

It was an amazing feeling” says Swansea writer Georgia Carys Williams as she recalls the moment she first clasped eyes – and hands – on a physical copy of her debut short fiction collection, *Second-hand Rain*.

Published by Swansea University-based publisher Parthian Books, and launched at a glitzy reception at the Dylan Thomas Centre, it was the instant where all the long hours and hard graft finally paid off.

“To see my stories so neatly bound together, with the intriguing mirror-image on the front cover, it was almost as though all my hard work had finally come to life and there were repetitions of it stacked upon the book table for people to purchase and actually read,” she says.

“Writing and editing alone for the run up to publication was obviously enjoyable, but it was also hard work.

“I had almost forgotten how great it would all eventually feel, especially when, during the Q and A, I looked up and saw everyone’s faces in the audience; I was just so thankful for their support.

“When I stood up to read the opening of my story *Swansea Malady*, a part of my mind was somewhere else entirely, and the next day, everything felt as though it had been a strange dream.”

But now that the strange dream has become an all-too-real reality, Georgia, who has already received some rave reviews from some of her more established contemporaries, is hoping to emulate their success by following in the footsteps of the local literary success stories who have inspired her along the way.

“Dylan Thomas is an obvious influence,” she says of Swansea’s most famous son.

“I mean, he’s filtered into Swansea’s mass consciousness and beyond, especially this year, during the centenary; there have been so many great events.

“In terms of more recent Welsh authors, I massively look up to and love the writings of Stevie Davies and Jon Gower,” she says of two authors who



Stevie Davies and Jo Furber at the book launch



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Swansea writer Georgia Carys Williams has just launched her debut collection, *Second-hand Rain*. She talks to **Mark Rees** about the experience.

have themselves described Georgia’s new stories as ‘astonishingly imaginative’ and ‘vigorously inventive.’

But how would she describe her book – labelled ‘dark, offbeat and haunting’ by her publisher – herself?

“It’s a very watery collection of stories and I suppose it’s about how all kinds of people feel,” she suggests.

“It’s quite focused on the interior thoughts and emotions of people during various, pivotal moments in their lives, and the very strange but true occurrences that can and are inflicted upon human-beings and other creatures – even birds and mermaids!” she laughs.

“It covers hard topics such as bereavement, phantom pregnancy, suicide, depression, deforestation, home-life, rape, low self esteem and adultery.

“But alongside all of these, there is also much hope. Most of the stories are narrated from perspectives you wouldn’t

expect. It doesn’t shy away from what may at first appear as dark truths, but the collection’s intention is to be honest about the various psychologies of reality; the world is a strange place, and strange and difficult events happen to apparently normal people.”

While looking to the future, we can probably expect another Swansea book launch from Georgia before too long.

“I’m currently working on a novel, which is another first experience, and I’m enjoying every phase the writing process guides me through.

“In many ways, I’ll feel sad when it’s complete. However, there are always new projects. I’d really like to put a collection of my poems together and have those published, and perhaps try my hand at scriptwriting.”

• *Second-hand Rain* by Georgia Carys Williams is available now from Parthian Books.