



## Interchange @ the Priestley

Interchange (Bradford Writers' Network) meets every Tuesday from 8pm at the Priestley Centre for Arts (formerly the Bradford Playhouse).

The sessions are informal and provide a sounding board for members' work, as well as constructive criticism and feedback should this be required.

Support, encouragement and words are at the forefront of the group's activities, and all kinds of writing is welcomed: poetry, short and long fiction, plays, memoirs, articles and songs.

### Inside this issue...

**Poets 4 Peace launch anthology, poetry by Patrick Blues and Karl Dallas, news, views and events**

# Verses on peace

*It took only minutes on September 11 to destroy the World Trade Centre, and months to prepare the anthology just released by Poets 4 Peace. **Mark Cantrell** reports on this poetic statement against war and violence*

**THEY** came together in the aftermath of September 11, determined to make a statement deploring war and violence.

The result is the anthology *Sundoves, Bumblebees & Blue Streak Bananas*, released at the end of May.

The anthology will raise money for the victims of war as well as make a statement, or so the group responsible for its production hopes.

Poets 4 Peace was spearheaded by Seema Gill and included Lynette Shaw McKone, Richard Heley and Bruce Barnes. Towards the end of last year, they issued a call for submissions, and were inundated with work.

"Poets can make a contribution towards peace," says Seema. "I saw the images of all this [last year]. It

was so frightening. I thought it's third world war. Something had to be done. I have always despised terrorism, racism and any kind of discrimination.

"I was brought up in India and I left that country because there was a lot of discrimina-

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*"Poets can make a contribution towards peace"*

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tion against one religion to another. I thought we should do something because poets are always heard."

To raise funds for the production of the book, the group con-

ducted workshops in several Bradford schools. This generated a wealth of material that will form the basis of Seema's next intended project, which is to produce an anthology of the children's work.

"We owe it to these children to publish their poems," she adds. "By doing the workshops, children could relate to these issues in their own communities. They want to live together peacefully in their own schools and their own neighbourhoods, and that's what we want to initiate on a small scale. Peace begins within yourself and within the community, then we can deal with these global conflicts."

The book features a diverse range of work from many poets, including some familiar names. It starts with a beautiful poem from 11-year-old Steven Wooler. Seema will introduce the book and some of the contributors will be reading their work at the official launch next month.

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*Continued on bottom of back page...*

# Poets @ Lister Park

Members of Interchange performed at the opening of a newly-refurbished Lister Park last month. **Bruce Barnes** was there

**I**NTERCHANGE was approached to do a reading as part of a day of celebration marking the completion of improvements to Lister Park, Bradford funded by the Millenium Commission.

There is a new children's playground and sports pitches, a Mughal Garden, the botanical garden has been replanted, the lake restored with boating and a water-side coffee house, many paths have been relayed and the gates

refurbished. It's great to see a park that was once dear to Bradfordians restored to its former glory. Do come and have a look if you haven't been and if you are interested in becoming actively involved in looking after the Park, why not become a member of the Friends of Lister Park: give Bruce or Joy a ring on (01274) 223665.

The day began in a downpour with muddy playing fields and the marquee roof sinking under the weight of water, like Glastonbury

on the doorstep, but by 1.p.m there was enough blue in the sky to make a Patrick poem. We were due to read for two sessions in the newly refurbished bandstand. Its base is decorated with the names of Victorian musicians, so clearly they never intended it for poetry reading.

Yet the novelty didn't attract crowds. There's a picture from the 1920's of a sea of flatcaps, umbrellas, and headscarves sweeping down the bank towards the bandstand where a brass band plays; now, I wish!

When the first ses-

sion was due to start, at 2.30, it was clear there had been a double booking with a saxophone ensemble from Bradford Grammar. In the spirit of artistic collaboration, Karl negotiated reading slots between their numbers, and even a poetry n jazz number for himself. So Karl, Gloria, Ruth in story telling mode, Richard Heeley (up or is it down from London?), and myself read to an audience sheltering in the bandstand. I have a real affection for the park and had written a per-

## Fifteen minutes for Seema

**S**EEMA Gill, no stranger on the local performance circuit, has made her poetry debut in the United States.

She recently returned from a three-week trip where she performed in the Austin International Poetry Festival and other venues.

"The Texan hospitality was great," she said. "It was really positive. I listened to the

poetry, saw how they were performing and I learned a lot."

It might have been her first time in the States, but Seema has performed abroad before: she has read work in East Africa, Tanzania and Denmark.

"I brought back a broad range of inspiration and greater experience as a performance poet," she added.

You can taste this inspiration and experi-

ence on the 25th June at 9pm, when Seema will be performing a 15 minute slot as a guest of Interchange.

This is a regular Tuesday event, which will include the usual read round of members' work, but to mark her US debut, and the forthcoming launch of the book (see item on front page), Seema was asked to perform.

**Mark Cantrell**



Above: Seema Gill. Seen here performing at the Priestley Centre last year.

formance piece about an old convoluted beech tree by one of the side gates. A band turned up for our 3.30 slot, and again we negotiated poetry interludes for Seema and Sarah Jennings but by this time the weather had improved and the audience found the confidence to move outside and sit in chairs; the P.A system did the rest. I usually grumble about the lack of audience

for our readings, but this time I didn't feel I needed one; I was reading for the Park; and its trees, gardens and wildlife.

The Interchange poets involved shared a fee of £100, and Andrew Woods, Events Officer, from the Council's Department of Arts Heritage and Leisure has written to thank all those who took part.

**Bruce Barnes**

## Poetry prizes

**POETRY Life Magazine is running its 21st open poetry competition, with a top prize of £500 for the lucky winner.**

The closing date for the competition is 27th July and the final judging will be done by Wendy Cope. There is no limit on the number of poems submitted, but an entry fee of £3 is payable for each poem (no more than 80 lines long).

The first prize winner will also be able to submit a further five poems to the magazine as well as see their winning entry published on the website. The second prize is £100 and the 3rd, 4th and 5th prizes are all £50.

For more information or to send entries: Poetry Life, 1 Blue Ball Corner, Water Lane, Winchester, Hampshire, SO23 0ER. Website: <http://freespace.virgin.net/poetry.life/>

## Interchange performs

**MEMBERS of Interchange performed — and also displayed — work at the PCA Weekend last month.**

Phil Wainman exhibited paintings and photography in the Studio Theatre, while Howard Frost, Patrick

Blues, Bruce Barnes and Carol Solorz performed poetry and song in the Cellar Bar.

The event was organised by students from Bradford University, and was intended to promote the Priestley Centre for Arts.

## Michael's Blues

Over there in Bradford

There was this cat I knew

His mind was always some place else

His brain always in a stew

We'd sit and I'd drink coffee

He'd have a lager or two

I'd read out my poetry

He'd talk about his philosophy

His appearance it was unkempt

He kinda smelled unpleasant

He really didn't care about

Those kind of things

Because his brain was always someplace else

But in his head he had been

To places that I'd never seen

In his mind he had been

To the edge of the wilderness

That guy went out walking

One day he never came back

Think the lord had saved his mind

Took him to a better place

Writing celestial poetry

For the soul band in the sky

It just won't matter if his breath smells bad

About the women he has never had

Gone down the heaven road now

Where he has gone

There ain't no coming back.

**Patrick Blues**

# Cretan Poetry

*All poets are liars.  
Believe none of us.*

*We weave webs of words to bewitch and baffle you.  
We turn what is into what might be  
and what could never be into what shall be.  
We snag your imagination like a fish on a hook  
and draw you out of the safety of your placid pools  
into the fast white water where hidden rocks lie in wait.  
We are crocodiles  
whose jaws open wide  
to swallow all your certainties  
and spew out spurious uncertainties  
whose glamour vanishes like mist in sunlight  
once the book is closed.*

*We are cheating lovers,  
truanting schoolboys,  
thieves of borrowed time,  
con merchants on the make,  
drug dealers who would stuff your brains with our garbage,  
fallen angels,  
unfrocked saints,  
will o' the wisps,  
foggy miasmas,  
red herring curers,  
fogmakers,  
shitstirrers,  
death defiers,  
evil eyers.*

*Nothing we say is true.  
Believe none of us.  
I, a poet, tell you this.*

**Karl Dallas**

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## Poets 4 Peace make sundoves

*Continued from front page*

This will take place at Bradford Central Library, 25th July. Full details to be announced later. It is hoped that some copies of the book will be sold through local bookshops, but that has not yet been finalised.

*Sundoves, Bumblebees & Blue*

*Streak Bananas, Poets 4 Peace  
(ISBN 0 9535626 03), price £6.99.*

**For purchasing details call  
Seema on 07876 772537.**

**Or email [meltingpotts@hotmail.com](mailto:meltingpotts@hotmail.com).  
Cheques should be made payable to 'Poets 4 Peace'.**

**T**he *Tyke Writer* is the monthly newsletter of the Interchange (Bradford Writers' Network).

For further details of the group, or to get involved, come down to the Priestley Centre for Arts, Chapel Street, Little Germany, Bradford.

Or contact:

**Email:** [interchange@brad.communigate.co.uk](mailto:interchange@brad.communigate.co.uk)

**Web:** <http://www.communigate.co.uk/brad/interchange>

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**E**ditorial contributions are welcome, but will be edited for space and style.

All contributions must bear the author's name, which may appear as a byline. Contributions are also preferably received in type written form.

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