



Tyke Writer

The Interchange

Issue 9: January 2002 (Bradford Writers' Network) Newsletter

Events Guide

Interchange @ the Priestley

A workshop held every Tuesday from 8pm at the Priestley Centre for Arts, Chapel Street, Little Germany.

It provides a friendly and informal gathering where members can share their work. Also gives a forum for constructive feedback.

Interchange @ the Melborn

Every last Wednesday of the month, Interchange hosts an open mic performance event for writers, performers, poets and singer-songwriters.

Be there at 8pm for an 8.30pm start at the Melborn, White Abbey Road.

Love across the Border

*Interchange (Bradford Writers' Network) took its anthology **Love, Sex, Death & Carrots** to Borders Books in Leeds. LYNETTE SHAW MCKONE reports on how the book and the performers were received*

In November members of Interchange were invited to read at Border Books in Leeds.

When we arrived at about 6pm the cafe area, where the reading was to take place, was just about packed.

'Great,' I thought, mentally rubbing my hands together, 'an audience!'

Oh what a sad and deluded poet I am; I thought all these peo-

ple were there to hear us read from our wonderful anthology, *Love, Sex, Death & Carrots*, and listen to our words of wisdom on life, the

So the old Interchange magic worked again, giving people the courage and encouragement to stand up and read their work.

universe and everything.

WRONG

We were due to start the readings at 6.30pm. At 6.10 James, the guy who had booked us, came and said that the woman who should have been the host was sick and wasn't coming in. We would have to host ourselves, so, no change there then.

I watched in dismay as the time of the performance drew closer and the customers withdrew -- fast.

At 6.25 there sat Ruth Malkin, Bruce Barnes, Patrick Blues, Karl Dallas, Steve Jones, Richard Healey and me.

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New Year, new look...

TYKE Writer has been re-designed and -- hopefully -- improved for the New Year.

Central to this makeover is the masthead designed by Phil Wainman, which makes its debut appearance at the top of the page.

Now it's up to the group to get writing and fill the pages with dazzling words. So, over to you, Interchange.

Inside this issue:

A literary agent gets hot under the collar; war and peace from new poetry group; poetry; news & events; interview, Thom the World Poet.

Poets join up for peace

POETS in Bradford have joined forces to use their words to fight for peace and are seeking submissions for an anthology dedicated to that theme.

Poets4Peace was launched in December by three members of the city's most prominent writing groups: Seema Gill of the Beehive Poets, Bruce Barnes of the Bradford Writers' Workshop, and Lynette Shaw McKone of the Interchange (Bradford Writers' Network).

By Mark Cantrell

So far they have culled over 60 poems from the members of their own organisations and are seeking more for the anthology, especially from children and people of different cultures.

The new group emerged from the terrible events of

September 11 and its aftermath. As Seema Gill explained: "When we saw the atrocities on TV it was like watching a horror film. I was so shocked. All my life I have been anti-war and against racism, desperately wanting people to live in peace and harmony and ease any suffering -- especially of inno-

cents.

"Now I am calling on people to fight war and racism with the weapon of words by writing anti-war poetry for peace. We want to steer clear of propaganda and religion, but this is a chance for people to express their feelings about war and peace."

Along with poetry, the group is also seeking sponsors and donations to cover the costs of producing and publishing the book. The group plans to publish the collection in March 2002, with the proceeds going to help refugees and displaced people in Afghanistan.

Poets4Peace

Submissions for the anthology can be of any length and style and should be emailed to Seema Gill at: meltingpotts@hotmail.com.

Fifteen Minutes of Flame

NEW YORK: Frank, a literary agent, found himself dazed and patting out flames shortly after arriving at a two-alarm house fire equipped with a sandwich, a loudhailer, whiskey and a deckchair.

He climbed onto the roof of a nearby house, perched on his deckchair, and proceeded to lecture the emergency crew while enjoying his drink.

Three firemen had just finished clearing the house, locating the

residents' young golden retriever in the process. They heard Frank's imperious command: "Drop the dog and open the hydrant this instant!"

They turned in surprise and dropped the yelping puppy, which fell through the burning timbers and burst into flames.

Onlookers mobbed the base of the heckler's house and threw cans and shrubbery at him. He batted these projectiles aside with his loudhailer while continuing to drink whiskey and issue

commands.

"Position the hose along the azalea bushes!"

"Stop picking your nose!"

Sorely provoked, the senior fireman picked up the dead (but still burning) dog and flung it onto the roof. The animal landed in Frank's lap, igniting his spilled whiskey and severely burned his crotch.

Frank heaved the dog away, but neglected to brace his feet on the slanted roof. The deckchair toppled and fell from the house,

miraculously avoiding onlookers, who watched aghast while the prostrate man suffered further injuries from falling embers and his own roof-top accoutrements.

The house fire was eventually subdued, and paramedics transported the injured man and his loudhailer to the hospital. Although he is recovering from his injuries, the prognosis is that he will never again be able to procreate with quite the same gusto.

Courtesy of the Darwin Awards. A nominee for 2001.

Love across the border

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The 'audience' had dwindled to about half a dozen people, who were all busy chatting to each other, chatting on mobile phones, one person was even chatting to himself and the remainder were reading.

We democratically nominated Ruth to host the show, which she did with her usual aplomb.

As she began to get into her stride a few people began to drift in; mind you, a few of the others drifted out

but it soon became apparent that the ones left were enjoying the performance.

A singer/songwriter friend of Ruth's turned up and joined in, treating us to a spoken word version of one of his songs.

A woman who sat quietly through the show decided that now was the time to perform a poem of her own.

In fact, she did 3 and they were all great; it wasn't until later we discovered that she had never performed before, you

would never have known by her demeanour.

Steve Jones, a new member of the group, read some of his work; another first time performer. So the old Interchange magic worked again, giving people the courage and encouragement to stand up and read their work.

Oh, and we sold a book and Border Books took 12 copies in to stock, so all in all it was a good night and I'm very glad we went.

Light Up The Sky

Live fast,
Die young,
Dare to dream
And trailblaze:
That's what writers
Do.
Be that comet
Soaring through the
Heavens
And set fire
To the sky
Of the human Mind.
Cascading,
Dazzling,
Burning bright
On the way towards
Ground Zero, per-
haps,
But what a blaze
Of glory,
What magnitude,
Your scintillating,
Coruscation.
For the duration
Of your flight
Of fancy,
For that one
Vibrant moment,
Thou art infinite
Heaven,
As you dance
With Angels
Bright as you.

Mark Cantrell

Ready, steady, Joe

IT can be safely said that audiences in the United States don't know what is about to hit them.

Joe Ogden is preparing to venture West and take his poetry to virgin ears. Just the kind he likes.

He is going to the States at the end of March to take part in the performance circuit at Austin, Texas and Cape Cod, where he will be following in the footsteps of Bruce Barnes and Lynette Shaw McKone. Both

went last year and had a thoroughly good time.

"I am worried about going," Joe confesses. "If I can perform and if the words are any good -- but that isn't going to stop me!"

In readiness for his trip, Joe is putting together his first collection, assisted by Lynette and Howard Frost.

"As for promoting myself," Joe adds, "What is there to say? I am a dull underclass middle aged man who lives a lonely life and



lives on a run-down housing estate.

"People tell me it's poetry. I say let the words speak."

Expect to hear about his adventures in due course. We might even hear about his poetry performances too.

Back Page Poets: Thom Woodruff

Troubadour @ Large

“**PERFORMING connects me to the dreams in others and it sustains and maintains the dreams in me,” says Thom the World Poet.**

Larger than life, colourful, and a regular visitor to Bradford, Thom is the reincarnation of the ancient bard.

Or, as he puts it himself, he's a fictional entity based on the Mediaeval ballads: *The Ballad of Poor Tom*. “*Poor Tom has come into the world again to see if he can cure your distempered brain. Come maid, come mare, be not afraid. Poor Tom will injure no-one...*”

“In a time of power, truth needs to be in disguise,” Thom adds.

The man behind the image is Thom Woodruff, a powerful and enthralling performance poet. His work is improvisational — so no performance is ever the same twice, but constantly renewed by this poet's never-fading energy.

Originally from Australia, he has made his home base in Austin, Texas. There, he runs the Austin International Poetry Festival (AIPF) and local venues such as the weekly Café Mundi and the monthly Expressions.

Thom is a rare breed indeed in the

poetry world. He earns his keep solely from his bardic activities. Over the years, his performance pieces have been encapsulated within the pages of 75 self-published books. Both a testament to his eloquent and experimental poetry as well as his prolific mind.

He started improvising poetry by chanting back in 1973 at the Rainbow Festival. As Thom explains: “Musicians backed me up and soon hundreds were dancing to the words and music.”

Later, he began distributing free broadsheets of poetry on the streets of Melbourne ‘when it became obvious that no-one remembered the improvisations’. He changed to booklets when it became apparent that no-one valued the free sheets of poetry.

He established the AIPF in 1991 after visiting a poetry festival in the park there. After receiving a firm ‘no’ to his request, he became determined to found a venue open to all. The same year he visited Bradford for the first time. “I was immediately and warmly welcomed into their circle so I have returned for the last decade,” he says.

During his time in Bradford he has supported both Interchange and the

Beehive Poets. He also runs workshops for MIND, Yorkshire Arts Circus and also schools.

Despite being welcoming to this ambassador of poetry, Bradford is not without its problems he notes: “Bradford has a fragile series of circles that seem to ignore each other — they do not seem to want to go outside their comfort zones,,” he says.

“Beehive poets rarely come to the Melborn or the Priestley. This needs to change.”

Fair criticism — or a comment based on his obvious lack of year round involvement in the local scene? No matter, just catch him on his next visit later this year, and enjoy his dazzling performances.

“It's time to talk and listen,” he says. “To give new faith to oral traditions, to memory and re-imagining (*sic*), to improvise and take big risks. Leave the texts behind and make it up as you go along. I do!”

Mark Cantrell

The *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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Editorial 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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