

Writer excelled in weaving tales with sinister plots

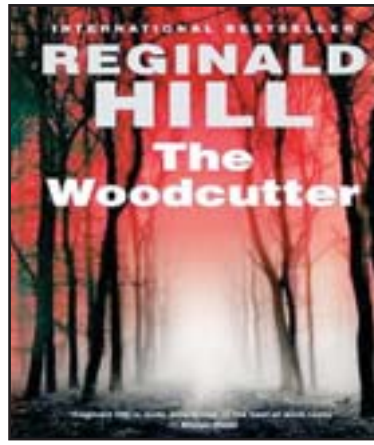
Reginald Hill leaves a legacy of robust thrillers

By Rima A. Mneimneh
Special to the Arab Times

Names of writers of thrillers are numerous in contemporary fiction across the globe; many have even a myriad of books in this genre and have scored phenomenal fame and incessant success. But when a prodigious and talented writer in this genre passes away, the literary world would certainly have lost an irreplaceable and non-recurring literary figure no doubt.

Mystery

Last week, a mystery tales' writer has passed away whose fame and plethora of stories have engraved for his memory an indelible place among contemporary leading mystery writers. Reginald Hill, writer of more than 40 books including a series with the famous Yorkshire detective duo Andrew Dalziel and Peter Pascoe in more than 20 stories, such as "An April Shroud", "Child's Play", "Under World", "Bones and Silence", "Recalled to Life", "Pictures of



The book cover of 'The Woodcutter'

Perfection", "A Cure for all Diseases", or standalone novels such as "Fell of Dark", "Albion! Albion!", "Another Death in Venice", "The Spy's Wife" as well as short stories' collections such as "Pascoe's Ghost: And other Brief Chronicles of Crime", "There are no Ghosts in the Soviet Union" and

"Brother's Keeper".

Hill passed away in Jan 2012 at the age of 75. Hill, however, was best renowned for his thrillers involving the two detectives Dalziel and Pascoe. The tales by Hill of these detectives were adapted for BBC television from 1996 until 2007. An insightful remark is stated in one of the reviews about Hill's duo that: "... most crime writers had provided a Watson to their Holmes; a character less intelligent than the great detective who could filter the plot and explain the clues to the reader. Hill chose to create a genuine double act.

Respect

"Each partner could stand and succeed alone, but together the pair became formidable. Like Laurel and Hardy, Dalziel and Pascoe bounced and sparked off each other and while complete opposites physically, politically and intellectually, there was a clear and present bond of affection and respect, perhaps even love, between them."

Reginald Hill was born in 1936 in

Hartlepool, Durham; he was the son of the professional footballer Reg Hill. By the time the boy was three, the family moved to Cumbria which remained his home and setting of some of his stories. He was educated at Carlisle grammar school, now Trinity school, and did his national service in the Border Regiment from 1955 until 1957 in Germany.

Hill read English at St Catherine's College in Oxford, and then became a teacher first in Essex and later on in Doncaster in the 60's and 70's, the latter was the most productive times for the writer as he wrote 18 novels, many short stories and wrote for the BBC. Hill showed great and genuine talent in weaving tales of sinister plots in all his works that enthralled the reader.



Hill

The reader could read excerpts from his vast oeuvre on the Internet as many sources have available parts of his writings to read. Hill used pen names such as Patrick Ruell.

Turbulent

Hill's "The Woodcutter", published in 2010 tells of Wolf's turbulent life. Wolf is the son of a groundskeeper. He falls in love while still a teenager with young Imogen. Wolf disappears for 3 years, returns an accomplished man and marries his beloved girl.

He becomes an affluent and a known man in his community. Wolf gets arrested, charged and sentenced to prison. He became crippled with a coma. He regained consciousness after months, knew his wife divorced and married his attorney.

Wolf admitted his guilt; he was later paroled and returned to the family cottage. Wolf becomes a woodcutter for hire. Wolf being down-trodden and impoverished begins having sinister plans against those who have ruined his life. Readers could find similarities

to Alexander Dumas' "Count of Monte Cristo" or Naguib Mahfouz's "The Thief and the Dogs" as this plot is quite familiar to readers in many other books.

However, it is Reginald Hill's style, robust and masterly command of the sequence of events as well his enthralling narrative that render his stories and this novel convincing and worth the read. "The Woodcutter" has been hailed by numerous readers and reviewers for many reasons, and no wonder that Hill — the award-winning writer — and his many novels have placed him among one of the leading writers of thrillers in modern times. A fellow writer laments the loss of a great writer reflecting on his loss of a friend as well, he expounds: "News of Hill's death was tragic, not only because he was an amazing writer, still working at the height of his powers, but also because he was one of the most lovely men you could ever meet. He was someone I looked up to enormously as a writer and a man."

'Dream Dealer' author visits Kuwait

Phillips shares her 'creative' life

By Chaitali B. Roy
Special to the Arab Times

It has been a busy beginning to the year for the British Ladies Society. On Thursday afternoon, the excitement reached a pitch when a highly accomplished multi-talented personality from Britain visited the BLS premises at Rumaithiya. On Jan 19, afternoon on Thursday, British author and songwriter Marita Phillips was invited to the Library Session to give a talk on her life as a writer and to sell, signed copies of her book 'The Dream Dealer' for KD 3.

What followed was a chat with members of the BLS who had gathered in the library for their regular meeting over books and a hot cup of brew. "Marita Phillips is visiting Kuwait because her musical, 'Buzz: the story of Glory Bee' is being performed for the Amir at the opening of the Bayt Abdullah hospice this week. Her co-writer for this project, Harriet Bushman lives in Kuwait and is a member of the BLS. This is a perfect example of the blending and integration of BLS ladies into Kuwait society and culture, which is one of our principal aims," explained Ann Napier President of BLS.

Production

"Alison Price, who is also a member of the Society, is involved with the production side of the musical and therefore, with BLS members heavily involved in such an important event in the Kuwait calendar, it was a great opportunity for the membership to meet a very interesting personality so involved in the arts.

In addition, the BLS has supported Bayt Abdullah and KACCH since 2006 in its fundraising efforts." On Wednesday BLS representatives Anne Napier and Marian Cameron Drolet were given the opportunity to meet Umm Abdullah whose son was the inspiration for Margaret Al Sayer's team to found Bayt Abdullah in Kuwait.

Marita is an author, songwriter, mime artist who has written two children's musicals. She has also written 'The Dream Dealer', a children's book that was made into a musical and performed in Kuwait (amongst other places in the world). The quiet, unassuming Marita Phillips, has an illustrious family history. Sister to the Duchess of Westminster and with the Prince of Wales as godfather to her son Galen, she wears her lineage lightly. "I feel very incredibly lucky," said Marita when asked about her impressive ancestry, which traces back to the great Russian poet Pushkin and Czar Nicholas I of Russia through her maternal grandmother. "I am very familiar with Pushkin's work and I have worked on an operetta libretto called 'The Poet and the Tsar' based on the lives of Pushkin and Czar Nicholas I."

Enriching

The late morning meeting turned out to be an enriching one with Marita, a simple person with a sense of humour, talking about her journey through different creative phases in her life. "I started off as a mime artist and founded a mime school in London," recalled Marita. "Though I did want to be a dancer, but I was told I was too tall for ballet and that's a different story altogether," she smiled. She has also written lyrics which have been recorded by Art Garfunkel, Demis Roussos, Peter Skellern and others. Marita has written two children's musicals. 'The Dream Dealer', was awarded a sell-



British author Marita Phillips



Left: A scene of the 'Buzz: The story of Glory Bee' production which will be staged in Kuwait during the opening of Bayt Abdullah hospice. Right: a scene of 'The Dream Dealer' which was staged earlier in Kuwait.

out logo at the Edinburgh Festival and has been performed in schools all around the world including Japan and

Australia. It was also her first collaboration with the highly talented Harriet Pethrick Bushman, a close



family friend and an award-winning composer of instrumental and vocal music for both theatre and the concert stage.

Collaboration

"Did they find it difficult collaborating with each other based as they are in two very different parts of the world?" "Not at all", answered Marita. Technological advancements have their advantages and two very talented individuals came together to create a musical for children, which was very well received both by the

audience and the critics. "It is easy to collaborate when two people are not worried about being upstaged by the other. I feel very comfortable working with Marita and there is absolutely no ego between us," confirmed Harriet, with whom Marita has also collaborated on the production of Buzz: the Story of Glorybee, which was performed at the opening of Bayt Abdullah.

"I have been writing from a very young age, but a lot of us have done that anyway," says Marita when asked about her early days as a writer. "In fact I started off when I was nine or ten, but the stuff I wrote back then was bad.

Publish

Later a writer of children's theater who had seen a production of The Dream Dealer encouraged me to write this book as it was an original idea." But writing a book was not that easy and getting it published was even more difficult. Faced by several difficulties when approaching publishers, Marita decided to self-publish. "I approached several publishers who gave these different reasons not to publish the book. Some of them wanted me to do a series, something I was absolutely not thrilled about, others did not get the go ahead from the marketing department." Self-publishing gave her freedom to do what she wanted with her work. "It gave me freedom to decide on so many little things. I decided to go back to my readers for review and to include their comments in my book. I could choose my own cover page," she said pointing out to the unusually creative cover of a bottled up magical world.

Marita began writing for young teenagers at a time when her own children were of the same age. As a parent, she found her offspring standing on the threshold of a life where parental role was being overtaken by peers.

"It is a difficult time," acknowledges Ann Napier, "when you realize your children are slowly moving away from you." The Dream Dealer is about a boy's search for his mother, the pressures of the playground and a charismatic stranger who turns up at the school selling ice creams but who is on his own dark mission. Marita Phillips went on to discuss various issues related to the world of books.

Books

Speaking of the world wide tendency amongst children to move away from books, she observed, "The point is the children do not have any time nowadays. Apart from their studies, they are kept busy with television, computers and other sources of entertainment. They do not have the time to get bored and are thus moving away from books." The morning turned out to be an enriching one. It is not every day one gets an opportunity to meet a person as creative who is willing to share her thoughts in Kuwait.

"It was an honour and privilege for the BLS members to have Marita Phillips talk to us about her books, her work and life as an author and songwriter. It provided the regular users of our library with a perfect opportunity to interact with a fascinating character. Marita is only in Kuwait for a few days and we are delighted that she found time in her busy schedule to touch base with our ladies over a cup of tea and biscuits. A touch of the celebrity fever has come to the BLS in Kuwait!" concluded Anne Napier.

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Drinking problem?: You are no longer alone! Confidential helpline 99641389.

Narcotics Anonymous: NA can help with addiction problems. Totally confidential: 94087800 English/Arabic.

Cancer online support group: If you are Cancer patient or family member fighting with this deadly disease, come join our online support group. Best way of dealing with this disease is providing support and share our experience with each other. There are lot of things which even doctors can't tell so be member of this website and start sharing your experiences which may help others. October is recognized as National Breast Cancer Awareness Month (NBCAM). The primary purpose is to promote self examination and screening mammography as the most effective way to save lives by detecting breast cancer at early stage. For more information visit: <http://fightingwithcancer.webs.com/>

Latest

Jan 23

AWARE museum tour: Tour of Tariq Rajab Calligraphy Museum on Jan 23, 2012 at 5:00 pm. The museum of Islamic Calligraphy traces the development of the Arabic script from the advent of Islam onwards. Due to combined efforts of calligraphers all over the Muslim world, several new styles were developed making the Arabic script one of the most diverse and flexible in the world. Arabic script was also used in decorative form to decorate ceramics, metalwork, glass, textiles and architectural facades. The museum contains examples of all mediums created by Muslims from around the world. Join us, as we discover more about the art of calligraphy housed in this Kuwaiti Museum.

For reservations, please contact us on Tel: 2-5335280 - Fax: 2-5335230 E-mail: info@aware.com.kw Working Hours: Sunday to Thursday 9 am-12:30 pm and 4:30 pm-9 pm, Villa 84, Surra St, Block 3, Surra, Kuwait

Jan 24

AWARE diwaniya: "The AWARE Center cordially invites to its diwaniya presentation entitled, "Polygyny: A Woman's Viewpoint," by Dr Teresa Leshner on Tuesday Jan 24, 2012 at 7:00pm.

How does a Muslim woman feel about polygyny? Join AWARE for a presentation about "Polygyny: A Woman's Viewpoint" by Dr Teresa Leshner on Tuesday Jan 24, 2012. Dr Teresa will discuss the rules and rationales for polygamous marriage in Islam and its effects on social, economic and spiritual lives of individuals in the community. Discussion and Q&A will follow the presentation.

Dr. Teresa holds her PhD in Information Science from the UK and is now associate professor at the Kuwait College of Basic Education. She held the position of General Manager of the AWARE Center for three years and returns often to host presentations related to Arab and Islamic culture.

For more information, call 25335260/80 or log onto: www.aware.com.kw

Kuwait Netball Games: Open to players of all abilities, aged 17+. Come down to T.E.S. on Tuesday evenings to play in matches on a weekly basis.

It costs KD 20 to play for the full season, but players who enrol on Jan 24 will get an early bird discount of KD 15/-.

Season will run every Tuesday, 6:30 pm - 8 pm from Jan 24, to March 13, 2012.

Calling all returning players ... we now have an "Introduce a friend offer!" If you bring down a new player to enrol, you get to play all season for KD10! Wow.

Contact Rachel 66636912 for more details or visit our facebook page: Kuwait Netball

Jan 25

Mendeel Um A7mad Exhibition: Mendeel Um A7mad (N x I x S M) is a multimedia installation by New York-based artists Fatima Al-Qadiri and Khalid Al-Gharaballi, to be exhibited at Contemporary Art Platform (CAP) in Kuwait from Jan 25 to Feb 9, 2012. The Arab Fund for Art and Culture

(AFAC) grant-winning project presents the tissue box as an unlikely Kuwaiti national icon. The two-part installation reinterprets the pre-noon tea ritual of Chai Dha7a, consisting of a film projected inside a monumental tissue box-created in

collaboration with Kuwait-based designers Aziz Alqatami and Nanu Al-Hamad. Event reception: Wednesday Jan 25, 2012 — 7:00-9:00 pm, located at CAP Warehouse, Exhibit Jan 25-Feb 9, 2012. Open on Saturday-Thursday: 5:00 pm-

9:00 pm, Office hours: Sunday-Thursday: 11:00 am-7:00 pm.

Jan 26

Flag hoisting ceremony: On the occasion of the Republic Day of India, a

flag hoisting ceremony will be held at the Embassy of India premises at 9:00 am on Thursday, Jan 26, 2012. This will be followed by the reading of the message of Hon'ble President of India by the Ambassador, singing of patriotic songs by

Indian children, and an Open House Reception. All Indian nationals in Kuwait are cordially invited to attend the Ceremony.