

THE TYKE WRITER

INTERCHANGE NEWSLETTER

Issue 2/ June 2001

EVENTS GUIDE

Interchange @ the Priestley

Weekly workshop that takes place every Tuesday from 8pm at the Priestley Centre for the Arts, Chapel Street, Little Germany.

It provides a friendly and informal gathering where group members are invited to share their work over a drink. Other members will (if asked) offer help and suggestions for improvement.

Interchange @ the Melborn

Every last Wednesday of the month on White Abbey Road,

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Write way forward

By Mark Cantrell

FALLING attendance at the group's Tuesday workshops, along with a decline in audiences at the Melborn event, has stimulated introspection about the next steps to develop the Interchange group.

The problem of numbers has been ongoing for some time now, though it is something that is affecting writers' group throughout Bradford.

At a recent business meeting, it was proposed that the group should adopt a monthly Tuesday workshop instead of the current weekly schedule.

A decision was not made, and follow up discussions seen to indicate a reluctance to abandon the Tuesday session in favour of something less frequent. However, that mood may not reflect the wider membership of the group.

The prevailing view was that the issue should be discussed and the opinions sought of the wider Interchange members.

On the one hand, a less frequent meeting schedule might work to revitalise the performance events. On the other, it is felt that a weekly session helps with main-

taining contact between members and of raising money through the 'sin tin'.

So what direction should Interchange take as it continues to develop and promote literature in the district? The answers lie with the membership, so have your say.

INSIDE:

In their own words:

Bruce Barnes and Lynette Shaw McK-one had an enjoyable time performing in the States. Here they recall the experience for those of us who couldn't go.

On tour in Texas

Lynette Shaw McKone and Bruce Barnes, members of the Bradford based writing group Interchange, are back from their poetry reading tour of Southern

LYNETTE regularly performs her poetry at West Yorkshire venues but it was her first time in the States.

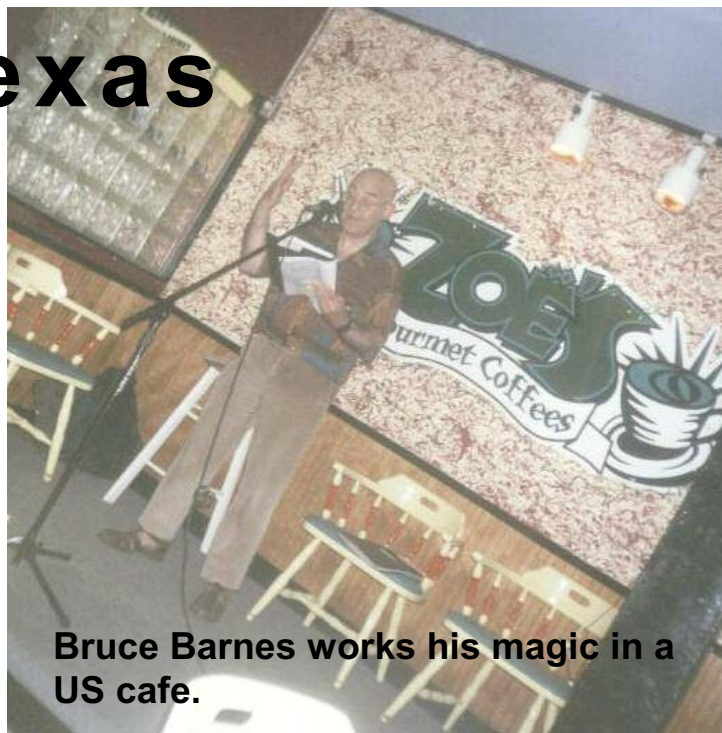
With a 4th of July birthday, she has been wanting to go since she was a child. Bruce won the Ilkley Literature Poetry prize in 1998, and has a Writers Award from Yorkshire Arts to finish work on his second collection of poetry, *Somewhere Else*.

It was Bruce's second tour; in 1999, he was one of the Bradford 6, who escaped their day jobs, and took their pamphlet / C.D/ performance 'Release the Bradford 6' to New England and Southern Texas.

The tour was

co-ordinated by the globe trotting Austin based poet, Thom the World Poet, a central figure in the vibrant poetry performance scene in Southern Texas and a regular visitor and performer in Bradford. Thom was keen to have a bevy of English poets over in April for readings at festivals throughout Southern Texas. Lynette's trip was supported by a Research and Development Award from Yorkshire Arts. Thom reckons there is a complete lack of institutional support for the verbal arts in Texas; poets survive on pot luck, magic hats, and ticket revenue.

The tour had many highlights. One warm atmo-



Bruce Barnes works his magic in a US cafe.

spheric night in Austin the poets were invited to read at a 1960s fancy dress party to an audience of Elvis', Che Guevaras', Monroes, and ageing Rock stars sitting in a Bedouin tent. In San Antonio there was a moving pulpit recitation to the congregation of a New Age church, and a reading to an English style tea room audience. In Houston there was a crowded enthusiastic poetry festival. There were readings too alongside Texan poets and poets from England,

Canada, Australia, in cafes and bookstores in Austin, San Antonio, Temple, and Georgetown.

And there was the hospitality and warmth of the people they met. Lynette recalls a poignant moment attending a venue in an old speakeasy club, The Victory Grill and Bar. There was a woman in the audience who, although a regular member of the audience, had never read or performed in public, but at the end of the session she walked to the

stage and performed one of Lynette's poems, Lynette was honoured and deeply moved by this, not to mention that she performed the piece better than Lynette did, and the thought that one of her poems had touched this woman so deeply was probably the best and most sincere compliment.

The poetry from Texas was witty and poignant often reflecting the old cowboy culture. Read in a warm Texan drawl, the poems seemed heartfelt. Hearing them gives an insight into the joys and tribulations of ordinary Texas people, an insight that the casual tourists would probably be denied.

In the first week of touring the poets clocked up over 700 miles, but were based in Austin, one of the fastest growing cities in the U.S. It's a place of

contrasts, with the vocal poetry community living alongside the verbally challenged George Bush. Downtown retains a frontier feel and has bars featuring live country music. The City has a laid back feel to go with having one of the largest student populations in the

States.

Interchange aims to build on these poetry exchanges with the U.S, and to continue developing their West Yorkshire poetry per-

POETRY is huge in Texas, writes Lynette, it seems to be almost the national pastime, we had some great audiences, some wonderful hosts and made some fantastic friends, and they must have liked us because we have been invited back next year.

We shared the bill with other international poets, Richard Healey from London, who, as well as being a great performance poet, is also an interactive mural artist, and quite something to see in action. Rupert Hopkins from Bristol, responsible for the 'Waste Warriors' project in Bristol, Pauline Brooks, a wonderful poet and an incredible human being from Canberra, Australia, and others from the length and breadth of the USA and Canada.

While I stayed in Austin,



Lynette takes on the States

Bruce moved up to San Francisco, where he had a great time with old and new friends, but you would have to talk to him about that.

I guess the best thing about the trip was discovering that poetry is a universal language with a beauty all its own. It cuts across the barriers of 'isms and belongs to everyone, regardless of age, sex, creed, colour and any other man-made barrier. It gives everyone who wants it the chance to say what they think and feel about their world, their lives, their planet.

Lynette Shaw McKone

The Tyke Writer

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Interchange hosts an open microphone event for writers, performers and singer-songwriters.

Singer/song-writers please contact Interchange in advance, as slots for musicians are limited.

Interchange @ the Monkey Bar

Every first Wednesday of the month from 8pm at the Monkey Bar cafe on Northgate, Wakefield.

The small size gives an intimate

PREVIEW:

Next month *Bruces Barnes* reviews the Redbeck Press performance that took place at the Melborn.

So what's it all about?

By Ian Reed

INTERCHANGE is an informal group of people who believe that no matter who you are, if you write then your voice, your input, your words matter.

We come from all sections of the community and have one aim — to develop the art of words in and around West Yorkshire.

Our members are

novelists, poets, journalists, broadcasters, singer-songwriters, performers, or just people who like to come along and listen to writers reading their work and talking about literature.

Our youngest participant (so far) was eight years old and the oldest was well into his eighties. Some members write for fun or therapy, others write professionally, but everyone loves the

art of words.

As an informal group we have very few rules, the main ones being:

- No self-deprecation
- Constructive suggestions only about other people's work
- Expect racist, sexist, homophobic, disabled etc statements to be challenged — minds (like books) work best when open.

Interchange goes on film

THE group has agreed that a new venture by group members may work under the aegis of Interchange, operating as a subcommittee, until it is able to go it alone.

Film Digital plans

on becoming a voluntary organisation dedicated to making films and multimedia projects.

The organisation is in its early days yet, but it has grown from the activities of group members Joedot, and Phil

Wainman. One of the first projects it hopes to develop is a documentary about local writers, featuring performances of their work and interviews with the writers themselves. At the moment, it is searching for funding to provide equip-

Editorial contributions welcome, but will be edited for space and style. All contributions must bear the author's name, which may appear as a byline.

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