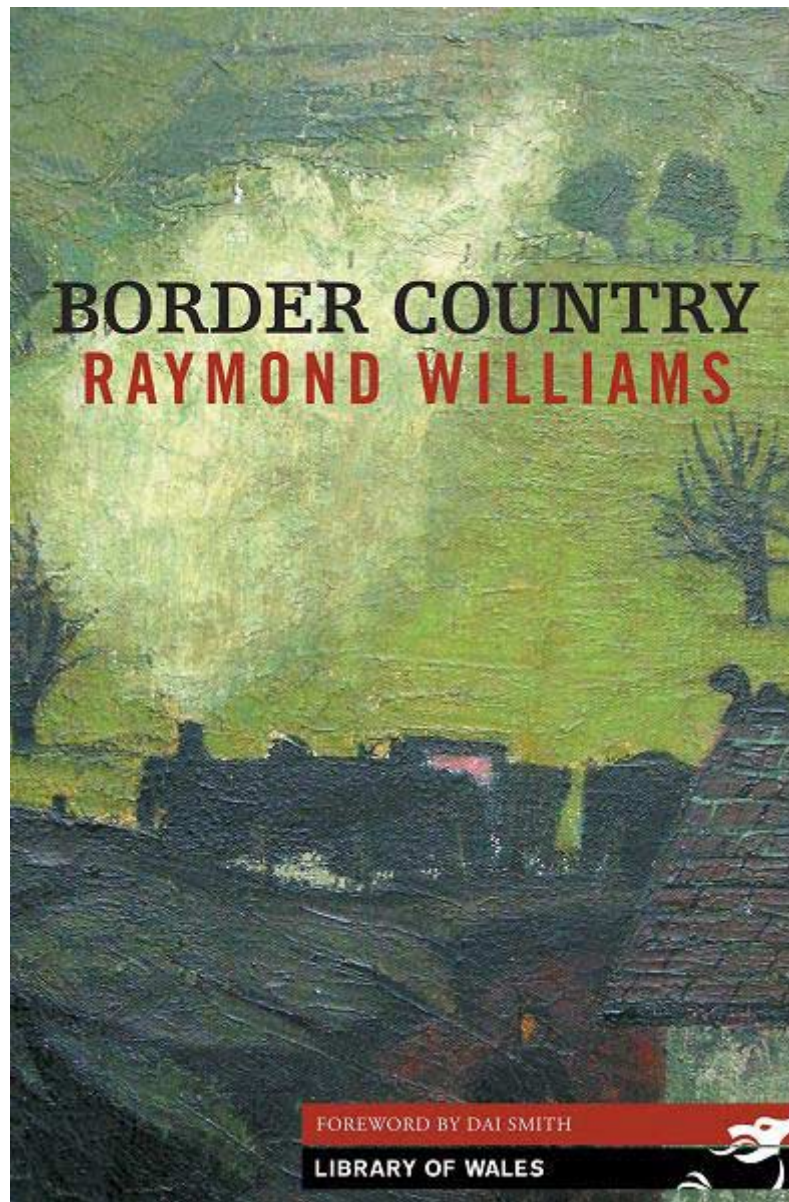




Raymond Williams Society Newsletter



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No 1 Summer 2006

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From the Chair

The Raymond Williams Society was established in 1989 with the aid of a capital sum donated by family, friends and admirers. It exists to encourage intellectual and political projects in areas broadly connected with Williams's work and, to that end, has organised a series of lectures, conferences symposia and seminars concerned with education, culture, the media, drama, and the future of socialism. And, as you will see from the reports in this Newsletter, the ideas of Raymond Williams continue to inform and inspire a wide range of activities and publications.

We would like to expand the membership of the society and are planning a range of new activities and events. In 2006 we are holding public talks and seminars in Nottingham, London, and Swansea, and supporting other events in association with the WEA and the Raymond Williams Memorial Fund at Wedgwood Memorial College, North Staffordshire (see page 3). We shall also, in 2007, re-launch the journal *Key Words: A Journal of Cultural Materialism* (for more details see Page 7).

Membership of the Raymond Williams Society will continue to cost £10 a year (£5 unwaged and students). New 2006 members will receive free copies of *Key Words* issues 2 and 4, advance notification of all Society events, and will have the right to attend the Annual General Meeting, to vote, and to stand for the Management Committee.

The Society has a website at www.raymondwilliamssociety.org, which is introduced on Page 7 of this Newsletter.

Peter Brooker
Chair, Raymond Williams Society

Cover image: a new edition of Raymond Williams' first published novel Border Country, recently published in the Library of Wales series. See page 5.

18th Annual Raymond Williams Weekend

'Lifelong Learning—if only...' was the title of this year's Raymond Williams Weekend held in May at the Wedgwood Memorial College in Staffordshire.

Forty participants from all over the UK addressed the gap between the 'Lifelong Learning' rhetoric of government and educational policy documents and the reality. The gap, already wide, is, if anything, broadening. However, our tutors (including Sue Jackson, Director of Lifelong Learning at Birkbeck, London University; Zoe Munby, Development Consultant for Home Start; Granville Williams, Editor Free Press and Arts in Residential College Education leaders,) helped by contributions from student participants, also looked for 'Resources for a Journey of Hope'. Works by Raymond Williams were mentioned in most sessions, especially in the discussion on 'Dumbing Down?—The Media, Education and Culture': *Television, Technology and Cultural Form* remains a remarkably prescient book.

There are some positives we can build on: the recent grant by Chancellor Gordon Brown of an additional £4.5 million for Trade Union education; the growth of 'self-help' groups like U3A and reading groups; the potential for 'grey power' in adult education; the Emilio nurseries of Italy as a model for early years; the use of the web for networking and campaigning by the Campaign for Press and Broadcasting Freedom (www.cpb.org.uk/). Chad Goodwin (Chair of the Thomas Paine Society), who led a session on Godwin and Robert Owen, recommended www.opendemocracy.net.

The theme for next year's Weekend (27-29 April 2007) will be: 'Borders and Boundaries—the movement of ideas and peoples'. Suggestions for keynote lecturer and tutors should be sent to the co-ordinator, derektatton@btinternet.com.

Derek Tatton
Raymond Williams Fund

'Relevances' Panel at ACLA 2006

The 2006 conference of the American Comparative Literature Association (ACLA) included a seminar entitled 'The Relevances of Raymond Williams'. The seminar was led by Keith O'Regan of York University and included eleven papers by scholars from the US, the UK and Australia covering topics as diverse as Williams' film and television criticism, cultural materialism and democratic socialism, Gilbert & George's early sculptures and alternative country music. The conference was held at Princeton in March and a full list of participants and abstracts of their presentations can be found at weblamp.princeton.edu/~acla06/the-relevances-of-raymond-williams and on the Society website.

'Monkey's Typewriter' wins community publishing prize

The 2005 winner of the Raymond Williams Community Publishing Prize was 'The Monkey's Typewriter' by Willesden Green Writers Workshop in North London and published by Willesden Green Library. This is an anthology of 18 stories and poems by members of the workshop. The runner-up prize went to The Kitchen Suitcase, a snapshot of the lives of seven women from Zayis Raanon, a Jewish organisation in Gateshead in the northeast of England.

The prize was established in 1989 in tribute to Raymond Williams and is dedicated to commending two published works of outstanding creative and imaginative quality that reflect the life and experiences of particular communities. It is open to non-profit making publishers and is awarded annually. It is administered by Arts Council England.

Biography on Film

The television documentary *Border Crossing: The Journey of Raymond Williams* won the Jury Award at the 27th Celtic Film and Television Festival held in Falmouth, Cornwall in March this year. The Jury Award is a special award made at the discretion of the International Jury for its quality of production and direction and technical or craft excellence. The film's director, **Colin Thomas**, has sent us these thoughts on *Border Crossing*.

Would I be interested in directing a programme on Raymond Williams?! I could hardly believe my ears. The question was asked by Mike Poole, a BBC4 executive producer based in Bristol, who is as enthusiastic about Raymond Williams's work as I am. A year later he had got the programme commissioned.

From the outset, I wanted Raymond Williams's 'structure of feeling' to come over through his novels as well as from his non fiction work so this involved a substantial amount of dramatisation. It was a thrilling moment watching Dafydd Price from the local school running through the fields and across the railway track at Pandy, just as the boy Raymond must have done some eighty years ago. And the ghost of the young Raymond once again walked amongst the toffs at Cambridge as they strode off to their May Balls.

This was not going to be a piece of hagiography and I made a point of including people like David Hare and Paul Gilroy who have been sharply critical of Raymond Williams in the past. As it turned out, their view of him has now mellowed—to such an extent that Daniel Williams's perceptive response to Paul Gilroy's earlier attack became unnecessary and didn't make it to the final cut.

Hopefully the welcome decision by the Library of Wales to reprint *Border Country* will mean that many more people will now be enabled to appreciate Raymond Williams's huge contribution to the 'structure of feeling' of our own time. I'd like to think that *Border Crossing*, shown on BBC Wales as well as on BBC4, made some contribution to that too.



Copies of *Border Crossing* may be obtained from
Colin Thomas at ctbr03509@blueyonder.co.uk

‘Border Country’ back in print

Dai Smith, Raymond Williams Chair in Cultural History at the University of Wales, Swansea, reports on the new edition of *Border Country* and his discovery of two unpublished novels.

The reappearance of *Border Country* in print is in no small part due to the new Library of Wales initiative supported by the Welsh Assembly Government. The series has been launched under my editorship, to ensure that works written in English about Wales—‘classics’ is an unfortunate but convenient short hand—which are currently out of print or generally unavailable will be easily available with around a hundred books to be included in the series over the next ten years.

In addition to putting free copies in the schools and colleges of Wales, the intention is to reach as wide a readership as possible in Wales and, of course, beyond its borders. In the first five books Raymond Williams’ *Border Country* sits alongside novellas by Gwyn Thomas, a fellow Welshman and novelist much admired by Raymond, and a combined edition of Lewis Jones’ colossal 1930s epics, *Cwmardy* and *We Live*, both of which Williams knew well as he did most of the corpus of Welsh industrial fiction. For me, to be able to place *Border Country* in this first offering was to make a statement of intent about the whole series, which all those involved prayed would find an audience where similar, if smaller, initiatives had failed in the past.

The first good news is that we have succeeded beyond our expectations within only a few months. Publicity on the Verb (BBC R3) and Start the Week (BBC R4) certainly helped but no one could pretend that this was easy reading. Still, the publisher Parthian Books has now reprinted *Border Country* three times and for books in English about Wales the sales figures are without precedent. Or, to put it another way, there are now over four thousand new copies of Raymond’s masterpiece in print and being read. For those of us who admire this novel enormously there can be no better way of imagining the Williams fictional oeuvre—which he valued more than any other part of his writing—beginning to receive the serious critical attention it deserves.

Unpublished Novels

Advance news is that in the course of biographical research for my study of the ‘making’ of Raymond Williams I have found, pieced together and more or less established from a mass of discarded and unpaginated typescript two complete novels that are the precursors of *Border Country*.

In effect an early version of the published account, *Bryllwyd* concentrates on the years 1927 to 1939 and the growing and going away of its protagonist. The second, *Between Two Worlds*, was written in 1955 and is set exclusively between April and December 1926. There are locational and thematic elements common to all three novels but the two unpublished works are also, stylistically and dramatically, different as we are moved between sympathetic portrayals of local gentry and the South Wales mining valleys in the depth of despair to the west of the ‘border country’. I am currently editing the typescripts for publication and am confident they will delight and amaze anyone, and there are clearly many, who shares an enthusiasm for *Border Country*.

The Biography

The last matter to report is that my appointment to a Research Chair at the University of Wales, Swansea has, fingers crossed, finally allowed me the time to research and write the biography of Williams which will be published in 2007 alongside the ‘new’ novels.

Border Country Library of Wales 2006 ISBN 1902638816 pbk. £8.99

Dai Smith further discusses *Border Country* and its reprinting at:
www.bbc.co.uk/wales/arts/sites/literature/pages/border_country.shtml

FUTURE EVENTS

The Society is supporting three events this Autumn centering on fifty years since the start of the New Left. Two of these are part of larger events likely to be of interest to readers and it is these which are cited below. Topics include jazz v folk in the early CND; the 1968 May Day Manifesto; the History Workshop movement; Southall, resistance and new social movements; peace and anarchism on Tyneside; anti-globalisation and internet warfare; the peace movement today. Deliberately held outside HE academics, each event links with the large and diverse world of 'amateur' writing and politics.

Updated details of each event may be found on the Society web site

THE NEW LEFT FIFTY YEARS ON

SATURDAY 28 OCTOBER
MARX MEMORIAL LIBRARY
CLERKENWELL
LONDON

Contact:
Stephen Woodhams, parmod.w@ntlworld.com

SATURDAY 2 DECEMBER
LEICESTER SECULAR HALL

Contact:
Jenny Swann, 21 Devonshire Avenue Nottingham NG9
Or Ross Bradshaw (email: ross.bradshaw@nottscc.gov.uk)

FOLKESTONE LITERARY FESTIVAL CREATIVE FOUNDATION

HISTORY MEMORY MYTH
FRIDAY 10 to SUNDAY 12 DECEMBER

strands and papers:
1956, the legacy of Suez and the New Left then and now
truth and myth: oral history; reportage and the Spanish Civil War;
Homer, myth and archaeology;
the idea of history in the early Christian church.
settlement or invasion: Britain in the first millennium
film and history

evening events: poetry readings, peace/protest songs, films.

Contacts:
Lesley Hardy, lah16@canterbury.ac.uk
John Prebble, john@creativeorganisation.org

Recent Publications

Listed below are some recently published articles and books that deal with Williams's work or directly engage with it. The list is not comprehensive and the Newsletter editors invite you to send details of other relevant publications to newsletter@raymondwilliamssociety.org. Short reviews (200 words) for the next issue of the Newsletter of any of these books or other recent publications relevant to Raymond Williams are also welcome.

Paul Jones. *Raymond Williams's Sociology of Culture*. Palgrave/Macmillan June 2006 0-230-00670-1

John Kirk. *Twentieth Century Writing and the British Working Class*. University of Wales Press. 2003 0-7083-1813-4

Alvaro Pino. 'Freedom, Community and Raymond Williams' Project of a Common Culture'. *Cultural Studies: Critical Methodologies*. Vol 5 no 2 230-249. 2003

Tom Steele. 'Mapping The fields and Pushing the Boundaries: Research in Adult Education'. *Ad-Lib: Journal for Continuing Liberal Education*. No 28 April 2005.

Daniel Williams ed. *Who Speaks for Wales? Nature, Culture, Identity*. University of Wales Press 2003 0-7083-1784-7

Forthcoming

A collection of Merryn Williams's poems is being published by **Shoestring Press** and will be available at the Secular Hall, Leicester on Saturday 2 December. Copies available from; John Lucas, Shoestring Press, 19 Devonshire Avenue, Beeston, Nottingham NG9 1BS, phone 0115 9251827.

Key Words

Key Words is the annual journal of the Raymond Williams Society. Its first number in 1998 set out its intention to develop Williams's project within the terms of a cultural materialism 'always subject to redefinition', ever alert to the historical and social agency of language and the role of literary, media and cultural forms and institutions. It took its cue from Williams's own method in framing a 'vocabulary of culture and society' in his *Keywords* (1976, rev.1983). The journal appeared annually until 2003 and is now being relaunched. We renew this project in much the same spirit, but just as the first issue acknowledged that 'Raymond Williams time is not our time', so our times too have changed. In a striking instance, while *Key Words* felt buoyed up at its launch by the labour landslide of May 1997, Stuart Hall has recently lamented how 'new labour' has emptied 'all the key terms' such as 'community' and 'reform' belonging to a progressive politics. Meanwhile, in a thoroughly transformed political discourse, Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri invest revolutionary hope in the newly named 'multitude'. The re-launched *Key Words* will seek to take the measure of such disparate moods and play its part in framing a new critical vocabulary and cultural agenda for our own times.

Contributions are now invited for the fifth issue of *Key Words*, to be published in 2007. The prevailing theme will be 'Writing Class and Gender: Representations of Working-Class Spaces in Modern Britain' but please note that submissions on other themes, appropriate to the focus of the journal, are always warmly welcomed. Articles for prospective inclusion should reach us no later than 31 December 2006. They should be sent to Key Words, Department of Critical Theory and Cultural Studies, University of Nottingham, University Park, Nottingham NG7 2RD, UK. (e-mail: keywords@raymondwilliamssociety.org)

Visit the Society website

The Raymond Williams Society website is at <http://www.raymondwilliamssociety.org/>. The website is the first place to look for up-to-date information on the society and the events it sponsors and promotes (try the 'Forthcoming Events' link on the homepage). You can also contact us via the website and send us information on any event you think we should be associated with. Copies of issues 1 and 3 of Key Words can be downloaded free of charge from the site for a limited period. Other facilities on the site allow you to make a donation, to join our mailing list and to access an archive of materials which we soon hope to start and which will grow over time. It is also possible to pay annual membership fees online via the site's 'Membership of the Society' link **(there is currently a special offer on 2006 membership whereby we send you two copies of Key Words instead of one)** and to buy copies of the Society's publications likewise (via the 'Publications' link).

Raymond Williams Society Committee

The following were elected at the 2005 Annual General Meeting, held in Nottingham on the 26 November 2005:

Peter Brooker (chair)
Michael Coyle
Macdonald Daly (website)
John Goodridge
John Lucas
Sean Matthews (secretary)
Tony Pinkney
Stan Smith
Derek Tatton (Raymond Williams Fund)
Carl Thompson
Steve Woodhams (membership/treasurer)

HOW TO JOIN THE RAYMOND WILLIAMS SOCIETY

Membership of the Raymond Williams Society is by Annual Subscription. The rates are £10 waged and £5 unwaged / students.

There are two ways of paying:

1. via the Society website where a PayPal facility is available.
2. by cheque made out to 'Raymond Williams Society' and sent to:

Steve Woodhams
103 Coopers Lane
London
E10 5DG

Membership enquiries should be addressed to: membership@raymondwilliamssociety.org



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Please send items for inclusion to: newsletter@raymondwilliamssociety.org

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