



## Interchange @ the Goldsboro

Interchange (Bradford Writers' Network) meets every Tuesday from 8pm at the Goldsboro pub on Bolton Road.

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...

poetry by Jan Henek, essay by Mark Cantrell, news, views and events...

# Adieu & farewell

**A**N era came to an end last month, when darkness fell upon the Priestley stage and the building was abandoned to its ghosts and the liquidators.

With the closure of the Priestley, Interchange finally bit the bullet and adopted a new home. From the 28th January, the writers' group descended on the Goldsboro pub, up Bolton Road, to continue being a beacon for the city's creative writers.

Every Tuesday, bar the third Tuesday of

the month, the group will continue in the upstairs room at its new home. On the third Tuesday, the group is experimenting with an open mic/poetry slam event (more details in the March issue).

Aside from that, it will offer a far quieter venue, but not everyone was happy with the choice. That said, it is not the end of the story as far as venues are concerned. Should a better place be found, then the group is open to a move.

Nor is it quite the end of the Priestley.

Though an era has definitely closed, the theatre's death is not yet absolute. It may yet be saved at the last minute. Though Interchange's association may (or may not) have ended with whatever new incarnation that appears, Interchange wishes it well, and hopes that it can be saved for future generations of Bradford people.

It nurtured not only actors, directors, techies and more — it also nurtured many a creative writer around that oval table.

So for now, we say a fond farewell.

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## Cathedral sounds verses for peace

**A**N exhibition of poetry, sculpture and art is to be launched at Wakefield Cathedral in early February, writes Mark Cantrell

The exhibition is the brainchild of the Cathedral Poets, which was launched by Louis Kazatkin after his year-long residency there

ended.

"We hope to keep the exhibition up for a while and to keep changing it to give everyone's work the chance to be seen," said Alex Krysinski, a member of the group. As for the theme of peace it is because "we are being pulled into war and people are upset, afraid and need some means to

express their feelings. For me, it is also the need to do something and not let it happen without a murmur."

The launch takes place 7th Feb at 7.30pm at Wakefield Cathedral. It is likely that more poetry will feature than art and sculpture, as to date this is mostly what they have received.

Mark Cantrell ponders the future of his writing and makes this very simple plea...

# Don't publish my collected works!

## EVER tried calling the future collect?

It's difficult, and I don't mean because the person at the other end refuses the charges. I couldn't dial because I didn't know the number, and as yet there is no Directory Enquiries for phones still to be.

So instead, I sent this plea as an email.

Not that this is a perfect solution because I don't know who it's for. But I can guess at the address and hope that it makes its way to the right recipient. For those who don't know, the address is *the-guilty-party@the-future.co.anywhere*.

That's all I know, other than the resonant echoes transmitted

on the retro-tachyon carrier wave emitted by my words. I know from these distant echoes that it's some time in the future, as far away from the here and now as possible (thank you very much), where I am in my grave and not feeling too happy about it.

My mortality, however, is way beside the point. More important is what is happening in this

parallel universe that, for me, is yet to be. I have to tell you that a terrible Crime Against Literature is about to be perpetrated. So I send my message, in the hope that I can prevent a shattering travesty.

You see, something shocking has happened in the future: I made it as a writer. My words stood the test of time to survive beyond my death. Amazing.

Now that's not the problem (other than finding a way to collect the royalties in the next world). This is: some bright spark has hit on an idea. It's a real money-spinner, or so this bloke hopes. He wants to cash in on my post-mortal success by publishing the Collected Works of Mark Cantrell, author *extraordinaire* of the early 21st Century.

Okay, fair enough, it's some kind of acclaim and I am gracious enough to accept the compliment even if it's from some money-grubbing bastard out to rob my

tomb — but it's also a total disaster. I mean this individual cannot be serious, right?

I hope you see my problem, or at least the first inklings. Then again, looking at your face I can see you're in some doubt. Hang about, you say, I'm dead so my opinion just can't hack it. Well, that's the reason for this — ultimately posthumous — message. So stop picking over my corpse and I'll explain.

Now, when I was breathing I tended to be prolific; I'd heard it said that a writer should strive to write something every day. I did my best to live up to that (and in death I'd quite like to die up to that, thank you very much). I wrote articles, news, comment, stories, poems, novels and stuff I couldn't make head nor tail of.

And now this bright spark wants to pull it all together?

Are they mad in this future world?

Do they have specially reinforced

## Fuck It!

Smoking is good  
Smoking is bad  
Bu that's a gamble  
Pure and free  
And I choke too on curry ghee  
It makes me sick after ten pints  
But I praise the balti —  
Man it's nice  
I'll go quite soon  
Or maybe later  
Doesn't matter  
It's small potato  
The hundred man who  
Never smoked saw the loss  
And man he choked  
And young man me  
I kicked the bucket  
But I'm glad I  
Shouted Fuck it!

Jan Henek

shelves?

They obviously have no idea just how much crap they are about to unleash on an unsuspecting public. Nor do they seem to care about the bucket of shit they're about to smear all over my reputation as a writer.

I mean, to create the gems that made my name I had to wade through a lake of slurry. That's the nature of the writing game.

My life as a writer was not a phenomenon. It wasn't a singular event. It was a process, which like a story had a beginning a middle and an end. And contrary to narrative causality, my beginning wasn't a great hook for the reading public.

In that literary beginning, I may have got lucky with my words but sooner or later lucks runs out. A writers' development must leave luck behind (in the creation of their words) and develop their craft. And so I did. Learning with each assembled sentence, each completed passage each rejected (or published) manuscript.

My first words as a literary creature were but the proud products of a newly-potty trained toddler. A milestone in life, a necessary step

to onward development, but still essentially a potty full of shit.

It takes time to hone and develop the scribbling skills and it is a learning process that goes on for a lifetime. Even the best of us are but journeymen.

As for the end, so maybe I got lucky and died face down on that final conclusive manuscript, or truly unlucky and my brain turned to still metabolising jelly. In this worst case scenario, I lost my skills and spent my final years as a dribbling geriatric infant. 'Nuff said on that score, lets focus on the middle. The realm of the great journey.

Here is where I produced my great works; the ones that caught your eye and emblazoned my name on your souls. This is the realm of my literary life, of so many days spent thinking and living and writing. All of it now to be collated and collected.

So let me ask you a question, and please think very hard.

Was everything I wrote a gem?

No.

No it was not.

Others will tell me the proportion, the ratio of crap to gold, but you in your quest to cash in on my fame seem to have lost your ability to

appraise. So I say to you, be a prospector, pan the stream of my work and separate the gold from the dross. If I have made my name sufficient for you to consider throwing every word I ever wrote upon the publishing pile, then your task cannot be that difficult for the appraisal has gone on throughout my life.

Don't, I beg you, poison my work, my legacy, my reputation by polluting the good with the bad.

Sort them. Judge them. Edit them by all means, but don't mix them up to make a weak alloy. Junk the dross where it belongs: in the backroom archive, a dusty repository of interest only to

academics studying my development.

For in my life I wrote much that was good, but also much that was bad and indifferent. That is the nature of the literary beast. We have good days and we have bad, great words and drivel. We scribes are not Engines of Perfection. Nor should we be.

So don't poison my oeuvre. Publish the selected works by all means but don't collect every last words I ever wrote. It would bury me far heavier than the earth that holds my bones.

And I have no wish to spend eternity in my grave spinning dizzy with shame.

## Ear for words

**P**LANS are afoot to create a new group dedicated to the arts of performance, though at the moment its progenitors are keeping their cards close to their chest, writes Mark Cantrell.

Patrick Blues and Joe Ogden, both of Interchange, along with Anzir Boodoo, a poet from Leeds, have met to discuss the creation of such a group.

Still in the early stages of development, details are not yet forthcoming, though one potential name cited for the group is *Ear For Words*. Whether the group will be open to wide membership, or whether it will focus on a core of performers dedicated to developing themselves as performers is as yet unclear.

"We are not yet ready to issue a statement until things are more firm," said Patrick Blues.

Joe Ogden added: "We don't have anything yet — so far it's in our heads."

# Dallas saves Baghdad

**O**BITUARY writers, poise your pens as Karl Dallas is going to Baghdad in Iraq this month, where he will join thousands of 'human shields' from across the world.

The operation is part of a global peace campaign to stop war in Iraq. Rather than simply stay at home and wave banners and chant, these people will put themselves in the firing line in an effort to stop a single

shot being fired.

It is a risky game, but Karl is undeterred: "I am joining the human shield because I believe the threat to humanity of the proposed war is so great that we must be prepared to put our lives on the line to do anything we can to avert it," he said.

Karl is a familiar face at interchange, and at Orpheus, the monthly performance event at the Melborn, he runs for

Interchange. He is a journalist, poet and singer songwriter as well as an old hand at political campaigning. We might not be seeing him for some time given that the shields plan to stay on in Iraq until the threat of war is averted (or not as the case may be), but don't be surprised if he sends us SMS poems or even emails about his exploits in the firing line.

**Mark Cantrell**

# Fastest verse in the West

**I**F the politicians and generals could organise as fast as these poets, then Iraq would already be a smoking hole in the ground. In just one week, 100 poets have been published in a global anthology dedicated to opposing the coming war.

The anthology *100 Poets Against War* is freely available as a PDF book. It was edited by Todd Swift, who worked with Val Stevenson of Nthposition.com, which has published the book. It is claimed to be the fastest assembled anthology ever produced.

"Poets usually take

weeks, if not months, to submit poems for an anthology," Todd said. "So I was astonished when they sent me poems within hours and days of my call for work."

He asked for poems on the 20th January. The book was launched on the 27th January, deliberately coincided for the Blix UN report on Iraq.

"The plan was to make a book of poems against the attack on Iraq instantly available to anyone who wants it, anywhere in the world," Todd added.

The anthology features 100 poets working in the English language from around the

world. They include 'mid-career and emerging' poets. Each contributor donated their poems, so that the resulting book would be freely available.

"It would have been impossible to complete the project within this time-scale without the Internet," said Val Stevenson. "The poems come from all over the world. They were commissioned and edited in Paris, page layout was in London and file conversion was done in the States."

The anthology is available from <http://www.nthposition.com>.

**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 Goldsboro pub on Bolton Road at 8pm every Tuesday.

Or contact:

Carol Solorz, secretary: 01274 570006

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

**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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