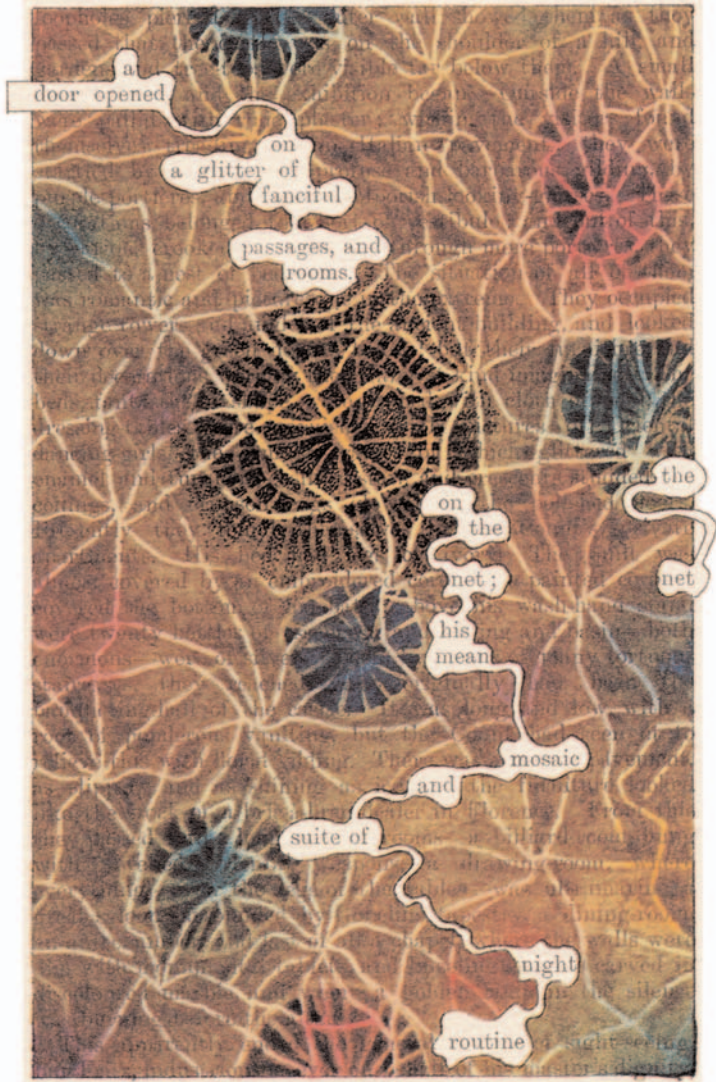


# “to infinity and beyond”



a NAWE conference on new writing & new media  
in association with Brunel University (London)  
Saturday 18 November 2006

nawe

national association of  
writers in education

## Introduction by Tim Wright

“The illiterate of the 21st century will not be those who cannot read and write, but those who cannot learn, unlearn, and relearn.” *Alvin Toffler*

Over 25 years ago, Alvin Toffler published his highly influential book *Futureshock*, warning us how the rapid rate of technological change would leave us all suffering from "shattering stress and disorientation". He is also the man who is credited with coining the phrase "information overload".

It's not the aim of this conference to leave you at the end of day feeling stressed and disorientated, but don't be surprised if you come away feeling overloaded. Overloaded with a sense of possibility.

You will be confronted by a bogging range of ideas, practices, tools, technologies, blogs, forums, applets, widgets and 'software updates'. You'll meet digital writers and new media artists who positively relish working outside their comfort zone, who are keen to expand their capabilities into new areas, who are working on the edge, happy not to know how to do something but keen to find out.

These people - and you are now one of them - are the learners, the unlearners, the relearners that Alvin Toffler wrote about.

Even given the esteemed company you're now in, you'll need to bear in mind that most of your day will still be concerned with what's happening 'now' - or what's possible within the very near future. True 'futureshockers' might want to look a little further ahead. So here are a few thoughts to push you into overload:

1. Mobile phones will become the primary way for people to gain access to digital content. Don't worry, this doesn't mean you all have to become talented writers of SMS text messages (although it's a good discipline to master). The phone will simply be the device that gives you access to screens and speakers dotted around your world.
2. Talking of which, digital screens will be everywhere (they already are) and soon you will be able to access highly personalized digital content from wherever you happen to be standing or sitting. When computers get out of the study and the classroom and onto the streets in this way, the kind of writing people will want to read will inevitably change.
3. We will start to wear computers (like we wear iPods now) and even make

them part of our bodies (we already do in the case of state-of-the-art pacemakers and high-tech hearing aids). Could you think of ways of stitching your writing into people's clothes - or their bodies?

4. Our homes are going to become much more 'intelligent' in that the you'll be able to talk to your cooker, your fridge, your vacuum cleaner. If we invest our white goods with interesting personalities, maybe we won't need dogs and cats any more! Seriously, how we 'play' with our houses in the future could be a great seam of creativity for a digital writer.

5. Already, with the growth of weblogs, we are witnessing a revolution in personal publishing. Very soon, it will be relatively easy to set up your own radio station, stream your own video, set up your own high resolution print on demand book shop. In a such an overcrowded marketplace, writers are going to have to become highly entrepreneurial about how they make a living from their craft.

And finally, yes, in the future there will be robots. The wizards and bots of today are going to grow into highly developed forms of artificial intelligence. Hell, it might even be possible to set up a few writing robots to do some of your job for you. And this, of course, will give you more time to attend conferences. Enjoy your day!

*Tim Wright has worked in new media as a writer since 1994. His credits include the web & email drama 'Online Caroline' and 'In Search of Oldton', a collaborative digital writing project that also morphed recently into a pack of playing cards and a BBC Radio 4 Afternoon Play. <http://timwright.typepad.com>*

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## **Programme: Saturday 18 November**

09.00-09.30 Registration and coffee

09.30-09.40 Welcome by Paul Munden, Director of NAWÉ

09.40-10.25 Plenary

### **Introduction and presentation - Fay Weldon and Kate Pullinger**

Brunel's newly appointed chair of creative writing, Fay Weldon, will talk about writing for new media, and award-winning novelist Kate Pullinger will follow this by demonstrating a recent piece of digital fiction. There will be time at the end for questions and discussion.

10.30-11.30 Choice of:

**Session A**

*presentation and discussion*

**Broadcasting, Online Media and Poetry - Richard Wright**

'Everything online' is seen as changing our reading. Less is said about writing, especially poetry. Has anything changed since Homer? Printing made text more democratic. Cinema and broadcasting made the 20th century qualitatively different: a cat (from any part of society) could look at a Queen -- and hear her, and her intercepted SMS messages. There are identifiable, quantifiable and significant differences in access to media as we 'go digital'. Online archives (e.g. the BBC) are waves in a sea of information. Our immersion changes how we write, because it alters access to information and experience. Details will be presented covering all media, concentrating on audiovisual media and their involvement in creative activity.

**Session B**

*presentation and discussion*

**Poetry and iPods - Paul Beasley**

This session will examine the nature and explore the possibilities of poetry's relationship with the new media - including new forms of poetic productions and distribution for the internet, for iPods and other emerging mobile technologies. I propose to argue that the internet is a powerful communications medium and a decentred space for cultural production and exchange. It is arguably elitist and yet potentially liberating - and as with previous technological revolutions it requires a re-situating of poetry – only here and now it is possible for poetry to position itself at the heart of new and developing systems of dynamic and interactive multi-media cultural production.

**Session C**

*presentation and discussion*

**How can new media best be used to support creative writing teaching? - Athena Hadji and Athena Zampara**

New technologies are accompanied by new conceptualizations of things pre-existing: a different idea of time and space is formed, since, given the nonlinear principles of operation of new digital technologies, they allow for transgressions of well-established linear boundaries of time and space. The expression of creativity through the use of multimedia does not solely presuppose familiarity with the technological aspect of the medium employed, but also the idea of a new concept of aesthetics. The project – any project under consideration is “out there”, since its digital form allows for rapid and

low-cost dissemination. There is great potential for interaction where consumer and producer blend into participants and partakers of a cultural experience. We shall present a case study implemented in Greek 'Second Chance Schools' for former drop-outs.

## **Session D**

*workshop*

### **"Between Worlds" - Helen and Julie Ward**

In 2004 Jack Drum Arts was invited to undertake an action research project as part of the DfES national ICT Test Bed project in West Durham. The artists who participated in the programme included NAWA member, writer, performer and storyteller Julie Ward. The project aimed to explore creative uses of ICT in the class-room and in particular how traditional artform methods can enrich educational use of new media technology. This workshop will demonstrate some of the methods the artists used and display the results of the work, including an online haiku project.

11.30-11.50 Coffee/tea

11.50-13.15 Choice of:

## **Session A**

*presentations and discussion*

### **\*Asterisk, centre for the study and development of narrative:**

#### **What is this place all about? - Patrick Wildgust**

*The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman* was written at Shandy Hall in the 18th century. Interactivity, hypertext, non-linear narrative, blogging - all achieved within the fixed boundaries of a book. What would Laurence Sterne have done with new technology? Did he need it?

#### **The Multiple Perspectives of Jekyll & Hyde: Rewriting the old with the new - Calum Kerr**

Much research has been undertaken on the theory and practice of hypertext, and more has been done on the processes of both writing and rewriting, but there has been little investigation of the cross-over between these two fields. For my PhD I rewrote Stevenson's classic novella as a hypertext entitled *The Multiple Perspectives of Jekyll & Hyde*. This paper will look at the creation of this work and the necessary interaction between rewriting a canonical work and writing for hypertext. In doing so, each discipline throws light on the other, revealing both strengths and weaknesses in both forms.

## **Session B**

*presentations and discussion*

### **"Crossing Points" - Franz Andres Morrissey and Barry Ingle**

The presentation showcases joint work-in-progress, based on a selection of Franz's poems and Barry's work in multimedia presentation. It outlines the process that began with a choice of poems, which provided Barry with a starting point for ways to 'stage' these, partly in the format of poetry clips (with a nodding reference to music clips), partly with animated text. The sound track and the separate audio CD explores the possibilities of presenting texts of all kinds, in this case, poems, using sound editing and multitrack recording techniques. The aim of the presentation is to show, non-judgmentally, alternatives to the print media, how to present ways in which texts are to work off as well as on the page, but also the limitations of the format and the challenges it presents. A discussion of issues such as the market for such work and its adaptation to various media guises including streaming on the Net will round off the presentation.

### **"Good Grief not Games...!": A Ludic Approach to Poetry-in-Schools - Gavin Stewart**

This presentation will report on the production of 'Mystery Museum', an innovative multimedia poetry-based game developed by Gavin Stewart, in conjunction with Year 3 of Heathwood Lower School for Big Arts Week 2005. It will explore the evolution of the 'multimedia' methodology employed in this school session by looking at the development of other poetry-based, multimedia collaborations involving both young and adult writers. It will conclude that a multimedia, game-based approach can be useful, in conjunction with more 'traditional' approaches, for encouraging young writers to explore poetic language through both reading and writing.

## **Session C**

*presentations and discussion*

### **Bypassing the Gate-Keepers: why the internet is the best thing that ever happened to writers - Ros Barber**

For new writers to reach their audiences through traditional print media has become increasingly difficult. Blogging allows writers to overcome the traditional isolation of the art and communicate freely with a worldwide readership, without the frustrations (and time-lag) of print. Talented writers can establish an audience rapidly, allowing them to build a reputation that is then transferable into the world of print. Drawing from her experiences, Ros Barber will demonstrate how, armed with only Wikipedia, Google, Blogger and an e-mail account, a writer can feed the creative stream of their writing, side-step the gatekeepers of traditional publishing, and build their own audience.

## **New ways of thinking and old ways of writing: a recipe for success for writing on the internet - Neil Davidson**

Many writers are afraid of the Internet, sure that they don't even know what they don't know, but the opportunities are endless. The old skills of storytelling are as relevant online as they are offline and the internet offers greater possibilities for understanding and connecting with audiences. Neil Davidson will explain why the internet needs skilled writers and the tricks of writing for the internet. He'll explain concepts such as online communities, linking strategies and keyword research and how writers can use these to transform the effectiveness of a piece of writing and make sure that their audience finds it. He will also discuss a recent case study with a commercial client, which brought together storytelling and online technology to deliver results which the usual ways of writing for the internet could not have delivered.

13.15-14.25 Lunch

13.50-14.25 NAWE Annual General Meeting

14.30-15.40 Choice of:

### **Session A**

*presentation and workshop*

## **Reading the New Media - Will Buckingham and David Fine**

As with any writing form, new media writing will become mature once there is an established and recognized readership separate from the writers themselves. Despite the growth of writers working in new media, and with the exception of the weblog as a literary form there is little in the way of this mature readership for hypertext and more experimental new media writing – there are no J K Rowlings or indeed minor yet acknowledged poets purely on the web. At the same time there is a coming generation of students who are more at home opening their mobile phones to text than a letterpad to write. Print and paper-based writers need to acknowledge this to both realize the potential of new media and new students. This paper (and workshop) will define new media reading and how it relates to writers helping others to write.

### **Session B**

*presentations and discussion*

## **Pretty Information - Georgina Lock**

My website <<http://www.handstandfilms.co.uk/>> works hard for its cyberspace, spreading the word (and images) about my new short film, supporting a production company and advertising an editorial consultancy. It

is also a teaching aid. In this seminar, I describe my decisions in posting material that is attractive to the roaming eye and useful to students and professionals as prelude to discussing how the web can encourage as well as enjoy attention to structure and economy of verbal expression.

### **"OWL: Expanding Creativity through E-Learning" - Zara Waldeback**

This paper offers a case study of how e-learning can enable writing students to understand and expand their creativity and writing skills. TVU's Creative Screenwriting MA is delivered mixed mode, with a blend of classroom and online teaching. The OWL system (Online Writing and Learning) has been developed with HEFCE funding to create a learning context for the MA, with both module-led content and stand-alone student support. An umbrella concept, OWL works across a number of platforms (Blackboard, web, blogs, wikis) to aid students with reflective learning, creative expression and exploring their voice. The paper will examine how writing can be taught online, how e-learning can support classroom teaching and how both writing craft and creative approaches can be enhanced by online learning.

### **Session C**

*presentation and discussion*

### **A Brief History of The Byteback Book - Ian Daley**

Think hardback, paperback and now – byteback, e-books that are real books printed on paper. Publishers have varied book forms over the centuries to meet the availability of technology and the practicality of getting books to readers. As publishing drifts into the digital age, the byteback book is a natural progression for the book form. The byteback is a book designed to be distributed over the internet and made up into a real, paper book by readers to be enjoyed away from the computer screen. The byteback book is pioneered by independent publisher Route on [www.route-online.com](http://www.route-online.com). This talk will outline Route's long term engagement with literature and the internet and how the byteback book was arrived at. Further, the talk will outline the numerous benefits of this new form to writers, readers and publishers alike.

15.40-16.00 Coffee/tea

16.00-17.00 Plenary

### **Using the web to promote yourself as a writer - Plenary panel discussion facilitated by literaturetraining**

This final session of the conference will explore how writers can use the internet to increase their profile and awareness of their work. Ros Barber



(chair), Paul Beasley, Ian Daley and Neil Davidson discuss the opportunities afforded by having your own website, blogging, social networking sites such as MySpace, podcasting and more.

17.00 Drinks and close

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## **one-to-one sessions with literaturetraining**

literaturetraining is a group of eight leading literature organizations (including NAWE) working in partnership to provide information, advice and guidance on professional development for writers and literature professionals.

literaturetraining will be at the conference manning a delegate information point for professional development with reference publications, writers' magazines, training information and partner leaflets.

In addition, literaturetraining will be offering hour-long one-to-one sessions for delegates looking for information and advice on specific professional development matters. There will also be an opportunity within the sessions for delegates to look more broadly at their writing career and what they would like to achieve, if they wish. Please book in advance on your booking form - places will be allocated on a first come, first served basis. Please note that delegates will be asked to complete a short preparatory questionnaire to help provide a focus for the session.

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## **Conference Booking**

To book a place on the conference, please complete the booking form (also available online) and return it with your payment to NAWE by 20 October. Named contributors to the programme should complete a different form, as personally supplied.

Conference updates, details of local accommodation and full travel directions are published on the NAWE website <[www.nawe.co.uk](http://www.nawe.co.uk)> under Training & Events/NAWE Conference. Please also refer to the Conference page to access any blog(s) that may be set up ahead of the event.

All enquiries to Gill Greaves <[g.greaves@nawe.co.uk](mailto:g.greaves@nawe.co.uk)>  
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## Contributor Biographies

**Ros Barber** is a prize-winning writer whose work has been widely published and broadcast (Independent on Sunday, Radio 4, Poetry Review, London Magazine). She has been creative writing tutor at the University of Sussex since 1997. Her blog, Shallowlands, attracts over 1,000 visitors a month.

**Paul Beasley** is Director of 57 Productions - an agency and production company specializing in contemporary poetry. 57 is the founder and host of [www.poetryjukebox.com](http://www.poetryjukebox.com) and is launching [www.ipoems.org.uk](http://www.ipoems.org.uk) and [www.poetryvideojukebox.com](http://www.poetryvideojukebox.com) in Autumn 2006.

**Will Buckingham's** first novel, *Cargo Fever*, will be published by Tindal Street Press in March 2007. He is currently completing a PhD in continental philosophy and ethics at Staffordshire University and runs Birmingham Words <<http://www.birminghamwords.co.uk>>, an online writers' community.

**Ian Daley** is the founding editor of Route, an independent publisher of contemporary fiction with a strong track record of innovative methods of disseminating the written word. He has overseen a number of website developments including the pioneering Opening Line site.

**Neil Davidson** is an independent marketing communications consultant and writer. He has a MA in Creative and Transactional Writing from Brunel University and occasionally teaches creative writing. He is also a blogger – [www.silverdarlings.typepad.com](http://www.silverdarlings.typepad.com).

**David Fine** is currently preparing to be 'A Poet in a Coffin' covering the next Ashes Series with funding from Arts Council England. This may well include poems on the replay screens. He co-ordinates [www.lit-net.org](http://www.lit-net.org), a virtual literature centre for the West Midlands.

**Athena Hadji** holds a PhD in Ancient History and Mediterranean Archaeology at the University of California at Berkeley. One of her fields of expertise is anthropology of technology. She works as a freelance translator and editor.

**Barry Ingle** is currently a lecturer in Media Arts at St Mary's College, Twickenham, teaching digital graphics and video production. His own work ranges across diverse visualising practices encompassing painting, print-making, paper and fibre art, photography and digital imaging.

**Calum Kerr** studied for his BA in English and MA and PhD in Creative Writing at Manchester Metropolitan University. He is currently taking time out from teaching to concentrate on his writing. His PhD work, *The Multiple Perspectives of Jekyll & Hyde*, can be found online at [www.calumkerr.co.uk](http://www.calumkerr.co.uk).

**Georgina Lock** teaches screenwriting and creative writing on the MA and BA at Nottingham Trent. She is also a film-maker. This year she has written, directed and produced a DV drama, the 4.24 min *The Pick Up*.

**Franz Andres Morrissey** teaches creative writing at Berne University. He is author of the British Council / BBC World Service teaching pack, *Creative Ways*. His website <[www.creative-writing.ch](http://www.creative-writing.ch)> features the “Collaboratory”, an experiment in interactive collaborative poetry.

**Kate Pullinger**'s most recent digital work is *The Breathing Wall*. She was the Research Fellow for trAce online writing centre, is currently the Royal Literary Fund Virtual Fellow and was involved in setting up the new MA in Creative Writing and Technology at De Montfort University.

**Gavin Stewart** is a Research Associate for the Narrative Laboratory for the Creative Industries based at De Montfort University. His web-based texts for adults and children include *landfill*, *homecoming*, *slippage* and *choice/cuts*. He is also the poet-in-residence for the Chiltern Study Centre, Ivinghoe.

**Zara Waldeback** is Programme Leader for the Creative Screenwriting MA at Thames Valley University. She has taught at Brunel and Sussex universities and writes feature films, shorts and TV scripts. She is currently writing a novel, as well as exploring therapeutic writing and its relationship to creativity.

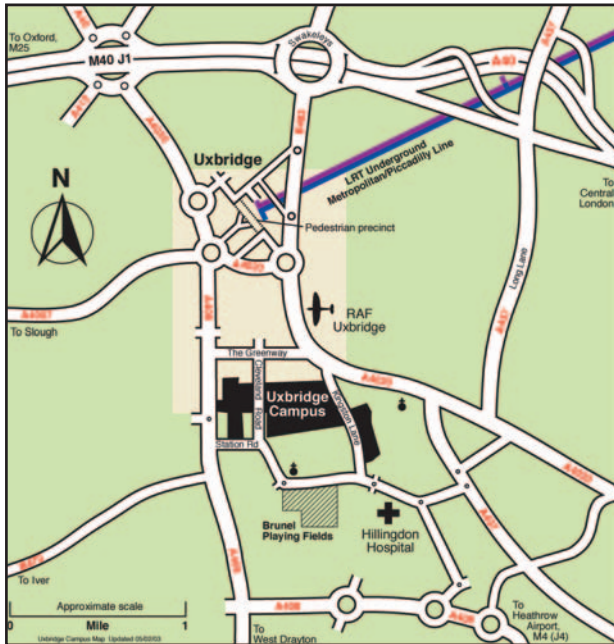
**Helen & Julie Ward** are sisters who use their different creative skills and artform specialisms to explore new ways of working with ICT. They won the Chrisi Bailey Media in Education award in 2003 for a project with early years children. Julie was recently lead practitioner at the Centre for the Children's Book as part of a DfES scheme called Cultural Hubs.

**Fay Weldon**'s work includes novels, short stories, children's books, non-fiction, magazine articles, and plays written for television, radio and the stage. Her latest book, *What Makes Women Happy*, offers wisdom gleaned from a remarkable life, a brilliantly successful career and a fair share of trouble.

**Patrick Wildgust** is the curator of Shandy Hall in Coxwold, North Yorkshire, where Laurence Sterne wrote *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy*.

**Richard Wright** is Technology Manager, BBC archives, and a widely unpublished poet. He has a PhD in signal processing (University of Southampton) specializing in audio and speech technology.

**Athena Zampara** has an MA in History and Philosophy of Science. She has extensive experience in multimedia productions for educational purposes and is studying for a PhD in the evaluation of e-learning programmes.



**Conference location:  
Brunel University, Uxbridge, Middlesex UB8 3PH**