

Discussion Panel

James Derounian has worked with rural communities for 38 years - in Devon, Northumberland, various European countries, and for national agencies dealing with countryside issues. He has written extensively on rural issues and community regeneration, and has been a regular contributor to *The Guardian* newspaper. As well as teaching at the University of Gloucestershire, he continues to train parish sector staff and those engaged in working with and for local communities. As a sideline James is a performance poet, and is an avid reader of fiction, poetry and prose that deal with imagery and the realities of rural life and disadvantage.

Dave Kent is a local government officer with a lifelong commitment to the arts and culture in the Forest of Dean. He wrote a weekly column for *The Citizen* newspaper covering Forest news, events and literature and reviewed books by Philip Toynbee and other writers living in the Forest. Dave spent four years as a resident of St Briavels in the mid-1970s and has keen insights into the changing social mix of the area. He believes that St Briavels was a changing place during the era of *A Fortunate Man*. 'There were increasing numbers of new and cosmopolitan people coming to the area,' says Dave, 'which made it less insular'. He knew many of the key players and places represented in the book.

Dr Chris Nancollas was born in Cornwall and qualified as a doctor in 1978. After a spell in hospital medicine he became a GP in the Forest, training in Cinderford, and then becoming a partner at Yorkley in 1986. He moved practices to Newnham in 2000, and retired in 2008. Since retirement he has developed a writing career, publishing two books, *Down Syndrome* (2012), and *Exhibitionism* (2013). In 2010 he set up Yorkey A&E, a small publishing company, that publishes local history and poetry. Chris first read *A Fortunate Man* when he came to the Forest, although it had been mentioned at Medical School. 'The work was instantly recognisable', says Chris, 'because we were working in exactly the same way as "Dr Sassal". My partners knew him, not well as he was a fairly private man, and had some stories about him'. Chris has since re-read the book, which he now says seems quite dated, and is left with the intriguing question: Who is the book actually about?

Dr Julia Peck is a photographer, writer and academic based at the University of Gloucestershire. Julia started her career as a landscape photographer, exhibiting and publishing disorientating images, and moved on to more overtly political practice. She is particularly interested in exploring the political effects of representing landscape, place and environment. Regarding *A Fortunate Man*, Julia says she is interested in the trust between Mohr and his subjects, 'the way Mohr conveys a strong humanist ethos in the images, and successfully constructs a visual narrative about "Dr. Sassall" and the wider community.'

Chair: Joanna Durrant of BBC Radio Gloucestershire.