

Publishers

Community

Worker Write

The Federation of

Life Stories



... Every Life Story is Worth Telling...

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- 98

- **Festival Write Back**
 - Life in Sweden/
Liv i Sverige
 - Histories for the
Millenium
 - Hand in Hand
Latest



The Federation of Worker Writers and Community Publishers

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

The Fed encourages an inclusive approach to creativity.

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

The Fed IS its Membership.

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

We believe that our difference is our strength. We'd like to hear from you.

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Feditorial

Akin

Why do I scrimp all year
to save for the Fed weekend
when I sorely need the money to spend
on luxuries like shoes and clothes
or the occasional steak for the stomach?

When I get here I know, I'm home
where my kin are. Not related
but allies and friends who understand
what my need to write is.

In the wide world of my acquaintances
there is many a reader who says
"I love a good read,
when it has a black rose on its cover
or it's a Mills and Boon newest romance."

The men I meet in the pub
who read every page in a newspaper
from A to Zed on sport,
quoting with a certain authority
which nag will win next day on Epsom Downs,
but read - as in a book -
whoa, nay.
That's not part of their reality

**Jan Holliday
Pecket Well College**

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to get more 'Friends of the Fed'? *The answer, for me, is simply to get them to a Festival. There really is nothing like it for spirit, for warmth, for diversity, for inspiration. Once experienced it must be repeated and is to be anticipated with great pleasure. And it's a relatively short step from being a 'Friend of the Fed'* to becoming one of those friendly people at the Fed. Oh, and Roger Drury, my heartfelt thanks for that quintessential festival experience. Where else could you abandon yourself to the lyrical delights of 'Ernie, the Fastest Milkman in the West'?

Sandra Courtman,
Friend of the Fed

**A Friends of the Fed form can be found on the bad page of the magazine.*

Festival Write Back...

My First Fed Weekend

I'd heard so much about the Fed from Arthur Thickett, longtime QueenSpark member and now Chair of the Fed, but it was rather a shadowy body to me. I'd read the magazine and knew the Fed was there, but there were no faces to the names and not much flesh to the organisation. So I went away on my first Fed weekend with no preconceived ideas.

I'm left with a sense of an organism which is full of life, full of faces, full of people being creative in their own different ways. It was a wonderful opportunity for me to meet members of other groups and appreciate how different we all are, but how we are driven by similar aims.

I attended workshops as diverse as one on marketing strategies, where we pooled our ideas, to one

on typography, using the old style lead type, which was a therapeutic alternative to creating pages on the computer. The performance evening on Saturday was an inspiration: the work was of a wonderfully high standard, some moving, some funny, some dramatic.

Full of all this, and images of the beautiful setting of the Yorkshire Sculpture Park, my head was buzzing with new ideas when I came back - I was quite unable to concentrate on the everyday. I am so grateful to the Fed for organising the event, it is good to know that there are others of us out there, working to promote writing and bookmaking.

**Sheena Macdonald,
QueenSpark Books**

The Fed Weekend

It's here again
the time is near
for the best event
that's been planned all year
For an enjoyable time
and get your writing read
come along and join us
for a weekend at The Fed
The beds are comfy
and the food's alright
enjoy the performance
on the Saturday Night
The people are great
and they give you Cred
we wouldn't be found
without a Fed under our
Bed

Thanks Feds

**Jim & Sandy O'Brien
Pecket Well College**

Shorelink Writers Take The Plunge

Shorelink Writers of Hastings, East Sussex have decided to flex their creative pectorals and muscle in on the opportunities that are available to community writing groups with their own community press.

Having secured A4E Express (Arts for Everyone) Lottery funding, Shorelink Writers are now at the editing stage of their first semi-professional anthology of the group's

creative work. Ahead lies the task of beefing up the poems and prose and taking a first step into hard edged realities. All this will be made easier as Shorelink interact with others members of the Fed.

A capable management structure is evolving under the watchful eye of Nan McCubbin and Gill Cook (Creative Teachers/Co-ordinators, Sonia Plato (CCE Sussex University Community Development

Festival Write Back...

The Apple Poem

Biting into the green skin
sucking the juice from the white flesh
mashing it down between her molars
to release the flavour from the pulp.

Eve, the naked virgin is
tasting fruit for the first time
and suddenly she knows.

She looks at Adam's unhealthy skin and says
"Go on taste it. Taste the knowledge."
'Wot, an waste a good night's drinking."
"Yeah. Reach out to the world beyond the sofa
and see the truth of all human kind:"
"Football's on. Go an make a cuppa or something."

Through the eyes of her new wisdom
she sees the washing, covers it
and thinks "fuck it."
At night she dances under the moon
eating apple after apple that
fall from the tree of life
filling herself with Golden delicious wonder

and next morn fresh and alive
with the sweetness still lingering on her tongue
she says again, begs
"bite it. Taste it. Be like me.
Unchain yourself from narrow vision
and see the world beyond
chips and beans to the afters"
"Where's my Black Jumper?"

With determination she gathers
a variety of apples,
Cox's, Spartans, Ida Reds,
Granny Smiths
She lays them out in front of him
She strokes their smooth perfect roundness
Her lips close around each one
her eyes focused on his
She tells him
how the juice caresses her taste buds
how exciting the first bite is,
how her body is suddenly filled
with a rich source of vitamins and minerals.

"Suck it. Suck the juice. Allow the flavour
to arrange your senses:"
And Adam says
"The thing about tinned peaches is
they're sterile. Apples give me the shits:"
She was the one who changed
it was her that unleashed the
richness of variety in the diet.
It all started with
One Apple
One bite
One desire.
And it took guts.

**Averil Staple,
Forest Artworks.**

Worker) Ashley Jordan (Administrator), Harry Roper (Artistic Development Officer). Shorelink will be sited for the time being at Hastings Trust, Robertson Street, where there will be full management and technical support, including access to the Internet.

Future activities include: creating a Website, encouraging new members, taking part in the National Year of Reading, and Interactive readings of the first anthology all over Sussex - and wherever possible.



Shorelink Writers

Alvin Culzac

Festival Write Back...

Experience, new, learning - me

In this safe environment I can check out my own flaws - for example spell a word VERY slowly. I had not thought of that. And its the simple things one does not think of.

Nearly 3 years ago I breezed my way onto the stage of the Contemporary Centre for the Arts - Glasgow. Performed not long after Ian Crichton Smith - chuffed I was. Larry Butler did not know me from Rhett Butler - but the association has NOT gone with the wind - has continued - blossomed, now flowering. In February `98 a meeting was advertised in Dumfries - a town notorious for NOT attracting an audience. More than 20 turned up, a small committee formed and -AND! - my area is very rural. Ecclefechan is a lay-by on the M74 - the centre of my universe - other survivors can be 20/30 miles away - and evening transport is zilchski. So - other ways of meeting will have to be considered -Teleconferencing for example. Expensive? Yupp! But money must be found. Where... ehm? Help! Ideas please.

I suffer from recurrent bipolar depressive disorder. (My brother says I'd delusional, merely on account of my obvious good looks and genius). Others have "others"... creativity stimulates and writing puts the problem down on paper where I can isolate "it" - then attend to the problem.

So I have begun a "pilot" for the pilot scheme - My girlfriend,afriend who is a girl and myself meet each Thursday

in a council flat in Ecclefechan. jointly we have developed a 10 week programme and - surprisingly for the two "girls" - we take 2 hours to develop writing/words/ideas etc. etc. In this safe environment I can check out my own flaws - for example spell a word VERY slowly. I had not thought of that. And its the simple things one does not think of.

Although, as a former Community Education Worker and trained Adult Basic Education Tutor, I have group work experience - this is a new experience. I know the two individuals very well and have to make allowance for that. Confidentiality - even between only three - is hard to keep, as I do keep it. Experience, new, learning - me.

We will evaluate finally but for now the flow is good ... wonderful watching friends grow. And the future... well... I wonder. I am city-bred, outgoing, creative... I have to keep stepping outside of myself and take a long hard look. Future groups will be survivor-determined not EDD-Determined although I will have my own unique input. I wonder how the educational establishment will react... already I am putting out feelers.. to prepare them. A point was made to aprofessional writer - you, the establishment support "us". It is

Festival Write Back

This year's Federation Festival of Writing at Bretton Hall College, near Wakefield, was attended by almost a hundred people, many of whom came for the first time.

The Festival programme included a wide variety of workshops, performance, bookstalls, a quiz night and a guided tour of the Yorkshire Sculpture Park in which the College is set. Here are some of the responses and writings generated by the Festival from those who went...

I was still looking for someone.

"My fault for not coming last night,"

I told myself.

"And have I stumbled on to an *Avengers* set or what?

Steed might come round the corner at any minute, swinging that lethal umbrella.

Or if I'm lucky, Sebastian and Charles..."

"The Fed is living, thriving, wide open and working better than ever, thanks to us all, and is now offering even more to all of its members, to all of us.

Please make sure that your group participates fully... and gets all that it needs that's on offer"

Arthur Thickett

I need a Friend...

I board a train for Wakefield Westgate one Saturday morning at 8.30 from the dismal platform at Burton station. It was cold, it was raining and every sense told me I should have been under a feather filled duvet. I anticipated the forthcoming Festival. I felt the unease of anyone travelling alone to an event where you might be seen as an outsider to a group with a very strong identity. I assembled my defence: not everybody can, or wants to be, part of a Fed writers' group, even if they are sympathetic with all the aims of the organisation. Still... I told myself "You're getting to be an old hand at this, after all, it is your third year at the Festival as a 'Friend of the Fed', and for goodness sake, stop worrying... why would you keep coming back for more, if the people were nasty and the workshops were crap?

However, arriving at the literally breathtaking, but deserted, Bretton Hall at coffee time only served to increase my sense of loneliness and anxiety. Everyone seemed to be elsewhere and there was no one to register me. I had

gathered where I'd be sleeping, in one of the rash of horrible 60's student blocks that covered the hills around the Brideshead Revisited mansion. I was mystified. How could they allow such 'architecture on the cheap' to blight the Yorkshire Sculpture Park? I was still looking for someone. "My fault for not coming last night," I told myself. "And have I stumbled on to an *Avengers* set or what? Steed might come round the corner at any minute, swinging that lethal umbrella. Or if I'm lucky, Sebastian and Charles..."

After patrolling many oak lined corridors someone helpful did find me the person with my key. And then, at last, sight of an exhausted, but ever cheery and welcoming Tim, and then a flash of the new, young, bright Deborah (phantom organiser of the '98 Festival). Within minutes, I was in the theatre and the AGM and felt completely at home, at ease, and part of something quite indefinably good. There was the relief of seeing some familiar faces, but there were lots of new faces too. They were good faces. So, in answer to your question, Sarah, how

Festival Write Back...

Musical Chairs at Bretton Hall

As far as the Fed Exec is concerned, continuity is usually both appropriate and beneficial. But in this years' AGM elections at the Bretton Hall Festival the 'Four Year Limit' rule really came home to roost. When the music stopped and the dust had settled there was only one person of the ten strong old Exec who held on to his seat! And that was the Hon. Sec. Surely he deserves a prize!

So we got a new Chair, Vice Chair, Treasurer, (all slightly second hand actually) and six brand new Exec members. I feel honoured and happy to be the new Chair, honoured because the Fed with all its parts adds up to something very special, and happy (and lucky) to be following and having the support of previous Chairs Tom and Sarah.

Already the new Exec has had its first work-out with a weekend meeting at Pecket

not we who fit into your round holes. OH!

Will they assist us with community transport for example, take into account special interests and needs... view as an educational extra and not conflict. Hm. Convince me.

**Eric D Davidson,
Survivors' Poetry Scotland**

Well (thanks to all concerned for the hospitality and behind the scenes arrangements) with the new members and some regional reps quickly becoming involved. Minutes and details will be going out as usual to Fed Member groups.

But for now, I'll repeat, I'm lucky to become Chair at this particular Fed year because of some many good things and improvements that have happened lately. The Fed/ Ruskin scheme, in operation for some time now, has had teething troubles sorted; the Hand in Hand Development scheme, a major step forward, is now running, and of the course the Fed is now an incorporated body, which is very beneficial for our organization and administration.

All this and more that has happened fairly recently has been due to much unstinting work from many people. I've already mentioned Tom and Sarah who have done much to bring about these recent Fed advances. I should also mention Alison, the outgoing Vice Chair; Pat and Nick, Fed stalwarts, with the Fed Mag and much else; Deborah for her long stint of Festival work; and Sarah, Richard and Paul and the Scottish contingent and the many others for lighting up the Friday and Saturday Festival nights. To Tim as always for stretching his 28

hours to cover everything at once while being everywhere at once; and to Christine, our new Training Development part time (.5) worker who in a few months has done much and is already so much one of us. What I am really doing, I suppose, is saying, like tiny Tim "God Bless us All". Well, yes, Fed-wise there is nothing wrong with that.

The Fed is living, thriving, wide open and working better than ever, thanks to us all, and is now offering even more to all of its members, to all of us. Please make sure that your group participates fully... and gets all that it needs that's on offer... from the Fed.

**Arthur Thickett,
Chair.**

I: This rule ensures that no person elected to the executive of the Federation can stand for more than four years consecutively. The principle is to encourage participation in the running of the Fed and to keep a flow of new people into the executive.

Federation Book Bag

“Meetings and Workshops”. Captioned in Bernard’s Federation English, this album is a personal and an historical document which illustrates much of what the Fed is about: lots of people having fun being creative, dedicated to sharing this pleasure with each other

One of the discussions at the Festival was whether or not more community publications were now being produced. Though there do appear to have been fewer new books over the last year, there were a number of books which have not previously made a showing at the festival, even from groups which come every year.

Not all these books surface in the reviews section of Federation magazine. Community publishing is a very ephemeral form, groups produce very small print runs in some cases, and these sell out directly to the community for whom they were produced. People forget to send them in, or forget to load the box of publications into the car before coming to the festival. If you want to collect community publications you have to seize the chance to get them while you can - you may not see them again.

As always, there is a lot of variety, and some innovative approaches to publication. Production standards vary - some groups are better resourced than others, or are able to creatively organise their costings to concentrate on design; others produce publications which are cheap and cheerful. You definitely can’t judge community publishing by the covers - there are some great books, much which is exciting, while some look impressive, but lack content,

others have loads of content, but look scrappy. This need not be an issue for value judgements - community publications are about people finding out how to produce their own work. They are often the result of an experiment in writing and publishing. So, browsing through the bookstalls at a Fed event is to taste from the melting pot of these islands’ cultures, old, new, and yet to be...

The first mention, however, has to be of **CREAFI** and **Bernard Lecointe**, who this year produced a lovely album of five years association with the Fed “Meetings and Workshops”. Captioned in Bernard’s Federation English, this album is a personal and an historical document which illustrates much of what the Fed is about: lots of people having fun being creative, dedicated to sharing this pleasure with each other. Creafi’s stall also had a collection by Survivors - “Ode d’Espoir;” a teaching pack of A4 sheets on Pioneers in Print “Les Pionniers de la Typographie”, and an essay on the development of the technology for writing (ink, parchment, and so on).

Survivors’ Poetry Scotland are a new Fed group. Their stall yielded several well produced books of verse, and copies of SPS’s magazine, Nomad. The inevitable quirks of logic in **Susan Watters** “Embers of Life” are worth a mention, and I’m looking forward to reading **Eric Davidson’s** “The Published

Works”, which, on a cursory scan, looks full of deprecatory humour. **Nomad** is a good magazine, with a curious price £ 1.98. Worth subscribing to for some cracking writing, in which, whereas a lot of poetry magazines strain at being big and clever, writers meet you full on, tell you funny and uncomfortable stories, tell you what’s happened to them. **Nomad** is published by SPS, 30 Cranworth St, Glasgow G12 8AG.

QueenSpark’s latest output is reviewed elsewhere in this issue, but they had a lot of books I’d missed last year - including “The Lone Rangers”, an anthology about single parents, “Me and My Mum” an anthology about mothers and daughters, and **Joan Parsons’** wonderful “Jobs for Life” which documents her life as a toilet attendant. I might have already acquired this (you’d think I’d be able to remember Joan’s book) - if so it will be a fabulous introduction to Fed writing for someone’s present.

Just up the road from **QueenSpark**, **Shorelink’s** stall revealed a clutch of A4 publications from the work of a considerable number of adult education students. I liked the beginning of this poem by **Harry Roper** in “The Book of Little Valentines”: Amos married Anna on a Sunday. Someday/ One day, they say, now, after fifty years/ We will try another, we will marry again/ But not to each other... (The Marriage of Anna and Amos Mundi).

Phil Hatfield’s A Love Song for Brigitte (Towpath, ISBN 1 901999 04 1, £2.50) pulled me over to **Commonword’s**

stall. Brigitte is not the only icon of the late twentieth century considered here, much of it actually dealt with comprehensively in “A Young Man’s Guide to the Cosmos”: the beguiling irony of this saved to the very last line. Still focusing on Brigitte Bardot I managed to buy five copies of *Sour Grapes* three of which I already had. This is difficult to recognise because the curious zig zag fold in it causes you to read both sides three times before you realise you’ve finished. With a stack of them you’re flummoxed. I like poetry to have a beginning, a middle and an end, myself like. *Sour Grapes* is full of good poetry and it’s better to get these one at a time on <http://www.mondaynightgroup.mcmail.com>.

At this point I had to get back to **Heeley’s** stall and shamelessly plug some copies of our broadsheet “The HeeleyWriter” (£2 for a year’s (quarterly) supply) and the first Heeley fourpack (four Heeley Writers individual broadsheets for a quid - an instant poetry party in your own living room without all the clearing up afterwards). Heeley’s aim is to publish at a price no-one can refuse to buy - but the writing is, on the other hand, priceless. You can get these from 60 Upper Valley Rd., Sheffield S8 9HB.

Lorraine Sitzia picked up “Living Room” by **Alison Marchant** at **Working Press** “Another beautifully produced book (where do they get the money?!) by a Hackney Artist. Interviews and photographs document individuals experiences of life on a local estate over the past thirty

years:”

At **Forest Artworks!** stall **Roger Drury** was conducting a newsletter folding workshop, with samples to take away, for the **Gloucester Writers’ Network**. Their intriguing themed anthology of poems, stories and other pieces, *Island Life*, documents a performance for the 1997 Cheltenham Literature Festival. This kind of project is often difficult to achieve with the diverse egos in a writers workshop, but this collection covers desert islands, traffic islands, and a few personal islands without at all getting stranded. Get this from *Forest Artworks!*, *Youth & Community Centre, Naas Lane, Lydney, Forest of Dean, Glos. GL15 5AT*.

Finally, **Yorkshire Arts Circus** didn’t get to mount their bookstall, but at their workshop I was overfaced with the plethora of books produced from a couple of boxes. What I bought was “The Book Starts Here”, their excellent guide to community publishing by **Reline Schule and Karl Woolley**. **Yorkshire Art Circus** are at School Lane, Glasshoughton, Castleford, WF10 4QH. If you or your group want to find out how to publish, £6.50 spent on this book will easily repay itself, over and over again.

Nick Pollard

Life in Sweden

“every life story is worth telling”

A project, still in the press, involves stories written by single mothers, a group of women who are themselves not usually heard very much in public debate, yet are often on the receiving end of government cuts in state benefits. In her introduction to the anthology the editor - Ann Nordberg from Karlstad - asks the very pertinent question: who writes about single mothers if we don't do it ourselves?

Life in Sweden - Swedish lives. These are two ways of translating the name of the organisation Liv i Sverige, which was founded fifteen years ago to encourage working-class people to retell the story of their lives. Since then, a national federation of local “story-telling cafes” has grown up, from the mining town of Kiruna beyond the Arctic circle to the city of Malmo in the south of Sweden, where groups meet regularly to talk about their individual experiences and read each others' writing. Our motto is “every life story is worth telling”.

Anthologies

The organisation has now over one thousand active members, many of whom are trade unionists, and has published over fifty books, some of which have become bestsellers in Sweden. To celebrate its fifteenth anniversary, Liv i Sverige has recently published two anthologies of writing - *Livsbilder* (Pictures of life) and *Berattarkafe* (Storytelling cafe) - which include extracts from the wide range of autobiographical writing produced by members of the federation.

In a similar way to the PWWCP, Liv i Sverige organises local writers' workshops where ordinary

people are encouraged to share their own poems and stories with other readers. The ultimate aim of collective publication is also seen as part of the process of demystifying the production of texts - from editing to the actual printing of the pamphlet or book. Some of the most recent gatherings resulted in two womens' writing collections.

Vredens Duvor (The Doves of Wrath) reflects the lives of women who work within the community, such as bus drivers, child minders, cleaners, hospital workers and kitchen staff. Another project, still in the press, involves stories written by single mothers, a group of women who are themselves not usually heard very much in public debate, yet are often on the receiving end of government cuts in state benefits. In her introduction to the anthology the editor - Ann Nordberg from Karlstad - asks the very pertinent question: who writes about single mothers if we don't do it ourselves?

Cafe Gatherings

Liv i Sverige is, however, not only an organisation for the written word. just as important are the cafe gatherings (pubs are less common in Sweden), where people are encouraged to speak about their writing and their lives. This is in direct response to the fact

Anyone for Anthologies?

Writers in the Yorkshire and Humberside region have some exciting publishing opportunities courtesy of Springboard Fiction, part of Yorkshire Arts Circus.

Tubthumping

This Autumn, Springboard Fiction will publish a collection of short stories by young writers from Yorkshire in an anthology called Tubthumping, for which submission are now invited. The collection will seek to showcase the cultural diversity, vitality and talent of the region. Stories, no longer than 5,000 words in length, can be on any theme, but

emphasise the surprising and original. "Slasher-horror, cyberpunk, virtual kitchen sink and seething tracts peppered with rich vernacular won't necessarily be discarded, but reminiscences about dead pets or dirges about colourful gnomes probably will be." Closing date for submissions July 3 1st 1998

Stories and Novels...

Springboard also want short stories and novels for their 1999 book programme, starting with a collection of short stories up to 5,000 words in length for Spring. They are also "constantly

searching for first time novelists with manuscripts of up to 80,000 words... but if submitting a novel please send a synopsis along with three sample chapters. Do not send the whole manuscript." Enclose an S.A.E. if you want your manuscript returned, and a stamped postcard if you want receipt of your manuscript acknowledged.

Send your manuscripts to:
Springboard Fiction, School Lane, Glasshoughton, Castleford, West Yorks, WF10 4QH. Tel. 01977 550401.

that working-class culture is primarily an oral one, and that there exists a rich and varied tradition of using the spoken word through the telling of anecdotes, stories, jokes and memories. In both of these areas of speaking and writing, Liv i Sverige continues therefore to encourage working people to find an independent voice and celebrate the everyday experiences of their own life stories.

Ron Paul

Correspondence to
Liv i Sverige, Hallandsgatan 24, 118 57 Stockholm, Sweden

PECKET WELL COLLEGE

are having a

LOTTERY LAUNCH

and

ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

Saturday 1st August 1998

11 am - 4pm

There will be

Displays, Arts and Crafts,

Food and Refreshments and

a celebrity or two

Everyone Welcome!

Just come along on the day or for further details ring Liz or Florence on 01422 347665



NATIONAL
LOTTERY
CHARITIES
BOARD

Pecket Well College
Keighley Road, Pecket Well
Nr_ Hebden Bridge



Histories for the Millenium

You might consider the early 1950's. and perhaps examine diaries, or local newspapers. A fourth option is to examine a notable event in your community. Some examples are an accident at a local pit, a plague, the opening of a new school after a long campaign, a significant strike or the arrival of new immigrants. There are bound to be a variety of views and myths about such events.

As 2,000 approaches many individuals and groups will want to mark the occasion by examining where they stand, by assessing, exploring and commemorating their roots. However, producing a good local history is a time-consuming and complex task..:

In order to encourage people to engage in this valuable activity, members of Open Studies in family and Community History (OSFACH), a group based at the Open University, have produced an informative leaflet, 'Histories for the Millennium'. This contains guidelines for people who want to find out more about their communities and their heritage. OSFACH members are keen to build links between historians within universities and community-based independent scholars. They want to foster support for and co-ordination of local history activity so that high-standard work is produced all over the country.

Framework

In order to promote effective work, the OSFACH leaflet sets out a framework for the creation of locally-based histories. 'Histories for the Millennium' is a blue print for those who want to contribute personally to research. It includes five suggested options

for concerted research. One suggestion is to focus on a single year, 1851, the year of the Great Exhibition. The census and a census of religious activity for that year contain plenty of material and there is almost certainly further information in your local archive. A second possibility is the 1930's. In this case you will not have access to the full census of 1931 but you will be able to find newspapers, and people who were young 70 or more years ago.

Diaries and Folk Song

You might consider the early 1950's. and perhaps examine diaries, or local newspapers. A fourth option is to examine a notable event in your community. Some examples are an accident at a local pit, a plague, the opening of a new school after a long campaign, a significant strike or the arrival of new immigrants. There are bound to be a variety of views and myths about such events. Maybe there are local memorials to examine, or a folk song commemorating a local event. The fifth option which is examined in 'Histories for the Millenium' is to consider changes in your local landscape. Maybe there is a new town or the railways had a dramatic effect locally. Perhaps there are distinctive industries or field patterns?

Lapidus

Advice

The leaflet also includes advice about how to make public the results of your research and some practical advice about carrying out the work. In addition, there are some suggestions about funding, and the leaflet stresses the importance of ensuring that information is properly deposited in local or national archives.

If you would like copies of the leaflet, or you would like to know more about the 'Histories for the Millenium' project, contact OSFACH (MM Leaflets), Faculty of Social Sciences, Open University, MK7 6AA. Up to three copies are free (but please send and S.A.E.). Otherwise they costs £3.50 for 50. You can also find a copy of the leaflet and further information on the Web at <http://socsci.open.ac.uk/SocSci/osfach/intro.html>

Dan Weinbren
(OSFACH Research Fellow,
Open University)

Many Federation members may be interested to learn about Lapidus, a group which aims to establish links between people, groups and organisations interested in the connections between the literary arts and personal development, for the purpose o f fruitful exchange o f information and ideas. The group has been meeting since 1994, forming as a result o f the Poetry Society's focus on the National Health of Poetry.

Lapidus includes writers who are using their writing skills to work in hospitals and prisons, or with people with mental health problems or learning disability, or with individuals or writers groups for purposes of self exploration. It also includes representatives from groups such as Survivors' Poetry and people engaged in research at universities into the use of creative writing in a therapeutic context.

Wide Definition

Lapidus defines literary arts as the reading, writing and performing of poetry, prose fiction, the practice of storytelling and other processes connected with the creation of literary works. The group is working towards the formation of an ethical code and models of good practice in all the association's activities.

Membership of Lapidus is open to anyone who is working in the area outlined above. Users are positively encouraged to become members.

Individual memberships costs £ 10, group membership £30 per year, details from Christina Dunhill, Hon. Sec., Lapidus, c/o Centre for Continuing Education (FAO CM Hunt), Education Development Building, University of Sussex, Falmer, Brighton BN1 9RG

Reviews

Five Flying Queensparks

FLYING SPARKS by **TIM WREN (£3.00)**

The trials, tribulations, experiences and fun of an apprentice electrician during War Two:

Tim Wren was just a young man starting out when World War Two began. Although it is now nearly sixty years since then, the period is obviously very vivid to him, as the reader will learn from the many memories that flooded back to him when he decided to put them down on paper. His own voice can be heard as he describes the incidents under chapter headings such as Air Raid Shelters, POW Camps, D-Day and the period of peace which followed. Unfortunately, the snippets are very tantalising in their brevity - I would have liked to learn much more about the local hops and the Italian and German prisoners of war who were interred in the camps around the Sussex area. Perhaps this small insight into life in the war years will lead the reader to want to explore the subject more fully. Tim Wren can be proud of his contribution to the historical documentation of the county of Sussex from 1942 onwards.

Margaret Bell

A HA'P'ORTH OF SWEETS by **JOHN KNIGHT (£3.50)**

This lively, funny and absorbing book recounts the events of John Knight's childhood in Brighton during the 1930's and 40's. Made up from snippets of childhood memories, songs and games, it describes a time of childhood freedom, safety and happiness, shattered for a time by the explosion of World War Two and the Brighton blitz, which affected him personally. Although the book reveals some nostalgia for the innocence and security of a community spirit long since disappeared, John Knight's vivid recollections recreate a childhood joy and curiosity which most readers will recognise from their own past, regardless of era.

Stephanie Cole

Five Flying QueenSparks

A DAUGHTER OF THE STATE by KATHLEEN DALLEY (£4.50)

A forthright and compelling account of the writer's childhood in the 1920's, spent in a London workhouse and children's home, where state property and paid workers provided both a home and family. Unadorned by sentimentality or self-pity, the events of Kathleen Dailey's institutionalised and often harsh young life are recounted with a stoicism and courage which reveal an abiding faith in the durability of the human spirit. She also has a gift of ready compassion for others, discovered and nurtured in the harshest of environments. As both a fascinating historical record of state welfare policies at the beginning of the century and an exploration of the deeper layers of human character, 'A Daughter of the State' is a revealing and shocking, but ultimately inspiring story.

Stephanie Cole

THE CROWD ROARS by THE GREAT OMANI (£4.50)

As it is rather unorthodox to review a book which you helped to make, this is rather the story behind this roller-coaster of a story. I first met Ron Cunningham or The Great Omani when I was searching for material to illustrate another QueenSpark book 'Oh! What a Lovely Pier'. (Ron is a local stunt man who used to float around the West Pier in Brighton on a bed of nails.) He then sent in his autobiography, we read it, loved it and published it. The book is rather like a treat Omani show, telling how it all started, when a book on Houdini flew off a bookshelf and was his inspiration, and how it went on - from Hastings to Piccadilly in a coffin, the same journey in a concrete block, a daredevil ride around the Wall of Death, being buried alive in a monastery garden, flinging himself in chains off the West Pier - and more. The tales are told in Ron's inimitable and amusing style, with some memorable dialogues. When we were making the book we had our meetings in the shop of Ron's palmist friend Margaret Cullen, adding to the magic of this unusual and quirky book, which is so dear to my heart.

Sheena Macdonald

MOULSECOOMB MEMORIES by SHEILA WINTER (£3.00)

This delightful book is a walk down memory lane which tells of Sheila's early days in Moulsecoomb, now a 'sprawling estate', but then in a rural setting, an area of orchards and market gardens. Life was hard: Sheila's Dad had been wounded in the war, her brother was sickly, the house was cold (it was nicknamed 'Siberia') and money was scarce. Whichever party was in power 'the rich got richer and the poor got poorer'. Sheila shows no self-pity, though. Despite the hardships, she describes living in Moulsecoomb as a 'real pleasure' with abundant community spirit. It was a safe and healthy place for children: there were cherry trees around the house, where Sheila used to sit and watch the neighbours go by; the children picked wild raspberries and strawberries for jam; they played outdoor games. There were street parties and much merrymaking and singing at the Hiker's Rest. I 5 It's a wonderful look back, and Sheila captures the atmosphere of the time.

Sheena Macdonald

All books are available from QueenSpark Books, 49 Grand Parade, Brighton BN2 2QA, Te1.: 01273 571710 (£L00 postage and packing)

Reviews

Bark

**Bark, Anniversary Edition,
c/o Mr Peter Loughran,
132 Club, 132 Union
Street, Lurgan, BT66 8EF,
Co.Armagh**

Bark is a magazine produced by the National Schizophrenia Fellowship, Northern Ireland, a collection of writings by those who experience mental ill health.

This collection (the anniversary is that of the NSF, which celebrated 25 years in 1997) includes Fod Loupekine's ironic cure for Seasonal Affective Disorder: "For the price of a drink/ We can buy a 150 watt lamp/ Light brings cheer and I think/ We need to thank the flowing amp", and an optimistic nugget from John Harkin "Through the windowed blurs of bathroom sky/ I saw the blue day whirl outside/ And triumphantly I held up the mirror to take the shave/ For the first time in a fortnight". Bark - issue 7 should be available now, - contains some surprising and interesting poetry, with bite.

Stories of Work

Working Lives: The Experiences of Fifteen Workers from the 40's to the Present Day, Gatehouse Books, Hulme Adult Education Centre, Stretford Rd, Manchester M 15 SFQ, ISBN 0 906253 59 4, 102pp E6

Fifteen men and women of different nationalities tell their stories about work. Some speak of the fulfilment they got from working, others of the difficulties of being mother, wife and full-time worker. The book is divided into themes, such as Leaving Home for Work, Best Times, and job after job. All are different, but I'm sure that readers will identify with more than one story and relive their own frustrations and joys of working. Among my favourites were a funny and poignant story by a photographer's assistant about photographing a dead dog, and a poem by an Indian woman which describes her rise from redundancy to flourishing self-employed caterer.

What I liked was that at the end of each story there was a photograph and a piece about the author. All the writers have come to adult education to improve their English; to begin to write creatively. Some have already retired others are still working.

I'm sure readers will find this inspiring and more importantly encouraging particularly if they have always wanted to learn more. Given that work plays such a big role in people's lives this would be a really good book to use in other adult education classes to spark off discussion and writing.

Lorraine Sitzia

The VAN Directory

This is one of the most useful tools for networking and development with other arts organizations around the country. The VAN (Voluntary Arts Network) Directory lists all the 300+ network of members of VAN (including the FWWCP) around Britain, giving information about what organizations do and offer, who their members are, and their up to date contact names, addresses and phone numbers.

There are also contact names for many funding bodies. It is well worth the investment if you are thinking of working with voluntary arts groups in any way.

To get a copy send a cheque made to "VAN" for £20 to:

**VAN, PO Box 200, Freepost SWC 1268,
Cardiff CF5 1 GU**

Fed. Broadsheet

Do you want your poem or piece of writing published? If so, then send it to the Fed Broadsheet for consideration. We have published two editions and a third one is due out very soon.

The Broadsheet aims to publish creative writing by members of FWWCP groups and people associated with the Fed., such as Friends and Subscribers.

If you want your work considered send it (preferably on disk) to:

Broadsheet, FWWCP, PO Box 540, Burslem, Stoke-on-Trent ST6 6DR

or e-mail to fwwcp@mcm.com

If you want back copies of the Broadsheet, send a large SAE. We look forward to receiving your writing.

Millenium Funding

About £ 100 million is being offered to support local and regional celebrations of the Millenium. These will be in the form of small grants from £500 up to £5,000, or larger grants of over £5,000 for events which will have a wider impact. These grants will be available for arts and community events. They are well worth looking at if you are planning an event in 2000.

To find out more you need to register for guidance notes and application pack, by phoning 0870 600 2000. Good luck!

Calabash

Calabash is a broadsheet newsletter for writers of African and Asian descent published 3 times a year by Centerprise, in Hackney. It is essentially an information provider including regular sections on IT-LIT (information technology), Looking Back, Looking Forward (historical and future trends) and Write Now (writers organisations) To receive Calabash by mail send a 38p A4 SAE, or, for the next 6 issues a £5 cheque (payable to Centerprise) to Centerprise, Calabash, 136-138 Kingsland High St., London E8 2NS

Write to Belong

Write to Belong is a national forum for disabled writers which works on a postal basis. There are no membership or other fees. For more information contact Sheila Cooper, 105 Mortimer Road, Kensal Green, London NW 10 5TN, 0 181 964 8019

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REVIEWS FEATURES

New Members

At the 1998 AGM Yorkshire Art Circus from Castleford were accepted as Full Members, and Corridor Press from Reading became Full Members after being First Chapter members.

Over the last few months there have been a number of new members joining the FWWCP. These include:

Arts Disability Wales from Cardiff, Bromley-by-Bow Centre from London, Key-in Publications from Bilston, Leeds Survivors' Poetry, Newham Writers' Workshop from London, Survivors' Poetry Scotland from Glasgow and Write Now from Birmingham. If your group wish to join the FWWCP, write to FWWCP, Box 540, Stoke-on-Trent ST6 6DR, or phone 01782 822327.

Hand in Hand

“Helping Hand” Scheme Launched

As part of the Hand in Hand training project, a scheme has been launched to provide specific, targeted short-term help and training for individual Fed Member groups.

It offers a simple, quick way for any member group or organization to get training and advice to help deal with a particular difficulty, or issue they are facing. Groups can receive up to four sessions of tailor-made training, usually from a professional trainer or from an appropriate member of a Fed group, on a specific area of work. Examples of issues already suggested by groups include: funding, planning for development, marketing a particular publication, policy development, increasing participation, keeping groups

going.

The “how, where and when” of the training will be decided by the group in collaboration with myself (The Training Development Coordinator). Sometimes four structured sessions will be suitable, and at other times a group will find it more useful to have a couple of visits from someone with experience of their specific issue, who can offer practical help.

For more details and an initial chat about how your group could use the scheme, contact me at the address below.

Working with the Media

This is the first training offered by the Hand in Hand project. It will take place on 5th and 6th September at Wedgwood College near Stoke-on-Trent. It is free to Members of FWWCP groups, but there is a limit of 12 places.

Password Training will be running a practical weekend of workshops, to increase confidence and skills in raising your profile and working with local radio and press. For details contact me at the address below.

Any spare places are available to non members for f ISO.

**Christine Bridgwood,
Training Development
Coordinator, 37 Airdale
Road, Stone, Staffs. ST 15
8DP, phone/fax 01785 286177
or e-mail handinhand@
mcmail.com,**

I look forward to hearing from you.

Federation Magazine is published quarterly.

Subscriptions are £7.00 per year or £14 for two years. Subscribers also get a generous discount on training and other events. Send your name and address and a cheque/p.o. made to “FWWCP” to the address below.

The Deadline for the next issue of Federation Magazine is August 20th 1998. If you wish to review books, write an article or advertise contact The Editor at the address below.

Federation Magazine is published by The Federation of Worker Writers and Community Publishers. The views and opinions published are those of the contributors and not necessarily those of The FWWCP or our funders.

All correspondence should be addressed to
**FWWCP, PO Box 540,
Stoke-on-Trent ST6 6DR.**

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Images from The 1998 Festival of Writing



Photographs by Tim Diggles
Drawings by Eric Davidson



The Federation of Worker Writers & Community Publishers

An invitation to be a Friend of the Fed.

Since the FWWCP was formed in 1976 we have helped many thousands of people gain the confidence to write, publish and perform their own work, often for the first time. Just read this magazine and you'll meet many of them. Writing has changed people's lives, new skills have been learnt and shared. We want more people to benefit in the next Century and we'd like you to help. So, if you want to make a personal contribution towards making writing and publishing more accessible, why not become a *Friend of the Fed*

The more self-sufficient we are, the stronger we are!

As a Friend of the Fed you will receive this quarterly magazine and our Broadsheet, minutes of meetings (optional) and have special concessions for our Training Days, Autumn Weekend and the Annual Festival of Writing. We will keep you in touch with all that is going on, you will be an important part of the organization. To become a Friend, all you need to do is complete the form below (photocopy it if you don't want to cut up your magazine) and return it to us at:

Friends of the Fed, FWWCP, Box 540, Burslem, Stoke-on-Trent ST6 6DR

We will register it and send it to your bank.

If you require help to complete the form ring 01782 822327, and remember you may increase or cancel your payment at any time.

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If making your Annual Contribution by Cheque or Postal Order please complete the following:

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