

Anne Rouse gets
hooked on the
radio, page 3



Publisher Portfolio:
Peepal Tree,
page 4

A letter from
Wallace Stevens,
page 4

Sophie Hannah
counts the
syllables, page 3



Poetry in
Cheshire,
page 5

poetrynews

the newsletter of the poetry society summer 2005 www.poetrysociety.org.uk



The Hamish Canham Poetry Prize 2005

Carole Satyamurti on the contenders for the second year of this new prize for the best poem to appear in *Poetry News*

Judy Brown wins the Hamish Canham Poetry Prize 2005



Judy Brown was born in Cheshire and studied English and American literature at Cambridge and Newcastle-upon-Tyne universities. Last year she resumed writing after a thirteen year interval (which started in the early nineties following a move to Hong Kong). She now lives and works in London again, and writes whenever she can. 'Loudness' was the first of Judy's new poems to be published. She has had a couple of other poems accepted for publication since then.

The Hamish Canham Prize was inaugurated in 2004, and is awarded every year for the best members' poem published in *Poetry News* during the preceding year. Hamish Canham was a remarkable child psychotherapist and writer who died in 2003 at the age of 40. He loved poetry, and the prize was endowed by his parents in his memory.

The judging panel this year had some excellent poems to choose between, which made our job both difficult and enjoyable. The year's four themes were 'Prehistory', 'Food', 'Loudness' and 'Coats'. Having a theme specified obviously presents a challenge, and members rose to it in ways that were very diverse. 'Coats', for instance, produced Jane Morley's poignant poem about psoriasis, as well as the more expectable ones about garments. 'Prehistory' prompted Frances Green to write about a photograph of her ex with both seriousness and humour.

'Food' gave us Amanda Parkyn's 'Catching Shad' and Ian Caws' 'Asylum Tea', both of which were strong contenders for the prize. 'Catching Shad' is, on the surface, just about preparing fish in the kitchen, but it is a subtle evocation of the simultaneous anticipation of the delicious dish the writer is making, and

awareness that, not long before, this was a living creature, exercising its freedom. In 'Asylum Tea', Ian Caws captures the state of mind of what we took to be a junior hospital doctor on night duty in a psychiatric hospital. The way language is used in this poem vividly conveys what it feels like to be just about hanging on.

After an impeccably democratic voting process, we finally chose Judy Brown's 'Loudness' as the winner of this year's prize. It is a poem about bad news, and we very much liked its unusual approach to the subject and the rightness of its language. It is a meditation on what bad news sounds like, and doesn't sound like. The poem manages to convey, and enable the reader to recognise, what is really quite an elusive experience – '... a sound that's not a sound... a chemical fizz...' The poem ends with an account of what the ear attends to when the bad news is "bedded in". The process of recovery makes it possible to hear sounds from the surrounding world again.

'Loudness' is a beautiful and subtle poem, and we were very happy to award it this year's prize.

Carole Satyamurti's *Stitching the Dark: New and Selected Poems* is published by Bloodaxe.

JUDY BROWN LOUDNESS

After bad news, and its pulled-back fist,
flows in a sound that's not a sound. It's not
the brain's tide beating blood in propped
and shored-up workings, not the tapestried
texture of attended silence, the goffering
of quiet air folding and unfolding
in a house where nothing is happening.

After bad news, you tell the seconds,
hungry for the hurrying thunder
that never comes. Instead a chemical fizz
fills the ears, before the descaling. An angel
rides the stirrup and anvil, spurring on the drum,
works like wild weather in wet sheets,
flapping and cracking the body's flat muscles.

Long after the bad news, when it's bedded in,
you notice most clearly the mild loudness
of the not-so-old man in the foot tunnel,
drumming and drumming and biting his mouth.
The posed coins in his blue cloth
are tiny, like a cast handful of earbones.

The Hamish Canham Poetry Prize was judged by Carole Satyamurti, Dr and Mrs Canham and Poetry Society staff. The inaugural prize was won by Denise Bennett (*PN*, Summer 2004).

A leaf out of her book

Alice Oswald talks to Janet Phillips about orchestrating the outdoors and her fascination with poetry's oral tradition

When Alice Oswald embarked on her first career as a gardener, she also began a quest to find a new way of capturing the sounds of the natural world in words. Gardening has had a profound effect on her writing, and, certainly in her latest book, *Woods etc.* (published in May by Faber), it is key to the representation of sound in her writing.

"When you're gardening you've got your head down, so you're using your ears much more than your eyes", she explains. "I became very aware of the way that sound happens to you all day long when you're working outside. There is a natural counterpoint going on, and I wanted to find a way of using it, so that I'm not just using one human, spoken rhythm but a whole lot of missed beats and syncopation, that suggest non-

human noise".

Oswald has been thinking about the challenge of representing the natural world in poetry for over fifteen years now. She studied classics at Oxford (Homer remains a strong influence) and she wrote poetry while she was studying, but she didn't belong to any writing group or publish in student magazines. She would occasionally send her poems to people she admired – such as John Carey – and get criticism back, but mainly she was writing in isolation. It wasn't until she had spent a year working as a gardener that her writing "clicked". This led to a Gregory Award in 1994, and two years later, the publication of her first collection, *The Thing in the Gap-Stone Stile*.

Oswald gave up gardening professionally several years ago. She has been reported as saying



that she grew furious with Wordsworth when experiencing this back-breaking work. She regrets saying this so emphatically, but it remains true that the poetry she read "didn't feel as vivid and astonishing as the real thing". She also found that her fellow gardeners had little time for "pen-pushers". "After six months or so, I rather agreed with them", she admits. "As a gardener one is always working hard and then a pen-pusher will come along and have a totally different way of seeing it, which is quite irritating. I found it hard to match up the poetry and the gardening until I read Ted Hughes, and then I could understand a different way of 'pushing the pen'." One of the things she likes about Hughes is the way he uses sound: "He uses those stress-based and syncopated rhythms, so it seems as if there is more than just

human noise going on".

"Human noise" is, however, an integral element of *Dart*, her book-length poem about the people and places along this Devonshire river from source to sea, published in 2003. The early research for this book, which won the T. S. Eliot Prize, was funded by the Poetry Society's Poetry Places scheme. Oswald originally thought of *Dart* as a kind of "jazz improvisation" for many voices, and it has been broadcast on radio as a performed piece. Alice's husband, Peter Oswald, is a playwright – might she be tempted to write something for the stage herself? "When I was writing *Dart* I was reading lots of Beckett and I did get very excited by the idea of theatre", she says. "I like the idea of performed pieces, but I think actual theatre is probably beyond me. I'm very bad at

continued on page 2

A Letter from the Director

Since Spring...

The Poetry Society's new constitution was voted in by members attending the 25 May Extraordinary General Meeting. Many thanks to all who attended for their support – the final vote was 31 yes, 1 abstention. We now have a new procedure for our annual process to elect Council members. Each year one third of the existing Council retires by rotation (though they may be proposed to run again). Enclosed with this Summer issue of *Poetry News* is the Call for Nominations and information about how to request a nomination and candidate information form. Please note that signatures and candidate's statement will need to be received in the Poetry Society office by 26 August in order to be submitted as part of the proxy ballot in the Autumn mailing of *Poetry News*.

We hope members who were able to attend enjoyed the translation reading events that took place in the Poetry Studio in London, Corpus Christi College in Oxford and (by the time of this mailing) festival events at Ledbury and Dartington 'Ways with Words'.

Hurrah for our new line-up of 'respect slam' 2005 spoken word stars, and for the dedicated alumni of that project, our very own Poetry Slambassadors, who wowed an audience of nearly 1000 at the Human Rights Watch event at Shakespeare's Globe Theatre on 13 June.

Funding was received from Arts Council England's Grants for the Arts for our National Poetry Day 'Poetry Laboratories', so those will be set up with our regional partners over the summer to launch in autumn (and run through early 2006) – details will be added to the Poetry Landmarks as they come together. Do look for:

- Newcastle – a conference in Spring 2006 for poets and scientists working together, part of a project now in progress at the Newcastle Lit & Phil Society;
- Warrington – a poet working with a Warrington library poetry group, two local prisons and a Young Offenders Institution;
- Isle of Wight – a project in schools supported by the Poetry Society Stanza group on the Isle of Wight that will culminate in an event at the Quay Arts theatre on 6 October;
- London – poet Stephen Watts working in schools with a Kurdish poet, dealing with issues of language through translation.



- Cornwall – this is top secret, to be unveiled at the end of November, but there will be some very interesting poetic activity throughout schools and libraries in Cornwall as part of the NPD Poetry Laboratories;
- Birmingham – an exchange between young performance poets from the Birmingham area and the Poetry Slambassadors in London.

Mark your diary...

In the penultimate event in our translation reading event series, London's Goodenough College welcomes the Poetry Society, with support from the Ratiu Family Foundation, in what should be a lovely evening featuring readings from the shortlisted books and by the winner of the Popescu Prize for European Poetry Translation 2005. PS members of course receive a discounted entry to this event on Thursday, 8 September.

October marks a turning point for the Poetry Society's venue options for artistic programming, which was previewed by our June EGM meeting and reading: on Tuesday, 4 October we will officially launch a new association with St Giles in the Field, in whose parish we reside, and which boasts a very special connection with poets. Enclosed in this mailing is a flyer with full details but I wanted to point out that Poetry Society members will be given an exclusive opportunity for advance booking until 15 August. This is a nice way to mark the growth of National Poetry Day to a week of celebrations – don't forget the equally special reading at the Beverley Literature Festival on Saturday, 8 October, where you can celebrate with a Poetry Society event in Yorkshire. (See pages 4 and 5).

Members News

We're delighted to see the Stanzas taking off – we now have 18 across the country (see the full list on page 7), and they are added as they come in to our Poetry Landmarks website.

And finally, may I remind you that Poetry Society members receive discounts to all of our events – do enjoy your membership benefits and take advantage of these offers. Our membership manager Carl Dhiman keeps a lively members web page; last I checked there was a fascinating list of a dozen various discounted or free items of interest to members, and nearly a dozen bookshops offering exclusive discounts (see page 5).

Jules Mann

JULES MANN, DIRECTOR

poetrynews is published four times a year by The Poetry Society, 22 Betterton Street, London WC2H 9BX t 020 7420 9880, f 020 7240 4818

e publications@poetrysociety.org.uk www.poetrysociety.org.uk

An audio-tape version is available

Editor: Janet Phillips

The views expressed in *Poetry News* are not necessarily those of the Poetry Society.

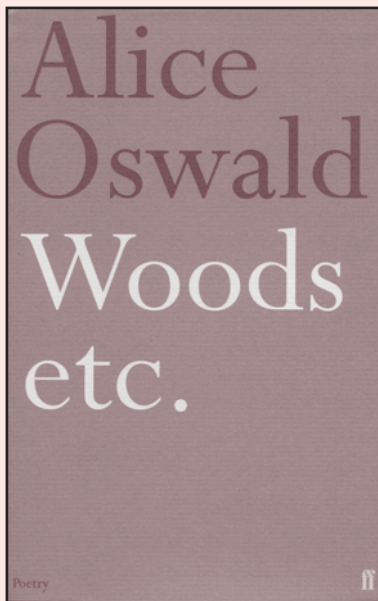


Eric Gregory Awards



Just four young poets received Eric Gregory Awards this year, the smallest number to be selected in the past five years. They are Melanie Challenger, Carolyn Jess, Luke Kennard and Jaim Smith. Carolyn Jess's first collection, *Inroads*, is due to be published this year, and Luke Kennard's collection, *The Solex Bothers* is due from Stride. Cholmondeley Awards, given in recognition of a writer's body of work, went to Jane Duran, Christopher Logue, M. R. Peacocke and Neil Rollinson. These awards are run by the Society of Authors.

continued from front page



speaking myself, and the idea of inventing speech for other people is a nightmare."

It does not seem to me that she is "very bad" at speaking at all, especially on the subject of poetry, on which she is eloquent and passionate. She clearly engages deeply with other writers and ideas, but she likes to come back to earth. In fact, it irritates her when something she has written with a practical purpose is intellectualised. She has recently edited an anthology of poems about the natural world, *The Thunder Mutters* (published last month by Faber), and in her preface to the book, she talks about the nuisance caused by the invention of the petrol-driven leaf-blower. She says that a reviewer "construed this as if it were an intellectual or philosophical argument, which for me it isn't at all, it's a very practical question". She explains how it is illegal to operate one of these machines without ear protectors, yet there is no protection for people passing by or for school children when it is being used on their playing field. And how you are not even supposed to pick up every single leaf in the garden: some perform the very useful function of rotting down and enriching the earth. "People think you are being intellectual about it and saying 'I don't believe in machines'. I *do* believe in machines, I just think this particular machine is a mistake".

In a similar way, her writing reminds you that what is often used as a metaphor or a stock image in

Julia Darling

Poet, playwright and novelist Julia Darling died in April after a long battle with cancer. Her most recent collections were *Apology for Absence* and *Sudden Collapses in Public Places* (Arc). An appreciation appears in *Poetry Review* (95:2).

'Poet Laureate' for Wales

Gwyneth Lewis has been chosen as the inaugural National Poet (Poet Laureate) for Wales. This is a bilingual role, and the appointment is for one year with an option to renew for a second. The post is funded by the Arts Council of Wales. Gwyneth Lewis writes in both Welsh and English. Her books include *Keeping Mum* (Bloodaxe) and *Y Llofrudd Iaith* (Barddas).

World Champion

Kat Francois wowed a 400-strong audience at the poetry slam contest at Rotterdam's Poetry International Festival and carried off the coveted title of world slam champion 2005.

From Michael Donaghy's widow, Maddy Paxman

I would like to say a big thank-you to everyone who contributed so generously to the fund set up for my son Ruairi after Michael's death last year. I had so many letters, cards and emails that I simply couldn't reply in person to them all, but it was lovely to know that people were thinking and caring about us, and to hear that Michael had touched so many hearts. We miss him very much, but your appreciation of him has helped to keep him present in our lives.

discovered a way of using it."

One of sonnets in *Woods etc.*, 'Leaf', is dedicated to two of Alice's children, and indeed the book spans a period of about eight years during which her family has expanded; she now has a third child. On a practical level, this means she finds it hard to give readings and participate in events (despite being one of the featured poets, she was not able to read in the Next Generation series, for example). But she regards herself as lucky in that childcare is shared with her husband. She is also very open about how the experience has affected her. "It fragments you", she explains. "Not in a bad way, but I do feel I have a more cubist approach now: I see things from more than one angle. Whereas I think before I had children I was more emphatically singular in my approach". There's an emotional change, too: "I feel much more blown open and vulnerable. Things hit me harder".

Soon the family will be going to live with her parents in

I've always had this interest in how you can (re)create an oral tradition within a literary tradition.

rhyme and makes something magical of it. Alice is interested in ballads and folk-song, and this interest also comes back to that early exposure to the writings of Homer: "I've always had this interest in how you can (re)create an oral tradition within a literary tradition", she says.

That most musical of forms, the sonnet, seems to present itself most often to Oswald. "It feels very perfect, like an in-breath and an out-breath", she explains. "When I'm writing about the mind or the heart I use a Shakespearean or a Miltonian form, a more entangled version, because that's more how the mind feels to me. If I'm writing about the natural world, I like to use the form that John Clare discovered, where you've got a series of couplets, and closure between each pair, so it's not all entangled together. The natural world is made of differences and new beginnings, so in a way the sonnet is quite alien to that, but I think Clare

Gloucestershire, which means leaving Devon, which she is "desperate" about, but, on the plus side, it's a chance to work on her mother's garden (her mother is a garden designer). She is not able to say where she will go next with her poetry, although at the moment she is collaborating with a graphic artist, trying to find a way of representing on the page the sounds with which she'd like to surround her writing. In a couple of poems, she has incorporated the word "pause", but this is not quite enough: she wants to be able to orchestrate it more clearly, with "something like a clap or a flick". Perhaps she will discover a different soundscape in Gloucestershire. "Sometimes", she says, "I think just waiting and listening, and being vividly alive, is really all it takes".

Links: Alice Oswald on writing poetry: www.bbc.co.uk/dna/getwriting/A2997444

All Tuned-in

When Anne Rouse spent a fortnight listening out for poetry on the airwaves she felt happiest in *The Darkest Place*



As I began a fortnight of listening to poetry on the radio, I expected a full-blown poet to provide a first verse. But instead, up popped Christopher Hitchens, the journalist, being interviewed on Radio 3.

The son of a naval officer, Hitchens was christened on a submarine in Malta and reared on Kipling. His first encounter with Owen's poetry "overturned the furniture in my mind", and so we heard 'Anthem for Doomed Youth': "But in their eyes / Shall shine the holy glimmers of good-byes." This edition of *Night Waves*, presented by Philip Dodd, made a thought-provoking start to a radio binge.

Keen listeners often hear "found" poems on radio: famously, the shipping forecast, or a scientist comparing a sea creature to a bathmat, or *Today*, quoting the *Guardian* on the latest celebrity knighthood: "Derek Trotter, trader in Peckham Spring Water, five-year-old Beaujolais Nouveau and Norwegian pine-scented Christmas candles, was yesterday in receipt of one working

gong (no previous owner) from her Majesty the Queen."

One could say that there is poetry, too, in the very act of silent listening, although one's own habits are frankly utilitarian. Recently, I tried to clean the kitchen to Radio 4's *Poetry Please*, while scribbling down choice phrases. Hart Crane's 'At Melville's Tomb' had me ditching the scrub-brush altogether: "dice of drowned men's bones", "corridors of shells", "silent answers crept across the stars". Can anyone do alliteration – which so easily degenerates into a mere tongue-twister – better than Hart Crane?

That particular *Poetry Please* flowed to a watery theme: Melville's 'Like the Fish'; Michael Symmons Roberts on the perfect dive; Katherine Pierpoint and Sophie Hannah on swimming; Marlowe's erotically playful *Hero and Leander*. Oh, those mellifluous *Poetry Please* actor-readers! Pure gravy-plus, we were treated to a recording of Betjemen himself. Presenter Roger McGough, on top form with his own 'A Man in the Moon', knows what we armchair poetry-lovers crave.

But I'm forgetting Seamus Heaney. *Front Row* called on him to describe the Wordsworth Trust's newly-opened Jerwood Centre. (Imagine that: now we are going live to our reporter, and it's ... Seamus Heaney!) The £3 million building was a "big, stone, proud ship". It had a "small round tower" and a "grange made of slate." Heaney said that he'd

been moved almost to tears to see in the permanent Wordsworth display "written in pencil in a little notebook", part of *The Prelude*: "That one, the fairest of all Rivers, lov'd / To blend his murmurs with my Nurse's song." Finally, he noted that



"A big, stone, proud ship" – Seamus Heaney on the new Jerwood Centre at the Wordsworth Trust, Grasmere

the Lake District "isn't just a postal address, but an extension of the spirit of the work ... an ongoingness."

Later in the week, on *Ramblings* (R4), poet Kim Taplin spoke memorably of the English footpath. Walking daily in Oxfordshire, alongside a hawthorn hedge, by a field that hasn't been ploughed since medieval times renews her sense of the past. "You never walk the same path twice ... there'll be a new flower, you'll hear a bird you never heard before...", she said. "Some people feel country poetry is escapist. I think exactly the opposite, that this is the reality."

At the weekend, Radio 3's *The*

Verb took up residence at the Hay Festival. Presenter Ian McMillan kicked off with some occasional verse, punctuated by a polite chorus of "Hay!" from the audience, like a crowd of hungry, yet diffident, donkeys. Otherwise, this *Verb* was

fair fields, the producers could easily have invited poetry along, too.

Why shouldn't she get the chance to sip Pimms with wisps of grass in her hair? (Though a poet *would* say that.) There's a danger that radio affords poetry only a surface respect, promoting it as a quick spray-on of culture, then discounting it as a means of actual enjoyment.

My other conclusion from a fortnight of listening is that radio needs to broaden its reach, to take in more English poetry from non-mainstream sources, European, and "world" poetry – as well as the traditional favourites.

Worries on this score were somewhat allayed, however, by Lavinia Greenlaw's stellar piece, *The Darkest Place*, broadcast the same evening on Radio 3. She stood in the absolute dark on Dartmoor and the Suffolk coast, and heard the rain like "fading static" while quoting Emily Dickinson: "I could not see to see". She spoke of light pollution, night effects, and the English weather. After a nod to science and photography, the programme reverted to pure, lyrical perception: poetry on radio at its most alive, and telling.

Anne Rouse's latest collection is *The School of Night* (Bloodaxe, 2004).

● Rommi Smith is writer in residence for BBC Radio 3's Africa Season. Read her blog at www.bbc.co.uk/africalives/myafrica/

Close-up: reading the metre

Sophie Hannah explains how to make each syllable count



'We seem to have some problem...' A faltering voice explains. I spy, along the platform, A sign: 'Beware of trains'

And picture you, impatient In the car park at the back Of a gaudy toy-town station, Or craning down the track

As the afternoon rehearses Its evensong of birds – Our time in the hands of others, And too brief for words.

A brilliant poem, and a superb use of metre. The first two verses are regular, controlled, calm – although one has the sense that it's a precarious calm. Then in the third stanza the pace picks up, and the second line has a crucial extra syllable which lends a sort of avalanche effect to the first three lines of that verse – suddenly the poem is full of impatience, rage and frustration. We picture the narrator's lover "craning down the track" and it gives us a real sense of fervent, futile struggling; the speeding up of the poem's rhythm reminds us that, however much our

feelings and desires might be racing ahead, we cannot get the stopped train to start.

The first two lines of the last verse tell us that, in one sense, it is already too late – the afternoon is preparing for the evening. The narrator knows this and is resigned to it, so the third and fourth lines of that stanza – "Our time in the hands of others / And too brief for words" – are wistful, contemplative; the narrator is sad rather than angry. Johnson was dying when he wrote the poem; the narrator will miss not only his lover but also the annoying details of life, like delayed trains. And the last line has only five syllables in contrast to the six syllables we are expecting (based on the pattern of the previous verses); the reader is reminded that sometimes things (poems, life) will be shorter than we expect them to be.

'Uncertainty' by C.H. Sisson is another wonderful poem:

The future is the only thing That makes for thought, the past is past: It brought its presents, had its fling,

But what it flung could never last. The future has not lasted yet Even the second that it can And so is good for any bet: It is the guessing makes the man.

Human uncertainty is all That makes the human reason strong: We never know until we fall That every word we speak is wrong.

The tone in the first verse is that of a wise man, impatient with others' ignorance, telling us, brusquely, what ought to be obvious. The stanza's last line contains the word 'flung', underlining our sense that truths – nuggets of wisdom – are being flung at us. Indeed, in that first verse we are told four separate things very quickly. There are five punctuation marks, compared to the two in each of the subsequent verses. Is this an angry narrator bombarding us or simply an offhand, dismissive one letting a few things slip casually?

In the second stanza, the narrator's voice becomes more engaged, more philosophical, with a syntactically complex three-line sentence. The fourth line of this verse

is almost upbeat, and we realise that the poem's aim is not to dismiss the past but to endorse the future.

The last stanza is perfectly balanced. It is neither lots of short snippets, like the first, nor primarily one sentence like the second. Its message is finely poised between the positive and the negative. When we read those final two lines, the rage we detected in the first verse begins to make sense: the same uncertainty that drives us on also make fools of us.

Sophie Hannah's most recent collection is *First of the Last Chances* (Carcenet)

'Unscheduled Stop' by Adam Johnson is from *New Poetries* (Carcenet, 1994). 'Uncertainty' by C. H. Sisson is from *Antidotes* (Carcenet 1991).

● What element of poetic craft would you like to see discussed in the "Close-up" column? Email your suggestions to the editor, publications@poetrysociety.org.uk

I sit in the Charles Hallé At windy Manningtree, While gulls enact their ballet Above the estuary.

poetryfeatures

Notes on Notes

Stella Halkyard continues our manuscript series with the letters which chronicle the inception of Wallace Stevens's *Notes Toward a Supreme Fiction*

Katharine Frazier, the Director of the Cummington School of the Arts in Massachusetts, wrote to Wallace Stevens on 19 December 1941 to invite him to publish a small collection of his poetry with the Cummington Press. Frazier cunningly followed up her invitation by sending Stevens a consignment of Cummington Press books which he, an inveterate collector of fine printing, found irresistible. Yet who could have predicted that the “something” he assured her he would offer her would take the form of ‘Notes Toward a Supreme Fiction’, a masterpiece of modern American poetry?

The story of the alchemical transformation of a meagre “something” into the gold of this poem and the prehistory of how it assumed its radiant form in the Cummington Press production are enshrined in jewel-like detail in a complete set of the correspondence which Stevens exchanged with the Press. This collection has found a permanent home in Manchester in The John Rylands University Library.

Many are used to mourning the loss of British literary manuscripts and letters to the university libraries in the United States. In this case we have a situation where a collection which carries the history of one of America's most famous poems has come to rest in Britain. Letter by letter, an engrossing narrative accumulates which traces the life cycle of this poem up to its publication.

Careful excavation of this stratigraphy reveals that Stevens was true to his word. In May 1942 he writes to tell Frazier that he expects to send her the manuscript of the poem within a month. Considerate to Frazier's need to know the scope of the finished poem so she can make the necessary arrangements for its production, he provides an inventory of its formal characteristics. It will be divided into three sections in order to reflect the properties of the supreme fiction, by which “of course”, he tells her, he means poetry! Each section will have a title – I) *It must be abstract*; II) *It must change*; III) *It must give pleasure* – and contain thirty poems in groups of ten, none of which will

have individual titles. Each poem will be written in the form of a tercet or three-line stanza. On the day in May when this letter was written he reported that the poem's first two sections were complete and that his attentions were now focused on the writing of the final section. Holding this frail piece of paper, stamped with the blazon of the Hartford Accident and Indemnity Company and signed with the poet's angular monograph, you can almost sense him conjuring those now immortal characters – the blue woman and Canon Aspirin – for the pleasure-giving purposes of the supreme fiction.

Later, Stevens writes to Frazier again, concerning the line-lengths of his nascent poem. He tells her that he uses a pentameter line but that it “runs over and under now again” and he offers to re-write a line or two if the printer's setting requires such accommodation! For Stevens the visual presence of his poem on the “deliberate space” of the page is of great importance. We also learn that Stevens is determined not to look back over the poem or rework it until

it is completely finished. The few revisions which are made to the text (“Sky-blue” turns to “Night-blue” and “Nancia” becomes the more exotic “Nanzia”) appear as annotations to the fair copy of the manuscript, which also survives within this collection.

One of Stevens' final suggestions is that a quotation taken from the poem's epilogue (“Soldier there was a war...”) could be printed as a border on the back cover of the book. Frazier responds to the idea with enthusiasm for she feels “a deep thankfulness to be printing so significant and timely an expression”. Those lines, written in the shadow of the bombing of Pearl Harbour, speak as eloquently to us now as they did to their original audience in the Second World War.

Stella Halkyard is Modern Literary Archivist at The John Rylands University Library, The University of Manchester.

● *Fifty Years On: Wallace Stevens in Europe* takes place from 25-27 August at the University of Oxford: www.rai.ox.ac.uk/seminars/

The Corneliu M. Popescu Prize for European Poetry Translation 2005

Goodenough College, London
8 September, 7.30pm
Sponsored by the Ratiu Family Charitable Foundation

This event will feature the shortlisted translators as well as the overall winner, who will be announced by judges Alan Brownjohn and Dr Mike Phillips. A wonderful opportunity to hear a selection of the best current poetry translations into English. Tickets £6 (£4 concessions and Poetry Society members)

National Poetry Day

reading at St Giles Church, Covent Garden on 4 October 2005. Advance booking exclusive to Poetry Society members until 15 August 2005.

Box Office: 020 7420 9896 or marketing@poetrysociety.org.uk

See the information included in this mailing for further details.

Publisher Portfolio: Peepal Tree Press

Poetry News talks to Jeremy Poynting, founder and managing editor of a small press with a world-wide market

When was Peepal Tree founded (and is there a story behind the name)?

Peepal Tree was founded in 1985. It came into being on the back of my PhD on Caribbean literary studies, which had made me aware of good writing that was not getting published. It started as a one-off: I published a book for a writer in Guyana, when you couldn't buy paper there at that time. Then I saw a niche opening. Heinemann and Longman, then the biggest players in Caribbean publishing, had both wound down the scale of their operations. Apart from writers such as David Dabydeen and Derek Walcott, there weren't many Caribbean poets being published.

The press is named after a tree you find in Indian villages: people sit and talk under it, and leave offerings there, and so on. Evidently, people coming to the Caribbean from India brought cuttings of a peepal tree with them, so it was an image of transplantation. Also, a characteristic of the peepal tree is that it grows multiple stems away from the trunk, which provides an image for diaspora.

Do you run your own printing press?

I took the first few books that we published to the local printers, and it soon became apparent that print costs are crippling! So I bought an old machine from them, set it up in my garage, and learnt how to use it. We've retained our in-house production ever since, and for a long time we supported ourselves by doing print work for other people. It also meant that we kept our unit costs down and that we could do more books per year

than most small publishers can manage.

How big is the editorial team?

It's myself, as managing editor, Hannah Bannister, marketing director, and now we have a third person, Kadija George, who is working on a writer development project with us.

How many books do you publish per year?

It's around 18-20; this includes fiction and academic titles as well as poetry. About half last year's titles were poetry.

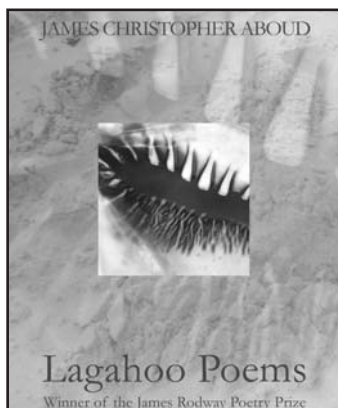
Do you receive financial support from any arts funding bodies, etc?

We've been a regularly funded organisation for a couple of years and we're one of the few organisations that received a substantial uplift in funding from Arts Council Yorkshire, which starts in 2006.

How did the writer development project come about?

Arts Council Yorkshire has a good track record for supporting Black and Asian writing in the region. This project came about when there was some Decibel money available and the decision was taken to place a development worker with Peepal Tree Press. The need for such a post was driven home by the fact that there was only one Black British poet included in the recent Next Generation promotion. We were very keen to ensure that when another promotion like this happens, that situation won't be repeated.

Kadija's work was initially an 18-month Arts Council Yorkshire project, where she identified Black



Jamaican werewolf: Peepal Tree's cover for James Christopher Aboud's collection.

and Asian writers in the region at pre-book stage and worked with them, focussing on their individual needs. After this phase, the project will be embedded with us, so we'll be able to retain Kadija's post for the next three years.

One of the problems is that the usual route for poets seeking publication – building up a CV through publishing in poetry magazines – isn't something that Black and Asian poets feel able to do. When they look at those magazines, they see publications which appear very white in cultural focus. So we're also keen on running an in-house journal as part of the project.

You have described the press's focus as being on the “Caribbean nation”.

Can you say a little more about this? It's George Lamming's phrase. Because the Caribbean is hugely diasporic, we publish writers who have a continuing sense of *Caribbeanness*, but who might now be living in New York, Canada, the UK,

Europe, or even Singapore.

Can you describe the kind of writing you are looking for?

There's a tendency to see Caribbean poetry as predominantly oral, particularly in the UK, because a good deal of the most visible contemporary Black British poetry has been performance-oriented. Clearly that's an important element, but whatever we publish must repay attention on the page. We also publish people whose work is best read in quiet repose and I'm into both kinds of writing. I can see lots of positive things about performance poetry but I can see some negatives too, in that people tend to read to a familiar audience, and their work sometimes doesn't develop.

How many submissions do you get?

We get 300-400 poetry submissions per year, but very few unsolicited submissions make it into print. Many writers come to us via recommendation. Quite a few have come via Lorna Goodison and Kwame Dawes, for example.

How would you describe the current state of the poetry market?

We used to sell in Waterstone's, but along with many other poetry publishers, we find that outlet mostly closed, so for a long time we've been developing alternatives. Over 50% of our sales are export, to the Caribbean and the US. The media in the Caribbean take our work very seriously: we've just been on a three week tour of Guyana, Trinidad and Barbados and there was tremendous interest. There are limits in the Caribbean market, though. The actual

reading public isn't huge, and there's a problem with insularity – it's hard to sell Guyanese books in Trinidad, for example. We do well in the States, especially through university bookshops. Our decision to publish is rarely market-led, but if it's a book which has some kind of teachability, it helps sales a lot.

What is the average print run for a first collection?

The minimum is 600.

How long does it take from signing a contract to getting the books on the shelves?

It's about 12 months from manuscript to the contractual stage.

What is your favourite book jacket?

The one for *Lagahoo Poems* (by James Christopher Aboud). The lagahoo is a Trinidadian werewolf and the cover uses a picture of a conch shell in a way that is both beautiful and threatening.

Do you re-publish books which are out of print?

Yes. For example, we've published a collected edition of Eric Roach's poems, and we've put back into print some of David Dabydeen's poetry.

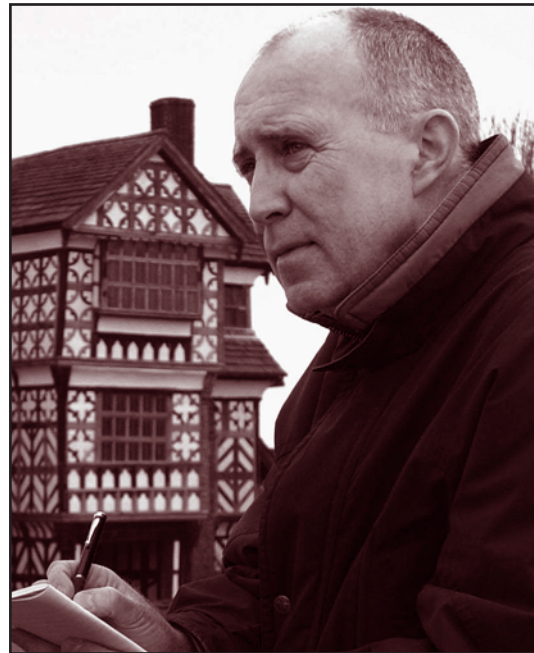
What or who is the next big thing in poetry publishing?

In a kind of precursor to the writer development project, Arts Council Yorkshire gave a bursary for providing mentoring and editorial support to two writers. One of the writers we're working with, Rommi Smith, has taken her poetry to new levels of excellence and is really beginning to wow people with her writing.

www.peepaltree.com

Poetry in Cheshire

Poetry in this large county is soaring to new heights, says Gill McEvoy



Handing on the baton: three Cheshire Poet Laureates – John Lindley, Joy Winkler, and Harry Owen

Silk, salt, cheese, a Roman city, royal forests, meres and mosses: Cheshire. Whenever I crest a hill and find myself looking out across the wide green spaces of the Cheshire Plain I feel like a bird released into joy. Poets in Cheshire might be feeling much the same: since the millennium year there has been a notable drive to raise the profile of poetry throughout the county. Of the recent literary initiatives perhaps the High Sheriff's Cheshire Prize for Literature tops the bill. This prize, brain-child of John Richards, High Sheriff in 2002, was launched in 2003. It awards a £2000 first prize and two runner-up prizes of £500 each. This year the prize is for writing for children, including both poetry and prose. Funded by the MBNA Foundation and administered by the University College, Chester, it is open to anyone born, living or working in Cheshire. Last year the prize was for poetry. Andrew Motion, presenting the awards, was struck by the high standard of the poems, which prompted his comment: "something special is happening in Cheshire".

It is. Poetry is spreading wings.

When Elizabeth Newall became Reading and Literature Development officer for Cheshire in 2001 she set about raising the profile of poetry in the county with two major initiatives. The first is the annual selection of a Cheshire Poet Laureate, which started in 2003 with the appointment of Harry Owen. The second, launched this year, is a series of poetry workshop days at Winsford Library, which have included "Writing for Commission" and "Performing your Poetry". The workshops are led by one guest poet (to date Carole Baldock, Jean Sprackland and Joolz Denby) and a previous Cheshire Poet Laureate. There is funding for these workshops for a further two years and they have been very well attended. On the Cheshire County Council's website there is a section for Readers and Writers with details of Cheshire's writing groups and contact numbers, plus festivals, competitions and other helpful information.

The Roman city of Chester is home to Chester Poets who meet once a month in the Commercial Hotel. Congleton Writers' Forum, in East Cheshire, runs a monthly critics' night for poets, plus a regular Poems

and Pints night at the Bear Town Tap, Congleton, and this event is usually packed out. John Lindley, Cheshire Poet Laureate 2004, has arranged two Poems and Pints nights at Goostrey, and these events also take place at other venues under the umbrella of Cheshire's Rural Touring Network which brings various excellent art events to rural areas. And I run the Golden Pear Poetry Society, a reading group for the enjoyment of contemporary poetry. We are new but are beginning to attract keen members who are interested both in reading poetry and writing it.

Cheshire was once home to Lewis Carroll, Thomas Hughes of *Tom Brown's Schooldays*, and the artist Charles Tunnicliffe who illustrated the works of writers like Henry Williamson. Lascelles Abercrombie and Christopher Isherwood were born here; De Quincy, George Borrow and Celia Fiennes travelled in the county. Mrs Gaskell's novel *Cranford* is Knutsford in disguise, so naturally Knutsford has an annual Literature festival, as does Chester. Bollington, too, has an arts festival which features poetry and other writing events. In the Vale Royle area

we have an arts initiative for the over 50s called "Wear Purple". John Lindley runs poetry workshops for this with the help of a "shadow" poet who might benefit from the experience.

There are also many opportunities in the county to study poetry or take a course in creative writing. The MA in creative writing is offered by Manchester Metropolitan University at Crewe and Alsager, and at University College, Chester. The Department of Continuing Professional studies at Keele University runs a weekly class for writing poetry led by Harry Owen, the first Cheshire Poet Laureate. Watch out too for courses run by the University of Liverpool's Department of Continuing Education.

Among magazines there are Gerald England's *New Hope International Review* online, and *Openwide* which has its own website. Cheshire is a big county, a wide plain bounded by hills to east and west. Across its large spaces poetry is taking flight.

Gill McEvoy runs the Golden Pear Poetry Society.

Contacts

Readers and writers website
www.cheshire.gov.uk/ReadersAndWriters
Wear Purple Initiative
www.wearpurple.co.uk
Chester Poets
Linda Bradley
tel: 0151 678 9732
The Cheshire Prize and MA in creative writing
University College, Chester
www.chester.ac.uk
Keele University
www.keele.ac.uk
Golden Pear Poetry Society
Gill McEvoy
tel: 01829 734062
Chester Literature festival
www.chesterfestivals.co.uk
Knutsford Literature Festival
www.knutsfordlitfest.co.uk
University of Liverpool
Continuing Education
email: conted@liverpool.ac.uk
Congleton Writers' Forum
Harry Owen
email: heo@beartown.co.uk
Manchester Metropolitan University, Cheshire
www.cheshire.mmu.ac.uk
Openwide Magazine
www.openwidemagazine.co.uk
New Hope International Review
www.nhi.clara.net/online
Cheshire Rural Touring Network
The Rural Arts Officer
email: murraysmith@cheshire.gov.uk

National Poetry Day
reading at
Beverley Literature Festival

Poetry Society – Beverley
Misericords commission

Simon Armitage,
Lavinia Greenlaw, Ian Duhig
and Vicki Feaver
Chaired by Ruth Padel
8 October 2005 at 7.30pm

Tickets: £8 / £5 (concs and Poetry Society members)

Bookings: 01482 391 672
St Marys Parish Church,
North Bar Within, Beverley, E. Yorks.
www.beverley-literature-festival.org



Fab Fives: websites

Lilias Fraser, Audience Development Officer for the Scottish Poetry Library, picks 5 websites with a Scottish flavour

www.thepoetryhouse.org

The real Poetry House is based in the School of English at the University of St Andrews. This virtual cousin is a portal for international web links about poetry in English. English-language poetry specialists act as editors for the rooms in this virtual house, providing overviews of what they consider to be some of the best internet sites for poetry in all corners of the earth. When it comes to the UK, accommodation is more accurately a suite housing resources on poetry in different periods. A sterling resource for students and general readers alike.

www.poetryscotland.co.uk

PS is no afterthought, but an extension of the *Poetry Scotland* broadsheet, allowing the editors space for features and information that triple the impact of their print operation. It revels in the amount of information and resources for poetry it can provide online, and the scope for extending its publication of individual poems. The advice section alone, with practical, humane and honest tips on sending work to magazines, is worth every penny of your internet connection.

http://textualities.net

We loved this in its former life as the print magazine *Scottish Book Collector* for its mixture of articles on

the life of books and book-people, and are just as keen on it now it has moved online. Interviews, reviews, articles, selected short stories and poetry – start with the ample writers section, then carry on rooting for bibliophile truffles on everything from contemporary Scottish artists' books to features on veteran collectors.

www.thehaar.org.uk

Two of *The Haar's* creators, Bill Duncan and Don Paterson, may already be present on your bookshelves. Here they've helped to produce a collective web installation of fiction, poetry, music, visual art and cracking design. You'll either

cackle in recognition, or find that it illuminates those darker corners of Scottish writing which have always struck you as a little odd. It wins the prize for site most likely to distract you from work – do be aware that it has sound elements which may alert colleagues to your guilty pleasures.

www.spl.org.uk

A shameless plug for our own website... The library's unique online catalogue is a central feature, searchable at the level of poem titles and subjects. But the most popular recent additions are in the Poetry Online section. Best Scottish Poems is a selection of twenty of the best poems by Scottish authors to appear

each year in books, pamphlets and literary magazines. This year's editor, Hamish Whyte, has picked a fascinating cross-section of recent Scottish poetry.

And if you're in holiday mood you can take a virtual journey round Scotland with the Poetry Map; where you'll find all the information you need to plan a literary expedition around parts of the country celebrated in contemporary poems.

● See back page for details of this year's Edinburgh Book Festival

poetrymembership

Members' Poems

Introduced by Kathryn Gray

‘On the Tiles’ The word “tile” derives from the Latin, *tegere*, “to cover”. But to write poetry, of course, is to uncover – while keeping a tight grip on the necessary, healthy mystery. The poems that made the final cut did just that for me. A special mention, too, to Paul Carey-Kent’s ‘The Late Tale’. The next theme is “The Future”. Send entries, unpublished, 40 lines max., typed on A4, and no more than two poems per member, to *Poetry News* – “future” poems, 22 Betterton Street, London WC2H 9BX. Deadline: 19 August 2005. Write your name, address and membership number on the front of each poem. Include SAE if you would like your poems returned. Winning poems will be published in *Poetry News* and on www.poetrysociety.org.uk.

D A PRINCE OWLS

The thunder’s still far off, bickering
over the next county’s fresh stubble, but

closer, a couple of owls, tawnies, bantering
across dry gardens, pines apart,

their *tsk tsk* unfamiliar, countering
school-book stereotypes, split

sleep from its darkness, lighting
the night’s long heat, hot slates, until

dropping in, between the chimneys, sidling
along the roofline, side by side

and up on the tiles, they’re edging into sex,
the whole restless city willing them on.

IAN LIGHT PRESERVATION

Soft-body survival is always the exception,
even on those tiles of Hunsrück slate
that roof rich Rhineland homesteads, whose stones
are compact from coeval sand and silt.
Nevertheless, we do find some lucky fossils
(arthropods whose well-developed eyes
prove them bottom-dwellers) where the Moselle
cuts through the bedrock of Devonian seas.

Fuck me. So my soft ghost won’t last
long pressed in this mud, old soak
that I am and soaked to the bone, pissed
beneath an evergreen in Victoria Park.

Yet another crustacean in sedimented night,
asking to be etched onto unwritten slate.

SUE BURLEY ROOF MAN

The roofer sits tight astride the ridge
with taut thighs and a jockey’s seat.
All morning he beds in the hips,
tucks tiles into place with a deft touch,
his long reach clearing the valleys.

Once in a while he’ll ease up
knees bent slightly, balancing,
full of bravura. Hedging his bets
he shades his eyes, raking the horizon
from the best spot in the grandstand.

Later a fag end trembling between
the tips of cement-grey fingers,
he talks of his dying daughter,
a brother slipping from a roof,
not the same since – nor likely to be.

Now he’s tired of hoisting ladders
in all weathers; had enough, that’s it.
His crushed slatey eyes gaze straight
past me, fixed on a finishing post
that’s always moving further off.

ANN LEAHY PULLING POWER

Outside, drizzle seems to generate
slugs to graze my dahlias’ leaves.

Night-time, and silverfish escape
from the grout beneath my slippers feet.

Latent till some obscure deadline expires,
weevils appear in my last ounce of rice.

Viruses, bacteria in the veins
wait for the defences to grow weak

as self-doubts, vague misgivings, wait
till the world deals a blow. Unforeseen,

this setback, though familiar when it strikes:
you’ve been a magnet for it all your life.

VALERIE JOSEPHS IN A GLASGOW TENEMENT DESIGNED BY ALEXANDER ‘GREEK’ THOMPSON

I strip away sixties orange vinyl
find Victorian swirls in red and green,
leave an island of it floating
on the newly painted wall.
I pull off reeded hardboard to reveal
the marble mantelpiece with cast-iron grate;
expose floors tiled in a Greek key design.
Prise off a panel, which hides an indicator board,
names of rooms painted on the glass.

If only I could unearth the footsteps
of those who’ve walked these rooms before.
I imagine their traces
embedded in the fabric of the building,
recorded like glyphs on a stave in Benesh notation,
to show a dancer moving through space.

ALEXIS HENEGHAN THE WOOLWICH TUNNEL

What can be seen on the tiles of the Woolwich Tunnel?
The long white corridor under the Thames
That smells of piss and bleach and damp.

Walk past the fim crews making advertisements for
banks.
Walk past, find a space and look at the wall.
You can see the world above you.

See the young couple kissing on the Woolwich ferry
After a day packing caster sugar.
A blue hairnet caught on her coat.

See them go into a warm smoky pub for two pints,
Then get on a bus and go to his house
Which is near the ‘No Poll Tax’ bridge.

The Woolwich tunnel echoes and stores all life above
In the memory chips that line its walls.
Look again. What else can you see?

Member Profile



Membership Manager Carl Dhiman catches up with Emma Must

When and where were you born?

In London, in 1966 – just before the World Cup.

Can you say a bit about where you live (and work)?

I live in Ventnor, a small coastal town on the Isle of Wight. I try to work as little as possible to make time to write: I’m a part-time Academic Skills Tutor at Portsmouth University from autumn to spring and a chambermaid in a local hotel in the summer. At the moment I’m chamber-maiding, so my arm muscles are pretty impressive ...

When did you first join the Poetry Society?

About twenty years ago, then I lapsed for ages while life got in the way. Now I’m a fully paid-up direct debit kind of member.

Who or what made you interested in poetry and why?

A combination of a dysfunctional family (seeking some way to make sense of emotional chaos) and being introduced to poetry at school (see below). Also, my Grandfather was a keen poet and reader, and quoted stuff at every opportunity.

Do you have any memories of reading poetry at school?

Yes. Heaney’s bog poems – I still remember going on a pilgrimage to Aarhus in Denmark in my late teens in search of the Tollund Man – and Larkin, whom I devoured from beginning to end, scribbling *ababdecde* in the right-hand margin of ‘The Whitsun Weddings’ as I grappled with its rhyme scheme.

Which poems or poets would you recommend to other members? Why?

I’m a big fan of Paul Farley: his poetry is witty, bang up-to-date and brilliantly crafted with seemingly effortless iambic pentameter and extended syntax to eat your heart out over. I’m also very keen on Kate Clanchy, who’s great on men and relationships as well as being an expert practitioner. I’ve got a soft spot for sonnets: W. N. Herbert’s ‘Smirr’ for its economy of language (“Winter is stitching mists of words with chance”) and ‘Water’ in George Szirtes’s collection *Reel*, which has the simplest, most thoughtful first two -and -a -half lines you’re going to find anywhere. Oh, and Paul Muldoon.

Have you ever been to a poetry performance/reading? Where and when?

At every opportunity. I think it’s essential to hear other poets and learn from them. I remember an electrifying reading by Tony Harrison of his long poem *V* in Newcastle in the eighties; and recently Simon Armitage opened my eyes to the wonderful things you can do with refrains when he read on the Island. I also helped start a regular open mic evening down here, modelled on the one at the Poetry Café. We usually get twenty readers and a keen audience.

Have you written and/or published any poems?

I write poems all the time. I’ve spent the past year trying to get to grips with the technical aspects by attending Mimi Khalvati’s Poetry School Versification class one evening a week in London. It’s been worth every hour on the train and every late night. I’ve had a few poems published: in the *Gizza Poem* competition anthology years ago and in local exhibitions, etc. I haven’t gone down the magazine route yet, though I think it’s time I started.

Are any of your friends or family interested in poetry?

Very much so. I co-host the bi-monthly open mic evenings at Quay Arts in Newport and always try to read in the half I’m not hosting, as well as co-editing a fold-out selection of poems called *QuayWords*. I’m a member of a group called Shore Women: we write and perform poetry on the Island and exhibit in places like hospitals and libraries. A Poetry Society Stanza recently started on the Island, which is adding to the buzz.

Which do you consider to be the most poetic city ? Why?

Well, it’s a small town not a city, but Ventnor. It’s got everything: a Wishing Seat, feuding fishermen, the odd beached whale. At a reading by local poets recently we had to bring in extra chairs to cope with the huge audience.

What might people be surprised to know about you?

In a former life I was one of the “Twyford Seven” – imprisoned for trying to stop a motorway ruining the landscape where I grew up.

Thank you to the following members for their generous donations to the Poetry Society: Gail Lee, Benita Jess, Dianne Constance Spencer, Pat Bhutta, Nigel Larmour, Margaret Lightbody, and Valerie Jane Harris.

Autumn circulation

The Autumn issue of *Poetry News* will be mailed in September, prior to National Poetry Day on 6 October. The Autumn issue of *Poetry Review* will follow in mid-October.

Discounts

Discounts at selected events are available to Poetry Society members, see www.poetrysociety.org.uk/members/mempage.htm

poetrymembership

Poetry Society Stanzas

Eighteen Poetry Society Stanzas have now formed since the launch of the initiative in January. If you are interested in joining one, please contact the Stanza Rep by the method listed. If you do not have access to email please call 020 7420 9881. Alternatively if the Stanzas listed aren't local enough and you would like to form a Stanza in *your* area, please contact Carl Dhiman, tel: 020 7420 9881 or email membership@poetrysociety.org.uk.

Location	Stanza Rep	Contact details
<i>Bath</i>	Nikki Bennett-Willemts	nikki_bennett_willemts@hotmail.com The Flat, 1 Avenue Place, Combe Down, Bath BA2 5EE 01225 837 251
<i>Brighton BN1</i>	Ros Barber	ros@rosbarber.com
<i>Cambridge CB1</i>	Helen Mort	hm317@cam.ac.uk
<i>Cambridge CB2</i>	Ronald Westbrook	01223 842 359
<i>Camelford, Cornwall</i>	Helen Wood	indianking@btconnect.com
<i>Dorchester</i>	Chris Harrington	wagharrington@hotmail.com
<i>East Midlands (Derbyshire)</i>	Clare Washbrook	clarewashbrook@aol.com 01773 821 413
<i>Goring, RG8</i>	Mary Williams	marywilliams@macunlimited.net
<i>London N12</i>	Lynette Craig	lynette.craig@btinternet.com 020 8446 0679
<i>London N16</i>	Jeremy Hill	jeremy.hill1@btopenworld.com 51 Evering Road, London, N16 7PU
<i>London SE13</i>	Les Robinson	tall.lighthouse@btinternet.com
<i>London SW13</i>	Kavita Jindal	k.jindal@btinternet.com
<i>Lymington, Hampshire</i>	Keith Bennett	keith_bennett532@hotmail.com 01590 675 409
<i>Ryde, Isle of Wight</i>	Edmund Matyjaszek	ems@emsbase.co.uk 020 7736 0350
<i>Teeside TS and DH</i>	Andy Croft	andy.croft@ntlworld.com 26 The Avenue, Middlesbrough TS5 6PD 01642 864 428
<i>Trowbridge BA14</i>	Dave Lewis	davekerry@blueyonder.co.uk or contact Trowbridge Town Library direct on libraryenquiries@wiltshire.gov.uk 01225 761 171
<i>Worcester WR2</i>	Charles Johnson	41 Buckley's Green, Alvechurch, Birmingham, B48 7NG 0121 445 2110 cannula.dementia@virgin.net
<i>Worcester WR4</i>	Amanda Bonnick	amanda@bonnick.fsworld.co.uk 01905 458773

National Poetry Day is 6 October 2005.
This year's theme is 'The Future'.

The Society of Authors – Offer

The Society of Authors is pleased to offer members of the Poetry Society a £20 discount on their first year of membership (normally £80 or £56 if under 35).

The Society of Authors is a trade union for professional writers. It provides clause-by-clause contract vetting, advice on agents' agreements, copyright, publishers and film options, an extensive range of *Quick Guides*, a quarterly journal *The Author*, access to a members-only website, opportunities to meet other writers, specialist groups, invitations to talks and seminars and special discounts on books.

Membership is open to those who have had one full-length work or a dozen poems, articles or short stories published, broadcast or performed (and been paid to do so), or have received an offer to be published commercially.

For more information about the Society, and an application form, visit www.societyofauthors.org or telephone 020 7373 6642 for an application pack. Any queries about eligibility can be discussed with Emma Boniwell, the Membership Secretary (membership@societyofauthors.org). Offer valid until 30 September 2005, please quote PS405 on your application form.

Bookshop Discounts

The following bookshops offer discounts to Poetry Society members. Please take your membership card with you to claim your discount. Discounts vary according to the bookshop and are at the discretion of the bookseller. For more details, see www.poetrysociety.org.uk/members/bookshops.htm

The Derwent Bookshop, Cumbria; Roundstone Books, Clitheroe, Lancashire; Davids Bookshop, Letchworth, Hertfordshire; Arnolfini Bookshop, Bristol; The Bookshop, Launceston, Cornwall; Foyles Bookshop, London; Anonym Bookshop, North London; The Owl Bookshop, Kentish Town, North London; London Review Bookshop, Bloomsbury, London; Palmers Green Bookstore, North London; Index Books, Brixton, London.

The Route to a First Collection: Delores Gauntlett

***The Watertank Revisited*, Delores Gauntlett's second collection, was published by Peepal Tree earlier this year. A number of her poems have appeared in *Poetry News*. Here she describes how her first collection made it into print**



When and where was your first poem published?

In a local daily newspaper, *The Gleaner*, under a pseudonym. This was in the early nineties, when I had just started to write and got bold enough to show my poems.

How many of your poems had appeared in magazines or anthologies before you started to aim for a collection?

Looking back, I don't think that I consciously aimed towards a collection. I was more on a trek to improvement and the collection happened over time during my search. By then around thirty poems had appeared in magazines and anthologies including *Mobius*, *The Jamaica Observer Literary Arts Supplement*, *Sisters of Caliban Anthology*, *The Caribbean Writer*, *Humanitarian Society Magazine in U.S.V.I.*, *Byline USA*, *Bearing Witness*, *Obsidian III*, *For Poetry*, *Jamaica Cultural Development Corporation Anniversary Magazine*.

Did you attend any particularly helpful workshops or classes?

I did a few part-time sessions at the Creative Arts Centre on the campus of our local university. Before this, I was self-taught, having read every "How-To" book I could get my

hands on. I clearly remember one book entitled *How Does A Poem Mean* by Ciardi Williams. It took a while before I understood why it was so titled, instead of *What Does A Poem Mean*. Then, after floundering around, in 1998 everything started coming together when I attended the *Jamaica Observer* Writers Workshop under the tutorship of Wayne Brown. Here, I was exposed for the first time to the traditional metres and rhymes which, for me, took the poems to a higher place. In addition to learning and reciting poems by heart, I also learnt to do craft annotations. The list of poems learnt by heart includes the poetry of Derek Walcott, W. B. Yeats, Roethke, Wallace Stevens, Plath, Dickinson, Wordsworth, Thom Gunn, Dennis Scott, Manley Hopkins, Auden, Donne, Edgar Allen Poe, D. H. Lawrence, and Matthew Arnold, to name a few.

How did you approach publishers with your collection (or was it the other way around)?

I did not approach a publisher *per se*. But I submitted the full manuscript to annual competitions organised by university presses, wherein one of the winning prizes is a book-length publication. Even though I knew how great the odds were at winning one of those competitions, I followed them each chance I got, and through that process my own poem collection improved. It was during this time that the editor for *The Observer Literary Arts Supplement* recommended my work to the book publishing arm of that newspaper, and somehow convinced them to publish it, even though until then they had specialised in publishing academic books only. I received a

contract soon after.

How long did it take from contract to the finished product?

About three months. A number of the poems were already professionally edited and that helped to speed the process along.

Did you make any revisions to the manuscript?

It was the first time ever that I used the word "depressed" in a sentence to describe myself. After I took the typeset proof copy to Mervyn Morris, who was writing the blurb, he led me through about four rigorous revision sessions. Almost every page required at least punctuation editing, and at each new revision we picked up on something that was overlooked the time before. He also suggested that I reduce its 98 pages by at least 15%, and then by a further 10-15%. Many doubts crept in. But having done it I owe him a debt of gratitude and am now sorry that I didn't take his further advice and reduce it to 40-45-pages instead of its eventual 70 pages. I have no idea now why that process felt so agonizing.

How did you decide on the title for your book?

Freeing Her Hands to Clap, the title poem, was submitted some years earlier to the editor of *The Observer Literary Arts* to be considered for publication. I met the editor soon after and he made reference to that line in the poem by saying, at a time when publishing a book was farthest from my mind: "that's the title for your book". His suggestion stuck.

Any tips for poets starting out on their own route to publication?

Read, read, read, read, read widely. And write, without the expectation of receiving anything for it.

Slam 2005



'TOS' performing at the semi-finals for the respect poetry slam 2005.
They join 15 other acts by young people in the final showcase at the rise festival in Burgess Park, South London on Saturday, 16 July. www.risefestival.org

Last chance to enter the Foyle Young Poets of the Year Award 2005

31 July is the closing date for entries to the Foyle Young Poets of the Year Award 2005. The competition is the leading poetry prize for young poets aged 11–17, selecting 100 talented winners every year. Prizes include an opportunity to work with the competition judges, this year George Szirtes and Colette Bryce.

Send entries to Foyle Young Poets of the Year Award 2005, The Poetry Society, 22 Betterton Street, London WC2H 9BX or fyp@poetrysociety.org.uk. Please make sure to include the poet's name, address, date of birth, school and how you found out about the competition on the reverse of each poem or in the email. We look forward to reading your poems.

poetrycafé & ads

On the racks

The Poetry News magazine monitor No. 11: The London Magazine

Vital Statistics:

Editor: Sebastian Barker

Subscriptions: £32 for six copies (UK), £6.95 for a single copy.

Address: *The London Magazine*, 32 Addison Grove, London W4 IER

Appearance: A beautifully produced, perfect-bound 128-page magazine. Original art, or sculpture, or imaginatively photographed architecture graces the glossy covers. Black and white illustrations or photographs of artworks accompany relevant essays, reviews and poems.

Inside: You can usually delve straight into a short story; poems tend to be scattered in between the reviews and features (on Larkin, Carl Rakosi, Bob Dylan etc). Poets appearing in recent issues include Ruth Fainlight, Peter Abbs, Michael Hamburger and Alison Brackenbury. The August issue last year included a eulogy to Kathleen Raine by HRH The Prince of Wales.

How long has the magazine been going and how was it founded?

Sebastian Barker writes:

The London Magazine was first published in 1732, founded in opposition to *The Gentleman's Magazine*. It had a period of brilliance, 1820-1829, established under the editorship of John Scott along the lines of *Blackwood's Magazine*, but without the politics, giving a large amount of space to literature. John Lehmann re-founded



it in 1954 as a platform for the general public interested in literature. Alan Ross took over from 1961–2001, extending its range to cover all the arts. From 2002–2005, it has continued this policy under my editorship.

Is there a story behind the name?

The first issue in April 1732 is called *The London Magazine, or, Gentleman's Monthly Intelligencer*. There is an engraving on the title page: London looking north towards St Paul's from south of the Thames. The name clearly has the stamp of London on it.

What is your editorial policy?

Our commitment is to established, young, and unknown talents – writers, artists, and critics – from all backgrounds around the world.

How many submissions do you get per year?

Thousands.

How many poems can you publish per issue?

Ten to twenty. We also publish long poems.

Do you publish other material, besides poetry?

Yes. We also publish work by, for example, short story writers, photographers, musicians, painters, satirists, historians, scientists, critics, memoirists, archaeologists, playwrights, translators, humorists, travel writers, biographers, essayists, and novelists.

What is the best way of submitting poems?

Brief covering letter, six poems, stamped addressed envelope. The SAE is vital and it must be enough to cover return of manuscripts, if this is required. If submitting from abroad, it is vital to include sufficient International Reply Coupons to cover return of manuscripts, if required. We have had numerous submissions from the United States with United States stamps on the SAE. It ought to be obvious that this is not valid, so it is worth mentioning here. If submitting from one of the very few countries which do not issue IRCs, such as Ireland, it is helpful to procure English stamps. Email submissions are unacceptable, except in difficult circumstances agreed in advance with the editor.

Which poets would you say you have discovered?

I would not presume to say I have discovered any. If I have in fact done so, I would not wish to release such information. The relationship between a poet and an editor is intimate and delicate. To advance it into the public sphere too soon is unwise.

What kind of poetry would you like to see less of?

Poetry which is poorly made, or not made at all. Poetry which betrays no interest in the art, as this has been established by the poets of the past. Poetry which is unimaginative, self-centred, solipsistic. All in all, I want to see less of the kind which brings a debit to the account of poetry rather than a credit.

Are you subsidised by a Regional Arts Board or Arts Council?

Yes, Arts Council England.

Do you have an association with a publisher?

We have a Publishing Board which owns the title of the magazine.

Which issue of the magazine do you like best?

I can't answer that. At the time of writing, we have published eighteen 128-page volumes of the magazine. I think of the talents represented in them as neighbours. I would not wish to stir up trouble practising favouritism. Each issue is a joint work made by the Editor and Jessica Chaney, Art Director and Designer.

www.thelondonmagazine.net/

New Look Basement



Have you checked out the new look Poetry Café basement recently? It has been transformed from a lifeless space, waiting for something to happen, into a pleasant reading room animated by magazines, notices and flyers in brand new racks. We are very grateful to the magazine editors who have contributed, free of charge, current copies of their publications, which are now available for all café visitors to read on the premises. This transformation was inspired by the knowledge that once the Poetry Library on the South Bank was closed

there would only be virtual access to current magazines at www.poetrylibrary.org.uk. So with librarian Simon Smith's blessing we have gone some way to filling that gap.

Opening hours:
Mon-Fri 11am–11pm
Sat 6.30pm–11pm
22 Betterton Street, London WC2H 9BX. Nearest tube: Covent Garden.

The Poetry Café will be closed on Saturdays throughout August and for one week from 22–29 August.

Festivals in August and September

The Poetry Festival at Stratford-upon-Avon goes beyond Shakespeare with readings from David Constantine and Judith Kazantzis, as well as a poetry mass featuring the work of R. S. Thomas and George Herbert. There's also an evening of poetry by the Brontës. Until 21 August.

Box Office: 01789204016

www.shakespeare.org.uk

'Poetry, a way of seeing' is the theme for **Poetry Otherwise** (7–13 August) which takes place at Emerson College, East Sussex, and features Mimi Khalvati, Peter Abbs and Paul Matthews, among others. Box Office: 01342 822238

www.poetryotherwise.org

The **Edinburgh Book Festival** (13–29 August) has readings from poets with a strong Scottish flavour, including Carol Ann Duffy, John Burnside, Douglas Dunn, Don Paterson, Kathleen Jamie, Stewart Conn, David Kinloch, Robert Crawford, and Kate Clanchy. Plus there are appearances by Jaan Kaplinski and Yang Lian. Box Office: 0131 624 5050

www.edbookfest.co.uk

In a warmer climate, the **Peterloo Poets International Poetry Festival** takes place from 2–3 September with Fleur Adcock, Christine Webb and John Weston.

tel: 01822 833473

www.peterloopoets.com

And, a couple of weeks before National Poetry Day, **King's Lynn Poetry Festival** (23–25 September) promises Tomaz Salamun, Peter Porter, Alan Brownjohn and Kit Wright.

tel: 01553 691661

www.lynnlitfests.co.uk

Advertisements

Poetry News advertising is available at a rate of 50p per word + VAT. Call 020 7420 9895 to book. Next deadline: 26 August 2005. NB: the Poetry Society cannot check advertisers' credentials.

Out The Mould

by Rab Dalglish

Excellent quality hardback book with dust jacket. Over 135 poems – some average 'some crap' some brilliant. I.S.B.N. Number: 0954890906.

Website: www.outthemould.com
Published by Sherbit Dab Enterprises. PO Box 23664.

Because of the profanities and some derogatory content this book is for adults only. But the book is quality enough to grace your illustrious book collection for ever. At £9.99 this novel book is the price of taxi-fare or four bevvy's . . . read-on MacDuff!!

Ragged Raven Press Poetry

Competition and Anthology

No line limit

Deadline: October 31st

www.raggedraven.co.uk

Poetry Surgeries

Poetry Surgeries with Carole Satyamurti will take place every quarter in the Poetry Café. For each session, Carole will read two or three of your poems and spend half an hour discussing your work with you. Fees: £15 for members and £20 for non-members. Contact Jessica York, tel: 020 7420 9887 or email: poetrycafe@poetrysociety.org.uk for further information.

NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Notice is hereby given that the 2005 Annual General Meeting of the Poetry Society will be held in the Vestry Room of St Giles in the Field Church, St Giles High Street, WC2H 8LG (one minute walk from Tottenham Court road station, or three minutes from Covent Garden) at 6.30pm on Thursday 10 November 2005 for the following purposes:

1. To consider and adopt the General Council's Report and Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2005.
2. To elect the General Council.
3. To re-appoint Kingston Smith, Chartered Accountants, as Auditors to hold office until the conclusion of the next Annual General Meeting.

NB. Admission to the Annual General Meeting will be by presentation of a valid membership card. If your card has not been stamped as up-to-date, or if you have a membership subscription owing, please contact the Membership Secretary immediately.

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS TO THE GENERAL COUNCIL

Members are invited to nominate individuals of appropriate skill or reputation to the General Council of the Poetry Society. Nomination of a candidate must be supported by the signature of three ordinary members of the Society or two existing Council Members, and by the written consent of the person nominated. All newly elected General Council members serve a three-year period. Please submit your nomination form to the Poetry Society offices before 26 August 2005.

There are 5 vacancies and the election will take place by members' proxy votes cast 48 hours before the AGM or by attendance at the AGM which is on 10 November 2005. For further information and nomination forms, please contact Carl Dhiman, Membership Manager, The Poetry Society, 22 Betterton Street, London WC2H 9BX. Tel: 020 7420 9880.