11th of October, talking about all things *Bodysnatcher*. During their interview, Carol talked about how inspiration turned into novel, in one of her many visits to Edinburgh, along with the attention the novel first received from the literary circle and figures in the film industry.

To hear the full interview, visit the CBC page [here](#).

Following the interview, Carol was part of the Windsor Book Festival/ Festival du Livre Windsor, which opened its doors for the first time since the pandemic this year. The event took place on Friday 13th of October, and what better day could they have picked to discuss the works of gothic and horror of the authors who joined the panel!



BOOKFEST
Festival du livre

WINDSOR 2023

Friday Night Fiction

Friday Oct 13, 7pm - 8pm



**Carol Margaret
Davison**



CM Forest



Chris Kuriata

**School of Creative Arts, Armouries Building
353 Freedom Way, Windsor, ON N9A 3A7**

The panel, consisting of [Carol](#) along [CM Forest](#), and [Chris Kuriata](#), led an interesting conversation, and offered snippets of their work with some spook-tacular readings. Carol discussed the inspiration behind *Bodysnatcher* and shared her writing process and the small rituals she follows, helping that process. When the event moderator, Dan MacDonald, led the conversation to the narrative and the interchanging perspectives her work follows, Carol discussed the importance of the two narratives and went into more depth on some of the scenes that 'haunted' her after writing them.

Carol Margaret Davison will also appear in Ringwood's Writing Historical Fiction event at Typewronger Books in Edinburgh on November 13th at 7pm.

To purchase the book, you can click [here](#).

Writing Historical Fiction Event

by Emma Clarke


Ringwood Publishing Presents

WRITING HISTORICAL FICTION

Forgotten Voices

WITH

**FLORA JOHNSTON
ROB MCINROY
CAROL MARGARET DAVISON
L.A. KRISTIENSEN.**



13
NOVEMBER

TYPEWRONGER BOOKS
4a Haddington Pl,
Edinburgh
7pm - 8.30pm

Save the date, because at 7pm-8.30 pm on November 13th, Ringwood is hosting a historical fiction event at Typewronger Books in Edinburgh! Lynda Kristiansen, Flora Johnson, and Rob McInroy will be there in person, with Carol Margaret Davison joining us from the Great White North. It will be a showcase of Ringwood's historical fiction, featuring authors who have written about some of the most thrilling and intriguing moments in Scottish history, often from new angles. Each author will perform a short reading from their book after their respective talk, and then there will be a panel discussion chaired by a Ringwood representative, with a chance for the audience to ask questions and start conversations of

their own. This is a really exciting congregation of fantastic Ringwood authors, and we don't want you to miss this!



Meeting the Managers: Donny McIntyre

by Margaret Mitchell



As part of our Newsletter series, Meeting the Managers, Margaret Mitchell spoke with Donny McIntyre, one of the newly appointed members of the four person Ringwood

Publishing Executive Group.

Donny McIntyre joined Ringwood Publishing in March of this year as a senior volunteer. Introduced to the company by a friend, he was interested in Ringwood's support of new Scottish writers and intrigued by its Intern training program. Ringwood operates an active Intern program providing younger people with the chance to learn the wide range of skills required in publishing. "Ringwood Publishing has a nurturing role, nurturing talent in both writers and Interns and creates a safe place for them to work and learn. I think Ringwood is doing amazingly well in encouraging people to write and giving first time Scottish writers a foothold. As a new member of Ringwood's Executive Group, I want to see the company continue to do just that."

Within the company, Donny's main involvement is marketing and making best use of social media to create awareness of Ringwood's publications and its outreach events. "I have forty years in the commercial world and know its glories and its pitfalls". He has had a varied and interesting career (so far) with some incredible work life experiences including working as a chef in the Café du Paris in Arbois, a baker in Rotterdam and running a major pub chain centred in London.

With new books coming out regularly, such as Fiona Gillan Kerr's *The Bone on the Beach* launched this month, the Interns he works with are kept busy with well-attended book launches. Donny also mentions the many events put on by Ringwood, such as the highly successful Short Story Seminar held this month at Hillhead Library. The two speakers, Maureen Cullen and Rob McNroy, assisted by Ringwood Interns, "knew how to engage the audience and encourage people to take up writing." Donny was impressed that "those who turned up, from many different backgrounds, were all really keen to express themselves through writing. Ringwood through its outreach events and focus on new writers makes it easier for people to do just that. And that is a wonderful thing."

"Publishing is something new for me" he explains, "I'm interested in the end product- books, writing, literature- but also in understanding the mechanics of publishing. I came from a time when books were important. I read constantly, and had aspirations to be a writer... and still have aspirations to be a writer." His own preferred reading list is long and varied, and he remains in awe of people who can express their ideas so forcefully and well in writing. Within his extensive and eclectic taste in literature, Jack Kerouac stands out for him. "*On the Road* is just incredibly wonderful and you think ... wow ... a human being can actually write that."

Donny says of the Interns he mentors “I’m just here to help.” But he sees so much in his volunteering at Ringwood that is enjoyable. “My involvement with Ringwood gives me yet another opportunity to interact with people who are interested in the same things that I am.” Meeting a person like Donny with his enthusiasm and openness to new ideas is not something that happens every day. Along with Ringwood’s mission to support new Scottish writing and support young people starting out in publishing, the company has an amazing ability to attract talented and creative individuals to contribute to those aims.

Thank you for your time, Donny!

Until next time,

Matilda Eker & Megan Gibson (Editors), Jiyuan Li & Margaret Mitchell (Assistant Editors), and the entire Ringwood team!

Want to share this with your friends and family? The Ringwood Newsletter is also available from our website www.ringwoodpublishing.com.