

Dedham Vale Society

President: Robert F Erith TD DL

Chairman: Charles Clover

Dr Ronald Blythe to be Dedham Vale Society Patron



The Dedham Vale Society is delighted that the distinguished author and countryman Dr Ronald Blythe has agreed to be its first Patron.

Ronnie Blythe has had a long and illustrious career as a writer and critic on East Anglian country life and has for many years lived at Wormingford in the Stour valley, part of the *Dedham Vale Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty* from which he draws inspiration for his unique and lyrical interpretations of the English countryside.

As guest speaker at the Society's annual lecture in the Dedham Assembly Rooms on Monday, 25th November, he introduced and showed a film he produced forty years ago about the life and work of the great painter John Constable RA.

Ronnie made his name with *Akenfield: Portrait of an English village* (1969), an evocative book about agricultural life in Suffolk from the turn of the last Century to 1966. He has since written novels and short stories and is the author of the much-loved Wormingford trilogy which beautifully observes the changing East Anglian scene.

In 2006 he was awarded the prestigious Benson Medal by the Royal Society for Literature in recognition of a lifetime's achievement.

He is also President of the John Clare Society and of the Francis Kilvert Society and is a lay reader in the Church of England.

The Dedham Vale Society was founded in 1938 by Sir Alfred Munnings PRA and Raymond Erith RA. It exists to protect the peace and tranquillity of the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, known universally as *Constable Country*.

For seventy five years the Society has worked to resist the excesses of developers, the utilities and individuals who would seek to damage the world-famous fragile landscape. Despite occasional setbacks, it has been largely successful in preserving a countryside which would be easily recognisable by John Constable today.