

# Tyke Writer

The Interchange

(Bradford Writers' Network) Newsletter

Issue 17: October 2002

## 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...

**Culture slammed,  
Paddington  
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# Culture slammed

*Karl Dallas reports on the Capital of Culture slam in Bristol, and shares some thoughts on the way ahead for Bradford*

**WE wuz robbed! Well, not exactly. The competition in the Capital of Culture Slam was fierce, and Newcastle fully deserved to win both the team and individual prizes, but the comparatively low marks received by Patricia Dillon and Kevin Flaherty seemed unfair.**

And judging by the

boos which greeted the judges' marks, the audience tended to agree.

Still, though we didn't win, it was a great experience for all concerned.

When you consider the fact that Kevin and Trish had hardly ever performed in public before they carried off the honours at the Bradford heat in July, it has been truly wonder-

ful to observe how they have developed and blossomed in just a couple of months, both as writers and performers, gaining the confidence to take on the rest of Britain in this gladiatorial battle, and retire from the field bloody but unbowed.

It was a powerful vindication, as if any were needed, of Interchange's purpose, of encouraging people to express themselves in whatever style or

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## Interchange gets a facelift

**IT'S out with the old and in with the new faces following Interchange's AGM at the Priestley last month, when group members elected new officers.**

Long standing chair and secretary Howard Frost and Ruth Malkin have bowed out, to be replaced by Kevin Flaherty as chair, and Carol Solorz as secretary. Rahel Guzellian has stood down as treasurer to be replaced provisionally by Joe Ogden, who also takes over Orpheus Radio.

Karl Dallas remains at the helm

of Orpheus, and he will continue as the editor of the email newsletter *Verse n Worse*. Bruce Barnes has agreed to advise the group on matters of fund raising.

Among the matters discussed was the issue of floor spots and entry fees at the monthly Orpheus event. From now on, performers of the six floor spots will gain free entry at the following month's event.

The group expressed its heartfelt thanks and gratitude to all outgoing officers.

# Culture slam in Bristol

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format they choose, and to be able to stand up before their peers and . . . just do it.

But the event also brought home how far we in Bradford have to go in the promotion of performance and building up an enthusiastic audience for it.

Could we fill 200 seats with a noisy, responsive crowd, fierce in their partisanship, but ever ready to express their apprecia-

tion of excellence, stamping their feet and cheering? I don't think so, not yet, but the way Orpheus is developing, for instance, shows we are heading in the right direction.

But the success of the slam didn't happen in isolation. It was part of a city-wide festival, a celebration of the spoken word which put nationally known names like John Cooper Clark, Linton

Kwesi Johnson and Bradford's own Jools together with a host of local performers.

Judging by the caliber of Bristol's own contestants in the slam, the local scene is vibrant and exciting enough to attract the ordinary punter, who has no particular interest in poetry as such, as long as a good time is to be had by all.

As with all positives, there are negative aspects to this success. It tends to focus on the crowd-pleasers, sometimes favouring style over content. We need to foster writers who don't have the exuberance to go down with such an audience.

It was notable that the quieter, more reflective work was greeted with no more than polite applause, and was marked down accordingly, even though the restrained technique employed in performance was entirely appropriate to the content, which wouldn't have suited the louder, more in-your-face style of the trophy-winners.

Where do we go from here? I'd like to see Bradford writers running a rolling slam

throughout the year, not only at Orpheus but in other groups and venues (like the Beehive and Love Apple) throughout the city, with a grand finale, say, in December 2003.

And we ought so start thinking about a Bradford Literary Festival, perhaps coinciding with the 2004 Bradford Festival.

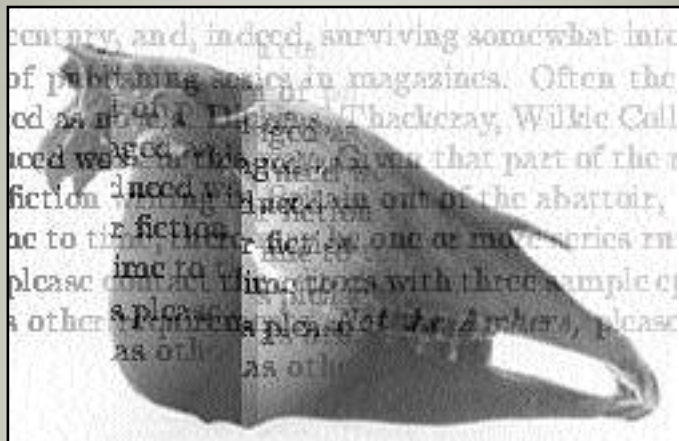
A long time in the future? Not really, for such a mammoth undertaking.

Finally, let's have a word of thanks to Bruce Barnes, who brought the Capital of Culture Slam to our attention, obtained funding for it from Bradford's bidders, ran the local heat in July, and generally pushed the whole thing through, nurturing and encouraging our local winners, so they could distinguish themselves so well on the national stage.

And not forgetting the dedication of our two performers. Trish and Kevin -- we're proud of you!

**Karl Dallas**

## Gothic tales for bare bones



PUBLISHER Skrev Press is looking for experimental and gothic stories for online and print publication. The co-operative company is particularly keen to hear from women writers.

The standard of work the company publishes is said to be extremely high, but it is also keen to unearth new talent.

Skrev's magazine *Text Bones* contains new writing from the likes of Andy Campbell, Chris Firth, Paul Sutherland, Daithidh Maceochaidh, Dai Parsons and a host of other experimental writers.

For more information and submission guidelines go to <http://www.skrev-press.com>. Or email: [editor@skrev-press.com](mailto:editor@skrev-press.com).

# Poets ponder Paddington

**Seema Gill** co-hosted the latest *Paddington International Poetry Festival* with **Richard Heley**. Here she reports back on what was a vibrant event

**WHAT** is so special about Paddington? That it was crossed by the Roman highways now roughly traced by Edgware Road with a history of multi-ethnicity of Greek, Jewish, Asians and Arabs in the early 19th century?

Or the night of October the 5th, 2002 when a young Latino poet from Miami, Diane Perez touched our consciousness with her thundering voice? She was indeed very close to ripping the 3rd International Poetry Slam cash prize from New York Slam champion Taalam Acey.

On a very mild October Saturday night, this year's Paddington International Poetry Festival was held in a theatre hall jammed with 85 people from all walks of life completing the vision of multiethnicity. This was the newly established Westbourne Studios in London half a mile from Edgware Road.

Twelve US and local poets excitedly participated in the poetry slam a no holds barred, raucous competition. That night when the audience saw a gladiatorial battle of words worthy of a venue so close to an ancient Roman settlement. We heard the powerful voices of performers who flexed their poetic muscles and sweated like footballers for the highest scores. The judges were picked randomly from the audience. "The atmosphere was intense, mesmerising and awesome," said

Jullian Joseph one of the Paddington poetry activists.

This unique spoken word bonanza was master minded by an ex hippy Richard Heley when he was travelling with other UK poets on a performance tour of Texas. On that tour were poets from several UK cities who muted the idea of setting up a UK poetry performance circuit which would offer incoming International poets the chance to travel around the UK. Richard Heley himself a poet, song writer, storey teller and a painter succeeds in breaking barriers and norms across borders.

"I want to see people from all over the world enrich this event. It's beautiful to see so many poets with their diverse voices, colours and languages get together to inspire and learn from each other. This is a rainbow of colours. There are also many fine and talented artists at grassroots level in the UK who are not given the opportunity to showcase themselves and who are often overlooked by closed shop institutions. PIPF offers them a broad platform to show their talents and mix with International performers. This year we had people from Miami, Florida, Los Angeles, New York.

Seema Gill with Richard Heley, both co-hosted the Paddington festival



## Meeting

I am a chair,  
I have a committee.  
I am the person  
Without any gender.  
Hold it right there,  
Don't stray from the point.  
I'll only allow  
What's on the agenda.

From when we last me,  
Matters arising?  
No progress yet?  
Hardly surprising.  
Propose a true record,  
Let's show our hands.  
No one dissenting  
Or taking a stand.

You know this is right,  
You know it makes sense.  
All sitting tight  
And secure on the fence.  
No new direction,  
No different line.  
See you next month,  
Sam place same time.

**Kevin Flaherty**

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# Paddington Poets

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We had spoken words, music and even a 30 minutes play by a troupe from Miami, Lip Tongue and Ear," said Richard.

PIPF 2002 was held on the 4th, 5th and 6th of October.

International poets Manni Suri, June Melby, Katie O'Loughin, Shamele Jenkins, Kristoff Skalet,

Nasheed Jackson, Terry Fernando Newton, Lola Haskins, Ainsley Burrows and Soul Tom Evans came to entertain and enlighten. Some of the local UK performers included Rupert Hopkins, Freddy Macha, Ashley Harrold, Agnes Meadow, Nii Parks, Beyonder and Casey Abonye.

*PIPF was hosted by EARTHBEAT directors Richard Heley and Seema Gill*

## A city's poetic biography

**P**OETRY Business director Peter

Sansom and Ann Sansom, will be running poetry workshops for Yorkshire writers.

These will take place at the sculpture

gallery in Leeds City Art Gallery on Saturdays of 19 and 26 October and 2 and 9 November from 11am to 2pm.

The creative writing sessions are free, but there is a practical limit of 12 participants at

any one time.

The workshops will be structured around a series of 'enjoyable and challenging exercises designed to find unexpected ideas and subjects for new poems'.

Some of the poetry that emerges from the sessions will be published as part of the City Poems literature and new media event. This is to take place in Leeds throughout 2003.

City Poems is intended to be a 'biography' of the city, written by people who live and work there.

For more information check the website at: <http://www.centrifugalforces.co.uk> or call Andrew Wilson on 07980 224927.

## Capital words

**A**UDIENCES Yorkshire and Yorkshire Arts have launched 'Yorkshire: Capital of the Word' to emphasise the region as a birthplace of literary talent and celebrate creativity in the region.

Over the next few months over 200 events will showcase Yorkshire talent, such as the literary festivals in Ilkley, Sheffield, Beverly and Hull.

"Yorkshire has produced and provided inspiration for some of the finest writers the

world has seen," says the initiative's Haidee Bell. "Over the next few months Yorkshire will play host to leading exponents of fiction, biography and poetry and encourage home-grown writers of all ages to cash in on the creative vibe."

A booklet has been published detailing Capital of Word events, and information can also be obtained from the website at <http://www.digYorkshire.com>.

**Mark Cantrell**

**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.

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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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