

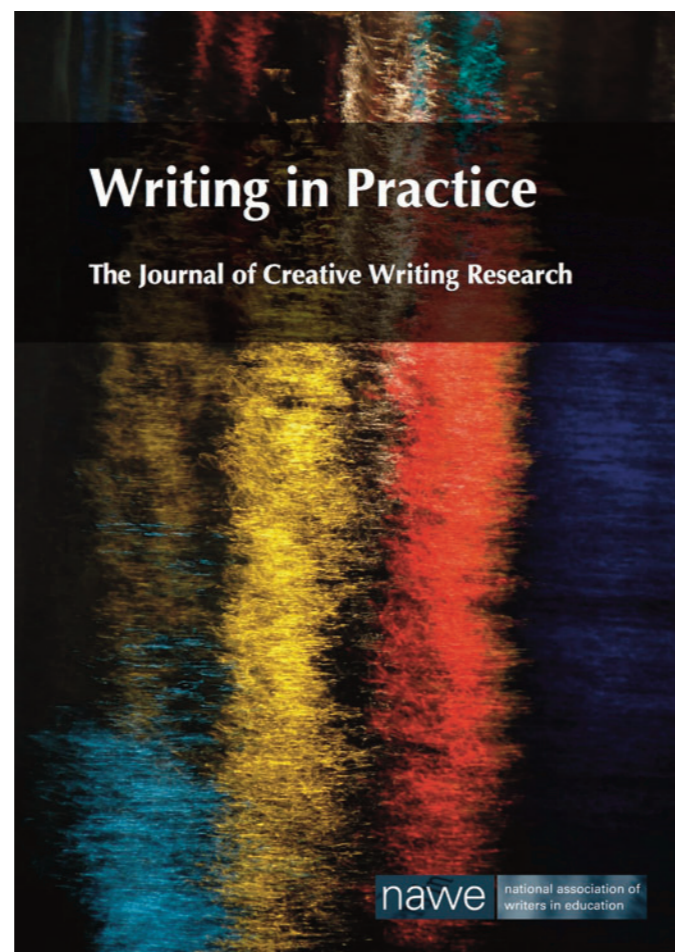
Writing in Practice

This year we announced the launch of our new Journal of Creative Writing Research, a peer-reviewed publication that aims to explore the nature of the art of writing, highlighting current academic thinking and practice, and reflecting on this with an international outlook. We were delighted with the response – not only from those submitting articles for the first edition (to be published in February 2015) but also from others within the international academic community, keen to support the venture as peer reviewers.

Sometimes we lead the way; at other times we're pleased to learn from others' experience, and the new journal certainly owes much to *TEXT, the Journal of Writing and Writing Courses* established by the Australasian Association of Writing Programs (AAWP). A peer-reviewed journal for the Creative Writing community in Australia and New Zealand has been of crucial importance to the status of the discipline within the academy. It was clearly time for NAWE to pursue a similar venture. The new, open access journal will complement *Writing in Education*, the NAWE magazine distributed to members. With the two publications we shall be able to feature the broadest possible range of articles and reports on writing as explored in all the great variety of contexts in which our members either lead the way – or need to learn.

International work has been prominent this past year, starting with our promotion of UK Creative Writing programmes at the AWP Conference and Bookfair in Seattle. Helena Blakemore and other representatives of our HE Committee have liaised with members of the European Association of Creative Writing Programmes, and we are pleased to welcome their President, Javier Sagarna, and Mariana Torres to give the opening talk at our conference in Bristol. In May I represented NAWE at the third biennial conference of the Canadian Creative Writers and Writing Programs (CCWWP), and in September at the first ever

South African colloquium on the teaching of writing. There are clear plans afoot for writers from both countries to take part in future NAWE events. What bemused me, in Grahamstown, was to hear a representative from a British



university mention that no such opportunity – to meet colleagues from other institutions and discuss matters of Creative Writing pedagogy – existed in the UK. We may be (rightly) proud of our inter-institutional collaborations and the discussions that take place at our conference and within the pages of our publications, but there is clearly much more work to be done.

NAWE is the Subject Association for Creative Writing, aiming to further knowledge, understanding and enjoyment of Creative Writing and to support good practice in its teaching and learning at all levels.



@NaweWriters

The NAWE Conference

NAWE members will be pleased to know that the conference in York, 2014, enjoyed by so many, also succeeded in covering its costs in full. This is the principle on which all our events and activities are now planned, in order for NAWE to thrive as a self sufficient organization. We have been helped in our efforts by Sarah Byrne of Mosaic Events, who has secured for us a number of commercial partnerships. Following the two years in York, we have reinstated our policy of moving the conference around the country, and after this year's Bristol event we shall head further north – to the Durham Radisson, 13-15 November 2015. A call for proposals will be issued in the Spring. All conference contributors are invited to submit written accounts of their workshops and presentations for publication in *Writing in Education* (or indeed, from now on, *Writing in Practice*). A full list of the 30 conferences to date, with links to the relevant magazine issues, is available on the website.

An Official Benchmark

Thanks to the efforts of our Higher Education Committee, and the wide respect for NAWE's own benchmark, the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (QAA) approved the case for developing a new, official benchmark, to be introduced in 2015. A number of NAWE members, representing a variety of universities, have been taking part in the drafting process. The benchmark, following standard form, will relate primarily to undergraduate study. Once it is launched, NAWE will revise its own Creative Writing Research Benchmark Statement, taking into account the different needs of postgraduate students and the growing sophistication of knowledge in this area.

Young Writers' Hub

The Hub has maintained a regular presence supporting young writers at festivals, workshops and institutions across the UK. We ran a successful mentorship programme and published three editions of our eBook journal, *Myths of the Near Future*, featuring interviews with Joe Dunthorne, Evie Wyld and many more. The plan is to implement a cross-platform "freemium" model, where digital editions are distributed free three times a year and then printed as an annual compendium. Wes Brown, responsible for the Hub, is currently preparing an Arts Council funding application to develop this work with young writers further, providing a Wattpad-style, safe and curated webspace, a new programme of events and residential workshops, more consultancy and feedback.



Sculpture in the grounds of the University of Canberra.

A Personal Reflection

When first employed by NAWE, in 1994, I took on a paid-up membership list of some 50 writers. Now membership stands at over 1500. Credit for that is shared with the other members of staff who have joined me over the years, all of us working closely together to realize the aims of the association. The strength of the membership is not just a number; it's the work of every individual writer/teacher combining to make an impact and raising a unified voice about the benefits of creativity – specifically writing – in education. Some of the achievements have exceeded our dreams: status as a Subject Association; a Creative Writing A Level; an official Benchmark for Creative Writing in Higher Education. Add to this our financial independence and there's much cause for celebration.

I have, personally, learned a great deal from the organization I have helped to develop, not least the importance of continuing professional development. Having taken some time out last year to study for a Professional Doctorate, I have since gained a new three-year research post – in poetry and creative studies – in

the International Poetry Studies Institute (IPSI) based at the University of Canberra.

IPSI's stated goals include working – collaboratively, where possible – to further the appreciation and understanding of poetry, poetic language and the cultural and social significance of poetry. The institute also organizes symposia, seminars, readings and other poetry-related activities and events.

Building on the international links already mentioned, I was pleased to put in place the affiliation between NAWE and IPSI last year, and look forward to strengthening the connections during my stay in Canberra. With a major conference on Poetry and Memory scheduled in Cambridge (23-24 March 2015), to coincide with the National Finals of Poetry by Heart, it's an exciting time for poetry studies – and the way in which the poetry community is collaborating at an international level.

<http://ipsi.org.au>



Poetry by Heart

Further to our work with the Poetry by Heart team over the past two years, we're delighted to be scheduling more professional development opportunities for teachers and writers working together. These events are organized by Anne Caldwell. In addition, we have a contract to deliver the county rounds of the competition throughout the North East. The aim is to develop the quality of the contests, turning them into lively poetry events in their own right, with community audiences and local press coverage. Our Conference Manager, Gill Greaves is leading the work on this. The special edition of *Writing in Education*, focusing on the project, was very well received, and a full length book is being planned, building on the content.

Poetry by Heart aims to make poetry more popular but it aims to do so by focusing on poems that are truly "great", or as Glyn Maxwell put it (in *Writing in Education* No. 63) "poems with superpowers", those that have survived the test of time. The rarity of the best poetry is part of its essence, and there's a tension between this and poetry's more inclusive possibilities, but I believe there are significant rewards to be found in exploring the interface between the two.

A Bigger Alliance

New this year is our partnership with engage, the National Association for Gallery Education, working on the Max Reinhardt Literacy Awards. This project links writers with museums and galleries, aiming to put in place some lasting resources for teachers developing creative writing with their students. A pilot project, it nevertheless builds on the success of NAWE's previous work with literary houses, *Writing on Location*, and we hope that it will run for further years, bringing more museums and galleries – and writers – into play. Our resources for teachers will, we hope, be augmented by a publication currently in development, relating to the Creative Writing A Level.

With engage and many others, as a result of our role within ArtWorks, the Paul Hamlyn special initiative "developing practice in participatory settings", we are moving towards an ArtWorks Alliance of all the key organizations involved in supporting such work. A bigger alliance is key to influencing policy makers, for instance in making the case for more artists to be deployed in the fields of health and social care. We trust that many of our existing partners, e.g Lapidus (the Retreat) and Arvon (the accredited Coaching Course) will be involved.

Turning a New Page

Our professional development programme to support Scotland's writers, Turning Another Page (2012-14), saw debut novelist Lucy Ribchester secure a two-book deal from a top London publisher as a result of attending our "Pitch Live!" event. Such headlines are invaluable, though it is of course the wider spread of progress, some of it inevitably lower-key, that is equally important. We are pleased to have secured further investment from Creative Scotland to extend the programme in 2014-15. Philippa Johnston will again be at the helm as project manager.

The new focus will be on supporting television writers. Working with a number of key broadcasting partners including BAFTA Scotland, BBC Scotland TV Drama, Celtic Media Festival, Glasgow Caledonian University and Screen Academy Scotland, as well as the Scottish Book Trust, we are planning a conference for television fiction writers in May 2015. This will explore the changing television landscape and look in particular at how writers gain that first, all-important, original commission.

The other strand of the programme will be around collaboration. As part of Turning Another Page, we held a networking event in Fife for writers and visual artists exploring the rewards and challenges of collaborating with practitioners from other art forms. The event, with its mix of talks and speed dating, was well received and we plan to replicate the event in other regions, extending the collaborative element in order that writers can explore working with each other as well as with practitioners in music, drama, dance and the visual arts.

As part of Turning Another Page, we commissioned a series of information resources for poets, focusing on being your own producer and setting up your own live event, with another series of more personal pieces exploring how writers can support their peers. These are being added to The Writer's Compass section of our website, and further resources will be commissioned next year.

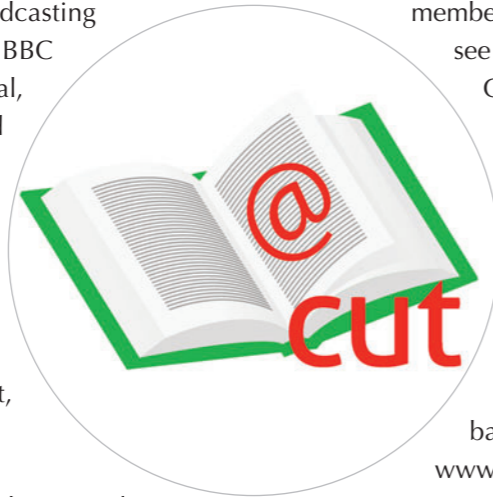
Cut a Long Story

When, two years ago, I was introduced to Tony Lahert and his vision for a short story publishing website, I was immediately convinced of the potential benefits to NAWE members – at whatever stage of their writing careers. At the time, conventional publishing of short fiction was a rarity. That situation seems to have improved, which is nothing but good news for the profile of CUT. Other digital publishing deals, however, have only got worse.

It is the first time that NAWE has been involved in a commercial opportunity, but the commerce is loaded entirely in our favour. Without any investment, NAWE members uploading their stories to the site will see them promoted for sale worldwide.

Certainly not the simple or quick project I envisaged, instead a meticulously planned intervention in global publishing, CUT will finally go live this Autumn, having been developed to the very highest standards, with professional support on all fronts. I'm proud to see the site make prominent display of its NAWE affiliation as a badge of literary quality.

www.cutalongstory.com.



The NAWE Team

I finish here, as ever, with mention of my colleagues. I am indebted to those who will, during my time in Australia, be taking on extra responsibilities. Wes Brown will take full charge of the website, and Clare Mallorie the finances in addition to her current administrative duties. We are also pleased to welcome back Philippa Johnston as a core member of the team, working not only on projects in Scotland but handling day-to-day enquiries. Anne Caldwell, as Deputy Director, will represent the association at top level during my absence. I myself, as ongoing Director, will remain as overall editor of all NAWE publications and continue to assist the team in the smooth running of all NAWE's work.

Paul Munden, November 2014