

Workers' magazine

Publishers

Worker Writers & Community

The Federation of



... *We* are all
beginner readers ...

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the *New* worker

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The Federation of Worker Writers and Community Publishers

Since 1976 the Fed has established itself as the voice of community writing and publishing. Working with and on behalf of our Membership, we have developed our policies so that all who wish to participate are able to do so. Representing people from Mauritius to Merseyside, Wales to Whitechapel, ours is truly an international organisation.

The Fed encourages an inclusive approach to creativity.

Community based writers' groups, publishers and adult literacy organisations network to help people develop their skills. Performance, oral and life history projects enable people to take an active role in their communities. Our co-operative approach values the participation of those who are homeless, survivors or people with different abilities. Groups meet regularly to share skills and offer constructive criticism and support.

The Fed IS its Membership.

Management and strategic planning are directed by representatives elected from member groups. All are encouraged to play an active role in decision making.

We believe that our difference

is our strength.

We'd like to hear from you.

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Feditorial

1998 being the Year of Literacy, the topic features largely in this edition of Federation.

Literacy issues, and their broader impact in making accessible the process of 'conscientization' (Friere 1972) are fundamental to the rationale for the existence of the Fed and many of its members. We have an important role in writing and literacy, in presenting and participating in our 'critical interventions in reality'. Thus, one of the latest Gatehouse books, *At The Supermarket*, by Marjorie Wells (see Reviews), does not moralise about a young shoplifter, but leaves many questions for readers to answer. The shoplifter and her child are pictured against "buy 2 get one free" offers; she pays for some items but not others. The jacket blurb refers to ABE students' discussion and asks "I saw a shoplifter... What would you do?"

Literacy is not just the ability to read; it gives access to knowledge and power. It is a matter of survival - for those who acquiring English as a second language the issue is not only of learning English and about the English way of life, but also of maintaining a sense of one's own community culture, and so enabling people to make bridges. Nor is literacy a one way process: an earlier Gatehouse publication *Our Experience* offers readers several pieces in the mother languages (in romanised text) of the women whose stories made the book. In a Fed which encompasses so many cultures amongst its groups we are all beginner readers.

Nick Pollard

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GAMA: Never Mind the Washing Up, When You are Told to Write, Do It!

When in your centres you are told to write, do it, do not mind if you leave the dishes without washing up, neither think that you are not going to do it right. As this work will help you feel more self confident and this is the best way to achieve improvements in your learning.

Hot off the press, Merce Redon asked us to save some space in Federation for this writing from a workshop held on February 27th for women by Fed Member group GAMA in Barcelona for literacy students.

GAMA, much like Gatehouse Books, produce adult oriented reading books by and for adult learners.

ANGELS ON EARTH.

They are called special kids and they are looked at in a strange way.

Do not look at them like this because as there are angels in heaven They are angels, but on earth.

Let's make wings of love, affection and firmness for them So that they can fly in this so uncertain life.

They have almond eyes and a face of innocence Do protect and help them as they are the angels on earth.

Fuensanta González

ANGELES EN LA TIERRA.

Les llaman niños especiales y los miran con rareza.

No los miréis así porque al igual que en el cielo hay ángeles ellos son Angeles, pero en la tierra.

Hagámosles alas de amor, cariño y firmeza para que puedan volar en esta vida tan incierta.

Tienen ojitos achinados y carita de inocencia protegerlos y ayudarlos porque son los ángeles de la tierra.

Fuensanta González

Never Mind the Washing Up,

AN EXPERIENCE

I would have liked being a doctor or a nurse, but I have had such bad luck that I could never achieve my dream of healing people and helping them as much as possible.

My family consisted of 8 people, my parents and 6 children. When anything happened to them I used to heal them and the same with animals.

My parents bred turkeys to sell them at Christmas and I used to take them to the fields to feed them and fatten them up. One day I could not go because I had to take care of my brothers and sisters.

Then one of my two sisters took the turkeys, started playing with other girls and forgot about the animals. When she realised that the turkeys had not eaten in all day and as there were many holm oaks, she climbed one and knocked the acorns down. She took them, opened the turkeys' beaks and stuffed their crops. The day after the turkeys were sick and we could see them dying. As I left so sorry that the animals suffered I asked my father: "Dad, do you want me to cut their crops, get the acorns out and I'll heal them after?" My father saw they were dying and said I could do it if I felt able.

I opened each crop and took the acorns, disinfected them and stitched them up.

They were some gloomy days but as I took care of them every day they got well, I felt very happy and my father was very proud of me.

Maria Ramos.

UNA EXPERIENCIA

A mí me hubiera gustado ser médico o enfermera pero he tenido tan mala suerte que nunca pude realizar el sueño de curar a las personas y darles el apoyo que fuera posible.

Mi familia se formaba de 8 personas, mis padres y 6 hijos. Cuando lo pasaba a alguno de ellos algo yo les curaba y lo mismo con los animales.

Mis padres criaban muchos pavos para venderlos en Navidad y siempre yo los llevaba por el campo para que comieran y se pusieran gordos. Un día no pude ir con los pavos porque tenía que ir a cuidar a mis hermanos.

Entonces una de mis dos hermanas llevó los pavos a comer, se puso a jugar con otras chiquillas y se le olvidaron los animales. Cuando se dio cuenta de que los pavos no habían comido nada en todo el día y como allí había muchas encinas, se subió a una y la vareó para que cayeran muchas bellotas al suelo, las cogió y les abrió el pico a los pavos y les llenó el buche a todos. Al día siguiente los pavos estaban malos y veíamos que se morían. Como me dolía tanto que los animales sufrieran, le pregunté a mi padre: papa ¿quieres que les raje el buche, les saque las bellotas y después ya les curaré? Mi padre vio que se iban a morir y me dijo que lo hiciese si era capaz.

Les abrí de uno en uno el buche y les saqué las bellotas, les desinfecté los buches y se los cosí. Estuvieron unos días tristes pero como yo los cuidaba todos los días se pusieron buenos, yo me sentí muy contenta y mi padre muy orgulloso de mí.

María Ramos.

When You are Told to Write, Do It!

Soy Úrsula Ibáñez de Alcalá la Real, Jaén.

Una de tantas emigrantes que no había podido aprender porque ese derecho era para los hijos de los caciques. El hijo del pobre sólo tenía que trabajar. Yo un día me decidí ir a la escuela de adultos. Empecé de cero y me parece mentira que hoy ya pueda leer y escribir.

GAMA para mí no existía hasta que un día Teresa, una profesora, que ella también colabora me dijo que un escrito mío había sido elegido. A mí eso me sonó a música celestial, yo que hasta los 57 años había sido analfabeta, para mí fue como un gran premio de lotería, me sentí más realizada.

A mí GAMA me ha hecho vivir grandes momentos porque he colaborado en ir a la televisión. Otro día que me sentí muy feliz por sentirme útil y del trato que nos dieron que fue de personas importantes.

Para mí fue como abrir una ventana al mundo. Cada presentación de me parece más hermosa. Pienso que ya voy dejando algo en la historia.

Úrsula Ibáñez

A las personas que hoy estáis luchando por aprender, quisiera que me permitáis un consejo:

Cuando en vuestros colegios os digan que escribáis, hacerlo, que no os importe dejar los platos sin fregar, ni penseís que no lo váis a hacer bien. Pues eso os ayudará a coger confianza en vosotras mismas, que es el mejor camino para ir logrando un avance en vuestra enseñanza. Esto es lo que hice yo.

Carmen Nieto.

I am Úrsula Ibáñez from Alcalá la Real in the province of Jaén. One of so many immigrants who could not learn because this was a right only for the cacique's (Andalusian landowners') children. The child of the poor could only work. One day I decided to start in an adult centre. I started from zero (right from the very beginning) and I cannot believe that today I can read and write.

GAMA did not exist for me until the day Teresa, a teacher, who is also involved said that one of my writings had been chosen. It sounded to me like music from heaven, to me, who had been illiterate until I was 57, it was like a big lottery prize, I felt more fulfilled.

With GAMA I have lived very special moments because I participated in a TV programme. It was another day that I felt very happy and useful and because of the way they treated us as important people.

To me it was like opening a window to the world. I think every celebration (of a new book) is more beautiful. I think I am leaving a trace in history.

Úrsula Ibáñez

To the people who nowadays are struggling for learning, I would like you to let me give a piece of advice:

When in your centres you are told to write, do it, do not mind if you leave the dishes without washing up, neither think that you are not going to do it right. As this work will help you feel more self confident and this is the best way to achieve improvements in your learning. That is what I did.

Carmen Nieto.

Family Literacy Across Generations; Between Schools

... Women began to bring in things that were important to them. One woman worked on a letter to the governors asking why her son had been excluded. Someone else made enquiries to the council about how her brother, recently released from prison, could be housed. The group decided to use their work to go towards a WordPower (City and Guilds) certificate. For all of them it was the first qualification they had gained.

The basic premise of Family Literacy is that it is inter-generational. Most often it is with parents and children, but it can be with grandparents or other family members.

Usually people of different ages tackle literacy separately. Children go to school with peers of their own age and adults might attend an Adult Literacy class or project. Within Family Literacy there is scope for children and adults to work together with benefit to both.

There are several different models for Family Literacy. The Language and Literacy Unit based at Southwark is currently documenting research about different projects. In this piece I will talk about one project I worked on last summer in Brentford, West London.

Green Dragon

The project took place in Green Dragon Primary School. Green Dragon is on the edge of a big council estate with five huge tower blocks. The families who live there are mainly white, with significant minorities of African Caribbean and Asian people. The project received funding from the Basic Skills Agency. This meant that for six hours a week children and adults worked separately and for two hours they worked together. The children were aged between three and six. The course lasted ten weeks. There was a partnership approach, with a trained

primary school teacher, Anne Fean, working with the children and myself working with the adults. Anne and I had a joint planning session once a week and worked together on the joint session.

We had an open meeting which all parents were invited to attend. Twelve parents came and we all talked about the project. One woman was worried that it would be seen as a class for "thickies" and also that the children in the group were being targeted as having problems. However, as access was open, we were able to reassure her and the twelve families agreed to do the course.

Committed

Only three mothers came to the adult class on the first day but more came to each subsequent session. By the end of the week there was a supportive and committed group. We worked on the areas of direct relevance to parents and children. These included: healthcare; school curriculum; the way the curriculum was taught and why; school governors. Often there were really interesting discussions, for example about drugs on the estate and what should be done. People had differing and strong views and were able to voice them and learn from each other.

Stories

Talking about why things were done at school was also useful. When we read about why stories are important to children,

one woman realised that if she read a story to her daughter about someone being bullied, it might help if she was ever in that situation.

Enquiries

As the weeks went on the women began to bring in things that were important to them. One woman worked on a letter to the governors asking why her son had been excluded. Someone else made enquiries to the council about how her brother, recently released from prison, could be housed. The group decided to use their work to go towards a WordPower (City and Guilds) certificate and for all of them it was the first qualification they had gained.

Equally rewarding there were the joint child/parent sessions. The first session was hard going for everyone involved. Parents were concerned that all eyes were upon them as they played with their children. The children were unsure whether to respond to their parents or the teachers. And the teachers didn't know what their role was with the children when the parents were there as well. However, we talked about these issues in the adults' class and the joint session got better and better.

Trips and Games

We did lots of fun things around literacy together including puppet-making, making games, mask-making, story telling and songs. We also went on several local trips

including looking for print in the environment (e.g. on signs and advertisements); visiting an art gallery which had an exhibition about the environment; going to the library for a story session and a chance for parents and children to join, and finally to a children's zoo. The trips were photographed and made into books for the children to use in their sessions with Anne.

More Projects

Since that first project there have been two more at different schools. The women from Green Dragon spoke to parents at the next school about how it had gone. Six more are planned for the coming year. Family Literacy has been a very positive experience, not only helping with reading and writing but for increasing self confidence and building support structures. As one woman said "I can go to a meeting now and take notes. And if I can't spell the words I'll put something down to remind myself what was said.

I didn't know it was alright to do that before."

Sarah Richardson

Happy Birthdays!

Federation Groups Celebrate Anniversaries

Pecket Well - The Next Step...

**You are in charge
of what you learn.**

**Whether it's
sharing skills,
producing our
magazines or
brushing up on
your English or
Maths, you gain
confidence!
Michelle Baynes**

Pecket Well College is now celebrating its fifth year since opening, and major changes are occurring as a consequence of its' successful 3 year funding application to the National Lottery Charities Board.

The College, based in a former co-operative building in the village of Pecket Well, above Hebden Bridge, is appointing three new workers with a £400,000 lottery grant. The money will also finance part time course organisers, tutors and carers for education programmes, all under the umbrella of its Next Step project.

Member Involvement

Pecket Well College, which runs through the efforts and involvement of its members, is concerned with the basic education needs of those 1 in 6 people who have been excluded from educational opportunity. It is the first residential centre for adult basic education in the country, and can be hired by basic and community education groups.

The keystone of the college's educational approach is involvement; participants are active not only in their educational development, but also the planning of the college programme and its day to day running. By this kind of approach people are encouraged to overcome writers

wORking Press is 10 Years Old!

A wall-display from Matthew Fuller, "Flyposter Frenzy", stretched in a sweeping curve from floor to ceiling; the other was Clifford Harper's beautiful black and white illustrations from "An Alphabet".

To celebrate ten years of wORking Press, Stefan Szczelkun organised an exhibition of books published by them during this time. The exhibition was hosted by Pat Christie, librarian at London Guildhall University in January and early February.

The opening night on Friday January 9th was attended by approximately forty people. Guests included authors published by Working Press over the years, plus Roger Mills (Eastside) and Denise Jones (Stepney Books).

In the foyer there was a glass

case of Working Press books, inside, an attractive and well lit exhibition area. As well as a full set of Working Press books to look through and the Working Press web-site set up, there were wall-displays from Matthew Fuller and Clifford Harper.

Flyposters and Alphabet

Matthew Fuller's "Flyposter Frenzy" stretched in a sweeping curve from floor to ceiling; the other, Clifford Harper's beautiful black and white illustrations from "An Alphabet". Both books are published by Working Press. As always, it was great to catch up with Federation writers over a

over a (soft!) drink or barriers to learning which arise through lack of access, feelings of failure, learning disabilities, unemployment and unsupportive family and community attitudes. Founder member and Director Michelle Baynes says "You are in charge of what you learn. Whether it's sharing skills, producing our magazines or brushing up on your English or Maths, you gain confidence!"

Open Access

Courses are free, open access, and travel is provided. Many members move on to further courses at Rochdale's Hopwood Hall, or Barnsley's Northern College.

Over the next three years the

(soft) drink or two and many of us ended the evening with a splendid celebratory curry in Brick Lane. The following day at a meeting regarding the future of Working Press it was agreed that Richard McKeever would take over much of the day-to-day work of the project. With a new book, "Living Room" by Alison Marchant just out (funded by a grant from the Arts Council), it is an exciting time for Working Press. Here's to the next 10 years!

Sarah Richardson

The wORking Press web-site can be accessed at http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/working_press

Next Step project will produce initiatives in volunteer activity based on work which has already been going on within the college, improve outreach and marketing of courses, and provide both short and long term schedules in basic education.

For further information contact the College at 36 Gibbet St, Halifax, W Yorks, HX1 5BA. Tel. 01422 347665 or fax 01422 343565.

Heeley Writers: Free Beer and Snap!

This year sees Heeley Writers' Eighteenth Birthday. With our Coming of Age we're having an open evening at the Ann's Road Community Centre, Heeley, Sheffield on April 26th at 7.30pm. You're welcome!

Our Open Evening will show how Heeley has gained a local reputation as a friendly and lively but hard working workshop which emphasises constructive criticism. Not only that, but we've laid on free beer and snap! What more could you want for a good night out.

Heeley Writers formed in early 1980. We've met regularly on Sunday evenings ever since. Enthusiastic Fed members since our admission in 1983, Heeley members are also actively involved in local writing around Sheffield. A broadsheet, The Heeley Writer, ensures that members' work is continually being published.

Find out more c/o 60 Upper Valley Rd., Sheffield S8 9HB (0114) 2551746

News and Events

Courses from Yorkshire Art Circus

All courses are £5 waged, £1 unwaged.

Story Box,
Mondays, May 11 and 18

Tutor: Ian Clayton. 2 day workshop which takes the magic of the spoken story or anecdote and turns it into a written piece of work.

Writing the Occasion,
Friday June 12

Tutor: Brian Lewis. A workshop in writing to mark a special occasion or to present to family and friends, focusing on creating a piece of writing to celebrate events such as birthdays, anniversaries, births or first meetings.

Routine to Creativity,
Friday July 11

Tutor: Ian Clayton. We spend a lot of time writing forms, applications and memos which involve very little creativity. This workshop shows you how to put the creativity and fun back into this everyday, routine kind of writing.

Handmade Books,
Thursday and Friday, June 25 and 26

Tutor: Chris Taylor. Learn about the different kinds of artist's books, from concertinas to pop-ups. Each participant will put together and bind a special piece of writing into a handmade book using Codex and Japanese binding techniques.

Make Your Mark,
Friday, July 24

Tutor: Janet Beckwith. Turn formal documents into creative objects and art forms, rather than a piece of paper that gets covered up on a desk. Get your CV, job or funding application noticed. Objects can include anything from boxes, mobiles and sculptures. Bring anything you would like to incorporate in your work.

To find out more, contact Lorna Hey on 01977 550401, or E Mail
ace@artcircus.org.uk

Center for Working-Class Studies Newsletter

The Center for Working Class Studies (CWCS), at Youngstown State University, Ohio, has set up a newsletter, **Working Class Notes**, which hopes to build an international network of teachers, scholars, activists and artists who are interested in working-class studies.

Announcements, short articles, poems and other materials should be sent to Karen Ford, Department of English, Youngstown State University, Youngstown, Ohio, OH 44555, or by e mail to klford@cc.ysu.edu. A CWCS website is located at <http://as.ysu.edu/as/cwcs>, and this will feature information about the Center, on line resources on working-class studies, calls for papers, announcements from working-class studies colleagues around the world, work by artists and photographers, and a major bibliography.

To join the e mail list contact Sherry Linkon at
sjlinkon@cc.ysu.edu.

News and Events

Young Women and Family Break-up

Have your parents split up? Do you live with just one of your parents or a step family? What would you like to tell other people about your experience? If you're a young woman (aged 13-20), want to tell your own story and have it published in a book, read on...

Livewire Books published by The Women's Press have asked me to put together a collection of personal first hand accounts. What you write could be light hearted or serious, funny or tragic, or any combination.

Think of a way of explaining how you feel, or what's happened, to someone who doesn't know you. Has there been an incident that says it all? You could write your piece as if it were like an entry in a diary or a letter, or a story about you. Don't worry about the spelling or punctuation. I'm here to help. Just aim to make it interesting to other young women.

Pieces should be about 1500 words (that's about 3-4 sides of A4 paper).

Send them to me, Helen Hines at 26 Romilly Road, London N4 2QX. Tel 0171 354 5590.

Eastside Novel Competition

Eastside Stories Novel Bursary competition will be running again this spring, and is set to be an annual event. Ben Richards, winner of the 1994 prize with 'Throwing the House out of the Window' has a second book 'Don't Step On The Lines' published by Hodder Headline.

The winner will receive £1,000 and have the opportunity to have their novel read by a major literary agent.

Details from Eastside at 178 Whitechapel Rd, London E1 1BJ, tel 0171 247 0216

West Midlands Disability Arts Forum

The West Midlands Disability Arts Forum has recently been launched to provide a forum for disabled people to create their own cultural agenda and a platform on which to take a progressive and forceful stance on cultural issues that affect disabled people.

WMDAF has been set up and is controlled by disabled people interested in the arts and culture in relation to disability.

It aims to promote festivals to bring disabled artists to a wider audience, offer advice to other arts organisations and individuals to enable them to promote equality of opportunity and accessibility, and create genuine opportunities for disabled artists. It plans to offer a volunteer scheme to provide disabled people with a wide range of media and art work. WMDAF is also compiling a database of disabled artists and individuals interested in Disability Arts.

WMDAF is based at

Unit 334, The Custard Factory, Gibb St, Digbeth, Birmingham B9 4AA, (0121) 11 242 2248. Minicom available.

Me!

My mother's dyslexia and limited writing skills meant very early on I was always spelling and writing things for my parents even though I've got mild dyslexia myself. One of the strongest things my mother ingrained in me was issues of everyone being equal and everyone having the right to a full life and opportunities. The politics of class issues became many a night time discussion from when I was 15!

Continuing the series of Federation members talking about their involvement in the FWWCP, Vice Chair Alison Smith tells how she got into writing, Survivors' Poetry, and the Fed...

My family background

My family are very much part of the fairground community in Scotland - travelling the length and breadth of the UK (and in the last couple of years abroad to Singapore and Spain) with my family home a trailer (which I still feel safer in than a flat or house).

Education in all its essences was very central to my childhood - both my parents left school by the time they were 14 to work.

Being in the fairground meant that I was very aware that people outside the community very much see me and my community as being lower than the low. Education even now (though it is improving) is very limited within the travelling community because of travelling around so much. I was one of the few kids of my age who had not only mainstream schooling but went on to get a Degree and find work outside the fairground (for me the politics of community and working class issues became more apparent as I went to a boarding school in Ayr).

I feel very much divided on my feelings about all of this. For a time I was aware of the issues of education and lack of - my mother's dyslexia and limited

writing skills meant very early on I was always spelling and writing things for my parents even though I've got mild dyslexia myself.

One of the strongest things my mother ingrained in me was issues of everyone being equal and everyone having the right to a full life and opportunities. The politics of class issues became many a night time discussion from when I was 15!

My own involvement in writing

This stems directly from a period of time in 1991 where I was not only having to confront a lot of issues in my life more so to do with being a survivor of childhood sexual abuse and my own sexuality adding my deafness, operations and scars which ruled my childhood meant at that time I had a lot to sort out. I started going to sign language classes and that enabled me for the first time to see where my natural language and way of thinking came from. I found the only way I could get some of the crap out of my head was to write it down - the first night I wrote 3 poems one after the other. Eventually I showed another survivor I know and trusted my writing and she encouraged me further.

I remember attending my first ever Survivors' Poetry workshop (having spent two weeks sussing them out - a definite survivor tactic!) For once I felt part and more importantly safe and very much able to share my writing.

I thought once I had gone through all the traumas and counselling I would stop writing - this has not happened. I still get flashes of inspiration from time to time and have become more confident as time goes on to perform my writing and on occasions get paid for it! My writing helps keep me going - it gets rid of the stresses - lets me get all my funny thoughts and observations on paper and gives me something to look back on - my own personal her-story!

How did I get involved in the Federation of Worker Writers and Community Publishers

I was part of Survivor's Poetry as Committee member when we joined the Federation (I was working in Arts and Disability at the Arts Council at the time - my first proper job after two and a half years on the dole, so much for my degree helping!).

I remember our big discussions on joining, the issues involved and how seriously we took whether or not we qualified and would be accepted as a group. In April 1995 I attended my first Federation Festival of Writing - I was going through a very bad episode of my life at that time and going to Stanford Hall was like a godsend. All that space, workshops and a real feeling of community.

I have to admit I was terrified in one workshop where everyone introduced themselves as writers, poets,

etc. I couldn't see myself in that way at all. Everyone was friendly (I think my hearing dog Sam at the time helped!), chatty and genuinely supportive of each other.

Attending my second Festival of Writing led to me being asked if I would consider being an Executive Member - even at that time it was hard to recognise what skills I could possibly offer to the Federation.

I was glad to be part of the Executive - learning about the different groups involved in the Federation and more so the people involved.

Now I am on my second year as an Executive member - for some reason I still can't understand I'm now the Vice Chair! It's been brilliant for me to be involved in the Fed, it's helped me find my feet, being accepted for who I am and I am really committed to what work it does. I feel very much at home and am looking to being part of it for a long while to come!

Alison Smith

Reviews

New Gatehouse Dilemmas

**At the Supermarket,
Marjorie Wells,**

ISBN 0 906253 49 7

**The Creature, Linda
Green,**

ISBN 0 906253 551

**Both 20 pp, also available on
cassette. Cassettes and
books cost £2.50 each, from
Gatehouse Books Ltd,
Hulme A.E. Centre, Stretford
Rd, Manchester M15 5FQ**

Julie: "I enjoyed these books. Marjorie's story is about seeing a shoplifter getting caught. It was good because it asked questions, and didn't say if the girl was wrong to nick the things."

Dean: "The Creature is a good book. You don't find out until the end what the creature is. You think it's going to be a right monster."

These latest books from Gatehouse by adult learners for adult learners are accompanied with lively illustrations. Linda Green takes on a formidable household pet - with a surprise at the end, while Marjorie Wells faces a moral quandary when she encounters a young shoplifter. Enjoyable beginner reader stories of adult experiences which will encourage readers to think about writing their own.

**Julie and Dean are literacy
students in Doncaster.**

Lavender Sweet Lavender

**Lavender Sweet Lavender.
Come Buy!**

**London Voices Poetry
Workshop**

Broadsheet No. 35

£3.95 + p&p

ISBN 0-9532292-0-3

My first London Voices Broadsheet filled me with delight. Topics range from Halloween and cod through to unemployment and lost love.

Poems form the bulk of the writing along with a part biography, a memoir and a few short stories. I was particularly captivated by a poem called "Requiem" by Steve Spartak, though I wasn't quite sure what it was about - that's what's so great about poetry; it can grab you and you don't know why. I was also struck by John Oxford's short story "Mogg's Shed", a fine comparison between the craftsmanship of carpentry and poetry and by "Halloween", with its rich tapestry of words which evoke wonderful images of Summer's end.

The volume has some wonderful illustrations which add to its higgledy-piggledy nature. A must on every Fed member's book shelf.

Peter Findlay

Rebel Yells...

Nailing Colours

Nailing Colours - poems of rebellion,

Edited by Cathy Bolton, Pete Kalu and Steve Waling,
Crocus Books, ISBN 0 946745 61 7, 180pp £7.50

- *What are you up against Johnny?* from the viewpoint of the permanently put-upon, who never get to get out from under
- *What have you got?* no matter what government we get - the unemployed, the sick, the stateless and the homeless, It's amazing how many of the poems express their anger with a smile on their faces. We may not be able to stop the bastards grinding us down but at least we don't have to show it!

I was reminded of this classic exchange between one of the townsfolk and Marlon Brando in the movie "The Wild One", when I read through this new anthology. The targets are wide and varied - so we get Kevin Fegan on Ireland, Samir Chatterjee on Hillsborough and Angela Cooke on the ever-present problem of poncy guest-poets at the poly.

Many of the contributions are less easy to categorise and could provide the basis for a new quiz game - Guess the Gripe. And if this sounds like I'm being critical, I'm not.

The book is packed with good material, more angry than rebellious. The plain fact is that there is just so much more to complain about! Hollywood actress Sharon Stone seems to come in for an inordinate amount of battering but apart from her, it's the usual suspects - DSS, the media and all the isms, that are lined up for a good kicking.

I don't know how long this book has been in the pipeline and I wonder if the publishers were worried that half the material would be made redundant by the May 1 St Labour victory. No chance! The most telling pieces come

For me, the weapons of stropo satire, caustic wit and I-get-knocked-down-but-I-get-up-again poetry were expressed best in Alison Silverwood's disabled diatribe, "The Cure", where tetchy rhyme and teeth clenched fury combine to devastating effect.

Congratulations Crocus. This book made me feel really, really angry. And it feels good.

Roger Mills

Red Lamp

Red Lamp,

**A Journal of Realist,
Socialist and
Humanitarian Poetry.
Available from Brad
Evans, 39 Norfolk Ave,
Islington 2296, New South
Wales, Australia. 42pp,
ISSN 1328-6013,
\$AUS 5.00**

A great small magazine from Australia which maintains a dialogue with its readership through a feedback column which sets a question for each issue. How much influence do state governments have over poetry and art in general? is the poser set for the next issue, out in July.

Red Lamp publishes a mix of contemporary and other poets, some gleaned from the editor's researches, thus in this issue we have Victor Daley/Creeve Roe's 'A Treat for the London Poor', and a review of Chris Searle's anthology Bricklight amongst a wide variety of Australian, Vietnamese and American poets. Hard to pick out from this array which is the most interesting or exciting - there are powerful contributions from Susan De Jong, Burraga Gutya, Bill Nicholson, and Nguyen Chi Thien, whose 'To Bertrand Russell' (which Thien composed and then memorised while in jail) attacks the naivety of his praise for the North Vietnamese regime. P.O.'s '2 men arguing over the proposed introduction of the ID card':

Fearful Symmetry

Fearful Symmetry, by Bill Allerton, Cross Lane Press, c/o
Heeley Writers, Ann's Rd Community Centre,
Heeley, Sheffield S8.

Red Lamp (continued)

“...Da polich iz poot wun gunz
hee-a
en wok to strit
layk `Kai boi`
sai yoo: STOP. Hoo yoo ar?
Whair yoo bor`?
Wot yoo jop?
Yoo for hurri?
F`kors yoo for hurri!
Givi-s `Ee. Dee. `! Wez da `Ee.
Dee`?
N-o hev.
N-o hev?!
In da jay-awl!
Good kuntri Ustralia....”

Which if nothing else wreaks
havoc with the automatic
spellchecking facility on the
computer. Full of inventive and
stimulating poems, Red Lamp
is a magazine that is well
worth the trouble of obtaining
it from Australia.

Nick Pollard

Bill is a familiar and popular
figure in community publishing
and performance in his
native Yorkshire. This smartly
presented collection shows his
strong poetic vision and great
love of words. The prose is
lyrical and full of mysterious
ambiguity.

“*The V8 Morning*,” is an
allegorical journey of the mind,
a quest for some kind of stability
in a crazy world.

Arthur placed his hands
beside him on the cold stone.
Gripping the edge, he rocked
silently back and forth, feeling
the compacted sand tug hard
against his skin, then stopped,
his eyes fast to the east where
the bow of golden light cresting
the horizon patchworked the
land beneath him with midnight
hollows, appearing suddenly as
the holes in the long road of his
memory.

The title piece, “Fearful
Symmetry,” shows Bill’s
powerful imagination at work
in a fantasy worthy of Ray
Bradbury himself. Space ships
use the “Iambic Drive” in which
“the deliberate constraints of the
rhyme folded the fabric of space
like... a concertina postcard.”

Beside a lake and beneath
the trees, hosts of daffodils
danced their golden trumpets
as, beyond the spaceliner
window, the pastoral scene
slid gracefully by. Sheep,
continuous as the stars that
shine and twinkle on the Milky
Way, dotted the green like
daisies cast upon a distant
lawn. Emily turned away from

the lonely clouds that
wandered high o’er vales and
hills and groaned. “Another
Wordsworth.”

Of course, things do not go
smoothly in the engine room!
The poems in this collection
are narrative ballads. All
have the wonderful rhythm
that Bill conveys so well in
performance. Take “Tickin’ of
clocks.”

Tickin’ of clocks
Tickin’ of clocks
Holes in his life
Like a pair of old socks...
Those who still wonder
whether or not dialect can be
effective in modern poetry
should read Bill’s homage to
“Jack Evans.” As always, he
is writing on several levels at
once.

Come `ere, let me look at thi
hand
That’s right, lad, grab hold
and don’t thee
let go, that’s `ow to treat life,
it’s got
to show thee some respect,
but keep
thi eye on it, `cause it can
creep up behind
thee an’ tha can die o’
neglect...

This is a true box of delights.
The power of these words from
“White Bay” is only increased if
you know the place itself.

Like Jonah,
I stand God-shriven Betwixt the
jawbones Of a whale.
This is a brilliant collection of
stories and poems. Get a copy
now and spread the word.

Alan Brown

The Republic of Emmaus

**Children for Social Change:
The Education for
Citizenship of Street and
Working Children in Brazil;**
by Anthony Swift,
Educational Heretics Press,
£11.95

This book follows, in practical examples, the philosophy of Paolo Friere (see last copy of Federation). It also links with the "Liberation Theology" practised by radical Catholics in Central and South America.

In Brazil, many homeless children live on the streets, or even in sewers, their only

family - each other. There are terrifying stories of cruelty shown to these children, even of their being murdered by death squads.

"Children for Social Change" tells in a very moving way of a project set up in Brazil to help street children. But this project is not run on the usual charitable lines. The children hold the power and run it themselves, holding democratic conferences and meetings, setting up a school. Several adults work as volunteers and the children

also generate income by recycling things they have found; for example, mending broken toys. The children call the project "The Republic of Emmaus".

There are lessons to be learnt for us in Britain too, about the way we could empower children to make decisions for themselves with support and respect. An interesting read for anyone who works with children, or has children of their own.

Sarah Richardson

Subtle Flame

**Subtle Flame: The third anthology, from Sharewords, 2
Norwood Grove, Beverley, East Yorkshire, HU17 9HS,
24pp £2. Details can also be obtained from the
Eastwords Website at [http://www.fernhsedemon.co.uk/
eastword](http://www.fernhsedemon.co.uk/eastword)**

This is a strong and vibrant collection of work, featuring some 15 different voices from Beverley's White Horse pub. Rosemary Palmeira's lyrical 'Weaver' stands out, as does the jingle jangle of Carol Coiffat's 'His Voice and Flesh are Gone, or It's a Long Way to Wakefield', which starts:

*If the square root of Heaven
is really seven, (your birthday)
Why couldn't you stay seven
times seven
long enough to take your
daughter
(two times nine) for her
birthday meal
and a glass of wine?*

There are interesting tales amongst the poems - James L Orwin's swimming fisherman uncle who

*Thought nothing of outwitting
the muscular currents to
welcome
the restless fishermen home,*

and Scott Bryson's disturbing untitled piece about a missing teenage girl. A lot of personal and honest work which lacks neither conviction nor craft.

Nick Pollard

Schooling the Innocents

Robert Owen; Schooling the Innocents by John Siraj-Blatchford

Educational Heretics Press ISBN1-900219-00-X

£7.95 pp 62

This book seeks to address the topical debate surrounding good education. The author uses Robert Owen - a 19th Century philanthropist with a home spun philosophy on education - as a basis for assessing current issues in education.

Some very good points are made about child development. The book argues that, as Owen pointed out, the child is a product of its environment and up bringing and that educators need to be aware that each child is an individual with abilities and intelligence. It goes on to argue that the belief that some children are more intelligent than others leads to what the author calls a self-fulfilling prophecy; the expectations that the educator has of the child become those of the child and may be carried on throughout life. The book also covers issues of equality, discipline and social control.

It would have helped to have a broader view of where Owen got his ideas from and why they are relevant today. The connection between today and the 19th-Century are not made clear enough. There is no mention of the problem of resources in education. It is proposed that more attention should be paid to the individual child's needs but

We Know Best

Sticks and Stones,

The Rushland Poets, Edited by Paul Green, A4 format 16pp £2.50, Living Magically Press, Published by the Disabled Writers Network, 4 Brook Cottages, rear of 1036 Coventry Rd, Hay Mills, Birmingham B25 8DR.

"And sometimes they came

More than one

Lots of them

Like Ghosts in their white coats

I felt like it wasn't fair

All those doctors just to see one little boy

And they all said

You can't

You can't

You can't"

Poems to "change your attitude and wrong thoughts" about disability. Poems that talk about life histories of being locked up, mistreated, having your feelings ignored, with the poets themselves commenting on what their poetry and writing means to them. Provocative and compelling words, often, like "*I can't think what to say*", about having the basic right to communicate yourself:

"I have a dream about my thoughts

I hear a rattling noise in my head

It is my brain like a wheel

going round and round in circles."

Joan Goodyear

The Rushland Poets themselves can be contacted via **Jacky Long at Rushlands, 113 Broadlands Drive, Lawrence Weston, Bristol BS11 OPD, tel voice and minicom 0117 9824296**

it is not explained how this can be achieved in an under resourced system.

This book would be useful to those who already have some knowledge of Owen and the issue surrounding current education policy but it does not in my view add anything new to the debate.

Peter Findlay

Sade

**Sade by Anne Giwa-Amu,
Ace Books £8.99**

This first novel by a black British Writer is a great read. Set in Nigeria at the time of the Biafran war, "Sade" tells the story of a young mixed race woman.

The horror of the war and the complicated political situation are woven into the story with Sade's involvement with traditional religion. The plot speeds along with a large cast of characters, plenty of love interest and some insight into how class and race collided in 'sixties Britain.

There is great confidence in the street dialogue and lots of product placement - naming makes of cars; musical artistes; designers.

The book is quite ambitious in its handling of such a turbulent time, but it manages to hook in the reader, educate and entertain. A real page turner.
Sarah Richardson

New Books

Young Blood

**Young Blood
Plays by Young
Performers
Edited by Sally
Goldsworthy
Aurora Metro, 4 Osier
Mews, Chiswick, London
W4 2NT,
ISBN 0-9515877-6-5
320pp £9.95**

Aurora Metro announce their latest publication of exciting plays, offering contemporary and challenging themes for young people to read and perform. Includes "And the girl fell through a hole in her jumper" by Naomi Wallace and Bruce Mcleod; "The Search for Odysseus" by Charles Way; "The Darker the Berry" by J.B. Rose; "Geraniums" by Sheila Yeger, and "Out of Their Heads" by Marcus Romer. Settings range from fantasy and myth to the East End in 1936, Jamaica and the urban club scene.

Candles in the Storm

**Candles in the Storm
Edited by N.S. Noor
Progressive Writers
Association (GB) with
support from Bilston
Community College.
To obtain a copy contact
Claudette Smith on 01902
821366**

15 well-known Punjabi poets who have settled in Britain contribute to this anthology of English translations. Computers, the Common Market, romance, nostalgia, racism, immigration, "sleaze", capitalism, socialism, workers rights, culture shock, hopes and dreams feature in the range of issues covered. This new publication aims to reach new English audiences for Punjabi poetry, and those of the largely English speaking 2nd/3rd generation Asian diaspora.

Scribes and Passions: New Anthology

Brian Docherty has recently co-edited *Scribes and Passions*, an anthology of new writing by Word for Word (WfW). WfW is a writing workshop meeting every Wednesday 1-3pm in Hornsey Library, Crouch End, North London.

WfW published *Scribes and Passions* with an A4E Express grant. "The application was a huge

amount of work but we have a handsome book and a high quality series of events - we also ran a series of workshops with guest tutors and performances in association with Haringey Literature Festival from March to June - as a result. I urge all Fed groups to do likewise".

The anthology features 14 writers in 5 sections, each prefaced with the exercises

which generated the writing from workshops by Margot Henderson. WfW intends to join the Fed.

Scribes and Passions is available from WfW, 101 Dickenson Rd, London N8 9ET, at £5.99

Hand in Hand

Christine Bridgwood the new Training Development Officer writes...

I'm delighted to introduce myself as the newly appointed Training Development Officer for the Fed. Some Fed members will have encountered me when I worked for North West Arts Board as Literature Officer; I was there for six years and was responsible for managing a programme of development for new writing in the north west. Working with partners to plan and provide training was an important part of the job, and I saw clearly how appropriate, effective training can empower individuals and organisations. Good training is exciting, inspiring, and makes people want to rush off and do things with their new-found skills. It's that excitement- along with tangible long-term benefits - that I'll be aiming to create in collaboration with Fed member groups.

My role as Training Development Officer will be, basically, to set up and coordinate training schemes with the Fed's membership, enabling members to gain new skills and develop existing ones, and encouraging new members

and volunteers to join the organisation. During the next few months I'll be finding out what kind of training initiatives member groups want, developing local networks and contacts, producing a Training Strategy, and setting up the first volunteer training projects. As an initial 'taster' for the Hand in Hand project, I'm hoping to put together a weekend of training workshops in July, open to all Fed member groups. Further details of this, and updates on the progress of the Hand in Hand project, are to follow - but in the meantime, I'm looking forward to meeting lots of Fed members at the Festival of Writing in April.

Christine Bridgwood

For more information about the Hand in Hand Project supported by The National Lottery Charities Board, write to Christine at FWWCP, PO Box 540, Stoke on Trent ST6 6DR

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The Deadline for the next issue of Federation Magazine is May 22nd 1998. If you wish to review books, write an article or advertise contact The Editor at the address below.

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