

Reynoldston Reading Group

Last month we read a most enjoyable book “Keeping the World Away “by Margaret Forster. A beautiful wrought story of a seemingly modest but intriguing work of art making its way through the twentieth century, and touching the lives of five different women owners along its way. Each of the women in possession of the painting draws emotional strength from it. The picture inspires and empowers each of them to make life-changing decisions which in turn have far reaching effects on the people close to them. These decisions are such that one feels they are adopting an Existentialist view of their own situations. They are going to change these and create their own worlds from a purely personal and subjective truth, even if it means rejecting normal moral values and universal rules of conduct held to be equally valid for everybody. The concept may seem academic but in the hands of this author it makes a delightful and surprising journey, peopled with interesting characters the author develops and brings to life. The novel evoked a lively discussion with readers having a range of views.

The story is fiction but with many truths and is based on the work of the well known Welsh artist Gwen John, who painted two editions of the picture, the one in the novel, and the other which is on permanent display at the National Museum in Cardiff.

This month we are reading John Le Carre’s latest novel “A Most Wanted Man “. The storyline takes place in Hamburg where the main character, Issa Karpov, an emaciated, illegal Chechen Muslim immigrant is sought and pursued by the German, British and American secret services. Why are they all so interested in this most wanted man? To find out please read on.....