



OUR MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

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WELCOME to this, our monthly members' newsletter
Has the idea got legs? Let's run it for a couple of months and see if we feel it's worthwhile.

Bryan

OUR ON-LINE MEETINGS

Our on-line meetings continue to replace the analogue Jasmine Court ones. We usually have about a dozen people there - our Jasmines have varied in numbers attending but we were averaging 18 or so (we have about 24 members altogether) in those last few months.

In those Jasmine-tinted days of yore we met from 7.30 - 10.00. The break in the middle was usually about a half an hour. Our virtual meetings keep going without a break. Is two and a half hours too long? Should we reduce the time? Perhaps the 'warm-up' should be a maximum of half an hour. Or do the Long and the Short Groups require less time for their sessions?

Let me know your thoughts by email or at the next meeting on 15th October.

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Got a better name for OUR Newsletter? Has anyone thought of one?

DEADLINE FOR NEXT EDITION

Copy to Bryan by 31st October, please.

SOME BITS OF NEWS

NEW TREASURER

CLIVE is now our official treasurer, taking over from Yvonne who had been Treasurer longer than anyone can remember.

NEW COMPETITIONS SECRETARY

Lesley has taken over the Competitions job from Clive.

ERNEST SHEPPARD POETRY COMPETITION

Fifteen poems have been entered. It's not a bad response, is it? What do you think? Previous three years: 2017 = 16 entries. 2018 = 12 entries. 2019 = 17 entries.

Lesley has collated them and will send them to be judged by *Geoff Evans* (pen name *Toby Wren*) as well as to all of us. We should have the results (with *Geoff/Toby's* comments) at our November meeting.

MEMBERS' MUSINGS

From Maggie

I have just finished a 6-week online course with the publishers, *Curtis Brown Creative*, entitled 'Starting to Write your Novel' and I thought writers circle friends might be interested to know how I found it. Usually there are live groups held up in London but of course with Covid not at the moment. They offer 6-week courses, a module a week, with a focus on either starting to write, writing to the end, or editing and pitching your novel. They also do three and six-month longer courses.

I thought I would start with 6 weeks as it's not too much of a commitment and I wasn't sure how I would find it. The content is very good, each module has two short tutor videos, and usually two tasks. One of which they ask you post up on a forum for other participants to comment. The technology seemed quite intuitive and easy. Interestingly the other students, about 25, were from all over the world. Most entered into it fully, commenting on others work and making suggestions. A tutor would make a comment each week. One could separately opt for individual feedback at the end of the course, a written piece and/or video tutorial. The cost for the basic 6-week course is now £200 and £125 for the 500-word feedback. I got it a bit cheaper in the middle of lockdown. They have had some impressive students including *Jessie Burton* who wrote 'The Miniaturist' who had discussed her story with the student group as she was writing it. I would recommend it, the resources are good, although I guess nothing you can't read about, and it does encourage you not to procrastinate and to think in different ways about your story.

From Nadia

A few ideas for our Newsletter.

How about a book club - or book hub - share recommendations ?

And maybe a style notes section - do's and don't on character or punctuation or dialogue - that sort of thing. I know on Lesley's adult ed course she shared loads of brilliant information on the art of writing which might be useful to others.

Maybe something on actually getting published - tips from anyone who has had experience, success or not and in that vein a section for mentorship or submissions section if people know of companies that are doing anything.



From Jane

From Flipboard - If you don't have Flipboard tap in 'How COVID-19 is changing the English language' into Google and you can find a really interesting article about the new words and phrases we're all starting to use - and are appearing in the Oxford Dictionary - words that a few months ago we'd have been at a loss to understand.

Recommended for info and reviews of books *Guardian Bookmarks*. It's free

If you have a *Waterstones* card you can get 50% off subscription to

LET'S GET QUIZZICAL (from Yvonne)

WHO SAID...?

1. Two roads diverged in the wood, and I, I took the one less travelled,
and that has made all the difference.

A. Robert Frost B. Robert Graves C. Robert Mugabe

2. I have measured out my life with coffee spoons

A. Dylan Thomas B. Joseph Lyons C. T.S. Eliot

3. Here today, up and off to somewhere else tomorrow

A. Christopher Columbus B. Amy Johnson C. Toad

4. If music be the food of love, play on.

A. Duke of Edinburgh B. Duke Orsino C. Duke Ellington

5. Veni, Vidi, Vici

A. Vivaldi B. Julius Caesar C. Queen Victoria

6. Be Yourself; everyone else is taken

A. Oscar Wilde B. Percy Bysshe Shelley C. Sigmund Freud

7. I have not failed. I've just found 10,000 ways that won't work.

A. Donald Trump B. Homer Simpson C. Thomas Edison

8. I'm playing all the right notes, but not necessarily in the right order.

A. Andre Previn B. Ernie Wise C. Eric Morecambe

9. Procrastination is the thief of time. Collar him.

A. Wilkins Micawber B. Cressida Dick C. Her Majesty's Clock
Winder

10. I like nonsense. It wakens up the brain cells. Fantasy is a
necessary ingredient in living.

A. Edward Lear B. J.R. Tolkien C. Dr. Seuss

(Answers on Page 5)



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Author's Pen 

In June 2020 Mathew Bridle and I decided to combine our skills and create a company to support authors at every stage of the writing process: teaching, brainstorming, editing, combined with our knowledge of traditional and self-publishing, together with the marketing skills necessary for today's author.

To support our launch we are happy to offer a 10% discount to all writers applying for and accepting a quote from Author's Pen during October 2020. All quoted work must be fulfilled before September 2021. Please contact Mathew or myself, Lesley, via email quoting the code: October10 to receive your discounted quote.

MARTIN'S THOUGHTS ON WHY HE WAS INSPIRED TO WRITE

I hated English as a child. I didn't get it. My teacher was scary and if a poem didn't start with 'There was a young man from...' then I wasn't interested. We once had to write a poem in the class about an animal. The muse was pulling a sickie and wasn't in school that day. I managed to force together four lines which rhymed 'week' with 'weak' and was horrified to be chosen first to read it out in class. The teacher asked the class 'What was good about the poem?' and Esther Keeley's was the only answer given; 'It was short.'

I scraped a C at GCSE and became a scientist. But then I saw a Halloween episode of the Simpsons where the characters act out Edgar Allen Poe's 'The Raven'. It was great, the poetry came alive. I still love that poem, the rhythm and the rhymes. For something quite depressing it has a lot of bounce. And it wasn't even short.

What inspired you? For me it was a tormented balding man screaming at a yellow boy shaped raven which could only say 'Nevermore'. Each to his own.

... and The Raven poem still inspires me. I wrote this a few years ago when struggling to get my son to sleep:

'While I nodded, nearly napping, suddenly there came a tapping,
As of someone gently rapping, rapping at my chamber door.'
It was sure my toddler creeping,
Through the door his head came peeping,
I asked the boy 'why aren't you sleeping?'
Quoth the toddler 'Nevermore!'

WE COULD MAKE THIS INTO A SERIES. CAN ANYONE ELSE OFFER THE EXPERIENCE THAT INSPIRED THEM TO BECOME A WRITER?

Next ZOOM Meeting

15th October

To discuss at the start:

1. Poetry Comp.
2. Thoughts about Newsletter.
3. Timing of on-line meetings
4. Christmas party?

1. Describe a place - then put an event or story in it
2. 'The Surprise'
3. A Family Get-together
- OR, 4. Something else you've been working on



September's Workshop

We had a go at poetry - with the Poetry Competition in mind. We looked at the ways in which using assonance and consonance can help the all-important sound of the writing (can be helpful in prose writing, too) We also looked at different types of rhyme. If anyone wants the session notes - contact Bryan (might help your entry for next year's Poetry Comp!)

BOOK REVIEWS

A Moveable Feast by Ernest Hemingway (Nadia)

Part fiction, part memoir, *A Moveable Feast* by Ernest Hemingway captures the writer's time in Paris in the 1920's.

Each chapter focuses on a different subject - his marriage, his apartment, his daily routine as well as accounts of his fellow ex-pats, such as Gertrude Stein, James Joyce and a shambolic road trip he took with F. Scott Fitzgerald, which is both amusing and revealing.

Simple, concise, yet keenly observed, it's not hard to see why Hemingway was so feted as a writer. A meal involving the humble potato, is particularly memorable and if ever you needed an example of 'show don't tell' start here - you won't be disappointed.

Roald Dahl Collected Stories (Bryan)

I've come across many of Dahl's short stories in the past - used some in my travels as an English teacher. This collection is of his 50-odd published ones - starting with his first ones, written in war-time. They were huge in America (Disney picked up the idea of *Gremlins*) and helped make his name. It's amazing to see his short-story writing gift, right from the start - and you see that wonderful ironic voice of his develop and the skill with which he plays his reader's expectations. Inspiring. Well worth borrowing or buying.



1.A	Robert Frost (The Road Not Taken)
2.C	T.S. Eliot (The Love Story of J. Alfred Prufrock)
3.C	Toad (The Wind in the Willows. Kenneth Grahame)
4.B	Duke Orsino (Twelfth Night. William Shakespeare)
5.B	Julius Caesar
6.A	Oscar Wilde
7.C	Thomas Edison
8.C	Eric Morecambe (Morecambe and Wise Christmas Show 1971)
9.A	Wilkins Micawber (David Copperfield. Charles Dickens)
10.C	Dr. Seuss