

Federation Magazine

The magazine of The Federation of Worker writers & Community Publishers £2 \$3 €3

Exposure Magazine "Preparing Young People for the World that can be"

Broadsheet 17
Inside!

Will Survivors'
Poetry survive?

What is Working
Class Writing?

Meshaw Writers

The Raymond
Williams Awards

Navigating the
Website

Syracuse

Cultural Workers

NIACE

Book Reviews



Issue 31

New Year 2006

fedmag@tiscali.co.uk

www.thefwwcp.org.uk

issn 1330-8598

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FEDitorial

In this issue of all things “FEDish”, (see page 12, or log onto www.fwwcp.org.uk). Federation brings you some of the most explosive writing in the history of the FWWCP. Just turn now to the Broadsheet pages (22 onwards) and the article on page 6 by members Exposure, and you’ll see why. In an issue which asks “What is working class writing?” (see page 9) finding work as vibrant as this reprises the excitement which drew a generation of young writers into the original Federation groups in the 1970’s. It’s like discovering the fire that lit the Fed all over again, and certainly the energies that lit it for me when I began going to Hackney Writers. Ike Enenmoh, Kelly-Dee, JJ Boothe, Kemi Foshoro, Semra Kati, Samantha Akinuli, Luiz Mababu - electric!

In our continuing series of articles about the practice of writing and community publishing, Celia Drummond writes about the lessons gained in rural Devon, but there are also interesting examples of practice from cultural workers in Syracuse, New York State, in adult education from NIACE, and from the Raymond Williams Community Publishing Prize event itself, as Tim Diggles gives his thoughts on the experience of being a judge. The Reviews section has a special feature on some of the books entered for the Raymond Williams competition as well as two important new books from NIACE.

Finally, we’ve seen the closing down of a long running member group, an original member of the Fed, one which has developed many invaluable resources for adult education and basic literacy, Gatehouse Books (see Federation Magazine no.29). Sadly, they are no longer able to continue trading, and a letter on page 9 explains why. At the same time Roy Holland appeals on behalf of Survivors Poetry for support to maintain their ACE grant. Losing Gatehouse has been a terrific blow to the FWWCP, and the threat to Survivors Poetry, especially through the close and very active involvement many of their groups have in the Fed, would also be a great loss. Give them your support.

Nick Pollard

The Federation of Worker Writers & Community Publishers

The FWWCP is a non-profit making umbrella organisation for writers’ groups and community publishers, who wish to share their skills and work with their communities, and promote working class writing. The FWWCP was formed in 1976, and there are over eighty Member groups and organisations around the World, who share a belief that writing and publishing should be made accessible to all. The FWWCP is open to all organisations working with words and language, who agree with our Constitution.

Our aims are:

- To create and support an international community of writers and publishers.
- To offer people greater access to developing skills in participatory writing and publishing activities.
- To encourage people to be heard and read, and write and read creatively, especially those who may be socially excluded.

Issue 31 Cover

The cover features photos of young people who participate in the writing and production of Exposure Magazine. The photos come from their website www.exposure.org.uk.

We are always looking for artwork for the cover, whether it is associated with an article or a piece on its own. If you have something you feel may be suitable, and could either be printed in black and white, or as a duotone, please send it by e-mail to fedmag@tiscali.co.uk or by post to FWWCP, Burslem School of Art, Queen Street, Stoke-on-Trent, ST6 3EJ, or contact us to discuss the matter on 01782 822327.

Survivors' Poetry - can they survive the cuts?

Former FWWCP Executive Committee member Roy Holland appeals for support to help stop ACE cutting their grant to Survivors' Poetry

Survivors' Poetry was founded by four survivors of the mental health system who wrote poetry in 1991, and for the last fourteen years has been the only survivor-led organisation promoting poetry by and for survivors of mental distress through a programme of workshops, training, performances, readings and publications. London events and workshops are organised centrally and there are thirty affiliated groups throughout Britain, which organise their own events. Now it appears that the Arts Council England are withdrawing our core funding from April 2006, which could mean the end of the organisation.

Exciting

This comes at a time when we have exciting artistic plans for new publications, an anthology of survivor work, a series of translations of survivor poets from the past beginning with the *Orphic Songs* of Dino Campana, translated from the Italian by Cristina Viti, which we hope will appear this autumn, a series of booklets by new poets involved in our mentoring scheme, and in the longer term a series of survivor classics.

Networking

We have also just completed a series of networking meetings round the country with a concentration on rural areas, which has led to the formation of new groups. There have been meetings in Taunton, Cambridge, Swansea, Truro, Redruth and Stoke-on Trent. At the same time the Bristol group has taken their survivors' theatre on tour and the Stevenage group appeared at this year's *Ways with Words Festival* at Dartington in Devon, where they were complimented by Paul Hyland, the poet in residence.

Members of the Fed who attend the annual FEDFest will know that several Survivors' Poetry groups, including Stevenage, Manchester, Scotland and the national headquarters in London, are active members of the FWWCP.

Two representatives of Survivors' have been on the FED's Executive Committee over the last four years. In fact there has been an arrangement whereby all new Survivors' Poetry groups are offered the chance of joining the FWWCP free of charge for an initial year. Survivor writers have traditionally been denied access to publication and opportunities in much the same way as the working-class groups which formed the FED thirty years ago, and Survivors' Poetry emphasises that the work has artistic and literary value as well as therapeutic value which gives self-confidence to the author.

Tragic

It would be tragic if Survivors' Poetry were to go to the wall at this juncture. Please do write, requesting the reinstatement of our funding, to Sarah Weir at the Arts Council England (London), 2 Pear Tree Court, London, EC1R 0DS. (e-mail: sarah.weir@artscouncil.org.uk) and to Gary McKeone at Arts Council England, 14 Great Peter Street, London, SW1P 3NQ, (e-mail: gary.mckeone@artscouncil.org.uk).

If you would like to join the free mailing list for our magazine Poetry Express, please write to Survivors' Poetry, Studio 11, Bickerton House, 25-27 Bickerton Road, Archway, London, N19 5JT, or e-mail us at info@survivorspoetry.org.uk.

Roy Holland

The Raymond Williams Awards

Tim Diggles, was invited to be on the judging panel for the 2005 Awards, and writes about the difficulties of choosing a winning book from so many worthy entries

The Raymond Williams Awards for Community Publishing were announced on October 13th 2005, at RIBA in London. The winner was *The Monkey's Typewriter*, a collection of writing by Willesden Green Writers' Workshop; and the runner up *The Kitchen Suitcase*, a book arising from a project about the lives of Jewish women in Gateshead, published by Equal Arts.

I felt honoured to be invited to be one of the judges for the awards, and of course cannot discuss any of the deliberations of the selection committee, but there are issues raised by the entries about what is expected of a prize-winning book.

The judging was very difficult. There were a few books that I felt did not fit the criteria of community publishing, and certainly I had very different values for judging than my two colleagues. In the end there were at least eight entries which I would have felt happy awarding the prize to.

One of the main problems is how do you judge one book against another when so many are so worthy?

Criteria

My criteria began with how engaged the whole process was with the participants, and whether decisions were made jointly and democratically, and the design and finished article was a group decision.

My fellow judges began with literary merit, which for me was a secondary requirement. I looked instead for good accessible design, an interesting and informative content, and when I had read the book, a greater understanding of a community.

I then looked at the care taken over the books, and that bit of extra care makes one book stand out against others of equal merit, and more likely to win an award.

For instance, one entry had wonderful content, but the cover, typeface, and feel of the book dropped it out of the reckoning. One book had a spine and yet no title on it, and the cover design and colour were poor and dull, which would probably put many people off even picking it up. In another the typeface was a heavy sans serif on a very absorbent paper, which made the nearly 150 pages very hard to read (a serif font makes the eye flow, but over many pages

a sans serif tires the eyes). The writer/publisher had worked with a literature organisation, and should have been given much better advice.

Another book, which could well have won, was well designed but no care had been taken over major typographic errors and some pages did not even follow on.

Therefore, where books are generally equal, these sort of things come into play when deciding a winner.

Hedgehog

With technology and training so readily available and accessible today, these sorts of issues should not even have to be an issue.

Even worse was when a well-funded literature development organisation was also involved and things were not right. For instance, one book looked like they had given the designer totally free reign! To read it you had to fold each differently coloured page at all sorts of angles, and the final effect was a sort of multi coloured hedgehog. Maybe a fine idea for a 10 page book, but this was around 200 pages! Surely, we are here to encourage people to read, not put them off by silly design.

The background information publishers included was interesting as many old problems reoccurred; such as getting too many books printed, the costs involved, and difficulties with distribution. (The Fed really must look into that one again)

Impressive

Despite the odd one, it was an impressive group of books that probably only scratched at the surface of what is being published. I feel in the future the Award could include periodicals, and maybe an award for 'Services to Community Publishing'.

I was left with the thought that really one of the silliest things to do is to print books, with so many alternatives available and so much cash tied up in paper and ink, and yet, the accessibility, mobility, and sheer joy of handling a book can never be matched by staring at a screen.

Tim Diggles, FWWCP Co-ordinator

There are reviews of some entries from page 29

Preparing Young People for the World that can be

Based in Haringey in north London, Exposure is a charity that enables children and young people from all backgrounds, including disadvantaged groups and those from areas of deprivation, to participate and achieve their fullest potential in the media.

Exposure publishes the free Exposure youth magazine, the free companion children's magazine Junior Exposure and undertakes other publishing, video production, advertising, design and internet activities.

Supported by Haringey Council, the Department for Education and Skills and Haringey Children's Fund, Exposure generates income through fundraising and through the provision of professional and ethical media-related trading services.

Achievements

Since its launch in April 1996, Exposure has:

- Worked with over 1,000 young people;
- Published over 75 issues of Exposure youth magazine;
- Raised thousands of pounds worth of funding and generated equivalent amounts through trading;
- Won a series of prestigious youth and media awards;
- Attended a number of youth conferences nationally and internationally;
- Made countless appearances on television, radio and in the press;
- Edited a teen edition of the Big Issue;
- Interviewed the prime minister as well as many other public figures and celebrities;
- Launched Junior Exposure, a publication by and for Haringey's children;
- Written the North London Connexions youth charter;
- Established an in-house video editing suite;
- Produced a series of educational videos for young people;
- Launched Under Exposure, a supplement for hard-to-reach young people.



Exposure Magazine

A core activity, the 28-page Exposure magazine is produced regularly, financed through charitable donations, as well as through advertising and sponsorship arrangements with a range of local government clients.

Exposure magazine is designed to educate and inform young people, as well as to guide adults in how to deal with young people. Young volunteers express freely their experiences, feelings and ideas through the publishing of articles, reviews, poems, photographs and illustrations.

As well as traditional teen issues such as crime, gangs, depression, sexual health, bullying, education, race and identity, during the year Exposure magazine featured articles on friendship, video games, reading, celebrity, conspiracies, international travel and cars.

Some 4,500 copies of Exposure magazine are distributed to local secondary schools, colleges, youth groups, North London Connexions offices, public buildings, libraries, sports clubs and leisure centres. The magazine is also posted to over 300 other youth and community groups around Haringey.

Under Exposure

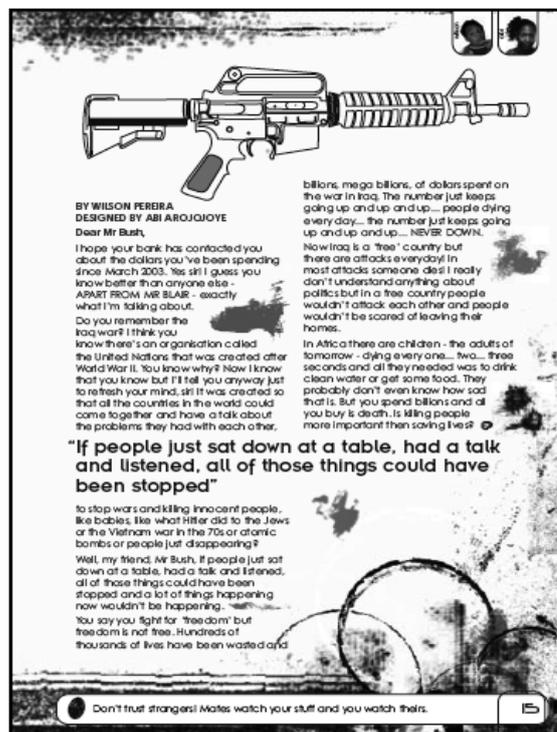
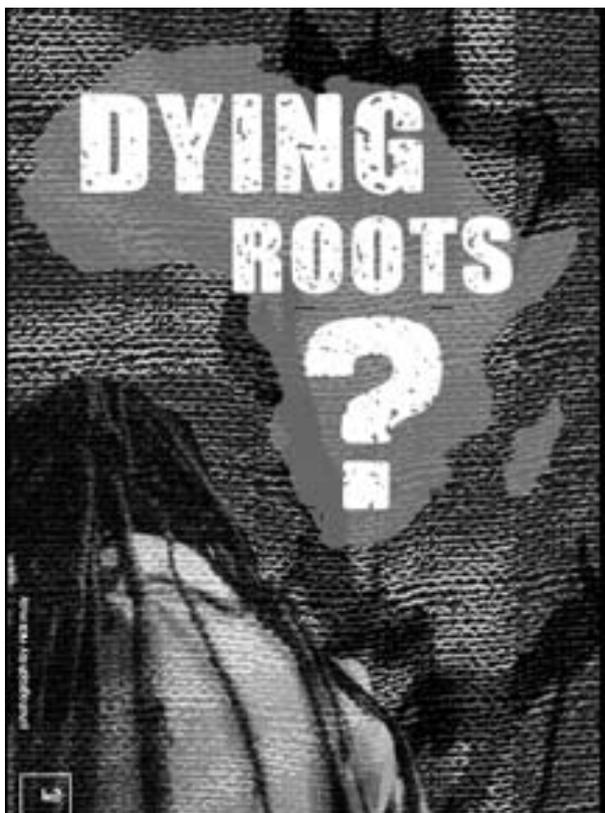
Under Exposure is an eight-page supplement to the Exposure magazine enabling under-represented groups of local young people to have a voice. A grant from The Local Area Network Fund enabled Exposure to produce five such supplements during the year on young fathers, homophobia, abortion, gun crime and bullying.

Exposure has secured funding to produce two more Under Exposure supplements - one on sexually transmitted diseases, the other on binge drinking - and is looking to apply for additional funds to sustain this valuable activity.

Junior Exposure

Financed by Haringey Children's Fund and published once a term, Junior Exposure gives children from local primary schools and play centres a chance to express their views to both young and older readers.

Junior Exposure features stories, poems and illustrations addressing issues relevant to children. The themes for the three issues published during the year were 'A wish come true', 'My favourite things', 'The future of the world' and 'Food'. The next issue will focus on 'Democracy and citizenship'. Exposure is looking to renew a contract with the Children's Fund to sustain Junior Exposure in the next academic year.



Some 7,000 copies of Junior Exposure are distributed to local primary schools and play centres by Haringey Children's Fund.

Young volunteers

Driven by a desire to make a difference, Exposure's young volunteers are on a journey of discovery involving media trainers, youth and community workers, council officers, teachers, politicians, accountants, lawyers and journalists.

They have made countless appearances on television, radio and in the press, and have collected a number of awards for their outstanding work and contribution to their community.

The intangible rewards, however, prove to be more important. The motivation and enthusiasm of the young volunteers is phenomenal. They take their work seriously and feel a genuine satisfaction as they achieve meaningful results, not only for themselves but for other young people and their community.

Exposure's young volunteers develop into confident decision makers, questioning and responsive citizens, gentle and effective peer educators.

Exposure has an in-house accreditation scheme enabling young volunteers to gain certificates of achievement. Accreditation is available in four areas of the media: journalism, graphic design, web design and video production. There are three levels of achievement: apprentice, intermediate and advanced. This year some 30 young volunteers were awarded certificates in recognition of their contribution to Exposure.

Most of Exposure's young volunteers go on to access a range of employment, education and training opportunities. Exposure is regularly contacted by educational establishments and employers to provide references for former volunteers.

Key to success

Exposure is an acknowledged market leader in the rapidly growing area of youth media provision. Young people's agencies and local authority youth services the length and breadth of the country look to Haringey as a model of best practice, regularly contacting Exposure for advice on how to emulate the success. The key to this success can be summed up in one word: freedom.

As an independent charity that is able to generate income through both fund-raising and trading, Exposure is beholden to no one except the young people it supports. As such it is able to attract independent thinking and committed young volunteers, a motivated staff team and high-calibre trustee directors aware that what Exposure offers is not political tokenism from patronizing and interfering local government, but a genuine opportunity to have their voices heard and so make a positive contribution to their community.

*Andy Koumi
Exposure Manager*

For further information log onto www.exposure.org.uk and see Broadsheet pages 22 to 26 for a small selection of participants writing



I feel proud. I've learnt from my experience at Exposure and I can't wait for my work to be published.
Selina



I've gained experience in media and learnt new software packages like Quark and Photoshop. I've been doing illustrations and page layouts, even a front cover! It makes me feel I'm on a professional level.
Leo, Designer



I'm having fun and have learnt to do things I haven't done in my life. I'm treated like an adult. Exposure is the best place I have ever been to in this country.
Semra, Writer and Poet



I've made friends, I've written articles about TV shows, crime and teenage pregnancy. I've learnt how to write. Before I couldn't be bothered to even write a letter!
Siobhan, Journalist



Since I joined Exposure I've learnt how to use various programs like QuarkXPress and Photoshop. I've also been working with the film crew and I've learnt how to edit videos. They have also taught me how to write to attract readers. The experience should help me in the future to get a job.
Leon, Journalist

Towards a definition of Working Class Writing

At FEDfest05 a brave group of a dozen people got together in the early hours of Saturday morning (well, fairly early!) to try and come up with a working definition of “Working Class Writing” - if there is such a thing. There has been an ongoing debate in the Fed about what we mean by “working class”, but we wanted to make the debate more manageable and practical by focusing on the “Writing” aspect.

So yes, we still began with an interesting exchange of ideas on possible meanings of “Working Class”, and whether the working class exists any more. Mr. Blair, of course, would persuade us that we are all working class now - except those of us who don't work at all! But our group felt that this society is still very class-ridden and that there are still major differences between the classes, for example, the different kinds of expectations and ambitions middle class and working class parents have for their children; the importance of formal education; ethnic background; the use of dialect, to name but a few.

And yes, we did get round to the “Writing” part! Though you couldn't call it a definition, here are some of the ideas that came up;

- We decided that working class writing is an attitude towards writing
- It is community based and therefore “local”, either geographically or to a specific group of people
- Working class writers sometimes use their local dialect, and choose not to use the dialect of power, Standard English
- Working class writing is non-judgemental, supportive, and not competitive
- The motivation is not profit but the “celebratory” sharing of experience

So now it's over to you! We'd love to know what your group thinks of our ideas - you agree with them? What would you like to add? Send your ideas to this magazine or bring them to the next Festival!

*Lynne Clayton
Southwark MIND Arts Collective*

Letter from Gatehouse Books, 19 August 2005

During the last twelve months, the staff and management committee at Gatehouse have worked strenuously to build on our earlier successes and to improve our working practices. Much has been achieved and there have been many developments of which we are proud. In particular, there has been a significant increase in sales to augment our income from grant-aid; our administrative and financial systems have improved; our record keeping and data collection and retrieval have been developed further and considerable attention has been paid to our website, both in design and regular updating.

Nevertheless, the long-term sick leave for ten months, of two members of staff from a total of five, has been very difficult to manage. You will know that we are a small organisation with limited resources and a heavy reliance on funding applications to grant-giving trusts. Our reserves have always been relatively small and in recent months, we have been increasingly concerned about our financial viability. Quite simply, we have struggled to employ additional staff to work with writers to produce more books, at the same time as paying substantial sick pay.

At a recent management meeting, having sought professional advice and having once more considered our finances in detail, we were forced to conclude that we could no longer claim to be a viable company and that we should seek to become voluntarily insolvent. You will probably not need to be told that this was an extremely difficult decision and one that we made with very heavy hearts. Nonetheless, our responsibilities as a management committee and trustees of a charity meant that we had no realistic alternative.

We are writing to say that as from 24 August, Gatehouse will exist no longer. We should also like to thank you for the support and encouragement we have received from you, and acknowledge that from our many other friends over the years. Without the tireless efforts and commitment of past staff, management committees and writers we should have closed long ago. It is impossible to contact everyone with whom we would wish to communicate and should be grateful if you would let others know of our circumstances.

With very best wishes and thanks again.

*Vince Young (Chair) On behalf of the Gatehouse
Management Committee*

Meshaw Writers & Strollers Community Publishing

Celia Drummond writes about setting up a writing groups new publishing venture in rural Devonshire

Situated in a village with just 127 on the electoral roll, where many live in scattered homesteads at the end of long muddy tracks, the very notion of this project seems improbable. The venture arose – as many ventures do – from synchronicity, which with a flourish brought together at the right time, a number of people with similar interests.

What follows is an account of a project that is still in its infancy but which is remarkable by virtue of the fact that it is happening at all.

Holistic

In 2004 there had existed for several years in Meshaw a group meeting once a fortnight in a private house (there is no public building available in the village) to share writing ideas and occasionally stage small-scale entertainment. Membership was not large but the aims of the group were ambitious and holistic. Sessions covered different aspects of writing, including examining a range of genre, reading published work and sharing own writing as well as learning from guest speakers.

One of those guest speakers who beamed in to this bucolic spot was Tim Diggles, of FWWCP. The group had recently joined FWWCP and wanted to hear more about the Federation. Tim, however, was also invited to share his knowledge about community publishing, since some members had begun to think about the feasibility of setting up their own

self-publishing scheme, (after all, when the stuff's written what do you do with it if you can't find a way of publishing it?). He showed us samples of literature produced mainly by other FWWCP members, outlined some of the pitfalls associated with community publishing and answered a battery of questions. Reflecting on his visit, the group felt wiser, rather more sober (in every sense) but undaunted.

A few months passed before the second piece of the jigsaw fell into place. The Regional Organiser for UnLtd Awards, Annabel Sampson, was already known by a few in the writing group and when she was in our area she was able to spend an afternoon with us. She immediately thought that community publishing might attract financial support from UnLtd Awards and after checking that the group complied with UnLtd's criteria she suggested that three members should complete application forms for Level 1 funding. If successful, these three people would spearhead a project that would involve and benefit the whole group.

Arduous

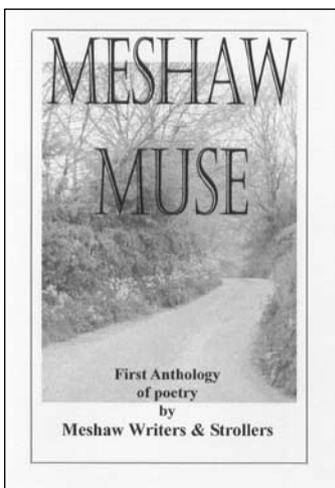
The maximum award at Level 1 was £5000, so when informed that UnLtd was prepared to make an award of £4000 the group was delighted. However, when it comes to printing equipment £4000 is not a great deal to play with. The result was that decisions as to what it was essential to purchase were protracted and

arduous. Everyone was conscious that this money had to be spent as wisely as possible, and of the need to balance making economies with obtaining quality products. Setting up was a 'go-slow' process, which became fraught when the printer was found to be faulty on delivery, as was its replacement. In fact the technician called to inspect the second brand-new machine said it was in the worst condition of any printer he had ever come across. Eventually, a third machine was supplied and so far, fingers crossed, it appears to be a case of "third time lucky"!

A further embarrassment was that when news that we had won the Award was disseminated via the local media, the group received a sheaf of enquiries from authors living up to a 100 miles away about the possibilities of having their work published. At that point we had a guillotine and a binding system but no printer!

Pipe Dreams

Even when we did get a useable printer we soon realised that it takes hours of concentrated work to turn a rough manuscript into an acceptably finished book, one that we could be proud to sell. Any pipe dreams we had harboured about becoming community publishers overnight quickly dissolved. We continue to make lots of mistakes, but we try to learn from them so that they are not repeated. Our ambitions have been modified as we discovered that what we can



manage to do is limited. Group members have other things to do in their lives and whole business of publishing using the equipment available to us is slow and labour intensive. We have decided to concentrate on work by group members and for others residing in our immediate vicinity, so at least for the present, the ethos of MWS Community Publishing is to facilitate the production and marketing of short books by local mainly unpublished authors and to help other local voluntary groups by producing publicity material for them. To date six titles are available, *The Bread Horse* by Elizabeth A Hill; *Epona* by Celia Drummond; *Grandma's Tales for Ponies & Two-Legged Friends* by Celia Drummond; (all three of the former books are illustrated by Claire Blick) *The Women in Nelson's Life* by Joyce Gordon; *Meshaw Muse* an anthology of poetry by various members of the group, and *Life As I See It* - a collection of poems by group member Brian Muchmore. In addition to the books, posters, tickets, invitations and auction schedules have been printed in support of local events.

Market Day

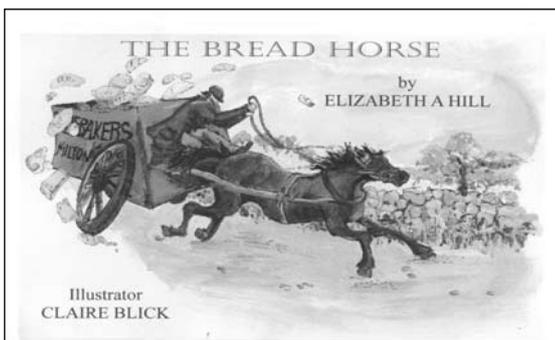
On the plus side the nearest bookseller - some six miles away - has given us a great deal of encouragement. Not only has the

shop displayed and sold our books but also the proprietors have refused to deduct commission from sales. It is on their premises that we will hold our official launch on Thursday 17 November. A Thursday has been chosen to coincide with Market Day when the small town is usually bustling.

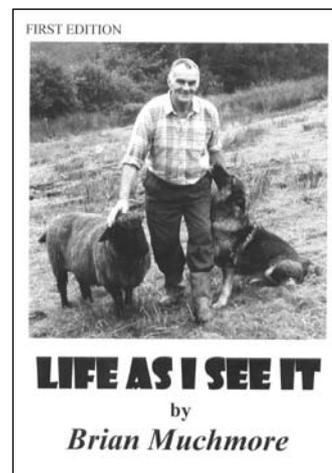
Another good point is that amongst the group's members is a professionally trained proof-reader (an incredibly valuable asset!).

Tempted

One difficulty with which we have wrestled is the question of how much to charge for our books. We had hoped that as community publishers we would be able to offer products at low cost and it has been a disappointment to find that printing, on our scale, cannot be managed as cheaply



as we would have wished. Even with unpaid labour, paper and ink purchased without the advantage of bulk buying are expensive and this has to be reflected in the prices charged. We had also not taken on board the amount of wastage - poor copies that have to be scrapped, or good copies sent gratis to reviewers, etc. - that would be generated. At first we were tempted to sell below production costs but as this would not lead to a sustainable project it has been decided to price our books fairly realistically. We have the advantage of being able to print a few books at a time, so it seems best to sell small quantities - say



three or four books - and then print replacement copies. We also have to be selective about where we sell our books: having been invited to a plethora of summer fetes in neighbouring villages paying an average of £5 for a stall, we soon found that in the main people do not go to village fetes to buy new books. However much publicity may be gained from having a presence at such events we have to be careful about how we spend our five pounds.

Marketing

In fact, marketing remains an issue we need to get much more clued up about and any advice or help readers can give would be greatly appreciated. At present we don't even have a website!

The next steps we hope to achieve are to publish several more books by local writers and to start a much needed village newsletter. Longer-term plans are to apply for Level 2 funding from UnLtd and to expand gradually. With luck MWS Community Publishing will be around for a long time!

For more information on anything mentioned above, please contact Celia Drummond on 01769 550890 or at cdrummond@ho2002me.fsnet.co.uk.

There will be reviews of some of the books in future issues of Federation Magazine.

Home is just one click away

George Richards, explains what you will see on the Fed's website - www.thefwwcp.org.uk

The new and expanding FWWCP website has been available on the internet since February 2005, and now seems to be as good a time as any to introduce it to our magazine readership. In this article I hope to present the Fed's initial aims for the website, describe its structure and therefore making it more accessible to readers who may be unfamiliar with the internet, and to outline our plans for its development in the future.

The Fed has had a presence (and several addresses) on the internet for many years. This has been successful in raising our profile, especially overseas, and has attracted new members from as far afield as North America, Europe, and Australia. One difficulty with a federation of writers groups with such a geographically spread membership is how to create a sense of community. Our annual festival does a brilliant job of bringing people together but unfortunately this is just one weekend a year. Also cost and other factors limit who is able to attend. It was decided that a managed website would enable our disparate membership to enjoy being part of a larger community, not just at the festivals but throughout the year.

Archive

For some time there has been the intention of forming an archive of all Fed publications and it was felt that this should also be made available on the internet. Incorporating the archive into our website would make permanent access to this wealth of material very easy for members and others interested in our history. When the website was launched it contained several back issues of the Federation Magazine and this collection has been growing ever since. At the time of writing the site contains all the magazines published between Autumn 1998 and the present as well as a couple of earlier editions.

One important factor in the plan was that the content should change on a regular basis. Each month, usually on the 1st, the entry page is re-written, pointing the visitor to the newest additions to the site or the latest news about the Fed and its

The screenshot shows the FWWCP website homepage. At the top, it says '5 November 2005 | Home |' and 'The Federation of Worker Writers & Community Publishers'. The left sidebar has a 'Main Menu' with links to Home, About the Fed, Join the Fed, Groups, Festival 2005, Festival 2006, Events, Publications, New writing, Links, Help, Contact, and Next Update. The main content area has a 'Welcome to our Home Page' and 'Two more editions of the Federation Magazine are now online.' It features a 'Mystery Magazine' section with a 'WORKER WRITER' cover and a 'FEDFEST06' banner. The right sidebar has 'Festival Workshops' and 'Sounds Interesting!' sections. The footer has a small navigation bar.

members. These continual changes are intended to attract visitors on a regular basis to see what's new, what's happening in other groups and to create a sense of involvement. It is therefore important that the site should be varied, relevant, easy to find, accessible to all and not hampered by flashy moving graphics that will only work on the latest, expensive computers.

The internet is ideal for spreading news and information. The FWWCP website is the place where its members can read the latest on such things as the next festival, the Federation Magazine and other publications, new groups joining, in fact anything FEDish.

Of course, groups in a community need to keep in contact, not just with the organisation but also with each other. This is especially true for our far-flung members. On our site you will find a complete list of member groups with telephone, postal and e-mail contact details. In order to encourage individuals to seek out and join our writers groups, we have a UK map and a world map, making it easy to find information on groups in their area.

The FWWCP website is designed to be user-friendly for everyone, including those who are coming to the internet for the first time. We have tried to keep the structure as simple and clear as possible but not allow this to restrict its content. The site is divided into areas of interest, e.g. publications, the FEDfest and groups, but each section can be reached directly from any other on the site. The top and left side of every 'page' (there's our first bit of jargon. Have a look at the box/panel/section at the bottom for an explanation of terms and how to use the website) is identical. This means that as you move from page to page you can be sure you are still viewing the Fed site.

Home Page

Usually, the first page you see is the Home page. As with all pages on our site the top contains the Fed logo and a banner announcing the FWWCP. Below this is the current date, then a list of pages which varies depending on where you are on the site, and on the right, two links – Back and Help. A left hand panel contains the Main Menu, listing links to the main areas of the site and below this, a calendar telling you when to expect the next update. At the bottom of the page is an in-line menu, duplicating the main menu. The remaining space holds the contents for each particular page, be it information, a poem, a map or a picture. Most pages also have boxes on the right for extra, relevant information.

At present the main areas of the site are:

- **About the FED** – Who we are and what we do.
- **Join the FED** – How to become a member and downloadable application forms.
- **Groups** – This is a large section with comprehensive information about our membership and how they may be contacted. A recent sub section is the Group Pages. Each member group is entitled to a page on the Fed website where they may present themselves in their own words. So far we have only three groups represented. If your group is not one of them, visit the website and

follow the links Home/Groups/Group Pages for a simple guide on how to design one. Or just send your group's details to the office. Your page could be up there next month.

- **Festival 05** – Contains reports and many photographs from the 2005 FEDfest at Alsager Campus. Another new feature is the soundtrack of the Saturday Evening Performance. Just a click and you'll be able to hear each group's readings.
- **Festival 06** – Up to date information on next year's Festival including booking forms and online payment.
- **Events** – We've had to announce this section as still under construction as we need you to let us know of your group's upcoming special events.
- **Publications** – Another large section. Sub-sections include Group Publications, Fed Books for sale and the Federation Magazine. Here you can download, read and print the current magazine and the growing back catalogue including the first issue. We also have the Fed's first ever magazine Worker Writer No.1, only recently discovered.
- **New Writing** – An opportunity for members to publish their own writing.
- **Links** – Some useful links to other sites on the internet.
- **Help** – Assistance on using the site.
- **Contact** – How to contact the Fed.

Converting

Work has already begun on converting the magazine archive into separate articles, one to a page. At present the magazines are available in Adobe Acrobat PDF files (a very common and convenient way of making printed documents available on the net) however, each edition is complete and cannot be readily used as research material. By separating each item in this way, we hope the archive will become a versatile resource for serious (or inquisitive) research. This

In case you were wondering who the present writer is, I should introduce myself. My name is George Richards and I am responsible for building and maintaining the FWWCP website. I work closely with the Fed co-ordinator Tim Diggles and regularly consult with members of the executive.

A brief biography may go: After gaining experience in technology and art I eventually combined the two by becoming a sound recordist in the film and TV industry. This has given me a wonderfully varied career that has lasted twenty years. Recently however I decided to move away from the stresses of this way of life and, pursuing my interest in computers and the internet, I began designing websites.

I live in the Cotswolds with Christine and our son, Joe.

is quite a slow process and so all material in the archive will first be made available as PDF files.

Other things we hope to add to the website in the near future are a way of searching the whole site for particular words or phrases and a means by which each visitor may have some control over the appearance of the pages by choosing preferred text and background colours.

More long-term plans include the possible creation of an online forum where members may post their comments, present their writings for criticism (constructive of course) or set up various dialogues with other members. The archive will continue to increase and will eventually include all past publications. Material first appearing on the Fed website will also become part of the online archive.

Our intention is to make our website accessible to everyone, including those who may have never before ventured onto the web. No matter what your previous experience may have been, go to www.thefwwcp.org.uk and check it out. Why not take this article with you to guide your first few steps? I'm sure you won't need it for long.

There is something you could do for us. Let us know what you think of the site especially in respect of clarity and ease of use. Don't forget, if you do get lost, you're only one click away from Home.

Bon Voyage.

George Richards

In issue 32, George will giving a beginners guide to Launch Yourself Onto the Internet!

What inspired me to write and why I write...

As many writers will say, writing is in the blood. I have always had a passion for writing, whether it's been poems, stories of varying length or letters to a multitude of pen-pals. I am twenty-seven now but I have been writing (creatively of course) since I can remember, I cannot explain where it came from except perhaps the depths of my vivid imagination. My parents have probably been my biggest inspiration, they are the sort of people who scrimped and saved to be able to pay for outlandish hobbies I wanted to pursue – drama classes; archery; horse riding; canoeing – you name it, I've tried it! Yet the single most wonderful gift they gave me was a computer. It was a Commodore 64 with the old Word Star programme; you know the one, the black screen and green letters. It was fantastic! My parents gave me the opportunity to write what I wanted when I wanted and they sat back and let me do it, and unlike the plethora of other hobbies, I haven't given up on writing.

English has always been my favourite subject (so much so I am embarking on a PGCE English course this year), and I have many favourite writers who have provided me with much inspiration to write. However, life in general has been a great source of inspiration, especially for my poetry. I love writing about people I've met at work or at university and some of these characters have crossed in to my novels too. It's more than just what comes out of my imagination; I enjoy the research element too.

Almost everything I write has had some background reading, for a horror story about a vampire I had to read up about the period I wanted to set it in; for a romance set in turn of the century New Orleans I had to read about Creole society; for a story about a woman going to court for murder I had to research court procedures – so it's not just writing which gets my juices flowing, but researching too!

Writing is an immensely wonderful way to let out bottled up feelings and emotions, whether good or bad. I can be the main character in my novel and win the day, something which doesn't usually happen in real life! I also write because I do want to become a published author (every writer's dream I guess) yet for me I want to share my writing and allow others in to the little worlds I have created so that they can escape real life through reading just as I do through writing. Sounds like a cliché I know, but it is a true fact too.

Writing is the most fun anyone can have on their own!

Alishia Mole

AB Writers, Stoke-on-Trent

*We'd like to hear from you about why you write and what inspired and inspires you to continue...
Send by e-mail to fedmag@tiscali.co.uk or by post to FWWCP, Burslem School of Art, Queen Street, Stoke-on-Trent ST6 3EJ*

Broadsheet 17

YOU can't sit here, Rosa Parks - 7053

She
sat down
not because
she was tired
but
because she was tired of
humiliation.
Constant humiliation
of her colour not being allowed
to sit in his colours seat
and led directly to
"I have a dream".

s'amazing
how little acts of defiance
like nailing a "diet" to a door, Luther,
or
following on from anothers act, Martin,
can make world
shattering changes
merely because
one woman
sat down
in another mans' seat

(as a tribute to one woman who died
yesterday but left her legacy that freed
others)

*Eric D Davidson
Lockerbie Writers*

Red

Trickles down my arm, keeping me calm,
From watery, glossy and bright,
To thick, dark and slow.
As the air begins to dry,
I can see before my eyes,
A skin begins to form, it's no longer warm,
Sticky like glue,
Then set like cement,
What a wonderful colour,
Wonder where my pain went?

*Nicola Hussain-Hayward
Southwark MIND Arts Collective*

Broadsheet publishes writing
by FWWCP members and
supporters.

In this issue we feature
writing by members of
Exposure Magazine (featured
on page 6 in the magazine),
from north London.

We look forward to receiving
your writing whatever form
it takes. It is difficult to
publish pieces which are
longer than one page of
A4, however as our website
develops we plan to feature
longer pieces than we are
able to publish here.

We aim to publish something
by most people who send
work to us, but we will not
publish a piece which goes
against the 'spirit' of the
FWWCP.

In a future issue of the
Magazine we will include an
article about our ethos.

If you wish to submit
writing for consideration for
Broadsheet 18, the deadline
is May 21st 2006.

E-mail to:

fedmag@tiscali.co.uk

Post to:

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

Manuscripts will not be
returned, so please keep a
copy for your records.

Broadsheet 17

Where be that blackbird...?

He sees I, I sees he, each knows the other's watching,
the blackbird in the dogwood hedge,
me, hanging washing, mouth full of pegs.
he scutters to a neighbour's shed, bird-quick,
head bobbing round the fix of his eye,
then folds his feathers to the climbing frame,
a tactician, inching, claiming his space.
Claw by claw, peg to peg, each to our own,
to him the early worm, me the underpants,
and in his beak the day already seized.

*Nick Pollard
Heeley Writers, Sheffield*

The Mounted Patrol

From that moment
whole day was saddled horses.

In bits and reins
they cracked
clods up the cycleway,
arched into the magnifying light.
of the flyover
clip-clop clip-clop in ratio to unicorns.

Brindled fetlocks and withers.
The sun tint was embellishing
from a timeless deep space
and where the constabulary helmets
teetered and swayed
they were all ears and eyes.
I almost wished them knights,
measured in hands
with airborne plumes of titan-red
contrary with make-believe
Parma violet capes.

a blackbird cheeped notey
"ooky-yooky-kooky-kooky".

*Christopher Barnes
Newcastle-on-Tyne*

Reflections

The Warehouse huddles by the River.
Broken windows, lead stripped
From the roof.
Wind, rain and snow, unchecked,
Enjoy the game.
Tearing the walls, blindly,
Maliciously.

Bird spattered, mice nibbled,
It looks at its reflection
In the water.
It does not see the desolation,
Rotting rope and crumbling hoist.
It looks at its reflection
In the River.

Silvered by the sun,
Fish swim through its blind eyes.
Tangles of water-weed,
Drift through gaps in the roof.
The light shimmers,
And once again, there is life,
Movement, and the sound of voices,
Long dead.

*Amyon Corbould-Turner
Grimsby Writers*

Broadsheet 17

Vida

ese pequeño milagro que
se reproduce sin cesar
de su seno brotan sonrisas; ilusiones;
vivencias etereas; algunas eternas
Vida
todo nuestro ser
nuestra herencia
y nuestro patrimonio
que despilfarramos sin fin.
Vida que se escapa por las
yemas de los dedos.
Vida, vida vivida de forma vana
inconsciente
automatizada,
absurda,
trivializada
cuando la esencia deja paso
a la pura supervivencia;
sumatorio de actos estériles,
prisas que se acumulan
en un rincón de la habitación:
cuando olvidamos quienes somos; dioses
y nos comportamos como mendicantes
desconocedores de nuestra grandeza.
Quién soy?
Cuál es mi propósito en esta vida?
claudicar al sistema
hipotecar sueños e ilusiones
esbozar excusas incoherentes
escondernos de la realidad,
gemir ante la adversidad como borregos,
seguir dictados y normas
preceptos y leyes impuestas
vivir al son que nos dicte el gran hermano.
O por un momento debemos detenernos,
ralentizar el paso,
recordar quienes somos
marineros del universo,
sentir como el aire penetra
en nuestros pulmones;
como los alveolos se expanden,
y la vida nos va fecundando,
como una acequia que suspira
entre las huertas,
las fibras musculares se despiertan;
se tensan
centellean
el ser se yergue
la Vida retorna
al Alma canta.

Life (translation)

is a small miracle which
is reproduced without cease
from its breast flow smiles; hopes;
ethereal experiences; other eternities
Life
all our being
our heritage
and the resources escapes
we never stop wasting.
Life which escapes from
the tips of our fingers.
Life, life vivid and vain
unknowing,
automatised
absurd
trivialised
when the last essence of pure survival,
the sum of sterile hurried acts
piled in the corner of the room:
when we forget who we are; gods
and we behave like beggars
who do not understand our nobility.
Who am I?
What is my purpose in this life?
To give in to the system
mortgage dreams and hopes
sketch incoherent excuses
skulk from the truth,
sheep like, bleating in hard times
following dictates and norms
rules and good information
to live according to
the voice of Big Brother.
Oh, just for a moment we should stop,
slow the pace,
remember that we are
mariners in the universe,
feel how the air fills our lungs;
how the alveoli swell,
how, as if we are gardens,
the life water irrigates us,
wakening the muscle fibres;
tensing
twinkling
the being awakes
Life returns
the Soul sings.

Delfin
OT Without Borders

Broadsheet 17

Pre-ambule: *This is about a lad from Barking that I had to write about, there is a TV program "A Band of Brothers", and this is what a company of Squadies become, this is about one such brother.*

Dick Watling

1924/1945

We bumped into each other
Festooned with haversack
Kitbag and side pack

He a big lad with a grin
that nothing could dispel
except

**King Neptune was the boss
No one could have a grin that wide
In the Atlantic Ocean his domain

For three whole days
the grin was missing
And he was not alone

Land ho! a shout and if by magic
Across Dicks face the happy
grin appeared It grew even wider

At the generosity of South African folk
Of food of every description

Another ship and Jim and I took
Control of his money as he was wont
To visit the canteen too often between

Semolina and sausages
of dubious origin
On the menu at every meal.

Bombay, Dick was happy here
He could swim, eat English type food
And doze in the midday heat,

And not do as mad dogs
and English men
Are said to do

Another ship, he and a five of his friends
Are volunteered for coal heaving
His smile started to disappear until the

Words 'fore and aft galleys
were mentioned
His intuition proved absolutely right
Ginger cake and tea by the pint

Abadan, miles and miles of Iraqi desert
and Dick's cheerful smile beneath his
crashhat could be seen

News and Gossip imparted
with a happy smile
He was the mail delivery man

ROME

I never saw his grin again
But knew others would

Italy would have suited him
Spaghetti, Wine, and beautiful women
Fresh fruit growing on the trees ...

Just north of Bologna in an assault boat,
on a river, overlooked
by a German machine gun post, he died.

*M.E Wilsher.
Newham Writers Workshop*

Broadsheet 17

Granddad

My grandfather claimed, each time we came to visit,
That I would eat him out of house and home,
I was a chubby child and it probably would have been true,
Had he lived a few more years,
But he didn't. He left an old woman all alone,
And a young one missing the obligatory tears.

I grew up thinking that when I was big,
I would do as my older brothers and sisters did,
Which was take it as a joke, when he said,
"There's no more room in the inn today".
But anyway he did not live, for me to tell him,
That I thought him a grumpy old man who I'd rather dead.

And maybe I was sorry that I drove my scooter into his trouser leg,
Or that the little springy green men made so much noise,
But did it have to be a sin to not say goodnight to you,
Before I went to bed,
Or make a mess with the toys.

I was just a kid. And anyway you never took me fishing, or to the races,
and I knew you took my Dad.
So you can't have been surprised that amongst all those faces,
I was the one who thought I'd have to slam my hand in a car door,
Or something, to make me sad.

And there must have been something,
Because my Gran read a leaflet on God,
And did not go to bed that night,
And Dad sobbed, which is still only the second time I've seen him do that,
In all my life.

And Dad said something about before the rot setting in,
Was I part of that rot?
Your professional football playing days would have been somewhere to begin,
Or the war. Not a lot. But something for you to know,
I was listening.

It falls on deaf ears now, but I think of you to squishy crocodile sweets,
And when there's no-one to tell Gran that it's number round time,
And when she puts number four on the horses, once in a while,
Because you never approved of gambling. So I wasn't blind.

But I never did get it. Until yesterday.
Taking that All Sorts book off the shelf.
The one with all your poetry in.
Your way. My way.

*Ellen Marsh
Harrogate*

Broadsheet 17

Time

Once there was time, time for other folk.
Now, there's time for nothing, it's gone beyond a joke.
Once there was time to stop and chat, to neighbours, friends, of this and that.
Time to help a friend in need: now one who helps is rare indeed.
Far easier to pass the buck, "Go on the State," they say, "tough luck."
Once there was time to pause awhile, watch nature's treasures with a smile.
See baby birds that scarce can fly, flap wings at mum, just hear them cry.
Time to marvel at the trees, their sturdy trunks, their boughs, their leaves.
Time to wander 'mongst the flowers – time then stretched, for hours and hours;
seeing colours of every hue, red and orange, green, yellow, blue,
when scent exquisite filled the air: yes, time enough to tarry there.
Time whilst breathing in that air, to stop and wonderingly stare,
at lambs and horses, cows and such, to name all things would be too much.
Now there's time for nought but self, make sure you've got last can off shelf.
Matters not another's dying, hungry, cold, in terror crying.
What would they give, to have the time to sit and share this land sublime?
But we who have don't give a dime, we don't care, there is "NO TIME".
I pray that GOD will be benign; I pray that HE will have some time.
Time to fill their empty cup, time to help their raising up,
time to hear their cry, their plea, time to help the blind to see,
time to ease their awful suffering, time to accept their humble offering.
Should they by the wayside fall, time to help them, save them all.
Then, I pray that I might be, privileged to serve at HIS decree.
So when HIS KINGDOM, comes again,
"You've had your time" won't be HIS refrain.

*Brian Muchmore
Meshaw Writers, Devon*

To Die For

I saw a car to die for it went speeding down the lane,
the driver was a nutter, he really was insane.

He's heading for an accident he's heading for a crash,
he's always in a hurry, he says he's, "Got to dash."

He really should slow down a bit and try to catch his breath,
he won't be late forever or late for his own death.

I can hear him in his funeral car complaining that he's late,
a ghostly voice will call out, "Put your foot down mate!"

*John Kerr
Liverpool*

Broadsheet 17

Resurrection

Though you are not with me,
two rosy candles I choose
and I attend the Resurrection.
Church small and old Byzantine like,
churchyard large
and full of people.
Russians around
make you think of Lev.
And how not?
He wrote of Resurrection.
The Holy Light
we do wait....
one, two.... Some moments pass
the first candle appears
with fainted flame
fighting shyly against
the fresh spring wind,
another candle lights
then another... till
all yard is lighted
like a small birthday cake
against the clean dark starry night.
Each one with candle in hand
wishes, I presume for
his life own resurrection
as cars and busses on the street
with lighted lamps
go speedily their way.
Few passers by
stand by illuminated shop windows
as others glance towards
the churches gathering.
Enthusiastic youth-ones
throw fireworks.

The Parasite

Everyone hates me to begin with
Absolutely loathes me
But then
I grow on them.

Poetry

Poetry is
Who the child is
As forgotten
In words.

*Noam Livne,
AB Writers, Stoke-on-Trent*

The bells finally
ring happily,
and I think
“Nothing opens the heart
more than the bells”
Is thins sound
the Resurrection marsh?
The way back I take
Holding my lighted candles
side by side:
one for me
one for you.

The holy flame
of the one extinguishes
only to be lighted
by the other
The holy flame
of the other now extinguishes
only, to be aided
by the first.

Smiling and sparkling happily
I feel my glance
on them.

Though you're miles away
I found the best way
of having you with me.

I wonder...
“Is this my soul's resurrection”

*George John Papparis
Greece*

Beyond the Door

I stand at the window looking out
There is a void in me,
An abyss which I cannot fill
Since the day you left me.

I stand at the open door
Looking for you, trying to find you.
I cannot follow you.
I cannot go beyond the door.

*Alishia Mole
AB Writers*

Broadsheet 17

Pages 22 to 26 publishes writing by 14 to 18 year olds, first seen in issues of the Exposure Magazine, featured in an article on page 6. To see them with the great graphics and much more writing, go to www.exposure.org.uk

Get Down

Depression is the fourth most common disability in the World. About 15% of people will suffer from it at some stage in their lives.

Many people seem to think that depressed people feel sorry for themselves, are simply looking for attention and should just snap out of it. The problem is they can't. People don't choose to become depressed. There is no single reason why depression affects people.

It can be caused by stressful events, worrying about the future or an imbalance in the delicate chemistry of the brain. It could hit anyone, at any time, for whatever reason. And when it does it's not nice, believe me.

My dad suffers with depression. My mum and I have had to live with it all our lives. Most of the time it's just verbal abuse but sometimes when it gets really bad he might hit my mum. This only happens when he doesn't take his medication. He doesn't like taking the tablets because they make him feel weird. He says he doesn't feel like himself. When I first started to notice my dad shouting at my mum, I would hide away in my room and turn my music up full blast. I'd cry myself to sleep. I never knew what to do. I just thought that he was having a bad day or that it was just a normal argument that parents have. I never knew my father had a real medical condition. My mum would be very strong and carry on as normal but we never knew when he might snap. As I became older I learnt to deal with it. Now I can tell when he's getting wound up so I suggest we go out. He would never make a scene by shouting at or hitting my mum in public. My dad has left home before for a few days when he got too angry. My mum would tell me he'd gone but it never bothered me. I didn't care. I just wanted to carry on as normal. Sometimes I never cared if he came back at all.

A couple of times when it got really bad my dad would tell us that he wanted to die. He told us that we shouldn't be surprised if we didn't see him the next day because he would probably be lying somewhere dead. He just wanted to kill himself.

Once it got too much and my mum went to see a solicitor about a divorce. They went to see a marriage councillor. This actually helped for a few weeks but then it all started again.

I'm not quite sure what happened next but for some reason my dad went to the doctor. My dad always said that there was nothing wrong with him, but this time it was different. He accepted that there was a problem and he wanted to get better.

I used to do everything I could to stay away from my dad but after he got some help I started to notice a change. I saw the dad I used to love. My real dad.

My mum and I can tell when my dad isn't taking his tablets. He starts to get bad tempered and he doesn't want to do anything. So we do all we can to help him. Sometimes that doesn't help. We just leave him and he realises there is something wrong and starts taking his tablets again.

At the moment my dad is very happy and I have a really good relationship with him. But you never really know how long his happy moods will last.

Fiona

Broadsheet 17

Baby

My baby boy or girl
How I love you so.
You were so small nine months ago.
Now you've grown in my womb,
Taking up space, leaving no room.
I rub my belly to let you know
I'm here with you and you're not alone.
I play you music to calm you down
Because I know you like that sound.
I feel you kick to get my attention.
My baby, I'm here, with love and affection.
I wonder how you'll be
 when you come out of me.
I wonder what you'll look like
 when you come out of me:
Your hair, your eyes, your lips, your nose,
Your tiny little fingers and
 your tiny little toes.
I can't wait to hold you in my arms
With a smile on my face
 from your sweet charm.

Kemi Foshoro

Just You

Stop. Stop. Don't wake me up.
It's you again in my dream.
Don't move your hand on my hand.
Don't move your lips on my lips.
This is just a dream.
Don't wake me up without you.
Ok, wake me up, but just you.
To kiss your lips and to hold your hand.
But wake me up, just you.

Semra Kati

First Period

The morning bell rings and school begins.
Black girl walks down the school corridor.
Boys stop and stare.
Man, that girl's bum's big, go on,
 touch it for a dare.
Nah man, I hear she'll fight you.
No she won't, I hear she likes you.
Why me?
Coz your nearly the same height as her,
 plus your in the same class as her.
Look, are you gonna do it or not man,
 she's soon gonna walk pass man.
Why don't you just shut up man!
Look, If you don't do it your out the gang.
Try know if she boxes me
 I'm gonna box her back
Yeah, yeah, whatever,
 you can't handle that.
Alright, stand back.
 Here goes nothing, man's a pro!
(Boy grabs black girls bum
 and wha' do you know)
Two blows to the face,
 slammed to the wall and a headlock!
The Science teacher stares in shock!
Calm down Charlene. Stop it!
 Mark get away.
Charlene come back here! Mark,
 what did you do, what did you say.
Charlene stay here, Mark, you wait outside.
That's not like you young miss,
 am I seeing another side?
I just started my period
 for the first time ever,
I've got a nappy up my batty and
 Mark thinks he's clever.
He grabbed my bum to touch my pad,
Now he's gonna tell the others
 and make me look bad!
Just give me five minutes with him Miss,
 that's all I need.
To do what Charlene?
To make him know what
 it feels like to bleed!

Kelly-Dee

Broadsheet 17

Jack & Kill

Me and my boys went down Enfield Town to make some cash. Our pockets had been feeling kind of empty.

We were all chilling down by Eros nightclub looking to jack any of the boys that kotch round there. We didn't see anyone worth robbing so we sparked up a couple of spliffs. Man I was so buzzing. We all had the munchies to the fullest so we went to a newsagents. The shopkeeper was bare rude: 'one at a time, one at a time'. He even told me to get out of his shop. I wasn't having that so I boxed him on his chin and took a fat bottle of Sprite, a couple of top-up cards and a pack of cigarettes for my compensation.

We rinsed out all the munch we took and then went back to Eros. When we arrived we saw some boys kotchin' with these buff girls. My bredren Jermaine was feeling one of the girls so he stepped to her but she didn't feel the same way. Her man was getting vex and told Jermaine to move off his girl. Now I don't know wagwan in these ends but people round here need to learn some respect.

Jermaine whipped out the fattest knife I've ever seen and went to slice the guy. Luckily for him Jermaine was as high as a bird and completely missed. Those boys ran back to their yards like they were on the athletics team or something, even the girls had bare pace.

My bredren were getting bored so they decided to go, but not me. My pockets were still empty. I went back to the newsagents to thief some more munch but when I got there I saw two feds so I quickly left that scene.

It was about 1am when I saw one of the boys we chiefed earlier. I went to see if I could get a little cash or any goods. Before I even said anything the boy pulled out a shooter. That was when I got scared. This boy was fuming. He was ranting and raving saying that I was scum and he was going to kill me. I wasn't going to stick around to see if he was serious so I bolted towards the newsagents.

Next thing I know I'm laying in a hospital with a hole in my chest. I knew I'd been shot. I was in so much pain. The police came in and started asking me questions about what happened.

Even though I was in so much pain I still wasn't a snitch so I just muttered: 'I don't know.'

A nurse took me into theatre. After the operation the police were in again. I shouted at them but it sounded more like a whisper. 'What do you want? I already told you I don't know who it was.'

But they weren't here about that.

'Jerome Otira, You are under arrest for the assault of Mr.. Abdul Patel, theft and possession of cannabis.' They started going on about my rights and all that. I was just like, damn, I'm going to jail.

By the time my trial came around I was on remand in Feltham. I'll tell you, this you do not want to go to Feltham. Bare sick heads in that manor, trust.

My mum came and told me that she wasn't going to see me anymore. She was not the best of mums but I loved her and that's when it hit me: the lifestyle I was living was not just affecting me, it was affecting others including those I love. Well I didn't exactly say that but it was kind of like that.

My dad had run off with some woman. My brother doesn't want to know me. Not one of my friends came to visit. They all said that if I'd been carrying a shooter I could have defended myself.

Idiots.

The feds never caught the guy that shot me and I'm the one on the other side of the bars.

Story by Ike Enenmoh

Broadsheet 17

I Love You

Love is such a wonderful game so full of pleasure,
So full of pain.
The day that you met he was there with his friends.
You couldn't help but wonder if you'd see him again.
You feel yourself falling down into a zone.
Late night conversations. Can't get off the phone.
Every time you link him, you have so much fun.
Your mind keeps on thinking, 'could he be the one?'
Hubby and wifey, for now and for ever,
It's been six months now since you've been together.
But he's acting strange, don't answer his phone.
Your hearts slowly breaking, you feel so alone.
Every time that you argue your heart starts to race,
The shouting, the screaming, his fist to your face.
He says that he loves you but what does that mean?
You're hardly together so where has he been?
Your friends keep saying to leave him alone,
'You're too good for him, you should get up and go!'
But inside there's this feeling, it's been here for weeks,
You keep feeling sick, you don't get no sleep.
You're putting on weight. This can't carry on.
Your body keeps changing, you wonder what's wrong.
He had no intention of you being wife but the condom burst,
Now he's ruined your life.
Like a trick from a book, sweet talk must have worked,
Because your legs opened up with the three magic words.
You find out you're pregnant but he doesn't care,
It's too late for abortion, your heart fills with fear.
He said that 'it's over!' You don't want to live,
Now he keeps saying the baby's not his.
Between love and hate lies a very thin line,
But you miss him so much you're losing our mind.
So you drop to your knees and pray above.
The price that you pay for falling in love.
Your life is a mess and the baby is due,
All 'coz he said 'I love you'.

Samantha Akinuli

One Love One Heart

In the night skies there are thousands of stars.
In the day there is but one.
When the dying sun is at death's door
That one star lives on.
The mind has thousands of loves
And the heart but one.
The light has new life then dies
When that one love is over and done.

Luizi Mabu

Broadsheet 17

Are the Streets the Real BB?

Are you a young black male? Up to date with the latest fashion? Are you fed up of being watched as if you're going to rob a bank?

That's exactly how I feel every time I cross a street, get on a bus or sit in a restaurant. I've endured this sort of attitude ever since I was a small boy.

I'm constantly followed around in shops, receive dirty looks from elderly people when I offer to hold a door for them and the police slow down to check if I'm doing something suspicious. Checking up on people is their job but it gets ridiculous when it happens all the time. It makes me feel like I'm in the wrong for something.

I talked to two black males and they both told me they had experienced over-the-top security measures while shopping. They are not criminals - they're both planning for higher education at university to achieve their goals - but, like me, they find it uncomfortable in predominantly white areas.

I didn't know what it was before and I'd look for every excuse but racism, mainly because people can take things too far with the routine "Is it because I'm black?" But I've grown to understand what people really feel.

People think that because my trousers are slightly saggy, my slang is different to theirs and my skin is black I must be somebody that goes out mugging people often. The worst thing is that I know why they think this. But why should I receive the funny looks for something another black male has done? If there is a white rapist on TV, then he is looked at as an individual but if that person is black then I feel guilty. But why? It feels like 'us' versus 'them'.

Terms like 'wigger', 'coconut' and 'bounty' and constant criticism about people not being in touch with their roots, make racial integration impossible. They put people down and make them feel outcast because they are not allowed to be who they would like to be: themselves.

When I was younger I used to constantly call my little sister a bounty because she used to hang around with no black people at all. My cousins joined in and any chance we had we used to put her down. It was our unsophisticated way of trying to encourage her to hang around with black people. We were all for this sort of social segregation. While my cousin was going on with the usual taunting I saw my sister upset, even though she tried to hide it from me. I realised I upset my own sister over something petty.

Now I've started to notice things on the road and at school. I no longer try and put people down for trying to speak any sort of slang, listening to a genre of music or wearing any type of clothes. People should be allowed to express themselves and act any way they want, if it's not offensive. And the people who judge people on their dress sense, choice of words or cultural background need to revise their judgement because it will never work.

There is no dress code for drug dealers or muggers and as for judging someone by the colour of their skin... that's racism.

J.J. Boothe

NIACE - Encouraging Adult Learning

The National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE) is the leading UK non-governmental organisation for adult learning. It is committed to encouraging more and different adults to engage in all kinds of learning, whether for career progression, personal enjoyment or community development. We promote the interests and celebrate the achievements of adults who are under-represented in learning, because of their gender, age, race, class, learning difficulty or disability. We do this by political lobbying, research and development work, publishing, organising conferences and by running national publicity campaigns such as Adult Learners' Week.

Seven Million People

The Moser Report of 1999 estimated that there were seven million people in England who had poor literacy or numeracy skills. Of these, about one million were under 25 years old and two million were over 55. People with poor literacy, numeracy or language skills tend to be on lower incomes or unemployed and more likely to be prone to ill health and social exclusion. It has been estimated that the cost to industry of poor basic skills among the workforce is £10bn annually. People with poor literacy and numeracy skills earn up to 11 per cent less on average than people who have sufficient literacy skills.

NIACE advocates that the development of reading, writing, numeracy and language skills empowers people to participate and contribute to living and working. These skills help people to make sense of the world as well as the word. NIACE has an important role in literacy, language and numeracy development in the UK to press for the voice of the learner to be heard.

NIACE believes that writing matters because it enables people to communicate with others and to express their thoughts, feelings and emotions. It offers an outlet for imagination and creativity, and for thoughtful reflection. Through writing, people can become confident in their abilities and have fun in relating the stories of their lives and about their interests.

Many adults whom NIACE encounters have started their learning journeys because of a desire to be able to read and/or write more effectively. In the words of John Linden:

“All my life I could not spell or write, I was only capable of printing my name and address. Not being able to spell is a real handicap it rules you out of most things and brings embarrassment, frustration, your self confidence is always low, it affects your relationships with people and friends.”

Write Where You Are is a recent NIACE community literacy campaign that encouraged many people like John to write about their lives and their interests. In a short time, John explains, ‘I feel I’ve made real progress. The change in my life has been terrific; I have more confidence and a feeling of achievement. I’m now texting, writing, and I’m also the proud owner of a laptop.’

Have a go

The campaign not only helped to strengthen reading and writing skills but, just as importantly, it encouraged people who didn’t think they could write to “have a go”.

This is exactly what happened when a giant book toured England, collecting pieces of writing along the way. Over 4,000 people took part and the results give some real insights into our everyday lives. By taking part in a writing exercise that was non-threatening and fun, people discovered in themselves creativity that might open up all sorts of new opportunities for them.

As Claire Woodward from the Campaign explains, ‘Everyone has something to write about. We all have experiences that inspire us to write, such as a memorable holiday or our favourite football team winning against all odds. What makes us laugh or cry can be expressed by putting a pen to paper and letting the writing flow.’

Following the great success of *Write Where You Are*, NIACE is launching *Say What You Like!* a sister campaign that helps adults to identify and overcome their barriers to learning. We want to hear from people about their experiences of



**Don't just shout about it.
Write about it.
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More of us than you think find writing a challenge.
We're offering literacy workshops to develop your skills.
They're free and they're fun. Call to find out more.

education, particularly going back to learning as adults.

Say What You Like! will help practitioners and volunteers to encourage learners to tell their own stories in words and/or pictures in ways that might be useful to others in similar situations. The campaign will add considerably to the research evidence already available because it will include rich, qualitative data produced in partnership with practitioners and learners themselves. The campaign will publish three fully illustrated booklets based on what learners have produced.

Another important NIACE role is that of publisher on adult learning. Our publications include good practice guides, training materials, academic books and journals. We aim to disseminate research and good practice, to inform policy and to stimulate debate in the field. This edition of Federation Magazine features reviews of two relevant books from NIACE: *Creative writing: education, culture and community* by Rebecca O'Rourke, and *The give and take of writing: scribes, literacy and everyday life* by Jane Mace.

For more information about how *Say What You Like!* contact: Claire Woodward, Campaigns & Promotions, NIACE, 20 Princess Road West, Leicester LE1 6TP. Phone: 0116 204 4200. Email: claire.woodward@niace.org.uk

For more information about NIACE and its work, visit www.niace.org.uk

To find out more information on the range of titles that NIACE publish, either visit the website www.niace.org.uk/publications or contact Elisabeth Prince, Publications Marketing Assistant, Elisabeth.prince@niace.org.uk, 0116 204 2832.

A Celebration of Sheffield Writing Groups

As part of the annual *Off The Shelf Writing Festival* in Sheffield I found I had volunteered myself, on behalf of Heeley Writers, to organise an event to celebrate the work of the various writing groups in Sheffield. Two years ago this was a very successful event, and a number of groups expressed regret there was no similar event last year. This is why, when I contacted the organisers of *Off The Shelf*, I found setting up and running it landed on me.

This year the event, held at FOB in the city centre, was nowhere near the mammoth event of two years ago, when it started at 2pm and finished after 11pm, but nevertheless a good number of local writing groups attended, some bringing even their own gang of (non-participating) supporters.

We kicked off with an introductory anecdote by John Turner of Sheffield Hallam University about ordering in a New York McDonalds (apparently a totally different experience from the



UK). Fortunately John abbreviated it before it became an interminable shaggy dog story, and he finished with a hilarious poem based on the experience. Then each group had a turn to put its members under the spotlight. Experienced public readers were interlaced with nervous first-time readers. The other attenders were very understanding, and when one reader was so terrified she was unable to hold her script still enough to read, someone said "I was just like you the first time, but we all want to hear you." This so released the tension that subsequent new readers were able to perform without fear.

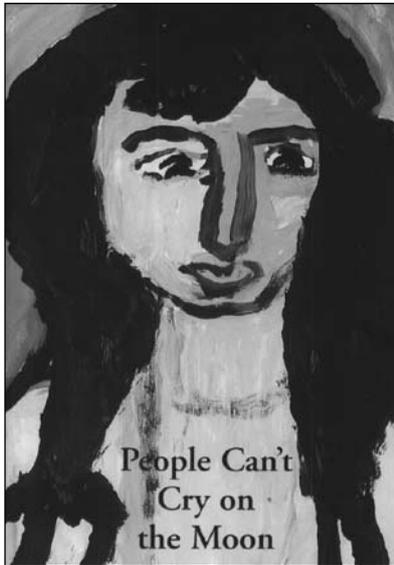
Off The Shelf had provided such generous funding we were able to lay on an enormous buffet and, despite a half-hour interval, there was plenty left for nibblers to tuck into during the second half. There was time at the end to offer an opportunity for a second go, and by then everyone was sufficiently relaxed to sing along with several performers, and especially Roy Blackman's ballads.

Everyone expressed the wish to make it an annual event during *Off The Shelf*. For my part I found the extraordinary level of writing talent on display almost overwhelming, and was very grateful to *Off The Shelf* for affording the opportunity to give it a showcase.

*John Malcomson
Heeley Writers*

Raymond Williams Awards Book Reviews

People Can't Cry on the Moon



Pub. by Down Lisburn Trust/
Arts Care - £5, for availability
e-mail info@dltrust.n-i.nhs.uk

Writing within the framework of a mental health service can present a number of dilemmas: should people publish their work, how should it be published and presented, and if they do publish should they be acknowledged? With this book the decision was taken to keep the authors anonymous in order to protect their confidentiality. It seems hard to do this, although I respect this decision, when part of the purpose of publishing the voices of people with experiences of mental health issues is to reach out to everyone and offer other people pictures they may themselves need some stimulus to acknowledge. As a consequence some of the pieces here fall a little out of context - we know the authors range in age from children to older adults, but who wrote such gems as:

What lies in the River Lagan?

*Dirty things.
Muck and kid's toys.
Rubbish.
Filth and dirt.*

or

Where Does Time Go?

*It goes when you're at school
working your brains off.
Time goes nowhere - just in
history books.
Time goes very fast.
Time goes out of its senses.
It's there all the time.*

Then again the anonymity also adds power, makes this a puzzle; is the author a child? Perhaps so, in the latter verse - but both are great economical verbal reductions. Look over the bridge, that's the Lagan for you.

Please Stay on the Path

*You're not allowed
To walk on the grass,
No, No, No, No*

Another effective piece of minimalism which sums up all the barriers and arbitrary rules you might ever have encountered. Faced with this short verse, you might at first laugh, but at the same time feel the sadness of the emphatic denial - a tension which is here in a good deal of the pieces.

With the absence of any foreword, it is not altogether clear how the pieces were written, collected and selected. While it might be to their advantage that they stand alone, at the same time the reader is left wondering how the process of getting the work was negotiated. It is clear that some of the material has come from workshop exercises, and

I don't think that knowing this diminishes a piece like *Painting the Pomegranate*:

Colour is infinite.

*That feeling in your stomach
- that things might go all right.
You don't want to know.
My stomach was churning - I
won't ever be able to do this.
Do we have to cover all the
white?*

- which on the one hand is about painting a still life and on the other could be much less concrete. It would have been particularly valuable to know more about the piece *Up Down*:

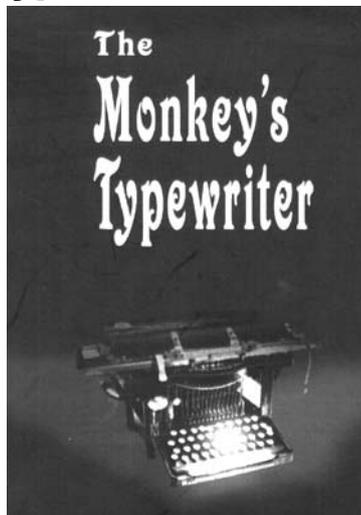
*A symphony of moods in three
movements which assembles a
great variety of voices and must
have been a deeply affective
performance.*

This is overall an inspirational book, a book of truths and beautiful and perturbing metaphors. There are a good number of tantalising glimpses into lives - the family that smelled of sheep-dip, for example, and the story of two boys running away from a Home, but these vignettes have probably been teased out by their writers with great effort. It can be very difficult to get the kind of writing project which led to this book to happen, it takes a lot of negotiation and confidence building, but this book is sound evidence of the value.

Nick Pollard

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The Monkey's Typewriter



Willesden Green Library
ISBN 0-9530195-5-1
Members of Willesden Green
Writers' Workshop, Contact
Willesden Green Library

This Anthology celebrates ten years of the Willesden Green Writers' Workshop. The introduction tells us how the group started and gives us a potted history. What the introduction does not say, since it was published in March it could not say, is that *The Monkey's Typewriter* is the winner of the 2005 Raymond Williams Community Publishing Prize. Hearty Congratulations are in order here. The prize takes into account not only the literary content, but the presentation and the 'look and feel' of the publication.

Well, it's an A5 paperback, dark blue cover with the title and picture of an old typewriter in shaded yellow giving a pleasing look to the volume. There's a contents page, the text is clear, easy to read, and there's not too much of it per page. The book

finishes with a paragraph about each author. All that and the cover do give the idea of a well and properly put together book, which this is.

The 18 contributions are a mixture of extracts from novels in progress, short stories and poems, a fairly typical anthology from an established writers' workshop.

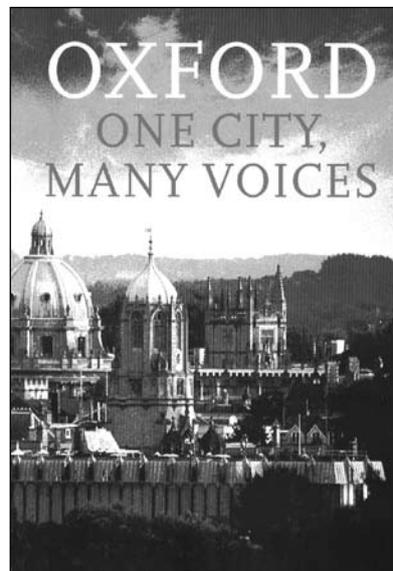
There are memorable stories told in this book. Stories about meeting people in Khairpur, Survivors in Stalingrad, a visit to Athens, a trip into the unknown, an ordinary day and about love, simply love. The poems too are a mixture, butterfly, attic and observatory being the more memorable among them.

Given that this is a 'tenth year' anthology it is entitled to be rather better than an 'ordinary' anthology and it certainly is pretty good, but being a 'workshop' mixed bag it's unlikely that readers will enthuse over everything in it. However, most readers will find something they enjoy reading, and maybe, like me, a few memorable pieces.

I did not read all of the entries to the 2005 Raymond Williams Community Publishing Prize so I did not check out the competition, but the judges did, and *The Monkey's Typewriter* is the winner. It is very well presented and there is really good writing in it. Check it out for yourself at Willesden Green Library. There is no purchase price on the cover, but I'm sure it will be available from the library.

Dave Chambers
Newham Writers Workshop

Oxford, one city, many voices



96pp, £5, for availability see
www.oxfordgatehouse.org.

It seems rather incongruous to be reviewing a book with contributions by Melvyn Bragg, Philip Pullman, Colin Dexter, Humphrey Carpenter, but this book mixes the names of well known writers with those few people will have heard of, although, if you live in Oxford, probably they are familiar faces. This is a book about Oxford, a kind of twist on 'town and gown' in which the common focus is in the accounts of the meaning the city has for the various writers. Some of the stories the lesser known voices tell are particularly intriguing, such as the Dutch couple who move there because they are psychic, after having lived in the forests of the Netherlands for six years, and others tell of the frustrations (and occasional joys) of life on the streets.

It's a deliberate manoeuvre, isn't it, to avoid the person begging in the shopping precinct or coming

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visibly along the street asking for money. It's easy to dismiss this sort of thing as a nuisance, or to say to oneself that there is simply no need in this day and age for people to be begging in order to live, or to be homeless. However, you can read that in papers. You can even read research on it. Here are some of the actual voices of the people who have that experience, and it seems simple. One moment you have a flat, and the next, as Chas finds out when his partner dies, he hasn't, because he simply didn't know his rights. Or else there is the simple arithmetical difficulty of getting together the money for rent and a deposit for accommodation, where the rents are astronomical and single tenants on housing benefits have great difficulty, as Chris Gray and Martin point out. Linda Bilverstone describes another major problem, the simple lack of choice for people who have moved out of homelessness into the accommodation that is available, so that you are forced to live in the same premises as drug users, drinkers and people with a tendency to be violent. This atmosphere of chaos and continually having to take survival measures runs through several people's stories.

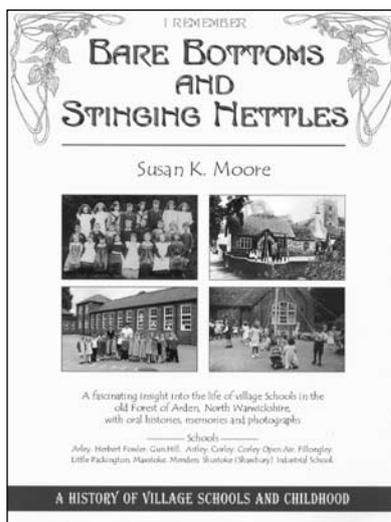
Others, as Phil describes, survive in tents, or bits of tents, all year round. There are also insights from people such as David who use drugs and the difficulties that the facilities available present for them - for example dry hostels becoming wet hostels because of changes in the law that prohibit drinking on the streets. The lack of stability is another hurdle that many of these voices describe as

preventing them from getting off the bottom rung of the ladder.

These accounts frequently jar with the other voices given to this volume, but that is perhaps intentional - some are uncertain how their contribution will sit with the stories of homeless people. Others, like John Bird, founder of The Big Issue who writes a foreword to this book and another contribution inside it, and Sister Gabriel Benedict who has made the remarkable transition into orders, have been able to get out of the cycles that bedog homelessness. An interesting, worthwhile and very thought provoking book, and one with many surprises.

Nick Pollard

I Remember Bare Bottoms and Stinging Nettles



A History of Village Schools and Childhood by Susan K. Moore, £13.50

I hope everyone will read this book. It offers a fascinating insight into village life and education over

the past couple of hundred years.

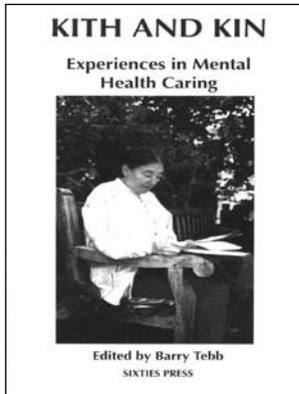
It contains compelling personal reminiscences about teachers, pupils, lessons and important local events which paint a vivid picture of rural childhood. Personal, sporting and academic triumphs are told with evident pride. Reminiscences from former pupils and teaching staff provide a unique glimpse into the changing educational philosophy of the times. I found the extracts from school log books particularly interesting as they offer so much information about the day to day running of the schools; delinquency and discipline, school buildings, repairs and funding, academic achievements and failings, truancy, health issues and family problems.

It is beautifully presented, containing many class, individual and family photographs. Personal accounts of school experiences, both good and bad, are interspersed with family histories. Stories of appalling, poverty, neglect, ignorance and abuse are shared with a humbling understanding and acceptance. The children who did not survive the frequent outbreaks of disease are remembered by their teachers, classmates and siblings. Those who dared to kick back against the system are recalled with glee and individual acts of defiance and rebellion are narrated with relish. The book is a testimony to the positive influence caring and committed teachers can exert over their pupils. It is also an affirmation of children's ability to survive - and even thrive - under extremely adverse conditions.

*Ashley Jordan
Shorelink Community Writers*

Raymond Williams Awards Book Reviews

Kith and Kin



Experiences in Mental Health Caring, Edited by Barry Tebb, Sixties Press, £6, ISBN 0 9529994 9 8

It's good to see a book by and for mental health carers - there are precious few about! Carers are that large, unacknowledged army without whom the NHS would collapse, yet they are given little help or support. Carers of people with severe mental health problems are even worse off, as they have to cope not only with delusional or severely depressed relatives or friends, but also with the social stigma of mental distress, which can isolate them as effectively as their loved ones.

This paperback is a mixed bag, starting with a lengthy diatribe against Camden and Islington MH Trust's CEO, Erville Miller, which immediately endeared me to the author - any enemy of Erville's has got my backing! (He was in Lambeth, with a similar reputation, till he crossed the Thames). Mainly, though, it's an anthology of some powerful creative writing, in prose and verse, describing carers' experiences, sometimes heartbreaking stuff. But it's also a celebration of the healing power of writing:

'Writing is my saviour. Putting it all on to paper has helped me in a way that is impossible to explain. I've actually had people say to me "you'll make yourself ill reliving all that again", but I can't make them see that it works in reverse and, just like a huge painful boil, once it's burst you feel relief.' (P. 62).

The last section contains some useful information about carers' rights, particularly about their right to a care plan, and ends with Standard 6 of the National Service Framework for Mental Health, which deals with "caring about carers".

As a long term mental health service user, I was very interested to read this book. Sometimes the agendas of users and carers are very different, but sometimes they are the same, and it might be an idea to fight together for better services. Recently I've been doing some work with a local carers group run by Rethink (the new name for the National Schizophrenia Fellowship, the national organisation for carers), as I think it is more important to share our experiences than fight over our different, and face it, sometimes conflicting needs. I'd encourage both user and carer to develop an "Advance Directive", which gives the opportunity for genuine collaboration when the user is well, and will usually involve the Community Mental Health Team, too.

Which brings me to the one real disappointment about this book; there was an almost complete acceptance of the "Medical Model" of mental distress. For example, even when a carer had met with a "poor" psychiatrist, they still believed in "Psychiatry".

Most of them still seem to believe that if only we can be given the "right" medication, everything will be all right. Oh dear Perhaps they might like to read Peter Breggin's "Toxic Psychiatry" for a very different view of anti-psychotic drugs.

Still, a book well worth picking up and dipping into, whether you know anything about the political issues or not, it'll still make you cry.

*Lynne Clayton
Southwark MIND Arts*

Turf



Short stories by new black writers, Brent Libraries, £6.99 to order email blackincwriters@aol.com

Here is a gem of a collection of short stories from, as the above title depicts, new Black writers. I found the entire book a very good read. The writers have shown much promise in their own individual approach to their given story which I am sure, as I have experienced in reading each story others will enjoy likewise.

The assorted emotional journey that the writers seem to have captured through the various characters

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within the stories on the whole, I feel has been successful. I couldn't put the book down! That said, I was surprised that I was so cleverly and swiftly caught up in the hurt, pain, betrayal, anger, sadness, happiness, twists, plots, self determination, finding inner peace, sheer guts and strength, to name but a few of the emotive roller coaster that I was on. This put my imagination to the test, wanting to be that proverbial fly on the wall as I read each story. Trying to 'feel, see' inside the writer and the characters mind, within each of the stories as they unfolded.

Although as mentioned before, each of the writer's works show talent for writing literature, I was impressed with certain writers works more as their standard of delivery and execution and contents of their stories was indeed high an undeniable.

This was to be found in the story *The Final Journey* by Kathy-Ann Marshal, I liked the way, through her writing style she 'lures' you in through the detail and twist and plot of the journey she wishes to take with her character. If you're anything like me, I have to know where it all ends, and with this story, resistance is futile! You want to follow this person on their journey and that takes good well thought out planning and imagination from the writer in the first place to capture the reader which she manages to do.

"The time was approaching 12.05. Mavis had made it into the platform in time to see her Jubilee Line train enter the tunnel towards Stanmore. Her patent black sling backs rubbed her little toe painfully,

and there was no way she was doing any more walking today... the train jolted into Kilburn Park Station. Just two more stops and she would be there... she walked to the exit of the church. No-one could have noticed the pain in her little toes.'

Sophia Brown's piece, *Dancehall Flex* was short, sharp and to the point. You could almost be there at the dance described in her story. The detailed wording of atmosphere, excitement of the crowd, the heavyweight beat of the music through the speaker boxes. The dancing of people. I personally can relate to, and have many memories of such events. Her main character I assume, a young woman with her friends, enjoy themselves at this dance. There is a part of the story where the young woman when approached by her own description, an unsavoury suitor wanting to dance with her, how the situation is handled. A very entertaining read.

'I stood stiffly by the large speaker box in the corner of the room, while the rest of my crew was bruk wining and skinning out. I wasn't in the mood for raga and was dying for some RnB or Hip Hop to come on.

Suddenly from within the smoky room, a fat sweaty palm closed round my hand. He looked like he was in his late thirties but unfortunately hadn't realised it yet. Hanging down from his neck and resting on said belly was a massive gold medallion big enough to serve Sunday dinner on.

"Beg you a dance nuh princess,"

he said

Intruder by Suzanne Stewart was also a captivating read. I felt sympathy for the situation the main character Della was put in and the fear the drama and self dignity and strength she maintained that unfolded as you read the story.

'What if the tests proved positive? What if the doctors said they have to operate? What if she had to lose a breast? What if the cancer had spread and she was dead before the year was out? She opened the kitchen window a fraction enough for the cat to squeeze his oversized bulk through if he returned whilst she was in the bathroom. His footsteps made a faint shush on the carpet as he came to an abrupt halt.'

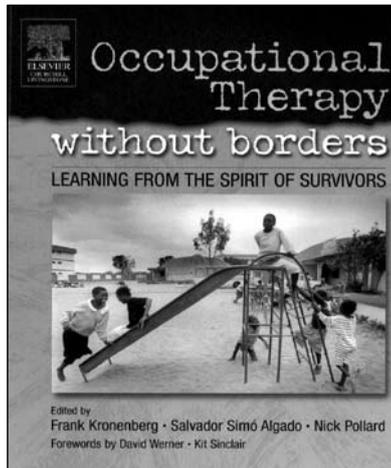
Overall, the stories offer something for all who engage in its pages. The fast paced broken English and street slang of the vocabulary of conversations between certain characters reflect the way people from different areas and environment use and is true to form in reality. Especially of the Afro-Caribbean community which I, for one, am pleased that this type of vocabulary was included. The stories are well detailed so that it is simple to follow, despite that most settings are London based.

I have to point out that there are some basic typographic and other errors on certain pages which caused the flow to go, but *Turf* is a book that is a good read none the less.

*Sharon Davis
Newham Writers*

B o o k R e v i e w s

Occupational Therapy Without Borders



Learning From the Spirit of Survivors, by Frank Kronenberg, Salvador Simo Algado, Nick Pollard, pub by Elsevier, 360 Pages £21.99 ISBN 0443074402

This is an academic text so when reading it I started with the Introduction and there I found more five-syllable words than you can shake a stick at, but don't let that put you off, do read on! I'm not an academic, not an Occupational Therapist, but what I found here is an astoundingly good read. The introduction lays out the five principles of Occupational Therapy. One of them – “Think globally, act locally” – can be one of the universal principles of living on this planet. The following sections tell stories of people who follow the principles or people who don't or both, but woven in there are clues, hints at how you might follow these principles too.

After the Introduction the first section is titled ‘Voices of Survivors’. The four chapters in section one are written by the people at the sharp end. Some scary stuff here, but these are

survivors and scared or not, they tell us about finding the voice that allows them to live their own lives instead of being intimidated by it.

Next is the section on ‘Philosophical and Theoretical Arguments’. This is the bit where the chapters have those long titles that academics seem to prefer, but this theory and philosophy makes for fascinating reading. Eleven chapters telling us about occupational apartheid, the art of, the justice of, the challenges of, the social history of, as well as different models of occupational therapy. These come from different places, countries and cultures. All this and the philosophy behind it, stretches your imagination, really makes you think.

Section three is ‘Occupational therapy practice without borders.’ Eleven more chapters, this time telling us about actual projects, and borders are mentioned only to properly dispense with them. From Japan and Vietnam in the east to Guatemala in the west and the story of the Fed's own ‘Voices Talk Hands Write’ project in Grimsby. This might be a sort of practical how-to that can be followed by other professionals, but for the rest of us the content is simply inspirational.

The last six chapters that make up ‘Section 4 Critical education and research’ form the icing on the cake for the academics, but we still get well written stories about ordinary people in amongst and as part of the research.

I'd like to quote more from the book, like ‘occupation under occupation’ of a foreign army, the return of the corn men to their homeland, the Kawa (river) model for life, how to get past

being constantly ‘put-down’, muffled cries and occupational injustices, in fact the whole book, but...

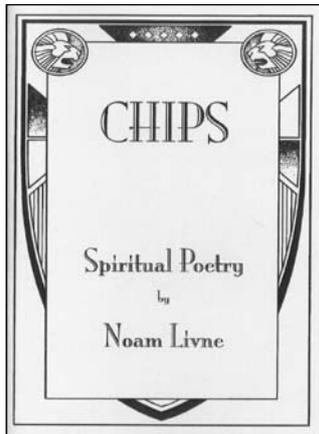
Each chapter is written by a different contributor or contributors so you can dip in rather than go through from beginning to end. Some are academics, some are not, what they all seem to have in common is a gift for saying what they want to say, and saying it well. Writing well is not always a gift; sometimes it's a hard won skill which has been hidden by circumstance, ignorance, or any one of many reasons why a voice is unable to cross a border. But this book is about getting rid of those borders, so we get the sharp end of Occupational Therapy, from both practitioner and client. Contributors come from many different backgrounds, self educated, learned, rich, poor, worker or boss: they also come from different continents, countries, cultures, languages. Gifted or ungifted, skilled or unskilled, Without Borders is about allowing voices to be heard and about listening to them.

This is a big book. Not big in size, not big in the four hundred and sixty one pages, but big in the impact it makes on the reader. Not an easy read by any means, but one of the most rewarding books I have ever sat up late with. And if you get the bug, where to find out more? Follow the copious references (the academics will love them) given at the end of each chapter. Recommended reading for anyone who is thinking about... - nay - for everyone who thinks, and those who choose not to.

*Dave Chambers
Newham Writers Workshop*

B o o k R e v i e w s

Chips



Spiritual Poetry by Noam Livne, £1 available through Noam@livne.freemove.co.uk, 32pp

History of the World Haiku
 World history is
 Peace, war, peace, war, peace
 All at the same time

This is a great and unassuming little book which is packed with well judged and carefully written nuggets, many of them, like the above, powerful and perceptive, and wise. As it says on the cover, this is spiritual poetry. It is succinct and pithy. Every poem, with an almost casual eloquence, lands with a bang:

Chips

*Though some are on
 shoulders
 Every single one came off
 a heart*

You just want to send them to someone, read them straightaway to your partner, hey, listen to this:

Roadsign

*For Heaven,
 Stop, Look, Listen.*

Buy this, read it, love it. You'll certainly be quoting it. Small book, massive talent.

Nick Pollard

Imagined Corners



Poetry by Keith Armstrong, Smokestack Books, £5.99 ISBN 0-9548691-0-9

Armstrong's poetry is the window opened to let out fetid air and everyone feels their lethargy evaporate. Although he's been writing and performing for over thirty years, he's still a marginal figure. Shame on the poetry czars!

A joyous, subversive, delightful, unpretentious, funny, anarchistic free spirit underpins Armstrong's work. It will cheer you up.

His poems are technically achieved, funny, witty, touching, and sufficiently various for there to be something to light up every brain which responds to poetry.

One way to make the world better would be to give poets as good as Armstrong their due.

Alan Dent
Penniless Press

Out of Sight, Out of Mind, People Relying on People

DVD, PROP Group, £15, contact Carol Jubb 01302 787579

Young onset dementia is an illness that is often misunderstood. As the members of People Relying on People who appear in this DVD say "we say 'it's not a problem' as we are not aware of what is happening. To our families, carers and friends it's frightening, it is an unknown journey which never has an ending. To the professionals we are the medical mysteries often trapped in bureaucracy and red tape." This poignant and pointed series of sketches clearly and entertainingly explain the issues from the point of view of the people with the illness and their carers.

The DVD opens with a short scene on the experience of receiving a diagnosis and the uncertainty and fear that this generates. Perhaps if this was a programme about early onset of dementia on the television there would be some quiet solo piano sound track and a lot of soft focus falling leaves in autumn. After the song about all the forms you have to fill in you realise that you can forget that. The inspiration for much of this presentation is cutting edge avant garde comedy. The problem of the loss of short term memory and retention of long term memory is revealed in a Mastermind sketch, underscoring that just because people can't remember what they had for breakfast doesn't mean that they can't remember; the need to maintain a routine is illustrated with all the items of daily activity are checked

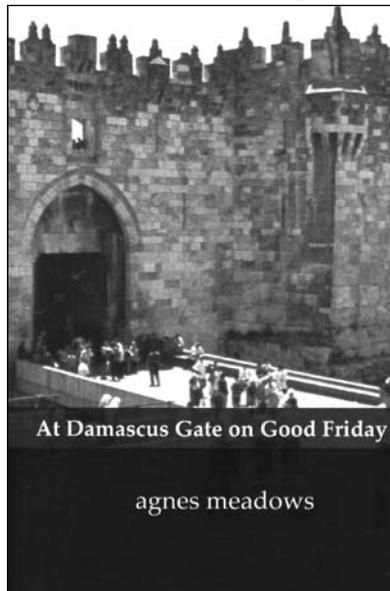
B o o k R e v i e w s

off in a surreal world war two operations room scenario. A man demonstrates the difficulties of sorting out what is happening in his world with a home made cross wired switchboard on which he eventually pulls the plug, as he explains, in his head, his wires are crossed - this is his life. Each of the participants has used their talents and skills to deliver quick fire messages about their experience of young onset dementia.

This is an excellent broadcast quality community production, made on a very small budget with the assistance of Jan Burrows from Doncaster council and Northern College. It is provocative, and it's positive. One of the fears identified early in the film is that people will be offered groups which do irrelevant and mind numbing activities. This DVD is proof that it doesn't have to be like that, and anyone setting up groups with people who experience dementia should get a copy.

Nick Pollard

At Damascus Gate on Good Friday



Waterways Books
ISBN 1 905233 00 0
Agnes Meadows
£5.99

Twenty-three poems in a slim forty-eight page A5 volume with a picture of what I assume is the book title on the front cover. Easy to carry around, to read on the train or bus, or whenever an opportunity presents itself.

The poems tell the stories of some of the impressions and sights that the author saw and of some of the people that she met while working in the 'middle east.'

The images are easy to see, exquisitely drawn in much fewer than the regulation thousand words, using flowers and stone colours to conjure up the pictures painted. But it is the finely drawn characters and the emotions expressed by them and by the author that make this much more than just another slim volume of poetry from somewhere far away.

We meet ordinary people trying to go about their ordinary lives

constantly under threat from occupying forces. It is their story the poems try to illustrate. Ordinary streets where terrible things happen. The birthday party which turns to carnage. The absolute despair of grieving parents who cannot console their grieving children and the red onions which cause a mother's tears.

We do not meet, however, the death of hope. These same ordinary streets can still witness a wedding ceremony as joyous as any, the only fear showing on the face of the groom as the white clad figure approaches. The gurgling laughter of children at play and the beauty of sunset, precious moments grasped and remembered in the late evening, but moments which are cruelly offset by the bombing of the harbour in the early hours.

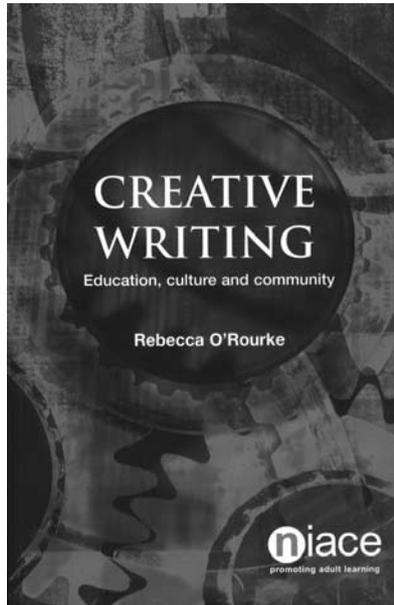
One poem takes us back to London before we return to commiserate with the horse whisperer who has the wilderness eyes and a family living abroad.

These are disturbing images of how some people are forced to live in fear and sadness, but the author also shows us how they sometimes rise above their circumstances, smile and laugh and maintain their humanity.

Dave Chambers
Newham Writers Workshop

B o o k R e v i e w s

Creative Writing



Creative Writing, education, culture and community, Rebecca O'Rourke, NIACE, 264pp ISBN 1 86201 161 3, £18.95

Although working class writing seems to have existed in some form or other at least as far back as the late 1800's, the term 'creative writing' is relatively recent. Rebecca O'Rourke, with a long association in the Federation and some of its member groups explores the origins of creative writing groups and their place in adult education, national and local arts policy, and as an aspect of local cultures, and combines these with her own research into the practices of writing groups in Cleveland.

The result is a highly readable and absorbing book, packed with resonances and salient stories from the practice and experience of creative writing groups for participants or tutors, but it is also scholarly, supported by a comprehensive bibliography. It is a vital for those interested in exploring the FWWCP tradition,

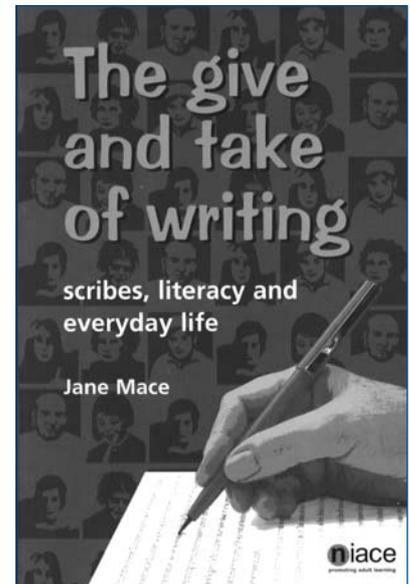
probably the most important book on this kind of writing since the publication of *The Republic of Letters* in 1982.

O'Rourke provides a comprehensive discussion of the debates which we have experienced on quality of writing, technique over content, the tensions between commitment to voluntary writing activities and developing your own writing, the development of writing as a form of political engagement against the pursuit of literary intent or writing for a market. There is also telling comment about the common problems of facilitating a critical approach to writing, getting people to develop their writing by reading other people's work rather than hoping to do it through attending only to their own, and the myriad forms of low confidence and self esteem which prevent people writing, or prevent them engaging with the vitality of their own lives.

Creative Writing concludes with a positive affirmation of the value of social practices of writing and their survival despite the bureaucratic pressures of a business approach to popular arts activities on the one hand and a threat of academic colonisation on the other. This is a very refreshing, well evidenced and much needed exploration of the way so many people in the FWWCP experience, use and enjoy their writing and publishing. It will help participants in groups think through how they might get more from their writing activities and the way they are organised, and it should certainly be on your shelf and handy if you are running a writing group.

Nick Pollard

The give and take of writing



Scribes, Literacy and everyday life, Jane Mace, NIACE, ISBN 1 86201 124 9, 232pp, £15.95

Literacy is about relationships. As this book points out, it would be hard to imagine much use for reading and writing if only one person held such skills. Much of the Fed's work has been about fostering forms of communication among people who find themselves on the outside – through workshops and small groups and, more publicly, readings and books. In these ways collective relations have been made more apparent. Whilst the technical skills of reading and writing have provided obstacles for many, the Fed has also stood against the prevailing assumption that such people are somehow inferior, ignorant or disabled by their lack of ability. The idea that 'a beginner reader is not a beginner thinker' neatly sums up the impulse behind many Fed groups, not just Shorelink, Pecket Well and Gatehouse but also writing groups and community

publishers which have recorded people as a way into writing. Indeed, 'writing hands' have become a familiar part of Fed festivals – scribes who aim to help writers get their thoughts down on paper.

Jane Mace has spent many years practising, researching and thinking about writing, as an adult literacy tutor who helped to set up the Fed as well as an academic. From this standpoint she has explored the varied practices and meanings of a scribe. The Give and Take of Writing examines the relationships within the process of writing which, for many people across the world, is more of a collective process than first meets the eye. She charts a course which takes in not only adult literacy work but also the representations of literacy in literature and film, street scribes in Mexico and India, medieval scribes and the prison bound letter writer, to name a few. Memorable examples include the legal secretary who cleans up the judge's 'gaffes' into standard English while leaving other statements as they were spoken and, more poignantly, the Portuguese woman living in London who writes letters to herself before ripping them up. However, the book aims to challenge the 'illusion of single authorship', and idea which, within the Fed, has cut two ways. On the one hand some groups have stressed the collective merits of their output whilst others have been keen to emphasize the strengths of individual writers, perhaps wary of external critics.

The translation of experience and speech into writing is often fraught with considerable tension and unhappiness as people discover that transcribing speech is difficult and that written words cannot always faithfully represent what has been said. Unsurprisingly then the book also mines the ambiguous feelings which result from encounters between writers and scribes: letters unsent, private pain becoming public and the tiredness of the scribe needing to renew themselves.

This book is an interesting contribution to a body of work which styles itself as 'the new literacy studies' maintaining that there is no great distinction between written and spoken forms of communication and that everyday culture should be incorporated into the classroom.

Tom Woodin
t.woodin@ioe.ac.uk

Syracuse Cultural Workers

Tim Diggles visited one of the newest FWWCP members in the USA and found a remarkable organisation...

I was invited by Steve Parks to go over to Syracuse, in New York State, to meet and work with some of his students and community groups at the University, and set up a reciprocal writing scheme with Fed groups in the UK. More of that in a future issue. I had never been to Syracuse so did some web based research and found the site of the Syracuse Cultural Workers (SCW) (www.syculturalworkers.com), and was intrigued by them. I arranged to meet them during my visit.

Syracuse reminded me of Stoke-on-Trent, it's old and in parts a bit dilapidated. People usually pass by on the freeway, unless stopping at the University, most of the traditional industries have left and the city is redeveloping the industrial wasteland.

SCW are publishers and distributors, they are housed in a quite large building with a small shop front, and behind that there are large stockroom and distribution facilities. They publish a catalogue of books, posters,



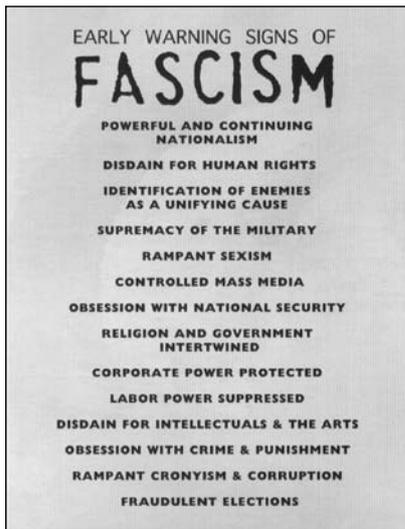
cards, flags, badges, T-shirts, almost anything that can be used as opposition to the war, government, and overwhelming capitalist society. They take orders from all over the USA and abroad, many people say they just can't get the sort of things they supply, locally. When I was there a woman from Texas was making an order for anti-war posters, what would Mr. Bush think!

I could have spent hundreds of dollars there, the *Early Warning Signs of Fascism* poster makes you shudder, it was also published as a T-shirt, bookmark, and postcard. SCW publish books of the amazing photographs of workers and their families by Milton Rogovin. Their *How to Build a Community* poster and associated products are truly inspirational. Go on site and see all they have to offer.

Since 1972 they have used their Peace Calendar to promote their work and they invite artists from around the world to illustrate their ideals.

I met with Donna Tarbania, one of the founders, and she told me all about the organisation. SCW was founded in 1982 out of the Syracuse Peace Council which was formed in 1972, "to help create a culture that honours diversity and celebrates community; inspires and nurtures justice, equality and freedom, and respects the fragile Earth and all its beings". They support all forms of creativity and promote the history that is largely ignored by schools and the media. Donna showed me around the building, through the distribution centre, the store rooms of posters, T-shirts, cards and books waiting to be posted, as well as the publishing and design sections.

In the past there have been inevitable major struggles to keep going, rapid growth in the early 1980's nearly sent them bankrupt,



and like many community ventures they have had to become much more business-like, whilst still retaining their values.

They offer us a glimpse of other ways of publishing than books, and distribution, such as the very direct methods of using posters, T-shirts, and postcards, and the importance of nationwide distribution, which Centerprise and Eastside have done for many years on a local level.

We can learn from them about ways of 'getting to people', for instance they have published a poster/leaflet called Lies, which sells at 25 cents (10p) if you buy 1,000, and is aimed at being handed out or stuck to walls and over the opposition's posters! A great way to get your message over.

The art and artists involved are central to SCW's work, they create things that you want to look at, that give a powerful message, that is equal if not surpassing those of the consumerist culture.

Their use of inspiring images along with the importance of the message makes them a very welcome new member of the FWWCP, we can learn a lot from them and I hope many members will be able to visit them in the future, if not in person through their website and catalogue.

On their *How to Build a Community* poster, they end with "Know that no one is silent though many are not heard - work to change this", which sums up SCW very well, and I hope the Fed!

Tim Diggles
FWWCP Co-ordinator

BOOK NOW FOR THE 2006 FWWCP FESTIVAL OF WRITING!

FEDfest06 takes place between April 28th to 30th 2006 at Stamford Hall, The University of Leicester

The Fed is already planning for FEDfest06, the 30th anniversary Festival, with workshops, readings, discussions, book stalls, networking. Stamford Hall is a lovely venue, with good road and rail communications.



It would be great if in 2006 representatives of all member groups attend. Remember we welcome all to attend, not just Fed members!

The weekend will cost £130 for Members and £160 for non-Members, which includes all workshops and accommodation.

Members, if you get your booking in before March 1st 2006 you pay just £115, a saving of £15!

For a booking form ring 01782 822327 or book right away on line using PayPal, at the Fed's website www.thefwwcp.org.uk

We realise that the fees are a considerable cost to most of you, and the FWWCP only charge what we are charged by the venue, so if you want to pay in easy stages ring 01782 822327 or e-mail thefwwcp@tiscali.co.uk

We look forward to meeting you there, it really is a great weekend!

Federation Magazine

Federation Magazine is published by The Federation of Worker Writers and Community Publishers.

The contents and opinions in this magazine do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the FWWCP or its funders.

Next Issue

The deadline for submissions of articles and reviews for consideration for issue 32 is May 21st 2006.

Post to:

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

E-mail: fedmag@tiscali.co.uk

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- *It may be republished on the FWWCP Website (www.thefwwcp.org.uk).*
- *It can be used for non-profit making purposes by the FWWCP in future publications, talks, and promotions.*
- *It may be edited at our discretion without recourse to the author.*

Do not send 'only copies' of any writing or imagery, as we are unable to return them. It is greatly appreciated if writing can be sent as an attachment to an e-mail, as it saves considerable time and funds in re-typing.

FWWCP Members may have a free quarter page advert. For non-members the charge is £35 per quarter page.

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