

CURRICULUM VITAE

Michael Schmidt OBE, FRSL

born Mexico D.F., Mexico

2 March 1947

nationality British/Mexican

EMPLOYMENT

Publishing and editorial

- Managing and Editorial Director, Carcanet Press Limited, 1969-

Editorial and Managing Director since its co-founding the Press in 1969 in Oxford. Moved to Manchester in 1971 when a Special Lectureship in Poetry, funded initially by the Gulbenkian Foundation, was established at the University of Manchester by Professor C.B. Cox to bring the publishing venture to the city.

Carcanet, wholly owned by Lord Gavron's Folio Holdings since 1983, and by Lady Gavron since 2018, is a substantial client of the Arts Council of England. It produces 30-40 new titles (print and e-book) and 40 reprints a year, having an in-print backlist of 900 titles. It has seven members of staff. The Press concentrates on poetry: new and classical, English and translated, with a bias towards the Commonwealth but a strong American list.

Margaret Drabble praised Carcanet's 'years of brave and distinguished publishing [...] the titles cover a remarkable cultural and political range'. Seamus Heaney: 'Carcanet's commitment to publishing work in translation has been matched by an admirable concern to keep lines open to writing in Ireland, Scotland, Wales and America'. Frederick Raphael: 'Carcanet has always been the place to look for considerations of purely literary and intellectual merit. Its list relies on the vision and the faith and the energy of people who care about books and values.' William Boyd spoke of Carcanet as 'a vital and enlightened presence in the British literary scene, a reliable and constant source of serious, imaginative and eclectic poetry, fiction and a criticism. Everything an independent publisher should be.'

Series Editorships

General Editor: Fyfield Books / Carcanet Classics 1970-

FyfieldBooks, established in 1970, provides inexpensive introductory selections of writers (poets, artists, divines) whose work is otherwise hard to come by. The series addresses general readers and students at upper secondary and tertiary level. Over 100 titles have been published, most edited by scholars and critics; some are established academic texts. The list now includes poetry and prose in translation as well as primary English-language texts.

General Editor: Carcanet new poetry 1969-

Carcanet's poetry list publishes new writers from all over the English-speaking world, poetry in translation from classical to modern times, and a list of rediscoveries in Collected or extended Selected editions of writers of the twentieth century and of major living poets due for reappraisal. The list stretches from the modernists Wyndham Lewis, H.D., William Carlos Williams, Ford Madox Ford, Mina Loy, Hugh MacDiarmid, Robert Graves and Yvor Winters, through neglected figures of the 1920s and 1930s including Edgell Rickword and I.A. Richards (as poet) to the New York School (Ashbery, Schuyler, O'Hara, Koch) and British writers such as Elizabeth Jennings, Edwin Morgan, Iain Crichton Smith, F.T. Prince, E.J. Scovell, Donald Davie, C.H. Sisson.

The Carcanet Press website: <https://www.carcanet.co.uk/>

- Founding & General Editor, *PN Review* (formerly *Poetry Nation*), 1972-
PN Review was established in the Department of English at the University of Manchester in 1972, as a twice-yearly hardcover journal, *Poetry Nation*. After three years it became quarterly, then bi-monthly. For over fifty years it has published new poetry, essays, reviews, interviews, translations, news and notes, reports, letters and editorials. It is regarded here and abroad as one of the distinguished journals of our time. It combines discovery and appraisal of new writing with reappraisals, 'scrutinies' and extended advocacies, and it has published important special issues, the first being the controversial *Crisis for Cranmer and King James*. Important supplements were devoted to Charles Tomlinson, C.H. Sisson, Donald Davie, I.A. Richards, Thom Gunn, Laura Riding, Sylvia Townsend Warner, Edgell Rickword, George Barker, John Ashbery, Eavan Boland, John Fuller etc.

PN Review has subscribers throughout the world and casual sales through the book trade. The entire run of *PN Review* is available online, in fully searchable form.

<https://www.pnreview.co.uk/>

There is also a *PN Review* app which features the full half-century-plus of work published:

<https://apps.apple.com/gb/app/pn-review/id506033010>

Academic

Professor of Poetry, University of Manchester 2019-25

Visiting Fellow at Trinity College, Cambridge, 2017-18

Writer in Residence, St John's College, Cambridge, 2014-16

Visiting professor, University of Bolton, 2013-24

Professor of Poetry, University of Glasgow, 2006-14

Professor of English, Manchester Metropolitan University, 2000-05

(Founder) Director of the Writing School, Manchester Metropolitan University, 1998-2005

Co-Director of the Modern Literature Archive project, John Rylands University Library 1990-

Senior Lecturer, University of Manchester, 1994-98

Director of the Poetry Centre, University of Manchester, 1984-98

Lecturer, University of Manchester, 1984-94

Part-time Lecturer, University of Manchester, 1971-84

Other posts held

Board Member, And Other Stories 2024-

Culture Team, Manchester City Council 2021-

Committee member of Manchester UNESCO City of Literature 2017-

Chetham's Library committee member 2010-

Publishers' Association, Diversity, and Export, committee member

Board Member, Whitworth Art Gallery, 2002-04

Artistic and General Director, Literatures of the Commonwealth Festival, Manchester, 2002

Writer in Residence, Portico Library, Manchester, 2001-04

Poetry Editor, *Grand Street* (New York), 1998-2000

Member, British Library Book Advisory Committee, 1997-2000

Member, Arts Council Touring Panel, 1991-96

Adviser to Finnish Literature Board, 1990

Northern theatre critic *Daily Telegraph*, 1988-93

North-West theatre critic *Independent*, 1986-88

Compton Bequest Trustee (Arts Council), 1980-3

Member, Arts Council of Great Britain Literature Panel, 1968-71

HONOURS

Medal of Honour, University of Manchester, 2025
Honorary Fellow (previously Fellow) of the English Association, 2024
Chetham's Library Patron 2024
Order of the British Empire, 2006
University of Bolton PhD *Honoris Causa*, 2006
Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature, 1993

EDUCATION

Wadham College, Oxford, Exhibitioner, 1967-71, B.A., M.A.
Harvard College, Cambridge, Massachusetts, USA, Sophomore standing 1966-67
Christ's Hospital School, Horsham, Sussex, English Speaking Union Scholarship, 1965-66
The Hill School, Pottstown, Pennsylvania, USA 1959-65
The American School, Mexico D.F., Mexico 1953-59

BROADCASTING

Radio has included: Presenter/contributor Kaleidoscope (BBC 4), Night Waves (BBC 3), Front Row (BBC 4), Presenter Poetry Now (BBC 3), A Piece of the World Discovered (ten part anthology programme, BBC 3), Chairman and panel member Critics' Forum (BBC 3), Presenter Third Ear (interviewed Burgess, Ford, Auster, Paz, Glendinning, BBC 3), Panel member on Third Opinion (BBC 3), A Word In Edgewise (Radio 4), Round Britain Quiz (BBC 4), A Good Read (BBC 4), The Message (BBC 4)

Feature programmes for BBC Radios 3 and 4 include:

The Feminist Enterprise (interviews with Cixous, Kristeva, Rich etc), Robert Lowell memorial programme, Octavio Paz introductory talk, Cambridge Poetry Festival (two summary programmes), Ezra Pound's Politics, four Personal View talks, four Words series

Television: Contributions to Newsnight, The Late Show, Start the Week.

ABOUT MICHAEL SCHMIDT

Nigel Beale, The Biblio File interview, 2023

<https://thebibliofile.substack.com/p/michael-schmidt-on-publishing-poetry>

The Rylands Brief: Michael Schmidt, 2020

<https://www.digitalexhibitions.manchester.ac.uk/s/carc Janet/item/1400>

Telegraph feature, 2019 <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/books/authors/meet-michael-schmidt-quirkest-man-publishing-reads-every-submission/>

Bookbrunch feature, 2019 <https://www.bookbrunch.co.uk/page/free-article/questions-for-michael-schmidt/>

The North: five poems by MS and three essays on his work by Bernard O'Donoghue, Elaine Feinstein and Grevel Lindop, 1996

Wolfgang Görtschacher, *Little Magazine Profiles*, University of Salzburg Press, 1993: profiles of *PN Review* and editorial work *passim*

Michael Hulse, 'Michael Schmidt in Conversation', *Antigonish Review*, 1991

Mark Fisher, *Letters to an Editor* (Carc Janet Press, 1989)

David Trotter, *The Making of the Reader*, 'Conclusion' pp.233ff (St Martin's Press, 1984)

Robert B. Shaw, 'Michael Schmidt', *Dictionary of Literary Biography: Poets of Great Britain and Ireland Since 1960 Part 2* (Gale Research, 1986)

Elizabeth Jennings, 'Michael Schmidt', *Contemporary Poets* (Macmillan, 1980)

BOOKS by Michael Schmidt

Literary history and criticism

- Gilgamesh: the life of a poem* (Princeton University Press, 2019)
The Novel: a biography (The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2014)
The First Poets: The Greeks (Weidenfeld/USA Knopf, 2004/2005)
The Story of Poetry I-III (Weidenfeld, 2001-2008)
Lives of the Poets (Weidenfeld/USA Knopf, 1998/1999)
Reading Modern Poetry (Routledge, 1989)
Fifty Modern British Poets: an introduction (Pan/Heinemann, USA Barnes & Noble, 1979)
Fifty English Poets 1300-1900: an introduction (Pan/Heinemann, USA Barnes & Noble, 1979)

Poetry

- Talking to Stanley on the Telephone* (Smith/Doorstop, 2021)
The Very Selected Michael Schmidt (Smith/Doorstop, 2017)
Selected Poems (Smith/Doorstop, 2014)
The Stories of My Life (Smith/Doorstop, 2013; USA Sheep Meadow Press, 2016)
Family Tree (Greville Press, 2011)
New & Collected Poems (USA Sheep Meadow Press, 2010)
Collected Poems (Smith/Doorstop, 2009)
The Resurrection of the Body (Smith/Doorstop, 2006)
Selected Poems (Smith/Doorstop, 1997)
The Love of Strangers (Century Hutchinson, 1989)
Choosing a Guest: new and selected poems (Anvil, 1983)
A Change of Affairs (Anvil, 1978)
My Brother Gloucester (Carcanet, 1976)
It Was My Tree (Anvil, 1972)
Desert of the Lions (Carcanet, 1972)
Bedlam & the Oakwood (Carcanet, 1970)
Black Buildings (Carcanet, 1969)

Poems have been translated into Arabic, Estonian, French, German, Italian, Lithuanian, Portuguese, Rumanian, Spanish, Swedish, Turkish

Novels

- The Dresden Gate* (Century Hutchinson, 1986; USA Vanguard, 1989)
The Colonist (Frederick Muller, 1980; Hutchinson, 1983; USA as *Green Island*, Vanguard, 1984)

Poetry anthologies (edited)

- The Great Modern Poets* (Quercus, 2006; 2024)
New Poetries I-VIII (Carcanet Press, 1994-2021)
The Harvill Book of Twentieth-Century Poetry in English (Harvill, 1999; Penguin, 2020)
Five American Poets (Carcanet Press, 2010)
Poets on Poets with Nick Rennison (Waterstones/Carcanet, 1997)
A Calendar of Modern Poetry (*PN Review* 100, 1994)
Eleven British Poets (Methuen/Routledge, 1980)
British Poetry since 1970: a critical survey with Peter Jones (Carcanet Press, 1980)
British Poetry since 1960: a critical survey with Grevel Lindop (Carcanet Press, 1972)

Translations

Flower & Song: Nahuatl Poetry with Edward Kissam (Anvil, 1977, 2010)

Octavio Paz, *On Poets & Others* (Carcenet Press, 1987; Paladin, 1991; USA Seaver Books, 1987)

Awards and citations received include

National Book Critics Circle Award (USA) short list (for *Lives of the Poets*, 2000)

New York Times Books of the Year list (for *Lives of the Poets*, 2000)

Poetry Book Society Special Commendation (for *Selected Poems*, 1997)

Poetry Book Society Recommendation (for *The Love of Strangers*, 1989)

Los Angeles Times book award (for *Green Island*, 1984)

Introductions, book contributions, afterwords

'On Poetry Publishing', *Writers' and Artists' Yearbook 2003, 2004-2014* (A.C. Black)

Introduction, Elizabeth Jennings, *Collected Poems* (Carcenet Press, 2002)

Introduction, Malcolm Lowry, *Under the Volcano* (Penguin, 1999)

Afterword, Rupert Brooke, *Poems 1915* (Penguin, 1999)

Afterword, Robert Burns, *Poems* (Penguin, 1999)

Afterword, George Gordon, Lord Byron, *The Corsair* (Penguin, 1999)

Afterword, Samuel Coleridge and William Wordsworth, *Lyrical Ballads* (Penguin, 1999)

Afterword, John Keats, *Lamia and Other Poems* (Penguin, 1999)

Afterword, Rudyard Kipling, *Barrack Room Ballads* (Penguin, 1999)

Afterword, D.H. Lawrence, *Birds, Beasts and Flowers* (Penguin, 1999)

Afterword, W.B. Yeats, *The Tower* (Penguin, 1999)

Introduction, Elizabeth Jennings, *Every Changing Shape* (Carcenet Press, 1996)

Introduction, John L. Stephens, *Incidents of Travel in Central America, Chiapas and Yucatan*, Century Travellers (Pimlico, 1988)

Introduction, C.H. Sisson, *The Avoidance of Literature: collected essays* (Carcenet Press, 1978)

RECORDINGS

MS reading a selection of his own poems, Poetry Archive, 2008

<https://poetryarchive.org/poet/michael-schmidt/>

Interviewer, co-editor in Canto Talk-Tapes, CD re-issues 2002

Gillian Clarke, Donald Davie, Elizabeth Jennings, Edwin Morgan, C.H. Sisson, Iain Crichton Smith, Sylvia Townsend Warner

Peter Orr, British Council/Harvard Poetry Tapes project, 1975

NEWSPAPER, PERIODICAL AND MAGAZINE CONTRIBUTIONS

including essays, features, poems, translations and reviews at various times in the following:

Agenda, The Author, The Correspondent, Critical Quarterly, Daily Telegraph, Encounter, Financial Times, Guardian, Independent, Letters, Listener, London Review of Books, Daily Mail, New Statesman, Notes & Queries, Prospect, Salisbury Review, Sunday Telegraph, Sunday Times, The Times, Times Higher Educational Supplement, Times Literary Supplement, Tribune; and abroad: *Kenyon Review, New York Times Book Review, Poetry (USA); Books from Finland* (Helsinki), *Plural* (Mexico), *Vuelta* (Mexico)

MANUSCRIPT HOLDINGS

Papers – manuscripts, drafts, proofs, correspondence etc – were acquired by the John Rylands University Library in 1991, as part of the modern literature archive project.