

# The *Wednesday*

www.thewednesdayoxford.com

Magazine of the Wednesday Group - Oxford



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## Editorial

### *An Amazing Milestone to Celebrate*

I am pleased to announce that we have just published Volume 13 of *The Wednesday* books. This volume contains all the issues published in the last year. The printing of this volume coincided with the fifth anniversary of *The Wednesday*. I wrote a Foreword for the volume which I find it fitting to reproduce in this supplement.

*The Wednesday* was a weekly for most of the first three years and monthly thereafter. I am delighted that the project has flourished and has gone from strength to strength. One aspect that is of interest to me, is the strong solidarity the magazine has created between its members through its publications, and through its weekly Wednesday meetings. The regularity of the meetings and the variety of topics discussed every week is impressive. But the noticeable achievement is in generating the spirit of friendship and mutual support within the group that made the production of the magazine such a pleasure.

In one of the recent issues, I wrote an editorial against dogmatism. I am suggesting here that in the regular Wednesday meetings and discussion I could see the modification of the views of participants to varying degrees. Over the months and years, extreme and dogmatic views have started to mellow.

Intellectual work is individualistic in nature, especially in philosophy, art and poetry but it is difficult to sustain over a lifetime. Even a philosopher needs the solidarity of like-minded, thinkers. I hope that we have succeeded in this endeavour, and I feel confident about the future.

Recent publications by members of the group acknowledge the magazine and its value for their work. I single out here Professor Chris Norris who dedicated his collection *Hedgehog: verse-reflections after Derrida*, to *The Wednesday*. Chris said about his collection that "It would never have been conceived or sustained without the regular creative stimulus provided by [the] online magazine *The Wednesday*, a wonderful

meeting-place for poets and philosophers." I am also pleased to read in William Bishop's book *Foundation For A Humanitarian Economy: Re-Thinking Boethius'* the *Consolation of Philosophy*, recently published by Routledge, that he introduced himself as follows: "his interest in writing and philosophy merged into association with 'The Wednesday' group, and several of his articles in recent years appear in *The Wednesday*". My thanks and my gratitude to both authors.

I am grateful to all participants in the weekly meetings. Without their presence, support and creativity all this would not have been possible. The meetings have been more organised since we moved from in person to online meetings. The reader could guess this from the monthly reports of these meetings in the magazine. Some of the papers read out in the meetings have been published in part or in full. I am also grateful to our readers for their encouragement and support. Their e-mails lift my spirit and give me the necessary incentive for continuing the magazine.

Special thanks go to my editorial board: Barbara Vellacott, Paul Cockburn and Chris Seddon for their help and support throughout this journey. Many writers, poets and artists have contributed to *The Wednesday*. I am grateful for their contributions. Many poets contributed to the magazine from its early issues, and I am indebted to their poems. A special mention here goes to Scharlie Meeuws who is both artist and poet and Alan Xuereb, a philosopher and artist. Their contributions made the magazine visually attractive and rich in content.

Issuing a magazine and printing books in the age of mass media is after all a risky business, especially when philosophy takes precedence. However, the project took off and became a success. To all contributors and readers alike I would say congratulations.

Happy Fifth Anniversary.

*The Editor*

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## Fifth Anniversary Celebration



Walton Street, Oxford, with Albion-Beatnik Bookstore and Opera Café.

## The Wednesday: A History

PAUL COCKBURN

The Wednesday group started about 2005 when a group of friends started meeting weekly in the café at Borders in Oxford. We discussed philosophical topics as we do now. Borders and the café closed down in 2010. Paul Cockburn, David Clough, and Rahim Hassan are the members who continue, David Clough was our 'founding' member. Other members were Peter Wood and our late friend Phil Walden.

After Borders closed our weekly meetings took place in a number of Oxford cafes. We went to Waterstones and Blackwell's, and Mumu's café in Little Clarendon Street. We tried other venues, even the bike store café in Union Street. We then moved to the Albion Beatnik bookshop run by Dennis Harrison. We have fond memories of Dennis, he made us tea and got us cakes, and sometimes entertained us on the piano. We had some notable evening events in the Albion Beatnik - Chris Norris twice gave poetry readings there.

We finally moved to the basement in the Opera café, very close to the Albion Beatnik in Walton Street, where we were warmly welcomed by Saleh El-Masri and his team of workers.

Five years ago, Rahim decided to launch a weekly Wednesday magazine, funded mainly by himself. The magazine was then later on published in book form and a number of donations were made by friends to support the publication of these books. This seemed to

me to be a very ambitious thing to do, but Rahim had all the skills and personnel to do it. He first managed to produce an 'experimental issue' Zero in 12 pages. He intended it as a newsletter to report the Wednesday meetings of the group. But from issue one, he decided to make it a full weekly magazine in 16 pages.

Rahim created a small team: an Iraqi friend, Sala Karam, is the designer, with the editorial board: Paul Cockburn, Barbara Vellacott, and Chris Seddon. It has been a great privilege for me to contribute to the magazine, and to be part of the editorial board. Although a philosophy magazine, it also regularly has art and poetry.

The magazine was produced weekly for nearly three years, but it is now published monthly. Rahim's wife built the website and loads all the issues to the website ([www.thewednesdayoxford.com](http://www.thewednesdayoxford.com)).

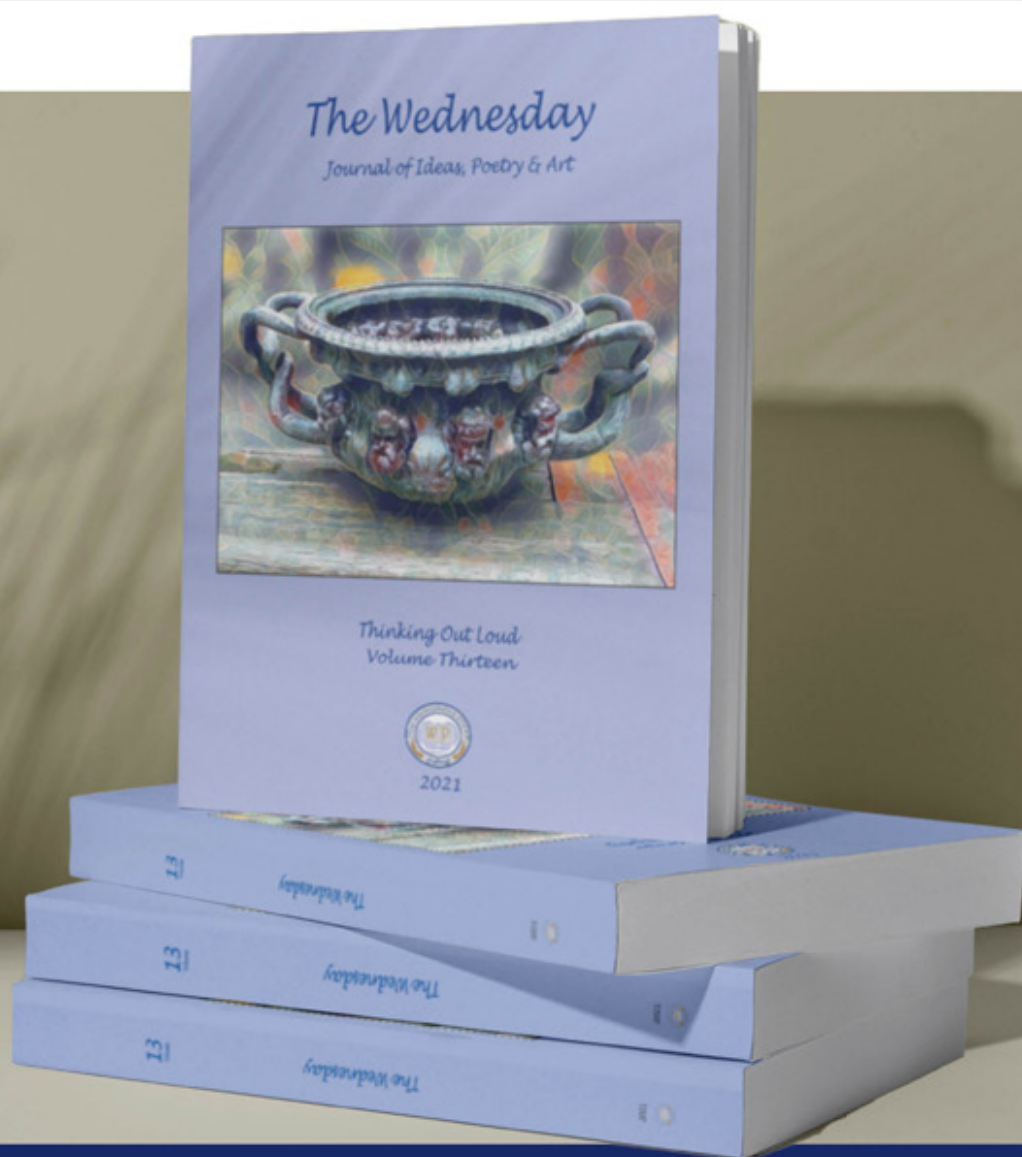
I think it is good to review our history and look back, to gain from the past. In personal terms we can see what we wrote 'back then' and then review it in the light of experience, review it critically. What has changed since we wrote it? What is more relevant now, what is less?

We hope that it will continue to thrive along with the weekly meetings. Congratulations on the 5<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

Your Set of 13 Volumes

# *Wednesday*

[www.thewednesdayoxford.com](http://www.thewednesdayoxford.com)



Volume 13 is out now  
order your copy

*Five years now available in print*



## Fifth Anniversary Celebration

# My Experience of The Wednesday Meetings

### MIKE ENGLAND

Over four years ago in a bookshop on Walton Street I first met Rahim, he invited me to the Wednesday group meeting still being held at the Albion Beatnik Bookstore at the time. When I attended, apart from feeling welcomed, it felt like a privilege. In hindsight I guess it was a privilege, and even today it still feels like a privilege.

What these meetings have revealed to me in regard to my painting, is that they have somehow put my work in clear context for me. In the sense that although the expression may be a result of my curiosities and interests, and may be the same visual result, but my understanding of the motive and thought became clearer. It was clear before, but now it is more so.

What the meetings have taught and harnessed in me is how important listening is. It is just as important as talking. I've learnt that if you are going to talk, present a perspective or respond to another's expression or point of view, your perspective will, hopefully, challenge and engage those listening, to make them question their own beliefs and opinions.

These meetings feel respectful and considered and at

the same time it feels safe to discuss, or to deconstruct any subject matter. Even if opinions differ, thanks to the tolerant nature of these meetings and the spirit of friendship and respect that allow this to happen.

To me, the meetings show respectful humanity and intelligence at its best, which then can lead to all sorts of understandings and possibilities, not just within oneself but possibly in the outside world. I have realised that my work is another perspective/expression of a philosophy. In fact I have started to call my work, 'Visual Philosophy' due to these meetings.

The Wednesday meetings have definitely influenced my work, not necessarily just in the nature of its expression but has made me aware of the link between 'Thought and Expression'. To see in a particular way, that is unique to each individual's experience of living.

Apart from being enjoyable, these meetings are a way to understanding one's motives, bias, judgments etc. The meetings reflect you, like a mirror, and you get to see yourself in the eyes of others. Thank you, it has been a pleasure getting to know all members of the group attending these meetings on a regular basis.



**Mike England  
in one of his  
exhibitions**



## **POETRY**

### **OXFORD**

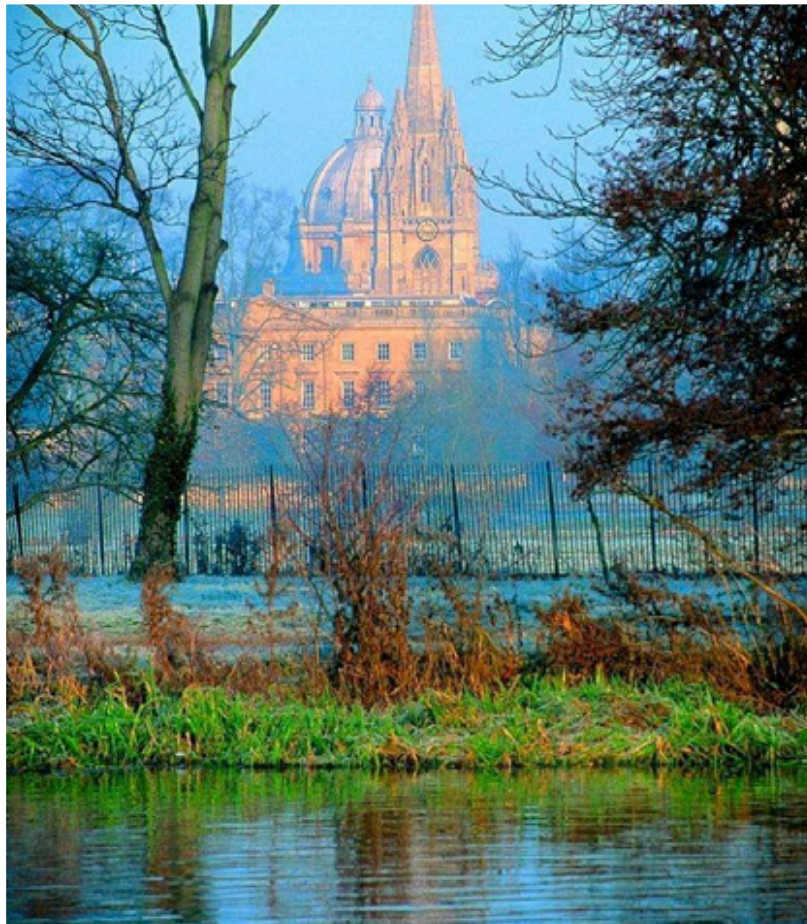
**Soon now I'll be in Oxford once again,  
In Christ Church meadow where the Isis flows,  
Where Magdalen tower across green levels shows,  
Its grey stone pinnacles all rising plain.**

**So many hours I pursued the train  
Of those there long ago while thinking how  
Greatness that is no longer present now  
Would rightly look on these times with disdain.**

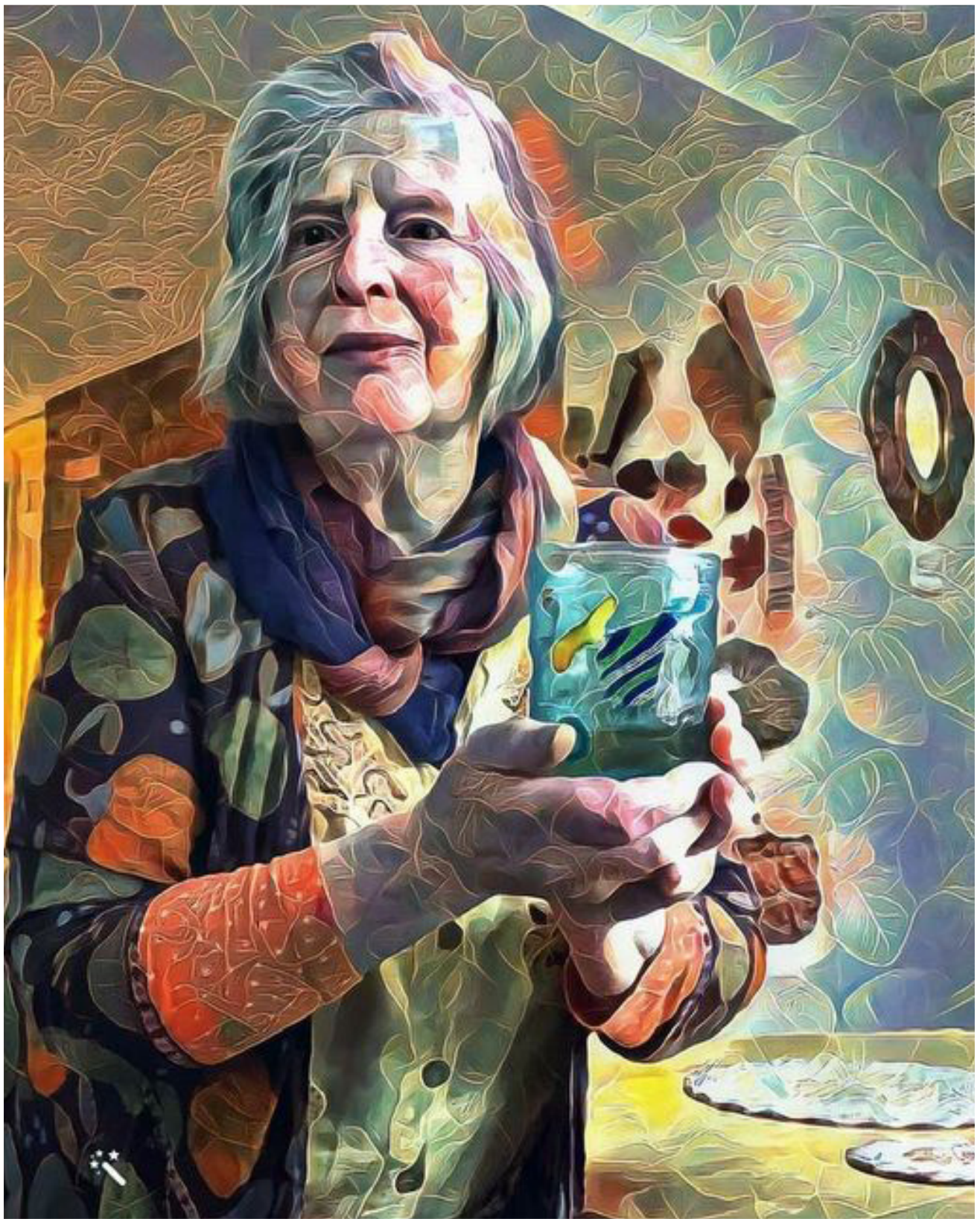
**I reached the room in Corpus where I passed  
So many happy hours discussing verse,  
Hours which always ticked away too fast.**

**But cruel Time won't let a good thing last  
So it is left to memory to rehearse  
The play long ended with its vanished cast.**

***Edward Greenwood***







**Scharlie Meeuws: Self Portrait**