

### Class Writing

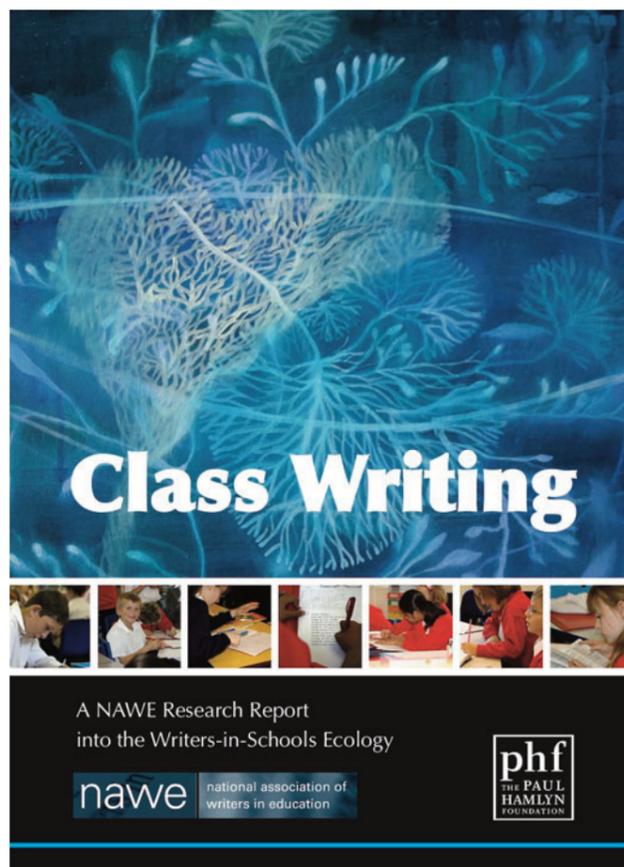
This Autumn we are publishing the report of our research into the effectiveness of writers working in schools. It involved the placement of writers in nine schools across England (four primary and five secondary) over nine academic terms between September 2006 and July 2009. The results tell a highly positive story, of pupils making better progress when working with writers, even when circumstances were not ideal. It's exciting to see evidence that working with writers really does have a positive influence on pupils' levels of attainment and we also have many new pointers to improve how writers' visits are managed - something that our network of Project Managers will now be putting into practice.

Beyond the statistical charting of progress, the feedback from all parties involved bears witness to a considerable enrichment. The pupils' own feedback demonstrates how they gained confidence and also learned how to write more expressively; how expressive writing applies to so many different things; how learning is rewarding and enjoyable; how to edit; how to *think*.

Comments point to how the project had an effect on the technical aspects of writing, including important matters of structure and organization, and also on pupils' imaginative engagement. The writing they produced within the project (some of which is included in the report) demonstrates this increased grasp of how writing can be used to unlock both intellectual and emotional responses.

The report includes case studies for each of the nine schools. The concluding sections then explore the critical factors emerging from the work, including: the role of the writer; the relationship with teachers; the importance of planning and follow-up, variety and sequence, links with the curriculum, and the environment in which the work takes place. On this last matter, there are strong

recommendations in the report that schools should take advantage of any opportunity to take pupils out of the classroom entirely - especially to any museums and galleries within reach. As a consequence, it is particularly rewarding that NAWE has since secured funding to run a new project exploring this very idea. (See overleaf.)



The chosen title for this final report, *Class Writing*, is a direct reference to Malcolm Bradbury's anthology, *Class Work* (Bradbury, 1995), a collection of writing by MA students at the University of East Anglia. Bradbury's groundbreaking MA has led to an extraordinary proliferation of HE writing courses in the UK (now linked by NAWE's HE Network). The teaching and assessing of

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**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.**

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creative writing at university level is now very well defined, so it's somewhat ironic that the subject still struggles for appropriate recognition in British schools, where writers were running workshops long before Bradbury was introducing them at Norwich. The evidence collected through this project - and other recent related research - should assist in correcting the situation. A copy of *Class Writing* is being sent free to every NAWE Professional Member. It is also available to purchase online from...

### The New NAWE Website

As pictured here, we have a completely new website, which combines the three sites previously maintained (NAWE, literaturetraining and artscape) together with a Young Writers' Hub. This combination alone makes good sense but the site also takes NAWE forward in the way that it has 'unpacked' all our resources and enabled membership and payments to be managed online.

### Membership

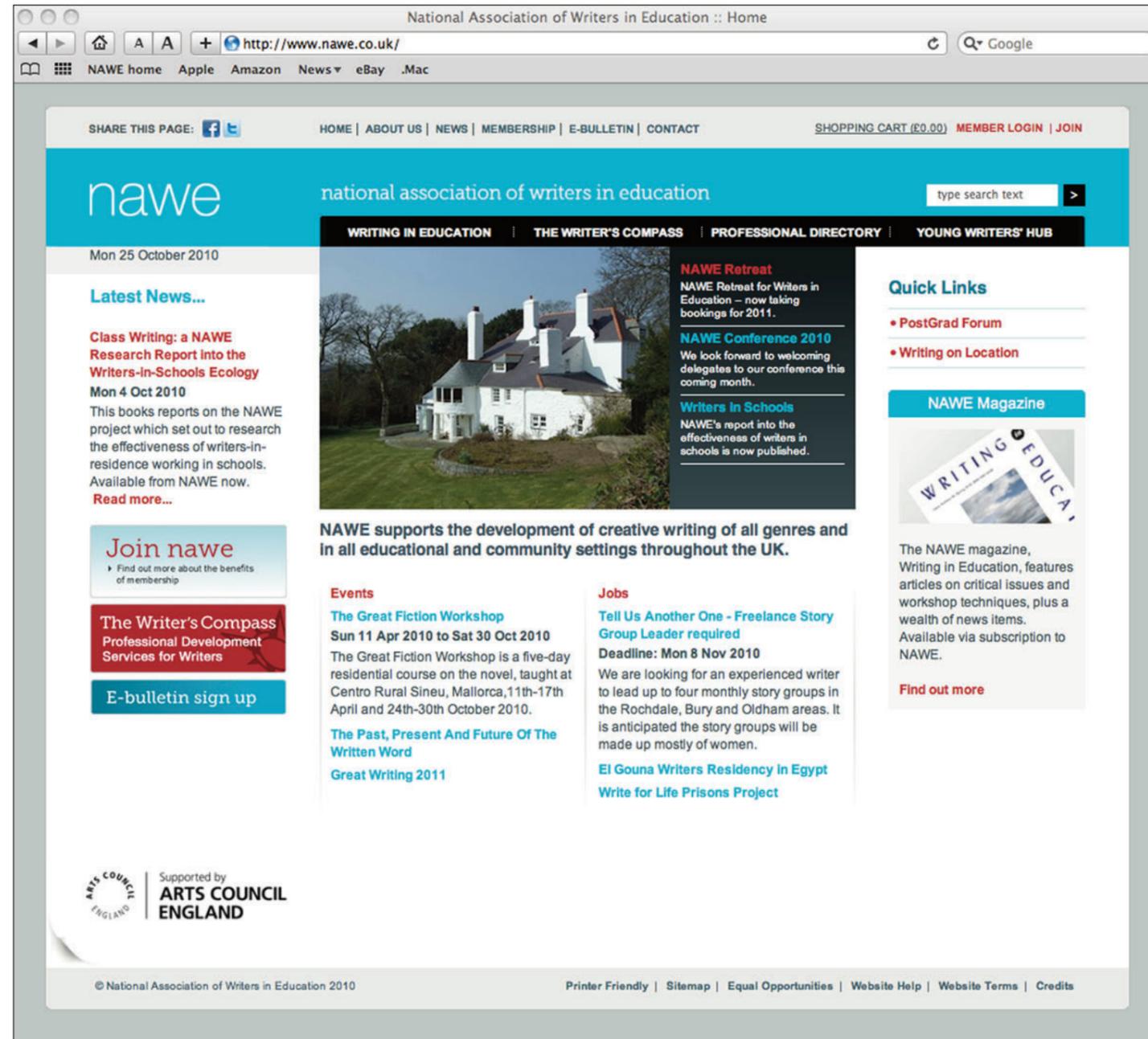
Even at a time when many individuals have been forced to make economies, our membership has continued to rise (to 1175). With subscriptions now facilitated online, we believe that this figure will now rise even more swiftly. Logged into the site, members have full access to all NAWE resources, are able to purchase books, magazines and also pay for events at reduced rates. Professional Members can download a personal certificate of their public liability insurance. They can also be listed on...

### The Professional Directory

Replacing artscape is a new directory that promotes the work of all NAWE Professional Members - whether offering workshops in schools or providing mentoring or coaching services. We also hope you like the map!

### The NAWE Magazine, *Writing in Education*

All visitors to the website can now browse the full back catalogue of what NAWE has collected and published over the past 20 years. A single page enables you to view all previous editions of the magazine, with individual articles then summarized. The full text is reserved for members only. Most importantly, we have introduced clear links across all areas of the site, pointing to the magazine articles that are particularly helpful to writers working in certain arenas, such as prisons, health care, regeneration - and, of course, the popular areas of schools and Higher Education. Back copies of the printed



magazine can now be purchased from the site, along with other NAWE publications and related books, such as those from the Teachers and Writers Collaborative in the US.

### Higher Education

Our network now has a formally elected Committee, elections taking place online, even as I write. Our seminar series has been ongoing, in conjunction with the English Subject Centre, and new this year - led by postgraduate students who have attended our network meetings - is a PostGrad Forum on the website, providing some answers to typical questions about studying for a Creative Writing PhD. We aim to develop this section further and look forward to hearing any suggestions.

### NAWE Conference

Our annual residential conference continues to expand, with the event starting ever earlier on the Friday, and the number of contributors increasing (from 66 last year to 78). We are particularly pleased to welcome this year so many contributors from overseas - from the US, Australia and China. In return, NAWE members will be contributing to the forthcoming conferences held in Melbourne and Washington DC.

### Writing on Location

Our latest project is in partnership with MLA (Museums, Libraries and Archives Council) and the British Library,

offering professional development events for teachers at museums and literary houses across England. This is part of a larger project (LinC) that addresses the theme of literacy in a museum and archive context. The aim is to provide a creative writing element within the professional development activities and resources for teachers and museum professionals, in turn providing a clear means of engaging school pupils with museum collections through creative writing. NAWE members have been involved with this type of work over a number of years. It has been clearly demonstrated how an imaginative approach through creative writing can complement critical enquiry - indeed be part of that enquiry. For teachers and their pupils, the combination of heritage site and contemporary writer is in itself an effective way of understanding the link between creative writing and literary study.

A special edition of the NAWE magazine will be produced with input from each of the writers and their museum colleagues. This will provide a reflective summary of the work undertaken, pitched as a resource for other writers, museum professionals and teachers, and incorporating everything we learn from evaluating the project. The publication will go to all NAWE members, with copies also made available to the British Library and museums.

### Young Writers' Hub

As proposed last year, NAWE has built the Hub as a distinct yet integrated part of the new NAWE website. It has been designed by Wes Brown (in conjunction with NAWE and web developers HCI York Ltd), employed by NAWE as Young Writers' Co-ordinator. Wes will be expanding the range of information, links and resources in all of the sections. With a launch this Autumn and wide publicity and promotion to young writers, we envisage the Hub then swiftly developing into a focus for writing activity and communication amongst the community of young writers throughout the UK.

This promotion of the Hub will in turn facilitate promotion of all young writers' events and activity. The involvement of interns will explore how the site might be 'managed' in a more thoroughly democratic way. Funded initially for writers in Yorkshire, the site will serve young writers nationally and make their work highly visible on the international stage.

Young writers are learning their craft and trade in a variety of ways - both in and outside formal education. The positioning of the Hub within the NAWE site is of real importance in nurturing the connections between all types of opportunities for writer development.

## The Writer's Compass

The Writer's Compass is the new name for all NAWE's professional development services for writers. It brings together NAWE's professional development programme (of seminars and courses, one-to-one services and annual writers' retreat for members) with the wide range of free information and advice services for writers generally, not just those working in education, formerly offered by literaturetraining. Our aim is to help writers in all genres, and at all stages in their development, to steer a course through the complexities of the writing life and build and sustain their careers.

New this year was our accredited training in coaching skills tailored specifically for writers. We have been delighted by the full take-up for this training and therefore plan to repeat it in the future. We have also offered year-round one-to-one support through the new 'Compass Points' programme that includes a Reader Feedback Service, Professional Development Planning and Coaching.

Subscribers to our free e-bulletin continue to increase, with over 5000 individuals reading it every fortnight. The bulletin includes information on jobs, competitions, submissions and commissions, workshops and courses, mentoring and manuscript appraisal services, conferences and events, magazines, books, organizations and more, from hundreds of sources.

As well as assisting individuals, we act as an information and advice resource for literature organizations, university creative writing programmes and others who support the development of writers. We have made significant headway in promoting the benefits to writers of investing in their own professional development and we assist other writers' organizations and individuals interested in establishing their own Professional Development Planning services.

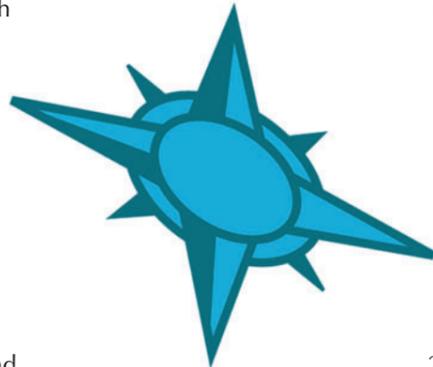
We have continued to commission and compile a wide

range of resources including: Information Sheets – a series of quick guides to the key organizations and other resources available to support writers across the UK; Briefings – 'how to' factsheets to support the creative and business aspects of being a writer (most recently Alison Baverstock writing about the importance of marketing); Professional Development Guides – practical handbooks on professional development planning, mentoring and evaluation; and 'How did I get here?' features written by writers at different stages in their careers. All are available as free downloads from the site.

## The Team

As ever, I should like to thank our Management Committee and our staff. Working as we do - all on a freelance basis, with no single 'public' office, presents its challenges, especially when most individuals work very much part-time. It is however an extremely efficient arrangement, with NAWE bearing no overhead costs. We trust that this efficiency commends us well to funders, though it also of course leaves precious little room to make further economies in these demanding times. Our 'revised' settlement from the Arts Council for 2011-2012 has reduced our funding by roughly £10,000 - a considerable figure though one that we can adapt to with some confidence. The picture beyond that is more complex, with an entirely new application required of us, as with every Regularly Funded Organization in the country. We do believe that NAWE is in a strong position to make a fresh claim to public support, on account of our growing membership, our highly valued work for the entire writing community, and our strategic role in ensuring a purposeful and productive relationship between all aspects of writer development right across the educational spectrum. We look forward to sharing our latest plans in the New Year.

*Paul Munden, October 2010*



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