

Federation Magazine

The Magazine of The Federation of Worker writers & Community Publishers £2 • 3 \$3

Celebration of Gatehouse Books



BROADSHEET
15
Inside

New FED Website!

Issue 29 New Year 2005

Southwark Mind

London Event

50 Word Stories

Weather Report

Reviews

Athens

Brides

Bitch Lit



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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

What is community publishing?

This afternoon I've been talking to a friend about creative writing activities, and trying to explain the Fed. My friend, a prolific producer of creative handbooks, resource packs and tools for use with people with literacy difficulties or dementia, had just dismissed a large pile of recent work as 'pathetic and home-made'. But looking at them from a Federation perspective this was their enviable ingenuity and beauty.

It's a little hard to understand the Fed's diversity of approaches, working in far flung localities and many of them not actually making books or magazines, but it's the home-made aspect which unites them, for me. The other weekend, at the London Writers' Day featured on page 14, sitting with what must be a typical selection of the membership, I attended a workshop run by Roger Mills. He was explaining how he had run a journal about life in the East End, which he recruited writers from some of his mates, met with them down the pub and from the discussion articles and even a series photographs emerged to give a side of London which had not seen print.

And Doreen Ravenscroft, on page 5, describes how the four founder members of Gatehouse sat round an electric fire talking about their lives. It's not the image you imagine of writing and publishing. Perhaps the best example is Lynne Clayton's description of putting together the Southwark MIND newsletter with lots of tea, coffee and biscuits. There seems to be a lot of community in the process of community publishing. I'm often accused of only going to Fed meetings to have a good time. It's hard to answer that with, "no, no, we do a lot of work", and say this convincingly. How else can you celebrate community, except by enjoying the process of deciding what it is you are going to portray... This point is made by the Greek 'ragazzi' on pages 11 to 13.

At the same time, our easy familiarity with the knowledge of our communities, with each other as we put together our publications and the very homespun nature of some of the things we produce should be, as Lynne Clayton says on page 28, a source of 'love and pride'. It's this committed facilitation which makes the things we set out to do achievable, enables the diversity that was reflected at the London Writers Day, and which will, to quote Mo Mowlam (page 9) 'save language and culture from oblivion'. Home-made, but well made.

Nick Pollard

Cover

The cover is an illustration by Ivor Arbuckle from *Born Twice with a spider on her head*, by Stephen Harber, published by Gatehouse Books in their CoolBooks series. CoolBooks are written by and for prisoners with basic skills needs, as part of a project in conjunction with The Writers in Prisons Network.

Gatehouse Books

Gatehouse Publishing Charity in Manchester is one of the original FWWCP members. Here we celebrate its work with an interview with Publications Worker Stephanie Prior



Tell us about Gatehouse...

Gatehouse is a registered charity, which began 27 years ago as a community publisher. We work with adults to improve their reading and writing skills, mainly to encourage and help them to develop pieces of their own writing, which we then publish as beginner reader books for use by other adults who are developing their skills. This ensures that the writing is both interesting and easy enough to engage other beginner readers.

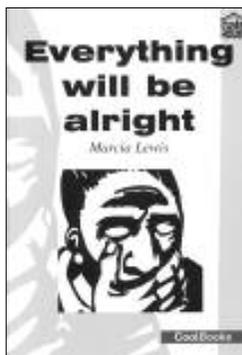
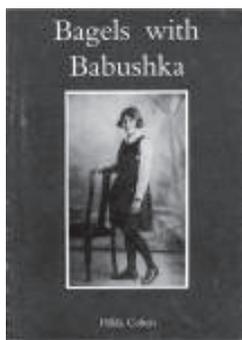
Does Gatehouse just publish books?

No, we also produce a range of talking books on audio-cassette, narrated by professional actors – and we are embarking on a series of multimedia publications with an interactive CD-ROM version of some of our most popular book titles.

Gatehouse also does a lot of work around community magazines, which can open up more writing opportunities to more people more often. These also provide a means of reaching a wider spectrum of adults with Basic English needs out in the community than the relatively small number attending formal classes. Recently, we have worked with writing groups to develop web-based magazines.

Tell us about the Gatehouse team...

Gatehouse employs a manager, a publications worker, a marketing coordinator, an administrator and a part-time accounts clerk. We also bring in project and publications workers to lead individual projects.



How is Gatehouse funded?

Gatehouse receives some funding from the Manchester Adult Education Service. This is supplemented by a continuous fund-raising effort and through the sales of our books.

Tell us about a typical Gatehouse project...

We find the people with whom we are going to work in a variety of ways. As well as asking tutors to look out for potential writers and putting leaflets out through basic skills classes, we use whatever visual, audio and word-of-mouth channels are available and hold our own taster workshops to advertise and network out in the community.

We may encourage students to write about a particular theme. Gatehouse then holds reading circles consisting of other adults from Basic English classes, who read all of the pieces of writing sent in and eventually select the best stories for publication.

All of the writers whose pieces are read by the reading circles receive the feedback from the reading circles. The selected writers then go on to work closely with Gatehouse, going through the editing issues and suggestions with them. The writer works with the illustrator, who adapts the writer's ideas into a series of drawings to illustrate the story.

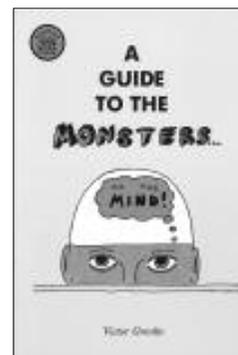
The writer might also choose an actor to narrate their work for a talking book version, and go into the recording studio with them, usually reading their own introduction to their work. The

In Federation Magazine No.7 (Spring 1996), founding member Doreen Ravenscroft described the early days...

"...Four women did it, had a bit of time on their hands from The Abraham Moss Centre in Manchester, to get together to do a bit of writing. So the ICI... offered us the gatehouse, the front of the ICI. Anyhow, it was empty... and we just had an electric fire and these four women. There was Julia, Tricia, Josie and I, and we all were in there and started talking - you know - how our lives was as women. That was in 1977.

...We've all got a story to tell haven't we, they've made my life bearable - I've done workshops, I've been taught how to do workshops and all sorts of things through Gatehouse...

...I've grew through that, if I wouldn't have had that I don't know where I'd have been".



audio versions contain a normal speed reading for learners to listen to and enjoy, and a slow read which they can use to help them read the story word by word themselves.

The writer is actively engaged in every stage of the publishing process. Once their work has been published, we encourage writers to stay involved with Gatehouse through joining the management committee or volunteering for another Gatehouse project. We also support them in finding other classes, writing groups or courses.

The two most recent Gatehouse publications are from the 'Food for Thought' series:

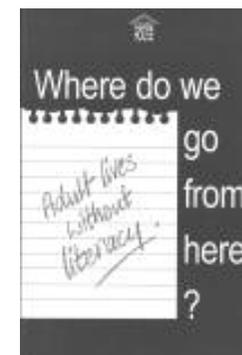
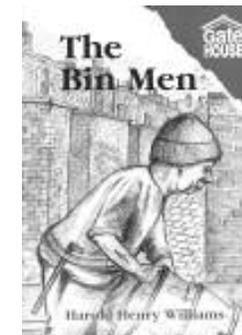
Fresh Pickings by Carol Barrow (isbn 1 84231 011 9)

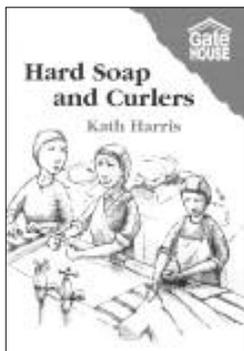
Fresh pickings, changing seasons, vibrant colours and new beginnings.

"Took me back to the days when we knew where our food came from. We bought our spuds whole with the mud still on and you knew it had all been picked fresh that morning. Not like now when everything's processed, packaged and frozen." A Basic Skills Tutor
Funny What Smells Can Do by Kathleen Claffey (isbn 1 84231 010 0)

Different smells, different meanings – one whiff and it's a trip down Memory Lane.

"This story reminds me of myself in winter coming home from school,

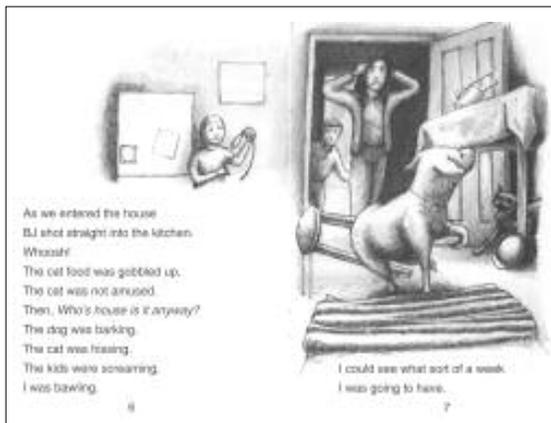
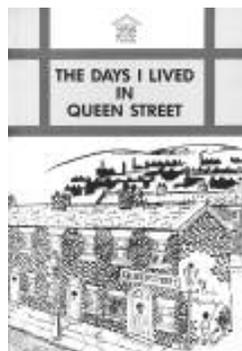




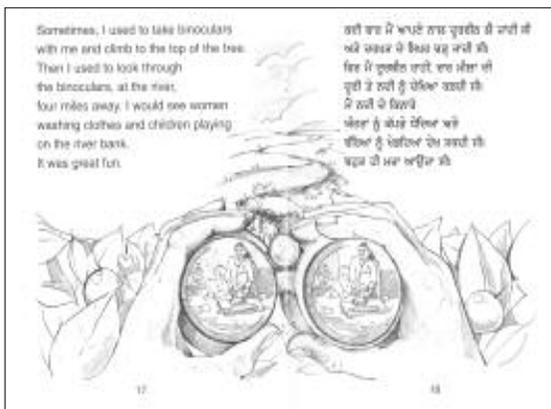
being cold and my mum having the fire on and dinner ready. It was lovely to have those memories come flooding back.” Sarah Williams, Clayton Sure Start

“After reading this story I feel inspired to write after years of struggle.” Jayne Morton, Clayton Sure Start

Both Carol Barrow and Kathleen Claffey went on to win achievement awards. A third title in the ‘Food for Thought’ series will be published soon.



Above and below are examples of pages from Gatehouse Books showing Gatehouses’ typical rich use of text and illustration in *In the Doghouse* by Angela Roscoe (top), and their outstanding dual language publications in *Taking Some Honey Home* by Zahida Affridi



To contact Gatehouse Books, order a catalogue, buy books: Gatehouse Publishing Charity, Hulme Adult Education Centre, Stretford Road, Hulme, Manchester M15 5FQ Telephone no: 0161 226 7152 Email: office@gatehousebooks.org.uk Website: www.gatehousebooks.org.uk

Taking Grimsby to Athens

Nick Pollard takes the Voices Talk, Hands Write anthology to a conference in Athens



The Hilton hotel in Athens is not, perhaps, where you’d expect to find a worker writer. 250 euros a night, 8.80 euros a beer... and in fact, although this was the venue for the 7th European Congress of Occupational Therapists, where I was presenting a poster on the Voices Talk and Hands Write community publishing project in Grimsby, you can rest assured that I actually stayed at the Zeus Hostel, near the market, which was under 60 euros for three nights. The Conference cost 600 euros without accommodation, which rather puts the Festival of Writing (around 200 euros!) into sharp perspective. The gap between the incomes across Europe is an important and growing divide, and for those coming from the Eastern edge of the community - not to mention those working in UK public services - these costs must have been particularly prohibitive. For a further sixty euros there was an overcrowded gala dinner on a

ferry boat which had been billed as an evening cruise around the Saronic gulf, but hardly got out of the harbour - this was beyond my budget. However, there were occupational therapists from some 32 countries attending, and over the course of the three days, Occupational Therapy Without Borders gave six presentations... not a lot of time for sight seeing. The Federation featured as an example in several of these, because of the work it has done with Voices Talk and Hands Write, and the relevance this has for current international debates in occupational therapy. At a time when many occupational therapists are reappraising their profession and exploring taking a more activist and politically involved stance, developing work with a community base, the Federation project in collaboration with Voices Talk and Hands Write, Grimsby Writers, Pecket Well College and the support of others offers an enabling and

empowering vision of how this new direction might be achieved. Sharing stories about ourselves is a good basis for building community. Writing is something which can fit into a range of community based projects irrespective of the kind of health and social issues, and although it is an activity which can demand preparation, skill and time in acquiring techniques, it can also have an immediacy where people want something to take home with them at the end of a session. The presentation on Voices Talk and Hands Write, “Occupational Benefits of Community Publication”, attracted an audience of about 10, but 40 copies of the anthology and 75 handouts describing the project were distributed to occupational therapists from all over the world during the course of the morning. Some of the anthologies, which have been written by people with learning difficulties, will be going to

university libraries as an education resource. The poster, which featured a piece of work from everyone in the anthology, described how the project had come about through the Fed wanting to develop work with people who had not had access to community publishing in partnership with its writing groups, and how people from the Queen Street Centre at Grimsby had formed into a writing and publishing group under the guidance of Pat Smart and volunteers from Grimsby Writers and Pecket Well College. The development of support workers and volunteers into 'writing hands' and Voices Talk and Hands Write's continuity were stressed as key outcomes from the project, along with the maximum use of their publication and performances to obtain publicity for the group. The ways in which the group had come to form their own decision making process, using flip charts to record proposals and choose activities, the social aspects of the group and the growth in individual self confidence were described - in occupational therapy terms - as 'occupational spin offs', i.e. additional outcomes from the community publishing process. One of the key results from the project is the way Voices Talk and Hands Write handle issues concerning their own representation; one of the questions asked was about how the group were actively involved in the project - I pointed out that the presentation had been discussed with the group and couldn't be made without their participation, indicated by their group authorship with the other contributors to the poster and hand out.

Nick Pollard



Voices Talk and Hands Write anthologies are available at £3 + £1 p&p from: FWWCP, Burslem School of Art, Queen Street, Stoke-on-Trent ST6 3EJ phone 01782 822327 e-mail fwwcp@tiscali.co.uk

Occupational Benefits of Community Publication, Pollard N, Smart P, Diggles T, Voices Talk and Hands Write, 7th European Congress of Occupational Therapists, Athens, September 22nd-24th, 2004 Handout text available from N.Pollard@shu.ac.uk

Voices Talk and Hands Write, Pollard N, Smart P, Voices Talk and Hands Write will be published in *Occupational Therapy Without Borders, Learning from the Spirit of Survivors*, Kronenberg F, Salvador Simo Algado S, Pollard N, Edinburgh, Churchill Livingstone on 17th December 2004

Songs of Freedom/Canu'n Rhydd

The Academi's bilingual conference on freedom of speech and the literature of protest and propaganda

The Esplanade Hotel, Llandudno, 25-27 February 2005.

Mo Mowlem, October 2004: "Wales knows all about the struggle to save a language and a culture from oblivion in the face of a more powerful political and linguistic neighbour. All across the world there are people struggling to make their voices heard above the background noise, above the chatter of governments, above the sound of guns ... this Conference will be listening. This weekend will be an extraordinary gathering of writers and critics from some of the most damaged countries on the planet, sharing ways of staying alive - literally, culturally and emotionally. This Conference won't be easy. This Conference will change the way you see the world."

The names of the killing fields change and we have built new prison camps for the stuff of our nightmares. The weapons may be different; death, apparently, only takes forty five minutes to cross a continent, but David's sling can kill, too. For evil to flourish, they say it is enough for good people to do nothing. Well, on the streets of Birmingham, Barcelona and Brussels good people tried to do something, but no-one really listened.

Strange days indeed and to try to make sense of it all FWWCP Members, the Academi - the Welsh National Literature Development Agency and Society for Authors is organising this bilingual conference to hear some of the frontline voices. How exactly is a whisper heard when the big people are shouting? *Songs of Freedom/Canu'n Rhydd* will be

Cynhadledd ddwyieithog yr Academi ar brotest, propaganda a rhyddid barn

Gwesty'r Esplanade, Llandudno, 25-27 Chwefror 2005

Mo Mowlam, Hydref 2004: "Mae Cymru'n ymwybodol iawn o'r frwydr i achub tranc ei hiaith a'i diwylliant yn wyneb cymydog llawer grymusach yn wleidyddol ac yn ieithyddol. Ledled y byd mae pobl yn brwydro i leisio'u barn dros y twrw cefndirol, dros gleber llywodraethau, dros su'n y gynnu....bydd y Gynhadledd hon yn gwranddo. Bydd amrywiaeth hynod o lenorion a sylwebyddion, o rai o wleidydd mwyaf difrodedig ein byd, yn ymgynnull i rannu eu profiadau o oroesi. Ni fydd y Gynhadledd hon yn hawdd. Bydd y Gynhadledd hon yn newid y ffordd yr ydych yn edrych ar y byd."

Trais Abu Ghraib, carcharorion Guantanamo, dinistr Iraq, etholiadau America, celwyddau'r 45 munud... Yn ein hoes ni heddiw, mae bron yn amhosibl herio'r grymoedd mawrion a chodi llais yn erbyn yr holl anghyfiawnderau. 'Does neb yn gwranddo. Gall miliynau brotestio ar strydoedd Milan, Madrid a Manceinion - ond anwybyddu'r bobl wna'r arweinyddion yn amlach na pheidio.

Fel ymateb i'r pryderon dyrys hyn, mae'r Academi - yr Asiantaeth Genedlaethol er Hyrwyddo Llenyddiaeth - wedi trefnu cynhadledd a fydd yn canolbwyntio ar agweddau ar brotest, propaganda a rhyddid barn yn ystod yr hanner canrif ddiwethaf. Bydd *Canu'n Rhydd / Songs of Freedom* yn dwyn at ei gilydd gasgliad rhyfeddol o lenorion, newyddiadurwyr a sylwebyddion - rhai ohonynt wedi profi erchyllterau rhyfel a charchar yn uniongyrchol - er mwyn trafod sut y gallwn godi llais a chael ein clywed.

Carcharwyd y bardd o



Jack Mapanje



Iolo ap Dafydd

unspokeable.

Through the Conference we will be interweaving the Welsh cultural struggles - personified by Iwan Llwyd, Gwyneth Glyn, Hefin Wyn and Dafydd Elis Thomas - with the fights for their very lives fought by Choman Hardi in Kurdistan and Jack Mapanje in Malawi. Benjamin Zephaniah has struck his hardest blows with humour like a stiletto between the ribs; his almost unique world over-view will give shape to the whole. He is not, you will recall, an OBE. Neil Astley of Bloodaxe Books, political analyst Andrew Hussey and Rough Guide author Mike Parker will come in from other directions. Mo Mowlam's right: this Conference will not be easy.

Songs of Freedom/Canu'n Rhydd, takes place at The Esplanade Hotel, Llandudno, 25-27 February 2005. Conference package: £120 per person (based on two people sharing).

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listening, will hear whether writers can ever change the world, whether the pen is mightier than the WMD; will hear what to say when all around you is

Malawi, Jack Mapanje, yn ei famwlad am dair blynedd a saith mis heb brawf. Cyhoeddwyd ei gyfrol gyntaf o farddoniaeth tra'r oedd dal yn y carchar. Yn ymuno ag ef mewn darlleniad bydd y bardd ifanc o ogledd Iraq, Choman Hardi, sydd wedi gorfod ffoi droeon o Iraq i Iran. Meddai: "mae 25 miliwn o bobl Cwrdaidd yn y byd - y nifer fwyaf o bobl sydd heb wladwriaeth."

Bydd siaradwyr o Gymru'n cymryd rhan hefyd, gyda'r Arglwydd Dafydd Elis-Thomas, yn trafod y don newydd o lenyddiaeth sy'n ymwneud â'r Cynulliad - beth yw barn y Llywydd am nofel ddychanol newydd y "dyn du'ad" Goronwy Jones, tybed? Billie Holiday yn y pumdegau, Dafydd Iwan yn y chwedegau, y Clash yn y saithdegau: Iwan Llwyd, Gwyneth Glyn a Hefin Wyn fydd yn trafod hanes canu pop a phrotestio dros y ddeugain mlynedd diwethaf.

Yn cloi'r Gynhadledd bydd y bardd â'r gweithredwr gwleidyddol Benjamin Zephaniah. Bu llawer o sôn amdano'n ddiweddar - yn enwedig yn y papurau tabloid Prydeinig - am iddo wrthod O.B.E. oherwydd ei wrthwynebiad i dderbyn anrhydedd gan Ymerodraeth a adeiladwyd ar gaethwasanaeth. Ers y Saithdegau, erys ei farddoniaeth yn heriol ac ysgytwol o hyd. Bydd llawer mwy yn cymryd rhan, ac yn sicr mi fydd yn amhosibl peidio â gwrandao ar y lleisiau hyn.

Canu'n Rhydd/ Songs of Freedom, Gwesty'r Esplanade, Llandudno, 25-27 Chwefror 2005. Pecyn y gynhadledd: yn dechrau o £120.

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Brides

From psychiatric ward to clapperboard

Introduction

The release of a new film by Voulgari, 'Brides', a story of Greek migrants has one actor whose entry into the film industry has been a story worthy of a film script itself. During the making of 'Brides' Vasilis, who plays one of the grooms waiting to identify his bride who he knows only from the photo she has sent him, was an actor by day, and the resident of a sheltered community home for people with mental illnesses by night. He is one of a group of people from the former Psychiatric Hospital of Petra Olympus (PHPO), in Katerini, Greece, who have found a means to creative expression through the stage.

"Pleusi", a theatre group which began in PHPO's closed asylum, began in 1999, when it was recognised that the institutional conditions and the isolation was leading to apathy for the patients and burnout of the occupational therapists working with them. From 1999 to 2004 three plays were developed which were performed in different Greek cities and village communities.

The group

The theatre group now has fourteen members, a number which has steadily grown from the first production, in which 7 patients participated. All of them were previously hospitalized in PHPO's closed institution and had serious difficulties in socialisation and integration in the community. These people, from small country towns, had few interests, were deprived of



experiences and had a low social and financial status. Everyone is involved in decisions and choices, and though the plays were initially chosen by the therapists, later on people in the group rejected plays if they didn't like the parts, and adapted the dialogue to suit their own performances.

Co-operation

Our first goal was to get the group to trust us and then to develop trust and co-operation among themselves. We worked according to the group and individual needs and endurance. We read the scripts aloud to get a first impression. Using "touching" exercises, without any group pressure, we enabled members to accept physical contact so that they could act together. The most important aspect was that all the participants exchanged moments of pleasure and of entertainment.

C: "I want to tell you that I had a great time. As an actor I made some friends for company. I would like to tell you that I had a great time with you."

S: "I did it! We had a very nice theatre group. We become known as performers."

Ca: "I would like to thank everyone who gave us the opportunity to be able to play as a team, doing the play in Crete gave me a boost."

Ca: "I had a nice time in all the performances. I like theatre a lot and I want to do it again. It lifted me up, everything".

Ns: "It gave me one great experience in my life. What else to say? I have no words to thank everyone. I will remember it all my life, that's why I cried".

Using theatre and cinema, gave us a better understanding of the abilities of the people we were working with. We realised that diagnostic labels and their limitations can be demolished, broadening the possibilities for the 'patients,' enabling the therapist to look at the person not the illness.

Getting into film

Through the theatre work the opportunity arose for two of the group members to take parts in films. We just went to a director in Athens and gave him some tapes of our community performances. We didn't have any great expectations but then we were contacted to see whether some of the group would participate in a film.



In Voulgari's film "Brides" about the emigration of 700 brides to America to marry men unknown to them except for a photograph which each of them carries, V plays the role of a groom searching for his own bride (pictured above third from right), and C participated in the film "Dog's Dream", directed by A. Frantzi, playing the role of a father in a series of strange incidents which occur in a family home.

The film directors picked out the actors on the basis of their appearance and ability. During the filming, the occupational therapists remained in eye contact with the actors and gave encouragement during breaks in filming, a link which was very important.

The results of the intervention with the participation in films they overcame their limitations and participated in the long process of the filming with great enthusiasm. They were integrated with the film crew and the actors quickly and effectively, helping us to overcome our own fears about how this would work. Looking at themselves on the screen with other professionals, as equal members of the film team, they had the sense that they belonged to the wider society once more.

The results were very positive. Their self esteem was reinforced. They started to take more

initiatives in their every day life. For example, Vasalis travelled for the first time alone by bus to Athens. The attitude of their families has changed. They showed greater interest and attention and felt proud of their "own" people.

V: "I went in Athens, I met Mr. Voulgari and Miss. Karistiani, very nice people, they helped me a lot. We shot a movie there, it was very good I think, I danced, I shout, I hugged."

Balance

After the filming process, there was a need to maintain balance among all the other members so that their participation did not become a source of competition. We explained to them that the selection of specific people for the film was based on them having traits that suited the roles. It was not a case of selecting the best. At the same time, we took care to ensure their expectations were realistic. However, there is a possibility that other members of the group may be able to act in future films.

Conclusion

Artistic activities based in theatre and film can be very effective and therapeutic. Through theatre these actors made local communities aware of their abilities and needs, improved the quality of their lives, changed their own

attitudes about their skills and their place as equal citizens, and showed that occupational therapy intervention can work socially at both local and wider levels.

Through our experience we have decided to continue our effort, hoping to motivate and involve more people, enriching our mutual work and cooperation with organizations and arts professionals. The participation of our "patients" in the movies will continue in order to reinforce our belief in the reality of integration. All the members of the theatre group believe that: "It is not important what I could do if I was someone else. But with my abilities, I can do better!"

Miranda Pouliopoulou, O.T
Dimitra Petridou, O.T
Voura Panagiota, Psychologist
Psychiatric Hospital of
Katerini, Greece

Vasalis' story

When I was told that I was selected to take part in the film "Brides" although I wanted very much to try, at first I did not understand where we were going to go. At first I was afraid because I didn't know what I was going to meet, I was afraid of Athens because I pictured it as a beast with a big figure and teeth that eats people, because I grew up in a village in Kilkis.

When we were arriving and got into the bus together with the other extras and actors I was

wondering what all these people would do when we arrive at the harbour of Pireaus where the filming would take place. As we were arriving at the harbour the first thing that I wanted to do was to meet the director. Before leaving my hometown I asked who he was: everybody was saying that he was a big director - but I didn't know him. I wanted to go and meet him and see how he lives, how he makes the films. At first I smiled and said "good morning". I met all his family that was there. We talked the way people in small towns speak, in a simple way, and Mrs. Ioanna, the wife of Mr. Voulgari and scriptwriter of the film. She asked me what I enjoy doing and I said that I love "birds". All that long nobody had given attention to what I was saying - she gave to me hanging birds as a gift.

The filming started; I was trying to do my best. I became attached to the rest actors - older and younger - during the filming. During the filming I forgot everything, all of my problems, my illness and I felt that if anything happened the other actors would stand by me. During the filming the weather was hot and that was quite tiring. There was water offered to everyone and we drank a toast to Mr. Voulgari and Mrs. Ioanna. These two are so close to one another - I realised that he wouldn't do anything just by himself.

I wish I would do something in my life that will endure too. I made new friends; I talked with men, women and learned from each one something different. In the second scene that I played, there were fewer people. In the wedding party I remember the dancing and the table full of food. Mr. Voulgari encouraged us. My bride and



partner helped me a lot, we danced together. On the set, the actors were telling me "have courage, don't feel embarrassed, let yourself feel free" and I was saying to myself "Vasilis you are not ill, prove it".

I dedicated myself to the camera and to the role. Miranda stood there for me, discreetly, at first more closely she explained to me what I should do, she gave courage to me. Slowly she left me by myself and I liked that. I was feeling that I could work independently. Our eyes crossed a few times. I knew that she was there, proud for me. When I got back at my hometown, at first I kept thinking what had happened and felt very calm inside of me. I was thinking of going back there with the rest people.

I started to talk about my experience with other people. I was proud of me. I feel grateful to Mr. Voulgari and Mrs. Ioanna for inviting me to the film in order to take part. I wish to them to be successful always, and to meet with them again and take part to a film. I wish also that there will be other opportunities for other kids as well because it is good for the health. It revitalised me.

Film Premier 18 October I enjoyed seeing Thessaloniki. I

expected to meet Mr. Voulgari and the actors; I saw a photograph with the grooms in the brochure of the film with me in it. Once the people of the film arrived, we had photos taken, I watched the press-conference and I liked what they said. The film began and I enjoyed it, it was touching. A very good film, very emotional, although I don't know much about films.

Mr. Voulgari introduced me to people from the arts; I met a lot of people. I had a very good time. I didn't care how much I was appearing on the screen. I watched the other actors, my friends play and it was like they were myself. When I saw our names at the end I cheered, but I would be glad mostly to see again the moments of the filming. I was feeling proud that I was lucky to be among those people. I wish that other kids* will also live such experiences. I will tell everybody to go and see the film, my friends and relatives - I will send them the brochures with the photograph and the grooms with me in it.

** kids' is a literal translation of the term by which survivors refer to themselves.*

Weather Report

Sampad's International search for young writers begins

FWWCP members sampad South Asian arts, have re-launched their successful local project The Weather Report internationally to include the cities of Lahore, Calcutta, Dhaka and Vancouver, amongst other cities and regions of the World. The project, is part of sampad's long-term strategy to encourage, identify and nurture writers has been launched by BBC Midlands Today's favourite weather girl Shefali Oza.

The Weather Report is a writing competition for writers aged between 12-18 years with an interest in South Asian Culture focusing on the theme of weather. Have you ever

noticed how a stormy day can make you feel gloomy, or a sunny day make you feel bright? How the weather can remind you of a special place, or help you imagine somewhere you have never been? Applicants are to think about the weather as a starting point for their writing. They can write in any style they want – stories, poetry or reportage. The winning entries will be published in a book in Summer 2005.

Guest Editor Shefali Oza will be helped in



selecting the winning entries by playwright Gurpreet Bhatti, former Birmingham Poet Laureate Julie Boden and London based poet Daljit Nagra.

Shefali says, "I'm so pleased to be involved with the Weather Report as it goes global and to be working with sampad South Asian arts, who are committed to developing talented artists. I think it's really important to get young people involved with literature and this is such a fantastic opportunity for them to have their writing published

and express their thoughts creatively. This is surely going to be a fun and challenging experience for me as guest editor, especially since the theme of the project is now the international weather!"

Deadline for entries is 28th February 2005. For an application form visit www.sampad.org.uk; email anne@sampad.org.uk, or phone 0121 446 4312

Turn to page 18 in the Broadsheet for some of the entries.

London Writers Day

On December 4th 2004, London Voices organised their annual day of workshops and performances, here participants write about the workshops they attended.

Writing & Performing Poetry convened by Agnes Meadows

"The ten faces sat there expectantly. We were here to learn something that struck terror into my heart: how to actively perform poetry, rather than just recite it. I've always been sensitive about my voice. A voice coach once pronounced it flat, monotone, 'junior' and a 'ghastly mish-mash of accents'. What would Agnes make of it?

The theme of the day was Journeys - journeys into the soul, back home, back to a loved one - and we were each given 10 minutes to conjure

something out of nothing. There were gasps of: "No-one is going to enjoy this!" and "I can't think of anything!" But Agnes was having none of it: "Do you think anyone is going to be interested in your poem if you say that about it?" she asked.

The first victim was a man who'd announced he would have to leave early. He stood up and read out his poem. Agnes plucked out a line which had beauty and resonance. "What did you feel next/what were you thinking then/what colour

continued on page 27

Mother

An incident in Ruffah, Gaza

Um Hisham Qishta cradled a young Israeli soldier. "It was like my son dying in front of me".

That night

Angry bulldozers had a banquet
Of bricks mortar and men
Two hundred houses pulverised
Transformed into a giant shroud
For ones once living now dead

In a half-destroyed apartment's door
Like a matriach sentinel
Stood Um Hisham Qishta

In crashed three marauders
And set up a sniper's nest
A scream went up from one of them
-A bullet found its guest
Whose bullet was it?
Was it a friendly fire?

Um Qishta nestled her almost-son
Perhaps her tears mingled with
The wasted blood of the youth

At that holy moment
She wasn't Arab or Jew
She was the mother of Palestine
She was the mother of Israel
She was the mother of the suffering
She was the mothered of the wronged
She was THE UNIVERSAL MOTHER

All glory to her

*Homi Framroze
London Voices*

Clever

Psychiatrists are very clever -
when there is something they don't
understand -
they medicate it.

Carol Batton

Broadsheet publishes writing by members and supporters of The FWWCP.

In this issue are pieces sent to us and a selection from Heeley Writers in Sheffield.

If you wish to have your writing considered for Broadsheet 16, send it to us by May 31st 2005, if possible by e-mail:

fedmag@tiscali.co.uk or by post to:

FWWCP,
Burslem School of Art, Queen Street,
Stoke-on-Trent
ST6 3EJ

If you belong to an FWWCP member group and would like your group to edit a future issue, please contact Tim Diggles on 01782 822327, and arrange how you can undertake this.

We look forward to receiving your writing for consideration.

At the end of Broadsheet are some guidelines for submitting writing.

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A temporary lover

Anger rose and ceased to quell,
I saw a painting of his stealing lies.
He led a life of stolen nights
and pumped veins of drawing poppies.

Flat he rifled for his next hit,
to numb the vacant truth of reality.
A certain sense of peace,
that only poppy fixed.

Absence of mothers love,
crushed his spirit,
tore him apart.

Moonflower was his bride,
he lay with her night after years.
He lay on her arm to die,
Moonflower was his bride.

Soon his veins lay flat and hard.
So he looked to the mirror with one eye.
Needle in hand he pierced his last eye.
This could be the way you die.

He was white but his face was black,
from the pressure of haemorrhage.
Dried blood crispy and cracked,
made it's last track from his nose,
mouth and ears.
Sure thing is smack.

The smell of death never leaves
and the stench of formaldehyde,
is always remembered
And never dies.

Moonflower was his bride,
he lay with her night after years.
He lay on her arm to die,
Moonflower was his bride.

*Sarah Lee Gray
Meshaw Writers, Devon*

Changing Seasons

I love to walk the lanes on winter mornings when it's cold and frosty: when the leaves, dressed in diamonds, shimmer in the early sun. The spider's web can be seen in all its glory and the mist clings to the evergreens making patterns that shift and change.

I love walking in the springtime when the rain clouds, dark and brooding, form a backdrop for a rainbow. The hills, standing proud against the grey sky, anticipate the refreshing rain to come. The trees, in different shades of green wave their branches, waiting for the rain to quench their thirst.

I love the lanes in summer when the sun shines in an azure blue sky, and the bright colours of the flowers stand out against the ever-changing greens and browns of the fields and hedgerows. The buzzard, floating lazily on the breeze, and the skylark sings her song, while the swallows swoop and dive, feeding on the insects as they go.

Then, when autumn comes and the trees change their dress to colours of red and gold, their branches bowing as the wind dances amongst them, I begin to think of nights drawing in and log fires blazing in the hearth: the flames making pictures as I gaze into the depths, dreaming of the days to come when the summer sun once more shines and brings new life to the dead branches.

*Sue Smith
Meshaw Writers*

Some Early Memories

I was born at St. George's Hospital in Knightsbridge as a result of a caesarian operation. I was an only child.

I lived at 163 Tachbrook Street, Pimlico until I was 3 years. My parents and I lived on the 1st floor in 3 rooms but we lived mainly in one room. It was a kitchen, living, dining room. And was also the room I played in every day. It was a very dilapidated house, full of mice. It was so bad the landlord used to let cats run wild all over the house to try and keep them down. My mother put down a trap with cheese on it in front of a hole. She was quite bloodthirsty as when she caught one she used to put it on the table and stare at it. When I saw it I felt sick. But our mother kept our rooms spotlessly clean, she was always working on it. She never used to play with me but she got my toys out so that I would get on with it.

One day I remember I had all my dolls including my dog with the poorly paw and my teddy bear all bandaged up and I was pretending to give them medicine it was hospitals. And when my dad came home he took one look and started shouting at me to take all the bandages off. Later on he explained that it had reminded him of the war and upset him.

One day my dad brought home a bird and put it in a cage. I was pleased and kept going over to it and talking to it. They told me not to open the door. But I wanted to let it out of the cage. And one day I let it out and it flew out of the open window. Then I got upset and started shouting out of the window for it to come back.

Sometimes my mother took me up the park with a fishing net and a jam jar. And I used to enjoy fishing. When I caught one my mum put it into the jar and we took it home. But they did not last long so we had many fishing trips. But I liked them and I talked to them a lot.

Sometimes I was allowed to play out. My parents brought my doll's pram down with me. I started playing with a little girl who

also had a pram but much smaller than mine. She said, "Let me push your pram and you push mine."

"All right," I replied.

Then she said, "Why don't we swap over prams altogether?" I said no. The next minute she started running down the street with my pram. I chased her and pulled the pram off of her and she started crying her eyes out and her mother came out and took her indoors with her pram.

After that I saw a boy with a dog. I was a bit afraid of it. So when he said I could stroke it I said no so he said I was a baby and walked off. Another time I was out minus my pram, I saw the coalman. He kept shouting out, "Any old coal!" and knocking on doors. When he was finished he saw me standing there and said, "Would you like a ride on the cart?" I said yes. So he picked me up and sat me on the cart. It was quite high up. He hit the horse on the back and took me for a ride round the streets. I enjoyed it very much and saw things I wouldn't have seen on foot. After that he took me back where we started and carried me down. Then he said I could stroke the horse. Well, it was very big and I was scared so I stood and stared at it for a long time before I gave it a pat. He turned his head round and I got scared again but I didn't run away, I just stared at it.

Suddenly I heard my mother calling me in and I went up immediately. My mother had been looking out of the window and she saw me talking to the coalman. She was worried about me, and she said I should never speak to strange men as it is very dangerous and that if they spoke to me I should run away.

Lily Cole, Southwark Mind

Its Raining Chaat and Dahl!

"Its Raining Chaat and Dahl!" My mother used to say
 When Aunty went into the kitchen on a cloudy day.
 Knives against countertops and spoons around the pans.
 A hurricane was quieter than the sound of the extraction fans!

The sorcerer of saag, the conjurer of chutney.
 Ninety-nine different names for Aunty who worked abruptly.

Aunty's sheer power smashed the four-minute mile.
 As she kneaded the dough typically desi style.
 Yet perfection were the roti that she made.
 This from the woman that killed her first husband with a garden spade!

Thunder would roar and lightning flash,
 But aunty continued even though sweat dripped from her tash!

Tremendous she was, stupendous she is.
 When it comes to making meals aunty is the biz!
 Her samosas are always piping, refreshing is her tea.
 I can't tell you how much I love aunty's gi!

She'll put on a show and always will heavily laden the table.
 This is why from behind she looks like she belongs in a stable!

But as the weather settles and the puddles dry up.
 You wont get no more chaay, not even a second cup!
 As aunty believes that you should eat whenever it rains plenty.
 This is her excuse for moving to England where you always get a drenching!

Saeed M. Hussain

An Underground Home

The rain pounded on the dirt above me, an occasional drop falling through the gap between the wood and the ground above. By that time the hole was about 4 foot something, which meant I could sit in it. It was the only place where I knew I was safe, my hole, dug by my own hands. A safe paradise, where I could live all my life and no-one would know. My safe, cosy hole, protecting me from the hardships of life, shielding me from the driving, stinging rain that had made my eyes and ears burn as I ran home. The black clouds above me were laughing, looking at me hiding, jumping whenever I heard thunder rumbling in the distance. They were taking immense pleasure in my fright.

I'd never liked rain, it makes me angry, especially when it feels like it's there just to ruin your day, just to make you personally feel miserable. I hate the thunder and lightning even more though, the way the lightning illuminates where it hits, the way thunder rumbles, like a thousand timpani players in an orchestra waiting for the final clash of cymbals that never come. I like it here and not thunder, nor lightning nor a tornado itself will keep me here, I'm staying no matter what, till hell freezes over and time stops. I'll stay here and watch all the seasons and then I'll die and what's left of me will still watch. I'll never go, not ever.

Gioia Barnbrook

Can I Go Home Now Please?

I did not know these days would be so black,
 That terror would rattle round my bones like a magazine of vagrant bullets
 Keeping me awake through the small hours,
 Souring my mouth with dread more bitter than hatred, making me retch.
 And when I dream,
 There's nothing familiar there,
 No young men's foolish fantasies replayed nostalgically,
 No home, or warmth, or anything that I have loved,
 Even for a second.

Instead, I see limbs abandoned in the streets, eaten by wild dogs
 Scavenging the bombed-out craters,
 Here a school, there a home once filled with warmth,
 and everything that had been loved,

For a lifetime.
 And there is blood on women's breasts,
 Faces filled with pain and incomprehension,
 Resentment just below the surface, anger in the dust and stones,
 Children's mouths imprisoning the silent shriek of horror.
 This is not the freedom they were promised.

I see the boys of my battalion grow grey and old,
 Old before their time, and worn out with waste.
 At night, when the bombs cease for minutes, sometimes hours,
 When time stands still, when clocks stop,
 And mothers crawl from out of the rubble to feed their still-breathing sons,
 At night,
 We soldiers of the Queen disguise our fear,
 Sharing crass tales of a different type of conquest far from here,
 Down by the railway tracks, in piss-soaked alleyways,
 Of faceless, warm-thighed girls, whose names we never knew,
 And, oh, I'd go home to any one of them now
 Instead of dodging death here
 Every single day.

And we do not look into the eyes of those we kill.
 We would find too many mirrors.

*Agnes Meadows
 London Voices*

Heeley Writers

Heeley Writers has been running for some twenty five years. We meet on Sunday evenings at the Ann's Road Community Centre in Heeley, Sheffield. The group is a varied mix of writers, with interests ranging across poetry, essays, biography and autobiography, and extending to short stories and full length novels.

Attendance at the weekly meetings varies widely, sometimes as few as three, and occasionally climbing to a dozen, but with an average of around seven.

The emphasis of the group is very much on helping members to improve the quality of their writing, using the medium of constructive comment. We try to avoid using the word 'criticism,' as in many people's minds it implies negativity. However, we do have a reputation with some of the other Sheffield writing groups for making our members work at writing.

Several members have had work published in various forms, including children's stories, short stories in both short story and mainstream magazines, and even an autobiography. Several members have published their own work, mostly poetry. We participate in the annual Off The Shelf writing festival held in Sheffield each autumn, and last year were part of a very successful all day event featuring a number of Sheffield writing groups.

Heeley Writers usually send several members to the FEDfest. Over the years a number of our members have served on the Executive Committee in a variety of roles. Currently Nick Pollard serves as Editor of the Fed Magazine, and John Malcomson holds the post of Treasurer.

Star

They show no response when
I've been to a dance
Won the title "The Belle of the Ball".

I appear in a film, they think I am dim
While I'm excited and stunned by it all.

I've admirers galore,
who keep asking for more,
"But you're old" they all start to say.

"Where is she now?" they ask,
mopping their brow
I'm conspicuously absent each day.

On a flight with a friend, I'm told
"Where will it end?"
They despair of my antics of glee.

Though I'm having my fling
They must wait in the wings
I'm definitely, outrageously, ME!

Audrey Bradley

In Case of Fire

The night of the first day
that they banned
the drinking of smoke in public places,
he knelt by his back door beneath
the security light
and caged in his hands a nest
of wet tobacco,
to wedge in the gaping trouser
of a drainpipe
as his insurance. If ever his house
burnt down,
this secret breath would rise
through colder air
and spill from the guttering like a flood.

Oliver Mantell

The train market

Boys are so different, my wife says, when she calls us from the loft.
In a girl's world the stuff of little boys is hard to find,
four Tammy-girl crop tops and pony tails and him,
and me, wandering in the malls, in a world of our own.
What we find interesting surprises me. Victorian drainpipes
and iron work. Clocks. Roofs. The shape of the hill.
Pylons and telegraph wires. Outside the shops we stand,
musing. We might look over a parapet, at a stained window,
and then, in the wide square, to the market. The stallholder
lounges with a fag and his tea; we jostle with granddads
and collectors, and bicker, while he makes his choice,
always anachronistic in the steam age I predestined for him.
Their bags bright pink in the dull and damp and tawdry,
"what is it with trains," the girls mutter, moving on.
The man takes our money, smiles knowingly;
he has torn up many worlds and sold them on piecemeal,
second hand plastic pylons and cardboard roofs,
he could tell me that the diesel electric will soon be king
and after that comes dust. But I know, in the bag he holds,
his other hand in mine, and my other in my wife's,
her indulgent fingers linking as we catch up the girls
at the next fashion shop, it's our time in the carrier,
our short time of difference, rattling in the wind.

Nick Pollard

Pole Dancing

Its Pole Dancing on the no. 50 bus -
There's Alice, Dot, Bren and good old Gus
Get on your mark, it's such a lark,
Alighting can be dangerous!
Press the bell, one and all
Grab the pole, or you'll fall
The old dears are twirling
While others are lurching
The driver looks scorching
At pensioners dancing
On the new fangled pole dancing bus
We lean on our rails
Step off into space
"It becomes quite a race" says old Gus
The step is quite steep, fall flat in a heap
Bodies pile on the pavement
It's the transports arrangement
Don't know where you're going
Gets adrenaline flowing
On the new fangled Pole Dancing bus
"They're really quite charming, but
it is most alarming" says Gus.

Audrey Bradley

Infanticide

When I first meet god
she is sucking her
thumb
in my arms
I watch her
eyes watching me
for the meaning of life
is death
a myth
I created
eternity

John Malcomson

Work Till You Drop

'Retire? Retire! You can't retire you're too young!' said Mr Hardman, the Chief Clerk in Accounts. Mr Sandiwell, the 64 year old accounts clerk, looked away to hide the pain and embarrassment he felt. His eyes filled with tears as he summoned up the courage to turn and look the chief in the face.

'But why not, I've been here 44 years, I've done my time. Every year it gets harder for me, what with new computers and reporting changes. I just can't keep up. Now you are promoting these youngsters, little more than schoolchildren some of them, you are putting them over me and expect me to do as they say. This company isn't the same any more, why can't I go?'

'You know perfectly well why not' The government has just scrapped the statutory retirement age which means it is at the discretion of the company and the pension fund when we let you go. Look, Mr Tolley has already said that until the pension fund Trustees have decided how the new regulations affect the scheme there can be no retirements in Accounts.'

'Its all so unfair. When will they have decided?'

'We are not sure, we don't think it will be long, two weeks maybe. Until then there is nothing that can be done. You will just have to wait. Now go back to your desk and get on with you work.'

The miserable Mr Sandiwell turned to trudge back to his desk. All those years and what was there to show for it? He wondered.

Two weeks later the Accounts department was summoned to the conference room for a presentation by the Trustees on the changes to the pension fund. Mr Sandiwell found a seat near the front and sat down trembling with anticipation. He was hoping that the new rules would allow him to retire; in fact he was banking on it. Surely the company would be fair with him? The room was

filled with an expectant hum of murmurings, which quickly quietened down when three of the trustees filed in. Two sat down and the third, Mr Caron, remained standing and arranged slides by the overhead projector.

'You will recall from earlier presentations that the recent falls in the stock market have reduced the value of the pension fund. Also, the recent round of early retirements on generous terms has placed a great burden on scheme. I will not hide from you that on an ongoing actuarial basis we are under-funded. But we can learn from our mistakes. In time, with the extra contributions that you and the company are making and with the expected stock market growth, the capital strength will recover. The recent abolition of the statutory retirement age gives us extra flexibility in managing the flow of new retirees. There are a few of you who might have expected to retire soon. To you we say, be patient. Our new flexible retirement policy will be based on the discretion of the manages and the trustees on a case by case basis with full account being taken of the funding level.' Mr Caron was interrupted by a question from the back of the room.

'What do you mean by 'a case by case basis'?'

'It used to be that that every one had to retire at 65. All that has been swept away. Each application for retirement will be decided on an individual basis. The merits of each case will be examined.'

Then someone nearer the front spoke up.

'What does 'full account of funding' mean?'

'We can only pay out what the scheme can afford. I've already explained that it's under-funded.'

Mr Sandiwell thought about what had been said and then stood up to ask a question.

'Are you saying that you are going to use the new regulations to stop people retiring?'

'I wouldn't put it like that. We now have more flexibility on retirement age. In the long run, when the strength of the fund has recovered we may be able to be generous on retirements.'

Mr Sandiwell, still standing, asked another question.

'And in the short run?'

'I've already said, we want you to be patient.'

Street Statistics

Bright and sunny but really quite cold
Shadow and light as the
white clouds rolled
Clicker in hand I'm feeling so bold
Keeping count as the story gets told.

Down from the north blows
a strong cold wind
The Vagrant's warmth, it's beer
and it's tinned

He sips the brew 'till informed
that he's sinned
A swearing shout and the
empty is binned.

Which says about him a whole lot more
Than the careless, feckless litter whore
Who drops the wrapper
by the shop door
As teeth tear at a big calorie score.

I count all the people who walk about,
Among the stalls the bargain scout,
And customers who show and flout
Designer labels,
they've nothing without.

Though wrapped up well they
both look swell

Two girls on the stall, it's fruit they sell
Sharons and pears and oranges as well
Lizzy and Sheila, neither named Nell.

Mr Sandiwell sat down. He thought about his dreams of long lazy days by the river, fishing, of country walks, of sitting in the garden with his wife in the sunset of their years. Dreams, just dreams, he thought, the only thing I can look forward to is to work till I drop. He got up and went back to his flexible working life.

Mike Coxon

Words, Stoke-on-Trent

Afternoon and the grey light fades
Consumers begin to end their raids
Their assault on 'Goods'
under the shades
Of Emporiums attended by pretty maids

And suited gents with nice brown tans
Playing leader to shopaholic fans
Who's desires fill up the delivery vans
With all sorts of things,
even pots and pans.

By five their interest starts to wane
They make their way toward the train
To their home where they may feign
That they are 'normal,'
completely sane.

Of all such thoughts the Vagrant is free
But his shelter's a doss
in the dark cemetery
The satellite TV's not his to see
Not for him is the culture of ME.

The story, you see has now been told
I've counted all those
who spend so bold

Folk that for whom the lucky dice rolled
But not for Vagrants,
they're out in the cold.

Dave Chambers

Newham Writers

Fire Mountain

Inspired by a mystical experience three days before Mount St. Helens blew 18th May 1980

The prophet saw the earth, travail,
and heard the world, agape,
arraigned by a golden flame
where tides of blood forward
backward flow
like faces in their shape;

hordes of karmic souls, migrate
to the affluent northern shore,
a beam on a wire, watched,
a sea of frightened dreams,
all the earth and world at war;

devils whirlwind brain and stem,
deaf, dumbstruck root eye
bread and tree were dust
desert noise had silenced them -

in the signs
in the soil
in the air and the water, soared by pain
and the mad behaved normal
and the normal insane.

And so it was that Twmbarlum* dawn
inspired hope and awesome joy reborn
spiralling visions took
shape given form

on a great highway of light, saw:
a lame figure, crawling,
walking, marching,
houses pouring, showering, storming
streets of voices and armies
of flags, imploring

the council of ten would-be
kings of the key
at the gate - the great white tower
wore a frock of stone, wherein,

a clatter of bereft shadowy creeds
the eighth justice asks, never answers
choice confusion weaves its task

as the candle slow burning on a hill
where dark messages
across continents
star crossed by an oath,
brew - proclaim
what hearts and minds already knew
in the land and sea and sky
riven things to come, all the while
why the fire mountain blew.

David Lloyd-Howells

Abergavenny

** ancient hill site in south Wales*

Nietzsche Leaves Buxton

That which is done out of love
Always takes place
Beyond Good and Evil

But nor beyond Hope,
Which is a village
In Derbyshire

Kane Oliver

Words, Stoke-on-Trent

Sleaford

The close mown mounds meet the
hanging mist where
the Slea rolls its weeds and
evening ducks stand
contemplating the agonies of
Bad King John,
poisoned, writhing in plain
sight of the windows
lighting up along the bank. A lone
quack sympathises,
one who would also be
wary of pears, cider
and French perfidy. Nothing
but misery,
to go to Newark and die,
bereft, tumbled
like the north east wall,
stripped of all but folly.

A man spins on his heel, his
dog strains in a dip;
complacent at the staggering
poop bin, he calls
"C'mon boy, c'mon". Clammy
under his coverlet,
John Lackland turns from spectres
of his drowned men

or those they slaughtered, blue
marshlights in back rooms
across the river flicker in the
faces of children
and workdone parents falling on
television pizza.

The agony will soon be over, although
it seems an age,
next ignominy, then a cartoon evil
that won't sustain
an audience given to ninja combat in
unknown worlds.
"What word is this?"
"Assassination, sire", I explain
to the man's deathly, beaded head,
but even that
is anachronism. He shudders,
nonetheless.

And there is nothing more. Even the
information boards
have been obliterated with jack knives
and cigarettes.
I return to my car, by the supermarket,
follow the A17 to Newark and
the North.

Nick Pollard

Heeley Writers

Autobiography

I have 19 plants,
and I do water them.
Their Average Age Estimation
(Their A.A.E.)
is around 5 years.

I say "Hello" on buses.
I cry when people don't say "Hello" back.

I have no sartorial sense.
I am musically, tone-deaf.

I doubt. I doubt everything.
I despair.
I listen. I look. I know.

On using a dictionary I learn.
(Or re-learn)
Other words before
I find the one I was looking for.

I sense the seasons in my soul.
I hate injustice and lies...
They make me scream.
Especially when I am naked to
criticism.

I over-react; I panic!
And it is not just for dug-up-Bluebells.

My imagination is off the scale.
(It actually is!)
(I did the test).

I cry daily.

I am normal, for a poet.

Carol Batton

Some guidelines for sending work for consideration for publication in Broadsheet

We welcome receiving all forms of writing for the Broadsheet, and would appreciate more short stories, life histories, essays, and other prose. Original artwork and photographs are very welcome!

The size of Broadsheet necessitates that we usually cannot publish anything longer than one A4 page. Shorter poems are more likely to be published than longer ones!

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

We try and publish something from everyone who makes the effort to submit their writing, as it is our aim to encourage people to write and read others 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 usually chosen by members of an FWWCP affiliated groups. It is open to their interpretation what is suitable.

If possible we ask for writing to be sent by E-mail (fedmag@tiscali.co.uk), 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 or sound files, 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, credit your writing, and send you the printed copy. If you wish to use an alias or be published anonymously, we will only publish if we have your actual name and address.

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

Copyright remains with you the author, however, by sending a piece of writing to us, you agree to give 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.

To discuss what to send or any other issues, phone 01782 822327 or e-mail fedmag@tiscali.co.uk.

We look forward to receiving your writing.

No write to right

I an't got no right to write
Cos evrythin I do is shite
I cant make my words fit into a neat rhyme
And novels just take too bloody long

I tried once you knowst
wrote me life story, took nearly a week
An I typed it out all nice n neat
An posted it to London to a big book
company but it must ave got lost

So a year later
I was visiting me sister there
I took a copy to the building on the address
An spoke to a bloke at the front desk,
he were a right ponce

He says to me I need an appointment
That I had to leave,
And calls over this handy looking
security guard
Name on the badge says Steve

He looks pretty hard
So I make my way to the door
An ah says to him
"What they treating people like
that for?" he inna a bad sort after all

An he says to me,
"I guard the building mate,
but they guard British culture 'rate"
I didna ave a fuckin clue
what'd just happened

And that was ma writin days done
I gave up there n then
I an't got time for smarmy gits
I went back home n called it quits -
put telly on

But ah can wax lyrical
An I no all the big words
I use em to confuse em
Dine at the Birds - that's ma local

*Steve Oakley
Words, Stoke-on-Trent*

continued from page 15

is the feeling?" she asked gently. And so began the live unravelling of a poem.

Within seven minutes the poem was teased out, with some input and ideas from the rest of the workshop. Then it was time to perform. Inflections were suggested, pauses inserted, words pulled out with luscious enjoyment. And before our eyes, Agnes pulled off her first hat-trick. The man was transformed in front of our eyes from a nervous, shy reader into a confident performer of performance poetry.

Eventually it was my turn. I got the same treatment amidst blushes and giggles. Standing up was the hardest bit - learning to own what I had written. It sounded lovely, however, mostly because Agnes knew how to ask the right questions, build confidence and inspire. I sat down to claps and murmurs of encouragement. Bingo! My third poem in 18 years had hatched!"

*Esther Oxford
London Voices*

War with Words - convened by Bob Dixon & Deborah Levin

As a long-standing fan of Bob Dixon's biting and witty political and anti-war poetry, I was very much looking forward to his "Writing War Poetry" workshop at the 2nd London Voices Writer's Day. And I was not disappointed.

Bob had prepared a sheaf of handouts of the work of various war poets such as Wilfred Owen and Rupert Brooke that drew in graphic detail the horror and futility of war. He had planned that we would read these examples, and use them as a springboard for inspiration to

write poems of our own. But we became so heated in our round table anti-war/anti-US debate that the results of our discussions became the focus of our writing time instead. Inevitably, the occupation of Iraq was prominent in our debate, and the suffering of millions of innocent civilians at the hands of the oil/power-hungry super powers.

Some of the participants had served in the Second World War, and had their own emotional memories to explore. Others continued to be active in the anti-war movement, and what they wanted to say had an equally emotive hub. The pieces that were produced round the workshop table concentrated primarily on the futility of war, each coming from a different perspective, and engaging the full spectrum of human emotion.

Bob, with decades of teaching experience at his command, guided the workshop with a sure hand, giving us time to both write a fresh piece, and then share and discuss it afterwards. We all found it a useful and inspirational workshop, and we came away with a fresh perspective on writing about war that will hopefully translate into more poetry in the future.

*Agnes Meadows
London Voices*

Sound, Vision, & Art convened by Jane Deakin & Rolf Dragstra

I went to this workshop wondering what it was about. The title gave a few clues but I was surprised to learn that we would be doing Mongolian Chanting. We were instructed in the body's chokras, their corresponding colours and how to chant using the relevant sound associated with each

chakra. We were also shown how to beat our bodies to get the energies flowing. We were told to do it gently but I saw more than one member of the group attacking their body with vigour.

When we all started chanting the resulting sound was strangely pleasing and relaxing. We practised the sounds individually before joining them all together to make one continuous sound, quite tricky if you haven't mastered the breathing. Looking up I saw some of the faces turning the colours of the chokras with the effort involved. A little more instruction may have been beneficial.

We then went on to make tonal pictures in pastels, using the chokras' colours. I am afraid I became so absorbed in creation that I didn't notice what everyone was doing until I had finished, then I was surprised to see the array of pictures and patterns displayed. Whilst I had been painstakingly careful in getting my pattern to balance tonally and getting it all just right, other people had been simply having fun and going wild with colour. I says something about me I think.

It would have been nice to have had another session of chanting at the end of the workshop to iron out any problems and bring us all back to earth, but on the whole it was very enjoyable and I would recommend it to anyone. It has certainly wet my appetite for both pastel drawing and Mongolian Chanting and I intend to learn more about both.

*Linda Kennedy
Shorelink Writers*

Southwark Mind Newsletter

FWWCP Executive Committee Member, Lynne Clayton, writes about the joys of putting SMN together for more than 7 years!

This local rag for mental health service users is now in its 7th year, during which time it has come out without fail every month, with a current print run of 800. Incredible stuff, especially when you think it's not funded, and is produced and distributed entirely by volunteer users from Southwark Mind.

Actually, I remember the early days, when Robert Dellar was Southwark Mind's first Development Worker. The Newsletter was one of the first things he started, as he wisely realised that we could reach loads more people in the Borough that way. Anyway, the editorial sub-group would meet in our tiny office to decide on what would go into it each month. Pete Shaughnessy was very much involved – one of my favourites was his “Lily Largactil” series - hilarious! Rob would cut & paste most of it by hand - when I politely pointed out that he could use the “computer” for all that nowadays, he laughed and said he liked the “amateurish, zany” feel to it! We still cut & paste some of it - bet you can tell!

(It reminded me of my earlier involvement with another, what we used to call “underground”, rag, “The Peckham Jemmy”, produced by the Peckham squatters in the '70s. That thrived on air, too, though it didn't last as long.)

The Editorial sub-group are all unpaid volunteers from Southwark Mind. We meet twice a month, once to decide on the content of that month's edition, and once to distribute it. The sub-group has strong links with the Writing Club, which supports users who want to write, but don't feel confident enough, or who want to improve

their writing skills, etc.

The “Contents” meeting is usually very lively, as we have a lot to juggle, and sometimes it's hard to choose from all the contributions that we get. So we've got a sort of priority list, though this is flexible. We're also aware that many of our readers feel isolated, and so we try to make it a “mixed bag”, not just up-to-date information and reports, but also creative stuff, mostly poems and artwork (with the proviso that it can only be reproduced in black & white). Sometimes we get upset when we read a submission, and we might decide not to put it in as we don't want to make anyone feel sad! (We do have obituaries, though, to honour our dead.) If we think something's offensive, we throw it out, usually, unless we think it'll offend the right people! What we don't do is to interfere with someone's work. If we like

it, we put it in as written, except for spellings (even this is hard, sometimes), and the odd, hopefully helpful full stop. Sometimes we put things in that sound nice, even though we're not quite sure what it means - perhaps our readers will get it!

When we've finally made all these choices, a couple of us work hard to get it print-ready – (“oh, well, at least you can read it”) and it goes off to our wonderful Catford Printers who miraculously send us back 800 copies within a few days. Then we all get together again, with lots of tea, coffee and biscuits, and mail them all out. How do we manage to do all this?

With love and pride.

Lynne Clayton



Workshop Ideas

“50 Word Stories” from Grimsby Writers

A newspaper ran a competition for short stories using only 50 words including the title. The stories had to be complete and make sense. This prompted one of the members of Grimsby Writers to use this as part of their workshop. It is a great exercise in imaginative writing and minimisation. It is quite amazing how many unnecessary words we actually use to tell a story. The result of the workshop was excellent and people still bring in stories to read out at our meetings. Why not try it; you will be surprised at the way you look at your writing afterwards.

Jim White

Reflections

As I sit, yellow leaves fall around me. A young couple pass, their eyes lost in each other. I remember your face locked in that “forever youngness” that is now yours. The world disappears into a golden pond. If only we had met on another day, in another lifetime.

Maria Garner

Options

“You have six months to live.” His voice was kind. “You have options.”
“There's no escape?”
“No. You can die naturally or by my hand now.”
“Today Doctor.”

Mary felt less brave when Doctor Dye approached with the mask. She rolled away screaming. Falling to the floor wakened her.

Joan Barker

Lost

Cold rain fell sharply and Tim was lost and frightened. On his voyage of discovery, he'd wandered away from the others and struggled to remember the way, when he heard familiar sounds.

Joan Barker

Agony

They were killing her slowly but surely. She couldn't wait until the time came when the agony would end. The pain was unbearable now. It wouldn't be long before she could feel relief. Finally reaching her front door, she opened it, once inside she kicked off her new shoes.

Gwen Kershaw

Fear

The light shone brightly on his face. The man in front of him yelled. “Open up, let's get this over with.” The weapon was threateningly close to him, but he wasn't giving in until the last minute.

He hated dental fillings. Oh well, time to open up.

Gwen Kershaw

Resurrected

Small, black and cute. Victim of expansion. Ejected from my home, imprisoned and abandoned. Hauled into the light, interrogated and categorised.

Now: a miracle! Among my fellow captives, in our redundancy and degradation, I am chosen and ransomed and now I am to be paraded in triumph.

Maggie Macdonald

Deliverance

January, the ice and snow, an open fire and a warming glow
February, the wind and driving rain, buds and leaves coming to live again.
March, a brightness above the hills, the sight of waltzing daffodils.
April, lighter days and longer hours, and morning dew on new-born flowers.

Fred Walker

Encounter

Maisie was waiting for her husband when the werewolf came in.
She bridled. “Take off that silly mask Graham.”
The werewolf growled.
“Stop it, it isn't funny.”
The telephone rang. The voice said, “Hello dear, this is Graham. I'll be late home tonight.”
Maisie's scream echoed round the room.

Fred Walker

If you or your group have ideas for workshops/writing exercises, with examples of how they came out, let us have them to share with others. E-mail them to fedmag@tiscali.co.uk or phone 01782 822327.

New Writers Wanted

Yorkshire Arts Circus have set up a scheme to support Yorkshire based writers in all aspects of their work.

As many writers who've spent years toiling over a hot keyboard will testify, sometimes it feels like beginners have it easy. Most colleges these days run creative writing classes, and there's no shortage of groups and writers' circles to support comparative newcomers to the craft of words.

But what happens to the rest of us? An Arvon course might be an inspiring experience, but by its nature it doesn't come along very often, and only lasts a week. The rest of the time, we're thrown back on our own devices and what support we can drum up among friends, workmates and family, most of whom haven't the faintest idea what we're doing or why we spend so much time doing it.

Over 25 years, Yorkshire Art Circus has encouraged plenty of people to start writing, and has published a good few books. But it's always been aware that there are skilled practitioners out there who just don't get the opportunity to develop their skills to the highest level, or the support in learning how to promote their work. A new YAC initiative, funded by Arts Council England, aims to change all that.

YAC Director Phil Simmons has been involved in formulating the project from the beginning stages. "The WDP is the kind of thing I wish had been around when I first started thinking about writing for a living. In fact, if I weren't involved in managing it, I'd probably apply!

"Of all the artistic callings, writing is almost certainly the one for which there's the least

preparation available. You're expected to just get on with it, sacrifice years of your life for no guaranteed return, persuade jaded agents to work for you, negotiate your way through every passing fad of the



publishing trade, and even if you achieve what passes fleetingly for 'success' in this business - usually meaning publication - you have to keep on running very fast to maintain even your initial momentum.

"The WDP aims to put in place a form of intensive apprenticeship to help writers through some of those initial barriers, combined with creation of an artistic community to provide longer-term peer support. We're intending to support 30 writers a year initially, based in the Yorkshire region.

"As well as traditional print publication, we will be working with participants to explore other means of getting their work out into the world. We're linking up with other interested organisations to promote this. As far as I know, this is the only project of its kind in the UK, but I'd love to be proved wrong. If there's anyone elsewhere doing something similar, let's share ideas!"

The Writer Development

Programme started in June 2004 and currently supports 22 new writers in a wide variety of genres and styles, encompassing prose fiction, poetry and scriptwriting. Participants work one-to-one with YAC staff to define their aspirations clearly, and work towards them using their own personal development plan. This allows each writer to work through a programme unique to them, and helps YAC to tailor activities to the needs of its participants. The schedule of workshops is based on the areas that writers

identify for improvement. They are also expected to submit new work monthly for structured critical discussion in seminar groups; experienced practitioners also present regular workshops on aspects of writing and publishing. Professional writers involved so far include Dave Sheasby and Sophie Hannah.

A mentoring scheme will be beginning shortly, that matches participating writers with established authors for intensive personal support over a period of six to eight months. There will also be a programme of master-classes open to experienced individual writers from outside the programme, at various locations around Yorkshire.

Programme Coordinator Lucy Macnab says: "This programme is all about creating a structure in which individual writers can look at what they are hoping to achieve with their writing. We hope that we can equip them with the skills and

experience to continue developing at the end of our time with us, and are working on plans for maintaining some support for writers when they move on."

Yorkshire Art Circus has a long history of working within and alongside the wider community, and the programme reflects this, developing collaborations and partnerships with other literary and arts organisations. As part of the Wakefield Readerfest, readers' groups and emerging writers are being brought together for a discussion of genre, an event that aims to begin building links between writers and committed readers, and to encourage writing events in libraries across Yorkshire.

Writers on the programme are also encouraged to get involved with the Creative Learning Programme, the short courses that the organisation runs for beginners in creative writing. It is a valuable opportunity for them to gain experience in workshop facilitation, and to build up their CVs.

Kath Powlesland, a writer on the programme, is enthusiastic about what it has to offer. "The Writer Development Programme has been the catalyst I needed to develop a professional approach to writing. I now have an achievable plan for completing my novel, and the knowledge

that the support I need will be available along the way through constructive critical workshops and one-to-one guidance. It is exciting and rewarding to regularly work with other writers on the Programme, sharing experiences as we develop alongside one another. The Programme has opened my eyes to the difference between seeing writing as a luxury for my spare time, and developing the discipline, the self-belief and the passion to write for a living."

For information about the YAC Writer Development Programme, please contact Lucy on 01977-522661, lucy@artcircus.org.uk.

Bitch Lit

Crocus Books are looking for submissions

FWWCP members vicarious wickedness. Commonword/Crocus Books plan to publish an anthology of short stories by women from Northern England. We are looking for stories that feature women anti-heroines: women who refuse to be victims, who defy society's expectations, who put their own needs first and don't feel guilty. They can be sinful, amoral or just plain evil.

There are many fine examples of women anti-heroines to be found in history and literature: Jezebel, Lady Macbeth, Medea, The Wife of Bath, Imelda Marcos, Phoolan Devi, Cruella De Ville, Scarlet O'Hara, Thackeray's Becky Sharp, Weldon's She Devil and all those other divas and bunny boilers. We want you to get in touch with your inner bitch, create your own bad girl persona and indulge in some



Stories can be in any genre but should be contemporary in voice and provide an original and refreshing antidote to Victim/Chick Lit.

Editors include Mary Sharratt and Maya Chowdhry. Mary Sharratt has had two novels published: Summit Avenue (Coffee House Press) and The Real Minerva (Houghton Mifflin), plus many short stories included in literary journals. Maya Chowdhry is an award winning writer who has been produced and published widely. Her most recent work was a two minute film for the BBC, and she was a contributor to the Lammy Finalist - Telling Moments.

We plan to publish the book in Summer 2006.

All contributors will receive

complimentary copies of the book and a small fee.

Submission Guidelines

- * You can submit up to 3 stories (each between 1,000 and 5,000 words in length).
 - * All stories must be your own original work and previously unpublished.
 - * Do not send originals, make sure you keep copies of all work submitted.
 - * Stories should be typed on A4 paper, double-spaced on one side only.
 - * Please send an S.A.E if you would like your work returned.
 - * You must live or work in Northern England to submit work for this collection.
 - * The closing date for submissions is 30th April 2005.
- Send your stories to: Bitch Lit, Commonword, 6 Mount Street, Manchester M2 5NF.**
For more details phone Cathy Bolton on: 0161 832 3777 or email Cathy@commonword.org.uk

R E V I E W S

Het Lopend Vuurtje

het Lopend Vuurtje

Het Lopend Vuurtje, PSC St Alexius Elsene, VU: Tom D'Hertefeldt, Gewidje Boomstraat 102, 1050 Brussel, 32pp 0.50 euros.

Het Lopend Vuurtje is a quarterly magazine based in a mental health unit in Brussels, containing poems, illustrations, reviews and articles in Flemish, French and some dialect. There is a lot of variety, although some of the material is clearly intended for a day centre based readership with workshop timetables, announcements, and interestingly, accounts of education sessions about schizophrenia and Rorty's philosophy. Wim Decorte gives an account of collecting leaves for primary school science lessons, Robrecht Druwe writes about Australia. There is a good deal of enjoyable verse and we liked these especially:

Marc Van Leeuw writes about nature anticipating snow (Sneeuw), the beauty of which is immediately transformed by people with skis, boots and sledges:

Maar daar stormt de mens naar buiten met skis en sleet, en bokshandschoenen, laarzen, borstels, scheppen, strooizout, gejoel, getier, gevloek, gejammer.

Jean-Marie writes a wistful lament for his father who is so far away, and yet so close in his



memory through the seasons, looking for some moment when:

Comme un mythe
je me rappelle de toi si tendre
aussi beau de coeur
qu'un matin de printemps
ou les oiseaux chantaient
et ou un pere etait la...

*Petra Klompenhouwer
Nick Pollard*

Painted Souls

Painted Souls, A collection of poems by MACA (Music and Creative Activities) and Illustrations of Hope by Expressive Art, 20pp, contact The Willows, Lincolnshire Partnership Trust, Grantham.

This pleasing and lavishly produced volume of poetry features glorious colour illustrations and illuminated text for a collection of anonymous verse from a community based mental health project. The art work, which is mostly based on the accompanying poetry, often also incorporates pieces of the text, and in a lively performance by the group held in Sleaford this made an excellent supporting exhibition: some of the original pieces are three dimensional. A lot of the verse is uplifting, with a vein of humour:

"Oh Heck", "Fight the Black Hole with Sunshine". The simple effectiveness of this one particularly struck me:

You...

You don't
you don't have
You don't have to
You don't have to be
You don't have to be good
You don't have to be good enough
I don't have to be good
I don't have to
I don't
I don't have to be
I don't

Nick Pollard

R E V I E W S



Lost Found Time

Lost Found Time, Stockport Arts and Health, Stockport NHS Trust, St Thomas' Hospital, Shaw Heath, Stockport, SK3 8BL, ISBN 0-9539367-2-4

Me, ice

Only kids, hadn't got much holes in our jumpers.
Tripe works next to the market (black tripe, white tripe).
Sneaked in when they were breaking the ice up.
Nicked it, big lumps of ice - just suck up as lollipops when it was hot.
No colouring or flavouring wrap the end in cardboard or what ever you could find.
Just as good as the ones you can buy now
it's too rich and creamy - too cold for me now
can't eat it - gives me ear ache
have to wait it till goes sold melted
'til it's like milk.
And just suck.

Ann Newton

This ambitious book and CD is a marvellous and



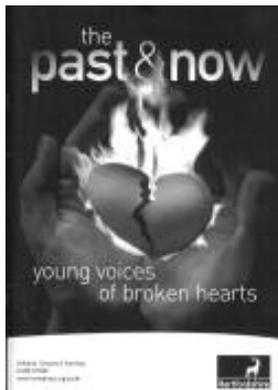
rich compendium of glimpses into other people's lives, memories of holidays and loves, the wars and childhoods of the last century, complemented by art work in pencil and embroidery, felt and collage.

It's a fresh and colourful collection which is a pleasure to dip into and read again and again, a labour of love, and clearly real physical effort, something which frames the economy and intensity of the poems. Sometimes when working with a group of people it is tempting to make compromises, to take material which could really benefit from more work; here the writing is not only good and sharp, but boldly experimental, making a beautiful publication in which each page is a surprise, affective or delightful, and a valuable resource for stimulating writing, or art work, in others.

*Nick Pollard
Heeley Writers*

R E V I E W S

The past & now



The Past & Now – Young Voices of Broken Hearts. Published by Hertfordshire County Council, 01992 556971

This booklet is the culmination of a project with Hertfordshire Social Services in 2003, involving youngsters in care and care leavers. It is a very moving collection of poetry in which the writers give expression to feelings about their past and present circumstances, and their hopes and anxieties for the future.

In 13 year-old Donna's two poems, "Go" is a real outburst of anger at the way she has been treated, and the real hurt she feels comes right through, while in contrast "Happy" is a joyful flood of mutual affection.

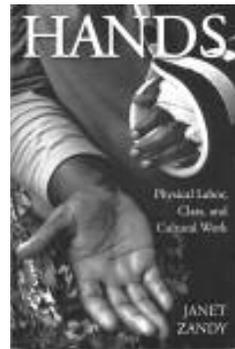
14 year-old Josh gives vent to feeling of loneliness in "To Mr & Mrs No-one" and of isolation in "I can't hear anything." The raw emotion of these two poems hits the reader so hard it is impossible to avoid the writer's feelings.

21 year-old Nadine writes in a more sophisticated style, but even so her "Lost" aches with pain and bewilderment, but also, tentatively reveals a sense of hope for the future.

The overall impression, is the need felt for affection and permanence in order to escape from rejection and insecurity. The heartache is apparent, but frequently this is tinged with anticipation, and in some cases even a positive excitement, that the future can bring something better.

*John Malcomson
Heeley Writers*

Hands



Hands – Physical Labor, Class, and Cultural Work by Janet Zandy, 225 pages, \$21.95, published by Rutgers University Press, New Jersey, isbn 0 8135 3435 6. rutgerspress.rutgers.edu/

This is a fascinating collection of essays by a long time FWWCP supporter Janet Zandy. This book is at the heart of Working Class Studies, and although an academically aimed book, it is accessible because of the strength of feeling behind the writing, and I am pleased to say there is even an essay featuring the FWWCP!

The use of the title *Hands* is central to the theme. Hands can often be a sign of your class; hands are a central part of creative and working lives; hands are people who are workers, and as seen too often in this book, are totally disposable when profit is foremost.

There are many harrowing tales of the exploitation of workers over the past century, including her own father's story, who worked for a chemical company after he left the army, there was little protection from the all enveloping chemicals, and the factory site, now derelict will be a place of contamination for many years.

Another essay which stuck in my mind, and reminded me of the appalling lives of pottery painters in my local area, was that of the dial painters. This was seen as a 'good job', in the 1920's and 30's young women painted watch dials with luminous paint, and to make an accurate job they 'lip-pointed' their brushes. What they were using and 'consuming' was radium. The young women, who were mainly from first generation

R E V I E W S

Italian immigrant families, suffered terrible facial and other diseases. Some authorities even had the gall to say that syphilis was a contributing factor! In the end the families received some small compensation, but US Radium did not have to admit guilt. Sadly this book has a series of similar stories that make you wonder why the revolution didn't happen in the USA!

However there are many insights into the creative depth of working class culture, such as the paintings of Ralph Fasanella, lots of poetry and writings, and some interesting reflections on how her students in Rochester NY react to this work.

As you would expect it has a huge index and reference section. Try to get hold of this important book; it is well worth the effort.

*Tim Diggles
FWWCP Co-ordinator*

Books from railway workers in Nord-Pas-De-Calais

Paths of Iron: publications from Le Comite d'Etablissement des Cheminots de la Region SNCF Nord-Pas-De-Calais

Conflictualite, conflits, et tissu cheminot en Nord-Pas de Calais, Olivier Kourchid, Ifresi, 128pp, ISBN 2-911975-29-4, 2003

This is a sociological study of industrial action in North West France, taken from around 50 witness accounts, covering a twenty year period. The accounts explore the development and the course of key periods of industrial action, and offers some interpretations of the consequences. The text is - as one might expect in a study of trade union history - fairly dense and requires frequent exploration of the dictionary of acronyms given towards the rear, but there is also an extensive reading list for those wanting to know more about the lives of those working on the French railway system.

The memoirs here are often frank and revealing, telling for example of the changes in the workforce which have occurred with the developments in railway technology and efficiency, the nature of the solidarity between various unions involved,

or the challenges presented by world events since the 1950s to workers who adhered to the communist party.

A series of photographs show images of strike action, and people at work. I was amused to see the sticker on the console of the switch operator for the Lille goods yard, saying "I am a Toys R Us kid", where indeed from his vantage point the track below looks like a big train set.

Memoire Cheminote en Nord-Pas-de-Calais, cheminots et chemins de fer du Nord (1938-1948), Le Comite d'Etablissement des Cheminots de la Region SNCF Nord-Pas-De-Calais, Editions Tiresias, Paris, 168pp ISBN 2-908527-68-5, 1999

This is a collection of papers and transcriptions from workshop discussions from a conference at the Centre des Archives du Monde du Travail at Roubaix in November 1995. The material presented here covers the period from nationalisation, immediately before the second world war through to the reconstruction phases immediately after it in one of the largest and more concentrated railways systems in Europe. There are discussions of the heroic part railway workers played in the resistance movement, engaged in sabotaging the very system on which they worked, and of railway operations under the German occupation and under bombardment; it is the story of a railway in the service of its nation, and indeed the cover features a Paul Colin poster with the legend "a public service for the service of the public". There is plenty of factual detail, which includes an overview of the historical development of the railway system in the north of France, discussions of the part union organisation had to play in organising anti-fascist action before the war, during the resistance and in the reconstruction. The sheer scale of the works, rolling stock, and material being moved just prior to the war on this system through one of Europe's more densely industrialised areas is stupendous, but against this there are many testimonies of human interest.

The book contains examples documentation from the war including notices issued under the Nazi regime detailing the deportation or shooting of hostages in response to acts of sabotage. There are pictures from La Voix du Nord and various archives showing the massive extent of the

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destruction caused by bombing and others documenting some of aspects of railway life before and after the war. In one of these, dated 1945, amongst a group of railway workers, some of whom hold musical instruments, is a man in his stage magician's costume, about to take a year's sabbatical in the circus.

Expression de Femmes, Le Comite d'Etablissement des Cheminots de la Region SNCF Nord-Pas-De-Calais, comprising: Songs by Les Belles Lorettes; Chemin Faisant, photographs by Laurence Verrier; Battements d'elles, short stories and poems by Colette Nys-Mazure, 2000.

This is a very pleasing boxed set of publications - the accordion backed train fantasies of Les Belles Lorettes accompany your perusal of Verrier's twenty portraits of women railway workers, train guards, ticket collectors, electricians, security guards and train drivers. The cover photo, showing a woman driving in the battered cab of a diesel electric engine gives a counterpoint to the two uniformed stewards in the modern steel and glass Lille Europe edifice, looking as if they are almost part of the construction. Nys-Mazure's stories begin, appropriately for the region, with La Bete Humaine. As in Zola's novel the railway is ever present, but unlike most railway stories, these are short vignettes snatched between the dictates of the timetable which reflect the concerns of women railway workers caught up in the rhythm of 'the train of life'.

Sauf Dimanches et jours de fete, Victoire Perdrot, Editions Sansonnet, 92pp, ISBN 2-914505-05-01

With the SNCF, anything is possible! Journeying on a train to nowhere between the boozy back streets of Cardiff, Lille Europe, and a Welsh mountain, and through a collection of characters such as the blues singing Gareth Gwyn, this impressionistic story centres on a confrontation with a guard for a lost ticket. Perdrot explores the value of a hard working life which leaves little promise for a future, and contemplates a time when people might have the rights to a decent retirement having given their best years to toil.

Nick Pollard

Loves Bouquet



Loves Banquet, London Voices Broadsheet no 42, 140pp, ISBN 0-9532292-9-7, £5.50 + £1.50 p&p

A rich collection from a group with a good vintage. 'Feijoada completa - the national dish of Brazil', by Diana Dunwoodie, is an early indication of the feast of material this anthology contains. Thus we have Sally Flood's ode to the 'Bendy Bus', more from Diana Dunwoodie on 'Cheap Hotels' and losing bicycles, Gill Oxford's 'The Snowman', and even the late Peter Masken's confession as to his lack of attendance at the Sekforde Arms, where the group meets.

David Kessel revisits the seemingly eternal battle against fascism amongst the other sights of the East End in 'Life Against Death', Bert Ward gives a life to the dead American seaman he found during the D Day landings, and John Oxford describes the surreal experience of applying for an American visa, Alison Clayburn compares governmental economy with truth to the problem of wrapping up cheese in 'When To Cover Up'. London Voices writers offer a lot of original perceptions of current and significant events, but on the whole, the good number of these pieces concerning the Iraq war seem to me to need a little more distillation to give them more bite in their attack on the usual suspects. It's difficult to give a gut response, which these poets need to do, and at the same time to strike home. Perhaps there are times when speaking out and being counted is more important.

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Having said this, David Marshall's 'Retrospect', a poem originally published in 1939, from experience of the Spanish Civil War remains immediate, and Houmi Framroze's 'Mother, An Incident at Rafah, Gaza' focuses on fundamental nature in the human response of a Palestinian woman to a dying Israeli soldier (see page 17).

The poem which struck me most of all from this - aside from its reference to Burning Spear - is Rolf Dragstra's 'Senso commune - in aid of common sense', an extended piece in five parts reflecting on the pace of human technological and social development:

We should protect
The past from the future
And we should protect
The future from the past
Thus creating space, in between,
Presence, for things to grow,
And things to do.

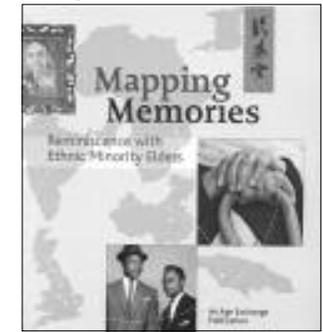
and perhaps, as a humorous illustration of this, Richard Bell's story of 'My First American' describes the inevitable result of attempting to record children singing indigenous folk songs before they are erased by transatlantic culture:

'PUT ANOTHER NICKEL IN
IN THE NICKELODEON...'

...but then feijoada completa is transatlantic culture too.

Nick Pollard

Mapping Memories



Mapping Memories, Reminiscence with Ethnic Minority Elders, edited by Pam Schweitzer, Age Exchange, 204pp plus CD ROM, £15, www.age-exchange.org.uk

This is a valuable multi media resource which aims at developing life story work around the diversity of cultural experience now available in UK society. An introduction gives a basic overview of the approaches and techniques used, but this is supplemented by the material on the CD ROM, which allows you to view examples of how creative activities evoke memories and enable people to work with them. A short series of geopolitical background pieces give a context for the memories which follow in the subsequent sections. These explore themes of childhood and family, schooldays and growing up, courtship and marriage, leaving home, settling in Britain, and growing old in Britain, so that different experiences at the same stage of life can be compared. Each section concludes with suggested activities for older or young people using the book, and there are useful resource lists at the back of the book.

The personal life stories, from China, the Indian subcontinent, Africa and the Caribbean, are lively, with plenty of interesting detail, telling and useful inside data about the ways in which people have made their homes and adapted their way of living into or alongside British cultures. A liberal use of photographs, personal mementoes and more modern images illustrates the text. This carefully thought out and designed pack will be well used in schools or centres for older people, and in promoting intergenerational work.

Nick Pollard

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Voices Talk, Hands Write



Voices Talk Hands Write, Anthology 2003-4 ISBN 0 906411 06 8, £3, Published and available from The Federation of Worker Writers and Community Publishers, Burslem School of Art, Queen Street, Stoke-on-Trent ST6 3EJ

Handsome is as Handsome does. And books don't come a great deal more handsome than this one.

The Anthology "charts a project run by The Federation of Worker Writers and Community Publishers at the Queen Street Resource Centre in Grimsby, aimed at giving service users a voice, and shows the remarkable development in their writing, from initially a few lines about things they like, to their stories, life histories and an insight into the daily lives and needs of people who often have little or no opportunity to be heard."

And what a voice it turned out to be. Rumi, the great Sufi poet, makes constant reference to The Beloved. The voice of The Beloved can be heard all the way through this beautiful book.

In the gentle words of Brian, who tells us "I like going to the pub on my own to have a drink of Coke", and Jayne, who gives us a different take on the idea of work. "I go to college two days a week to do gardening and we dig up carrots, we do lots of work and we work hard, very hard and it's like a proper job."

In Trevor P's moving account of workplace injustice - "The boss in the factory warned me about stealing going on - I thought, what am I working here for then?"

"I explained I've got Learning Difficulties and he said, 'Well, you won't want to work here then.'"

In Mandy's treatise on Dress-Sense and Colour-Schemes. "I've got a purple bedroom and purple quilt, a purple lamp-shade, but I'm glad to say I haven't got purple pyjamas, I've got a nice pink blue white red yellow green nightie."

And what of Kim, on the subject of hobbies? "My hobby is going into town and I like having a leisurely coffee, because I find it relaxing just sitting there and having nothing to do."

I can imagine The Beloved saying those very words. These too - the utterances of Erica and Sally on the subject of Child Care.

"To look after children you need to ...
Make sure they are safe.
Go to college to learn about children.
Practise your reading and writing.
Use Jigsaw Puzzles."

I could go on and on about this book. I could tell you the format is A4, simply and extremely tastefully produced; that it is divided into headed sections; that it contains an introduction by Tim Diggles, the FWWCP Co-Ordinator, who put the book together; that it contains a poem by Pat Smart of Pecket Well College, the Project Leader; that there are pictures of all the contributing writers and a list of the Writing Hands and the other volunteers; but to what avail? It would be rather like offering shadows as proof that the sun is shining. Beauty must be experienced. This book is quite exquisitely beautiful. Read it. Experience the beauty.

My thanks to everyone connected with the project. To Maria Garner, former Chair of the FWWCP, who inspired it. To Pat Smart, who led it in her own inimitable manner. To Tim Diggles, who created such a beautiful book from it. To the Writing Hands and other volunteers. And last and most importantly, the wonderful wonderful poets of Voices Talk Hands Write.

Thank you.

Roy Birch
Stevenage Survivors.

New Fed Website!

After too long the Fed roars back with a new Website www.thefwwcp.org.uk. The new Communications Officer, George Richards writes about the site



To coincide with the publication of this magazine, we are re-launching our newly designed and expanded Website at www.thefwwcp.org.uk.

The aim of this new venture is to give our widely dispersed members a simple way to keep in touch with each other and find out what the Fed and its various member groups are doing.

The site contains the latest news from the Fed together with reviews of its most recent publications. We have provided a downloadable copy of this magazine and will expand this part to include all back issues of the Federation Magazine. You can also find information about this year's Festival.

There is contact information for each group and, if they have one, a link to their own Website. Eventually, each member group could have its own page so start thinking about how you would like your group represented on the web.

An interactive map will help people find a writers' group in their area and there is information for organisations about membership and how to join. We hope many new groups will be tempted to join the Fed in this way.

New writing will feature on the site and submissions of work by members are welcomed. Please bear in mind that reading from the screen

is tiring, so pieces should be very short and concise.

And, of course, there are plenty of links to other useful information.

As part of a long-term project to archive material from the Fed's past, the Website will also contain a virtual collection of all published work by the membership. So check your bookshelves for anything that would contribute to the history of the Fed.

Our intention is to make this Website accessible to all. If, when visiting the site, you find anything that causes difficulties or is unclear or confusing, please let us know. You can email any comments or suggestions to fwwcp@tiscali.co.uk.

Let's make the Fed on the Web a virtual year round festival.

The site has been designed, built and will be managed by me our new Communications Officer. The content will be updated with news and information on a monthly basis.

At the 2005 Festival of Writing, George will be running a workshop about how your group can be involved in the site.

Letter from The Labor Heritage Foundation

Friends,

The Labor Heritage Foundation (Washington DC) has published its annual Catalog of Labor Music, Art, Books and Video with our new and best-selling items. Some samples include:



Music: The Almanac Singers, Billy Bragg, Brooklyn Women's Chorus, Songs of Joe Hill, Lila Downs, Drop the Debt, Dropkick Murphys, Anne Feeney, Joe Glazer, Woody Guthrie, Ella Jenkins, Charlie King & Karen Brandow, Harold Palmer, Utah Phillips & Ani DiFranco, Paul Robeson, Pete

Seeger, Si Se Puede, Sweet Honey in the Rock, Joe Uehlein, Baldemar Velasquez and many others.

Videos and DVDS: At the River I Stand, Bread and Roses, Chicken Run, Christ in Concrete, The Inheritance, Matewan, The Molly Maguires, Norma Rae, Salt of the Earth, 10,000 Black Men Named George and more.



Books: Activist Cookbook, Good Chants for a Lively Picket Line, Our Community of Workers Coloring Book, Hit the Road Bush Parody Songbook, Huck and Konopacki Cartoons, Inventory of American Labor Landmarks, Si Se Puede, the IWW Songbook, Joe Hill, etc.

Plus: Note Cards and Buttons as well as Posters

by Ralph Fasanella, Ricardo Levins Morales, and Martha Tabor.

Order at www.laborheritage.org/catalog.html. And that is only a small sampling.

Solidarity!

Peter Jones



Federation Magazine & Broadsheet NEXT ISSUE

The deadline for submission of articles or reviews for consideration for Federation Magazine issue No.30 and Broadsheet 16, is April 15th 2005, for publication and distribution in June 2005.

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All writing and visual imagery submitted for consideration and publishing, is on the understanding that it may be published on the FWWCP Website, and may be republished by the FWWCP for non-profit making purposes in future publications. It may be edited, at our discretion.

Do not send 'only copies' as we will not be able to return them. We appreciate work on disk or attached to an e-mail, as it saves considerable funds and time retyping.

We are also always looking for original illustrations, photographs, artwork, and pictures.

FWWCP Members can have FREE quarter page adverts. For non-members the charge is £35 per quarter page.

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