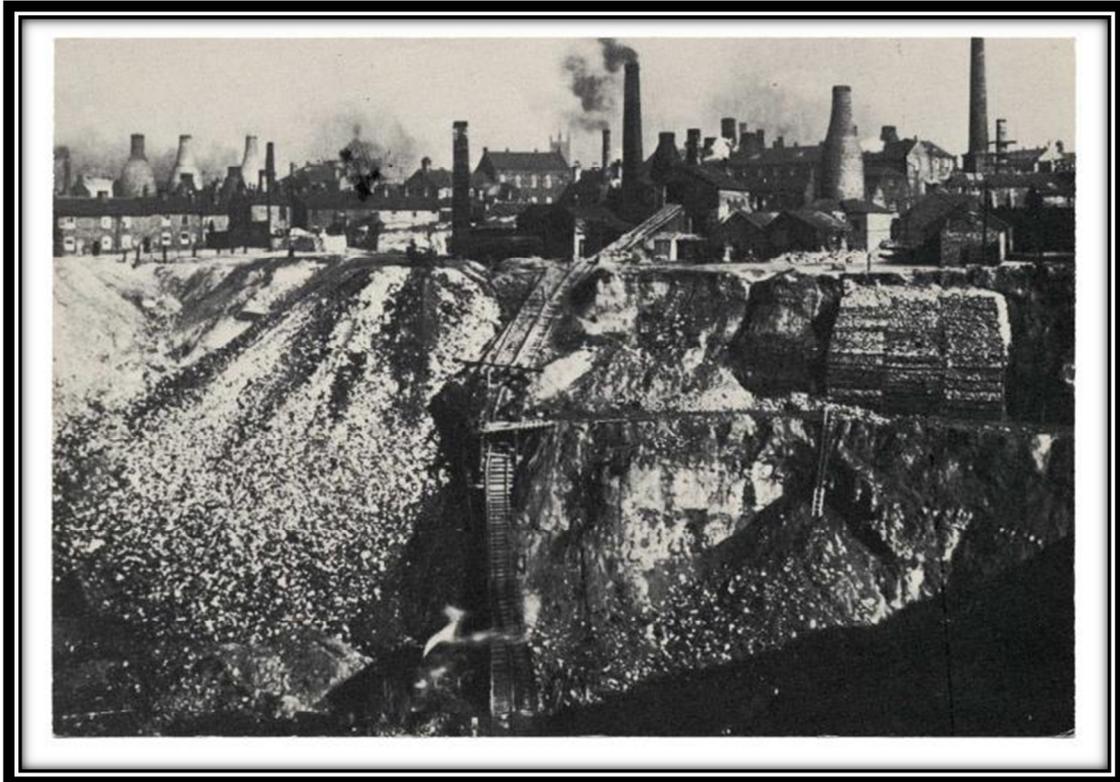




# **STOKE-IN-PRINT II**

## **The Potteries in Fact and Fiction**



Daisy Bank Marl Hole, William Blake c. 1900 (Potteries Museum & Art Gallery)

### Digging

The marl, they dug a second nature  
And water, seeping up to fill their pits,  
Sheeted them to lakes that wink and shine  
Between tips and steeples, streets and waste

Charles Tomlinson

**A short public-access course led by  
Dr Catherine Burgass at Keele University  
(February-May 2018)**

## COURSE INFORMATION

<http://www.keele.ac.uk/hums/shortcoursesandcontinuingeducation/>

**Course overview:** We will explore the ways that writers have conveyed their lived experiences and impressions of the Potteries from the late Victorian era to the present day. We will discuss the following questions via close reading of a variety of texts (novels, poems, plays, memoirs):

- What kind of first impression does Stoke make on the literary tourist?
- Are there significant differences between the way that 'outsiders' and Stoke-born writers present the region?
- Must a writer leave his or her place of origin to write about it well, and do all exiled writers return – at least in their imagination?

The course will be of interest to keen readers and anyone who wishes to explore the region's literature in greater depth and historical context. No previous experience or qualifications are required – the course is open to all.



**Course leader: Dr Catherine Burgass** is a regional literature specialist with twenty years' experience as a university lecturer (Leicester, Liverpool and Staffordshire) and international publications. She has given numerous academic papers and public talks on local writers at festivals, museums and galleries. Stoke's literary heritage is rich and diverse (more than just Arnold Bennett!) and Catherine is keen to explore fresh perspectives on this literature with fellow readers.

**Meeting time and location:** Tuesdays 6-8pm, 27 February-15 May 2018 at Keele University (room confirmed nearer the time).

**Cost:** Just £80 for all ten two-hour sessions, handouts, tea/coffee, and biscuits. Parking is free at Keele after 5pm.

**How to register:** Please see the form on this leaflet.

**RESOURCES:** A handout with questions and suggestions will be provided prior to each session.

**Keele Library:** Registered students will have access to Keele University Library, including limited borrowing rights and access to the Archive.



**Informal enquiries** are welcome, please email Catherine at [cburgass@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:cburgass@yahoo.co.uk)

## COURSE PROGRAMME

<b>Week 1</b> (27 Feb.)	Introduction to the course. H.G. Wells, 'The Cone' (1895). What was Wells' connection with the Potteries and how does he exploit the district in this short story, as well as his later science-fiction works?
<b>Week 2</b> (6 March)	Sabine Baring-Gould, <i>The Frobishers</i> (1901). How on earth did a West Country Vicar (better known for penning the lyrics of Onward Christian Soldiers and books about werewolves) come to set this late Victorian novel in the Potteries and what did he make of the region?
<b>Week 3</b> (13 Mar.)	Charles Shaw, <i>When I was a Child</i> (1903). Shaw's memoirs describe his experiences as a child worker in the Potteries, including a spell in the workhouse. We will analyse this depiction while considering the nature and status (fact/fiction?) of memoirs.
<b>Week 4</b> (20 Mar.)	Arnold Bennett, <i>Clayhanger</i> (1910). One of Bennett's Five Towns' novels makes rather liberal use of Shaw's book. How does Bennett integrate Shaw's work, along with his own personal history and broader social commentary, in this story of oedipal struggle in Burslem and beyond.
<b>Week 5</b> (27 Mar.)	A. Scott (Wilfred Bloor), <i>The Jabez Stories</i> . In the 1960s, local newspaper the <i>Sentinel</i> ran a series of stories based on the author's reminiscences. Drawing on the Keele University Archive, we will strike out for a rural Staffordshire mining village.  <b>TWO-WEEK BREAK FOR EASTER</b>
<b>Week 6</b> (17 April)	Mary Kelly, <i>A Spoilt Kill</i> (1961). This novel is a mystery in more ways than one. It won a crime fiction award on first publication and was reissued by Virago in 1991. Although Kelly was praised for her authentic evocation of place, little is known of her connection with Stoke-on-Trent. We shall try and find out more!
<b>Week 7</b> (24 April)	The Victoria Theatre Archive. How did pioneering director Peter Cheeseman work with the local community to produce ground-breaking documentary plays such as <i>Fight for Shelton Bar!</i> (1974). What is Cheeseman's legacy today?
<b>Week 8</b> (1 May)	David Haden, <i>The Spyderys of Burslem</i> (2012). We will consider how Haden mines Burslem's rich local history and architectural heritage in this novel.
<b>Week 9</b> (8 May)	'Homecoming'. This week we will explore the ways in which contemporary poets such as Pauline Stainer, Michael Hulse and John Lancaster look back to their place of origin. What is it that tempts these poets back home, both on the page and in person?
<b>Week 10</b> (15 May)	Jonathan Taylor, <i>Melissa</i> (2015). A quiet Trentham cul-de-sac is the setting for this subtly supernatural literary fiction. Though Taylor has emigrated to the East Midlands, his two novels – along with an earlier memoir – are set in Stoke. This week we will attempt to summarise the literary lure of the Potteries.

## REGISTRATION

### How to enroll:

You can post the form below with a cheque for £80.00 payable to Keele University to:

Mr Scott Dean  
School of Humanities  
Keele University  
Staffordshire  
ST5 5BG

Email: [s.dean@keele.ac.uk](mailto:s.dean@keele.ac.uk)

Or you can make a telephone payment by debit or credit card by calling Scott Dean on 01782 733203. Please indicate that this is for the Stoke-in-Print Adult Education Course.

Please note that no refunds can be made after 26<sup>th</sup> February.

Name	
Address	
Telephone Number	
Email Address	