

The Federation of

Worker Writers & Community

Publishers

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*New* **Logo**

- **New Federation Design**
- **Fed Ruskin Scheme:**  
First student reports
- **Festival of writing**
- **A Touch of the Dutch**

# Feditorial: A Designer's Perspective

In 1996 The FWWCP obtained funding from the Paul Hamlyn Foundation to improve the design of Federation Magazine, and Richard Earle, of RED, based in Sheffield, was engaged to work with the magazine team. At the conclusion of this work he takes this issue's Feditorial to explain the concept of the magazine and the new Fed logo.

Often good design is left out of organisations like the Federation, mainly because it can be seen as an unnecessary expense. With the advent of modern desk top publishing systems and the growing ability of untrained users we are seeing more and more cheaply produced artwork. This has its obvious benefits; publications in many formats can be produced with satisfactory results. However the use of such systems does not mean good design can be automatically achieved.

Many aspects of the design process are overlooked or misinterpreted, leading to products which communicate but do not show the information in the best way.

In 1996 I was approached by Nick Pollard to revamp and reorganise the look of Federation magazine. It was also decided to redesign the Federation logo.

The Federation's aim was to create:

A new look which will be our magazine identity, one which grabs the attention, relays the required information, captures the essence of the Federation and offers a quality of design which complements the text.

A simple system of production. This means following a basic layout which is reused each time, including the page look, front cover, column width, font type and size,

standardisation of colours used, number of pages and software with which the magazine is produced. This is with a view to reduce work for the production team, speed turnaround of production, and facilitate training of new magazine team members.

## The new magazine look

Two camps of opinion emerged as to what Federation Magazine should be. On one side a cheaply produced newsletter, and on the other a more glossy full colour approach.

The result is neither: the magazine has quality texts and they need to be supported by a design and production approach which makes it stay on the table, not get filed away as with so many other publications. The inside of the magazine needed to be light and airy, not heavy and difficult

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to read. It needed to be easy to follow with clear headings and sections. The page numbers are now on the side of the page to give quicker access when thumbing through.

### Changes

The inside is still going through changes and I wish to add more images relating to the text. The typographic image of "Federation" running down the side of the pages in a 10% black tint creates more visual interest and relates to the standard "Federation" type on the front cover.

### Cover

Though you should never judge books or magazines by their cover this is so often the case. The Federation magazine cover has a new standardised format on the left hand side but also has scope for 'teasers' on the right. A teaser is an image or phrase which creates interest to look inside. The choice of text for bullet points is to be standardised - but the main front page message is to be designed in type which complements the feel of the content.

The last publication had circles down the right hand side. These create yet more visual interest and are to be used at a later date to hold photographic details of images from the contents.

After 21 years of the FWWCP I hope the magazine's design will contribute to the longevity of the Fed. The new design has broached many design problems and I believe will service the organisation well into the next century, marrying flexibility and production organisation.

### New Logo

The new logo, which incorporates members' most common way of referring to the FWWCP - "Fed" - places the 'Fed' within a set of quotation marks, and conveys the idea of the Fed as an interactive organisation about words, about telling stories of ourselves. The design should serve as an expression of the Fed's identity on everything associated with the Federation. Whether reduced to a size suitable for a book spine or blown up to banner size it needs to remain recognisable as a marque at any angle, vertical or horizontal. It needed to be simple and easy to copy, and to work against any colour background so Fed groups can use it with anything they produce.

To celebrate the launch of the new logo a metal pin badge in white enamel on nickel chrome, and a T shirt is available.

**Richard Earle**

## Say "FED" with panache!

Federation T shirts (in black and red on white, XL size fits all), price £7.50 each plus £1 postage and packing, and FED badges (white enamel shaped design on nickel chrome), price £2 plus 35p postage and packing are available from PO Box 540, Burslem ST6 6DR. Please make cheques and postal orders payable to FWWCP, using the form (which can be photocopied) below.

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Please send me \_\_\_ T Shirts at £7.50 each (+£1 p&p, 50p for each T shirt thereafter, to a maximum of £2.50)

Please send me \_\_\_ badges at £2 each (+35p p&p, 20p for each badge thereafter, to a maximum of £2.55)

I enclose a cheque for £ \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

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Post Code \_\_\_\_\_

# The Ruskin-Fed partnership

**Come on,  
you members of Fed  
writing groups - come  
to Oxford and enjoy the  
unique Ruskin College  
experience!  
That's what I'm doing,  
thanks to the  
Fed-Ruskin writing  
partnership,  
and I'm finding it one  
of the most valuable  
experiences of my life!**

This is a unique scheme to enable you, Fed writers, to work on your writing for 20 weeks at Ruskin College.

Both the Fed and Ruskin have a commitment to furthering working class writing and creating opportunities for people at the margins of society. A basic motivation for both organisations is to encourage people to put their own experience at the centre of their writing and learning.

Having visited Ruskin a few times I have been impressed by the warmth

and commitment of all the workers there. It is one of only 6 residential adult education colleges in England, Scotland and Wales. The adults who go to study there do not need formal qualifications; experience and commitment to learning are more important. Students are fully supported in this.

The Fed is a unique organisation with a great diversity of people and practices united in a Federation. This difference can often make the Fed feel separate, even isolated, from

## What is the scheme?

- Members of Fed groups can go to Ruskin College for 20 weeks to write and study.
- Grants are available for this. They will cover accommodation, food and (!) living expenses.
- You will do three courses. The first will be a piece of your own writing. This could be some poems, an autobiography, an account of a community struggle, a piece of fiction, or other idea you may have.
- The other two courses will be short courses which are offered by the College. These include courses on labour history, politics, literature, women's studies, reading company accounts, and computing, to name a few.
- To qualify for a grant you need to be over 21 and not have had a higher education grant before. Higher education means university, if you're not sure, ask.
- The course is residential with single rooms.
- This is an on-going scheme.

other organisations. This can be a danger we should guard against. By forming this partnership we aim to create new opportunities and spaces in which to work. New ideas and projects may arise as a result of this one.

This scheme was set up by Stephen Yeo, principal of the college. Some of you may know Stephen as one of the founder members of

QueenSpark, a long-standing Fed member.

There will be various deadlines throughout the year. At the moment it's not too late to apply to start in September.

If you are not sure about any of this, or want to discuss it, you can contact me (Tom Woodin) at Gatehouse (0161 226 7152) or Tim Diggles the Fed worker (01782 822 327). We can phone you back if needed.

If you want an application form, or want to discuss this with the college yourself, contact: Ruskin College, Walton Street, Oxford OX1 2HE. Tel 01865 558376 (Liz Mathews).

If you already know all this tell me how the Fed could better advertise the scheme among your members who don't know. You could make sure they do know!

## The Bishop who Built the Cathedral

I see the bishop scabbling on his knees  
Across the slippery roof.

That's a good one, Brother.

I see him heaving stones  
Across a swaying cat-walk.

Now tell me another.

I see him up there  
In all the wild and windy weather

That's a good one, Brother.

Nursing his chilblains, getting his old wife  
To rub his creaking back.

Now tell me another.

I see him toppling to the streets below  
(Though he knew that God would save his soul).

That's a good one, Brother.

Well, it must be so. It says so on this plaque:  
'The bishop built this great cathedral.'

No, don't tell me another.  
That's a good one.  
That's a good one, Brother.

## Sussex Stag Night

The moon goes reeling through the trees  
And Jack's atop the vicar's garden wall.  
The steeple leans against the scudding clouds  
And Jack looks like about to fall.  
And it's, hush, hush, my Sussex bonny boys,  
Go home quiet and make no noise!

Young Nancy's shadow moves across the curtain.  
We love her, lads, and that's for true.  
Climb up, young Jack, upon this branch,  
And then you'll get a better view!  
And it's, hush, hush my Sussex bonny boys,  
Go home quiet and make no noise!

Strike up your harmonica, young Jack,  
And we'll do a proper morris dance.  
Oh dear, he's in the flower-bed now.  
Get up, Jack, and let us see you prance.  
And it's, hush, hush, my Sussex bonny boys,  
Go home quiet and make no noise!

It's all right, Officer, we've only drunk a yard of ale;  
Though I swear young Jack drank from a pail.  
And it's, hush, hush, my Sussex bonny boys,  
Go home quiet and make no noise!  
Hush, hush, the clock's tolled midnight now.  
Go home, lads, and make no noise

# Deborah Thomas

Below John Tatum gives his impressions of the scheme and what it's done for him. John is a member of QueenSpark in Brighton who is spending the time improving his poems. I have a hazy reflection of sitting with friends at the Walmer Castle in Brighton listening to John read his poems. He's still at it! - he's dug up a pub in Oxford where he reads regularly. You could join him.

## Tom Woodin

*Come on, you members of Fed writing groups - come to Oxford and enjoy the unique Ruskin College experience! That's what I'm doing, thanks to the FedRuskin writing partnership, and I'm finding it one of the most valuable experiences of my life!*

So, pick up a leaflet from your Federation group and give it a go. You'll be mixing with a great bunch of people in an inspiring environment and you'll have expert, individual guidance and tuition to help you develop your writing.

There'll be none of the usual distractions - shopping, cooking, washing-up, housework, DIY, etc. - that you find at home. You'll just be able to knuckle down to what you like doing best - writing.

I'm writing this sitting at my desk in my own private studybedroom, after a fantastic lunch. The food is great and there's plenty of it. And the

beds are so comfortable you'll sleep like a log.

As well as attending lectures and tutorials, you'll find plenty of time to be on your own to write or study and also plenty of time to socialise. But, best of all, you'll be actually encouraged to write. No more furtive scribbling at a corner of the kitchen table, with the kids screaming and the telly blaring. You'll be in academia here - but academia with a friendly face.

This time last year I would never have believed it - now I'm never going to look back. So ask your convenor for a Fed-Ruskin Writing Partnership leaflet. It'll be the best thing you ever did. And it's all free!

## John Tatum

**QueenSpark Books of Brighton wishes to announce the sudden death, on Easter Sunday 1997, of one of their active members, Deborah Thomas, known as 'Debo'.**

The circumstances are particularly tragic and harrowing. A member for more than three years, 'Debo' covered QueenSpark's 'CLUB 94', an afternoon writing group.

She was a vivacious and lively performance poet, well known and well loved on the Brighton circuits. Aged 38, 'Debo' leaves two young children and a grieving family.

We all miss her.



# 21 Today! The Federation's Festival of Writing

**A twenty first birthday (complete with cake!), the launch of the Federation's new logo and tour 'Fed's Under the Beds' - a performance documenting the growth of the FWWCP, a lively two hour reading, bookstalls, meetings and over twenty workshops, not to mention a fair amount of partying and networking made for another event packed Festival of Writing.**

On offer were sessions on American working class writing, marketing self published books, glass painting, typography, using the internet, writing with symbols, as well as open readings and more conventional workshops on poetry, story writing, and performance. Over eighty people attended this April at the Co-operative Management College, Stanford Hall, near Loughborough.

## **Culture Shock**

The Federation's membership is increasingly diverse, a source of its strength, and in the collision of people from different backgrounds and with different experiences some Festival attenders will find themselves in for a culture shock. The difference which makes the Fed what it is, is that it is about writing for all. Many ideas which drive and enable the Fed to develop have come directly from the necessity of creativity which has originated in groups

such as Survivor Poets, Big Issue, Creafi and Pecket Well College - indeed, at the core of the Fed is the principle of accessibility, a fundamental democracy. What results is something which could take you as a writer in any direction, and probably several at the same time. But it won't benefit you to close the book before you have had a chance to read it properly: it was unfortunate to hear a couple of people remark that this year "it was like care in the community". A month after the AGM, millions of people showed that the premise that 'there is no such thing as society' is very mistaken.

As 'Fed's Under the Beds' shows in a compilation of all kinds of voices, through the last twenty one years, eighteen of them a rolling descent into a culture of mean social complacency, the Fed has been a community where people have continued to explore ways to write about and publish an account of people as themselves. Now's the time, more than ever, for us to celebrate our writing, ourselves.

## **AGM - "interesting - didn't last too long"**

This year, with the help of Yorkshire and Humberside Arts, the Festival saw a particularly large contingent from Pecket Well: 'the play about the history of the

FWWCP was very funny, we all enjoyed it. Roger (Drury) said that the FWWCP could maybe put on their play with Pecket Well to help us raise money. At the Saturday morning bookstalls Pecket Well College sold quite a few books. The Annual General Meeting was interesting - and didn't last too long! Some people from Pecket Well were elected onto the executive committee - Sandra O'Brien, and Michelle Baynes as a regional representative.

## **Big Audience**

On the Saturday night there was a big performance where everybody read their writing to a big audience, lots for the very first time. Liz Thompson, the compere, was a right character, she read right at the end. It was really funny - Julie nearly choked on her drink when Liz began because it was all "about shit" (the pleasures of living in close proximity to a sewage fuelled power station).

Lots of people spoke to us, they were very friendly. We'd love to go again! We want to thank the Fed committee and Tim Diggles the Worker for all their hard work and thanks to the workshop leaders who gave their time freely."

**Pecket Well College**

## **"Brilliant"**

**Angie Arblaster** of Burbury Creative Writers: "Just one word sums up the whole weekend and that is Brilliant.



I found the whole weekend interesting and enjoyable and I met many new people who were friendly and helpful. It was the first weekend I had gone away with the Fed and at the AGM I was voted in as a Executive Member which was great. Also I brought a lot of material from the bookstalls which contain some excellent poetry and short stories. I attended two workshops which I found very useful especially the Reminiscence workshop. I'll end by saying the food was great a real change from the old beans on toast, being in the countryside is a real treat especially being from Birmingham".

**"I like to see a big crowd"**

**Dorothy Blake** of Gatehouse: "The Fed is very good, it brings people together from different opinions, but most of them work and link with each other. It gives you plenty of activities and keeps you cheerful. It's a good organisation and I'd like to see more groups coming. The first AGM I went to there were over 100 people. I like to see a big crowd."

If you missed this year's Festival, make a point of going to the next one. Because workshop convenors and the organisers work voluntarily, the cost is held down, just to cover accommodation. Consequently it's good value, and you should come away absolutely knackered. It's one of the best and liveliest opportunities to meet other groups and exchange ideas to take your own writing forward. It's the place to find out that community publishing might be fun but is to be taken seriously.

**I am a book addict,  
and part of that  
growing be  
anoraked  
bibliophilic breed,  
a Fedobibulout.  
My collection spans  
getting on for a  
thousand texts of  
working class and  
community  
publishing or books  
related to the  
movement.  
Most of these are  
from the Fed.  
If each on average  
contains 6 authors  
(some many more)  
there are tens of  
thousands of people  
who at some time  
have been published  
by one of the  
member groups -  
an enormous  
number of writers.**

# Festival Bookbag

*Nick Pollard roots through the contents of his post Festival shopping hangover bag and reports on what was on sale at the Federations Bookstalls.*

The bookstall is once again an important element of the Festival of Writing, punctuated by launches of new books and much chasing of stall holders as everyone is at other stalls catching up on new books. The increased emphasis on the bookstall has made it a much more lively occasion.

I have a confession. I am a book addict, and part of that growing be-anoraked bibliophilic breed, a Fedophile. My collection spans getting on for a thousand texts of working class and community publishing or books related to the movement. Most of these are from the Fed. If each on average contains 6 authors (some many more) there are tens of thousands of people who at some time have been published by one of the member groups - an enormous number of writers.

My habit requires a separate save and borrow account to build up funds through the year to sustain it. There is no cure, but I am not alone - and Federation magazine welcomes other Fedophiles needing the opportunity to out themselves and feel supported.

## Survivors

One of the most productive areas appears to have been

**Survivors' Poetry.** At their stall I picked up Steve Tasane's *Bleeding Heart* (Gecko Press, £6.95), containing for example Fat Slag, which reverses the Viz comic images for an exploration of the male sexual psyche which debunks thoroughly any notion of respectability in laddism. This is followed by television versions of the Brothers Grimm. Humour so dark you need a halogen bulb on your torch.

**Survivor's Poetry Scotland's** *Sweet, Sour and Serious* (£6.95, Glasgow Association for Mental Health, 1st floor, Melrose House, 15/23 Cadogan St, Glasgow) and *And the World Really Had Changed (Leeds Survivor Poets* £8, Centenary House, 59 North St, Leeds LS2) are two anthologies of poems and illustrations which confront the myths of mental illness. As likely to be funny as disturbing, both contain lots of work and look good value for money (allow a bit extra for p&p). *The Memory Bird*, Virago, (edited by Caroline Malone, Linda Farthing, and Lorraine Marce), £8.99, contains hundreds of writings by survivors of sexual abuse. Difficult reading, but from some of the pieces I've so far read, an ultimately uplifting book.

### Our Experience

An annual problem at the **Gatehouse** stall is working out which of these popular books have been republished in new covers. *Our Experience* is new this year, and features writings by women from Somalia, Tanzania, Bangladesh and Pakistan. A great innovation in this book is the setting of poems in dual translation, in

their original language but in roman type; you don't require knowledge of different alphabets if you want to read them aloud. There is also a small recipe section. It's a great book - details from *Gatehouse, Hulme Adult Education Centre, Hulme Walk, Manchester - tel 0161 226 7152*.

### The Figure in Black

Fatma Durmush is part of the **Big Issue** writing group - her two poetry collections: *The Figure in Black* and *The Bitter Breeze* cost £2.50 together. *The Figure in Black* contains translations of other Turkish poets. Her own work deals powerfully with the contradictions thrown up in her role as a migrant to the UK, the demands of Muslim conformity and the marginalisations she has found at the many levels of her experience.

The **Commonword** stall had a couple of publications I must have missed in earlier years: *Dancing on Diamonds* (Crocus), a young writers anthology from 1993, and *Patronizingly Challenged Beware!*, by the **North West Disabled Writers Workshop**. Though the play from which the latter anthology's title is taken is about confronting disablist attitudes, this is by no means all - "I thought you made the earth move for me/ but it turned out to be/ a few dodgy springs and an unsteady bed" (Bev Burkitt).

### Greenham

**Working Press** yielded *Beth Junor's Greenham Common*,

*Women's Peace Camp: A History of Non-Violent Resistance 1984-1995*.

Needless to say on opening this the nonviolence is rather one sided, and the forces of state terror showing no such restraint. The verve, inventiveness and wit of women's peace camp protest activities has always impressed me, and it is probably something which has fed into issues like the road protests now. It still elicits a brutal, rather than an appreciative response from the state: subversion is even more threatening when delivered with irony. The other book I picked up here is *Educating Who About What? The circled A and its' parasites (Black Economy Books)*. An uncompromising critique of the anarchist movement in the UK, and the misuse of anarchism, notably *Class War*, "a fucking joke". This is a critique of middle class involvement in politics, the use of politics itself as diversion from the issues confronting working class people, delivered in an up front style and ranting typography.

### Refreshingly Home Made

At **Pecket Well** I picked up a copy of *Your Magazine* (£1). This is good value for money at a quid, it looks home made; in an age of desk top publishing it is refreshing to see something that has obviously had someone sticking on the pictures. Most of them show people writing, a clear statement in itself - especially as a large part of this issue is given to experiences of education. The title *Misty Memories of Bygone Days* (50p) belies the hard experience documented in Betty Legg's autobiography,

while Jim O'Brien's *Poetry: A Labour of Love*, (£1) eulogises the 10.18 Leeds to Halifax and records the sad demise of a tomato. Get them from *Pecket Well College, Co-op Buildings, Keighley Rd, Pecket Well, Hebden Bridge, West Yorkshire*.

Continuing the educational theme, an impressive display of books was mounted by **Educational Heretics**, a number of which have been reviewed in previous Federation Magazines. Addressing some of the issues raised by the education debate in Pecket's *Your Magazine*, Educational Heretics books are aimed at home education, and to support those who with their children have opted out of the national curriculum's humdrum homogeneity. The latest of these, *The Next Learning System: and why homeschoolers are trailblazers*, by Roland Meighan, (£7.95) will be reviewed in the next issue. (From 113 Arundel Drive, Bramcote Hills, Nottingham NG9 3FQ).

### Stormful of Celebration

At **Eastside's** stall I bought Boom, *A stormful of celebration from children and adults in Tower Hamlets*, again a book I've missed previously, dating from a lively collaboration between schools and homes for the elderly in 1994. It opens with What's in the Wardrobe and has sections on food, presents, dancing - there are concrete poems and collective as well as individual pieces. It's great for dipping into and getting

other people to talk or write about their experiences. Bargain at £3. (From 178 Whitechapel Rd, London E1 1BJ)

**London Voices A Classy Pair of Knickers** (£3.60 + 50p p&p) is a bumper mix of writing and some fine illustrations. The title piece is one of Diana Dunwoodie's humorous explorations of sexuality, an expensive experience in lingerie, while Richard Bell movingly tells in a triptych of poems of the death of his wife.

### Visual Appeal

Finally **Creafi's** beautifully made books are a real pleasure to hold - the quality of the paper, and the visual appeal of hand set type with contrasting motifs set them apart. This year I picked up *Recueil de textes et poemes Creafi - atelier typographique 1990-1991*:

### My Birth

"I was born one 25th December like baby Jesus, but I wasn't born in a stable and I didn't have the three kings, but my mother's arms to warm me, and her big blue eyes to look at me. It was winter, it was cold and snow covered the streets of my district like a white tablecloth." Pierette. *Two more recent Creafi books appear in the reviews section, see page 16.*

I could have spent more, but Northern Voices and QueenSpark books were very conspicuous by their absence... this is a problem as some Market Books turn over very quickly and you can miss the opportunity to get them. I

## Festival Bookbag

managed to get a bootleg copy of Daphne Mitchell's *Oh! What a Lovely Pier*, which describes working in the West Pier concert hall in Brighton, from Arthur Thickett.

### Penguin

Much of the charm of community publishing is in its ephemeral nature. Print runs of a hundred or so copies, here today, gone tomorrow. If you don't get a copy you might never see it again. But historians and philosophers (e.g. Christopher Hill, Michel Foucault) attest to its value. Where else will you read of midwives and bin men, housewives and rail workers, the young and old ordinary people of Britain saying what they think and feel - and at the same time, writing history. Fresh history. You can't get no fresher. You don't get much of that in a pound of discounted penguin.

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# A Touch of the Dutch

**She talks compulsively; with lovers, sisters, an obscene caller and even (with the aid of a medium) her late mother. Gradually it becomes clear that she (and thus we) are waiting for one special call.**

*In 1995 Aurora Metro Publications decided to produce a collection of plays by Netherlands female writers. Cheryl Robson (Series Editor for Aurora's collection of European Plays by Women) has spent the past two years bringing this project to fruition:*

"We've had to find the plays, have them read in Dutch and reported on, commission translations, proof read them. The writers we chose are well known in their country and often working in other media as well. Theatre there is well subsidised - they've had the opportunity to learn their skills."

## Despite the Cold

With the launch of the book *A Touch of The Dutch*, Aurora Metro Publications showcased the collection at Notting Hill's Gate Theatre. Despite the cold Sunday evening the trickle of ticket buyers very nearly turned into a flood; it became clear that this was an event many had heard of and few were inclined to miss. Writers Hella S. Hasse, Suzanne Van Lohuizen, Marin Van Veldhuizen, Inez Van Dulleman and Judith Herzberg rubbed shoulders with translators, other practitioners and interested theatre goers.

With only twenty four hours in which to rehearse, performances took the form of rehearsed readings, followed by informal discussions between audience, actors,

writers, translators and a director from the Women's Theatre Workshop. For cast and director the public meetings were invariably their first contact with writers and translators, and the resultant discussions about ways of working and approach were accompanied by exploration of content and form.

## A Thread in the Dark

The showcase began with an extract from *A Thread in the Dark* by Hella S Hasse. Translated by Della Couling and directed by Janet Cordon, the play is a profound retelling of the myth of Theseus and the Minotaur from Ariadne's viewpoint. Taking as her starting point the idea that this monster which demands annual human sacrifice doesn't actually exist, Hasse's adept reworking of the classical tragedy explores issues of political power, betrayal and unquestioning acceptance.

*Dossier:*  
*Ronald Akkerman*

*Dossier: Ronald Akkerman, by Suzanne Van Lohuizen* (translated by Saskia Bosch, directed by Lucy PitmanWallace) deconstructs the last encounters between a nurse and her patient who is dying of AIDS. Deeply moving, the play is almost a mediation between direct and reported action. 'He' has chosen euthanasia; when 'She' returns from the funeral she begins to

she speak about herself in the third person. Gradually a second voice (He) is woven in, the dialogue eventually bringing the Shecharacter to an understanding of what actually happened to her during the course of their relationship as patient and carer.

### **Eat**

In **Matin Van Veldhuizen's** *Eat* (translated by Rina Vergano, directed by Bernadete Moran) three sisters come together to celebrate the anniversary of their mother's death. As they talk, it becomes clear that each has a problem with food and body. As the sisters locate the root of their problems in the relationship between their late mother and step-father, we are treated to large doses of irony, insight and everyday wisdom that had many in the audience laughing out loud.

### **Write Me in the Sand**

Many arrived intending to see just one performance, only to find themselves hooked for the duration. *Write Me in the Sand*, by **Inez Van Dulleman** (translated by Anthony Akerman, directed by Chrissy Harmar-Brown) elicited absolute silence. Available here in English for the first time, the play has been performed throughout Europe and Scandinavia, as well as broadcast on German TV. Aided by a series of flashbacks, Judith uncovers

the genuinely shocking truth behind her elder sister's suicide. As the play unfolds, a powerful and poetic reconstruction of the life of an incest victim emerges. Handled with immense sensitivity, Inez Van Dulleman held the audience enthralled in the subsequent talkback session, as she explained how the idea for the play had begun with the discovery of a series of letters and papers uncovered in the attic of a newly acquired house.

### **The Caracal**

The uninhibited atmosphere and broad spectrum of issues and genres far outweighed my minor discomfort entailed in sitting in the same space for almost five hours. As *The Caracal* by Holland's leading dramatist, **Judith Herzberg** (translated by Rina Vergano, directed by Astrid Hilne) brought the evening to an end, the audience were drawn into the comic world of a teacher and her telephone, trying to make sense of her lonely life. She talks compulsively; with lovers, sisters, an obscene caller and even (with the aid of a medium) her late mother. Gradually it becomes clear that she (and thus we) are waiting for one special call. When it finally comes her response couldn't be more unexpected.

As last orders were called and The Gate closed its doors, the success of the showcase bore out Cheryl Robson's claim in

the foreword of *A Touch of the Dutch*: "The range of plays, poetry, journalism and novels undertaken by the selected writers, many of whom have won awards and had their work translated into several languages demonstrates the growth and inventiveness of Dutch Women's Literature". Judging from the audience's response, Cheryl's hope "to connect English-speaking theatre practitioners with some of the best contemporary work available elsewhere in Europe" was fully realised.

### **Carey Andrews**

*A Touch of the Dutch* is available from Aurora Metro, 4 Osier Mews, Chiswick, London W4 2NT  
232 pp, £9.95,  
ISBN 0 9515877 7 3

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# For Workers' Arts and Heritage

**“In every major city throughout this land there are buildings and monuments to wealth and power. We are right to ask, “Where are the workers who built the railways, piloted the boats, farmed the land and forged the iron?”**

**Where are their monuments?  
Working families know who their heroes and heroines are - we all have wonderful stories to tell about our parents and grandparents. Stories of immigrants, pioneers, hard work and hard-fought freedoms. This building will speak for all working people who have built this province and will give them a voice in the interpretation of recorded history.”**

**Gordon Wilson,  
President of the Ontario  
Federation of Labour**

*Hamilton, Ontario: In November 1996, after a great deal of work the former Custom House was reopened as the Ontario Workers Arts and Heritage Centre (OWAHC).*

This important venture, which secured two years funding from the social democratic government of Ontario just before it fell to the conservatives in 1995, aims to preserve workers history and culture, and mount a number of projects around exhibitions, publications and other cultural events celebrating workers lives.

Staffed by Executive Director Mary Breen (formerly of Canadian fed members Storylinks) and Program Coordinator Renee Johnston it is the only organisation of its kind in Canada.

## Network

A biannual publication, *Worklines*, documents many exciting activities in a vibrant network of volunteers and links with local trade union branches and history and cultural groupings. In the current issue there are articles on workers' struggles at a local doughnut bakery, an oral history of industrial workers in Ottawa and Ontario Women's History Network, as well as reviews of books and videos on mineworkers, a 1965 postal strike, and an adult education workbook on labour history.

OWAHC is in the process of a major fund-raising and membership drive to help the new Centre ensure long term viability.

“This Centre is a collective achievement. It will be the memory for Ontario workers. It will tell our story. The rich and powerful members of our society will no longer have the privilege of dictating the history of our province. History will no longer suffer from amnesia when dealing with the role of workers.

Who helped Alexander and Caesar? Who wept with Philip of Spain? Who besides Frederick the Great fought the Seven Years War? We know, and we will not forget... not now... not ever.” Gordon Wilson

*OWAHC's address is  
PO Box 83034,  
Jamesville Postal Stn.,  
Hamilton, Ontario L8L 8E8, fax  
(905) 522-5225424, website  
<http://www.web.netadenew>.  
(short/y to move to <http://www.web.net/-owahc>.)*

*Individual membership is  
\$CN 25*

# REVIEWS

## Inside Out

### Inside Out

Apples and Snakes, ISBN 0 95188816 1 , 72pp, Unit A11 Hatcham Mews Business Centre, Hatcham Park Mews, London SE14 5QA.

Inside Out is a collection of women's writing from prison workshops at Holloway, Risley, Bullwood Hall, and Cookham Wood. The poems which are intended for women to speak out, i.e. to vocalise their experiences and feelings. To read these poems you have to appreciate the difficulty of speaking out in the closed regime of a prison, of revealing your feelings in an arena where print is not anonymous, and not everyone may want to understand your courage in doing so. There are many striking poems in this book - this is from Clare Barstow

**Corruption begins with the bottle, the dummy, the nappy.**

**It begins with the first greedy grasp of the nipple.**

**It begins with the desire, the lust, the yearning.**

**It begins with the hollow emptiness where love begins.**

Carol Nicholas

## Colditz to Bangladesh

From Colditz to Bangladesh, Childhood... thought, antics and exaggeration, £2, 52pp, Black Economy Books, Dept 8, 1 Newton St, Manchester M1 1HIV, ISBN 1901178 00 5

This collection of reminiscence, prose, poetry and rhetoric with a common theme of childhood generates a bright spark from its ruminations on the violence of growing up working class. Some of these pages are searing enough to leave a sort of afterimage on the mind - that resonates back into your own half-forgotten childhood memories.

It is at this part of our lives when most of us are prepared for future compliance or hopelessness and all those abstract feeling head states that bring many of us to our knees or booze. It is also a time when our identity is forged within the richness and depth of the common struggle all around us. This little book is full of such gems as well as violences.

From the first page when a nylon shirted man bursts through a flimsy caravan door to the last pages of a London Eastender's memories of ritual battles over bonfires when he moved to Cumbria, the action lets up only to give space to a fairy tale and a long loving character study of a stern grandad.

Stefan Szczelkun

## CREAFI: Happiness on a Composer's Stick

*Creafi is one of the latest groups to join the Federation. Many of their books, two of which are reviewed below, are hand bound anthologies from printing workshops using lead type. Two are reviewed below. CREAfi are based at 125 Rue du Marche, Lille, 59000, France.*

### **Recueil do textes et poemes, Atelier typo 1994-5, 84PP**

I write because I am in love.  
I secretly love all the sands of the beach.  
And when one loves sands, one loves waves.  
And when one loves waves, one loves water.  
And when one loves water, one loves the ocean.  
And when one loves the ocean, one loves boats.  
And when one loves boats, one loves quays.  
And when one loves quays, one loves to stand upon the earth. And when one loves the earth, one loves people.  
And when one loves people, one loves the world.

**Yuk-Kuen**

This is a little book of printing exercises and writings by immigrant students of Creafi's project, which teaches french as a second language through the use of typography and book binding craft. Each piece of writing has been written and typeset by the author. As with Yuk-Kuen's piece above, there are some wonderful surprises in this unique anthology which deserve a much wider audience. Fatima Bouali

writes:  
Jai un stylo  
tu as un stylo  
il a un stylo  
nous avons un stylo  
vous avez un stylo  
ils ont un stylo

Je suis heureux  
tu es heureux  
il est heureux  
nous sommes heureux  
vous etes heureux  
ils sont heureux

Almost a found-poem, but if we have the power of the pen, we can be happy; the writings in this book express many times over the empowerment given to the imagination by literacy in a second language.

### **Travailler... Insertion Culturelle Professionnelle, 100pp, CREAfi1996.**

This absorbing book documents a series of writing exercises accompanied by a wealth of illustrations - some very striking images indeed, benefiting from a culture in which comics are an accepted adult art form - from workshops with mental health patients. The writers explore dreams, identities, definitions of "madness", unemployment; some in a direct, but many in an allegorical way. There is a clear sense in many of the pieces that the writers have really been encouraged to play around with words and explore forms of expression; much of the writing is adventurous, but often the economy forced by the composer's stick has produces neatly epigrammatic works:

For man to live in groups he must stick to the rules. In departing from this principle he will lose the path to liberty.

**Jean Laurent**

The question of the publication of work which is identified with one's "mental illness" is vexed, particularly if it is the outcome of a project undertaken through hospital or education packages associated with community care, and thus carrying some kind of badge. This volume shows that the results can be something to be proud of, pleased with. Others will be encouraged by it to try their hand at composing type, and giving free reign to their expression.

**Nick Pollard**





# Magazine Round-up    **Feds Under the Bed**

## **Sour Grapes**

Sour Grapes, The Monday Night Group, Commonword, Cheetwood House, 21 Newton St, Manchester, 50p per issue. Now in its 4th issue, Sour Grapes Broadsheet features work by The Monday Night Group, including Matthew Curry's poem sent by an evil spirit: The blank page/ is beautiful/ Do not interfere/ with the blank page.

## **The Heeley Writer**

The Heeley Writer is a new broadsheet (or 'broadsheet'), published by Heeley Writers of Sheffield (c% 60 Upper Valley Rd, Sheffield S8 9HB). Annual subscriptions cost £ 1. 70, cheques/POs to Heeley Writers. This issue features 13 members' work and contains a couple of stories as well as poems. A launch night on April 20th to showcase this and other writing was attended by nearly 40 people, and attracted several new members. The next issue will be available in early June.

## **Lexikon**

Lexikon Magazine is running a ghost story competition, prizes up to £100, with winners published in Spring 1998. Closing date for entries (up to 2,000 words) is 29th September 1997. *Further details from Lexikon (Ghost Story Comp) PO Box 754, Stoke on Trent, ST1 48U*

## **4 Word**

4 Word, a FREE magazine from Rhondda Cynon Taff Community Arts, ISSN 1360-4481, has published its 7th edition and features a mix of stories and poems. Available from Park and Dare Theatre, Station Rd, Treorchy, Rhondda, Mid Glamorgan, donations welcome. Deadline for the next issue (3,000 words max) is Friday 13th July.

## **Oasis**

Oasis, also a free magazine, is one of several quarterlies from community mental health projects in Derbyshire. It is a lively publication which features poems and anecdotes, jokes and quizzes, even simple recipes, as well as information about local services. An emphasis on clip art in the design shows that these stock images can be used with striking effect, and each piece is effectively highlighted. More of these publications are being produced, and they play a vital role in bringing people into writing and community publishing - and exploring their capacity to gain all the accompanying skills. The magazine is produced by an editorial group which meets at the Oasis centre. From *OASIS Editorial Group, Resource Centre, 38 High St., Clay Cross, S45 9DW*

**Roger Drury**, the show's deviser, writes: A performance which links the threads of the community writing and publishing movement over the last 25 years... humour, music and passion.

Featuring the 1971 **Stepney Words Strike**: East London schoolchildren wrote poems about their lives and teacher Chris Searle was sacked for publishing their work; 1972: Ken Worpole and an American draft resistor helped establish **Centerprise** which began the trail of community publishing and writers' groups in the East London area surviving to this day; Two 12 year olds: West Indian **Vivian Usherwood** whose poems sold 10,000 copies - amazing for any poetry book 25 years later, and **Jimmy McGovern**, whose "Day of the Rat" has all the conviction of his later, better known work for film and TV.

With Fed books as landmarks: poems, stories and personal experiences range from how Pecket Well, a group of adults in basic education set up their own college, to "women talking" about how finding a writers' workshop changed their lives.

The voices of past and present Fed members bring writing and publishing onto the stage to tell the stories of people and events that have developed the Fed's role of making writing and publishing accessible to all. Booking Details from FWWCP, PO Box 540, Burslem, Stoke on Trent ST6 6DR Phone/fax 01782 822327

The Federation of Worker  
Writers  
and Community Publishers

## Fund Raising Training

**Burton Manor, Merseyside;**  
June 21st & 22nd 1997  
**Debden House, London**  
October 25th & 26th 1997

Two weekends convened by Dovetail  
Management offering participants:  
*Tools to create a fund-raising strategy*  
*The components of fund-raising*  
*Avenues available for fund raising*  
*Assistance with making applications to*  
*different types of funders*  
*An overview of fund raising possibilities*  
*Use of information technology*

The weekends will follow a practical and hands-on  
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• **on-Trent ST6 6DR** •

• **For details of other subscriptions phone/fax** •  
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# Events and Information

## **FWWCP Training**

Fundraising Weekends

June 21st & 22nd at Burton Manor near Liverpool, and, October 25th & 26th at Debden House near London. Both will be run by Dovetail Management Consultants and both will cost only £40 (full board) for Members, Friends and Subscribers. For all others the cost is £185. For details and forms phone or fax 01782 822327.

## **FWWCP becomes Limited Company**

At Last! The Fed is now a Company Limited by Guarantee. This won't change our aims or work but will mean we can make the organisation more efficient and stable. The next issue of this magazine will feature this change.

## **New Exec. Committee Appointed**

The 1997-98 Committee was appointed by the AGM and is as follows:

Sarah Richardson (Eastside) Chair, Alison Smith (Survivors) Vice Chair, Arthur Thickett (QueenSpark) Treasurer, Paul King (Commonword) Secretary, Angie Arblaster (Burbury), Dorothy Blake (Gatehouse), Shirley Cooper (Burbury), Peter Findlay (Gatehouse), Mike Hoy (Heeley), Sandra O'Brien (Pecket Well), Pat Smart (Prescot and Whiston), Gaby Tyrrell (Eastside). Nick Pollard (Heeley) was reappointed Magazine Editor and Michelle Baynes (Pecket Well), Harry Dempsey (Prescot), Roger Drury (Forest Artworks), Roger Mills (Eastside) and Tom Woodin (Gatehouse) were appointed Regional Reps.

## **New Book from Stepney Books**

"The Tower Hamlets Connection" (ISBN 0 902385 25 9) is a who's who of the East End, everything `` you always wanted to know about those who made the history of Tower Hamlets. Costs £7.99 (+£1.20 p&p) from Stepney Books, 19 Tomlins Grove, Bow, London E3 4NX.

## **Centerprise**

As usual lots going on, readings, writers groups and surgeries, advice and information. For full details phone 0171 254 9632 ext. 210

## **New Members**

CREAFI a community education workshop from Lille, France were accepted as Associate Members with Editions Sanssonet from Lille and Le Temps de Cerises from Paris. For Membership of the FWWCP phone 01782 822327.

## **Spread the Word**

Spread the Word have a wide range of events in South London under the title Zone Orgazma including Kama Sutra Aerobics, Powder Puff & Lipstick, Gorgy Orgy and Tete-a-Tete (must be something in the South London water). For full details contact 0171 207 2025 .

## **Islington Poetry Workshop**

There is a new meeting place every first Wednesday of the month - Islington Museum Gallery, 268 Upper St. London N1. Also their annual Summer Residential Workshop will take place from 22nd - 25th August at Pecket Well College set in beautiful countryside in West Yorkshire. For full details phone either 0181 340 5974 or 0171 272 9023.

## **QueenSpark Books Move**

Brighton member QueenSpark Books have moved to: 1st Floor, 49 Grand Parade, Brighton BN2 2QA

## **Working Class Studies Conference**

June 11-14 Youngstown State University, Ohio. Speakers and activities including Writing the lives of working class women, Representations of the working class. For full details phone (USA code) + 330 742 1783.

## **Channel 4 Booklet**

A typewriter shaped listing of useful addresses and contacts for writers and writing groups has been produced by Channel 4 called "Typewriter". For details phone BSS 0181 280 8000.

## **NDAF Information Bulletin**

Regular useful information for any writers group from The National Disability Arts Forum. For a details phone 0191 261 1628 or through Minicom 0191 261 2237.

## **Kicking Daffodils 11**

September 12-14 Oxford, A conference and festival celebrating women's poetry. For full details phone Catriona Smith on 01865 483570.

## **FWWCP Exec. Committee Meeting**

The next will take place on - July 5th in Sheffield ALL members are welcome to attend

## **Magazine Deadline**

Get your reviews and information to FWWCP, Box 540, Burslem, Stoke-on-Trent ST6 6DR by August 15th for the next issue of Federation Magazine. Work on disk is most welcomed.