

Time In

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Walking the Armitage way

After his recent gig at Dubai Litfest, we cornered renowned British poet **Simon Armitage** for a chat. Words *Rob Garratt*

Like thousands of children before us, we first encountered Simon Armitage at a school desk. But while it would have been easy to form a lifelong association between the poet's work and dull textbooks, we left school thankfully wanting to read more. Armitage's prominent place on the UK's school syllabus obviously worked: he is one of Britain's best-known and most-loved poets, and was awarded a CBE by the Queen in 2010.

That honour came a year after many expected him to be named UK Poet Laureate, a ceremonious role that was eventually accepted by Carol Ann Duffy. He's still reluctant to talk about it – 'are we done?' he bites when we bring up his suitability for the role – but on other subjects 49-year-old Armitage talks with all the eloquence and intellect you'd expect from a writer of his stature.



'Until the mid-'90s I was a probation officer,' he explains, in his Yorkshire accent. 'I was testing my reputation as a poet, and the reputation of poetry. And I found poetry is a relevant and valid art form that speaks to the

He's in Dubai for a number of talks and readings, including one set to music in the desert, and is enthusiastic about the role festivals play in keeping readers interested. 'I think it's natural human curiosity to want to see the person behind the work,' he says. 'It's a testament to the fact literature and books have an important part in people's worlds.'

Dubai, however, is a subject he seems less sure of. 'I've found it too beguiling and bewildering, completely alien,' he says. Good inspiration for a poem, then, we venture. 'It's not the most poetic of places,' he steadies himself. 'But I'm always looking for challenges and the new things in life, and I'm sure if I keep coming back it will become a sonnet.' *Walking Home is out now, from Dhs90 at www.amazon.com.*











'If you write a poem about your Aunt Gladys and people think it's about a tractor, you've probably got the poem wrong'

The basis for our encounter is his visit to Dubai to promote his latest book, *Walking Home*, a prose account of the 256-mile journey he made on foot along the UK's gruelling Pennine Way last summer, without a penny in his pocket and giving readings at night for bread and board.

people. I felt validated in the career that I've chosen, and optimistic about the whole human project.' But how does he feel when someone misinterprets his work? 'If you write a poem about your Aunt Gladys and 3,000 people think it's about a tractor, you've probably got the poem wrong.'

Cool app

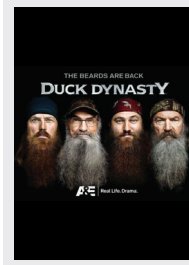
Animated Knots by Grog

Categories	Fishing
	Albright Knot Joins uneven fishing lines
	Arbor Knot Attach fishing line to Arbor
	Australian Braid Strong loop in end of line
	Bimini Twist Strong loop in end of line
	Blood Knot Join two similar fishing lines
	Dropper Loop Strong loop in end of line
	Duncan (Uni) Knot Attach line to hook
	Improved Clinch Attach fishing line to hook
	Nail Knot Joins unequal fishing lines
	Non-Slip Mono Strong fishing knot loop

Never made it through Boy Scouts? This handy app is a necessity for boatmen, fisherman, adventurers and even the fashion set: it divulges how to tie hundreds of knots, from a Windsor necktie to fishing knots. Each lesson comes with a step-by-step animation and guidance as to what the knots are best used for.
From Dhs21 at itunes.apple.com.

DVD

Duck Dynasty season two



A fascinating US reality series documenting the lives of an off-kilter Louisiana family who have made millions of dollars by selling wooden 'duck calls'.

The bandana-wearing clan snub mod cons and white mansions in favour of the backwoods, from where they run their booming Duck Commander business.
From Dhs48 at www.amazon.com.

Five things to watch this week



JFK

Kevin Costner stars in this Oliver Stone film about the assassination of the former US president. *3.30pm, Wednesday March 13, Fox Movies.*

Gavin & Stacey

Hit UK comedy series. Gavin is uncomfortable with Gwen and Bryn knowing too much about his life. *8.30pm, Thursday March 14, BBC Entertainment.*

Live Super Rugby

The Waratahs take on the Cheetahs in this southern hemisphere rugby-league tournament. *11.30am, Friday March 15, OSN Sports 1 HD.*

Come Dine With Me: South Africa

In this celeb special, actress Shashi Naidoo and sportscaster Neil Andrews try to host the winning dinner party. *9.30pm, Saturday March 16, BBC Lifestyle.*

Reservation Road

Drama with Jennifer Connelly and Joaquin Phoenix about a hit-and-run accident. *10.30pm, Tuesday March 19, Fox Movies.*

Dubai bestsellers

Top three bestsellers at Border's, February 19-25

1 Fifty Shades trilogy E L James

The *New York Times* bestseller documenting the relationship between a college graduate and a businessman.

2 The Casual Vacancy JK Rowling

The author's first foray into grown-up fiction revolves around small-town gossip and a council election.

3 The Racketeer John Grisham

Another legal thriller from Grisham: this time the plot features a lawyer who has inside knowledge on the murder of a federal judge.

► **NEXT WEEK:** Actor Norman Reedus fills us in on season three of zombie drama *The Walking Dead*