

OUTLET

NO 11 APRIL 1990 FREE



IN THIS ISSUE: INTERVIEW WITH MARY WILLIAMS

ROGER MCGOUGH BRIAN PATTEN PIPPA GREGORY

CLEVELAND



COUNTY COUNCIL

of local opportunity providers

MAGICAL ARVON LUMB BANK

FOUNDATION WRITING COURSES

Lumb Bank was a magical experience for me. Five days spent doing what I most love to do and not having to feel guilty about it! The course was not structured in any formal way, in fact everything about Lumb Bank was informal. It was like home from home. The tutors that week were John Moot and John Fairfax, co-founders of the Arvon Foundation. They have written a book entitled 'The Way to Write' based on their experiences with students on the Arvon Courses, which for any aspiring writer is well worth reading. The course was entitled 'Beginning to Write' - some were, some of us had been writing for a while.

WILLING TO LISTEN

The weather was glorious in June and most of us spent our days writing outside - either in the individual writing huts provided in the garden and down the bankside, or below the house in the woods and fields. I sat on some slabs in the middle of the river one warm sunny afternoon enjoying the music of the sounds around me! Each morning after breakfast we all gathered in the garden and made arrangements for the tutorials which were held on four or five days. These were times set aside for each of us to discuss with the tutors any problems we were having and seek their help and advice, but both tutors were available at any time and were always willing to listen and help.

WE ALL LAUGHED

The evenings were full and great fun. The first one we spent at the pub in Hebden Bridge! The rest were spent either in poetry or anthology readings given by the tutors, ourselves or Nigel Forde (who was the guest speaker that week). I think without exception we all found reading our own work difficult, but the ideas from one these were varied and interesting. We all laughed so much on these evenings which was a great tonic and brought us all closer together.

CONQUERED FEARS

It isn't easy I know to make the decision to shut yourself away with 15 other people - all total strangers, for five days but having now conquered my own fears I can recommend it.

As with everything in life it is what you bring to it which dictates success or failure, so if you go with an open mind and ready to learn, I'm sure, like me you'll get a lot out of it.

Maureen Graham GT. AYTON

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Notes for contributors

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Film Review -

DEAD Poets Soc.

One of the first things Robin Williams as their teacher tells his students is to turn to the opening pages of their English textbook, that determine the greatness of a poem by a graph. 'Excrement', He cries - 'Rip, Rip, Rip.

The Ripping commences and is completed.

The message is - Poetry is not a science, it is the expression of the whole soul, being, dreams, aspirations, impressions, expressions, emotions, of man - of one man - of all people everywhere.

Life is a blank sheet. It is ours to create!

He draws their attention to a photograph of a row of schoolboy faces, almost their mirror image - a few minor differences in the eyes, nose, hair - it could be them or their contemporaries. Same haircuts, unlined faces. Only the photograph is 60/70 years old. Those lives are now no more, returned once again to dust.

Create while you are here. Be yourself, for in the space of a few years, all that will be left of your youth, will be a photograph too.

Let all the soul in us burst forth, overflow, come into full flower.

Dreams, visions, concepts, the written word do change the world, if we really believe in them and give our all to them.

Don't be shut into some tight confined, splinter version of what you could have been. Crisp life with both hands, make it all that it can be - because this is all we have. Now.

Margaret Weir.

EDITORIAL

Welcome to OUTLET 11. Apologies for the delay. The Grand Order of the PRATT has been bestowed on yours truly for the grievous bodily loss of the Outlet layouts - lock, stock and wheel-barrow! The newly, neatly laser-printed layouts were left one wind-bashed evening at a bus-stop in Gaisborough shortly after Christmas. They obviously fell into unpoetic hands as we never got them back. Artwork, scripts, computer disc went. Despondancy jumped up and down on us while we re-gathered materials, scripts and the spirit to go on. The setting up of a less flashy home-based computer system followed to help make life-simpler. So we're back business. Some of the articles have matured a little but are still edible. Sadly Mary Williams passed away shortly after we had interviewed her. The article now forms a tribute. Outlet and Write Around have also been involved in producing a short film about our work for BBC 2's OPEN SPACE. More on this inside. Read On.

Trev Teasdel

Outlet is available free through Cleveland libraries, local bookshops or from the Outlet address. Outlet is non-party political and is a community-arts based literary magazine with a commitment to encouraging new and budding writers in the area. If you disagree with anything in Outlet you are free to respond in a creative form.

EDITED BY

Pauline Plummer
Margaret Weir
Terry Lawson
Trev Teasdel
Andy Croft
Richard Briddon



SEND

US

POEMS

SHORT

STORIES

articles

on writing

GRAPHICS



If you've tried

& failed

try, try again.

many have



LATEX AND ROXENE

Latex and Roxene (an extract)

Following this grand event the gang then hit the road.

More or less away they went, almost à la mode.

Roxene wore alternatives, the gang were all in pink.

Quite the sort of thing that gives gang impact, don't you think.

Soon they hit a village hut, which seemed a trifle weird.

Roxene claimed her eyes were shut, so she slightly oversteered.

The village seemed a long way off, as a village well can be.

Roxene coughed a little cough and leaned against a tree.

If we're all here and they're all there, then night's another day.

The owner never turned a hair, he's cool or gone away.

The gang agreed, it seemed most odd, not to mention strange.

They all said yes, a nervous nod, it made a kind of change.

For often when agreed upon they whispered their assent

Asking why she needed it, wondering what she meant.

Roxene, who'd a second sight, was stubborn as a mule.

Any sign of otherwise resulted in a duel.

The duel was quite one-sided, or if not was rigged instead.

A dissenter who had tried it was not only wrong but dead.

Her adversary that time round was little Charlie Tanner.

She quickly kicked him to the

ground then killed him with a spanner.

The gang stood by and oohed and aahed, Roxene was still in charge.

They clearly thought her rather hard. Charles wasn't all that large.

Roxene spat and spurned her foe, she did so with delight.

She turned him over with her toe, they buried him that night.

A little cross reminded all where Charlie had been tannered.

His epitaph read Rather Small And Really Quite Well Mannered.

Weeks elapsed and Roxene felt the need to have a wash.

She said she sort of felt she smelt, pretending to be posh.

Peter Fairclough YARM

I AM

I am the Winter
The Discomfort in your life,
I am the cold,
I am the crisp frost on the ground
The savage wind that swirls around
I am the sharp edge of a knife.

I am the thunder
The gloom, the storm in your eye,
I am the tempest,
I am a turbulent cloud that shouts,
I am the bearer of all your doubts,
I am the heavy leaden sky.

I am the evening,
Your period before night,
I am darkness,
I am your fear, I am your dread,
I am the silence in your head,
I am the taker of your light.

I am your epitaph,
The inscription on your grave,
I am stone,
Unprincipled, undisciplined,
I've shadowed you whilst you have sinned,
You are my slave.

For I am death,
Your time is ripe to die,
I am hell
I am brimstone, I am fire,
The Devil is your sire,
Don't you wonder,.....Who am I?

Carol Wright Skelton

Between the Pole

The silence of hands,
Feathers dead
& disconnected from their birds.

Home! Home! Home!
Where we are stretched beyond
our capabilities.

My mother's tears grew worse and worse
drowning me in love
dampening my wings.

They conspire together.

My father became
the cruel force of gravity,
In the autumn
my parents spread me in a field,
And there I lay,
Softly blending with the earth,
My tongue became infested with toads,
and by night I would grow
brick by brick; killing my parents.

Now at 22 years of age
my parents have a lighted council estate
Thick with lamposts...

Except

they're not even real lamposts
they're ghost lamposts
shining on shadowy streets.

There is hurt here
& the cold, abandoned hate of the womb,
My fingers feel like ice.

We played with satin sheets
like there was no tomorrow

story of our lives.

Primrose Anna Morbid Middlesbrough
Wodinsdai 31st august 1988ev
Middlesbrough

EAVESDROPPING

"ey up". She said. "did you 'ear
that Dennis won't be living here
much longer? - fact 'e's moving out
I 'eard 'is missis give a shout
the other night while in my bed.
In fact I turned and said to Ted
Can you 'ear them two through the wall?
'E said, 'I can't 'ear nout at all'
I said to 'im well that just shows
That men are deaf and well the knows
They never know the juicy bits
Like who is playing with who's tits
But let's not get too seedy now
I'll not have you calling me a cow
Not like Vera down the road
Who called my Ted a lazy toad
I mean 'er Bill 'e ain't much better
I 'eard 'e burst 'is last French letter "
"E never did, "I heard her say
"did she go to the quacks next day?"
"Well no ye see, there wasn't much point
Cos last week they closed the joint
Cos Doctor Smith 'E's 'ad to quit
Cos well, 'e just can't 'andle it
You see 'e's suffering 'ard from stress
In fact 'e's really quite a mess "
"Oh that's awful," she replied.
"I mean what if the doctor died?"
"What would we do if we were sick
or if we 'ad to 'ave a prick?"
"You what? she asked, with some surprise
"I thought you said you'd gone off guys?"
"I 'ave," she said, "it's you, you're thick
I meant a needle, not a dick!"

* Linda Evans Redcar

acquainted with the Night

Black form creeps stealthily
along night-darkened roofs,
sure-footed, precise,
each confident foot
carefully placed
in silent progression.
Jeweled amber eyes
seek out unwary target
in murky shadows
of unlit alleyways.
Puissant muscle tightens,
prepares to pounce,
flexes,
hunter lands silently,
Whiskers twitching,
fangs bared,
moves in for bloody kill
merciless, cruel,
and sated moves on,
a black form,
acquainted with the night.

Wendy Simpson Middlesbrough

THE LAST TRAIN==

Waiting on the platform she glances apprehensively at people on the left and then the right. Her body moves sharply as a train, expelling an enormous breath, rushes past. That's the third past this platform. Two have stopped to take on board weary passengers, excited children and expectant lovers. Will she board the next one? Why is she here?



The smell of diesel smarting her nostrils make her face wrinkle comically. She doesn't feel like being amused. The ridiculousness of other people provides no relief today - she hates them. She hates the station. Like worn-out wives its paint is chipped, flaking and faded. The smell of stale urine in corners evokes another episode - standing in cold telephone boxes late at night with frozen fingers warmly dialling a familiar number. A train passes - another time gone by.

infuses

Why? She pauses in thought but whirls in distaste, responding to the rancid odour of meat. Acquiescing, she curls her fingers round the cup of hot tea - small comfort. Her eyes roam furtively as she sips and they drink in the tall youth in black. His image infuses her blood as she swallows. She smiles secretively at her own thoughts but catches his eye. A burning flush envelopes her skin and she turns away, staring at the train standing in front of her.

People frantically push past trying to be first through the doors already jammed with people rushing to get off. Suitcases are dragged along the platform and then heaved upwards and through

the doorway disrespectfully. She notices the set look on people's faces as they battle for a place when half the train is empty.

Out of the corner of her right eye she sees the youth in black move slightly. Is he coming towards her? She holds her breath unnecessarily. Another sip of tea, sharply hot against the biting cold of sensitive teeth. It shouldn't be long now.

As the light fades and the wind grows colder she reflects on her reasons for being at the station. The cold wind chills her bones, reminiscent of the icy words a few hours before. She's waiting for the last train, by then she'll know.

self-possessed

The youth in black catches her eye again - this time he is moving closer. Is he catching the last train too? She doubts it, he looks too self-possessed. With trepidation she realises that he is standing along side her. Her breathing becomes more rapid as she turns to look at him, expecting words. He looks back at her in penetrating silence. She turns away and shivers. She looks around and realises how desolate the station is now; no bustling sounds, no sounds of irritation - nothing but piercing wind and cold breath.

As the last train rushes towards the platform the youth takes her hand. The brakes scream painfully and the last train stops.

LINDA EVANS
REDCAR

THE COBWEB

*Pearl-threaded filigree, silver grey lace,
A delicate universe, woven in space,
What eye and brain such beauty could plan,
Patterned and perfect, with no help from man?
Suspended invisibly, motionless there,
Blending so skilfully into the air,
"Take care little fly, of the soft, silent trap
And lurking jaws, waiting, ready to snap!"*

Doris Smith Skelton



CHAINS

We're all chained
one way or another
as the blacksmith's bellows
fire the fetal spark
into living flame
The first link is cast.

Interned
In that umbilic fortress
force fed
like it or not
disregard, pollution,
famine, war,
Babies must be born.

Hauled
from that chaste chamber
Tearing, spilling,
In a bloody gush,
Into this mess
Called living.

Mother and child
chained
by that first warm suckle
Where's the choice
in this lottery of life?
The chain grows longer.

Chained,
To the system
padlocked puppets,
uniformed,
drilled into learning
Who says it's a free world?
God, the family
More links
The chain grows stronger

Old age the retrieve
no more links
That's what you think
a decaying jailor
Nothing left but prayer,
loneliness and pain
Another link
In this rotting chain.

"Here he comes"
listen,
Hear his keys
A jangling, jangling
Death the liberator
No more links
No more links.

Caroline Duck Redcar

SMELLING DISTAKES

Congratulations
on spotting
yet another mistake.

The way
you pick fault
with such a superior smile
reminds me
of someone finding
an almost finished crossword
and completing it,
claiming full marks.

But know this...

My mistakes -
when not a play on words -
are merely mistakes,

not ignorance.

Mark BeEVERS

POLE-AXE THE POLL TAX
LET HEADS OF STATE ROLL
Mark BeEVERS

PIPPA GREGORY A Profile

Philippa Gregory was born on 9th January 1964 in Nairobi, where her father was an airline pilot. She grew up in Bristol, going to school at Colston's Girls Grammar school there and then at seventeen to train as a journalist in Cardiff. After three years on the Portsmouth News, she went to Sussex University at the age of 21 to read History. Back in journalism again she worked as a newsreporter and then as a producer of news programmes at Radio Solent. From 1980-85 she researched into popular eighteenth century fiction for a PhD at Edinburgh University, financing herself by working freelance for Radio Four and Radio Scotland.

WIDEACRE

Then in 1984 she came to Hartlepool, teaching part-time for the Open-University, the Workers Educational Association, Durham University and Teesside Polytechnic, and involved in establishing Hartlepool People, a self-help project for local unemployed people.



PIPPA GREGORY

To support herself and her daughter Victoria during this time she began writing her first novel, and in 1987 *Wideacre* was published simultaneously in the UK and the US. A Historical Romance, *Wideacre* is the story of one woman's passion for her family estate, her struggle to maintain it at a time when women were deprived of all their property rights. Although she describes it as a Marxist-Feminist novel, this did not prevent it from being a runaway best-seller, translated all over the world. In 1987 it was in the best-seller list in the UK for nine weeks, Penguin's second best-selling British novel (with 200,000 paperback sales) that year and the 37th best-selling book in Britain in 1988.

SEQUEL

A Sequel, *The Favourite Child* was published in 1989, and the last in the trilogy, *Meridon* is due to appear in 1990. A feminist fairy story for children, *Princess Florizella* appeared in 1988.

ANDY CROFT

Recipe for a Story

Take one idea and hang it well. All ideas improve with age and should never be cooked when fresh.

Marinate it for a good long time in your imagination and beliefs. Baste it with your prejudices and spoon your favourite feelings over it. Rinse it in your experiences and rub it with your favourite sights and sounds. When it has been turned over at least two or three times take it out of the larder and put it in a large warm pot.

Into the pot add your other ingredients: small fresh cuttings of dialogue, snippets of characters, a generous handful of scenes you can see already in your head, locations and the period and feel of your story.

Mash your Ego

Stir well and leave to simmer for at least a couple of days. When you next come to look at the story you will see that it is taking shape. Stir well. In stirring, mash up your pre-conceptions about what your story is about, mash your ego, braise your vanity, beat well. Unless your ego is thoroughly dissolved the story will curdle and become a diary - inedible for anyone but you.

Motives

Stir. Now season. The seasoning is some truth and ginger. Truth is from your store of truth - you have your own vision of what the world is like and you have to write from this place. Truth is also the truth of the story, its own inner life and coherence. For instance: if someone deeply loves her husband she would not emigrate without him. If she does emigrate without him you must explain her motives. Every character has his or her own drives and motives and you cannot bend them to your story - the story has to grow from them.

Flowered Bonnet

Add ginger also: if you are getting bored, so is your reader. Change the scene, introduce a new character, break-up the look of the page; be impatient with yourself, all good cooks are temperamental! Do not over-inger. Any story which starts with zippy dialogue may have suffered from the lid off the ginger pot falling in: "I am bored! bored! bored!" shrieked Melissa, tossing her flowered bonnet across the room and flinging herself in a seat.

Stir and leave.

The story is now ready for decanting. Take an absolutely clean receptacle - notepad, exercise book, white page, blank screen, and a sharp pencil, pen new typewriter/printer ribbon. These are the tools of your trade, wipe them down like work-surfaces, keep them as sharp as Sabatier knives.

Sludgy

Serve your soup, let it trickle out - sometimes lumpy and sludgy, sometimes clear and fast, into your bowl and enjoy it while you pour it. You are the chef, smell

Cooking the Books

it, taste it, delight in it.

Sex Scenes !!

Leave to stand for twenty-four hours. Then skim. Skimming is the most important stage because the lumps of absolutely yucky

fat were invisible while you were stirring and pouring. If you are a good cook, you will see them now. They are often metaphors or similes; his heart was like lead in his chest. She was as fresh as a summer morning. They are clichés: the morning dawned bright and fair. Her eyes swam with tears. They are scenes which are bogged down in detail. "But Madeleine," he said as he poured single cream into his Kenya roast medium ground filter coffee... They are scenes which don't have enough detail: She prepared the dinner for twenty-two people and served it, still thinking of Jeff. They are often sex scenes which are particularly difficult to write, they are almost always love scenes. They are scenes when you try to pack in too much information: Lawrence had always regarded the grand old castle as his home ever since his mother had abandoned him there in the care of ageing godparents who, disappointed in their own son, snatched the chance to raise the illegitimate child of Lady Cosby's renegade brother.

Mouthful of Gristle

You always know a horrid mouthful of gristle in a stew cooked by someone else: that's why it's easier to be a literary critic than an author. Spotting the gristle in your own home-made stew is the greatest skill you will ever learn.

Taste.

Nasty Bits

Taste every scene and every word as if you had eaten nothing for weeks. Do the separate flavours of this dish flow together? Is there a small indigestible lump of an ingredient which does not fit in the middle? Do you like what you have cooked? If not skim it and skim it again. You may find you are left with nothing but a little smear of gravy. Save it, and start again. This is your stock for a new batch of stew and all this work and sacrifice of all the nasty bits was worth while. But if you are lucky and you skim and skim and then like your stew...

Serve.

Bottom Drawer

Perhaps you serve to an editor and from him or her to the wider world of the reader. Perhaps you serve it to your writing circle (fellow cooks who will understand). Perhaps you serve it to one person only. Perhaps you serve it to yourself and freeze it in the bottom drawer of your desk in case one day you want it.

Whoever eats it, take their comments with a pinch of salt. Your stew is your stew and it should please you: the Chef.

PIPPA GREGORY

INVESTIGATOR

the INTERNATIONAL SILENT INVESTIGATOR

THE SILENT INVESTIGATOR is a new magazine with a *New Age* outlook. It will aim to provide a home for *Expressive, Exploratory and Experimental* writing from this country and abroad. Due for summer release it will come out twice a year. While it will consider contributions of poetry, fiction, non-fiction in general, in particular it is looking for lively expressive poetry, imaginative, well written stories with something to say, graphics, science fiction, short playlets, humour/satire, and interesting articles in general but in particular those which fit in with the following related headings.

Breaking New Ground

A) BREAKING NEW GROUND: B) ALTERNATIVE FUTURES: Could perhaps include interestingly written and clear articles on new developments in science, space research, para-normal, ancient civilisations, literary movements, ecology, life-styles, changing political ideologies, art, inventions, solution to problems, psychology etc etc....

WATCH OUT FOR THE SILENT INVESTIGATOR - He/she or it could be watching YOU!

CONTRIBUTIONS to THE SILENT INVESTIGATOR: Trev Teasdel, 9, Linden Grove, St Ayton, Middlesbrough, Cleveland, TS9 6AQ, England. THE SILENT INVESTIGATOR

the SILENT

BEEES AND BEARS

Industrial hives
bustling, buzzing,
busy bees,
sweets
for the fat bear
In his warm winter coat

Big bears
Gorged on the honey
We live to produce
We die for our Queens
In factory and field
fodder for the crown

One voice
is lost in the hum
of the factory floor
a single strike
is suicide

Beans
are bigger than bees
but beware
Our deadly drone
will drown your roars
when we swarm

When we unite
and take flight
we'll sting you
where it hurts
you be at the top
Big beans
but we know
your tender spots

What will you do?
Big boss beans
When you wake
from your cosy
hibernation
and the combs
lie empty
workers gone
No Queen on the throne
you're on your own

No more honey
in the golden pot
What will you do?
"Big Boss Beans"
When the bees
are gone?

Caroline Duck

WHAT HAVE THEY DONE

I see, I see you standing alone,
Head bowed, life's work all done,
Your arms outstretched, embracing
The cold wood against which you hang,
Did people think you so threatening,
So much more than a man?

I hear, I hear the wind blow as
It brushes against your skin,
It's gentle hand caresses your face,
Wipes away all the grime and the blood,
That down your face is flowing,
Your straggling blood matted hair
Aches to be free, to touch the dark sky
As if that would bring an end,
To the storm clouds now brewing,

What did they do to leave you in the state you're in?
Would we judge you any less for screaming in pain?
Blood running free marks the passage of your span,
It runs swiftly like a stream, down to mingle with
the ground.

I see, I see you standing alone
Your head bowed, life's work all done,
And then movement - you stir - one last song,
To the few that remain, you forgive then are gone,

Mike Fowler



THE SUMMER GHOSTS

The shore lay foam-frilled at our feet,
We squelched wet toes in the mid-day heat,
Childish happiness, quite complete,

We shaped castles from golden sand,
The air danced round, in tune with the band,
We splashed in the sea, hand in hand,

Vowed that we would stay together,
Couldn't be parted, No, no never,
We'd be here, now and forever,

Stars in your eyes were six years old,
The sun smiled down on your plaits of gold
And on the pools in which we rolled,

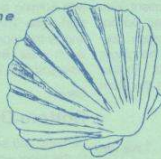
Summer days of laughter and love,
Gathering shells in the lee of the cove,
Seeking to find lost treasure-trove,

All things change, summer cannot stay,
But we linger here, to this day,
Our ghosts still frolic by the bay,

We ride the wind, splash in the foam,
Our spirits are here, we shall not roam,
Sea, sand, and air, this is our home,

Generations yet to be born,
Will here our laughter rise with the dawn,
Not all ghosts are sad and forlorn,

Ruth Swainston



The Redcar Writers' Group was formed in February 1989. We have a nucleus of about a dozen people who write, some in the process of being published, the majority still struggling. We meet to encourage each other in our writing, though we all seem to be interested in different kinds of writing, including science fiction, horror, romance, poetry - fact and fiction, novels and short stories.

We meet on the first and third Thursdays of each month in the Lecture room of the Redcar Central Library at 7.15 pm. Anyone interested is welcome.

REUNION

This split second,
Endured so long,
Those could be words,
From a song,

It passes unfurling,
Before my eyes,
As I rise up,
And ascend to the skies,

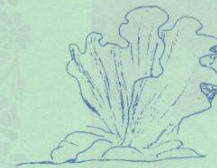
There I am,
Sat in my chair,
The old folks home,
They didn't care,

They would wheel me out,
In front of the telly,
Next to Gladys,
All grimey and smelly,

My poor wife Molly,
Had passed away,
Many years before,
On Boxing Day,

That's me again,
I'm earning a wage,
That was a good chapter,
Please don't turn the page,

I'm dressed up to the nines,
And Molly married me,
We honeymooned,
In Southsea,



REDCAR WRITERS

Joan Dalton
(Hon Sec)
Redcar 473897

EDITED BY

National service
A medal for me
I called it
They said Gall

Quick, quick,
This bit I hate
Poor Rupert was
A proper state

London's been
Bombs down the
That's what go
Or so it was e

There's Pete,
Robert and Pau
Me and my girl
In the old dan

The staff are
For her lady's
All turned out
Or they'd've s

There I am aga
I'm at the sco
I remember old
The old feller

Now back at sc
With all the cl
Haha there's R
Still in nappi

REDCAR WRITERS GROUP

Joan Dalton
(Hon Sec)
Redcar 473897



illed at our feet,
in the mid-day heat,
quite complete.

Golden sand,
in tune with the band,
hand in hand.

stay together,
do no never,
forever.

ire six years old,
in your plaits of gold
which we rolled.

er and love,
the lee of the cove,
treasure-trove.

immer cannot stay,
to this day,
tic by the bay.

ash in the foam,
we shall not roam,
this is our home.

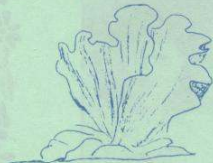
born,
rise with the dawn,
and forlorn.

Redcar Writers' Group was formed in 1989. We are a nucleus of a dozen people. Some, in the process of being published, the others still waiting. We meet to encourage each other in our writing. We seem to be interested in all kinds of writing, including fiction, romance, fact and novels and stories.

It was on the first Thursday of the month in the room of the Central Library at 7.15 pm. I was interested in...

you're in?
I pain?
span,
e with

gone.



REUNION

This split second,
Endured so long,
Those could be words,
From a song.

It passes unfurling,
Before my eyes,
As I rise up,
And ascend to the skies.

There I am,
Sat in my chair,
The old folks home,
They didn't care.

They would wheel me out,
In front of the telly,
Next to Gladys,
All grimy and smelly.

My poor wife Molly,
Had passed away,
Many years before,
On Boxing Day.

That's me again,
I'm earning a wage,
That was a good chapter,
Please don't turn the page.

I'm dressed up to the nines,
And Molly married me,
We honeymooned,
In Southsea.

MY SON

Where are you,
child, my son,
was it yesterday
you filled my knee
and my heart,
now you shrink from my love
as if stung
who is this man
you have become.



Time has claimed
the needing child
and spawned this brooding male
and I, though bound
to your manhood
ache for that infant's smile

When did that tender shoot
become this sturdy oak
your eager branches reaching outwards
to other loves, other needs

The hungry hand of time
devours the precious years
We wish we dream,
So soon they're lost
To yesterday

Caroline Duck

FATHER AND DAUGHTER

No love is more pure...

Distance cannot dissuade similarity
A binding love but free...

Transcending time and tears
Fragile fears...

This love is strong and sure...

Linda Evans

EDITED BY THE REDCAR WRITERS GROUP

National service,
A medal for me,
I called it luck,
They said Gallantry.

Quick, quick,
This bit I hate,
Poor Rupert was killed,
A proper state.

London's been flattened,
Bombs down they rained,
That's what got Rupert,
Or so it was explained.

There's Pete, Simon,
Robert and Paul,
Me and my girl,
In the old dance hall

The staff are waiting,
For her ladyship to arrive,
All turned out immaculate,
Or they'd've skinned us alive.

There I am again,
I'm at the scout camp,
I remember old Bertie,
The old feller got cramp.

Now back at school,
With all the chappies,
Haha there's Rupert,
Still in nappies.

Now in the nursery,
All spick and span,
With my favourite hero,
He's Peter Pan.

Back to my birth,
A messy job,
I remember the doctor,
He slapped me the slob.

I thank the Lord,
And a healthy heart,
For my life has been seen,
From the end to the start.

My life has been long,
A happy one too,
Now I'm with Molly,
We'll see things through.

Stephen Price



ORGAN RECIT

The person who
will never know
And will the
See beauty in
As I have done

Will my eyes
Still wonder
And will the
The loving I
That mine has

Will he see
And marvel to
Will he find
Make all his
As I have done

And will my
God's own punishment
and smell the
And drain the
As I have done

Will my kidneys
of someone I
A chance of
His grandchild
As mine have

And if my brain
Of use to anyone
Will its new
Just how the
As I cannot,

And will the
Feel all the
of my life,
The joy of
And will he
And will he
As I have done

Doris Smit

the Last

Woman! Why do
Why don't you
What are you
You're not the

Silly man! You
the things in
You only think
Ideals for you

Woman! Super
materialism
Retired now,
'bout others

Man, I despise
When will you
The more you
The more will

Charity starts
Indulge ours
I'll not be
To ignore any

We'll have to
Tolerate each
Shall we go
and each find

It would be a
You'd not be
My wealth was
Do you get it

Joan Dalton

WRITERS GROUP

MY SON

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child, my son,
was it yesterday
you filled my knee
and my heart,
now you shrink from my love
as if stung
who is this man
you have become.



Time has claimed
the needling child
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From the end to the start.

My life has been long,
A happy one too,
Now I'm with Molly,
We'll see things through.

Stephen Price



ORGAN RECITAL

The person who receives my liver
Will never know I was the giver,
And will the one who owns my eyes
See beauty in each new sunrise
As I have done?

Will my eyes in another's face
Still wonder at the depths of space,
And will they know, in future years,
The loving looks, the lonely tears
That mine have known?

Will he see the moors and sea
And marvel that such things could be,
Will he find a baby's smile
Make all his worries seem worthwhile
As I have done?

And will my lungs help him to breathe
God's own pure air upon the heath,
and smell the perfume of each flower
And drain the best from every hour,
As I have done?

Will my kidneys cleanse the blood
of someone like who has never stood
A chance of growing old to see
His grandchild standing by his knee
As mine have done?

And if my brain, by chance, should be
Of use to anyone but me,
Will its new owner understand
just how the universe is planned,
As I cannot,

And will the one who gets my heart
Feel all the things that were a part
of my life, all the tears and pain,
The joy of finding love again
And will he sometimes kneel in prayer
And will he love, and will he care
As I have done?

Doris Smith Skelton

the Last word

Woman! Why don't you relate to me?
Why don't you speak when I don't see
What are you up to, on your high heels?
You're not the girl I married, you're getting worse.

Silly man! You cannot know
the things inside my head,
You only think of material things,
Ideals for you are dead.

Woman! Supreme priority is
material comfort, less to do,
Retired now, why should we worry
'bout others' problems, get in a flurry.

Man, I despair of you,
When will you learn?
The more you give and love
The more will be returned.

Charity starts at home you say,
Indulge ourselves, a selfish way,
I'll not be mean, We can still be friends,
To ignore appeals I won't pretend.

We'll have to compromise,
Tolerate each other,
Shall we go our separate ways
and each find another?

T'would be a pity if we did,
You'd not be any richer,
My wealth would be my friends,
Do you get the picture?

Joan Dalton Redcar



WRITE Around

Just when you thought you'd seen the last of WRITE AROUND 89, here we come with a new version to set your pens a flutter.

Preparations are well under-way for this year's festival, so if you missed out last year now's your chance to make sure you're involved in all the literary/ writerly events taking place this June.

A platform for local writers
The deadline has already passed for this year's competition and anthology selection and we have received over 300 entries. Where appropriate winners' work will be read, sung, and performed during the June events and published in the WRITE AROUND Anthologies.

The 7 day Celebration of Cleveland Writing will kick off with a day of workshops and performances at Middlesbrough Town Hall on the 23rd of June. Another highlight planned for this first day is a performance of Mark Rutter's new translation of BEOWULF, hopefully to be performed in the open air somewhere in Middlesbrough. From then on the week will be alive with workshops, Readings, Songs and get - togethers at venues all over Cleveland and the surrounding seaside and moorland areas.

Ideas Wanted

This festival is your festival and we are interested in your ideas. If you are already part of a writers group, get together and let us know what your ideas, requirements, hopes, wishes, dreams are for this year's festival. We need to know what you want as a group. We can suggest ways in which you can take part if necessary but would prefer the initiative to come from YOU. All individual ideas welcome too. So if you can think of something you'd like to see at this year's festival, or maybe even for 91 or 92, for the decade! - then we'd like to hear about it.

The Lone Writer

If you're a lone writer, poet, songwriter, then this may be your chance to meet like-minded people, see what other Cleveland writers have to offer and find a platform for your work. Join a writers or poets group or just turn up at any of the June events - you can be sure of a warm welcome. As the WRITE AROUND team have always stressed, this week long series of events - workshops, readings songs and music is for YOU.

OUTLET and WRITE AROUND believe that all that is created honestly, sincerely and as skilfully as the writer at the time has the ability to create it, when people have the belief or need to write, is ART, as the expression of life and the deepest need, beliefs, hopes, yearnings, frustrations, aspirations, depressions, optimism, endurance and triumphs of people's souls, very being - the only reason art is ever valid, for without soul it is nothing, totally and utterly void, technically brilliant though it may be.

Enthusiasm for this first display of writing skills in Cleveland has been immense. "People who have never written before are ringing up and expressing their interest in it," says Alyson Perry.

Copies of the program will shortly be available in your local library, bookshop, arts centre. The address to write to if you have any ideas, thoughts or want to get involved is

**WRITE AROUND
FESTIVAL SECRETARY
ALYSON PERRY
BERMICK HILLS LIBRARY
MIDDLESBROUGH 246947**

A Diverse Write Around

If you think you could organise a display of calligraphy, a street theatre event or anything else that can be linked/encompassed within the general theme of writing/storytelling then we'd like to hear from you.

Children's Write Around

This year we are planning to hold some events for children on the first saturday at the Town Hall. Some children's events are also being planned at other venues such as community centres. It is hoped that these will include activities such as mask and puppet making - creating stories around these. Also it may include story-telling, poetry and creative writing workshops for older children.

However, still not enough children's activities are being planned. We need mums and toddler groups, PTA's, community groups and other mums groups to get involved and help organise some of these type of events. Other ideas include finger-puppet making, second-hand book-stalls, picture story making.

All you need to do is plan the event and then let us know. If you need help or more information, then please contact **Program Secretary Margaret Weir** address as **OUTLET** ~~at~~ **Schools**

If you have anything to contribute to WRITE AROUND - Events, displays, book stalls etc we'd like to hear from you.

Libraries

If you feel you could organise childrens events or displays of their work, that would be great. How about schools and libraries liaising to produce displays of childrens creative writing - poetry etc.?

Here another reminder that WRITE AROUND is not only for those within the Cleveland boundary but also for those from Whitby, North York moors, Gt Ayton, Stokesley and Darlington areas.

If any mums, NNEB students, children's librarians, teachers, student teachers etc can help with childrens events on the first saturday, again please contact us.

MARGARET WEIR

As they put it: "The child encouraged to be creative with words and language today could well become the accomplished author of tomorrow."

OPEN SPACE BBC 2

OUTLET and WRITE AROUND have recently been involved in filming a 9 minute slot to be shown as part of BBC TV's OPEN SPACE program. It is hoped that this will be broadcast late May/ June time (WATCH Radio Times or the Gazette for the broadcast date). Although there was only time for a few writers to be involved in this short film it is hoped they will speak for us all and that the program will give an indication of the creativity that is present in Cleveland and in communities everywhere, and of the deep belief of OUTLET and WRITE AROUND that giving encouragement to the creativity of ordinary people is at least as important (if not more) than bringing the Royal Shakespeare Company to Cleveland. The program will be called BREAKING THE ICE and will feature six Cleveland poets reading extracts from their poems culminating with last year's winning Write Around poem by Brian Burr. It will also feature short interviews with members of Outlet and Write Around set against the diverse views of Cleveland.

MEDIA MURDER

Don't mention Cleveland's beauty to me,
It's full of chemicals and industry,
I've read the papers, seen it on TV,
The land is polluted, so is the sea.

What's that you say about the people there,
Warm and friendly? Well I don't care,
They abused their children didn't they?
Can't get out of that, no matter what you say.

I didn't know it had any history
Captain Cook's name means little to me,
Wann't he some sort of aborigine?
Didn't he go somewhere across the sea?

I know it's somewhere near Newcastle,
It's violent there, lots of hassle.
Cloth caps and clogs and things like that
They drink, race whippets, eat lots of fat.

All in all it's best to say
If I ever end up there one day
I'll just close my eyes till it goes away
They'd have to tie me down to make me stay.
Don't get upset, what do you mean I'm blind,
So what if I haven't been, I don't have to go,
I've seen what I've seen, know what I know...

DAVE KIDD MIDDLESBROUGH

NIGHT

One hour to midnight
dark December drizzle drifts through
city centre
strident street lamps stoop to pierce
the sullen night.
Islanded, marooned aloft
impervious to traffic's noise and swirl
bronze-mounted elevated Earl
presides above bustling square
with icy stare
where neon's winking eye
promotes the current star
and dapper doorman, servile, salutes
the slowing car;
where disco bouncer, bored,
defends the steps to hell,
and pungent pizza-parlour, alehouse dim
call the starved to sample warmth within;
while steaming, hissing coffee stall,
by chapel wall
dispenses charitable cheer.
In the shadows,
loitering with intent,
waits another sculptured castaway,
plastered, painted,
sell-by-date well past.
drizzle-drenched, dispirited,
the lady of the night consults her watch
One hour to midnight.

MARJORIE BENDELOW GUISBOROUGH

MEDIA MURDER

THE BANDBOX SCENE

Less Hollywood showbiz glitter
More an ounce of shag and a pint of bitter
Organ, guitar and tambourine
It's the the Cleveland Bandbox scene.

First on, it's the Elvis look-a-like
No Cadillac, but a fifties pushbike
Bouffant hair dyed black as coal
A Royal Pretender on the dole.

Next its Alf, fired up on brandy
Screaming out "Yankee Doodle Dandy"
As Mr Pastry, he'd be a dead ringer
For he's more of a comic than a singer.

Now it's the turn of little Julie
Who thinks life has treated her cruelly
And who always screeches the same old song
About some man that did her wrong.

A talent contest atmosphere
Cigarettes, lager and beer
So, for the singers and the band
Let's hear it, a great big hand.

B.J. Rooney Middlesbrough

THE ALCOHOLIC

It isn't funny anymore,
When he stumbles, drunkenly to the floor.
I gaze into his bleary eyes,
Who am I to moralize?
He fills his glass and drinks with glee.
Then turns his drunken rage on me,
Every night he does the same.
Inflicts on me this senseless pain,
I've thought about an institution.
But will he think it's retribution
For the way he's ruined my happy life.
I want to scream, "I am your wife
I'm not a thing to push aside"
(Actually I'm terrified)
You're killing yourself, stop and think.
Do you really need that drink?

Carol Wright Skelton

CURSED

Enslaving siren.
Are we doomed to dig for coal?
That knee, back and hand,
Must shovel muck on to belt,
And work three hard shifts
Which must change about. To melt
Each week, the brain's gifts
For the sake of pit head gear
That never must sleep.
Why dig deep, for coal board cash
Explosive firedamp,
Falling roof, and cable lash,
Black terror, lost lamp,
Half rotted lungs, twisted limb.
Foul acidic rain,
Standing forests dead, lakes rim,
Depths, unfit for life,
Find ozone depletion rife.
Homes with children die.
Famine spreads, politicians
Windbag, yammer, lie,
While the threat to stupid man
gathers pace on high.
Phobic radiation nuts,
Use the media
To shut our minds, turn our guts,
Make us greedier
For superstitious fancies
About atomic power.
Most of them couldn't mend a fuse.
But fusion will flower
While fission records abuse
Hold, wait, think, keep your nerve,
Stop burning coal, look forward.

Peter brewin

WHITBY

SWINGING SINGLE

Downing indifferent pints
To erring baroom rhubarb
Thatcher, weather, snooker,
Missed last bus (again)
Clutching, congealed chinese (takeaway)
Through mud strewn estates
To high rise hell
Lift broke (again)
Up dog turded steps
To bachelor pad joke
Loneliness converted
With chair and lightflex noose
To a swinging single (R.I.P.)

B.J. Rooney



ATTITUDES

Attitudes today
That people get from God knows where
Are easy for all to hold
because it's easy not to care.
Each member of a community
has only one concern -
A profit making opportunity
and how much their share will earn,
Why is everyone so weak these days?
When will they question
what Thatcherism says?
A man's best friend
is his dividend.

**Jonathan Pybus
Sandsend**

LISTEN

Listen, in patient practise,
omit the angry cries and tortured screams,
For if you listen well, then you will hear,
The patient unrelenting thud of hell,
as blow and flesh do bend and flow,
In timeless rhythm that their marriage did decree.
Softly it falls, a quiet stream,
that flows in ebbing wave upon the flesh,
And kisses skin with hues of scarlet flame,
Yet now the brain begins to let in pain,
as frantic mother's screams invade your head,
And you in turn, take up your marriage bed.

**Karen Milburn
(Redcar)**



a tribute to
MARY WILLIAMS

A few weeks ago I drove over to Marske to talk with Mary Williams, Writer, Local Historian and long term leader of the Poetry 20+ group. **Poetry 20+**

Born in 1924 the daughter of S.M. Williams who wrote children's adventure stories in his spare time, Mary was one of the early members of Poetry 20+, formed in 1962 by Magdalene and Archie Donald. The first meeting was held at Eastbourne Rd, Middlesbrough and thereafter the poets were for many years based at Leeds University Adult Education Centre at Harrow Road. They met ten times a year and published their first folio in 1963 with one following every year since. Throughout they have had a core of eight or nine regular members.

POETRY 20+ * * *

One of their early achievements was participation in a children's poetry competition in which The Evening Gazette was also involved. Poetry 20+ did the initial judging. Their selection was then sent to Philip Larkin in Hull, who did the final judging, and the prizes were later presented by David Kossoff at Darlington Arts Centre. There then followed a meeting with Yorkshire Poets (from the West Riding), at Harrow Road. When the affiliation fees became too high they started to meet in each other's houses, thereafter at All Saint's Community Centre, M'bro, and when the fees again became prohibitive, at Acklam Library, their most recent venue. The group has existed for 27 years, and as Mary said "I think we have done our fair share for Poetry".

The Writer Herself

Publications

- (1) *CLEVELAND'S HISTORY* (1984, Seaside Books). A collection of local history articles edited by Chris Scott Wilson. Mary Contributed two of the articles.
- (2) *THE POTTERY THAT BEGAN MIDDLESBROUGH*, A book by Mary about Middlesbrough Old Pottery, as it was known, not to be confused with Linthorpe Potteries. This was published in 1985 by C. Books.
- (3) *WITCHES IN OLD NORTH YORKSHIRE* Published in 1987, by Hutton Press, which operates in Beverley, Yorks. Having completed her manuscript, Mary spoke to Ryedale Folk Museum, Hutton-le-Hole, knowing that they have a special interest in the folklore of Yorkshire Witches. They said they could sell it and recommended that she try Hutton Press, who much to her delight said "Yes" to publication.
- (4) The same year C. Books released a publication, *WHO WAS WHO IN NINETEENTH CENTURY CLEVELAND?* - By Mary and David M. Tomlin, who is a leading light of Cleveland Archaeological Society. C.Books are available from P.O. Box 11, Redcar TS10 1YS.

The Articles

Mary had her first piece of writing accepted by The Evening Gazette in 1981. She then learned from David Philippon, who had written a history of Redcar Lifeboats, that the then Cleveland Courier was looking for local history articles. One by one Mary sent them eighteen articles which they published fortnightly until The Courier ceased publication in

March 1984. At the end of May '84, The Cleveland Clarion arrived through her letterbox and she sent her last article to the Editor who was very enthusiastic, and so she writes weekly - articles have included:

"William Stanes - The Iron Copper of Marske"

"The History of Warrenby" - This was a special request for an account of a community no longer in existence, as it has been re-housed in Redcar.

"A Pot of Gold"

One useful contact created through the auspices of the Clarion was one Mr. Pappill - licensee of The Victoria in Saltburn. Converting the premises to a pub, he stumbled across a blocked off section of cellar, behind which was a mass of old papers. Miraculously he didn't just dump them. Investigating he discovered that they told the story of a firm of printers that had existed there years before. This was as Mary described it, "A Real Pot of Gold", as the information contained in these old papers inspired many other articles too.

Saltburn - A Fishing Village

Once, going through newspaper archives in search of something completely different, Mary found an article written in 1904 by a reporter who at that time had to an old lady who was living next to 'The Ship' at Saltburn. Her images of Saltburn dated back to before 1881, when Saltburn was merely a few fishing cottages, near 'The Ship'.

Requests

People also ask for articles - a piece for St. Peter's Church, Redcar, to celebrate their anniversary. Marske Charities gave her their archives and asked for an article, as did the British Legion's Women's Board. Only once has she returned into fiction, when she was asked for a series of articles on Christmas, and invented a family, Martin and Martha Cleveland of Marske. This was the springboard for comparing their past Christmasses of Yule Logs and Fromenty Wheat with the seasonal festivities of today.

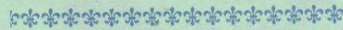
Presently

A retired Schoolteacher, Mary is presently continuing with articles for the Clarion, and is a member of the Cleveland Family History Society, and Teesside Local History Society. While still staying loyal to Poetry 20+ Mary seems pleased that many more forums for poets and other writers are opening up in the area. As regards future publications, she has 'a few irons in the fire', and books will as she says 'appear when and if'. Remembering her cosy living room-office with its 'piles of files' and rows of books it seems a forgone conclusion that Mary will continue to find expression for her perceptive and enquiring mind and talent with words, whatever forms these take.

MARGARET WEIR



Since this article was written we have learned that sadly Mary has passed away. Our thanks go with her for all the work she has done in the area.



the way ahead

Set me on my road:
Choose me the way,
Take the load from me
So I can move on from here.
Lead me, blindfolded, past the crossroads:
I want no part in it.
Do not ask me to choose
For I am unable.
Hide from me, the way ahead:
Whether troubled or easy.
Constrain my ache to see it;
Restrain my struggle to try.
Let me stop to talk to no-one;
Make me deaf to their truths.
They only confound my ideals
Confuse my direction.
Hurry me over bridges,
through tunnels
Where time flows too quickly
And the past echoes so loudly:
It will hurt too much to stop.
Steal away from me, the memory
Of the journey passed, the way I have come;
And allow me neither time nor need
To lament the way I have not.

Jane Berry
Middlesbrough

SMALL PRESS SUCCESS

Had I ceased to write when you suggested I should, Success - though small could never have come my way, nor should I ever have heard you say "Write on, Clever," as you do today.

Mark Beever

ADVICE TO WORD-SPINNERS

Amongst word-spinning poets, there are some into whose heads a spate of words will come like horses galloping, their verses flow Hooves thudding rhythmic as a beating drum.

How fortunate they are, you say? Oh, no! When they have reached their goal, their horses go On galloping, will not obey the rein, Those words keep pouring out. Such poets know

Merely to stop will go against the grain, They cannot call a halt because their brain Will not obey them, All they had to say Those wilful words are saying once again.

Oh, hapless wordaholics... I've a ray Of hope... try dresage on your mounts, it may Control them, Cut. Aim for a minimum, Wrestle with rhyme patterns - it's the only way.

Mary Williams

This pastel and charcoal evening arrests my attention,
My awareness is held to it as to a magnet.
A sensation of wonder and awe creeps through my being and I would, were I able, to perpetuate it in paint.
Undescribable in simple words is the sight before me,
But insistent is its appeal to be registered.
It's persistence will surely be short - I must drink while there's time
Of this precious ethereal fluid distilled From the sun now sunk from the sky.
Already the vision Slithers out of my grasp, and slight is the seepage that shows where the stream still slides beyond the horizon.
Blacker now against fading light The violent and velvet shadows and the strange blue hue
Of the grass: unique is the evening; - yet here is this bus-load of people absorbed in their sordid selves.
Margaret Mawston Gt. Ayton

THE MERSEY SOUND



ADRIAN HENRI
ROGER McGOUGH
BRIAN PATTEN

~~~~~  
This interview, reprinted from VOICE OF THE NORTH, was conducted in 1984 by Troy Teasdel & John Quinn at Darlington Arts Centre

You're grouped together as the LIVERPOOL POETS. To what extent do you feel you have things in common?

**RMC** We all came out of Liverpool and were all writing at the same time as other poets, there wasn't just the three of us like today. We all shared things like a working class background; perhaps we had different religions, attitudes, which still show in the work if you look at it. We'd all been friends and things.

In terms of writing styles would you say there's a difference?

**RMC** To some extent, again because we didn't have academic backgrounds and do English at University, we wanted to make the poetry very direct to the audience. Making the poetry accessible seemed to be what we had in common.

Could you tell us a bit about your background. What was going on in Liverpool when you emerged?

**BP** Pete Brown (later lyricist with Cream) and a few other poets... London poets, were orientated towards Jazz in the very early sixties. They were coming up to Liverpool and doing Jazz poetry in the pubs, but our orientation was more towards pop music, which was mainly R&B at the time.

**RMC** Well Adrian (Henri) was more orientated towards Jazz at the time.

**BP**...but I think the Jazz audience was not, I'd say, one's kind of audience really. And so one's allegiance was with people who were more interested in a kind of pop world.

**RMC** I don't think our work was influenced by music so much, we both started off as writers but when it comes to communicating and getting it across, there were very few magazines in those days. The only magazine was Brian's.

**BP**. Yes I used to run a magazine (Underdog) which published a lot of

## INTERVIEW WITH ROGER McGOUGH BRIAN PATTEN

people that are now very well known. But the kind of actual strength of what ever movement came out, came out of the readings, as opposed to publishing.

**RMC** The place where the audience was, was where the music was, and that was the pubs and clubs of course.

How did this affect your poetry?

**BP** Well one had to be careful, in a sense, you have to make a division between what you read out in public and also what you wrote, I mean, say your poetry could work in public and having an audience that really wasn't necessarily a poetry audience or a university audience. In the beginning most poetry was coming out of the universities. Most poetry readings, if there were any, were stuck in university situations. And when we began organising readings in pubs and clubs, one had to be much more direct in one's work really, to keep hold of those people.

Do you think then you would be writing differently if you were writing strictly for the page?

**RMC** No, I think you approach them in the same way after a while. I believe if a poem's a poem it should be spoken anyway. A good poem, the best poems are memorable. The best poems are poems you can quote from. At the end of the day you say "he's a good poet, he's a good poet... give me a line, give me two lines..

**BP** Also again on poetry readings, it's important that the poems are accessible. I mean there are certain poems that are totally memorable on the page and you can keep the image but out loud it doesn't make sense, you know.

*"Often in a community writing is frowned upon & there's nowhere really to realise you're not a freak"*

BRIAN PATTEN

**RMC** There are academic poets who did (and still do) write for the page then other poets like John Cooper Clark and Seething Wells, who generally write performance poetry, but we are writers first but who think performance is very important.

How did you approach combining music and poetry?

**RMC** In the place where we used to do a lot of our readings, there were lots of musicians around and some of them later formed a band.. Adrian's band.. The Liverpool Scene.

**BP** It wasn't so much working with music, it's always having music with the poetry as being able to work in the same environment as the music...

**RMC** At these places, to start off with there would be a band, a folk singer, a poet and then a folk singer and it ended up with a dance. Sometimes the musicians would work with you in a poem.

Was this usually improvised?

**RMC** It would vary, you might work something out for this or that. I mean the thing about Jazz.. I tried to get into Jazz, but it never worked because

for the musicians it was a chance to have a blow, and as long as we started and finished together that was it. Where as with people like Andy Roberts, the sense and the enjoyment of the poetry were important and as such the two were more integrated.

Do you think it's best to strike a balance between the performance and the written word?

**BP** It's not for me to say what's best.

But in your opinion is it best?

**RMC** It depends on your intention you see. If your intention is to get up there and be a star and be on stage, be a performer, alright you might be into the poetry as well but being a poet is about being able to express yourself, that's what it's really about, it depends on your motives.. if you just want to make money out of it.. I know you might say.. 'It's alright for him to talk' but.....

**BP** But performance is a gift that a lot of people have that just dies if they don't do something with it.

How did the Beatles affect what you were doing?

**RMC** They didn't affect us as writers or anything.

**BP** We were writing simultaneously.

While we were developing our work and were still underground the Beatles were still underground too but obviously the difference is plain to see. It didn't affect the work, it just grew alongside it.

**RMC** We did things like ENTS, which were Happenings where they'd take over a whole place and put Pop Art posters everywhere.. billboard posters.. Adrian did this. He filled the place with Guinness... huge posters kind of thing. You walked through things and out of things. There'd be sketches and various happenings, a band and school girls running on and.....

**BP** It was a very environmental entertainment in fact.

**RMC** And the music and poetry were part of it.

What do you think of the newer performance poets like John Cooper-Clark?

**BP** I count him as a very strong powerful voice but he's saying nothing no one else has said really. It's an incredibly effective work but I don't think it works that well on the page. I think this is a problem that a lot of new poets do face, in a sense that a lot of the work does not rest well on the page. I mean there are good exceptions, I'd say someone like Joolz is a good exception. I mean her work sits well on the page but there's not all that many.

Do you think poetry writing should be encouraged in schools and workshops?

**RMC** We were just talking about this. In terms of schools it does seem to have improved since I was at school. It depends whether it's recognised on the syllabus.... (noisy traffic made this bit hard to make out unfortunately ED.)

**BP** As far as writers workshops are concerned, there is this very basic thing that each one is each other's lifebelt as it were. Often in a community, writing and poetry is frowned upon and there's just nowhere really to realise that you're not a freak. One of the

CONTINUED OVERLEAF



People get their priorities wrong. Looking at the piles of papers to edit for one anthology or another, I note that I never finished wallpapering this room, just as I never finished wallpapering it the time before... On the lower levels, the grime is becoming manifest, pleading for at least a coat of paint, but a postcard of the pyramids at sunset, a poem typed on the back, gets my attention.

# DEVIL'S ADVOCAT

The winter's drawing-in since the last editorial - Trev's left his summer residence by the sea, for the less drafty climbs of the winter palace at Great Aytton. There are changes apparent, people are becoming restless. Looking out of the window I can't decide... Are those the fabled storm clouds I can see, or is it just the meeting of iron clouds from ICI and the frozen breath of a quarter million Teessiders? There must be more to life than ICI and a population out in the cold.

In the words of Andy Croft's poem (Outlet 10) this place is 'so obvious', the factories and steel works are so often taken for Teesside pyramids, (great monuments to the state religion, built by slaves for the deified). Each Pharaoh defacing the monument of its predecessor, demolishing, rebuilding: ironstone, steel, salt, fertilizers, paint.

One of these piles of papers is of political writing for the Paranoia Press group's anthology ("submissions to 35 Percy Street, M'bro"), and while Outlet is avowedly not party-political, all these pieces about how people feel, their gut-reaction to child abuse or to the miner's strike, they make you think...

I have another postcard by the desk, you might have seen it already, it says:

*"First they came for the Jews  
and I did not speak out - because I was not a Jew.*

*Then they came for the communists  
and I did not speak out - because I was not a communist.*

*Then they came for the trade unionists and I  
did not speak out - because I was not a trade unionist.*

*Then they came for me - and there was no one  
left to speak out for me.*

even to the pyramids, just 20 or so local poets and short story writers reading to an audience of a few dozen more, all to celebrate the production of two new books of Cleveland Writing.

Restless with all these changes I find I'm faltering; yes, the scale is small, but the greatest triumphs of life are on this scale. The publication of two thin books, maybe 20-30 people involved with the production, most working for free. What got them off their backsides? The writers too, 50-60 writers - who knows how much effort it took to create these books, how many failed love affairs to produce a poem, how many miscarriages, how many deaths?

Such questions are too romantic for me now, too subtle, things going on elsewhere distract my attention, how will these changes affect the things that matter, those planned minor legislations that deal with the quality of life. Perhaps these changes are insignificant compared with wars, small drops in the ocean they may be, but there is a tidal wave of them coming. How will changes coming to the structure of the funding bodies, the suggestion for instance that Northern Arts be merged with Yorkshire affect the next Write Around anthologies. Will a body that stretches from the Midlands to Scotland remember the Free Writers of South Bank? Will they want pyramids and laugh when we offer anthologies? Will they sell us to the Pharaohs, or tell us to sell ourselves to them? Yes, restlessly, I'm ignoring the wallpaper, as it tells me that I've got my priorities wrong... I know that Outlet Editors are not allowed to be political, but because I can't speak out, doesn't mean that you can't.

Richard Briddon.  
If you agree or disagree with this viewpoint, or if you want to sound off about something for consideration, you can send-in a piece for this column (The Devil's Advocate), or reply in the usual form of poems and short stories...

◆◆◆◆◆ Outlet

## OUT & ABOUTLET

Received copy of local writer Sheila Holligon's novel *THE HOUSE OF GINGERBREAD* from Dunscalth Publishers Ltd. The book will be reviewed in next issue. Sheila, who lives on the North Yorkshire Moors, has a second novel soon to be published by an American publisher and is working on her third. She also has a book of poetry out by the Poetry Foundation. Meanwhile Dunscalth are also publishing a local science fiction author - Kenneth Harker, whose novel *TRIBUNAL ON TAV CETT* is due out this summer. Catalogue available from Dunscalth Publishing Ltd, 28, West Lodge Avenue, London, W3 9SF.

**TEES VALLEY WRITER** ☆  
Is a shortly to be launched local quality style literary magazine for the area in the style of, but not the same as IRON magazine. It will appear twice a year at the cost of £1.69p and contain 72 pages of articles, poetry and short stories. Work can be sent to TEES VALLEY WRITER, Derek Gregory, 57, The Avenue, Linthorpe, Middlesbrough.

**EXILE** ☆  
This oft-before-mentioned magazine, now based in Saltburn, is still on the scene at 50p a copy and is hungry for your poetry. New issue imminent. Poems to/copies from Ann & Herbert, 3B, Emerald St, Saltburn, Cleveland.

**Z MAGAZINE** ☆  
Z Magazine is a relatively new small press mag requiring stories, poetry and articles. Lots of info in this mag. Z Magazine, 6a Switzerland Terrace, Douglas, Isle of Man.

**POETRY LIVE** ☆  
Live poetry bursts forth from the Leeds University Centre at Harrow Rd, M'bro on the first Friday of each month. On the 4th May ROGER GARFITT, who writes with 'a strong sense of contemporary predicaments' reads from his latest collection *GIVEN GROUND* accompanied by two distinguished traditional harpists Tristram and Jane Robson. Sounds good. See you there at 8pm £1.50 (75p). Organiser Andy Croft c/o Adult Education Centre.

## ROGER MCGOUGH BRIAN PATTEN LIVERPOOL POETS


..... things about writing workshops is to help you realise that it is a valid thing, that you have some compatriots at arms as it were.

At the end of the day it's good to have a local poetry forum of any kind but if you get somebody who writes very very bad poetry, who are just appalling, I don't think they should be encouraged. I mean they should be turned in another direction. I think if someone writes very very bad poetry, I think it's criminal to pamper to them and say this good. I mean if ever I take a writing course or something and somebody's got very bad poetry, I tell them right out that's it's no bloody good. If they obviously want to express themselves then you try and turn them to another way of expressing themselves and pray to God they'll be better as a Novelist or something.

Also with the spoken word, if you read it out and there's a bad line in it you find out for yourself how lazy you've been. So much poetry is so easy to use staid language in. You think you've expressed something and all you've expressed is a cliché. You haven't delved into anything within yourself or anyone else. I think it's important that that is shown up.

RMC It's good when everyone's around doing it, sharing their work, it gets very competitive, you see someone doing this or that and you learn from each other.

How important is it that your poems are understood by the audience?

BP That's a tricky one!   
There are certain poems in which you can recognise certain sensations and feelings that you can't necessarily put words to, is the words evoke feelings you can't put words to if you get what I mean, it's hard to explain really.

RMC You've only got so much material and you tend to read those poems you know work and which you get a response to. If the poem goes flat you don't read it again. I mean it's probably too complex. It's not clear. You need to read it again, go back and find out why it's not working.

Did it take you long to develop your reading style?

BP Yes I was an appalling reader. I used to shout and scream my poems. It took me a long time in a way. Sometimes I wrote Black comedy, as it were. I'd have one poem which had various odd quirks in it. It took me a long time to realise that people wouldn't find them humorous. But even now it depends on the way they are read. I mean things like the line "All this during chemistry" often goes flat. It depends on how it's read.

The three of you have a New Volume out. Has your work changed much in the last ten years or so?

RMC It will have done. It's hard to say. We tend to write less frequently than we used to and also tend to re-work them more, squeezing a little more out of them.

What does the future hold for you. Do you have any plans?  
RMC I never did have any plans.  
Have you got a light please?  
RMC Yes (ha) I have a light. Strange question!