

# Federation Magazine

The Magazine of The Federation of Worker Writers & Community Publishers £2 €3 \$3

## FEDfest 04

## 3<sup>eme</sup> Salon du Livre

## Reports & Pictures

Includes  
BROADSHEET  
14

### Issue 28 Summer 2004

This issue includes:  
DIY Publishing Part 3 plus  
Book and CD Reviews  
Articles, Reports, and Stories



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## The FWWCP

The FWWCP was formed in 1976, and now has a Membership of over eighty independently organised writers' workshops, community publishers and organisations in Britain, and around the World. It is an umbrella organisation for those who wish to share their skills and work with their communities.

The FWWCP aims to further working class writing and community publishing, and the Membership share a belief that writing and publishing should be made accessible to all.

As well as publishing this Magazine and

Broadsheet; we run an annual Festival of Writing; organise training; develop networks; encourage people to express themselves; offer advice, work with other literature organisations; fund-raise to help support people attend events.

Membership is for groups only. For information write to:

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# Feditorial

Under-recognition is probably a key thread to the narratives that make up the his and her stories of the Fed. Asserting the place of worker writing and community publishing by any means we could find has been a struggle because there have been few handholds to support the structure we have been building. We've had to make those as well. In the process the people in the Fed have acquired a good deal of expertise and practical skills, but often do not feel that it is something which other people will recognise. It's a distinctive body of knowledge, a way of working which connects and involves people but has necessarily operated outside mainstream activities, in a kind of semi vacuum in which it is so usual to be unrecognised that you just get on and do it.

Perhaps this is one of the underpinning themes for this issue. Here we have people from within the Fed discussing writing workshops on domestic violence, which jc mfee of Shorelink has devised "on my own experience, through her lack of formal education", a participative exhortation from Eric Davidson of Lockerbie Writers to go and be international - something Tim Diggles was told during his visit to Arras was that a lunchtime talk by Fed members to SNCF workers in Lille back in 1996, which we had almost forgotten, had proved to be very influential in the development of their union's own worker writing (these will be reviewed later this year) - and accounts from attenders of a very successful Fedfest. A clutch of broadsheet pieces and articles from Grimsby reveal a good deal happening at the far end of the A180. All these provide evidence of innovation and creativity; the Fed's artistry extends way beyond the actual writing to the situations we are developing in which to write and publish.

A good point at which to bring in Mad Ted's article, which questions the artificial divisions of knowledge and experience of the world - perhaps travelling in similar territory as jc mfee, and Kyla's ecological parable from Braille Without Borders. Unrealised potential - all we have to do, like the writers featured in this issue - is connect it up.

*Nick Pollard*

## FEDfest05

We are pleased to announce that FEDfest05 will take place again at the Alsager Campus of MMU Cheshire. The cost will be a little higher than this year, but the venue is one of the lowest priced we can find in the UK! By the autumn we will know the actual costs, and a leaflet/booking form should be out before Christmas. If you wish to be informed about the costs as soon as we know them, please either e-mail [fwwcp@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:fwwcp@tiscali.co.uk), or phone 01782 822327.



## Cover

The cover picture shows the special bottle of organic wine produced for the 3ème Salon du Livre d'expression populaire et de critique sociale in Arras, northern France, reported on page 6.

Also on the front cover of this issue you will see a red triangle. This is the symbol of the French anti-fascist and anti-racist organisation, Ras l'front. The red triangle originates from the Nazi concentration camps, where anti-fascist political prisoners had to wear them on their clothes.

Today the resistance still goes on in France against the modern day fascists, as it does in Britain against the BNP and others. Many of those attending the Salon du Livre in Arras (see page 6) wore red triangle lapel badges, to show their support for the work of Ras l'front; and this magazine wishes to show its support by wearing the triangle on the cover. For more information log onto [www.raslfront.org](http://www.raslfront.org).

# FEDfest04

## Some viewpoints from the evaluation sheets and diaries

### Friday Evening

Friendly welcome ...the pleasure of making contact with many people not seen for a year - *Mike Harwood*

I felt really involved in the event. I was really looking forward to all the next events. Felt welcomed and very friendly - *Hiromi Watson*

Problems with finding the rooms, probably because it was raining and we were trying to keep dry - *Maria Garner*

Went smoothly. But the rooms took some working out! Friday always seems like an anti-climax to the weekend - *Rob Hanlon*

I was told it was good.... I went to bed and slept like a log - *Ann Copeland*

Reading Space was better by far than could have been anticipated - *Roy Birch*

Stevenage Survivors reading was great and led on to a jam session - magic - *Jim White*

After a long journey it was good the events didn't last longer than necessary - *Robert Brandon*

Some good chats with some (slightly drunk) people I had not met before - *John Malcomson*



### Saturday

After a good breakfast, browsed the bookstalls then attended Grimsby Writers Writing Hour where we did two exercises, both producing sketches for possible new poems - *Richard Copeland*

Sang in the bath. Hope I didn't wake the other residents and if I did I hope they were entertained - *Steve Lyons*

Thoroughly enjoyed workshop with Nan Agnew (Psychosynthesis) but a bit upset to find I'm a goldfish! - *Linda Kennedy*

AGM was lively and overan - very difficult to regulate time. People seem less afraid to ask questions than when I first came which is a positive thing - *Jim White*

This AGM was the usual long haul, however eventually the mighty Fed conquered obstacles, and we hope reached all the right decisions - *Margaret Pearson*

...it's good the 'podium' is on the same level as the delegates - more unity between the Committee and other members was apparent - *George Tahta*

Not very interesting, monotonous, I don't like AGMs - *Rachel van den Bergen*

After lunch I attended Brigitte Riley's workshop on the stranger/exile which for me became rather an emotional experience. *Antony May*

I attended the excellent sound recording workshop with George, followed by a 1 to 1 with Philippa (literaturetraining) which I found useful and perhaps more so in the near future? - *Rob Hanlon*

Haiku workshop OK, but I didn't learn anything about Haiku I didn't already know - *Roy Birch*

Encouraging non readers/writers to write - emphasis on creating a non-judgemental space to encourage self-expression in peoples own words, very useful and thought provoking - *Liz Thompson*

Very very good - Japanese Calligraphy - a delightful session - my crane will be a lasting memento - *Lynne Clayton*

Great music workshop with Cath. It was amazing how she worked with everyone to produce a song so quickly and perform it at the Celebratory Readings close - *Maria Garner*

Brigitte thanks, you put me in touch with the child inside who often felt a stranger inside a loving family. Poor me, I'll face my past, leave it there, and move on to a more positive life - *Jan Holiday*

Nick and Frank's talk was really interesting, will there be a follow-up article in the magazine? - *anon*



...I performed at the Celebratory Reading, a very knee knocking feat, emotionally and physically draining... *Antony May*  
Celebratory Reading - this was very enlightening, I was amazed at the talent that was brought out - *Jim Jones*

A great range of funny, moving and uplifting work. No one went on too long and I for one wasn't offended by anything - *Kate Lewis*

What a wonderful night. Full of inspired people... good venue. U shape seating worked very well. Talent in abundance - *Jim White*

I found it too long - very hard to listen as carefully as I wanted to, as time went on. Would it be possible to stagger it over two evenings? - *Lynne Clayton*

Sound level better. Interesting the different things people had to offer - I might be brave enough (to perform) next year now - *Linda Kennedy*

Absolutely inspiring, great atmosphere - *George Tahta*

Rollercoaster ride of emotional trauma. Some performances are likely to induce anger, joy, reflective memories and forgotten generations. But all show me the diversity of people who only want to be heard and it humbles me how brave people can be through such an outlet as these Celebratory Readings - *Rob Hanlon*

Two workshops, the AGM, the Reading and the late-night party. There cannot be many better days in the British Literary Calendar. Long live the Fed! - *anon*

Saturday sped away so fast, it seemed over before it began. So much to learn, so much to eat, it was totally fantastic. I need a dictionary of superlative complimentary words to describe today - *Jan Holiday*

## Sunday

We made a song, called it Federation. I've learned that English people are very shy. They want to be perfect and are frightened to make mistakes - *Hiroimi Watson*

Writing Humour, I enjoyed the brain storming and the writing of a short passage with two other participants - *Amarjit Takhar*

The Networking Session - useful to get up to date with on-going developments in the various groups. Didn't attend any workshops used my time to network on a personal basis - *Mike Harwood*

Pat's workshop was terrific. The feedback I personally received was as comprehensive and thorough and enthusiastic and committed as anything I have come across anywhere. It had the practical benefit of enabling me to choose a piece for publishing - and Pat was instantly supportive, offering help with typing and stuff - *George Tahta*

## Overall

I enjoyed everything I attended. The Networking Session was really useful. It goes too quickly, it would be good to meet more than once a year - even if only for a day - *Robert Brandon*

Need more younger people and ethnic minorities - *Roy Holland*  
Saddened that so many other workshops had to be missed due to the constraints of time - *Antony May*

Whilst the atmosphere in workshops and readings is non-judgmental and friendly, the rest of the time its very much like I find it always is, people stick to their own groups and people they know - *Kate Lewis*

As usual it is what everyone contributes that makes it work - *Nan McCubbin*

Next time arrange for a rain-free weekend - *Jan Holliday*



\*A DVD of the Saturday Night Celebratory Reading is available from the FWWCP for £5. It's not Hollywood, but a useful record of the evening from a static camera. All who read are on it. For full details e-mail [fedmag@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:fedmag@tiscali.co.uk), or phone 01782 822327.



# May 1st 2004 - Arras

**FWWCP Co-ordinator Tim Diggles reports on a fact finding visit to the 3ème Salon du Livre d'expression populaire et de critique sociale**



The Salon du Livre d'expression populaire et de critique sociale in Arras, is organised by the Association Coleres du Present ([www.colersdupresent](http://www.colersdupresent)), and one of their members is Vincent Valdelevre, from the Fed group Editions Sansonnet in Lille.

On a visit Vincent made to the UK in February, we discussed the possibility of a group from the Fed going to the event, performing, joining in discussions and (hopefully) selling some books. My visit this year was to see what the event was about, so we could plan to take 4-6 people over for May 1st 2005, when they have an international theme.

## Germinal

Arras is about 30 miles from Lille (where there is a Eurostar station), and the journey between them takes you through the former coalfields which feature in Zola's *Germinal*. Arras is a town about the size of Macclesfield, with two fine squares dating back to the Spanish occupation of Flanders. It is in the heart of the Western Front, and Arras was the site of a couple of major battles. They are used to British visitors who come to the war graves.

The event began on Friday afternoon with a discussion entitled "Why write social novels today?" It was a heated debate, in which I was lost after about 5 minutes, my French could not keep up! In the evening was a showing of Eisenstein's *Strike*, with a jazz band accompanying, and activists from a local dispute taking part.

## The Main Event

Saturday May 1st was the main event. There were two large tents, with food and music areas, plus street stalls, all close to the centre of the town. One tent had tables for over 50 well known writers, who sat behind piles of books, signing and selling them, and discussing their writing. The other tent had tables for publishers and organisations, selling books, cd's, DVDs,





T-shirts, badges, and an opportunity to discuss organisations' aims and work. I sat next to a group of women workers from Levi Strauss (the 501 jeans manufacturer), who worked with Editions Sansonnet on a book called (in translation) *Blue Hands*, the title taken from the permanent dye that has effected their hands and health.

It was good to meet people from previous visits (who still wish to work with us), especially from the SNCF and TEC/CRIAC. They have adapted some of the ideas we talked about with them years ago, and produced some very interesting work.

### Spaghetti Westerns

Our tent was also a venue for music, and the Arras town band arrived. They began, in a rather surreal manner with the music from *Once upon a time in the West* (including the bit that sounds like *Steptoe and Son*), followed by a medley of other Morricone tunes from spaghetti westerns!

By the afternoon there were thousands of people milling around (8-9,000 attended), the Fed stuff was looked at, with some interest. I wandered off to see some of the other events, there were discussions going on in the Mediatheque, plus a series of quite wild music and poetry performances at a small cinema. There was lots of food and beer, and the event had its own wine for sale (see cover). In the evening there were some performances.

I met many people from around France, who were working on all types of publications and projects, it was a great opportunity to get together and share ideas.

### Involved

What struck me was how involved the town council was in the event (I can't imagine a British town welcoming so many radical organisations!). Big posters were everywhere around town, leaflets in bars, cafes, shops, and hotels.

When we go in 2005 we will definitely have to have at least two fluent French speakers. The discussions are often of an academic and intellectual level. That said, it is a great event to attend and be part of, and it is easy to get to, from London you could easily go as a day visitor. It was a very positive experience, despite disability access issues and a lack of toilets!



# DVP Writing Groups

## jc mcfree writes about two groups she has facilitated in Hastings around the theme of Domestic Violence

### Women's Project

In January 2004 the group started with 14 members, a few came collected the writing pack, chatted then left. Eventually 10 women completed the course.

I acted as the facilitator. My course objects were unprecedented, and the course was written and devised by me, based on how I wish someone would have talked to me twenty years ago in terms of my writing.

Considering my lack of an academic level of education, I set out to prove that anyone who wanted despite great odds could actually write something that they really wanted to say /read out to others/open/close doors that had remained shut tight, because no one was interested or judged without really knowing/the reality.

I knew that with support women would be able to heal/talk/write what they truly wanted to say; re my own learning problems, the privilege that I personally experienced from the standard of written work that had never been put on paper before is beyond words. For those same women (BME members or wherever they came from) to have the courage to read out loud despite their lack of confidence in speaking English, or just speaking in a group setting anyway, to read past their own past, horrific or equally joyous times that they had forgotten was remarkable.

None of us felt happy with the fact that it were asked to monitor the group, we all find monitoring offensive on the level of age/ race abilities etc, but understand why in this day and age, it still made

us a bit.... edgy.. That as ever we have to justify...

This course was funded by the Scarman Trust and was completed in April 04. Although we are still awaiting our finished booklets, and then do our presentation event, which will be at the Shorelink Poetry Fest on July 10th 04.

As ever with a diverse group of women some with young children /work, or just living it was still an effort to find the time to organise two hours to spend on just writing, but they all managed. Some of the women didn't just write about "Domestic Violence" in terms of men, and the brutality of racism in so many forms; people shouting whilst trying to explain something just because the woman was from a different country; parents/family because the woman was going to have a mixed-race/religion child all our unspoken /screaming quietly under a blanket experiences from childhood even; systematic bullying at work. It was at times very traumatic.

These issues had led us to live in varying degrees of constant fear. Therefore allowing DV (domestic violence) to be a normal continuing of self; even when they/we knew we didn't want to live like that. All the pretending in front of family/ neighbours.

We all agreed what a waste. We should have just left/ screamed etc etc... Instead we etc etc...

But life isn't always that simple is it?

The group was constantly supportive and sensitive to the

needs of each other, and non-judgemental as to why.

My aims/outcomes were everything I initially wanted. But the performance at the Shorelink Poetry Fest will be yet another major step for some of my group as individuals.

As the facilitator I constantly felt I had to assure the group they didn't have to wait twenty/fifty years like me. The achievement that I feel that I had some part in showing sharing this course with them, that to get published write a project/do my workshops they don't have to wait forty years .

They can stop thinking why they can't do it, write it down, get on with it and already some of the group have moved on. The Shorelink Poetry Festival will be a launch for some of the group; in terms of doing their own incredible workshops and getting paid. Reading out loud their own poetry, new college courses. Plus jobs they actually wanted to do.

Others are going to allow their precious booklets to be on sale on my book stand. Maybe next year they will have their own!

All booklets will be on sale at £1.50 each at the Shorelink Poetry Mini Fest on July 10th in Hastings, White Rock Theatre.

For more info e-mail [jcymcfree@hotmail.com](mailto:jcymcfree@hotmail.com)

### Youth Project

My DVP Writing/Poetry youth project ran from January 2004, and was funded by Hastings BC Community Safety.

Initially I had at least thirty young people who heard about



the course (often at the very last minute) and wanted to take part.

After a few chats 15 young people from 14 to 18 yrs old participated after the 1st session and it stayed at around 12.

The group consisted of boy/girls - mixed abilities- and mixed cultures, all living in Hastings. Some were out of school or had on going issues with schools/teachers, families/ friends... living.

Once again I had devised my course on my own life experiences, through lack of formal education, and based it on what I felt/knew I needed as a young person.

As the facilitator of this course, I knew it was going to be even more challenging than my Women's Writing Course.

Once the participants actually saw/felt what they had written, would they want to share it at all?

In my brief introduction I explained to them what I wanted for them and what they could get from this course.

They briefly looked at my intro packs; my own poetry booklets subject; families; battered; love; hate; raped; madness; woman; incest; custody; death (to use as templates). As they looked through my booklets none of them could believe, that I called my poetry, 'poetry' - or that my work was simple and it could be called poetry.

Explaining that my DVP Youth Project was just a small part of my idea/vision; a chance for them to be heard in their community, using poetry/writing as a start; that Hastings BC was actually interested in listening to them; that the police via Community Safety actually wanted to hear what they as young people had to say about DV. And the effect it had on their every day lives.

I told them that DVP Youth Project was not just going to stay

on the subject of DV, but would evolve as to the groups needs.

I was offering them via my course a chance to be seen and heard their way. We could evolve as a group or just fade away the choice was theirs.

No one was drugged up/drunken at any time, there was no violence towards each other. Everything was freely filmed and participants said exactly what they wanted to say.

Some parents came to watch. Some young people had never been on stage before let alone on a mike. Some said that their first set of writing was better than mine and read their poetry out. Some just read from the safety of the table.

This was only the first two hour session, everything was filmed freely.

Other young people came to see.

Clr Trevor Webb came for a while at session 3, to tell the group about Hastings BC commitment to young people, and at any projects that involved them the council were happy to come and have a chat or support.

Trevor Webb had hoped the video that HBC had commissioned on DV would be ready for a presentation at the Council Chambers before the elections, but sadly we are still awaiting part two of the video.

Clr Webb felt it was very important not just to show the drama group play on DV, but that young people would benefit from hearing young people discuss unhindered or coached their views on DV. The poetry on the subject of DV that he read and heard at the group, he felt was astounding.

The young people's poetry booklets will be on sale at the Shorelink Poetry Festival on July 10th; plus a performance by the DVP writing group, joined with the

young people drama group "REVERSE".

We now are twenty strong... a multicultural drama group being real about issues that have really upset young people in their everyday lives.

"REVERSE" are so called because they want to challenge/change people's perception on what is acceptable to today's young people.

As I explained from the beginning of the course, we would evolve or fade away.

Yet again I'm very proud to announce that DVP Youth Drama Project "REVERSE" will have performed on stage in the Story Telling tent at the Pestalozzi Global Fusion Festival on 19th June 04. The subject will be Cultural Identity/Bullying, devised by the cast. And Benjamin Zephaniah will be on stage after "REVERSE"!

"REVERSE" will also be performing at the Shorelink Poetry Festival contact; Ashley Jordan on [jordana@screaming.net](mailto:jordana@screaming.net), for more details.

The DVP Youth Projects Poetry booklets will be on sale on Saturday July 10th at the White Rock Theatre Hastings.

*jc mcphoe, Shorelink Writers*

# Mad Ted's Social Model

**As far back as I care to remember, my own personal definition of that thing we call 'madness' has been that of "a sane reaction to an insane world"...**

...and here at Mad Pride, we tend to favour the social model of Mental Health and its discontents as being the dominant one. That of a psycho-corporeal sense of Toxic Shock to consumer-capitalism and the death and destruction that it wreaks upon the world and the rest of us what lives here. Ahem. Ya get me? In his book, *Art, class & cleavage*, Mad Pride activist Mad Benny Watson talks about how consumer capital's division of art, science and other things into distinct disciplines with no possibility of overlap leads us to develop separate sections to our consciousness which inevitably come into conflict with each other, leading to breakdown; that is to say, we live in a schizophrenic society - this is the 'cleavage'. At least I think that's what he was on about. Now that's all very well, but what can we as Mental Health activists do about it, other than running soup kitchens and advocacy projects within MIND (for example), and picketing psychiatrists conventions and otherwise ostensibly propping up this system through our care work?

I just read this book. Know what I mean? It's called *The culture of make believe*, Derrick Jensen, and it's quite a long one. He begins by detailing a few of the parts of the history of American slavery and colonisation, quoting some of the defences of them, and goes on to express the view that the problem isn't simply slavery, or imperialism, or capitalism, but the very notion of private property itself. His computer was put together by some poor woman in

Thailand who will probably get a cancer as a result of the job that she's 'lucky' to have, and he feels complicit in this. Hardly any indigenous cultures had the notion of private property, or total war, or the ownership of land: they didn't own the land, they belonged to it. And because they felt that they were a part of nature they worked with it, and were happy with that. But European colonial culture is something that is in love with death, driven by an impotent hatred, and all of our social institutions are designed to mask this. When somebody sees through the inevitable cracks in this, the result is confusion and feelings of madness. But this is temporary, he asserts, and merely the growing pains of adjusting from a perceived reality into something else:

*"The primary point is this - now I understand that the dissonance I felt for so long is a natural step in rejecting one's socialisation. It is not possible... to move from one way of perceiving the world to another without a transition of confusion, loss, even hopelessness. Had I known this earlier - had I an understanding of how transitions occur - my period of questioning my sanity may have been shorter, my desperation less deep."*

Those who attempt to stand against this for a little while in our lives are invariably both labelled and perceived as having an inability to live in the real world, and are frequently advised to grow up and get with the program, among other such vacuous platitudes. But a more careful

examination of child psychology might serve to reveal that it's the established western way of doing things that is essentially infantile: seriously believing at the core of our value system that we can just take whatever we want, usually now, that we can have everything - even all things simultaneously - and there will never be any consequences to this:

*"Imagine a small child always used to getting his own way. Recall the shrieks you may have heard when such a spoiled child - somebody else's kid, of course - has a whim thwarted. He deserves the candy he sees at eye level in the grocery store, or his mother is an ogre. He needs the toy his little sister happens to be playing with, and if he doesn't get it, she'll pay. Always he must be right, always he must be the centre of attention, the centre of the universe. But even being the centre of the universe can never be enough. In a finite world - especially one inhabited by other beings with needs, concerns, desires, and destinies all their own - to want everything is to bring on disappointment. And because being the centre of the universe implies in fallibility - if you are the standard, you must be right, except in those rare cases you deign to acknowledge some slight transgression... this disappointment can never occur through any fault of your own. And further, because you are the centre of the universe, the disappointment could never be the universe's fault (which would imply it was your fault), nor can it be bad luck. It must be someone else's fault. When anything goes wrong*

- when you receive less than everything that exists, or even that much but not more - it's because someone is stopping you."

Now, I'm not seriously suggesting that all Mental Health issues derive from consumer capitalism, production, and private property. Neither am I saying that there is no Medical

Model; and I love my computer too, and my bicycle. But it ought to be obvious that the lives that people lead are driving them crazy and that we are on a roller coaster ride to oblivion, simply from a step back and a brief objective analysis of the salient facts. I know that objectivity can be a hard business from the inside of any situation,

let alone the fate of the planet, Janet, but just ye think about the costs, brother.

Know what I mean?

*Ted Curtis – Mad Pride*

*This article was first published in Southwark Mind Newsletter. Information on Mad Pride can be found on [www.madpride.org.uk](http://www.madpride.org.uk)*

## **FWWCP Executive Committee**

A new Executive Committee was elected at the 2004 AGM in April. They are as follows:

*Roy Birch - Stevenage Survivors*  
*Dave Chambers - Newham Writers - **Chair***  
*Lynne Clayton - Southwark Mind Arts Collective*  
*Sue Havercroft - Grimsby Writers*  
*Roy Holland - Survivors' Poetry*  
*Ashley Jordan - Shorelink Writers - **Secretary***  
*Anne Lambie - Lockerbie Writers - **Vice Chair***  
*John Malcomson - Heeley Writers - **Treasurer***  
*Amer Salam - Gatehouse Books*  
*Pat Smart - Pecket Well College*  
*Jim White - Grimsby Writers*

Vincent Twyford of Pecket Well College is first reserve in case any of the above have to resign.

Nick Pollard was seconded as editor of Federation Magazine.

The first meeting was held in Cleethorpes, which gave an opportunity for members of Driftnet, Grimsby Writers, and Voices Talk & Hands Write, to perform together in the evening alongside members of the Exec (see page 31).

The Committee meeting placed the development of the archive as a priority over the next few years, with the possibility of a specific position on the Committee being created to oversee progress. This is felt to be a duty for future members, as we have so much information, both at the office and amongst members and individuals, which deserves to be accessible to all.

Remember all members can attend Executive Committee meetings, for dates, contact 01782 822327 or [fwwcp@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:fwwcp@tiscali.co.uk).

## **literature- training**

Now we are eight! The Scottish Book Trust has joined literaturetraining as a partner. (The others are Survivors Poetry, Lapidus, Apples & Snakes, NAWE, NALD, writernet, and, of course, the FED.) We are already working with the Scottish Book Trust on our successful words@work training programme for writers in Scotland.

Our Information Officer, Amanda Liddle, is introducing developments to our website starting with a free fortnightly email bulletin which keeps you to date with what's new on the site. Other developments include a news section and message board. In liaison with NAWE and The British Council, we're taking over the current function of the British Council website to list literature and creative writing short courses and summer schools.

On the training projects front, still to come in words@work is a Live Literature Scotland Induction Day in September and *Confident Creativity*, a major national conference for educators in writers, in March 2005. Good news - we've just heard that we've secured funding from the Scottish Arts Council to continue words@work. Contact [sophie.moxon@scottishbooktrust.com](mailto:sophie.moxon@scottishbooktrust.com) to join the mailing list. In Wales, both our training pilots for writers are under way and progressing well. Plans are now afoot for a writers' day to be held at the Dylan Thomas Centre in Swansea. Contact [info@academi.org](mailto:info@academi.org) for information.

Finally, it was great meeting some of you at FEDfest04. Do get in contact if I can help you with information or advice on any training or professional development matters.

*Philippa Johnston*

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# Adopt-a-FED-group-be-a-friend-get-linternationale

I have just completed an oil painting. It's a copy, in effect. If you take the postcard of the city of Barcelona (landscape) and turn it on its' side (portrait) – blurr your eyes, you get a surreal representation of a Dali-like visage. Barcelona is like that – surreal and everything can be a blurr, a representation of what you have never seen before.

Gaudy Gaudi, Passeig de Gracia, La Rambla, Mont Tibidabo – all the traditional tourist traps are there - but go offbeat – Besos Mar, Tajo, Trinitat Vella – all at the far end of the metro lines. Few foreigners stroll there, apart from Anne Lambie and I out here to continue our desire to have an exchange of writers between Germany, Spain and SW Scotland (Fed Mag No 25 Jan 2003 gives a report on the German end).

Michael Tonfeld of WERKKREIS visited us in Lockerbie last September and has written a very fulsome account in their magazine about his visit. Hopefully, we'll get out to visit him in Augsburg whilst Merce Redon (GAMA) and Silvado Simo of the University of VIC will get to visit our GaelForce event. Thus, in time, we are working on the prospect of an international tripartite exchange of FED groups – solely because of being members of the FED. Great for an isolated group such as ours.

We flew from Prestwick to

**QUEST -  
I-ON ?**

Colonia Agrippinensium  
And  
Amilcar Barca  
Adopted  
Caled of Alba

Neros' mother of Germania  
Hannibals' Catalan father  
Hard Son of Scotia,  
From the White Land –  
A literary  
Vie-a-Trois  
Communicating in  
Babels' Erse –  
3 tongues  
1 mouth all FED-erated  
within a union.

! Oui ? –Ya , Si !?  
“ Aye-I “

What will they further  
Beget ?

Gerona and stayed in the district of Gracia in a pension, basically a B & B without one of the “B”s so breakfast was in the local coffee house in the street downstairs alongside morning commuters. Very cosmopolitan. And there are coffee houses - everywhere. Not Starbucks. Coffee houses. Real ones. We also met Merce first in Bar Picoteo and immediately got in into the Barca-swing of things ... 'cos – believe me -Barcelona swings. She warned me “Eric, you cannot possibly do all the things

you say you are going to do. There is not that sort of time.”

As an artist and writer it is very difficult to be completely objective about Barcelona because Barcelona IS something else. VERY. Anne literally wept tears when confronted with Sagrada Famalia, its' size, its' concept, its' beauty, its meaning. *Expiatory and Equilibrated*. Now since this building after over a 100 years of construction is still only 2/3rds completed and with a Catalan having designed the new Scottish Parliament building and not yet completed.... and only a couple of years late ... what's the problem? Eh? Meanwhile, I wept for fallen comrades at La Rambla where the International Brigade marched off to fight Franco in the defence of liberty during the Spanish Civil War. Just imagine me standing alone in the middle

of that big street singing “Bandiera Arosa” at 9 o'clock on a Saturday night with the locals all looking at me and saying – “Whi'/Que...or words to that effect?”

“NO PASARAN.”

Both very emotional moments. On our first morning at 9 o'clock, with but little sleep, we were on metro-ligne 5 to almost the terminus, coming up in the east of the city near the river Besos. Misreading our instructions we were easily redirected by a warm-hearted woman to the civic centre

to be even more warmly greeted by an angel. ANGEL MARZO, director of GAMA who had specifically asked to meet us. Now, with his English being of the not-so-good variety and my grasp of Catalan limited to "Cerveza, por favor, Senor" – naturally we conversed in French – and it worked. See me? See languages? Aye. Right, Eric – I hear you say but then we also used visual art and hand gesticulations and I'm relatively confident we understood each other as he then translated. Relatively. His group of 7, men and women of all ages, were like adult learners groups the world over. Missing out on traditional education they found the courage to come back later in life. One man who had written a poem in honour of my coming had been able to buy a lottery ticket for the first time in his life (if I grasped the translation properly). And you know how it is ... you go prepared for all the intellectual questions of the day and what one member really wanted to know was what our grocery prices were like compared to theirs which led into discussions on the euro and thus an international debate, or thereabouts.

MAGIC it was – and even more magic in the evening having been invited back to their FETE de lent. The sight of – how shall I say? – amply proportioned mature women parading their own working class streets in the gaudy yellow and reds of Ladybird costumes is one of the true sights to behold in life. Conversation thereafter was a doddle. Food in the Catalan capital that night was naturally provided by a Ukrainian, I think – and we had a ball.

Artistic culture – later - was provided by a passing view of the floodlit Sagrada Familia. Wow-eee!!!!!!!!!!!!

We then visited the town of Vic to meet with Silvado regarding the

following Tuesday. We were supposed to go to the Pyrenees with him but snowstorms prohibited. Like most Spanish towns it has more than its fair share of twisting, turning narrow streets with a surprise round every corner. Yupp. I can handle that. (Plus the fact that Chinese immigrant labour has arrived and there were lots of "backs of lorries", you can't move at metro stations for them trying to sell you umbrellas – an interesting comparison given the expansion of the EU and the rabid right wing



press response to that.) And transport to VIC? *Clean, fast, cheap, many and punctual.* British train companies take note, POR FAVOR. (Naturally, since the station was underground – it was a no-smoking area, which is why there was an ashtray at every seat and the line was littered with fag-ends.) As an interesting corollary the time to Vic was 90 minutes – the time from Carlisle to Crewe for FEDfest was 2hours. Once one did the time differences and exchanged into euros, the Spanish fare was 7 euros, the British fare was 43 Euros, 6 times the amount. It is the same reason why it is cheaper for me to fly to the Balearics than it is to fly to the Orkneys.

TURONS – Marta, sister of Merce arranged for a visit to an

adult day care centre where we conversed with Isobel and then viewed their workshops seeing a plethora of different methods. I did not spend enough time there and would like to go back.

It was interesting to give the bus driver our instructions as to where to get off then have another Man on the bus get off the bus and point out where we were to go before getting back on to the bus in the same way that a Woman in street went out of her way by a mile to redirect us. Got there eventually – at the top of a hill after quite the most momentous bus trip I've ever taken in an urban area. How the driver got up these steep narrow streets and turned really tight corners I'll never know. Later - Standing in a bar – not unlike the "Crown Hotel" in Lockerbie - and listening to the same arguments, smoking the same fags and going to the same toilets ... aye, got away from it all, OK.

And, so finally on the last day, to Trinitat Vella in the north east of the city on a cold, raw, misty morning – a long way from the central urban area, standing on a flyover above the motorway watching the rush hour traffic which takes holidaymakers from the Costa Brava in to same said central urban area, not knowing what they were missing – observing the graffiti of the "Barrios" and thinking ... don't know what I was thinking. Just thinking. Just being. We had got there early and so had time to spare, time to meander, time to ... "Hola, Merce!"

Now, I don't know what I had expected in the civic centre but a tableful of lit candles was probably the last thing I expected – OH, and a table full of food and goodies' as well. They do DO warm welcomes well in Catalunya. Very. GAMA not only provides for adult learners, they publish as well. So we saw the



evidence of this - and heard it. Even though we cannot speak their language, the expressiveness of their tongue spoke volumes. I think ours did also. The gutterality of their language matches the gutterality of Scots (or as Silvado said - "I was



worried before you came, Eric. I could not always understand the English of Nick from Sheffield too well. First words of yours - no problem." This after trying to phone him but getting held up at a telephone box because the young lady in front was giving the phone her mobile to speak to on the telephone. Then Anne asks - "what took you so long?" There IS no answer to that.) It really was a great feeling to be in the company of a FED group from another country - "Brithers an' Sisters be for a' tha', Rabbie."

The morning was completed for the two of us not only by being given a nice book each - BUT we had to wait until a lot of them had signed them and given written messages to take home with us. Knowledge of the language was unimportant, their love shone through. Tears for souvenirs, indeed. Tears, indeed as we said "Adios" to Merce in Carrer Escozia, St. Andreu Estacio (Scottish Street and St. Andrews') heading for VIC for another workshop (or as a friend said in Lockerbie - "Did you enjoy your holiday?" "Holiday? - oh!...oh aye").

Those of you who attended the FEDFEST and listened to Nick Pollard and Frank Kronenberg talking about *Spirit of Survivors* - well Silvado Simo is the 3<sup>rd</sup> of that triumverate. Buy their book - contact FWWCP Nick had suggested I look him up when over there so over and above speaking of SW Scotland,

FWWCP, DGSP and LWG etc Silvado also wanted his students of therapy to hear from recipients of mental health care. I suffer from recurrent bipolar depressive disorder and Anne from Lupus and he wanted them to know that on completion of their training it did not make them the "Expert" so to speak. The patient comes first not the "Expert" and I say this as one suffering from having a mother-in-law who is causing her family carnage - because she does come first, in her view, refusing all sorts of help because of an old Scottish Calvinistic attitude. It's a very difficult middle line and the words "empathic" and "sympathy" sometimes do not come into the equation. What about the health of the family who are suffering because of someone elses' health, in this case Alzheimer's?

When - eventually - after much prompting a question was timidly asked, it was wonderful for this writer to step off the podium and wander off to the back of the classroom and listen to my wife respond - she who maintains that I am much more clever than her and who then amply demonstrated - once again - just how "clever" she is in her own right, given the opportunity and an empathically sympathetic audience. But then, that's what the FED does for you. Gives you confidence in yourself. This year at the FEDFEST she gave her first ever "talk" to an audience and coupled with her VIC performance

.... it's a long, long way from 6 years ago in her first oration at the FED when I had to hold her up by the waist lest her knees buckled from fear. Worth it all for her to receive a marvellous book on Rodin and what with the new clothes and bundles of prezzis I'm beginning to wonder - is our plane big enough for us?

Other little "this" and "that's" - OH Tapas oh-mio in Tajo, Spanish Soberano brandy, a wonderful transport system which British cities would give their right arms for and ... oh! - a city in which one can be. Just be. The number of people who come up to us when they thought we looked lost in order to redirect vastly overcame that one *Basta-ya* who dipped my pocket for 50 Euros. Be warned. Be warned also Merce and Silvado. We'll be back.

One final point - I recommend that all British Fed Members adopt-a-friend, one of our reciprocal groups, and start a dialogue by letter or e-mail. You will have something to give to them and they you. You never know where it may lead. Look where we have been. And you could then read out some of their works at next years' Fedfest so that they could be there with us - in absentia. Joined up writers by proxy.

OK?

*Eric D Davidson*

*Lockerbie Writers Group*

*PS Expiatory means to absolve from sin and Equilibrated means that you use the force of nature to keep things standing up without support or buttresses - "Just like a tree" explained Gaudi who only never overcame one thing. His irascibility. Now, there I can empathise. PPS Anne Lambie was elected vice-chair and gave a brief talk on our visit at this years Fedfest.*

## Stone

This is the book you should have written,  
the pointing finger wrote, the key  
to all mythologies that would unlock  
all meanings, and immortalise your name.

You lost your voice on some bleak childhood strand  
the sun, that watched you, sank, a stone,  
took years to rise again. Too late.

*Brenden McMahon  
Derby*

## Welcome the Hero

(On Vanunu's release from Israeli prison)

A triumphant trumpet pierced the sky  
With We Shall Overcome  
Yes We Shall Overcome  
Eighteen white-dove wings echoed  
We Shall We Shall We Did

Welcome comrade hero Man  
From eighteen years of hell  
The cave-men who did this to you  
They did it to us too

There are many miles to travel  
Before we shall prevail  
But you and we together  
Must and will prevail

Welcome Vanunu

*Homi Framroze  
London Voices*

## Snow Flower

Snowdrop...  
Thou art frozen...  
Snowdrip,  
Thou art cold...

Cold heart, being brazen...  
(Or maybe, not that bold)...

So steady, in the garden...  
So faint a flower, as you...

First flower in the sunshine...  
Can I come too?

*Carol Batton  
Manchester Survivors Poetry*

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can undertake this.

We look forward to  
receiving your  
writing for  
consideration.

See page 26 for  
some guidelines for  
submitting work to  
Broadsheet.

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# Broadsheet 14

## A State of Peace

Three border policemen  
Taking pleasure in each other's company,  
Smiling innocuously,  
Rifles rested against walls.

Shrouded in memories of war  
Live wires  
Conducting the brutality which  
Like a toxin that attaches to a cell  
Is stored in all our injured souls  
To light it up in flashing pain and terror.

*Naom Livne  
Stoke-on-Trent*

## The Masterplan

Looking up into a sunlit tree  
flaming in spring's conflagration,  
monument to the great rising-again,  
we remember that first optimism,  
dream that came to us on this earth  
long ago, when the seed's dark voyage  
ended with a green triumphant flag  
flying one May-morning of the year.  
Then our deepest truth came clear.  
We knew the cyclic rays of the return  
to represent what in our death must burn  
the outer matter, not the inner man.  
We saw the flowering of the masterplan.

*Aidan Dun  
Gloucestershire*

## Beached

I kick at the seaweed in the places we walked,  
all traces of us removed by the tide.  
So I talk to the sea, hiding my tears  
in a wind of November I tried to remember your face  
as we ran on that beach in our race to the sea.  
You and me. Me and you, was it that long ago  
when we hid in the dunes and kissed and fumbled.  
Now your face is a jumble of pixel parts that  
I thought in my heart would stay whole.

*Jim White  
Grimsby Writers*

## Carousel

Around the Carousel they rumble  
Cases all in different hues  
Some that really look quite humble  
Which no one ever wants to choose.

With labels truly mystifying  
Thomas Cook, Mytravel too  
On eagle eyes they are relying  
That destination always be true.

Some have straps of different textures  
To make them stand out in the queue  
Others have all become fixtures  
Their owners gone into the loo.

Where is mine, I stand there worried  
I saw it loaded when I boarded  
Ah, here it comes with others hurried  
All my possessions safely hoarded.

It passes me, I grab it strongly  
Me, standing just the handle holding,  
The case moves off in direction wrongly  
Through the black flaps now unfolding.

Again it passes, the strap I've found  
I cling to it like person famished  
Triumphantly I turn around  
Botheration, my trolley's vanished!

*Henry Dallimore  
Shorelink Community Writers*

# Broadsheet 14

## Evening Prayer

I pray that every time we meet  
your head will not your body cheat,  
whatever shape the glass designs  
your form will always be divine  
I look at no other pint than mine  
as to my mouth your lip inclines  
be you white, amber, red, brown, black  
be full flavoured when I knock you back  
let me feel your strength within  
as in your malty depths I swim  
and sweet and bitter my veins course  
with well hopped and foaming force  
the yeasty wort. From crowning cap  
the djin John Barleycorn untrap  
and give no rest to the flow of ale;  
three wishes: let it not go stale,  
let the pumps be clean and never fail,  
each opening time find the holy grail,  
and make sure, when last orders comes  
that each pot is an empty one,  
and yes, that's four  
but there's always time for just one more!

Cheers

*Nick Pollard  
Heeley Writers*

## 10.26am

The past is the beginning of time  
It reminds you of much  
But helps begin a new beginning  
The present and the future  
Will always find itself in the past  
For when I began this writing  
The first word can be written again  
But it will never be from the same place  
It will never be thought of the same  
It will never be the same beginning  
The first word on the third line  
'But' - can mean a negative stance  
So Ashley of Shorelink Writers said;  
But sometimes it has to be written.  
This poem is now written  
A bit of philosophy maybe  
But finished, it is 10.31am.

*Josie Lawson  
Shorelink Community Writer*

## Max Bruch's Violin Concerto

The mourning, opening movement  
filled my kitchen with the smell of coffee  
on the morning a boy jumped  
from a top window  
and died on the lawn outside  
the high-rise flat.

His mother said he'd been bullied at school  
and wept a few days later  
to see the tawdry flowers blowing  
away to hell in an indifferent wind...

She had scolded him for being late for school  
but he'd clung on to the window frame  
in a paroxysm of fear and rage,  
dead set against something  
strange and monstrous  
in his young tender life.

I was to think of that terrible prophecy  
in the Second Coming by W. B. Yeats,  
Bethlehem: - noble star tarnished  
under a cloud of smoke and fire,  
that shapeless monster lurching to be born  
after the carnage, inexpressible horror...

My fancy gives new meaning  
to the Concerto, as if the boy  
had timed it for his own requiem,  
something to make life possible for me  
in the light of events on the world stage.  
Bullying - at whatever level it happens -  
cities laid waste, preventable slaughter;  
cruelty in playgrounds,  
a valuable wrist slashed  
spurting blood on innocent grass...  
WHO WILL ANSWER -  
WHO WILL ANSWER?

I must listen to the violin again  
to hear the boy's voice telling me  
of something beyond mortal folly,  
(not to make light of his fear and pain)  
but in the hope of being at hand  
near another window  
or near some lonely man desolate  
in the grip of the monster.

*Patrick Norman  
London*

# Broadsheet 14

## A Sentence containing Malawi

Stealing food here is a serious crime.  
*I'm starving, not a criminal, and running out of time.*

The penalty for being caught is very severe.  
*It can't be worse than death. My children must eat. I have no fear.*

Thousands are starving. It's no excuse. You make our blood boil.  
*Do you know what we ate today, yesterday/ that's right; soil.*

We will cut off your leg as punishment.  
*And how will I feed my children, then?*

We hand out sentences, not something to eat.  
*Your sentences kill my children. I' dead on my feet.*

*John Andrews  
Glasgow*

## My Memories of Childhood at age 46 years & a bit!

Young and wanting to be old  
So that I could be free of being told  
You can't do this, you can't do that  
This is not for you, you underage brat

I grew tall with size eleven feet  
At thirteen was a man on the street  
Started shaving to look more mature  
A terrible mistake that had no cure

Having the look, I behaved grown up  
No-one treated me like a naughty pup  
I was old beyond my childhood years  
Crying was out, shedding no public tears

No sooner was there full-time employ  
For this grown up man still just a boy  
Money became a big motivating factor  
It had the pulling power of a tractor

But having gone through many phases  
I still look back fondly on the traces  
That being young, I wanted to be old  
Just to be free of being told

*Rob Hanlon  
High Peak Writers*



# Broadsheet 14

## Dream

You are plastic and take on the shape  
of what contains you. Lying asleep  
you scarcely seem to breath, except,  
disturbed by the sad wing beat  
of some thought that circles  
even in dreams about your bed,  
you stir and call to some remembered  
lover, maybe, even, me.

*Brenden McMahon  
Derby*

## Matin

It's that too early time,  
when the sun is putting the moon to bed.  
Thoughts are still dreams,  
swimming in dust streams,  
waiting to be remembered.  
It's that time when you want to snuggle up,  
but there's nobody there.

So you test one leg out of the bed  
for temperature and balance.  
Then the other,  
moving very, very slowly... Your knees give way  
with a sudden unexpected jolt.  
Up comes your head. Vibrating,  
with regrets for what you should have done,  
and didn't  
and did do and shouldn't.  
Full of recollections of words that can't be unsaid  
all swirling in the blender you call a brain,  
full of pain.

Clothes arranged Feng Shui style on the floor,  
makes dressing easier.  
Time for two lightly boiled paracetamols  
swilled down with orange juice and  
black sweet coffee  
in the certain knowledge that there is no cure.  
Reality starts to mingle with the living dead,  
and somewhere the Beatles sing  
in your early morning kaleidoscope world.  
"I do-on't remember yesterday-ay-ay."

*Jim White  
Driftnet*

## What do I like about coming to Glasgow?

A question that was put to me recently  
no immediate answer  
give it time to be replied to decently  
Truth be told I don't come for the City  
except it holds my partner hostage  
so there you go, the nitty-gritty

But, then again, I like the Car Boot Sale  
Next Clearance, Big W, Primark,  
even Rose Street to hear the endless tale  
of Alcoholic poisoning and high-class shite  
and that pub called the Waldorf  
where we go for a wee bite

I mean, what a question to ask me  
and expect a straight answer  
it's no fair, there's a catch, you'll see  
You might as well ask me why I breathe  
no don't bother, as questions  
just make me think.....

*Rob Hanlon*

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## Surprise

Her father had always had affairs, she said  
Her mother became an addict  
They divorced  
(Her brother went to prison  
A few years later.)  
Teens, twenties  
Bad sex, bad depression,  
Bad relationships  
Now she's recovered  
And in a wonderful marriage  
"You're an unusual kind of reporter",  
She said, "I would have expected  
A tape recorder or something.  
But the way you just let me talk, your empathy –  
Thank you."  
For a world-famous actress to say that to me  
Was such a shock  
That I could only blurt out:  
"Oh, er, sorry, love, I'm the plumber."

*Naom Livne  
Stoke-on-Trent*

## Case Study

I've come across a situation  
of a middle aged man  
who never makes an effort  
to change his clothes —  
he was nearly arrested as a tramp  
but talked his way out of it.

His home is a wreck-  
he is very good musically  
but totally 'obsessed' with it,  
(there is nothing else in his life)  
and papers, etc. are lying  
scattered in his chaotic room.

He has no interest in  
looking after himself,  
some say his music is odd,  
even mad,  
though his music makes  
enough money to support him.

He has some support from friends.

He has moved house about  
thirty times.

He has poor hearing and this  
depresses him extremely and  
makes  
him very anxious about whether  
he can  
continue his music.

Does he need social services to  
take a look?

Should, (or can),  
residential care be considered?

This man's name is  
Ludwig van Beethoven.

Score nil if you just prevented,  
Beethoven's Fifth Symphony,  
being written.

*Told by Carol Batton*

# Broadsheet 14

## **The Russian Ammunition Ship -**

### **This Story Is a True Happening**

I was stationed at Grimsby, our Company was doing guard duties at Immingham Docks. A Russian ammunition ship was in the docks loading up provisions. One of our duties was to stop any of the crew smoking on the ship, as the ship was loaded with high explosives, and our job was to see that no was smoking or lighting matches.

Every time the guard was changed, the captain, who was a Russian, invited the guard to his cabin for a drink of vodka. One night Frank Knott was on guard duty, he liked a drink, and he drank more than he should have, all through his tour of duty he drank, encouraged by the captain. By the time Frank finished his duty he was real and truly drunk, as he was going down the gang plank he tripped and fell into the water, luckily his rifle landed at the bottom of the gang plank dry. We managed to get Frank back on dry land and back to the billet: he was soaking wet and nearly sober.

When I went on guard duty the captain invited me into his cabin for a drink, I didn't drink, but I had a soft drink to please the captain, he said: "You good soldier, you guard my ship well". He was a nice man, I got on with him very well.

I did manage to catch one of the crew smoking on deck, I gave him a telling off and took his cigarettes off him, most of the crew were Lascars, this one begged me not to report him to the captain, he was really scared, the captain would have been furious with him.

One of the Lascars trailed another Lascar all over the globe; the man had raped his wife and the Lascar caught up with him at Immingham, the culprit was found with his throat cut in one of the dockyards, I believe they caught the man who did it.

The Russian ship sailed away that week and it got just outside the four mile limit, sadly a German U boat was waiting for it, the Russian ship was torpedoed, we could see a large red glow out to sea. We found out that it was our Russian ship that had been torpedoed. I was very sorry the captain was a good man, I think he knew his life would be short, that's why he drank.

*Jim Jones*  
*Pecket Well College*

# Broadsheet 14

## Trev

Trev was angry.

Such a shit word that - angry.

Such an understatement.

Such a waste of timid breath.

There was no word not never for this horror. No word with the depth and weight to express this hand-grenade to the head.

A slight nausea rose in his chest and he noted how rapidly his heart was pumping.

His legs cramped behind the knees and fear tore shreds from his chest.

Dr. Sanderson had warned him about situations like this. Warned him in his gentle yet insistent monotone.

- Trev, he'd said, there's nothing too big for you to handle, but there's plenty too small. You'll have to hold on then Trev, hold on real tight.

Trev held on. Held on to the handle of his car.

He panted within the emotion. Consumed him it did. Nothing else was or ever had been or ever would be.

And he loved it. It was what he knew best.

Like falling back into the arms of an old yet spiteful wife. Comfortable shit.

He barely recognised its form, its taste and what drove it forward in monstrous destructive bounds.

Sweat dripped from the pores of his crease ridden brow. He wiped it away half-heartedly with a meaty hand.

Hang on Trev, he told himself, hang on.

He looked at his car again.

He looked at the wall, some four inches off the front bumper.

He looked at the car behind his car, some four inches off his back bumper.

He looked away quick.

He was stuck. That was it really. He was stuck. No room for manoeuvre.

The wall was all right. He had no problem with the wall. The wall was easy to accept.

It was the car behind his car that wounded him. He glanced at it again. His knowledge of cars was slight. His knowledge of most aspects of modernity was slight.

Trev was forty-six years old. Just over twenty of those years had been spent in borstals, remand centres and prisons.

That sort of lifestyle cuts a bloke's appreciation of the modern motor industry down quite considerably. He had his theories mind. Not about the car. About the owner.

He knew he didn't know, but knew anyway.

Knew just what sort of unthinking, arrogant, self-centred little cunt would drive a car like that.

Knew what he'd like to do to him.

Knew the consequences of such actions.

Trev held on. Held onto himself as the tumult roared and smashed from his guts to his head in great provoking waves.

Dr. Sanderson had told him to get one. A mobile. He could do with talking right now. Talking himself into an escape route. But he still saw them as some eighties iconoclastic fetish. He was stubborn. So fucking stubborn.

Stubborn and feared up to the fucking eyeballs. On him it was, on him and

## Broadsheet 14

merciless. Didn't care who he was or what he wanted. It wanted him. Wanted him back.

And in that moment. That small crystal moment. Something changed and Trev reacted.

Tears welled then poured forth within a breath. Big salty droplets running down his puffed and ravaged cheeks.

It happened regular these days. Never used to. He'd knocked crying on the head at four years of age. Knocked it clean on the head. What was the fucking point? Changed fuck all. Changed fuck all for young Trev. And it stayed like that for a good time. Stayed like that until Dr. Sanderson entered Trev's cell and asked if he wanted a chat.

He didn't. Then he did. Then he really fucking didn't. Then he had no choice. He couldn't stop crying on his own. Couldn't hold it in no more. Couldn't hold in what he didn't even know was there. His truth. His most terrible truth which no number of beatings, no years locked up and no measure of chemicals could contain.

He'd tried had Trev. Tried to hide it. Hide from it. Not be it, but there it was anyway. The evidence lay in the tatters of his life. A life that took life and squeezed it. A life that hurt, maimed and murdered its way through forty vicious confusing years.

How could he have forgotten?

How couldn't he have forgotten?

No difference.

No difference to a four year old child bugged stupid by his beloved father.

He was there again in that terrible beautiful place.

The place of his death and his life.

He saw it for what it was.

Saw himself for who he was.

Saw his car for what it was.

Saw his place in this moment in this space and he accepted it.

Trev blew his nose. Had a quick scan about. Felt a bit daft crying that way.

Then he went back into town for a cup of tea and something sweet.

*Peter Moore*

*Nelson*

23

### Smoker

My father always smoked  
He was taught in the army  
he always sent me on errands  
To get them  
He was working for tobacco  
company  
I think  
They should have  
Given him  
A pension

*Geoffrey Clamp*

*Newcastle-under-Lyme*



# Broadsheet 14

## ***Exile Estranged***

(after Bridgit Rileys' workshop at Alsager)

I don't ever recall being lonely as a child.  
I was lucky. Good parents.  
I *do* remember isolating Basil Paton.

Where football was the only king, being a ballet dancer in a working class area of Glasgow did not go down well – at all. Me and my pals literally '*bear-baited*' him. It must have been a daily hell. Once, a mob of us (10, actually) stood in the street below his window shouting insults up at him. His "Mummy's" intervention affected us not.

One day ... he got to be allowed to join in the playtime football match at school ... danced rings round us because of his ballet skills. At last, he was in. He thought.

One THUDDING tackle next day – he was out, isolated. Again.

The very name BASIL, what sort of name was that for a *wee-Keeli* \*, ... I mean ...eh? We snorted, derisively.

And not PAETON ...

but PAHTON ...as in -Pah...!-ya-bam-ye.

Schoolboys apartheid.

He was destined to be bullied –

From conception.

We all blamed the parents.

Silly name.

Poncy hobby.

Face like a "poof" – *IF* us 6-year olds we actually knew what a "poof" was.

And no adult berated us for what we did.

It was, after all, *HIS* own fault.

When I became a teenager and could formally comprehend intellect, my father counselled –

"Never become one of the flocking herd, son."

*Eric D Davidson  
Lockerbie Writers*

\* *patois for Glaswegian - Small*

# Broadsheet 14

## Three Months in Stoke-on-Trent

After leaving Jamaica for a new life in England in 1961, May 19, my first home was in Stoke-on-Trent north Staffordshire, one of the smaller county in England. The address, was fifteen Hill Church Street, and the town was call Hanley.

I arrived on the Sunday morning, the twenty-first, after travelling overnight from London to Hanley by train. I take a taxi from the station to Hill Church Street. The hill was so steep I said to myself that the name was just right for it.

As the taxi were going up the hill, I look back over my right shoulder, and I thought, 'Oh gosh we maybe rolling hack down to where we supposed to he coming from! The two sisters, Jean and Sheila, my friends I know from back home were waiting for me at the house. Their father, Mr. Wright were at work that morning. At that time he used to work in the coalmine.

In Stoke-on-Trent those days, most of the men works in the coalmine and the women in the potteries. I remember when I used to go into this shop, right at the bottom of Hill Church Street it was called Dorothy Perkins. One Saturday Jean and Sheila took me in there. Two ladies was in the shop, one of them was Dorothy Perkins herself. Sheila introduced me to her as her friend from Jamaica, "And her name is Dorothy also" Sheila told her.

We used to go shopping there every weekend, buying all sorts of things. Hanley the town was just below the road where the shop was. That road was called the Ivy House Road, but we always have to go into the shop before we go into the town. I used to live looking at the coats in the shop window when I go down town. Sheila and Jean have to call me saying, "Dorothy, come on!" Well, they were here two years before me, so things not so strange to them anymore, like it was to me.

The shoe shop was another place I did like to gaze at. The heels were very high just like they are today. There were some lovely things in the shops for what style they was in the 1960's.

I moved from Stoke-on-Trent down to Manchester in August 1961 Sadly, Mr. Wright died in October nineteen seventy three. Mr. Wright's house is not a house anymore it became an Indian takeaway now. In May 2001, when it was forty years after my first experience of fifteen Hill Church Street, Stoke-on-Trent I decided to paid a visit. I get on the train just like I did before, but this time I travelled on the bus from the station up to Hanley and then walked up the hill.

I stood in front of the house, but didn't know that was the house because the number fifteen were not on the door, but my instinct just hold me there. While I was standing there, a young lady came knocking next door. She has a large hook in her hands and a pen. So I thought of asking her if she would by any chance know the number of this house, so I did.

"Of course" she said, "it's number fifteen but they haven't had the number on for a while now." Well. I just breakdown and started crying. She put her arm around my shoulders and ask me, "What's the matter?" Then I told her that this was my first home when I came to England forty years ago. So it brings back memories. She said, " Never mind, I understand. Are you OK now?" I told her "Yes."

It's forty-three years but I dread going back to Hill Church Street.

*Dorothy Blake  
Gatehouse Books*

## Whose Driving

Pressure always pressure from first light, to twilight  
My minds on the run, what happened to having fun  
Never have time to say, I missed so much today

Yesterday was just as bad, what happened to the life we had  
When you and I had time to reflect, on great daytime sex  
On the sun, the sky and laid in, which came free of charge

my mind of rivers and streams flow back in time to dream  
of what we thought would stay, but somehow lost along the way  
Now drive and ambition is all we see, never you and me

*Sue Havercroft  
Grimsby Writers*

## Some guidelines for sending work for consideration for publication in Broadsheet

We welcome receiving all forms of writing for Broadsheet, and would appreciate more short stories, life histories, essays, and other prose. Illustrations and cartoons are also very welcome!

The size of Broadsheet necessitates that we usually cannot publish anything longer than one A4 page.

We generally have a policy that no more than one or two pieces are published by any writer, in each issue. However we do keep on file writing not published, and consider it for later publication.

We try and publish something from everyone who submits to us, as it is our aim to encourage people in their writing. Being published and sharing writing is an important part of that process. However if the writing is viewed as contravening our Equal Opportunities Policy, or the 'spirit' of the FWWCP, it will not be published.

The contents of Broadsheet are chosen by members of an FWWCP affiliated groups. It is open to their interpretation what is suitable. In this issue you will read pieces by people previously unpublished, alongside some well-known names.

If possible we appreciate writing sent by E-mail, or on disk, which saves us considerable time and cost retyping. If that is not possible, please ensure that the piece is clear to read. We accept cassette tapes, which we will transcribe. Ensure you put your name, address, and contact number on each piece, so we can refer any query regarding your text, and credit your writing.

We do not return writing sent for consideration, so please do not send the only copy you have.

Copyright remains with you, however, by sending a piece of writing for consideration to us, you agree to giving us the right to reprint the piece at any time, for non-profit making purposes, such as in an anthology, or read as part of a talk about the work of the FWWCP. You will be credited and where possible notified of these occurrences.

*We look forward to receiving your writing.*

# DIY Publishing Part 3

## Nick Pollard concludes his guide to publishing yourselves

Written content. Looking at other people's publications will give you an idea about what you want to include in your own. The content has to reflect the aims of your group. Federation Magazine evolved into more of a discursive publication on community publication because the Fed wanted a magazine where community publications would get reviewed and discussed – this was a gap in the market which no-one else filled. Poems and short stories were therefore moved into a separate Broadsheet, which could be produced solely for the purpose of distributing work by our members. This gave the organisation two publications instead of one, and for the same money.

### Inside the publication

In a 20 page publication you might have room for one longish article of around 1,200 words, and several shorter pieces or features. Poems are useful, if appropriate, as they can fit into spare corners, and give added depth to the content. Notices of events relevant to the group might also be included – make sure that they will still be in date by the time your publication is distributed – one reason for failing to sell is that the publication looks out of date.

Allow space for:

- Statement of the group's objectives
- Editorial/foreword
- Credits
- Contents section (which may need a short explanation or teaser for each section) Index (make sure you remember to number pages)
- Glossary (sometimes you

may need to explain technical terms to your audience)

### Cover

- Price!
- Issue number
- ISSN or ISBN (For an ISSN number apply to ISSN UK Centre, The British Library, Boston Spa, Wetherby, West Yorkshire LS23 7BQ, tel. 01937 546959, e mail issn-uk@bl.uk, for an ISBN apply to ISBN Agency, Woolmead House West, Bear Lane, Farnham, GU9 7LG, Tel.: 01252 742590 e-mail: isbn@whitaker.co.uk)
- Funders' whose logos may have to be prominently displayed)
- Front page teasers which tell you what's inside
- Back page blurb (important to encourage people to read it)

### Editing

In a voluntary group the task of editing can be a difficult one. Some groups prefer to work on a collective basis, but this can be difficult if you are producing a regular publication; you will need to spend more time on meetings to decide what should go in and what will not.

The editor will oversee the whole process of publication, and co-ordinate design and content, so it is important to have someone who is in tune with the group's objectives and will produce a publication that reflects the group. Editors can be undermined by too much interference. It is important that the group produces a good publication, but sometimes this may be at odds with what others in the group think. Consider whether you want to adhere strongly to the principles of the group or whether you are going

to use your publication to debate issues freely.

The editor has the job of chasing up individual contributors and making sure that everyone sticks to the deadline. If you can, agree on a standard format for submission, and make sure that authors give you addresses and phone numbers so that you can check out revisions with them.

### Giving support

Not everyone has access to a computer or even a typewriter but material on disc saves a lot of time. If handwritten, copies can at least be clear, and clean. If you need to make your process more accessible, for example allowing people to send in material (clearly recorded) on tape, remember that an hour of tape takes about ten hours to transcribe.

Editorial support, spelling and grammar

Community publishers often find that they need to give considerable editorial support to contributors. People will not be confident that they can write at all, and sometimes the best thing to do is to organise creative workshops for people who might want to write for your publication. Contributors may want assurances that they will get help with spelling and grammar, but it is important to ensure that the voice they write with is an authentic one. Encourage them to be confident in this.

*Dobroyed*, by Leslie Wilson, (Commonword, Manchester, 1980) was an autobiography of life in a Borstal. The spelling and grammar is unconventional and self taught. Solicitor, for example, is spelt *cellisiter*, because the

solicitor visits you in the cell. Sometimes new meanings come from new spellings, and there are other examples in the writing of poets like Benjamin Zephaniah or Levi Tafari, who work with the sounds of Caribbean English.

Many people working in community publications have been denied educational opportunities. As these media give a voice to those who would otherwise be unheard, an important editorial quality is an ability to see how working from the margins can produce new creative opportunities.

In mental health settings individuals can be extremely slow in producing material – sometimes you might find yourself working a sentence at a time. Community publications are a means for people to achieve the goal of reaching others with their voice. The results can often be powerful, particularly when that opportunity to speak is invested with the experience of silence.

In some sensitive areas, such as dealing with victims of abuse, publication is not often sought as an outcome. Consider that while some individuals may need to protect their confidentiality, others may need to tell their stories. Publishing your own account and reading the stories of others can help the understanding that your own experiences are “true”. Such accounts also reach out to others who have not yet had the chance to deal with their issues. There have been a large number of community publications over the last thirty years dealing with issues such as teenage pregnancy, abuse, adoption, approved schools, racism, aspects of sexuality, drug and alcohol use, learning difficulties, mental illness and physical disabilities.

Similarly, a good number of publications by people with these issues include writing which is not,

perhaps connected with an ‘ism’. Community publications offer avenues for people to work together simply because they are interested in writing.

### **Working with volunteers**

Publications produce a lot of pressure and expectation on others, especially when produced in voluntary circumstances:

Respect the production process. Those who don’t meet deadlines make work for others, the whole process becomes more of a chore and less enjoyable, there will be more arguments and the group will have to weather internal criticism.

Work given freely is more time-expensive and difficult to procure than waged work. Even if you are working voluntarily, you will be working with people who are operating commercially, like your printer, and expect you to meet deadlines. If you have agreed a time with your printer for the delivery of the hard copy and final version on disc, you may find that a delay means that your work is held up while other jobs are finished. Avoid these problems by good planning.

### **Planning ahead**

The editor needs to make sure that there will be more copy than can be used in any one publication, so that there is flexibility when material does not come in on time. Try and plan several issues of a magazine ahead, so that you can line writers up well in advance and have more flexibility in switching material around to give a co-ordinated, topic centred feel to your magazine.

### **Proof reading**

The editor is sometimes also responsible for proof reading, but if you have someone in your group who can do this, encourage them

to take responsibility. Proof reading is a separate skill from editing in many ways and requires close attention to detail. The editor will make cuts or ask for additions in the content, but the proof reader will check to make sure that everything within an article makes sense, is readable, and in a consistent language. The proof reader may need to come back to authors to clarify meaning. Proof reading is especially vital at the stage when the printer sends you the final proofs to correct before printing. Many small publications, pressed for time, are spoilt by poor attention at this point, and your contributors may be vexed by finding their piece has silly mistakes in it.

### **Libel and controversy**

The “McDonalds Two” demonstrated that even a small leaflet can attract the wrath of big corporations. The editor should know what constitutes libel (malicious falsehood) and make sure that the content avoids this – get an up to date copy of a law book for journalists to make certain you are clear of problems. Any contentious statement must be attributable to a source, i.e. someone else, preferably someone who has put it in print or made a public statement that is witnessed by others. Libel costs can be expensive, and the charge can be brought against anyone in the process of publication, including the distributor – the prosecution will aim to extract the maximum amount of money.

Even if you are prepared to take the risk, think carefully. The consequences of a successful libel action might affect other publications, not just yours, denying future access to printers, distributors and venues.

### **Publish and be damned**

In some cases people have

regretted putting their work into community publications, for example having made statements when they were acutely unwell which they would like to retract now they are in health. The editor should work carefully with contributors to ensure that the text respects their intentions. If the publication is likely to be controversial, consider whether pseudonyms and some changes of detail are advisable. When a former drug user produced a book about his childhood some members of his community objected and broke his arm. The book also received some damning reviews because of its poor preparation, with detrimental consequences for the self-esteem of this vulnerable man.

### Advertising

Advertising can offset the cost of publication in different ways. To get a reasonable price you need to work out how much a proportion of the total cost of the publication will be taken up by a quarter, half or full page.

Advertisers will want to know how you are going to distribute the publication and how many copies, to what audience. Some businesses or local government departments may help with the distribution (rather than direct payment) in return for an advertisement. Another way of subsidising your publication is by distributing flyers with it. This can be a lot less trouble, and may not compromise your space or design.

Advertising is a partnership. You need to consider whether you want to be associated with an advertiser, and the advertiser will only pay up if you are reaching an audience they want. Small groups can find it difficult and eventually not cost-effective, to get money from advertisers if they know you will have to chase them.

### Pricing

If you have scant resources, you may need to recoup as much as possible from publications. While a realistic price can be important to their success it may be more practical to consider the cost of publication as a publicity exercise, and any direct financial return is a bonus.

- Producing a publication is unlikely to be profitable, but there may be returns in other ways. Publication can raise the profile of the group, in turn enabling it to participate in a wider range of events.

- Publications are a good thing to distribute to other people, and 'filter down' as they are passed around.

- Funders and sponsors like to see publications, they provide evidence of where their money is going.

To get back more from your investment, pricing should take account of:

- Print costs (take the biggest estimate to allow for error)

- Administrative time both to make the publication and to distribute it (allow 15% of the total end cost)

- Additional labour costs (for example if you have to pay someone to do typing or specialised tasks like layout or proof reading)

- Margin to distributors (how much do you allow individual sellers, or shops)

- Review copies and copies given away to like minded groups or for publicity

- Postage

- Differential pricing

If you are making a cassette or CD, you need to think about these extra costs:

- Studio and equipment hire costs

- Equipment and materials (if producing a series of tapes spread

equipment costs as a percentage across the first few issues – you may have had to buy a couple of mikes which you might not ordinarily use for much else)

- Cost of bulk copying

- Production and printing of inserts for cases

To obtain the price per copy simply add all these costs and divide by the number of copies you will allocate for sales.

### Making it affordable

When you do the sums you may find that your price is quite high for your group members, or readership, to afford. Affordability is vital to selling your publication.

Some community publishers have produced high quality books but have been unable to get people to buy them because the local community cannot afford them. The *Fritz Huser Institut for German and foreign workers' literature* in Dortmund sets out to produce lavish books in order to give full justice to the content. Price is not seen as problem because the content is more important, but many publishing groups cannot afford the subsidies.

Getting an organisation to sponsor the publication, for example through buying copies for its own distribution, can reduce the price-per-copy print cost overall. Either you can afford to print extra copies more cheaply, or you can reduce your distribution effort because part of your planned print run has been sold.

Some groups operate a local price and a higher price for sales outside the immediate community to cover the extra distribution cost, or a price for members and a higher price for non-members. Most community publishers no longer operate these price differentials as they have rarely proved practical.

Encourage investment in your

publication by selling subscriptions for advance sales at a slight discount. Sometimes these happen in small numbers and prove impractical to administer. Another way – the way Federation magazine is costed – is to build the cost of the magazine into the price of membership, so that receipt of the mag is one of the benefits of belonging to the group.

With an idea of price you can begin to work out what to do to make your publication more affordable:

- Do you really need 20 pages or just 16?
  - One colour instead of full colour?
  - A lighter weight of paper will reduce postage and print costs.
  - Organise more distribution by hand.
- Finally, ask yourself: would you buy the publication cold, i.e. if you had no idea what was really in it?

- Does it look interesting enough to try a copy?
  - Can you sell it to someone you've never met before?
  - Will you want to sell it standing on a street corner?
  - Does it say what you want it to say about your group?
- For my own rule of thumb I base the ideal price around a bag of crisps in a pub, or the price of a pint. If a community publication is going to be hawked around the community it has to be affordable on an impulse basis from people who may not have a great deal of money to spare. It will be sold, for example on a stall, in competition with tombola tickets, second hand books, jam and plants. It has to compete at an event with a whole range of other publications, equally worthy and good. When wrapped in a piece of plastic against a coat on a wet Saturday afternoon in town it has to stand out enough to make people stop, want one, and think, why not,

when told the price.

### Finally

Enjoy it. It is exciting distributing your own publication (what better way to get direct feedback about what you are doing). Don't expect that everyone will want to write for it – many people are intimidated by the idea of appearing in print, so you will have to encourage a lot of people to try. Don't expect that everyone will like it, but most people will appreciate your efforts, and be proud of the way your group is represented by your publication.

*Nick Pollard, Heeley Writers*  
 If you have missed parts 1 & 2, send a cheque or PO. for £4 (£7 from abroad) made payable to "FWWCP", for copies of Federation Magazine issues 26 & 27, to:  
 FWWCP, Burslem School of Art, Queen Street, Stoke-on-Trent ST6 3EJ, UK

# Driftnet Poets

## Driftnet was featured in Magazine 25, Caroline Burton reports on their achievements over the past 18 months

Just two months after the publication of Fed Magazine No 25, we were celebrating the receipt of a substantial grant from Awards for All. After the initial euphoria had died down, we set about organising performances, workshops, a 100-page anthology, and a CD.

With the aid of local council funding we had already brought three nationally known poets here to perform and run workshops. Following the success of these events, we have brought some promising young talent such as Clare Shaw, Jaclyn Hagan and also a future laureate (maybe) in Antony Dunn. Driftnets are now

in a position to present several more "big names" (including Simon Armitage, due to appear in August) as well as Gillian Clarke. On many occasions Driftnet members provide a support act, thereby helping to establish our name on the local arts scene.

We eagerly anticipate more performance opportunities, namely at two North Lincolnshire arts festivals and an August Bank Holiday fund-raising event in Grimsby's largest public park (which last year attracted 10,000 people). The fact that we have been invited by the organisers to contribute can only point to our

growing reputation.

One of our members, Jim White, is assisting in the running of a writing group for people with learning difficulties, (see page 31).

Driftnet continues to hold regular meetings and to critique each other's work honestly and constructively. Without exception we have found that our standard has improved, and that we are tending to explore more poetic forms and styles than we might have done without the support of the group.

Our first poetry collection will be on sale shortly.

# Grimsby Project Update

Since the 'official' completion of the project on the 16<sup>th</sup> January the group has carried on and is called Voices Talk & Hands Write (VTHW).

Members of the VTHW have given presentations of their work produced in the group to members of the NE Lincs. council at the Grimsby College, to the Valuing People committee at the town Hall and one member, Brian has given an interview on the local radio station, Compass FM.

At the Fed Exec meeting in Cleethorpes on the 22<sup>nd</sup> May members of VTHW read their own work out as part of an evening of readings and were brilliant. Their confidence is wonderful.



Claire, Ellen, June Baxendale and I are the only regular writing hands left, but get help from a couple of others who pop in when they can.

VTHW is totally unfunded now and our only real help is the use of Queen Street resource centre. So if you have any spare books, pens or printer paper, send it along.

The stalwarts of the group are Project Workers Claire and Ellen, (who is heavily pregnant and may be leaving soon.) They are full of ideas and give up a lot of personal time to be part of VTHW and the pride shows in their faces.

The book launch on the 16<sup>th</sup> July will hopefully raise the profile of the group and may even get us some funding.

At the NE Lincs. Arts Forum Festival in August work from the VTHW will be displays with the visual artists work. This will be a great boost.

Group members have started to produce stories and poems in their own time and this is wonderful writing with true feelings.

Who knows how long we will keep going but from small seeds large trees grow.

*Jim White*

*Volunteer for VTHW, Grimsby Writers & Driftnet*





# R E V I E W S



## Bad Boys of Mental Health

CD from Mad Pride Records, Free Available from:  
Cambridge House,  
131 Camberwell Road, London, SE5 OHF  
Phone: 0207 701 8535  
Email: [info@southwarkmind.org.uk](mailto:info@southwarkmind.org.uk)  
Website: [www.southwarkmind.org.uk](http://www.southwarkmind.org.uk)

This is a CD of songs written and performed by members of the Southwark Mind Arts Collective. It is a live performance which was held in the St. Giles Church Crypt to mark the departure of Robert Dellar, former Development Worker for Southwark Mind.

It was issued free with the 70<sup>th</sup> edition of the Southwark Mind Newsletter in December 2003 and only one thousand copies were produced.

The lyrics cover a wealth of human experience, from break ups to break downs, confusion to certainty, despair to hope, exclusion to acceptance, and the fine line of emotion walked between life and death.

The sound quality is not brilliant and it is not always easy to hear the words – but, even so, it is a very atmospheric recording.

*Ashley Jordan  
Shorelink Community Writers*

## Calais dal

Editions Sansonnet, 73 rue de Rivoli,  
59000 Lille, France,  
[www.coleresdupresent.com](http://www.coleresdupresent.com)  
[editions.sansonnet@nordnet.fr](mailto:editions.sansonnet@nordnet.fr), 80pp  
paperback, 8 euros, ISBN 2 914505 14 0

Calais dal (dal is droit au logement) is the product of a rare experiment in community publishing, a collective novel. Produced by a Calais based campaign group for people struggling to find a place to live, it tells the story of a young woman and her political awakening as she becomes involved in a squatters' collective and campaign for housing. Although this sounds like a typical agitprop novel premise, and there are points when the weaknesses of this kind of writing are evident when the argument dominates the story, it is none the less a rich and absorbing experience to read.



*The Droit Au Logement stall at Arras*

It is not simply the story of Annette Fauchette, her partner Kader and their family, but a tale which spans generations of people in their search for a place of their own. Part of Annette's inheritance is the tale of her great grandfather Nestor, who once was chosen by his fellow serfs to run between sunrise and sundown to encircle as much land as he could in a day from the estate of the baron who owned him. He fails, and the question which challenges the reader throughout the book is why should some people have the right to possess everything and thus deprive others of their necessities? It is a question which faces every character in the novel.

There are other stories embedded here, the stories of individuals fighting for basic needs against municipal official indifference and the corruption of landlords, stories which ought to have been consigned to previous centuries but are sadly very true and contemporary. An extraordinarily ordinary

# R E V I E W S

story, as the blurb says on the cover.

As an exercise this project has been very successful in producing a telling and creative way of making their case, and the book is well worth looking at to see how Thierry Maricourt, the co-ordinating writer, has achieved the interweaving of the project's elements. It gives a good picture of some of the key facts of life for those in France only 20 miles from the UK, those closest to us geographically as well as perhaps socially. For readers in England this would be a great text for adult learners wanting to pick up vernacular French, again, a recent slang dictionary (e.g. Strutz, H (1999) Dictionary of French Slang and Colloquial Expressions, New York, Barrons) would be useful for the nuances, but lack of one won't prevent you understanding the bulk of the content, or indeed asking the same questions.

*Nick Pollard*

## The Work Book

Stevenage Survivors, edited by Roy Birch, spiral bound, 120 pages approx.

This huge compendium could be one of those classics of Federation publishing: a cycle of 20 writing workshops in which every member of the group has set a writing exercise for the rest, and following the exercise, every complete - not finished - piece of work produced in that session. (Several of the pieces have been revised for No Margins, an anthology also published this year by the group). While this alone makes it a fairly unique record (though QueenSpark's From Circle to Spiral, published in 1995, discussed workshop experiences and approaches along with pieces of writing), an important feature of this material is that a lot of the work is presented in its original form - the authors' handwriting. Fresh work, often impressive writing when you consider the brevity of the time available to produce it.

In one sense this is a handbook, in that you can attempt the exercises yourself or with your own group, but you can also enter a workshop by trying the activity before you read the pieces which resulted from it. Perhaps this suggestion should have been set out on the front cover, otherwise it's a bit like opening your eyes to see the match score before you see the highlights on late night telly. The exercise which appealed most to me was by Bruce James: To re-write the lyrics of a randomly chosen song, or

to write on the general aspects of the song's original lyrical content - which presents a real challenge in striving away from the forceful memory of the structure and phrasing of the song itself: Neil Hopkins wrote (cover your eyes now if you don't want to see the results):

If smoke gets in your eyes  
then use a better pan.  
Beware the smoker in disguise  
who demands a smoking ban.

The Work Book is a useful resource, something to have tucked away in the workshop bookshelf when inspiration is flagging, when everyone turns up with nothing to read, or to work through as a cycle for your own group.

*Nick Pollard*



## Silverdale

Peter Lewin Kendalpress £4.95

ISBN 0-9545883-8-4

This is an outright plug for the best collection of poetry I have read for ages. Peter Lewin's Silverdale is named after the village in North Lancashire where he grew up next to farms, coves and beaches. He tells childhood memories of an idyllic storybook time and place. From the first poem full of snowballs, laughter, cheery faces and cherry noses, through the eggs for breakfast still warm from the bantams in the creosote shed, to haymaking and Indian headdresses made of pheasant feathers, small entrepreneurs selling sticklebacks, the killing of the pig at Christmas and the Silver Flash, the new sledge this is the sort of childhood we all wish for, told in straightforward but magical poetry.

There is a dark thread there too that somehow

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makes this childhood real. The father and his 'lady-friends', the effect this has on Peter's sister and especially his mother. Cruel games such as feeding moths to spiders, pinning butterflies to garden canes are told with a touch as light and sure as tears 'falling like warm pearls'.

The whole story falls back into perspective with a last section 'Later' where the poet writes from now, taking his own grandson to school. He rejoices in the music of BB king and Eric Clapton and sees his father's similarity to Bukowski, a literary hero. He is still soothed by the childhood smell of bacon and eggs. Terrific stuff.

*Mike Hoy  
Heeley Writers*

## On the Road of Hope

Stories told by disabled women in Khayelitsa, Edited by Theresa Lorenzo and Linda C Saunders with Marjories January and Peliwe Mdlolo, Disabled People South Africa (DPSA), Zanempilo Disability Project, Division of Occupational Therapy, University of Cape Town, ISBN 0 620 29469 8

### Beautiful Shoes

I remember one day I was in Mitchell's Plain  
And I bought a pair of most beautiful shoes.  
My daughter said, Mama,  
They are beautiful,  
Except that when you walk  
it is like you are ploughing,  
So you shoes will soon be destroyed.  
Really,  
It didn't take long  
Before my shoes were broken  
And my daughter said, see? I told you so.  
But I don't really mind,  
Because just for a while,  
With those shoes on my feet,  
I was beautiful.

*Abigail*

This book is the product of a participatory action research project amongst disabled women in a Cape Town township to develop entrepreneurial skills overcome their social isolation and gain a sense of personal power. As well as recording the

outcomes of the project the pieces here tell of their everyday experiences, celebrating the participants' writing. The stories and poems tell of tragic experiences, extreme poverty, chronic abuse, considerable discrimination and disenfranchisement, but also reveal a positive spirit for survival, a redoubtable strength, and provide an educational resource for others.

I want to change being called by names,  
being called crippled or handicapped.  
Even if I'm walking, people say,  
"Shame, that cripple". I want to change  
the way they say when I'm talking,  
"Don't listen to her, she's handicapped."  
I want to continue. I want to be on TV  
or take a flight, and then they will say,  
"Oh, it's her! We were looking down on  
her." Then I'll be seeing myself up there,  
I'll be there in high places. I want to be  
up there because I am a pillar.

*Sindiswa Nomlala*

These are voices who have not been heard, telling tales of hardship which might be difficult to imagine in Britain, but who are indeed inspirational. The project around which this writing is based is innovative and exciting and community publishing is just one of the outcomes. It is something that other Fed groups, with their community publishing and writers workshop expertise, could explore in association with local services. (More about the project can be read in *Transformation Through Occupation Human Occupation in Context* Edited by Ruth M. Watson and Leslie Swartz (eds), London, Whurr, 2004).

*Nick Pollard*

## No Margins

Stevenage Survivors, Poems 2004, edited by Roy Birch and Neil Hopkins, 34pp

This latest anthology from Stevenage Survivors conveys a strong sense of a group of people working together to develop their writing and pulling the poems out of each other with strong individual voices (see The Work Book reviewed on page 33). One feature many of the contributors share is the knack of producing different perceptions of ordinary things - you wish you'd thought of writing about Tom Sawyer and Me (Dick Copeland): .

..glad to see he had not aged like me/  
and that his mind still thought wildly/  
where mine had solidified...

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or your shower:

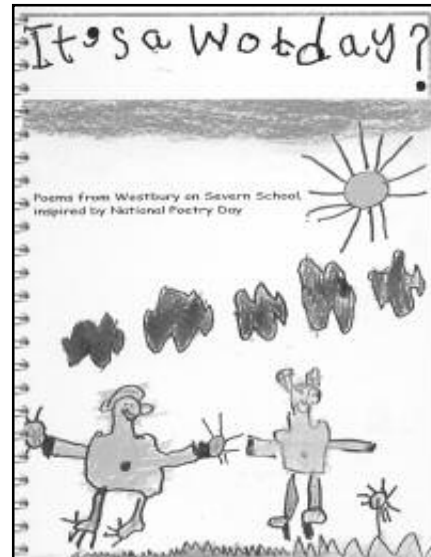
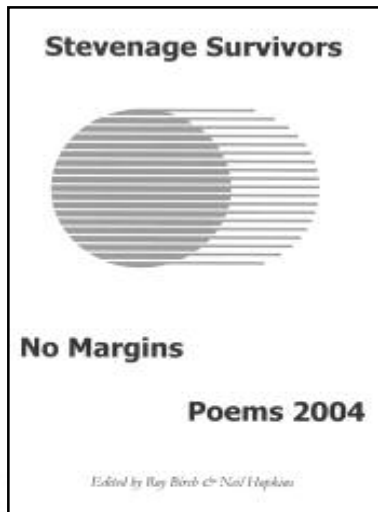
**I Am**  
 I am  
 I am the sun  
 I am the fire  
 I am the head on your shower

I am  
 I am the light above your bed  
 I am your cuddle Ted  
 I am the window that shuts out the wind  
 I am the story that sends you to sleep

*Julia Roberts*

Lawyers, too, have different quarrels:  
 What was lawful's now an offence,  
 Bloody murder, self-defence.  
 No Margins is an inspirational and provocative collection.

*Nick Pollard*



Continuing in this vein is *The Tea Set* (Bruce James), evoking recent colonial malaises:

Remember the barbarian/ Cut and thrust for this/ Remember the importation/ Of treacle and molasses, or even *The Statue* (Emzi Zimیزی):  
 Sometimes fathers come/ And tell their little boys/ About the person I look like;/ I don't take any notice:/ I just stand here.

Many of the poems deal with topical issues, concerns about the 'war on terror'. Anne Copeland's '*Seen This Bad Movie Before*' is very effective, suggesting Hiroshima in the smoke of 9/11 and Armageddon:

Suspended between was and will be/  
 The world holds its breath

In another take on timeless themes, Emzi Zimیزی has a good line in consciousness raising ditties:

**Times Change**  
 Times change, and so do morals;

## It's a Wot Day?

Poems from Westbury on Severn School-  
 Inspired by National Poetry Day, ISBN 0 9512833 1 6

Published by Forest Artworks!  
 Community Arts Project  
 C/o Youth and Community Office, Naas Lane, Lydney, Glos GL15 5AT

I brought this appealing, spiral bound, book home to review back in November and have only just got it back from my daughters. It is a collection of poems by the children of Westbury on Severn School, their parents, grandparents, staff and friends. It is illustrated throughout by the children and covers topics such as home and hobbies, family, pets, friendship, growing up and learning. It was fun and easy to read and it has inspired my children to write and illustrate a collection of their own poems and short stories.

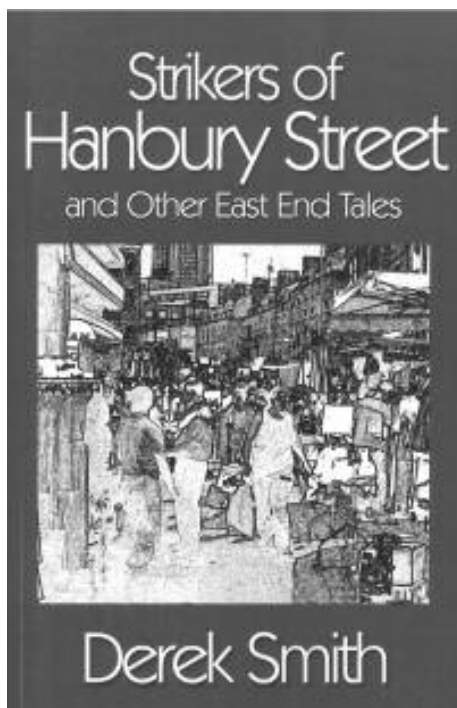
*Ashley Jordan*

I liked the poem book '*It's a Wot Day?*' because it is not about older people but about young people so it has a nice sort of feeling to it. Also it shows how talented children can be if you give them a chance. My personal favourite is called '*Myself*'

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by Kate Edginton because I like people showing what they think of themselves, their own opinion and not others. My other favourite is 'Autumn' by Mrs. Bradley Bishop because it is very detailed and realistic.

*Bethany Jordan(11)*



## Strikers of Hanbury Street and Other East End Tales

Derek Smith, Rhapsody  
 ISBN 1 898030588, 211pp  
 available from Newham Writers

“Over the railway, beyond the silhouette of house tops, the sky was opening up, a white rent pushing back the darkness. Opening up too her own shutter, drawing her into wakefulness. Taking a deep breath she gazed into the splitting sky. Her sky, her time. Her patch of undisputed ground.” (Passing Trains)

Mary and Jack run a newsagents shop and a burger stand, but they've lost the reason for doing anything else. From the first and title story in this excellent read - in which two boys enlist the London Jewish bakers to picket their neighbour and get their ball back - I was engrossed. Forget East

Enders, this *is* life in the East End. Syed needs to make a living, makes his first wad on a box of light up yo-yos and spends it on a business plan... a mum discovers her son is working a scam on the local bookies and turns to crime herself to save him... a boy grows out of Captain Marvel having had the mysteries of the earth explained to him in school... and a failed student finds man's earliest ancestor fossilized on a Hackney building site... Well, you can't wander around too long without bumping into something that's a bit larger than life, after all.

Derek Smith's writing is lively with a good ear for diction, the brusque and the subtle humour of working life, and an eye for developing tricky situations from innocuous beginnings, all with a clear sense of place. This is a highly enjoyable and well crafted collection.

*Nick Pollard*

## A Manchester Shirtmaker

John Law (Margaret Harkness), Northern Herald Books, 5 Close Lea, Rastrick, Brighouse, West Yorks, HD5 3AR, ISBN 0 9523167 2 2, 110pp £6.95

*“She wore a black dress, and a widow's bonnet. A long crape veil fell from her shoulders and reached to her waist. But she was young, so young that she seemed like a mere child to the policeman, who said in a conciliatory voice, “Come, move on like a sensible young woman...”*

Margaret Harkness, who wrote as John Law, was a Victorian socialist campaigner who visited the Ancoats and Angel Meadow areas of Manchester in 1889 and published this novel the following year, one of a number concerning working lives. The story of Mary Dillon, a young widow with a baby to feed, whose husband - cut off by his family because he has married beneath his social station - died as a result of an accident at work, was written in order to depict the miserable slum conditions in which people who worked in the clothing industry tried to support themselves. As a precursor to the kind of writing produced by many Fed writers it is of considerable interest, attempting the realism of other more renowned and mostly male 19th century writers in order to generate a consciousness in middle class readers. Of course, it is a product of its time, with anti Semitic passages, a tendency to

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patronising vocabulary, but as the critical introduction by Trefor Thomas points out, it is remarkable in having a group of women organise industrial action, attacks the idiotic panacea of simple religious salvation, and unlike many of its contemporaries, reverses the rags to riches story, advancing relentlessly to an unhappy ending.

This edition also contains Engels' letter to Harkness offering constructive criticism on another of her novels, *A City Girl*, and the question of realism in representing the working class as passively accepting their conditions. A Manchester Shirtmaker appears to take on the arguments from Engels in charting a steady worsening of Mary Dillon's situation, no other assessment of the position of slum dwellers would serve Harkness's political and campaigning objective.

*Nick Pollard*



## Extra! Extra! Read all about it

The University of Liverpool Creative Writing Society for Lifelong Learning First Anthology 2003, 52pp details from [thomas.mcbride2@btopenworld.com](mailto:thomas.mcbride2@btopenworld.com)

A densely packed anthology of poems and stories, this collection is a lively blast of scouse wit and the survival of strong women. The writing is full flavoured in a way which will make many readers envious of the dialect and the rhythms of speech which enable its humour. For example, even with the title "Full Residence" the subject of this poem by Tommy McBride took a little while to dawn on me:

They headed East to Mecca  
 She'd read it in her stars:  
 excitedly she said to her husband Dave,  
 "This twenty grand could be ours."  
 "Did you bring your lucky shamrock  
 love?  
 And that pen you got from your Mam?  
 She told me it was on a free-gift label,  
 attached to a small tin of Spam...

And that's not the only poem which mentions the subject. Ken Hennigan takes the lid off the European City of Culture with a satirical flourish:

At the corner of Jubilee Drive  
 Old men play boules and blow  
 Aromatic smells from briar pipes  
 While their wives play  
 Lacrosse on the reservoir  
 The bingo hall is bought out by drug  
 dealers  
 Stripped to the waist in the sun  
 They work to convert it to an art house  
 cinema  
 Breaking only to discuss  
 The Coen brothers over camomile tea...

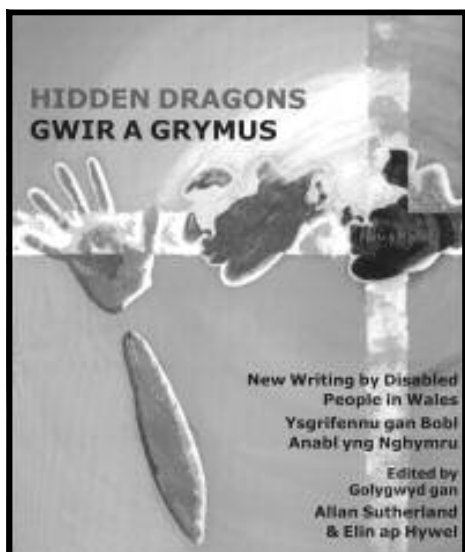
...as you might expect Liverpool itself features not only through the sense of place, but is also the muse, particularly for Ann McDermot:

She's brash  
 She's funny  
 She's in your face  
 She's music  
 She's dance  
 She's on your case... (My Liverpool).

It's a feisty debut from this group. There's a great deal to appreciate and savour, but I also got a strong impression of something else from this work which woke me up, one of a renaissance of sharp, edgy, 'worker writing' from the capital of culture.

*Nick Pollard*

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## Hidden Dragons - Gwir a Grymus

New Writing by Disabled People in Wales, published by Arts Disability Wales with Parthian Press, £7.99, ISBN 1-902638-39-5, ringbound 224pp - also available in large print, Braille, tape and CD-Rom - for details contact:

arts.disability@btconnect.com

This is an impressive collection of writing, the culmination of a year long project The Write Stuff, which ran writing workshops (with many access difficulties!!) for people with disabilities up and down Wales during 2003.

The first impression is of a large book, well and clearly designed, printed on cream paper. The cover by Tina Watts is very effective. There are both English and Welsh language pieces, not translated. It's the sort of collection to dip into and the writing features strong voices, with a great sense of place, sometimes an anger, often a humour. *Hidden Dragons* is separated into themes and all the writers have short biographies at the back, which is very useful.

The impressive production is not just a gloss, the contents are even more impressive, and ADW should be proud of this extraordinary book, and the writers equally proud to be part of it.

The contents are a mix of prose and poetry in about equal number. It all stands out, and as I read through the book I kept thinking, *I must use this in my review*, enough to reprint the book!

One piece that has stuck in my mind is:

### **Beside My River**

I live Beside my Dyslexia  
Like a house beside a river which  
occasionally bursts its banks  
To play a trick on the unsuspecting  
house

*Robert Pleasance*

One that chilled me was:

### **State of Grace**

When I'm too old  
to be alone, and  
go into some  
old people's home,  
I'll sit  
in urinated chairs,  
and stare at every  
passing cat,  
that wanders  
through the litter  
in the bushes,  
outside the window  
four flights up.

I'll tell them  
how they tie poor Grace  
to arms of chairs  
so she's in place  
to have her  
daily medication.

But will they care  
if I just stare,  
and Grace  
is fastened  
in her chair.

*Norma E. Jones*

So, I hope you can see from just those two pieces that this is a collection worth owning. It's only £7.99 which is well worth the money. ADW have been running launches around Wales, and I think it would be well worth them setting up a tour for the writers to appear around Britain, this is strong stuff and many more should see and hear that the dragons are emerging!

*Tim Diggles*  
FWWCP Co-ordinator

# What a beautiful sight

*The story below is by Kyla, who was inspired by the TERMA Hygiene Exhibition in June 2003. Terma is an international NGO who works in Lhasa (Tibet) on healthcare. The exhibition was organized to teach the public the importance of hygiene in order to stop diseases from spreading.*

*All the staff and the blind children of the project (Braille without Borders, Tibet) visited the exhibition.*

*Kyla is a girl from a family of which the father as well as two brothers (twins) are blind (pictured right). Two other (sighted) children have died about 5 years ago, last year the mother died as well. The two brothers, Jampa and Dorjee have opened up their own teahouse, Kyla opened up her own medical massage and physiotherapy clinic.*

It is not so long ago and it can always happen again.

In the middle of Tibet there are two beautiful valleys with two beautiful villages.

The valleys have many trees and flowers and rivers with clear water.

One day a man of one village thinks about how to become very rich. He had an idea: He looked at the old and big trees and said: (oh, I can cut the trees and I can sell the wood in Lhasa.) Then all the people of the village help him with cutting the trees and they are driving to Lhasa. They get a lot of money for the wood. The village becomes very rich. But there is no shadow anymore and the beautiful flowers die because the heat of the sun is now very strong. And now the village looks very ugly.

When the people of the rich village go to Lhasa they buy a lot

of things. They buy beer in cans, orange juice in plastic bottles, sweets for the children put in plastic bags and a lot of paper boxes with sweet cookies.

They have many parties and they throw the trash around the village.

One night the wind came, and in the morning some of the trash lies in the river and makes the water very dirty. Then the flies come. They like to sit on the dirty



trash. And they bring bad diseases to the people. The people all become very sick because they can not wash their hands in clean water and a lot of the children loose their teeth because they eat too much sweets and don't brush their teeth. All the money they have they spent for the hospital. So they become very poor because they are not healthy and they have no more wood to sell. There is no grass, no shadow and no clean water for the animals. The animals can only eat plastic but this is not good for their milk.

The other village, which is not rich, is still very beautiful. The people are healthy and the landscape is full of big trees. On the trees grow sweet and juicy fruits that look like gold. Their Yaks and goats can stand in the cool shadow and they can eat the nice grass and drink the clean water of the river.

One day a tourist visited both villages. He heard about the villages in Lhasa. He heard that

one village is very rich and one village is very poor. He first visited the rich village. He was very surprised and asked the businessman:

"I heard that your village is very rich, but why is it so ugly?"

The businessman said: "we thought the trees we cut will grow again. But our earth now became sand. There is no water in the ground and the trees cannot grow again."

Then the tourist visited the other village and is again very surprised: "This is not a poor village!" said the tourist. "The people and animals look very healthy!"

The villager said: "we don't have money but we are very rich because we have beautiful landscape and we are very happy."

The tourist thought that a lot of people should come and see this beautiful sight.

Therefore he builds a teahouse and a big restaurant.

And then a lot of people come to enjoy the beautiful landscape of the village. They buy their drinks in the teahouse and sit everywhere making parties and drinking beer in cans and orange juice in plastic bottles.....



*Braille Without Borders, Tibet  
P.O. Box 01-054, Lhasa  
Tibet Autonomous Region  
PR China  
Email: [BrailleWB@gmx.net](mailto:BrailleWB@gmx.net)*



# FED Member wins UNESCO Prize

*Dear friends at FWWCP,  
Our Association has been awarded the UNESCO  
Literacy Prize 2004. We wish to share this wonderful  
news to all members of the Fed. Please find below the  
UNESCO Press release on this award.*

*Best wishes, Alain Ah-Vee, L'Edikasyon pu travayer*

## Winners of the 2004 UNESCO Literacy Prizes

UNESCO's 2004 international literacy prizes have been awarded to programmes in Mauritius, Brazil and China. The laureates of the International Reading Association Literacy Award and the two King Sejong Literacy Prizes were selected by a jury that met at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris from May 10 to 14. These UNESCO prizes are awarded in recognition of particularly effective contributions to the fight against illiteracy, one of UNESCO's priorities. They call attention to the efforts of thousands of men and women who devote themselves year after year to advancing the cause of literacy for all. This year, the jury focused particularly on candidates whose work promoted gender equality, in accordance with the theme assigned by the United Nations Literacy Decade (2003-2012) of which UNESCO is the lead agency. The three winners were chosen from 28 candidates. They will receive their prizes in their own countries on International Literacy Day, September 8. The International Reading Association Literacy Award (\$17,000) goes to L'Edikasyon pu travayer, a non-governmental organization in Mauritius, chosen by the jury for its adult literacy programme, which places the emphasis on women, its respect for cultural context and use of mother languages. The organization has also produced, printed and distributed books - including the first Mauritian Creole Dictionary - and reading materials covering every aspect of learners' lives. The two King Sejong Literacy Prizes (\$15,000) have been awarded to Alfabetização Solidária (AlfaSol, Brazil) and the Steering Group of Literacy Education in Qinghai Province (China). AlfaSol is honoured for launching a literacy programme aimed at four million illiterate adults, and based on an innovative, simple and cost-effective model. The Steering Group of Literacy Education in Qinghai Province responded to the needs of a large and geographically isolated population, concentrating its efforts on women and various ethnic minorities. It created a methodology combining literacy with skills training geared to the needs of farmers and herdsmen and taking into account their daily routines.



# Federation Magazine & Broadsheet NEXT ISSUE

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