

Reading the Forest

Forest of Dean people, places and traditions have appeared in books of fiction, fact, and fable, poems, comedy and plays since at least the 18th century.

Our aim is to encourage people of all ages to engage with this rich seam of stories set in and about our Forest.

- Local events & exhibitions
- Research
- Working with schools
- A Forest of Dean Anthology
- Sharing information

The project is led by Forest-based academics at the University of Gloucestershire, supported by an active team of local volunteers.

Would you like to join our team?

Write a Forest book review?

Call Forest Voluntary Action Forum
01594 822073

Contact us via our website



a new mural for Coleford

Celebrating Forest of Dean Writers

On the side of the former Masons Arms / Help Me Through the World pub, this new mural marks three successful & prolific Forest of Dean authors with strong connections to West Dean and Coleford.

Created by local artist

Tom Cousins

working with
Reading the Forest.

www.tomcousins.co.uk



Made possible through funding from the Foresters' Forest Heritage Lottery Funded programme, and support from the University of Gloucestershire.

With very special thanks to Cath & Don Burgess for the use of their wall.

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Celebrating Forest of Dean Writers

Who are the people in the pictures?

Help Me Through The World,
2 Boxbush Road,
Coleford,
GL168DN

www.readingtheforest.co.uk

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Dennis Potter



1935-1994

- Author & journalist
- Dramatist
- Producer

Journalist, author, cultural commentator, broadcaster, producer, director, and playwright, he was one of the towering figures of UK television with an influence that continues to this day. His books relate closely to his work for television each often informing the other in their ideas, storylines and techniques. His TV dramas and films often used fantasy sequences, and song and dance routines, with actors lip-synching to popular songs. His work was internationally renowned. The Forest of Dean remained vitally important to him throughout his life, appearing in and influencing many of his books and television programmes. He remained a life-long supporter of Berry Hill rugby club, and the band.

Some of his books...

- *The Changing Forest* (1962)
- *Hide and Seek* (1973)
- *Ticket to Ride* (1986)

Joyce Latham



1932-2007

- Memoirist
- Poet
- Performer

Her writing blossomed later in life and she is especially remembered for her autobiographies of childhood and early adulthood in the Forest. She was a talented school girl, though her opportunities were blighted by prejudice and the limited financial means of her family. Her stories reflect the harsh realities of post-war life in the Forest and her entry into the labour market. Throughout her stories and poems, full of stoicism and humour, she reflects the kinship and strong bonds within her family and with the local community. She was an immensely popular and well known local figure and worked behind the bar in The Masons Arms now adorned by this mural.

Some of her books...

- *Puzzlewood and Other Poems* (1982)
- *Where I Belong* (1993)
- *Whistling in the Dark* (1994)

F. W. Harvey



1888-1957

- Poet
- Playwright
- Broadcaster

Frederick William Harvey was a major influence on the literary heritage of the Forest of Dean and Gloucestershire. He was a poet, broadcaster and solicitor with a remarkable talent, and love for his native county and the Forest. Nationally recognised for his war poetry he captured the humour, comradeship and pathos of wartime experience. His poem *Ducks* remains a popular favourite appearing in a BBC poll of the UK's 100 favourite poems. His creative relationship with Gloucestershire's Ivor Gurney and Herbert Howells produced remarkable music and verse. As a broadcaster at the BBC in Bristol he wrote and presented programmes about poetry, music, the Forest of Dean and drama.

Some of his books...

- *A Gloucestershire Lad At Home and Abroad* (1916)
- *Ducks, and other Verses* (1919)
- *In Pillowell Woods* (1926)