

Seán Haldane

Seán Haldane has long-standing family connections with Oxford (his great grandfather Sir William Schlich founded the School of Forestry). He obtained a First in English in 1965. His doctoral studies were in North America where he then worked in clinical psychology and neuropsychology. He returned to England in 1994, setting up Memory Clinics in the NHS and doing medical-legal work, both civil and criminal.

He has published books on psychology and psychotherapy as well as on poets and poetry, and his recent historical crime novel about an Oxford detective in British Columbia in 1869 has won a major award.

His double life as a poet and scientist-practitioner is reflected in his friendships with other poets and with neuroscientists and physicists. He is used to poetic and scientific thought and sees no incompatibility between them.

Historically the Professor of Poetry has been not only a writer in residence but a scholar, and the early professors often gave lectures on Latin and Greek poetry. Seán Haldane speaks and reads French, Italian, German, Portuguese and Gaelic and has either written about or translated poetry in all these languages. With his wide range of knowledge and experience he will be a distinguished occupant of the post.

He is a publisher of other poets' work, and his own poems have always had a circle of readers. Robert Graves (Professor of Poetry, 1961-6) wrote about Haldane's first volume of poems in 1968: 'I like Seán's poems: clean, accurate and no nonsense – they still have the original poetic nap on them. They make sense, which is rare these days.' The Scottish poet Helena Nelson wrote of his Collected Poems 1966-2009: 'Reading through Haldane's volume is an extraordinary experience, not unlike walking very close to a waterfall. Things sparkle and flash on all sides: one becomes mesmerised and fascinated by the energy, the force of the flow... I am not sure if Haldane's other existence in neuropsychology has to do with it, but there is often the sense of a mind watching itself with the reader invited into the brain. It is eerie and intense.'

If elected Professor of Poetry Seán Haldane intends to lecture on such topics as What Poetry Is and Is Not; Poetry, Brain and Body; Paradox in Poetry and Physics; Poetry in Different Englishes; Poetry and Music. In his Candidate Statement he writes about Robert Graves: 'In private he was as frank as in his lectures. As Professor of Poetry I would establish just such an open presence.'

Paul Charles Adams, Department of Pharmacology

Michael Broers, Lady Margaret Hall

Ivor Crewe, University College

Nicholas Graham Irving, Nuffield Department of Clinical Neurosciences

Dr A M Knowland, University College

Peter Jezzard, University College

C A Miller, University College

L G Mitchell, University College

William A. Roth, University College

Tiffany Stern, University College