

Federation Magazine

The magazine of The Federation of Worker Writers and Community Publishers £1/£2

Friendship goes dancing round the earth

a new London Voices anthology
reviewed on page 24



Letter to Romania

Letter from
Mauritius

Feds visit to
Dortmund

Glenn Thompson

Thinking of
Kay Ekevall

CPD - What does
it mean?

Reading Together

Book Reviews



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C o n t e n t s

Letter to Romania 4

Letter from Mauritius 10

How I Felt 12

Are You Insured? 12

Writing Prompt 13

Feds visit to Dortmund 14

CPD what is it? 19

Want to get people reading together? 20

Visting Writers Scheme 21

Glenn Thompson 22

Thinking of Kay Ekevall 22

Reviews 24

Reviewers Wanted! 27

The Federation of Worker Writers & Community Publishers

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

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

The FWWCP publish this magazine and a Broadsheet of writing; we run an annual Festival of Writing; organise training; develop networks; encourage people to express themselves; offer advice, and much more!

To become a Member of the FWWCP contact the address below. Membership is for groups only. Individuals can take a valuable role by becoming a Friend of the Fed, and get involved in all our activities. We would like to hear from you. By post (please note the new address):

**The FWWCP, Burslem School of Art,
Queen Street,
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By e-mail: thefwcp@tiscali.co.uk

This magazine, previous issues and a wealth of useful information is available on our Website: www.thefwcp.org.uk

F E D i t o r a l

CPD

CPD, Continuing Professional Development (see page 18) may seem a far cry from where many of Federation readers may imagine themselves to be. Perhaps another interpretation of CPD may be Continuing Personal Development, and yet another, since the Personal is Political, might be to reflect on how our exchange of narratives affects the views we are always revising about the wider world.

This issue of Federation shows the increasingly international nature of our organisation. Though our geographical range reaches more widely the voices the magazine carries continue to intimate conversation based on direct experience, the 'witnessing' element of personal stories. So thus we have letters to and from New York and Mauritius, diaries from Dortmund, and memories of Glenn Thompson and Kay Ekevall, both significant contributors to the ideas which have made the Federation a vehicle for the continuing personal development of so many.

One of the difficulties about getting across to potential Fed members can be imagining, without having participated in an event or a publication, what the benefits can be. As members in the UK prepare for the 2002 Festival of Writing - and in the remembrance of some of the concepts which were around at the start of Centerprise with the loss of Glenn Thompson - we might read and reflect on how personal and political change are interlinked. In our professional development, as worker writers, these are things which we should continue.

Nick Pollard, Editor

Cover

The cover illustration is by Jane Deakin from the London Voices anthology *Friendship goes dancing round the earth* reviewed on page 20. The illustration is from her poem *She sat there*:

She sat there
Quite still
Quite still
As if waiting
For a reason
To go
She made a
Lovely shape
With her leopard
Hat
A Bloomsbury Face
Taking Tea
Underneath
My favourite Monet



FEDWebsite

We apologise to Members and others about the confusion over our website address recently. The old address expired in September 01, due to NTL ceasing to offer its service. We took on another 'forwarding' address because the new Tiscali website address was too complicated to remember. Then the new system didn't forward anything! So we have recently bought the domain name www.thefwcp.org.uk, so our website is:

<http://www.thefwcp.org.uk>

We hope this will be easier to remember and will work properly this time. You will find a copy of this magazine and others on the site, plus Broadsheets and other information. Slowly we will be adding further information and links which we hope will be useful.

Our e-mail address is:

thefwcp@tiscali.co.uk

Letter to Romania

Dear parents, brothers, cousins and friends,

I am writing this collective answer to all of you and those who, worried, asked for news of us. I wish there was nothing special to tell, but I'm afraid these last few weeks will change our lives no matter where we are, and what we think about the world.

On September 11, when evening finally came, the house across the street from my bedroom's window remained dark and quiet.

I never connected with those neighbours, a family of four, with two grown sons who gave us grief many times, throwing empty beer bottles on our property, or idling their cars along our fence, while an excessively loud radio went on and on and on. I never liked them much, and they didn't like us either. They never said hello, not even offer a friendly smile, although every morning both adults took the bus to the City with my husband, and then the subway. They both work in one of the towers of the World Trade Center.

I still can't think 'The World Trade Center' in the past tense; I still say 'are', not 'were'. My mind cannot comprehend, cannot accept the new grammar.

My oldest son did not go to school for one week after September 11, it should have been his first full week of school, his first year in college; too close to 'ground zero.'

Fortunately he was still in the bus when the first plane hit. Thinking it was an accident I called him at his cell phone to alert him of the traffic nightmare I assumed would follow, and asked him to avoid the area at all cost. The towers, I knew, could sustain a crush with a small commuter plane, the kind allowed to fly in the area. But when the second plane hit I understood this was no accident; we were under attack, and horrified, frightened, I called him again. His bus had not yet entered the City; they were stopped right in front of the Lincoln Tunnel. All traffic was turned back, and he came home safely, but some of his colleagues who got to school earlier remained trapped in Manhattan for two days;

all the bridges and tunnels were closed for fear of new attacks, false alarms, bomb scares, rumours of trucks full of explosive racing towards the City. Most suburb kids gather together with kids from other parts of the country who were in the dorms, trying to call home, to talk with their parents, to hear themselves saying 'I'm OK, don't worry' although they were sending jittery e-mails to my son, obviously scared, far away from home, their first year of college.

Around noon I went to pick up my youngest son from his school, to let him know his brother and father are OK. Policemen and teachers were patrolling the area stopping everyone. Parent? Enemy? We do have a few kids whose parents work in various embassies in the City, and at the UN.

Inside the school, teams of counselors were close at hand in the hallways, talking with the kids who were desperately trying to reach their parents and couldn't. All those whose parents were supposed to be 'there' at work, were taken out of class and ushered into the principal's office behind closed doors, with more counselors there. Throughout the school you could hear kids sobbing, crying inconsolable. In each class a TV was on, nonstop on news coverage, and the kids were advised to talk 'about it,' to let off anger and fear into words, and be comforted by their peers. My son said to me 'I always thought that question 'where were you when x or z happened?' was stupid, but now I understand it.'

My husband works three blocks away from the WTC. I was able to get in touch with him immediately after the second plane hit. Bewildered, saddened he said 'I can see them. They are burning like to prayer candles,' while I was begging him to run away, to leave no matter what, to come home. He made it home safely, late in the afternoon, snowed with ash and soot after running ankle deep through cinder and debris through a decapitated town. He took the ferry over to NJ, a bus over to another town, and called home to let me know he was OK, out of the danger zone. I went to pick

him up going through an unusual traffic through otherwise sleepy suburbs.

When we finally got home, all of us, dusty, frightened, exhausted, my youngest, who still remembers the house of his early childhood, our living room window lit every night by the NY skyline, where he learned to name each tall building, asked about their history and height, marvelled at how the many shades of red and blue glitter in the windows of the Twin Towers at sunset, my youngest, looking at his father's shoes said in terror, 'daddy brought home on his shoes all that's left of the Twin Towers.'

And I felt selfishly guilty having all of them home, out of danger, while the house across the street remained dark, and in my mind I kept hearing the sobs of the children from school, and knew that some of them might not go back to school the next day, although the school in our town was going to be open.

But what surprised me the most about myself the next day on awakening was how deeply and dreamlessly I had slept. Nothing populated my sleep. All day on September 11 I had been sobbing and crying, exchanged messages with people all over the world, made comforting calls to my mother back in Romania, to let her know we were safe, although I wasn't sure of it myself, although I knew it would never end.

All I could think of all day was 'there will be another one.' I grew up with the shadow of the bomb shaping my imagination, and learned to live with the certainty that there would be a time and a way when the big one would start. I was under the frightening thought that now it just had, and there would be another plane coming out of the sky to hit god knows where, maybe the Statue of Liberty, for the sake of a symbol, maybe the Bridge, for damage and carnage, or the White House, or another one, right here, close, murderous.

All day I exchanged e-mails and phone calls with friends from Israel, who commiserated with me, 'the American,' and were compassionate and understanding in a fraternal kind of tone, with

friends from Romania who were stunned and promised me 'America is going to 'do' something,' as if they were in touch with the State Department, and knew certain secrets I was yet unaware of, with friends from France who doubted everything, believed nothing and suspected some sort of a conspiracy somewhere, that would, in the end, explain it all, with friends from Germany who called with long silences unable to find their words, other than to say how sorry and scared they feel, as if their own safety had been destroyed, too; 'If this could happen to you...' and a Russian friend asked me almost defiantly 'what are you going to do now?' as if I were in charge and was called upon to react decisively, immediately.

Many people were hitchhiking out on the open road. People who are savvy and cautious enough to know you never hitch-hike, and never pick someone up, not in this area, not anywhere; they put their thumb out, and got into a stranger's car, not thinking twice about it.

Many people I have not been in touch with for decades e-mailed and called, just to make sure we are still here, some distant effigy for their thoughts about an over there they sometime allow into their realities. They asked if we are safe, as if all of a sudden they have realized how long it's been since they had no idea if we are still alive.

My brother e-mailed. 'It is just the beginning' says one of his lines. He lives in

Jerusalem, in the area where bombs and snipers are part of the daily routine, where gas masks are kept in backpacks next to lunch, books, and bus schedules. He is a doctor; he tries to mend those who are ripped apart by killing machines on either side of the conflict.

All day I listened to the radio refusing to visualize what I was hearing. I listen while driving from town to town to pick up friends stranded in neighboring suburbs, wherever a bus, a ferry, a police car, or even a Good Samaritan had dropped them. Many people were hitchhiking out on the open road. People who are savvy and cautious enough to know you never hitchhike, and never pick someone up, not in this area, not anywhere; they put their thumb out, and got into a stranger's car, not thinking twice about it.

Letter to Romania cont'd...

I didn't want to watch TV after the first images in the morning; it was too overwhelming. Only at night I glimpsed for a minute, and then turned the TV off. I didn't want to see. Late, with every one home, safe, sleeping, I went to bed exhausted.

In the morning, before waking, feeling my husband next to me at a time he usually is out to work already, I thought for a moment it was the weekend, the one that had just passed, and that's when I realized I hadn't had any dreams, while behind my still closed eyelids, in the first drowsiness of awakening I started to recover the reality, images and all.

I took my youngest to school, 'will I get in trouble for not having done my homework for today' he was wondering, his first full week of high school, this honored student who always does his homework. At school, the principal told me 'we have a few parents missing' and I started sobbing again. I later found out the kids whose parents were missing had not come to school, leaving their schoolmates felling helpless and worried for them. Some classes did go as scheduled, others broke up in tears with children and teachers trying to cope with a new concept - missing parents.

Home, my oldest was desperately trying to get in touch with a kid he met during summer classes; a kid of Indian descent from some Midwestern American suburb, who now lives in Manhattan with his stock broker brother, near the Twin towers, and loves to go early in the morning to watch the trading monitors in his brother's office, at some high floor in the North Tower.

At the office where I work no one could concentrate on what needed to be done, all tasks seemed pointless, every dilemma: trivial. Mid morning, a high school student we had just hired for 'office help' called to say she could come to work; 'How come you don't have school?' I asked; she had called her counselor and was told not to come to school for now, at least until Monday.

She's Muslim. She loves rock and roll, she reads *The Catcher in the Rye*, she laughs with the musicality of a little crystal ball when she hears a joke, and she loves to tell funny stories. She wears the traditional Muslim

shall, wrapped around her head and shoulders. A sweet little girl of 15, from some godforsaken village in India, speaking a language that sounds warm and spiced with strange inflections, she had been afraid to go to school now, and had been advised to stay home by her teachers. We talked; we talked about a fallen world, a world neither she, nor I could keep it whole anymore, and she said she understands why people are angry and upset, and how they could irrationally go hurt someone just for appearances. She understands. I don't.

My husband and my oldest son, not knowing what else to do with themselves on this weekday planned for work and school, went in the park and played basketball. It was a beautiful late-summer day, the sky just a bit hazy on the southern part of the horizon, and many men from all walks of life,

of all colors and creeds, from every single corner of the world, culture and ethnic background; men who live in our little suburb, this melting pot, this anonymous

'bedroom' community, men who work in the Big City across the river, came to the town's basketball courts, ball in hand, didn't say more than hello and god by to each other, but got together to play a game, while the large shadows of military planes crisscrossed the blackout from time to time.

When I came home we sat down for dinner, and looking at each other we all thought the same thought; we are safe. But when the thick air from the south blew in that evening, bringing the oppressing smell of burnt rubber and the taste of dust from over there we weren't so sure anymore, and we realized again how much our lives have changed, and that many of my husband's colleagues from the port authority offices, people he worked with, people he signed projects with, people he met with in long and not always productive or pleasant meetings over designs for highways and airport landing ramps, people with offices, and documents, and blueprints, and accounting books, and ideas, and solutions, and know-how, people - are gone, dead.

In the other room my oldest son was on the phone non-stop, retelling the story of where I was when 'it' happened to countless friends calling

from distant parts of the country to tell where they were' when 'it' happened, as if trying to put last day's events in the past already, as if speaking of 'it' in past tenses would make it easier to accept. In his room, my youngest was trying to concentrate over homework, and sometimes stopped to stare into the void of a window, closed to keep the dusty air and the sickening smell outside, and I knew he was thinking and praying his friend's dad would be found alive. And my throat went dry with anger and dust.

For a week, only emergency personnel were allowed in the part of the City where my husband works and my child goes to school. Many buildings around 'ground zero' were damaged; windows blown, roofs broken, no electricity, no water, no phones. Many buildings around the area of the WTC are affected and could be in danger. There could be many structural problems arising from how the WTC was built. It seems the foundation on which the Towers were build, once their weight is removed, or the weight of the fourteen-stories high pile of debris which is now pressing on, from underground up to the surfaces, the entire foundation is in danger of floating up, upsetting the structure of every other building around it.

On the first Saturday after the attack, our friend Mark asked us to come for a barbecue. He decided all of us should come, no matter how sad or depressed we were, come and gather around our common fears, our common loss, come together to comfort each other.

On the way there we had to take the Turnpike, and for the first time I saw the panoramic view of the City with the two skyscraper missing. Far in the distance I knew the towers were still burning, and my eyes filled with tears again watching the thick column of smoke rising from within the other buildings as if from the chimney of a mortuary crematorium.

In Mark's backyard, all the way up in the scrub oaks' canopies, squirrels were gathering food and kept throwing shells and half-eaten acorns at us. We cried, we laughed, we offered plans for

reconstructions, strategies for reprisal, pronouncing, as best we could, names of places so far away from our homes we cannot even imagine what they are like, just as I suppose people living there can't really imagine how we are, how our lives are.

I am really scared of all this rhetoric of war I hear every day from officials and generals, all this thirst for blood and revenge which came into our lives just as suddenly as the attack did, although I think some of it at least is done for collective therapy purpose, some sort of band-aide to a wounded pride. I want to believe that any action we will take will be taken with wisdom and tact, in such a way that those over there, who are

themselves victims in this absurd struggle will not suffer even more than they already do, and with no hope.

Many times I find it hard to think, to speak and particularly to write in Romanian. I live within the customs of this other tongue, this other way of thinking. There are stages of my life I can't recount with ease in any other language but in English...

It is not true that every American wants war. Hundreds of people here watch with apprehension all the belligerent talks, all the promises of bloody retribution. Many send letters and petitions to

representatives, civil and military officials expressing their views, their wish for peace and a well balanced, well thought out solution to a difficult problem, a problem our entire civilization is confronted with, not only United States. Yes, something must be done, but something that will solve not only this terrorist action, but also what is at the root of it, the misery of the poor and destitute lives of so many people in the Middle East. Something must be done, something that could bring peace to those children, a simple, human life to their parents, a place to work, a good neighbor, schools and doctors, and bread. And many Americans know that this kind of something cannot be obtained with tanks and bullets. Just like in WWII, not only has the battle to be won, but also the peace, and peace was won then with chocolate and democracy, not with bullets.

Coming home on the Turnpike in the evening, we were fascinated again by the City's landscape across the meadow. All the skyscrapers were enlivened by the sunset's colors, and where not

Letter to Romania cont'd...

too long ago two twin towers stood a column of white smoke rose to the sky like an angel's wing.

It is hard to deal with the after effects, and I am a bit intimidated by all the sudden restrictions and the presence of military personnel, the boats on the river, the planes flying above, all the checkpoints, the cars stopped, all the guns. I hope whatever it is we are going to do will not destroy our own democracy in the process.

On September 22nd, we celebrated 18 years since we came to America.

Many times I find it hard to think, to speak and particularly to write in Romanian. I live within the

customs of this other tongue, this other way of thinking. There are stages of my life I can't recount with ease in any other language but in English, and when I have to explain something about my life to someone who is not from around here, I first have to present a context and details unfamiliar to them, and I realize how hard it is for them to understand, and for me to explain.

Our children are Americans. This is their country, and through them it is ours, too. We identify with people here, the life here is the life we live, and this world is the world we understand, maybe not fully understand, but non the less the only one we understand. Don't ask me to go back; don't ask me to come back to a safer place. I can't lose one more country, one more world, one more language. I can't put ocean and land between my children and me. Whatever the future will bring for this country it will bring for me too.

Eighteen years ago when we came, our first residence was Cliffside Park; a little town right at the edge of the Palisades, on the shores of the Hudson River, where almost every street offers a view of Manhattan.

Saturday the 22nd of September we decided to go to a little restaurant in our old neighborhood, although none of us was in a celebratory mood. We, like probably most of America, are still under the strong heavy pain brought upon us by the attacks, and the immense loss of life. Every day we find out about a victim, someone who

was part of the texture of our lives, a neighbor, a friend of a friend. As scared as I am for what's coming, I have to try to hide my fears and mediate the shock and the stress these events brought upon my children. And that's not always easy. Because they are males, they don't verbalize, don't tell, don't want to face or recognize their fears, their feelings, and so I have to pull words out of their mouths, watch for gestures, inflections, scoop out whatever reaction they have, understand it and help them understand it in order to heal (however much we all could heal from such a tragedy) and grow up mentally, and emotionally healthy, and with a good optimistic view on life. They are so very young; they need so much to believe that life is worth the trouble of living.

My oldest son was telling me one day that every morning he watches for the faces of those he travels with in the bus to NYC, he's looking for those faces he used to see every day before the attack. There are 'faces,' he says, he hasn't seen since that day, and he wonders what happened to them. He realizes there could be a million other reasons why those people do not board the bus anymore, but he's worried, he'd like to see them again, to know that they too, are all right. After all, they are strangers, but those strangers that give context to his life.

He and my husband are the most exposed to the tragedy and its aftereffects. Every day they have to go to school or work and walk alongside the cortege of people still looking for their loved ones, still showing the pictures of those missing, hoping against hope that someone could have seen them alive after September 11, refusing to give up their search and accept their immense loss.

Almost every square and park on their route has ad hoc memorials, people fraternizing with someone visibly aggrieved, people stopping to change stories, to join in a song, to hug and console each other, and if you happened to be around, you can't just go by, you too are pulled into this wailing, and weep for the collective sorrow, even if you are not directly afflicted.

With the little one is even worst. There are a few kids in his school who lost their parents, and one of them is now facing losing everything he ever knew. His mother, a widow now, is not culturally and financially able to remain in US, and will go back to Japan after more than 15 years of living here.

Maybe because I know too much history, I feel as if I have already lived through this time once before, particularly since an on-line friend posted the news item about the Hindu population forced by the Taliban regime to wear a distinctive yellow sign on them at all times. I feel as if I am witnessing the reincarnation of an old nightmare. I feel so vulnerable, so powerless, and this very feeling becomes a cause of anxiety and sadness. All I can do is cry and give a meagre dollar to each cause that comes my way, while helplessly praying that fate will protect my children, and will have pity on all the children of the world.

I entered a couple of European email lists, I read news papers, and the more I read the more I realize how few recognize that what happened did not happen because America did something wrong, or because of American's attitude and allegiances around the world, it has almost nothing to do with Israel, or with the Palestinian cause, it didn't even happen to America alone, but to our entire civilization.

However Saturday we decided to celebrate our coming to America in our old neighborhood, in a small Spanish restaurant, with mandolins and sangria. On leaving, we went to visit the streets we used to go on for daily walks during our first years here, to watch as we did in the past the Big City across the river.

When we came to America we were so poor we couldn't afford any kind of entertainment. A daily walk on the streets offering the panoramic view of Manhattan was the only show we could afford. There was one particular street we loved, a street with an unobstructed view of the river, the city, the bridge. We would go there to watch how the lights turned on in millions of the city's windows.

Saturday too, the lights turned on in the city's windows, and as the river's water grew darker, small boats and flocks of seagulls and ducks calmly drifted into the night under the smile of a quarter moon, only far to the south a thin and transparent column of smoke was still rising, like a winter breath.

Home, a message from someone I participate with on a reading group was waiting to remind me of the next meeting. During the summer we take a break and return in September, but in the avalanche and urgency of the last few days I have forgotten that it is time to go back to our daily activities, as insignificant and trivial, as they might seem now.

Monday, after the meeting we went out, as we usually do, to a small café for a bite and a little gossip. One of the ladies in the group told us her father in law had the tenacity to take the first flight after the attack, and come from somewhere in California to NJ, for his previously planned visit. 'How did you have the courage?' she asked him, a man in his late 80's early 90's, he said 'I know, it stinks, but life goes on'

Tuesday, two weeks after the attack, I finally got in touch with a childhood friend, after all these many days of worry, not knowing what had happened to him. Phones in Manhattan are still down, everything that goes through the affected area will probably be down for days to come. He was telling me with a new found and surprising wisdom 'that's it, that's life, when we were children our parents were trembling for our fate, worrying over what the next day would bring, now it is our turn to worry for our children. Same shit, and nobody can escape it.' His voice was intense with the heavy breath of an angry man, he was dusting and vacuuming the house while carrying on the conversation, 'I left the windows ajar when I went to work on Tuesday, and was not allowed to return until today,' he was saying 'I have enough dust, ash, and soot in this house to fill up a landfill.' He was mixing curses with thanks for having been blessed not too loose any one dear to him, 'everything else... stuff, things, don't matter, we did them once, will do them again'

Life goes on.

Love,

Ana Doina
New York City

Letter from Mauritius

Alain Ah-Vee, Secretary of Fed members Ledikasyon pu Travayer (LPT), writes about the year just ended, and includes a found poem.

24th December 2001

Dear friends at FWCP,

The LPT team wishes all of you a happy New Year 2002.

This year (2001) our Association celebrated its 25th anniversary (like the FWCP). It was in 1976 that a group of teachers and college students founded Ledikasyon pu Travayer in the wake of the student rebel movement of May 1975 in Mauritius. The aim of the Association: to do adult education, particularly adult literacy and to promote the two popular languages Creole and Bhojpuri, spoken by 92% of the population. Since then LPT has been at the forefront of the struggle on these two issues. Even if the Creole language which is understood by all Mauritians is still banned from the National Assembly, in all official institutions, under-used in the media, only tolerated in the educational system, the constant work of LPT has contributed a lot to recent progress that the Mauritian Creole language has made in such areas as literature, humour shows, plays, films, rap music, advertisement, radio and TV.

In the context of the celebration of our 25th anniversary, we organised from the 22nd to 27th October, a one week activity which started with a colloquium on *The Creole language in terms of globalization*. The colloquium included cultural openings with readings from Bertold Brecht, Kurt Schwitters, modern art displays and musical interludes. There was a large number of papers presented on a wide spectrum of subjects linked to the creole language. The colloquium ended with the launch of a new book *Collecting folklore in Mauritius*, by Lee Haring, in Mauritian Creole and English versions. The celebration culminated in a big conference on *Globalization and War* with guest speaker Dr. Vandana Shiva, an anti-globalization militant from India.

Some 500 people

attended this event, mainly women from women's associations and from our economic literacy courses.

We have started this month the construction of a new hall on our existing building which has been named *Mother Earth Education Centre*.

I am enclosing (see page 11) for FWCP a found poem (the original Creole version and an English version) from participants in our last women's literacy course based on a discussion session on Picasso's painting *Guernica*. We are sure that you would love this piece of work filled with humanity and vision.

Lots of best wishes for 2002, Alain Ah-Vee

You can contact LPT

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Port Louis
Republic of Mauritius**



Painting by LPT artist Henry Koombes to support "The right to read-and-

The Thursday Women's Literacy Class looks at Picasso's *Guernica* during the bombardment of Afghanistan

Kur fam Zedi get *Guernica* par Picasso pandan barbardman Afganistan

there is war
and disor-
der
there is a cry
it's like a cy-
clone, and here
a man lies
slain
even the cow, the cow's eyes
are sideways and forwards
at the same time, why?

you chose it on purpose, this one,
because of the bombings didn't you?

Picasso is sad
oh, makes me feel holl-
ow
he is show-
ing
us we live in
the dark, in darkness,
a dark so thick lamps can't shed light on it,
all
because
of war
and disor-
der
and the horse
they tor-
ture
the horse, and the slain man, look
his eyes wander in his skull, and the mother
cries
as her child dies in her arms, look
the ox tail
a swirl
of smoke
phantoms of the dead
and dy-
ing float over cry-
ing dark disor-
der
and war

a found poem by Lindsey Collen
15th November 2001

ena enn lager
enn dezord
enn bulversman
ena dimunn inn tombe

dimunn ki anba la
so lizey enn perdi dan so latet
tann enn kriye
enn siklonn pe pase

Seval, ordire pe tortir li,
tu dan nwar,
vas la so lizey drol, li dib-fas profil ek portre
kifer?
Ena enn ti veyez
e tu dan nwar.

Mama la pe kriye,
zanfan la
ordire
ordire
li'nn fini mor

Lake bef turn an lafime
enn bom inn tonbe
enn bom

tu kiksoz pe denul dan nwar,
ena fantom

resanti enn tristess
dan bulversman
enn kri
buku duler
sufrans.

Picasso kan li pe penn sa
li pe sagrin.
Li pe montre nu nu dan nwar,
mam lalmyer pe pe kapav ekler nu
telman nu dan nwar.
Akoz lager.

Poem dekuver par Lindsey Collen

How I Felt

Some reactions by children from the Summerbank Primary School Writers and Journalists club, written on September 13th.

I felt apprehensive because I think this might become a World War 3. I feel upset for the Americans because I can't even think about what they are going through. I think it is really sad what is happening. I wonder what is the point of bombing buildings, what does it prove? At 11 am everybody had 3 minutes silence, Chris was crying, Daniel just went bright red. I think I'll have a party when this finishes because this is putting everybody through danger!

Alex

When my friend told me that the twin towers got bombed I thought he was joking but when I went home I saw my dad watching the news then I started to watch it myself. First I saw the plane crashing into the building nearly at the top then another one came and hit the middle. I felt very very sorry and I was about to cry. When it collapsed I started to cry. Since that day I have been watching the news. Everybody in the continent all had a three minutes silence to remember all of the dead and injured people in America. Hundreds of the fire fighters had died and I felt really sorry for them. This dirt and paper and all the other stuff is going to take along time to pick up and take it away. The people who are going to pick it up they are going to get very tired and they will need a very long sleep.

Raza

I feel really upset for America because the people who have died. There are thousands of innocent people who have died.

But for what reason?

Some horrible people have planned and killed lots of workers, I just do not know why?

I am really shocked because of this and I bet George W. Bush will not be very happy about this.

Why did they destroy the buildings, did they want revenge?

Or what?

Lots of bodies were burned.

I would like to thank the fire fighters for saving lives.

Sian

Are you Insured?

A personal liability Insurance for Creative Writers

The Arts Council of England Literature Department have announced a new insurance policy specifically for writers who work with groups in the community.

We all think the worst won't happen, but what if an accident happens when you are leading a workshop? Are you covered? Have you checked if the college, school, community centre is covered? If it isn't you may be liable, even if it was not your fault, as workshop leader you may be deemed responsible. We are living in a litigious society.

Are you sure your household policy or the venues' policy will cover that laptop or camera of yours which went missing?

The Cover and Cost

ACE have worked with Blake Insurance Services to set up a policy specifically to cover writers. It covers:

Public Liability to £2,000,000

Legal Expenses to £25,000

Personal Possessions £1,500

The cost for standard cover is £40 per annum

The cost for Standard cover plus is £55 per annum, which increases liability to £5,000,000.

Both policies include worldwide cover.

Simple

It is also very simple to set up. Just phone the Arts Council's number below, and all they need is your name and address; type of cover required; the date it is to commence. Then make payment to them at the address below.

The Fed would advise anyone running workshops and working with people to be properly insured, this seems a good offer that fits the bill.

Contact addresses

Clare Marshall

Literature Department

The Arts Council of England

14 Great Peter Street

London SW1P 3NQ

Phone: 020 7333 0100 ext. 6258

For the full terms of the policy contact:

Blake Insurance Services

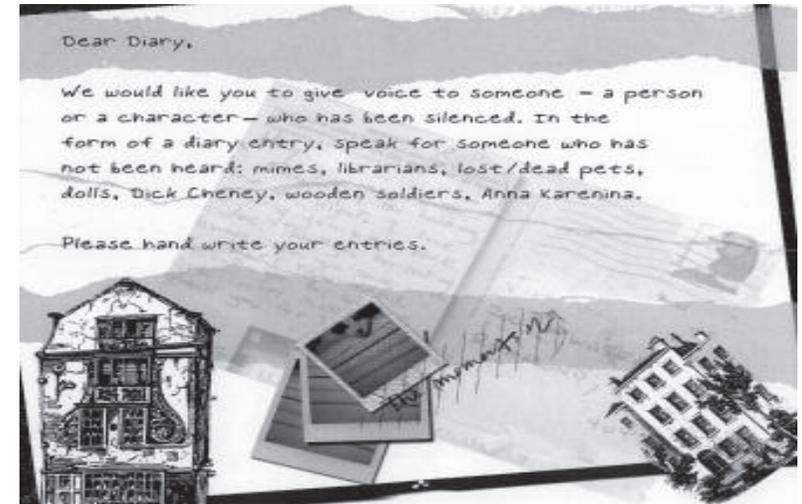
46 North Street

Bridgwater

Somerset TA6 3PN

Phone: 01278 453345

Writing Prompt



This 'prompt' was produced for New City Press, one of our members in Philadelphia, by Jae Jung, a student at Tyler School of Art at Temple University. If you want to take part, send your 'diary entries' to the FWWCP, Burslem School of Art, Queen Street, Stoke on Trent ST6 3EJ, and we'll pass them on to August Tarrrier at New City Press. In the next few issues we'll be publishing further prompts. If you have any ideas send them to us.

Helping the Fed and celebrating a memory

Have you ever thought of leaving the Fed a legacy?

Have you ever thought what will happen to that vital collection of books, newspapers and pamphlets that for years you have been collecting, and may be the only remaining copies?

What about asking people to donate a sum to us instead of giving flowers at your funeral or remembrance event?

These can help us greatly.

It is always embarrassing to ask for your help, especially to be remembered in a will, and even more so when so many of our members are known to each other as personal friends. But please think about how you may help future generations.

We would also like to receive collections of books which to others may seem useless junk and be just thrown away, or put in the loft. Many people own copies of what were small run publications or short lived community newspapers, and which future generations of writers will find vital to understand the struggles which have taken place in your lifetime.

So please contact us if you want any advice on 01782 822327, or write to The FWWCP, Burslem School of Art, Queen Street, Stoke on Trent ST6 3EJ, e-mail thefwwcp@tiscali.co.uk

Feds visit to Dortmund

In June 2001 a group of people from FWWCP member groups represented the Fed in Dortmund, giving performances, taking part in discussions, reading both their own and other writers' work.



The visit to Dortmund came about as a consequence of the performance of *Feds under the Beds* at The Working Class Studies Conference in Youngstown, USA in 1999. Rainer Noltenius, the Director of The Fritz-Huser Institut, (the amazing archive of working class literature, and arts in Dortmund), had seen the performance, and even after that had wanted us to go to Dortmund to meet with writers, take part in discussions, and perform.



—And so it happened in June 2001. The group comprised of Pat and John Smart (Prescott Writers and Peckett Well College), Jackie Blackwell (QueenSpark Books), Eric Davidson (Dumfries and Galloway Survivors Poetry), Irene Leake (Lockerbie Writers), and myself (Tim Diggles the Co-ordinator of the FWWCP). The group was chosen to represent the broad range of the membership, and also members who had some knowledge of German (considerable in Irene's case).

We flew or drove from different parts of Britain, eventually meeting up at the Kolpinghaus in Dortmund. An interesting place to stay, a pan German institution set up by the Catholic church in the 19th Century for travelling manual workers to stay in good clean (alcohol free!!) rooms. The tradition is continued; super clean basic rooms, big breakfasts, with food that can be taken away for lunch, and sensible prices! It costs around £20 per night for city centre accommodation, cheaper if you share.



This, like all Fed visits, was certainly no holiday, though the weather was wonderful, too hot in some ways for sitting in rooms talking. We had a busy schedule meeting and performing from early morning through to the evenings. We met so many people and developed as many connections.



What struck me as ever were the similarities of experience and culture, though as ever with different emphasis. The bare bones of the visit were as follows:

Monday

In the morning we were taken on a tour around the Dortmund area, visiting industrial sites of historical interest, including a mine with which tried in parts to look like a hunting lodge in the Alps, and an amazing ship-lift on the Dortmund-Ems Canal. All immaculately kept and part of a trail of more than 50 sites in the Ruhr area. We were shown round by Roy Kift an English author now living in Dortmund. He has written a fascinating guide, in English, to the areas industrial heritage.



After a far longer lunch at a Portuguese restaurant, than should be allowed, we were set in front of an eager press at the Institut, and had our photos taken with Rainer. The subsequent reports on our visit were very interesting and showed how incorrect the press get it everywhere!



In the evening we performed/read/discussed for the Englischen Zirkel at Der Nordrhein-Westfälischen Auslands-gesellschaft, in Dortmund. This was a group of people who meet to talk in English and discuss Britain. The building was like a further education college, and they work with schools and colleges, promoting other cultures

and developments. It was a tight hot room, but as ever the words of our members entranced the audience.

Attached to the Auslands-gesellschaft is a former police station and jail, now the Steinwache Memorial Museum. From 1933 to 1945 over 66,000 people were imprisoned there for either racial or political reasons. Many were tortured and killed. It is a place that needs to be kept to remember what can happen to a society when it degenerates into fascism.

On that evening we met many of the people we were to meet later during our stay.

Tuesday

The next day we had an early start. Another beautiful hot day, we went to Malinckrodt-Gymnasium, a school almost next door to the Institut. Here we were set in a beautifully designed hall with around 100 16-17 year olds. Now at that age at 9am on a hot summer day near the end of term, would you want to listen to an odd bunch of people speaking in a foreign language? Well they were wonderful and listened, asked useful questions, seemed interested. One student wanted the words from Roger Mills' *Ban Fascism* to use for his punk band. Eric went down a storm, especially because he used visual as well as written material.



After an afternoon of being shown round the Institut by Rainer, meeting the 'star' author Erasmus Schofers, and tea with Marian Kane, a Scot living in Dortmund, and one of the teachers from the school in Unna we were due to visit. We made our way to the University of Dortmund for a presentation and discussion at 5.30.



The discussion at the University was for me one of the highlights of the visit. It was (as we found in Lille, Philadelphia, Youngstown, et al.), where some of the basics of 'why the Fed is' arise. The evening was a mix of readings and discussion. Erasmus read in German from his latest novel. He was a founding member of Werkkreis in the 1960's, which promotes writing by working class people. The discussion inevitably got round to why political writing, in both the Fed and



Werkkreis, appears not to be central to current work. But that instead we promote the creative voice of working people. A not dissimilar argument looked like developing as happened at a conference in Lille. It sort of ended in a draw. But it is a point that would be useful to develop at a conference or special weekend sometime, and something we need to confront.



The hot evening ended in long cold beers as the day cooled down, and new friendships were developed.



Wednesday

This was a day planned by Rainer for us, Gudrun Siegel of Werkkreis, Erasmus, Harry Boseke of the German Writers Union, and Pilar (a blind writer of Spanish decent writing in German), and a number of other people, to have a round table meeting and talk about the future of working class writing. The writer Max von de Grun was unable to attend due to illness.

Top to Bottom
Rainer
Noltenius,
Erasmus
Schofers,
Gudrun Siegel,
Harry Boseke,
Pilar



The day was useful but never really got beyond introductions and reasons why we do the work we do. We heard about the development of Werkkreis and of other organisations, their struggles and splits. We outlined the history of the Fed, the highs and lows. We needed a month together, not just 5 hours! There were many similarities between Werkkreis and the Fed, and since the meeting they have joined us!

The evening was another long discussion over food about writing, and getting to know each other. We could all see so much potential for working together, creating, publishing, performing! Oh for lots of money to do it! The day cooled down with late night ice creams overlooking the busy town square.

Thursday

Another early start after a late night. We had a 9am 'show' in Unna, a small town about twenty miles east of Dortmund, at the Schule für Erwachsenenbildung - a sort of technical school, where young people learn skills useful to them in their working lives.

We had a large enthusiastic audience of 16 to 18 year olds, on the top floor of a building that was like an oven! With us we had Gudren and Pilar, who read in German. This was probably the best of our performances, the last usually is! The students were most generous in the applause and understanding of the words of our members. Many said they wrote, though not publicly of course, it would have been an ideal opportunity for some great workshops, but again we were booked in for another appointment, which we were as usual late for (Rainer must have been driven mad by us!).

After a long lunchtime meeting to plan future visits and follow-ups, we made our way (late of course!), to south Dortmund to visit a publisher working mainly with people with disabilities. We found a welcoming shop/office/cafe, where writing and many other forms of the arts took place. Immediately we realised that here was massive potential for creative partnerships with Fed groups, and as usual ideas flew around usually too quick to catch.

And that was that. We ended in a Vegetarian restaurant with Rainer. In the morning we split up, Pat and John by road to Belgium and beyond, the fliers making our way early to Dusseldorf Airport for 8am planes, and by 10.30am I was back in Britain on the slowest train ever into London!

What did we learn

All our visits whether in this country or abroad offer new insights and new challenges. We all learnt a great deal from the people we worked with and from each other. We saw how similar people's experience was, how organisations differed, how fascinated people were by what we have to offer and the words of our members.



We learnt how valuable the Fritz-Huser Institut is with its vast collection of books, visual and aural information and the great need we have to celebrate our membership through a well organised archive. It

truly is an amazing place, and would urge anyone who can to visit it.

We also learnt that trying to fit in too much worked against us. It is always tempting to think that we can go everywhere and meet everyone, I know I have been guilty of organising others to do that, but we



really never allowed for the often quite long discussions people wanted with us after the events, and we were either feeling guilty for not continuing a conversation or being late for the next appointment!

Everyone who came along gave their time to the Fed and to their groups and organisations. They represented all our members well, made many new contacts with people who we can in the long term work alongside. This was just the beginning not a finality. We want many more people to follow in our footsteps.

Future

We started planning the next stage of this work, and that has since developed into a visit in June 2002 to run a week long series of workshops with young people, culminating in a performance as part of a British Festival. Also we will be giving two evenings of talks/performances at the Ostwall Museum alongside an exhibition from the Tate Gallery. And then there is the rest of Germany!

Tim Diggles - FWWCP Co-ordinator

Ich schneibe im Dortmund Mit Fed und Fritz-Huser

Er...right... ehm, Rite of Writer. This one - Ein Schottich/Nord Rhein-Westfalien.. and So - Nerdlinger goes to Glasgow. A Glaswegian goes to Borussia.. one to play football, one to play with words.. in Gymnasium, University, School and... In my mind and body and soul. British and German writers working together, women and men - old and young (ish), unabled and sightless, published and not-be-dammed.

We have no archive - they have no Fed. So we must interchange, confer, enact - so that our week together is not wasted. There has to be more "futures" two-gether. This is only the end of the beginning, I hope. As a democratic socialist I was impressed by the breadth, scope and depth of material - kept from pasts long forgotten. Our German hosts were amazed at our Worker Writers and Community Publishers but as Erasmus Schoffer said "who is reading?" Oh.. I did not think of that. I will now. He regrets the change in Werkkreis from writing for political change for society, to writing for everything by individuals (if I completely got his drift).



As a Scot, I liked seeing non-touristical (in terms of aesthetic beauty) Stadt im Lander - I come from Glasgow and now live in Lockerbie. Whilst I won't go back - I remember my roots. "Never forget the arse you used to sit on". Dortmund is twinned with my birthplace.

We read, performed, communicated. They listened, respected - made us feel "Wilkommen", danke, mein Dortmunders.



I have seen similar archives in Chicago, Antwerp, Palma, but here a difference. An Institut dedicated to Working People's writings - of all sorts - sport, art, sexualite, Esperanto.. for a mere example.

And now my name, my words, my readings.. My God - I share, in a foreign country - with my brothers and sisters, the same shelf. My book sleeps with my German Sisters. Someone take me down and read me. Please (pleas). I now will read more German literature. Speak your language "besser"... Ich spreke klein.. next time.. (I

wish.. but I must work at it)

A brief, very brief article on but a mere three days. Daze I am in. Sehr muden. Very tired. I must rest... spreke leise.. nicht erwahrt im 16hrs.. Wednesday. Dis nacht.. I awake 2 days to go.

Oh yehh! Man... Och aye ma wee man... Ya mein herr...

So fae a wee Keelie,

A' ra-bes'

Eric Davidson

The 'Smart' Experience of Dortmund

Adult Basic Ed. Groups in the FED

On our visit to Dortmund, we did presentations and talks about working class writing to the University of Dortmund, as well as all the other places we visited.

I spoke about the place Adult Ed had in working class writing, how writing about people's own lives encourages them to learn, to be proud of themselves, of who they are. I spoke about some member groups from the North West, like Pecket Well College, Gatehouse Books, and my own group, Prescot Writers. I also had many other books with me that people were interested in and some took away copies.

I read from books published by these groups, choosing a good selection from each. I also spoke about an organisation called 'Ideas in Motion', although not a Fed group, they are a group of disabled and able-bodied people who put on courses and events and hold conferences about their fight to give people who attend day centres a voice, I run a creative writing / arts and crafts group for Ideas in Motion at the University of Liverpool.



It wasn't all hard work and serious, at one of the evening performances at Dortmund University, I included a poem from my late dad called 'Two Green Fingers,' and felt I had to give an explanation before reading it. I raised two fingers in the air and asked the students and tutors if they knew what the gesture meant! A lot of grumbling was heard and they said words to the effect of, 'oh yeah, we know, Victory'. So I explained what it meant and they all fell about laughing. (My dad's poem was about two neighbours, one who was a brilliant gardener and the other who couldn't garden to save his life.) There were lots of laughs whilst reading the poem.

During the whole visit I felt pleased and proud the way all the examples of writing we read / performed were received. We also went to a 6th form college for students ages 16 - 17 who were studying English and I was thrilled at their understanding and appreciation of people's work.

We were made so welcome over there, it was incredible, we must make sure we do the same for them.

Pat Smart (Exec member, Prescot Writers and Pecket Well College) Dortmund - and writings by disabled people

One of the visits on the agenda was to a young disabled man, Christian. He had a bookshop in one of the little side streets in Dortmund and he collected books written by people, who also had disabilities, telling about their lives. People donate books and he catalogues, records, sells them and keeps an archive of them in his bookshop. Christian also receives a lot of requests and visits from people doing research, for various projects, he always obliges.

On the floor above his shop there was a big room where various community groups met. One of these groups is a 'street theatre', When they were going to give a performance they would dress up in the costume of that particular play and dash off around the streets performing.

Christian couldn't understand English so we spoke to him through Irene, but when we asked questions he would answer in German to Irene before she could translate them to him. Near the end of our visit he started to talk a bit of English. I think we gave him the confidence to use his language skills.

We hope that one day we will get Christian to bring a group over and promote his work and bookshop. With the next trip to Dortmund, we hope to have someone interview him, and, with luck he may apply for his bookshop to be part of the Fed. If any groups would like to contact Christian, drop us a line and we'll let him have your details.

John Smart (Prescot Writers and Pecket Well College)



CPD what is it?

The FWWCP joined a consortium of national literature organisations to promote CPD. Philippa Johnston the consortium's Co-ordinator, writes about how it can help our members.

Hands up anyone who dares to admit that they don't really know what continuing professional development (CPD) is, or what it has to do with writers or writing?

I have to confess that my understanding of 'CPD', as those in the know refer to it, was less than perfect when I took on the new job of CPD Co-ordinator for the New Writing and Literature Consortium back in September. As I've come to understand it, professional development is about enhancing your skills and knowledge on a continuing basis throughout your working life, so that you can make the most of your potential, professional and personal. Everyone learns in different ways. Some of us like to go on courses or attend a workshop - others prefer to learn from their peers or on their own. All are equally valid. The key thing is planning your learning rather than doing an odd bit every now and again.

The New Writing and Literature Consortium is a new grouping of five well-established literature organisations - the Federation itself, plus the National Association of Writers in Education (NAWE) who are leading the Consortium; The National Association for Literature Development (NALD); writernet (which supports writers working in theatre and other performance mediums); and Lapidus (The Association for the Literary Arts in Personal Development).

Joined Forces

The five organisations have joined forces to provide writers, literature development specialists and other professionals involved in creating and supporting new writing with the information and advice that they need to make informed choices about their professional development needs and how best to address them. One of the first things that the Consortium is doing is creating a database of all the different types of training and development opportunities within new writing and literature that exist in the UK, plus the various sources of funding available. This invaluable information resource will be accessible on-line and via other means and is due to be launched by autumn 2002. Advice on which training or development activity is most appropriate to your particular needs will also be available.

The Consortium plans to introduce other professional development services as well, such as help with the whole process of planning your professional development, networking opportunities, and a broad range of resource materials, including articles on professional practice, case studies, and information sheets.

Thanks to additional funding, the Consortium itself will also be able to offer a range of new training and development opportunities. These are likely to focus on equipping writers with the skills to work in the community, education, healthcare and other settings, and in areas such as cross-artform and live literature. Training for writers in making a living from writing, and development opportunities such as mentoring and job shadowing are also likely to be on the agenda. There will also be training opportunities for literature development specialists and for those who wish to use creative writing in their work.

Growing Recognition

The New Writing and Literature Consortium represents new writing and literature within CreativePeople, a major new cross-artform initiative funded by the Arts Council of England. CreativePeople reflects the growing recognition within the arts sector of the importance of supporting the development of the 500,000 people who work within it, if they are to keep pace with developments in their own field and take full advantage of the employment opportunities in other fields.

The initiative is especially relevant to writers and writing. It has always been a challenge for writers to earn a living from writing alone but today there is a growing range of employment opportunities in other settings, such as education, healthcare, and in the community. All that is needed to take advantage of these opportunities are the relevant professional skills - and this is where the New Writing and Literature Consortium steps in.

Over the next few months, the Consortium is consulting widely to ensure that it provides what is really wanted. This consultation will take

Cont'd bottom of page 20

Want to get people reading together?

If so, why not apply for a Reading Families Millennium Award?

Where do you read?

Most people read alone. 62% of women read in bed and 9% of men admit to reading on the toilet! 50% of children read with their mums and only 34% read with their fathers.

A new Award scheme

If you have a good idea for getting families reading together you could apply for a Reading Families Award. This new Award scheme is being co-ordinated by the Campaign for Learning with support from the Millennium Commission and is offering over £1.2 million worth of awards to individuals throughout England over the next three years. Almost 400 awards averaging £2,500 each will be made, with most projects lasting between six and twelve months.

Who can apply?

You can – all you need is a good idea for getting families and communities reading more together and the energy and enthusiasm to carry it out! You must be aged 21 or over and cannot have received a Millennium Award before and your project must not be part of your job.

What could your project do?

All you need is a good idea for getting people reading together. Here are some ideas – you could:

- turn family stories into a play
- help prisoners write stories and record them on tape for their children
- create a community website
- set up a homework club for the children in your area
- collect local recipes and make them into a book
- form a book group
- work with children and grandparents to improve reading and IT skills.

Most awards will be aimed at those who have become switched off from learning or who are, for whatever reason, disadvantaged, for example people in sheltered

housing, refugees, prisoners, adults with poor basic skills, the elderly and those with special needs.

What would an Award cover?

An Award would provide money to cover all costs (except salary) as well as training and support for you to run the project. That means all you would need to put in is just your time, energy and ideas!

So how do you apply?

The closing date for applications in the second round is in autumn 2002, with a further application round in 2003.

Even if you do not want to apply yourself, you might be able to help get the word out to potential applicants – let us know and we will provide you with posters and promotional materials.

For an application form contact:

Geoff Taggart
Reading Families Millennium Award Scheme
Campaign for Learning
BVSC
138 Digbeth
Birmingham
B5 6DR
phone: 0121 643 4533
e-mail: gtaggart@cflearning.org.uk

CPD cont'd from page 19...

various forms – postal surveys, group discussions, individual interviews – and we hope that you will take the opportunity to have your say and shape the work of the Consortium. In the meantime, if you would like to let us know your views on training and professional development, or would like further information on the New Writing and Literature Consortium, please get in touch – we would be delighted to hear from you.

Contact:

Philippa Johnston,
CPD Co-ordinator,
The New Writing and Literature Consortium,
Freepost NEA12181,
Edinburgh EH6 0BR (no stamp required)
tel.: 0131 553 2210
e-mail: pcjohnston@freeuk.com



One of the plus factors for the Fed moving to The Burslem School of Art, is an interesting programme of exhibitions at the former art school. This, of football at Longport, 1959, is from a popular show organised by The Potteries Museum, of photographs of the north of Stoke-on-Trent, by Don Morris. Some of the bottle kilns in the background are still standing.

Visiting Writers Scheme

Heeley Writers in Sheffield brought Linda Lee Welch in to run some workshops for the membership, using the FWWCP Visiting Writers funding. Heeley member John Malcomson reports:

The object of the workshops was to give participants the opportunity to learn about the craft of writing short stories, and to produce two stories (hopefully) and present them at an evening during the Off the Shelf Festival of Writing, held annually in Sheffield.

Linda Lee Welch was chosen from a short-list of local writers who had been suggested by the co-ordinator for the MA course in Creative Writing at Sheffield Hallam University, and all of whom were tutors on that course.

We held eight workshops, spread over some four months, from late June to early October. The workshops were held at our usual venue, as we knew our members would be available then, but were spaced to be only alternate weeks, plus a gap over the summer holiday period. The reason for holding the workshops on alternate weeks was that some members expressed the view that they did not want to join the workshops, and this allowed our usual meetings to continue.

Attendance varied from nine to sixteen participants, with about four writers who had not been regular attenders at Heeley Writers. Linda Lee Welch turned out to be an excellent tutor, proving very popular, both in her approach and her enthusiasm, which was extremely infectious.

The first five meetings were devoted to the craft and structure of story writing in general, and how this applied to short story in particular. In the final

three sessions, participants presented draft versions of their work. As with all writers however, several had chosen to go their own way and produced work, which it would be hard to describe as short stories; some were clearly poems. Linda Lee was very accepting of this, expressing the view that her job was to inspire, and if such inspiration resulted in a form other than the presumed goal, it did not matter.

The final event took place at Trippett's Wine Bar during the Off the Shelf Festival. Participants read their work to a small but enthusiastic gathering, and a band by the name of Sneaky Peek, of which Linda Lee is a member, interspersed the readings with music and songs.

All the workshop participants were very complimentary about Linda Lee and the workshops, and nobody suggested it had not been worthwhile. When I suggested it might be possible to obtain funding for another one, there was a general sense that it would be great to be able to do so.

FWWCP Note:

We have limited funding for another year of Visits, the criteria will be available after the Festival in April. They will be sent to all Member groups when available.

Glenn Thompson

An appreciation by Ken Worpole of the founder of Centerprise who died in 2001

Glenn Thompson, the black American founder of Centerprise, died on 7th September 2001. He was one of the great pioneering spirits of Hackney's multi-cultural politics, and it is amazing that his original achievement still flourishes after thirty years - one of the great survivors of the London 60's culture.

Glenn arrived in the borough at the end of the 1960s, as a youth worker in Hoxton. He had been brought up in Brooklyn, in tough circumstances, with his mother dying when he was 11 and his father later spending time in prison. A late reader himself, he became almost obsessed with the power of literacy to change people's lives, and in many ways the rest of his life was spent promoting this belief - in Hackney, back in New York, then as an international publisher, as well as someone who worked in Africa setting up workshops to promote indigenous publishing.

He set up the first outlet for the Open University course books in London at Centerprise, imported black literature from small publishers around the world, and contacted teachers, including me, to

talk about setting up literacy projects for young people who fell through the net. He was convinced of his mission in life, though he was happy for others to fill in the details.

Five years ago, to celebrate the 25th anniversary of Centerprise, Glenn returned to Hackney, along with the eminent writer and publishers, Margaret Busby. Glenn talked enthusiastically about the workshops he had run in Africa, and the new possibilities which desktop publishing offered against the dead hand of mass publishing. Always the optimist, he left everyone feeling good at the end of the evening, as he talked about the many projects he felt that he still had to complete.

He was buried in Highgate Cemetery. At his funeral service a poem by Vivian Usherwood, a young black Stoke Newington writer (who died tragically young) was read. Vivian's poems became the first book that Glenn and Centerprise ever published.

(This is an extract from a longer version published in N16 Magazine)

Thinking of Kay Ekevall

Jill Oxford of London Voices celebrates the life of Kay Ekevall who died in 2001 aged 90.

On the evening when Bush and Blair launched the bombing of Afghanistan, I wondered what Kay's reaction would have been. I think she would have been calm, and would have spoken out clearly. She was politically astute. A poem by Kay which I picked at random seems apposite.

Freedom by banker's order

The Nations are United
One Planet and three worlds.
Liberty and Peace were won
Twice in one Century:
Yet death and destruction,
Debt and slow starvation
Still divide the three worlds
Despite the United Nations.

Kay and I agreed on many things, and I valued her older woman's judgement. She co-edited many books published by London Voices. That meant her coming right across London on the tube, for a pleasant half-day's discussion on the merits of people's writings. We lunched on home-made bread and ham, good but not fancy, a lot of coffee and tea, and in between I asked tactful questions as I tried to understand her past.

George Orwell

She seemed to have lived in many places, including Edinburgh, Hampstead and South London, and she had known George Orwell, when she typed for famous writers in Hampstead. The main spoken memory from that romance was shock at Orwell's view of the working class expressed in *Wigan Pier*, which he was writing at the time. Kay staunchly aligned herself with the

ideas of class unity and progressive values, the poem *Education* expresses her belief that her real education began after she left school at fifteen, when she met the hunger marchers in the thirties.

Education

At school I knew history:
Kings and Emperors
Battles and heroes
There was something called
The White Man's burden
We seemed to do well under it,
But the black man didn't.

I didn't know about
Miners and Dockers:
Their work and their battles,
I did hear about Peterloo
But those Chartists were bloodthirsty rebels,
They had to be put down!
My education began when I met
The hunger marchers from
Aberdeen and Dundee
On their way to London

Kay volunteered for the Spanish Civil War, but her eyesight was too poor for her to go. Physically strong, her one good eye was operated on successfully as it began to fail, and this gave her a new lease of life. But often my heart was in my mouth as I half guided her to the tube at the end of our days together.

She had looked after her Swedish husband, who was an engine driver in the Second World War, until he died, his nerves frayed. Her twin boys, Kon and Thor live to rejoice in her legacy of ideas. Kon was with her every minute of her last two years, taking her out, helpful, caring to the end. She was 90 on her last birthday on May 1st 2001, the May Day of which she was so proud.

Welder

Kay herself was a welder in the war for two years, but none of her writing gives any impression of this time. I do remember that in her seventies she often stayed overnight in a humpy tent at the women's gate, protesting against US bases at Greenham Common.

Every year on August 6th, she would write a poem on a theme connected with the suffering of unempowered people. Here is one of them.

Hiroshima bomb, August 6th 1945, to Pacific Islands radiation 1988

Roughly pushing the leaflet aside,
"It saved my life", she said
(Children's shadows staining the stones)
"It insults me that you mourn their dead".

"You should be grateful, then" the mother said
"If, through our grief, your being was preserved.
Prolonging hate beyond this dire revenge
Only breeds hate another war to serve.

"Oh man, whose life was saved, abandon hate!
Bend your mind now towards saving the Earth.
Lest you doom more mothers to create
Shadows for the travail of a birth".

Kay always took great interest in the character and destiny of all my children, and rejoiced in the children of other friends. She gave us a rose when Juliette was born 15 years ago. It was *Pink Peace* as strong as herself, and it flourishes in our garden now. Roses were her flower, her garden was as full of roses, as her house was as full of books. I feel that she should share her own tribute to Hilda Murrell the famous rose grower and peace activist.

Hilda Murrell

*No man knows what wild centuries roves back
the rose - Walter de la Mare*
Dedicated
To life on Earth
She grew roses
For our pleasure.
The measure
Of her trust to us
Must be
That roses live
For centuries
To come

*Reprinted from London Voices' latest anthology
Friendship goes dancing round the earth reviewed on
page 20*

R e v i e w s

LUGGAGE IN MADRID

Luggage in Madrid is Steve Haythorne's personal catechism for things that make no sense to him. It is the title of his poetry book which takes a rhyming bard's eye view of agony aunts (letters to) Bouncers, Computers (Shove I T) in fact everything from Aliens is Sheffield to Xmas (do you know Why you shouldn't give pets for Christmas?) with a sliding tackle on Football Referees, on the Sheffield version of the Mating Game and much more.

I have always known Steve is funny. He slips in the (very) odd verse while comparing gigs for The Lazy Dollies and you can draw in audience laughter at his regular spot at The Deep End. Where you can obtain a copy of this book. Steve is also wickedly clever. *Luggage in Madrid* contains incendiary material, Not to be Opened on Flight...

More details on www.serafic.com (I am told).

Mike Hoy, Heeley Writers

Sir Tingly in the Quest for the Dargon

by Bill Allerton, CD, from 101 Cross Lane, Sheffield S10



Sir Tingly, his horse Whinnie, his friend Old Ned and a grey mouse are out to find a Dargon who has done so much demolition that some of the villagers have called the ruins of their homes "Dunbuilding". They meet a wizard who has a problem with spells, and find that the Dargon, who is rather silly, is not quite what he seems.

The entertaining story, read with a lively delivery and with nearly an hour's playing time, is ideal for a car journey, with plenty of convenient chapter breaks. Our reviewers, Sally Gascoigne and Charlotte Neely, both aged 11, thought the content would suit slightly younger children.

"It was exciting, and very descriptive. It keeps you wanting to know what happens next," says Sally.

Charlotte says, "The Dargon sounds strange and quite funny. It's got some weird and funny voices."

Friendship goes dancing round the earth

Published by London Voices, ISBN-0-9532292-5-3, £4

The title is a quote from Epicurius (342-271BC), and as usual, London Voices have produced a fascinating and varied selection, well illustrated, and presented. There is a tribute to Kay Ekevall (see p22), in which I was struck by something Kay wrote at the age of 87, that she was "still learning", something that would be a great epitaph for any person.

Where to start in such a strong selection of writing? There are reactions to September 11th; some wonderfully ironic, witty poetry and short stories; moving poems about people, the earth, struggles, and recollection. One that has stuck in my mind, is Greta Sykes' poem *For ever and ever*, which starts so beautifully:

I think of you
In the shape of the large-fingered
Leaf of the plane
On the pavement
In ochre and rust.
Eternal for me and forever.

Another highlight was Bert Ward's *No reprise*, in which a friend was drowned in a submarine in the war, for 55 years he thought it occurred in the warm Mediterranean, but when finding that it was in the icy Atlantic, Bert was shaken that for years he had been wrong. He uses the poem to say goodbye again to his friend, through a lovely use of straightforward words:

from a thousand miles
I lay a garland of words
On the grey water above you
We must not forget

A highlight throughout is the copious use of good illustration. The cover is a wonderful painting by Richard Bell, which needs to be seen in its full colour to appreciate it.

I highly recommend this book as a model for any writers group; it gives ample opportunity for members old and new to be heard, it celebrates the past, and looks forward to the future.

Tim Diggles, FWCP



R e v i e w s

Bless'd Millennium - the Life and Work of Thomas Spence (1750 - 1814)

Published by Northern Voices, 10 Greenhaugh Road, Whitley Bay, Tyne and Wear NE24 9HF, Price £3.50 ISBN 1 871536 138

Edited by Keith Armstrong, includes "gathering Nuts" by Thomas Spence, "Friends and Foes" by Olive Rudkin, "At the sign of the Fleece" by P M Ashraf, "On becoming a Spenceman" by George French, "A Folksong for Thomas Spence" by Keith Armstrong, letters and poems of Spence, an epilogue by Arthur W Waters, and an introduction by Malcolm Chase. The photographs are not credited.

Thomas Spence, a Geordie of Scottish ancestry, was born in 1750. When he was 25 Spence read a paper to the newly formed Newcastle Philosophical Society on the Rights of Man. These rights, said Spence, are Liberty, Air, the light and heat of the Sun, and most important of all, the right of property in land. His theory was that each Parish in the land should take over the land, fanning themselves into a corporation, they would the rent the land to everyone in small lots. The rent received would be the only tax, and from it, the schools, the militia, and the industries, should be sustained. The Parish Council would be elected by ballot on a basis of manhood suffrage, and would be the real governing authority in the community.

Had he left it at this the Philosophical Society could have tolerated it, but what they did not like was Spence's conduct after he had delivered the lecture. He printed and sold it to the public. So he was expelled from the Society. Spence, a teacher, continued to propagate his theory, first in Newcastle, and later from a stall in Chancery Lane, London. As this was the time of American Independence, and a great fervour of debate, was throughout the Kingdom, it can be imagined that the British Government became worried, and eventually, by the time of Spence's death in 1814, had sent a spy to worm his way into the Spencian Societies, which had been formed, and three years later, a special Act of Parliament was passed to suppress all societies or clubs calling themselves Spencians'.

This well-produced 28 page booklet contains a very interesting group of documents relating to Thomas Spence, and the Spencian Theory, and also enlightens us about other aspects of his lively mind. This interesting character also produced in his lifetime a book adapting standard spelling to help local pupils whose strong Geordie accents made reading and writing in the King's English very difficult. Perhaps a further product of a teacher's mind was the political tokens he produced and distributed - coins showing embossed picture surrounded by a motto. There are some very clear pictures of these in the booklet.

When Thomas Spence died, one of these tokens was put into his coffin by a well-wisher. It showed a cat surrounded by the motto "I Liberty I Among Slaves Enjoy".

Frances Grant

Dumfries and Galloway Survivors Poetry

Dreamcatcher 9

A collection of poetry & prose £3.60 (75p p&p), available from 9 Berkeley Drive, Lincoln LN6 8EN issn 1466-9455

This magazine/book features work of poets from across the world, short fictions and one photographic artist alongside twelve other artists. The highlight of the collection for me is the variety and the chance to sample the work of poets all the way from Australia, New Zealand, USA, Portugal, Canada, Ireland and the UK.



It is amazing that despite the distances and the diversities of cultural background the words came together - whatever their native languages or accents they spoke in one voice.

Paul Sutherland and associates have done a very good job getting these people together. It is refreshing and inspiring. A great opportunity to savour this varied menu, constantly learning from each other.

Fitz Lewis, Gatehouse Books

R e v i e w s

Strange Baggage

Published by the Kingfisher Project Salisbury ISBN 0953977501, available from Salisbury Arts Centre (42 pages)

Strange Baggage is a collection of poems by the Salisbury Arts Centre Kingfisher group. The seven poets present works that are open, honest and courageous in their exploration of such universal themes as *parting, loss* and the *human condition*.

The collection opens with Sue Morgan whose intense and powerful vernacular deals with frustration and anger in an explosive address to an unnamed stranger. Her touching analogy of a final journey in 'Goodbye' captures all the wistful reluctance of one who neither wishes to travel nor to say farewell.

Henry Lawson provides historical and evocative description in his poem 'On Devizes Road', yet also charms with his candid word-painting in 'Still Life'. Funny and insightful about the atmospheric moods of relationships is the opening piece by Brian F Billon. He skilfully explores such diverse themes as change 'Refurb' and writer's block 'Lost for Words' in a manner that is both highly descriptive and philosophical.

Terry Cleeve's observational pieces highlight much of the moment. A first sighting of a field, the sudden change when illness comes, the impact of colour on landscape - these are just some of the themes that he so aptly traces with his descriptive word imagery.

Jan Alford captures poignantly the moment of parting from a beloved pet, 'He wouldn't look at me. I couldn't look away'. She delicately traces the intensity and mystery of the circumstances, leaving the reader wondering yet in full empathy, In 'Windscreen Wipers' she skilfully encapsulates the effects of a growing snowstorm during a journey by car with such immediate imagery as "Landmarks -nouveaux riches in emine".

Bill O'bitt has a reflective start to his collection with 'Flesh', an exploration of the meaning of life. This reflectiveness continues throughout his work until we come to the Odes which conclude his contribution. There we find both his diverse ability to elicit humour and embrace the hunger of lust with delight.

Pegasus writes in both poem and prose forms, dreamy visionary pieces which capture the injustice, aspirations and harsh fates of his times with telling insight. This collection is diverse, intense, dreamy, provocative and well worth a read.

Hazel Gardiner, Lockerbie Writer's Group (There is a conference concerning writing in health care in Salisbury to debate issues arisen in this book, on April 11 2002, at Salisbury Arts Centre, contact Peter Ursem on 01747 821757 for details)

Last of the Rock 'N' Rollers

Last of the Rock 'N' Rollers, Forty Winks Press, 28pp £1.50, cheques to B Fortey, 212 Caerleon Rd., Newport NP19 7GQ

Steve Sneyd, Mike Hoy, Dave Wright and Bryn Fortey in a highly enjoyable anthology which is a (disturbing) paean to popular music. Sneyd delivers a cycle of almost religious, nay, prophetic, poems about Elvis (one of which has him working in the chippy a mile down the road from my house) which are a bit undermined by being very probably true. The poems are great but the problem with writing about Elvis is that the mythology is already exponentially fantastic and bizarre and the real phenomena associated with it even more so.

Dave Wright's entrance on stage describes the frightening twilight of real rock and roll, like one of JG Ballard's early stories, but set around decaying Wurlitzers in a holiday camp near Pwllheli. Just as the collection has become Nightmare of the Zombie Rockers, Mike Hoy works in a few laughs: "Well it's Saturday night and I've not got laid" "I once drove a pink Cadillac polished like glass/ now when I get out I use a bus pass". *I could have been Dylan couldn't I?* is a tour de force of Dylanisms.

Bryn Fortey concludes with a round up of a few other dead heroes, and a death rattle in *Last*. I found, with the final page read, that I felt quite shocked. Whereas a lot of rock and roll is about youth, or romanticised death and preoccupation with the morbid, as much in the songs as in the way the lives of all the young, dead, rock stars are portrayed, this isn't romantic, at all. It's shake, rattle and roll over.

Nick Pollard

R e v i e w s

Ripples from the Rother

Rotherham Metro Writers, Forward Press, 50pp £2.75

A collection of poems, stories, articles and performance pieces, funny, sentimental and some plain quirky, like the encounter between Graham Rippon's *New Friends*. Much of the writing has a strong sense of place, perhaps no more so than in Ernest Rodgers amusing tale of how *The Rotherhamites* saw off the Vikings. Rotherham Metro's inclusion of articles is unusual. Bernard Rooney's article *On Writing* might have been better placed as an introduction - but there's a danger in dispensing advice on writing if others in the volume don't "cut poetry to the bone", perhaps because cutting to the bone doesn't suit everyone's approach.

Nick Pollard

Reviewers Wanted!

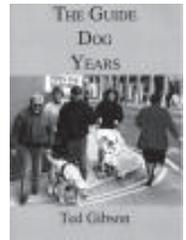
Below is a list of books which we have received, but unfortunately have been unable to get the reviews completed in time for publishing in this issue. We need people or groups who are willing to review books, and equally importantly get those reviews completed and sent to us!

So if you are interested in either reviewing one of the books below, or receiving books for review in the future, please contact us by phone on 01782 822327, or e-mail thefwcp@tiscali.co.uk

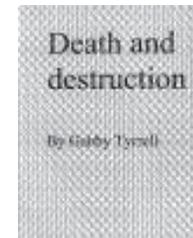


Bound to be Free
Jan Fortune-West published by Educational Heretics Press, 113 Arundel Drive, Bramcote Hills, Nottingham NG9 3FQ - a book exploring the myths that education is free!

Guide Dog Years
Ted Gibson published by New Millennium, 292 Kennington Road London SE11. A collection of poetry which often humorously reflects the authors life and dog.



Death and Destruction
Gabby Tyrrell published by New River Project, 89a Petherton Road, London N5 - a book of poetry used in performance by Gabby.



Three new books from Spout Publications, The Word Hoard, 7 Northumberland St., Huddersfield



Hermit Space
poetry and prose by Ralph Hancock



Plot 161
Prose by Matt Black about an allotment through the evolving gardening year.



Feeding Fire
Poetry by Eleanor Rees

FedFest02 April 5 to 7 Liverpool



The 26th annual Festival of Writing takes place at The University of Liverpool, the weekend after Easter.

FedFest comprises of workshops, readings, talks, discussion, an opportunity to meet those working in community publishing from the UK and abroad.

You can have a hectic and busy time, or time to think and write. The cost for FWWCP Members is £89 for full board and all workshops. There are day and non member rates. We have some bursaries to support those with lower incomes.

For forms and information:
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Forms are also available on our Website www.thefwwcp.org.uk
We look forward to seeing you!



NEXT ISSUE

The deadline for submission of articles or reviews for consideration for Issue No.24 is March 12th, 2002.

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