

Tyke Writer

The Newsletter For Creative Writers In Bradford & District

Where to find us...

Tyke Writer is published on behalf of the Interchange (Bradford Writers' Network).

The group meets every Tuesday from 8pm at the Irish Democratic League, Rebecca Street, just behind the New Beehive pub on Westgate, Bradford.

No matter what kind of writing you are into, you will find it welcome at Interchange.

Along with poetry, the group also welcomes novelists, short story writers, journalists, singer-songwriters and just about every kind of writing imaginable.

The group is informal. Critical feedback is available for those who feel the need, but the emphasis is on developing the writing and the writer in a relaxed and friendly environment.

So step out of the garrett and join the scribes...

Open Mic's Bard Start

Performance nights are back, following the first of a season of open mic events organised by Interchange. Mark Cantrell wandered in...

In a bold experiment, Interchange has resurrected its performance poetry evenings, with a well-attended show at the Irish Democratic League (IDL).

"It was a fantastic evening," said host Kevin Flaherty. "We had a really good turn out, along with some great poetry and live performances."

He added that for the 'foreseeable future', every last Tuesday of the month will now see a similar event, held in the function room at the IDL, to start at 8.30pm.

Other Tuesdays will continue as the group's workshop sessions.

January's event is the first time the group has run such a series, since the end of *Orpheus* early last year.

That event took place at the Melborn, and was organised by Karl Dallas, but

dwindling audiences and Dallas's hectic schedule finally closed the curtains.

Until now.

Kevin joined in the stage craft with his poem 'Your A Celebrity — And I Hate You.'

Perhaps he was preparing us for his impending status as a local celeb, with the newly launched Team Flaherty.

Kevin & siblings are out to set the world record for the number of siblings who compete in and complete a marathon, all in aid of

the Macmillan Cancer care charity.

Among those who Joined Kevin on the stage (if not the run) were Diane Johnson, Joe Ogden, Karl Dallas, Patrick Blues, Jean Robinson, Andrew Motion, Jan Henek, 'Muppet', and Tina Watkin of Bradford Writers' Circle.

The aim of the open mics is not just to allow poets the chance to experiment with performance, but also to forge better links and contacts with other writers and writers' groups in the city.

On that note (and others), the event got off to a great start.

Love hurts

HEAR 4 Words presents *Twisted Love* in February, for anyone suffering from post-Valentine's Day blues.

The performance events takes place at Heaven Scent, Shipley, on 23rd February from 7.30pm. The night also doubles as the 50th birthday bash for Patrick Blues.

He will be among the performers along with his 'fallen angels'. *Twisted Love* will also feature Anzir 'the Banned' Boodoo and Joe Ogden.

Still more

ONLINE cultural magazine *Still* wants anything from artwork, poetry, essays, stories, photography and more for its third issue and beyond.

Contributors are unpaid, but work is credited and it is claimed to have a wide subscription base, including 'important members of the art world, media and culturati'.

Issues are published in PDF format. To subscribe free or get back issues go to <http://www.stillmag.com>. To contact the magazine direct email: editor@stillmag.com.

Fishing for a prize

FISH Publishing is running a 'Very Short Story' competition worth up to €250 for the six winners.

The deadline for competition entries is the 16th March and the stories must be 250 words long or less.

For more information visit the website at: http://www.fishpublishing.com/short_story_vsscompetition.htm.

Hospital poetry

A new contest will offer poets the chance to ease the suffering of the sick – sick of waiting that is.

Ten winning entries will be displayed electronically or as posters in hospital waiting rooms in Whitby, Scarborough, Bridlington and Malton. They will also be compiled together in a booklet published by East Coast Books of North Yorkshire.

These will be made available in hospitals throughout the district.

Despite its focus on North East Yorkshire, the Poetry for Hospital Waiting Rooms competition is open to poets from beyond that area. Entrants may send up to three poems of between four and 20 lines long. There is no cash prize, but the competition is free to enter.

The competition has been organised by Hospital Arts for North East Yorkshire, in partnership with creative digital writing group Electraglade.

There are two categories: children (up to 16) and adults (16 and over). Poems



are not restricted by form or subject matter, but the judges will be looking for work that is 'inspiring, uplifting, humorous, entertaining, baffling, challenging, positive, beautiful', say the organisers.

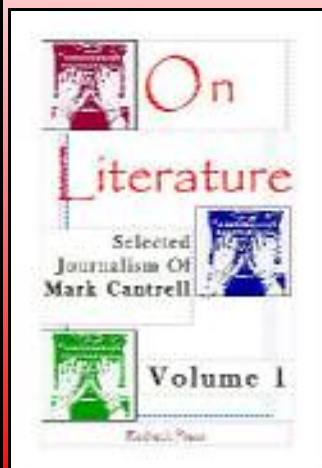
Entries should include name, address, age, category and the titles of submitted poems on a separate sheet of A4. Poems should be typed, word processed or neatly hand written. An SAE should be included if the poems are to be returned.

The deadline for entries is 29 February 2004.

Send entries to: Poems While You Wait Competition, c/o Helen Berry, St Hilda's Business Centre, G3 Unit 5, The Ropery, Whitby, YO2. Or email them to electraglade@aol.com. For more information tel: 01947 600135.

Mark Cantrell

Key words on *you*



TYKE Writer editor Mark Cantrell has just published his latest chapbook: a collection of articles on writing.

Priced at £2.50, it brings together a selection of journalism and creative essays on the local writing scene, written over the last four years.

Type Out Of An Altered State

EVERY session at the keyboard is a journey to unknown places.

So too are those times when I sit with notepaper and pen.

My body might reside in the here and now of the physical universe, but like the ancient shaman high on exotic herbs, my mind – or soul depending on your inclinations – is away elsewhere.

Not to the gods. Or the spirits of animals and ancestors.

Elsewhere.

To that place that somehow reaches back to this world to manifest itself on the glowing screen or the coffee-stained paper.

It's a hard place to reach.

Some, again, we're back to shamans, have preached the wondrous facilitator that is illegal drugs.

Pop a pill, snort some neuro-chemically interesting powder and open the doors to perception.

Others might swear by various concoctions of alcohol.

And yes, there's always the boring swot who preaches the virtues of hard work.

Forget chemicals writes Mark Cantrell, writing is itself enough to create an altered state of consciousness...

They overlook something.

Not that hard work is not a given, whatever substance you abuse or none. And it isn't sleep deprivation either, which can sometimes be a wonderful hallucinatory mind-swirling phenomenon for the creative writer out for a quick nib.

No.

They forget.

That writing itself is an altered stream of consciousness. The words themselves, and the fizzing incandescent ideas they dance to represent, can themselves open that mystical doorway to perception and otherworldliness.

I think, drugs aside, those ancient shamans knew that little secret too.

These days they have a phrase for it. Typically boring. The kind of label that only someone who's spent years using their mind to learn the theories and hypotheses of what makes the brain work rather than the mind itself could come up with.

Hey, let's take the essential mystery out of

the mind, they might have declared. Then thought even that's too scintillating and figured let's just map the neurons and stick a few electrodes in to see how they mechanically behave.

They call it the hypnagogic state.

It has different brainwave patterns apparently, quite distinct from phases like REM or deep sleep, or various neurologically and experientially interesting substances.

I suppose as writers we forget this too. We just say we were on a roll.

On a whole roll of flying carpet, maybe.

Because that's when we're flying.

We've got there without chemicals. Only the most powerful drug known to man: words.

Opening the door might be hard work. We might stare at the keyboard or at the paper for ages.

Frustrated.

Grumpy.

Wondering why we bother.

And then the idea detonates in the head, or else we get 'back into the flow' and suddenly we're there.

Not at the table or the PC. Not in the café. But out *there*.

In whatever world we're struggling to create.

Once we're there, the outside world, the mundane place, is gone. It's beyond our perception, because – temporarily at least – we have moved on to a higher plane of existence.

So sure, it exists only in the mnemonics of words, but mathematicians express the entire complexity and beauty of the Universe in the mnemonics of numbers and algebra.

Why should ours be any less real because the mnemonics assemble in our heads and are encoded on paper by the mechanics of the motor cortex, bones and muscle. Oh yes, and the pen (or keyboard).

The Muse is out there. Hiding, and giggling coy in the cosmology of our altered state.

And we search in strange places every time we sit at a desk.

So be adventurous. Don't just push at the doors, fling them wide and see what's out there. You might be amazed at what comes back with you.

Writing is metaphysical, spiritual cosmic exploration, without never a need to worry about the vice squad a'calling.

Unless, that is, you like to wind down with the old prohibited stuff. Me, I'll just stick with the words.

Rise high with the Phoenix

LET your poetry arise like a Phoenix, but careful you don't burn your wings on its more high-brow pretensions.

Phoenix New Life Poetry is an international journal published quarterly. According to its editors, David Allen Stringer and Dr Emmanuel Petrakis (both members of the 'Planetary Council'), the magazine is not for simple poets but for "engaged poets of the

New Millennium with a positive, eutopian, spiritual & wholistic social vision for humanity and the Planetary Creation of which we are a part."

So it's not quite a straightforward small press magazine. Indeed it has a vision. "The New Renaissance is about much more than a literary-artistic movement but for the overall healing ad reconstruction of our societies and their planetary environment."

Heady stuff indeed,

but then this is the stuff of poetry and poets. On a more practical footing, the magazine is interested in poetry of any style and there are no set limits on the length.

The magazine is also interested in receiving news and information about community projects that involve 'education for harmonious living' or 'shared artistic creativity'.

There is no payment for accepted contribution, but

contributors will receive a free copy of the issue in which their work appears.

Perhaps also, though it isn't said, they receive a little soul cleansing too.

Send work to David Stringer at Phoenix New Life Poetry, Angel Cottage, 84 Par Lane, Cornwall, PL24 2DW. Tel: 01726 817080.

Email: universalalliance.org@tinyworld.co.uk. Web: www.universalalliance.org.uk.

Talk Pictures

TALKING Pictures is a website dedicated to film, television and all things mass media -- and it is seeking new contributors.

The site, which claims to be independent, features interviews, reviews, columns and essays. There is no payment, but work is credited to the author.

To contribute contact the site at valis23a@aol.com. Or write to: Nigel Watson, Talking Pictures, 1 Orchard Cottages, Orchard Lane, Plymouth, PL7 4AJ. Tel: 01752 347200.

The POD Begins

AFTER much 'blood, sweat and tears', website UK Authors has launched the UKA Press.

"The site's aim is to offer a way for members to have their work published in a fair and democratic way, without having to resort to so called vanity publishers and give authors a chance to get their work out there and noticed," site administrator Andrea.

"We initially aim to publish two prose and two

poetry anthologies a year, as well as four members' books, although this number will hopefully increase as the project takes off."

Authors will not have to pay to be published and will receive 15 per cent royalties — said to be twice as much as other Print On Demand (POD) publishers.

Copyright will remain with the authors. To check out (and join for free) UK Authors visit <http://www.ukauthors.com>.

TYKE Writer welcomes editorial contributions, but such will be edited for space and style restrictions.

All contributions must bear the author's name, which may appear as a byline. Material is also preferred in a type written form.

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