



TheFED – emazine1

The FED Emagination – making a difference with words

*A network of writing and community publishers,
LATEST-WHERE WE ARE WITH TheFED*

*Who is on the Steering group- what's been happening- writing/news from the website
Louise Glasscoe interview-Coming dates-*

The dust is rising, and the determination to grab this culture, which has always made TheFed something so important and unique, is taking shape.

For the last two years, small but growing festivals, have taken place in London, bringing together the grass roots activity which runs all through the year, in a celebration of our links and our differences.

Workshops, performances, exchanges and debates that keep the decision making & the direction in the hands of those who make the organisation what it is.

FEDfest 08 created a new steering group which has met twice in recent months, the last in February, high above the known world of Yorkshire, at Pecketwell, a real landmark of Fed achievement, also currently facing an uneasy future, the next few meetings are set to work getting this newsletter out, chasing fundraising and the priorities to promote who we are, link us up and to strengthen our ability to make writing and publishing accessible to all.. *The steering group includes the Chair- Roy Birch from Stevenage Survivors, Maia Tahta secretary Lucia Birch (Stevenage Survivors), Louise Glasscoe Treasurer (High Peak Writers Derbyshire) Ashley*

Jordan, (GROW-Bexhill, East Sussex), Lynne Clayton, (Southwark Mind Arts Collective London SE15), Roger Drury (SOUNDWORK Forest of Dean), John Malcomson (Heeley Writers), Sheffield, Amer Salam (New Leaf), Manchester, Pat Smart (Pecket Well College Hebden Bridge Yorkshire) Dave Chambers (Newham Writers), London E7, Sally Flood, (formerly of Basement Writers), London E1.

A big THANK YOU to Pat Smart and Sandra Breeze for organising the accommodation etc at Pecketwell College.

If you want a taste of all the friends that The Fed has in common, just click on www.fedonline.org.uk there you will discover our history, what's current, how you can join and a number of examples of writing and publishing that range across the UK and spread further including to 'The Bread is Rising' in USA.



Lucia, Ashley, John & Louise at Pecketwell

TheFed Festival 09
Saturday 21st
November

Faraday House, 48-51 Old Gloucester Street, Holborn, London, WC1N 3AE

One-day Training and Networking Event

**Workshops, Performances
9-30am – 6pm All welcome**



Louise Glasscoe interviewed by Roger Drury
'I'm Louise and I started the group High Peak Writers in Buxton, Derbyshire, in 2001 and it was mainly from people suffering mental distress.' The NHS

withdrew their funding from the Grapevine cafe which was opposite Colber View? Community Mental Health Team.

I started the group on a Tuesday night at the cafe it was the ideal place for it to be. We got funding originally from the local planning group and then we got funding from the Primary Care Trust and now we get funding from them every year. We have to put in bids through the self help forum, which meets 4 or 5 times a year, and helps all the self help groups in the area for people suffering from mental distress.

We got an Awards For All Grant in about 2003 and it was to write radio play on a mental health theme. We got help of a local Playwright called Alan Ogden. He helped us write it and typed it up for us and knew all about the sound effects we needed. We also got help from the head of drama at Buxton Community School and some of the pupils helped record it.

It was written collaboratively, about five of us wrote it, there were some quite difficult characters in the group so it was quite difficult to agree on the script, at times, it was intended to be played on High Peak Radio. We recorded it with the help of High Peak Community arts but one of the group didn't want his voice to be broadcast, so we did a live performance of it in the Grapevine cafe to a small audience in 2004 and also played excerpts of the recording at various writing festivals and on University campuses. That is how we came into contact with The Fed.

We have also published booklets and I have done a CD of my work, at the moment I have decided to revive the radio play and I have

submitted it to the Buxton Fringe Festival and they've agreed to put it on. I'm trying to get actors to perform because we are not actors, but some of the group are interested in doing 'off stage' voices. It's about a comedienne who has an Italian boyfriend and a couple of children and she is under a lot of stress so she has a psychotic episode and she goes into hospital and the family are totally shocked. She recovers and it has a very good ending but I think it raises awareness mental health issues in that it can happen to anybody. It is a very authentic account of what happens when you go into a psychiatric unit of a hospital, I've many friends in hospital so I know what it is like and we are hoping to raise awareness about mental health issues in the area. High Peak Radio says they can't put it on because it is too short. It's about 20 minutes long but we've got quite a few new members now, some of the original members who wrote the play have now left the group, but we thought the new members would appreciate hearing it.

At our meetings we do things like group poems, someone writes a line and then someone else adds a line and so on,



Steering group meeting at Pecketwell

sometimes we get a word out of a dictionary we try and write about that. If I set homework that can be difficult because attendance can be quite erratic, you don't always get the same people in the group so it seems to work best actually doing the writing within the workshop.

We have about an hour between and 7 and 8pm every , it can be very few or sometimes up to 7

or 8 people -but we do get new members, some of us go to 'Telling Tales' 3rd Thursday of the month at the Eagle pub. There are not just poets and writers, there are also musicians. I've talked about our group and I've said it's not just for people with mental health problems and some of them have shown an interest in joining.

When I first heard about the FED I was in a group in Manchester called

Commonword and I used to go to the Monday night group, there was never any shortage of material; it's quite different to the group I'm part of now. I went to the Fed Festival one year and was made secretary so got onto the committee straight away and I was on that for about four years and I got very involved in several things I went on a marketing course. There were all sort of groups under the umbrella of Commonword there was the Women's group, the Survivors group mainly for people suffering mental distress, there was a Gay group, an ethnic Minority group. The Monday group was open to everybody and we did a postcard for each group and then did a reading at the Green Room in Manchester having been on a marketing course, it was a good opportunity to promote the group, I met a lot of poets through the group and we did a lot of performances in pubs and clubs in Manchester, so I met such a wide group of people.

So when I heard about the FED I thought I'd go along and see what it was like and I met so many different people from so many different groups from all over the country, I'd no idea that it was so big and the festival was great fun.

It involved quite a lot of work being on the committee because the meetings used to last for long periods. It wasn't 4 or 5 meetings a year it was sub committees as well I got And that is when I thought 'it is taking me a long time to get from Buxton to Manchester' so thought I'd start my own group. And it eventually became a FED group, so we went along and all the people from my group who came along enjoyed the Festival a great deal.

It's just a really good opportunity to meet different groups and find out different ways of running groups. I also visited other groups including Leeds and Birmingham, asking them to join the FED and I enjoyed it because I met such a huge number of people that I've stayed friends with for years now, and I am just really pleased with it. Anybody I talk to I always promote the FED and I've been on courses here at Pecketwell in Yorkshire and thought they were very good and I would not been able to do them if they were not so reasonable. Workshops, accommodation and walks it's very stimulating, I had a great deal of fun, I always enjoyed the Festival workshops in Bexhill and London

I think I was very nervous when I had to perform my own stuff but I seem to have overcome it now, I think I've done it so many times now I've managed to conquer my shyness, as I now perform at The Eagle in Buxton every month and I'm getting more involved with the FED again, feeling active as the treasurer and I want to help with the magazine as I enjoy writing.

POLITICAL Songwriting Competition - Theme: Living in 21st Century(Yorkshire) Four finalists will perform at the Topic Folk Club on Thursday 5th November. The winner will be asked to perform the winning song at the Leon Rosselson Birthday concert on the afternoon of Saturday 7th November. Songs will be judged primarily on the lyrics which should be sent (with a £5 entry fee) to: Raise Your Banners Song Competition c/o Bradford Resource Centre, 17-21 Chapel Street, Bradford, BD1 5DT Details should include the writer, the performer/s (maximum 2) the tune, and date written. Please also include any explanation of the song which you would use by way of introduction when performing your song. All songs must be original and received by 1st September 2009. further information from: www.raiseyourbanners.org or Rob Martin on 01274 593585

REFLECTION

was the theme for JUNE
on TheFED website
Please add your own
words, comments as
writers and readers
www.fedonline.org.

Calico

Alone on the bench
she sat watching

Calico, on a
shimmering sea
drifting, drifting
sailing the breeze
lazily billowing
catching the air
harnessing
its power
quite naturally

In quiet contemplation
she dreams, of being

Calico
adrift and free
amidst the
dancing sunlight
of her own
reflection, to
feel the breeze
revelling in all
its serenity

Silently, she entered
a darker world of

Calico drowning

in salty tears
unable to breathe
suffocating, despair
dragging her
down, down
as the storm
releases its power
destructively

Grasping for hope
she reaches out

And sails now
on calico wings
peacefully
drifting in the
pure clean air
above the
shimmering sea
remembering
quite reflectively

A girl sitting
alone on a bench
wishing.....

By Jan Hedger



**Illustration from
Voices 27
Fed Magazine from 1970s**



'Climbing Through'

Climbing through a portal
to another kind of place
things still a little hazy
warm wind on my face
eyes opening wider now
a new world comes into
view
sun shining down on
everything
sparkling in the morning
dew
the air is filled with
radiance
I hear seagulls cry
this journey just became
more beautiful
walking on
climbing through
reaching out to sea and
sky

*Lucia Birch (Stevenage
Survivors)*



Photographs by Louise Glasscoe

Update from Nick Pollard

I am still working with Steve Parks on the republication of The Republic of Letters and interviewed David Morley and Ken Worpole, who kindly agreed to see me last week. Steve and I think this will be out by next year.

One of the suggestions that came out of the discussion we had was looking at the archive again and the importance of doing something with the Fed's archive - The real aim here would be to preserve what's there and have it where it can be studied - this would enable more stuff about the Fed to be published and probably open opportunities to talk about what we're doing now. Still looking for another group or two to interview for my study on how writing groups survive, value of networks etc.

Sad news

Unfortunately Ken Baldwin who was a member of the Steering Committee recently died of cancer. He contributed a great deal to the discussions about The FED by email over the last couple of months and he even tried to participate in a FED meeting from his hospital bed last year. He will be sadly missed.

Bedtime with Dad

At my bedtime
my dad faced by a lion in
Africa turned his back contemptuously
and the lion threw him down
jaws slavering red and open
teeth razor-white sharp
but my dad thrust his hand
into those jaws down its throat
and through a slithery belly to
the roots of its tail
then with one gigantic heave
he turned it inside out,
that's what he said.

At my bedtime
my dad saved a white
mermaid in Blackpool from an octopus
by tying it in knots

and that same day saved a
black mermaid from a shark
by forcing cod liver oil down it
with a bicycle pump
he happened to be carrying
upon which the shark was
violently sick on the sea-bed
and took no further interest,
that's what he said.

At my bedtime
my dad put his thumbs in his
mouth and blew
and blew until his biceps
swelled like balloons.
He once saved his life at sea
by using them to keep afloat.
I tried to blow mine up but couldn't
there'll come a time,
that's what he said.

At his own last bedtime
lions and mermaids waiting his arrival
he gave me a morning clean-shaven kiss and
Be a Good Boy
is what he said.
I was sixty three.

K C Baldwin

We now have a website (www.fedonline.org.uk) and membership forms can be downloaded from that site to be returned to Lucia Birch, 156 Gonville Crescent, Stevenage, Herts, SG2 9LY, email luciabirch53@yahoo.co.uk. Her phone number is 01438 225377. We also have a blogspot www.thefed-friends.blogspot.com. All this computer wizardry thanks to Ashley Jordan. Any financial contributions to The FED would be most gratefully accepted and can be sent to Louise Glasscoe, Treasurer, at 2 Clydesdale, 5 College Road, Buxton, Derbyshire SK17 9DZ. Cheques should be made payable to The FED and sent to me The FED's bank account is now with the Royal Bank of Scotland, Buxton, Derbyshire. My telephone number is 01298 77623 and my email address is glasscoe@tiscali.co.uk.

EXEC update The most recent exec meeting took place in London at the end of June. Hosted by Survivors Poetry in North London. A dry Saturday morning brought us together, unfortunately Louise was let down by a bus connection so she missed her train. But 10 of us made it here's a few reflections from Ashley after the meeting

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I thought it might be a nice idea to re-cap on what we have already achieved with absolutely NO outside funding!

2007 London MiniFest
2008 London MiniFest
The Website
The E-Groups
The Message Board
The BLOG
50+ Individual Members
A growing list of Member Groups
Monthly Writing Challenges - each with more submissions than the last!
4 Successful Exec Meetings
Our new name and tag-line
An adopted constitution

And the support we already have is phenomenal

Faraday House for the London MiniFests
Volunteers willing to provide & prepare food and clear up afterwards, workshop leaders, skills, transport and resource sharing, a membership that care about each other and offer practical support where it is needed...
An Exec committee that are so committed we are working our guts out AND covering all our own expenses...
Free venues for all our Exec meetings so far
Free website & communication tools provision
and I'm sure that as soon as I click send I'll think of even more!!!

I really think we are doing brilliantly :-)

love & light, Ashleyxxx

Next exec mtg

Sheffield 19th September

TheFed Festival 09

Making a difference with Words

SATURDAY 21ST NOVEMBER

A Day of networking, training & celebrating words- with People from all pages of the map

Workshop sessions will include- John Malcolmson – 'whatever kind of story you write, it will be about people. Getting the character right is essential to a good story,'

Writing and Performing Poetry with Agnes Meadows

Jan Hedger - 'Description can be flowery, to the point, fun, imaginative, and all things in between! Don't be afraid of it - let it flow from your pen '

Andy Smith-In deadly earnest or light-hearted fun come & enjoy personal story writing and playing with form & colour.

From the USA The Bread is Rising project comes to UK

Meditation, Reiki and Creative Writing as therapy with Roy & Lucia Birch

Food, friendship, debate and much more including the unique

FED Performances event

Faraday House, 48-51 Old Gloucester Street, Holborn, London, WC1N 3AE

9-30am till 6pm Book now through our website www.fedonline.org.uk) or TheFED 156 Gonville Crescent, Stevenage, SG2 9LY or call 01438 225377

£15 (concessions £10)