



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, and the emphasis is very much on the words. 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...

Wrestling With An Author

Sheila Atkinson hot-footed it to meet Robert Craig at Bradford's Waterstone's to find out more about his latest book. With free wine who wouldn't?

ROBERT Craig caused a bit of a stir in his local supermarket. He'd signed his pre deed poll name that he had used for nearly forty years till fame beckoned on the literary front.

He stopped off at *Waterstone's* before heading to London for a meeting with his editor this week to discuss his third book.

"With a two book deal, this one's crucial" he said. His first book, *Cover to Cover* is written in the first person from a woman's perspective. The 'antithesis to Bridget Jones' received brilliant reviews, although Robert is critical of the marketing people as he prefers its original title, *39 Steps to Despair*.

"They said you can't have despair in the title", he told me.

It takes Robert about a year to complete a book. Each chapter planned and having a working title, which he changes according to where the book is taking him. "Not like when I first started writing, I just got an idea and wrote," he told me.

A practiced people watcher, his ability to observe, report and get into the female characters is astounding.

Guys don't be fooled by the Chick Lit genre. Robert Craig successfully enters the world of women and how they think in a humorous way. You can too.

His second book, *More Like Wrestling Than Dancing*, follows the drudgery and dreams of two life long friends, who work together, live together and constantly meet the wrong kind of blokes at the *Apollo* nightclub based on the

now closed Pile Bar in Bradford.

I, like many others of a certain age, remember it well. On one of my visits I was confronted by a bloke who said "Av allwiz fancied birds wearin' glasses". So I promptly removed them. It was that kinda place.

So where does he get his characters from? Memories of people he's met and experiences he's had; although he said he wouldn't use an entire personality.

Robert works from home on a word processor in his attic most afternoons. So why does a successful writer continue to work part time as a postman. Simple, how do you write in a vacuum? You need social interaction to get new material and Bradford is full of it!

Limited signed copies of his books are available at *Waterstone's*, Bradford.

More Like Wrestling Than Dancing, ISBN: 0-297-84746-5 price £10.99

Cover to Cover, ISBN: 0-75381-708-X price £6.99.

Shedding Light On Markets

W **RITING your words is only half the battle. The other is to send your work out somewhere, but where do you start?**

Naturally, there's the *Writers' & Artists Yearbook*, but that is not the only reference book out there, and it doesn't cover the hoards of small press magazines that exist for just about every eventuality.

Enter *Light's List*, now in its 19th annual edition.

The 2004 issue contains basic details for over 1,400 small press and independent publishers. These include not only UK titles, but publications from places as diverse as Australia, Belgium, Germany,

India and the United States.

Basic information includes address, editor's name, price, area of interest (such as fiction or poetry, horror or science fiction), the number of issues published per year and so on.

As such, the List is an invaluable tool for both reader and writer when it comes to locating magazines of interest.

Of course, particularly for the writer, it is only a starting point. As a directory, it can't go into the in depth issues such as a publication's house style or its submission policies. It's up to the writer to do the follow up, such as asking for guidelines and sample issues of a title. The List is a starting point for research, not a substitute.

For any writer seeking to cut their teeth and build a body of published work, then *Light's List* is an important addition to their shelves. And at £3 it's well worth the investment. It can't guarantee publication, but it arms the writer with the contacts needed to court success.

Light's List of Literary Magazines 2004 (ISBN 1 897968 25 6, ISSN 1741-7880), published by Photon Press, 37 The Meadows, Berwick-upon-Tweed, Northumberland, TD15 1NY. Cheques payable to 'John Light'. Price £3 (including P+P).

Mark Cantrell

Poetry: Women of the World Unite

Diane Johnson on a forthcoming poetic celebration of International Women's Day...

L **OCAL women poets and writers will take part in a celebration to mark women's achievements next month as part of International Women's Day (IWD).**

The event at the Carlisle Business Centre, Carlisle Road, Manningham, takes place two days before the actual day, on Saturday 6th March between 11am and 4pm.

International Women's Day celebrates the economic, social, cultural and political achievements of women, and has many

significant dates in its history.

On the 8th March 1857, women workers in New York's textile and clothing industry protested against low wages and poor working conditions.

Then, in 1957 in the same city, they rallied and protested against child labour and sweatshops (*globally, very much an issue to this day — Ed*). Two years later, in Germany, Denmark, Switzerland and Austria, an estimated one million women demanded the right to vote and for an end to sex discrimination.

In 1913, Russian women joined the fight and the Russian parliament declared March 8th a national holiday. The world had begun to sit up and take notice that women were second class

citizens no longer.

IWD is a celebration of all this and more; of how far women have come in their struggle for equality, peace and development. Even in today's world, not all women are free so we have to keep shouting, we have to keep working, and we have to keep fighting for what we believe in.

The day is a recognition of the countless acts of courage and determination of ordinary women from all over the world. There is still lots to be done. As Indira Gandhi said: "There are two kinds of people, those who do the work and those who take the credit. Try to be in the first group, there is less competition."

Rules that don't bend, break

LIKE many gamblers, I believe that there's a method to winning competitions.

The belief isn't mired in the irrationality of addiction but is based on some simple rules, as follows.

- Start small aiming initially for the competitions with small prizes.
- Make the minimum investment.
- Send in poems that meet the competition criteria about numbers of lines or a particular theme. (Obvious I know but you would be surprised.)
- Do road-test your

As an occasional player at the Poetry Competition Casino, and a sometimes winner/runner up, Bruce Barnes felt moved to comment...

poems in a writing workshop before you send them. The joy of creating a wonderful new poem often leads straight to the *cul de sac* of a competition envelope. If it's hot off the press let it cool down; get it to a critical workshop and let them pick up the 'obvious' typo or the knuckle-duster cliché that in your enthusiasm you missed.

- Look at the judges, consider their writing, not with a view to aping

them but to identify themes that appear in their work. If the competition has a website with previous winners, have a look at that, particularly if the competition doesn't have judges per se.

- Avoid a tear stained winners' cheque, (the bank might not accept it); before you enter any of the smaller competitions, reconcile yourself to the fact that it's largely about winning money. Buy yourself a drink to celebrate, say, being first among 500 and that you can include the poem with a reference to the win in your next chap-book. The best publicity and the serious recognition come with the Arvon and the National, and these are 1000-1 shots.

You might see such 'rules' as petty and restrictive. Perhaps they should be seen not as rules, in the draconian legal sense of the word, but as rules of etiquette such as not farting in

company. People may recognise them as such, but realise that such rules are inevitably broken, or if not broken, they are skirted around. For instance, revisions to a poem, inherent in most poets practice, will free the poem for another competition or a magazine.

Most competitions give details of their prize giving dates, and if you send in close to the closing date, the poem is tied up for a couple of months at the most, which is the same time scale as the more reliable magazines.

I believe that it doesn't do to have too much recycled stuff in circulation, waiting to be picked up by magazines and competitions; the time spent stuffing envelopes is better spent revising the poem that never seems to be making it or better still writing anew.

Somewhere Else, a collection of poetry by Bruce Barnes, is available from the Utistugu Press, 37 Wilmer Rd, Heaton, Bradford BD9 4RX. Price £7.50 (inc P+P). Cheques payable to 'Bruce Barnes'.

Off the shelf

OFF The Shelf has produced a handbook that will explain to community groups how to organise and promote events.

It is intended for those with little experience at such activities and is available in a variety of languages. In addition to the current English Somali and Chinese versions, the group hopes to make it available in Urdu and Bengali 'in the very near future'.

The handbook emerged from the Off The Shelf Literature Festival that took place last year. It was funded by Arts Council England, Yorkshire and won the Audience Yorkshire Best Inclusion/Diversity Project Award.

Community groups can obtain a copy from the Off The Shelf Team. Tel: 0114 273 4400. Email: offtheshelf@sheffield.gov.uk.

Sin(k) City Poets: Jeremy Young

Just 'Bidjing' Along

BEGINNING a new series of mini-interview-come-profiles with local writers, we start with Jeremy Young, who came to Bradford from Norfolk.

Nowadays, according to what he says, he lives '28 inches from the screen'. Here's what he has to say for himself...

What do you do when you're not writing?

I dunno.

Why do you write?

Fractured ego.

How did you become a writer?

Is that what I am? I would say the moment of revelation came when the dole finally accepted that I was genuinely trying to write a novel – and not just saying it. Didn't do much good. The straight answer is that I am a writer when I write and a bullshitting skiver when I swan about talking about writing 'stuff'.

What was the greatest literary moment in your life?

Being mentioned in the notes of the examiner in my English Literature O level: for my 'mature style.' I believe his mind

was swayed by my essay on One Flew over the Cuckoo's Nest, in which I described the breasts of the big nurse; when they are exposed by McMurphy towards the end of the book; after the party scene – are you still with me – as 'fleshy globes of femininity. Clearly my love of late night literature was suitable revision – despite warnings by my mother.

What was your worst literary moment?

Going to a poetry group for the first time, and being told that they had an up-and-coming event. The person I went with read her poem and was met with waves of orgasmic enthusiasm and asked to read in the show. I read mine and was asked if I would like to help with the teas.

How has writing

affected your life?

What apart from the drink, the lack of money, receding hairline and this nervous twitch? I even have earwax! Well, you can put that down to old age I suppose.

Any advice you can give fellow writers?

If they don't get it – they won't buy it, but just because they don't get it – and you can't sell it – doesn't make it bad.

Besides who are they?

Oh and the obvious, it is better to have fifty pages of crap writing on paper than a library of work in your head. You

never know where an idea might lead, or how a piece might look in six months time.

What's your involvement in the local literary scene?

Just bidjing about really.

Brief bibliography?

What is this, a job interview?

Maybe. Who or what has influenced your work?

Chips and beans on a tray, Nancy Friday, and a frightening incident with a chocolate éclair and a photo booth. ↘

Open a prize

EVERYMAN Press is running an open poetry competition worth a whopping ton to the lucky winner.

To stand a chance of winning the £100 prize, entries should be submitted by 10 April 2004. A fee of £3 must accompany the first poem, with a further £1 for each additional entry.

For more details write with an SAE to: Cherry-bite Publications, Linden Cottage, 45 Burden Road, Little Neston, Cheshire, CH64 4AE. Tel: 0151 353 096. Email: helicon@globalnet.co.uk. Web: www.cherrybite.co.uk.

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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EDITOR: Mark Cantrell

TEL: 07963 500125. FAX: 0870 1643314

EMAIL: tykewriter@supanet.com

WEB: <http://www.tykewriter.supanet.com/tw>

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