

News Release

Launch of new WW1 novel at Chester Festival

18 October 2010

Award-winning writer Gladys Mary Coles is to launch her first novel **Clay** at the Chester Literature Festival at a special event on Wednesday 20th October.

The novel is set against a background of the First World War and vividly portrays the human suffering of this period through the life of a young soldier-poet, William Manderson and his family.

He is sent to fight on the Western Front as an infantry soldier with the Cheshire Regiment, but is gassed and eventually invalided out of the Army. The novel sensitively conveys the physical and psychological effects of war injuries, as all the characters struggle to come to terms with the aftermath of the conflict. Turbulent events in post-war Liverpool form the climax to a gripping story of endurance, creativity and love.



Gladys Mary Coles

The action takes place against a rich array of local backdrops, with chapters set in Chester, where William recovers in a military hospital, Liverpool, Wirral and North Wales. There are dramatic historical events, weaving fact and fiction together, such as the Battle of the Somme, the 1917 Welsh National Eisteddfod in Birkenhead attended by PM Lloyd George, the 1919 Police Strike and unemployment riots in Liverpool.

The First World War is a period which has fascinated Gladys Mary Coles ever since researching the First World War poets, lecturing on Wilfred Owen and war poetry. She recalls: "Visiting the war cemeteries of northern France was deeply moving, seeing the endless rows of graves. After this I wrote a series of poems and began to plan a novel set in the First World War period."

Extensive background research led her to the Cheshire Regiment Museum, Red Cross and Imperial War Museums and the local Leverhulme archives, amongst others, in search of authentic detail for her novel. She is now an expert on the literature and history of this period.

Gladys Mary Coles' numerous writing awards include the Wilfred Owen Association Open Poetry Competition, a Welsh Arts Council Award and major prizes in the National Poetry Competition, and the Cardiff and Scottish Internationals. She was also selected to represent Britain in the Euro-Literature project. She has a PhD in Creative Writing and is a lecturer at Liverpool University.

Gladys Mary Coles, who lives on the Dee estuary, is also a familiar figure on the Cheshire literature scene and has twice judged the Chester Literature Festival short story competition, as well as leading the Chester Writers Workshop for many years. She has ten published collections of poetry to her name as well as an internationally-acclaimed biography on the Welsh Border writer, Mary Webb, and has edited 15 anthologies, including *Poet's England:Cheshire*.

Clay will be launched at two public literature events. The first is at St Mary's Centre in Chester on Wednesday 20th October at 1pm and the second is an evening event at Liverpool's Bluecoat Arts Centre on Friday 5 November.

Clay is published by Flambard Press at £8.99 and is available from selected local bookshops or direct from the publishers. www.flambardpress.co.uk.

Note to Editors

A book front cover and photo of Gladys Mary Coles are available electronically by emailing Lynn Pegler at lynn@peglercommunications.co.uk.

To arrange an interview with Gladys Mary Coles, please contact Lynn Pegler on 01928 789042/07783 686246 or email Gladys Mary on gladysmarycoles@hotmail.co.uk.

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