

Publishers



Worker Writers & Community

...jumping into that wonderful *warm* sea of **community**...

£2

● **Participation in the Arts**

v12

● **Our Stories**

Win

● **Community Radio**

97-98

● **Brighton's Youthful History**

The Federation of

Funded by

THE
ARTS
COUNCIL
OF ENGLAND

Feditorial

The Federation of Worker Writers and Community Publishers

Since 1976 the Fed has established itself as the voice of community writing and publishing. Working with and on behalf of our Membership, we have developed our policies so that all who wish to participate are able to do so. Representing people from Mauritius to Merseyside, Wales to Whitechapel, ours is truly an international organisation.

The Fed encourages an inclusive approach to creativity.

Community based writers' groups, publishers and adult literacy organisations network to help people develop their skills. Performance, oral and life history projects enable people to take an active role in their communities. Our co-operative approach values the participation of those who are homeless, survivors or people with different abilities. Groups meet to share skills and offer constructive criticism and support.

The Fed IS Its Membership.

Management and strategic planning are directed by representatives elected from member groups. All are encouraged to play an active role in decision making.

We believe that our difference **is our strength**. We'd like to hear from you.

Mail: The FWWCP, Box 540, Stoke-on-Trent ST6 6DR

Website: <http://www.fwwcp.mcmail.com>

Phone/Fax: 01782 822327

E-mail: fwwcp@mcmail.com

"...on the one hand the sense of direct common concern; on the other hand the materialisation of various forms of common organisation... **Community** can be the warmly persuasive word to describe an existing set of relationships, or the warmly persuasive word to describe an alternative set of relationships... Unlike all other terms of social organisation (state, nation, society, etc.) it seems never to be used unfavourably, and never to be given any positive opposing or distinguishing term. "
Raymond Williams, Keywords.

This issue of Federation looks at community issues around writing: Francois Matarasso on the social benefits of arts participation, followed later in this issue by Fed members Harry Dempsey and Arthur Thickett's accounts of their involvement in community publishing sand worker writing; Roger Drury on Forest `Artworks! experience of Community Radio, and publications from Educational Heretics and Element books on Community arts and Community publishing. Clearly, particularly from Harry and Arthurs' stories - and those of the earlier Women's issue of this magazine, the FWWCP's work is both about a sense of local communities - or as Gatehouse's latest Somali book reviewed in this issue shows - communities within our communities - and also about an awareness of the greater community we share as writers, despite or even because of our differences.

Nick Pollard

contents

FEATURES

Francois Matarasso - Use or Ornament: The Social Impact of Participation in the Arts	page 3
Roger Drury: Community Radio	page 8
Our Stories: Harry Dempsey	page 9
Arthur Thickett	page 10
QueenSpark - The Changing	
Face of Youth in Brighton	page 12

REVIEWS

Nicki Jackowska - Write for Life	page 13
Mark Webster - Finding Voices - Making Choices	page 14
Gatehouse - A Song for Carrying Water	page 15
New Books	page 15
News, Events & Jobs	page 16

contents

USE OR ORNAMENT

The Social Impact of Participation
in the Arts
by Francois Matarasso

Taking part in local arts projects is a popular way of becoming involved in community activities; (it is one of the top 6 reasons for volunteering in the UK).

Skills learnt in the arts can be applied to other local projects; Participatory arts projects can also be empowering, and help people gain control over their lives;

They can also play a vital role in the regeneration process, facilitating consultation and partnership between residents and public agencies.

Arts projects can nurture local democracy. They encourage people to become more active citizens, and strengthen support for local and self-help projects.

Britain has seen an increasing use of arts initiatives to address socioeconomic problems in recent years, ranging from major capital schemes to local participatory projects. While the economic value of these has been researched, there has been no large scale study of their social benefits. Between September 1995 and March 1997, Comedia, a leading independent research group, undertook the first phase of a study into the social impacts of arts programmes. This concentrated on participation in the arts, as the area most widely claimed to support personal and community development.

This paper summarises the first phase of Comedia's study of the social impact of the arts, which includes research in the UK and abroad. This research found that:

- Participation in the arts is an effective route for personal growth, leading to enhanced confidence, skill-building and educational developments which can improve people's social contacts and employability.
- It can contribute to social cohesion by developing networks and understanding, and building local capacity for organisation and self-determination.
- It brings benefits in other areas such as environmental renewal and health promotion, and injects an element of creativity into organisational planning.
- It produces social change which can be seen, evaluated and planned for.
- It represents a flexible, responsive and cost-effective element of a community development strategy.
- It strengthens rather than dilutes Britain's cultural life, and forms a vital factor of success rather than a soft option in social policy.

The study concludes that a marginal adjustment of priorities in cultural and social policy could deliver real socio-economic benefits to people and communities, and recommends a framework for developing the role of participatory arts initiatives in public policy.

(.... Continued overleaf)

Use Or Ornament

Background

Rationale

Over the last 10 years it has become increasingly accepted that the arts play an important role in the economic life of the country. These arguments have informed public policy, especially in urban renewal, and underpin much recent political thinking on the arts. But they have two flaws:

1. They tend to focus on financial issues rather than on economics in its deeper sense as the management of society's resources;
2. They miss the real purpose of the arts, which is not to create wealth but to contribute to a stable, confident and creative society.

Those who work in the arts, especially in the participatory sector, have long argued that they produce positive social impacts. But they have had very little independent evidence with which to support that contention. Indeed, some argue that such qualitative benefits cannot be evaluated at all.

The research

This research was designed to add a dimension to existing economic and aesthetic rationales for the arts by looking at their role in social development and cohesion. Given the complexity involved, the study was undertaken as a first step into this area, with two aims:

To identify evidence of the

social impacts of participation in the arts at amateur or community level;

To identify ways of assessing social impact which are helpful and workable for policy-makers and those working in the arts or social fields.

To this end, case study research was undertaken in Batley, Bolton, Hounslow, London, Nottingham, Sandwell, Portsmouth, Northern Scotland, Derry, Helsinki and New York.

Additional research included the use of a questionnaire for participants (from which figures in this paper are drawn). A series of working papers on various aspects of social impact of the arts, including research in Australia and the USA, was published.

The methodology included questionnaires, interviews, formal and informal discussion groups, participant observation, agreed indicators, observer groups and other survey techniques, as well as desk research. None was satisfactory in itself, but each contributed to a multidimensional understanding of project outcomes.

Introduction

The research divided the social impacts of participation in the arts into six different themes, relating to people as individuals or community change; there is obviously a degree of overlap between them.

Principal Research Findings

Personal Development

'It made me realise that I'm capable of doing anything I put my mind to.'

Participation in the arts can have a significant impact on people's self-confidence, and as a result on their social lives. Many participants go on to become involved in other community activities or personal development through training. In some cases, like the V & A Mughal Tent project, people feel they have gained more control over how they are seen by friends and family. In others, the arts work has provided groups with an opportunity to think about their rights and social responsibilities.

Most participants have gained practical and social skills which they feel will help them in their working and home lives. Teachers identified educational benefits to schoolchildren in several areas including language development, creativity and social skills. A significant proportion of adult participants have been encouraged to take up training or education opportunities. Some people, especially those working with digital technology, have found work as a result of being involved, while many more believe that their new skills and confidence will make it easier for them to get jobs. The research found that among adult participants:

- 84% feel more confident
- about what they can do
- 37% have decided to take

Use Or Ornament

up training or a course

- 80% have learnt new skills by being involved

Social Cohesion

I never thought that I, a Hindu, would work on an Islamic thing.'

Participatory arts projects can contribute to social cohesion in several ways. At a basic level, they bring people together, and provide neutral spaces in which friendships can develop. They encourage partnership and co-operation.

Some projects, like Portsmouth's HOME festival, promote intercultural understanding and help recognise the contribution of all sections of the community. The arts are also important means of bringing young and old together, and projects in Batley showed the value of these intergenerational contacts, especially in reducing anxiety about young people.

There was also evidence that the community development aspects of participatory arts projects could help reduce fear of crime and promote neighbourhood security. Projects involving offenders in the UK, the United States and Australia also show important rehabilitation benefits.

The research found that among adult participants:

- 91 % have made new friends
- 54% have learnt about other people's cultures
- 84% have become interested in something new.

Community Empowerment and Self-Determination

'I learnt through a lot of mistakes, by speaking to people, and by sitting down and trying to work it out - and just laughing it off a lot of the time.'

Taking part in local arts projects is a popular way of becoming involved in community activities; (it is one of the top 6 reasons for volunteering in the UK). As a result it helps build organisational skills and capacity, as seen, for example, in almost 30 feisean (Gaelic festivals) which have grown up recently across the Scottish Highlands and Islands.

Skills learnt in the arts can be applied to other local projects: in South Uist, the feis organiser has gone on to establish a major women's training organisation with EU funding. Participatory arts projects can also be empowering, and help people gain control over their lives - sometimes, as with Acting Up's work with severely disabled people, in a very practical sense. They can also play a vital role in the regeneration process, facilitating consultation and partnership between residents and public agencies.

Arts projects can nurture local democracy. They encourage people to become more active citizens, and strengthen support for local and self-help projects.

The research found that among adult participants:

- 86% want to be involved in further projects.
- 21 % have a new sense of their rights.

Local Image and Identity

'I can see the potential in have an important role in celebrating local cultures and feel more part of a traditions such as the York community.'

Participatory arts projects local people and places; i.e. Mystery Plays. In new areas they can help develop local identity and belonging, as the Living Archive project in Milton Keynes has sought to do. The arts can affirm the pride of marginalised groups, and help improve their local image.

Participatory projects can encourage people to become involved in environmental improvements and make them feel better about where they live. They can also help transform perceptions of public agencies and local authorities, renewing the public image of cities for their own citizens, as well as outsiders,

The research found that among adult participants:

- 40% feel more positive about where they live.
- 63% have become keen to help in local projects.

Imagination and Vision

As I am 11, nobody listens to me: if I sing or rap, my ideas get across.'

Participating in the arts made a big difference in developing people's creativity and

Use Or Ornament

confidence about the arts. For many, this was simply enjoyable and liberating, but professionals in teaching, social services, health, housing, countryside services and other areas said it had changed how they saw their work.

Workers in Batley, Nottingham, Portsmouth and elsewhere intended to change their practice to use the arts in future. Projects had also helped public bodies to be more responsive to the views and interests of their users. Their creativity and openness encouraged people to take positive risks, both personally and organisationally, with far-reaching benefits. Arts projects could embody people's values and raise their expectations.

The research found that among adult participants:

- 86% have tried things they haven't done before.
- 49% think taking part has changed their ideas.
- 81 % say being creative was important to them.

Health and Well-Being

'I was becoming a typical moaning middle-aged zombie: now / feel needed.'

The research did not look at arts in health care, but there was considerable evidence that participating in arts projects could make people feel better. Projects in Nottingham, Durham and Portsmouth were making very positive contributions to supporting mental health service users and other vulnerable people. In Batley, Sandwell and London, arts

work with young people produced important health education resources. Finally, it was very clear that people derived great pleasure from being involved in arts activities, and that it added greatly to their quality of life.

The research found that among adult participants:

- 52 % feel better or healthier
- 73% have been happier
- since being involved.

Other Findings

Counterweight

The study found some costs and problems to set against these positive impacts. Participatory arts projects can fail or underachieve for a variety of reasons, including inexperience and underresourcing. Since they are part of a continuum of experience, positive outcomes can turn sour if the work is not built on. It must also be recognised that people can experience personal costs, (e.g. in relationships) especially where their lives do change and growth puts existing situations under pressure.

Economic impacts

Although the study did not address economic impacts, some issues arose, including the contribution to local economies made by the invisible voluntary labour of all the people who make participation in the arts possible. At a time when the education and training are at the top of the political agenda, this represents a boost to the country's education resources

worth hundreds of millions of pounds.

It is also a significant contributor to other public services, including child care, social services, health promotion and crime prevention, sometimes directly and sometimes through expenditure savings. The work is often paid for (where there is a financial transaction) out of communities' existing resources, with marginal support from the state.

Social policy and the arts

Participatory arts projects are essential components of successful social policy, helping to turn houses into homes. They can open dialogue between service users and providers, and avert costly mistakes. They involve people missed by other initiatives and introduce creativity, meaning and communication into the equation. They offer flexible, responsive and cost-effective solutions: a creative, not a soft option. Social policy would benefit from a marginal repositioning of priorities to make use of them.

The arts and social policy

The arts also have a responsibility, at least so long as they are in receipt of public funds, to consider their existing or potential contribution to society's wider goals. They should recognise their dependence on the audiences, new talent and creative ideas which the participatory sector develops.

They have nothing to fear from such projects, especially not

falling standards: a culture which needs protecting from people's participation is not worth the name.

Conclusions

Taking culture seriously

The study reached several conclusions about the social impacts of participation in the arts, the most important being that:

- Participation in arts activities
- brings social benefits;
- The benefits are integral to the
- act of participation;
- The social impacts are complex
- but understandable;
- Social impacts can be assessed
- and planned for.

In short, the arts have a serious contribution to addressing contemporary social challenges. Rather than the cherry on the policy cake to which they are so often compared, they should be seen as the yeast without which it fails to rise to expectations.

Building a creative environment

The study sees the creativity, openness and elasticity of the arts as the roots of their social impacts. Since these may appear hard to integrate within public policy it recommends focusing on planning an environment in which participatory arts projects can succeed. It suggests that this could be based on seven core principles:

Use Or Ornament

1. Clear objectives
2. Equitable partnership
3. Good planning
4. Shared ethical principles Excellence
5. Proportional expectations
6. Joint evaluation

Participatory arts projects built on these principles lay sound foundations of internal success and are most likely to produce positive social impacts. They can be evaluated consistently and integrated with mainstream public policy.

The future

This is the first stage of an ongoing research programme, not a definitive response to these issues. If it raises as many questions as it answers, others may wish to address them in the context of practical work. To this end, the main report sets out the evaluation methods used, and a practical handbook on evaluation of arts projects will be published later by Comedia. Further case studies are also being planned, including a study of the arts and social policy in Glasgow. Comedia is very happy to receive responses to the study or suggestions for its further development.

The FWWCP thank Francois and Comedia for allowing us to publish this precis of "Use or Ornament".

The full report is available from Eco Distribution Tel.: 01509 890068 Fax: 01509 890191, at £20 + p&p.

Histories for the Millennium

The Open University have announced a project for you to produce a history of your community and take part in a nationwide project. They have produced a leaflet to help you and this project is open to all -whatever your experience of writing or research. For a detailed information leaflet write (with S.A.E.) to Prof. Ruth Finnegan, The Open University, Gardiner 2, Walton Hall, Milton Keynes MK7 6AA.

Young Writer Magazine

Young Writer Magazine comes out three times a year. It is a platform for writing by children, coupled with serious but unstuffy advice and suggestion. It is full of writing NOT adverts, it costs £2.50 available in newsagents. If you have a problem obtaining a copy contact :
Young Writer,
Glebe House,
Weobly,
Herefordshire HR4 8SD.

COMMUNITY RADIO

- Just a Switch Away

It's about £50 per day plus a few other charges but for less than a £1000 you could create a radio station with your community, and use it, just as Notting Hill, Edinburgh and Cheltenham Races do as a special Festival event that puts your community on the air.

Look at the Radio Times, lots of stations. Turn on the radio, lots of music. How many voices do you recognise that aren't stars?

Access

The issue of access to the airways has had a very controlled history in this country. There over a thousand Community Radio projects regularly broadcasting in Europe. They are based on the principle of serving an area offering access to broadcast for their listeners and run as non-profit making organisation just like most voluntary groups. In the UK there are less than a dozen.

Most stations which are described as local are commercial stations often owned by large companies with little or no real contact with their target audience. They offer music, basic local news and lots of ads. Several stations play the same music simultaneously linked to a central source which plays across the country.

The Community Radio Association started campaigning in the 1980's for a difference between Community and Commercial radio. However, the Radio Authority the national controllers of radio don't agree, yet.

Before 1992 trying to get on your local BBC station or being a pirate or hospital Radio were the main ways of broadcasting to a local audience defined as

a local town or district. Then came the RSL, a restricted Service Licence which allowed you to put your own radio station on the air for up to 28 days on a 1-25 Watts power signal.

Cinderford FM!

In 1994 Forest Artworks did a feasibility study to discover much of the above and see how it might work in the Forest of Dean. In 1995, with a lot of support, both financial and people we put on Cinderford FM, a 4 day radio station over the weekend of the annual carnival. It took about 3 months to make the programmes, working with 30 or so groups so they could say what they wanted about Disabled Access, Youth provision, transport, drugs and phone ins with advice workers. The mother of a local drug taker was interviewed. She was incredibly moving and wanted to have the story told. Over 4 days, 500 local voices, 50 original programmes, presenters 7-70yrs, local bands indie and brass, local history phone ins, writers, etc.... anyway it cost £2,500. The licence was £1,500 alone because it was a fixed rate, 4 days or 28 days.

So, mid-September '97 big change! You can now pay on a daily rate. It's about £50 per day plus a few other charges but for less than a£1,000 you could create a radio station with your community, and use it, just as Notting Hill, Edinburgh and Cheltenham Races do as a special Festival

Our Stories

event that puts your community on the air.

Information

If you want more information contact me at Forest Artworks! at the Forest Youth & Community Office 01594 - 844563 Naas Lane, Lydney, Gloucestershire GL1 5 5AT. What was that about big steps to having a Voice...

Roger Drury

As a conclusion to the Fed's 21st Birthday celebrations we've been asking members how they got involved in worker writing and community publishing. The Fed IS it's membership, so why not send in your story for the next issue. Whether you've just become a member of a Fed group, or you've been writing or publishing for a long time, everybody has an interesting tale to tell...

Harry Dempsey...

How did I get involved in Writers Workshops and the Fed? I suppose you could call it a slip of the pen. I had signed at the local tech. for two courses relating to my trade and was told that I was entitled to take a third for the same fee. Knowing my English was dicey I looked down the list and chose creative writing, the only one that seemed to be applicable. I had not heard of this title before but at school 'writing' was an English lesson.

On the technical courses Tuesdays and Thursdays the average age was 25 and I was nearly 50 - the odd one out.

New Dimension

The first time I attended the Friday night course I realised I had entered a new dimension. I was among people from all walks of life and of different nationalities. Their ages ranged from 18 to 70, and there were housewives, dockers, butchers, bakers - workers and non-workers. All of them had written poetry, short stories, or were starting to write their life stories. I was again the odd man out, but at the end of that two hour session I was hooked. In cooperation with the chap sitting next to me, whose name was Ray McKeon

we had started to write a short play to be finished the following week. Ray told me he belonged to Scotland Road Writers and asked me to go with him on the following Monday night to join Scottie. This was September 1982.

Teller of Stories

I met him as arranged and I became a member of a writers workshop. I had always been a teller of stories, first to my younger sisters when the blackout forbade the showing of a light, putting paid to reading in bed. Later in life I told my own children stories with the light off until they went to sleep. I thought only the upper classes got stories printed - Scottie Writers proved this was a fallacy by printing an anthology with one of my stories in it. Amazing.

Three years later, in 1985, the Merseyside Association of Writers Workshops (M.A.W.W.) was formed.

A year later in 1986 I attended my first FWWCP AGM at Nottingham University, another eye opener and a very enjoyable experience. It is said that travel broadens the mind. The Fed AGM was and is equal to a year's worth of travelling encompassed into

Arthur Thickett...

one weekend.

I have been involved in the writers movement ever since. I write short stories and poetry as the whim takes me. I have been on the Fed executive and Chairman of MAWW because I believe that we should all give a little .of our time to an organisation which after all is said and done is ours.

What I really enjoy about writing is that all I require is a pen, a blank piece of paper and a good idea.

**Harry Dempsey
Prescot and Whiston Writers**

**A couple of
longer serving
QueenSpark
members put me
up to going; I
was `at home` in
the first minute
and I've never
missed an April
FED-estival
since! ...Nor any
of their mini-
autumn festivals
either; end of
`The Loner` in
me! I quickly and
willingly jumped
into that
wonderful warm
sea of
community**

**QueenSpark is a small pond
in a corner of The Southern
Jungle
where little fishes jump quite
prettily and a couple of stray
pike lurk... in the depths...**

I learned of QueenSpark through a close friend. After tentative contacts at their Brighton May Festival Events in '88 and '89 I became a QueenSpark member and a Nightwriters regular in October '89: (Nightwriters is one of QueenSpark's writing groups).

Prematurely Shoved
I did not join QueenSpark in order to 'learn to write'. Having been prematurely shoved into retirement a year or two previously during the first - or was it the second? Thatcher miracle I settled down and... just wrote. By October '89 after shamefully dismissing loads of absolute crap, I had accumulated quite a bit of stuff, including a novel-and-a-half, that I felt 'wasn't too bad'. But it needed other opinions. And after half hearted attempts I realised that I did not much care for fishing out publishers and agents. Nor did I have any illusions, I still had some way to go. I wanted to publish, yes, but how really important was it? It was a question that bothered me.

So... at first I attended Nightwriters of QueenSpark Books in order to gain constructive criticism and pick up publishing know-how. But I quickly discovered, or re-discovered, something that was much more valuable to me. At that time I was something of a loner and I felt that that was OK for writing... but at heart I was just an

Our Stories: Arthur Thickett...

introverted-extrovert! (Gawd!)
With Nightwriters and
QueenSpark out came the
extrovert.

FED-estival

And what really sealed it for me was my first FED April Festival at Birmingham in April '90. A couple of longer serving QueenSpark members put me up to going; I was 'at home' in the first minute and I've never missed an April FED-estival since! ...Nor any of their miniautumn festivals either; end of 'The Loner' in me! I quickly and willingly jumped into that wonderful warm sea of community again - I'd been away from it too long. I wallowed in the magic of genuine togetherness again; discovering (or re-discovering) that it is actually enjoyable trying to drown one's own ego and realising that it seems to thrive on it's repeated duckings... and so giving it all the more! I had felt this before, other times, other places... doubtless its half-lost roots were in the tight, working class fishing community that I stem from.

This spontaneous, magic spirit of community that is . particularly sparked off at the Fed Festivals, at its best, its peaks, its flights... when the spirit soars, is one of the greatest feelings in the world (OK there's sex) and all I want to do at these times is share it, share it with anyone that I feel I can tune into... and that's usually just about anyone around.

Communal Forked Lightning
That is the best thing I ever got from QueenSpark and The Fed, this communal forked

lightning which can spark off from one to another and go right through one - thanks QueenSpark, thanks Fed! and for me yet more!

Inextricably linked with this feeling is of course... Performance! I'm a real unashamed ham; this to is a wonderful gain from QueenSpark and The Fed; (how can I forget the heartaches, but yes, the privilege of working with the Fed's 'Under The Bed', and it's trips; Stoke, Barlaston and wherever, and of course the hospitality of Pecket Well.)

QueenSpark have published me too, it seemed to happen almost incidentally and probably the best part of that was working with the small book-making group.

As I mentioned earlier I was pushed into premature retirement; a victim of the Thatcher miracle plus my own follies. My involvement with QueenSpark and The Fed - including being on the Fed executive and helping in QueenSpark's administration work - has helped me restore 'face', if it was needed, with family and friends. And it renewed my faith in myself too.

...QueenSpark is a small pond (with subterranean link to The Fed-stream) where little fishes jump quite prettily, and occasional stray pike lie low... waiting... but help me, so help me, I'm gonna be a rainbow trout... not a pike.

**Art Thickett
QueenSpark Books**

The Changing Face of Youth:

Brighton's Youth Culture Project

QueenSpark felt that we could do something different. We could make a book that gave an understanding of the real and subjective experience of being involved in a youth culture in Brighton from the 1950s to the current day... We believed we could show how Brighton actually was for teddy boys, mods, rockers, hippies, punks etc., and at the same time create a new angle on the history of the town.

It seems like there are already enough books that celebrate youth culture, from fashion to pop to drugs: it's one of capitalism's ways of selling people back to themselves. When you scan the bookshelves however, the books seem to be either mindless hagiographies of teen pop idols, or serious academic analysis of the semiotics of pop videos or haircuts.

How Brighton Actually Was

QueenSpark felt that we could do something different. We could make a book that gave an understanding of the real and subjective experience of being involved in a youth culture in Brighton from the 1950s to the current day. Using the oral interviewing techniques developed by producing *Catching Stories*, we believed we could use this method to show how Brighton actually was for teddy boys, mods, rockers, hippies, punks etc., and at the same time create a new angle on the history of the town. However, from our experience of producing the last two oral history projects, we decided we could not undertake this project until outside funding had been secured. In October this year we were successful in our bid for £4,500 from the A4E Express scheme to start the first phase of the project.

Information Gathering

Over the next six months we are holding a series of five information gathering events,

each representing a decade, asking local people to come along and tell us what it was really like being a youth in the town. Each event will concentrate on a particular decade, playing music along with slides and pictures of that time. The contributors are asked to bring along a photograph or a piece of memorabilia that invoke a strong memory for them of that time. These pieces will be scanned into the computer during the event. We are also asking them to write a short piece on what memory the picture invokes. At the events we will also be taking photographs of the contributors as they are today.

Multi-Media

All the information gathered will be collated as an ongoing record of Brighton youth culture in the form of a web site. At the end of the project we plan to produce a multimedia exhibition of work to include; a display of 'then' and 'now' photographs; the recorded voices of contributors playing on a loop; slide projection of images from all the decades; the youth culture web site and written quotations to accompany the visual and audio material. The exhibition will give those involved an opportunity to see their contributions in public and to bring together all the decades in one celebratory event.

In this first phase we won't be publishing a book, but compiling a database of research material, contributors

Write for Life

and contacts, which will inform us of the feasibility of the book. If we get enough material then we will apply for more funds to produce and eventually publish the work. QueenSpark are very excited about this project. Our active volunteers have increased bringing some wonderful ideas and great enthusiasm to the project. Our first event, looking at the 1960s, was held in November which produced very positive results and a lot of subsequent enquiries. A local independent cinema is putting on a season of youth culture films to compliment the project, decade by decade, and a local community radio group (CROW) are taping 'soundbites' from contributors at the events to put together for the final exhibition.

Jackie Blackwell and Lorraine Sitzia are the joint coordinators of the project and should you like any further details or information, please contact them at QueenSpark Books, 49 Grand Parade, Brighton, BN2 2QA, Telephone & Fax: 01273 571710.

Reviews

**"Write for Life - How to Inspire Your Creative Writing" by Nicki Jackowska
Element Books £8.99 ISBN
1-86204-148-2 200pp**

Well, what can I say? At first I found this the most infuriating book and ended up being inspired! This is a book of writing exercises, advice, and paths towards self-fulfilment and self-analyses. I would advise you not to go too deeply into some of the exercises if you are feeling depressed, because Nicki Jackowska has a knack of opening up parts of yourself you wished you hadn't!

The book throughout is like a good writers' workshop and certainly drew writing out of me I never thought would appear.

In the first section a short essay precedes each exercise, and, at first some emphasise her life in Cornwall a bit too much. The style and voice of "Write for Life" is her own throughout.

There are some annoying errors like calling the Belgrano a cruise ship (it was a former US cruiser battleship), but the point of this chapter 'The Extravagance of Being There', is very well made. One of the exercises sets you to imagine being one of the young men on board that fated ship and, like many exercises in the book, this is a moving and inspiring one.

Each set of writing exercises

Finding Voices, Making Choices

leads on to the following set and gradually gives you a broad range of writing experiences to build upon. They are based around your self and your inner life, imagination, environment and experience. To make them really work you have to be very open with yourself. The second part of the book is a series of chapters on how to expand the work from the exercises of the first part. It includes advice on writing, and is useful stuff. There is also a very good "Quick Reference Writing Practice List" which I have copied and keep in a notebook as an instant idea bank.

This book actually inspired me to start a 'journal' of writing, something I had never done before. There are some good workshop outlines, including one she did with Fed members QueenSpark Books. The reference section is excellent, except the Fed address is about 10 years out of date!

The style of "Write for Life" will not be to everyone's taste, I often had to re-read sections to make any sense of them, but that may be a strength, the book certainly made me think very deeply about writing and myself. "Write for Life" will help fill the vacuum between writing workshops and is ideal for people who don't have a group near to them. The cost is very reasonable and I recommend anyone to buy this book. It certainly should, at the very least, be a shared book in all writers' groups.

Tim Diggles

**"Finding Voices,
Making Choices"**
Edited by Mark Webster
Educational Heretics Press
£9.95
ISBN 1-900219-02-6 90pp

This book is a series of essays about different aspects of community arts, based upon the work of the Walsall Community Arts team. They are well known for their work and a good model for students and people interested in, or working in, community arts to base themselves upon. If only all towns and cities in Britain had such a team!

"Making Choices" is essentially a guide to what community arts are with models of good practice.

The book covers the tricky aspects of whose voice the work is, i.e. the artist's working in the community or the community themselves; the quality of work; the expectations of those taking part. I am sure we have all seen and taken part in projects that failed to live up to expectation.

Having a background in community arts, I read this book with interest and many good points are made. Throughout, the book emphasises the importance of the work and decisions being that of the community, not the artist.

It emphasises the importance of the role that the artist plays, who amongst the many people participating, may be the only person 'trained' in an art based skill. They point out that artists trained in a one specialist skill may need to use others they are not trained in. All these points can equally apply to writing and book production projects.

This is a useful, though not vital book. If you are thinking of a career in community arts or plan to get something going in your own community it is useful reading.

My main criticism is that there are no pictures. As a practitioner I understand what they mean and can imagine the events described, but a few photos would have helped.

The cost is also high, £9.95 for basically 76 pages, which means it is probably aimed at the college library or local authority officer. One final thing, why are the Fed not mentioned in the list of organisations to contact?

"Making Choices" is a good try, but the field is still open for a more definitive (and illustrated!) guide.

Tim Diggles

A Song For Carrying Water..

“A Song For Carrying Water and Other Stories From Somalia” Gatehouse Books ISBN 0 906253 59 4,

This beautifully produced bilingual book, in English and Somali, came from a Family Literacy Project. It has full colour illustrations and line drawings. These wonderful short stories are traditionally handed down orally, from generation to generation. They have been recorded in written form to reach a wider audience and prevent their loss as these Somali refugees settled in Moss Side.

The five women authors contribute very different stories to this anthology. They begin with introductions - a window to Somali life here and in Somalia. There are then different sets of stories - animal tales reminiscent of Aesop's fables; tales of Igal Shedad, the cowardly man, and Arawelo the warrior queen.

The book could be used in a variety of ways. It is a very interesting read; good for comprehension or to generate reminiscence work. It would obviously be very popular with Somali students, but would also work very well in a mixed class or for an individual to find out more about another culture.

Sarah Richardson

New Books

Springboard...

Springboard Fiction announce the publication of Miasma, by Chris Firth. “Deserted. Lonely. Sad. Going Bad. Slowly mad. Anna Fisher can only take so much...

Mincemeat - quarter of a pound, Dog biscuits - a good handful;, preferably the most expensive available One free range egg Senna pod extract Ground glass, Lightly fry the mincemeat; dogs prefer meat rare. Crumble dog biscuits and add senna pod extract (use the whole of the 120 ml bottle) A delicious, fatal, meaty burger, irresistible to greedy pets. “

Miasma is “a darkly humoured first novel” of “the murky world of Anna Fisher - where nothing is quite what it seems”. Springboard exists to publish first time novels by new writers, providing a platform which allows a new voice in fiction to test the waters...

Contact:

Clare Conlon, Springboard Fiction, Yorkshire Art Circus, School Lane, Glasshoughton, Castleford WF10 4QH

London Voices...

have published “Lavender Sweet Lavender Come Buy” a collection of poems of politics and love. isbn 0-9532292-0-3 £3.95 + £1 p&p available from London Voices c/o FWWCP, PO Box 540, Stoke-on-Trent ST6 6DR.

Commonword...

“Nailing Colours, poems of rebellion, is “a wake-up call for the 21st century. Eighty of the most talented and radical of contemporary voices, including SuAndi, David Bateman, Sean Brody, Maya Chowdhry, Dike, Kevin Fegan, Pam Leeson, Rosie Lugosi, John Lyons, Cheryl Martin, Henry Normal, Lemn Sissay, and Pat Winslow. Rebellious, defiant, challenging and non conformist, these poets nails their colours to the mast of change.”

Published by Crocus, Nailing Colours is available for £7.50 plus 75p p&p from Commonword Ltd, Cheetwood House, 21 Newton St, Manchester M1 1FZ

The Deadline for the next issue of Federation Magazine is February 20th 1998. If you wish to review books, write an article or advertise write to The Editor at the address below.

Federation Magazine is published by The Federation of Worker Writers and Community Publishers. The views and opinions published are those of the contributors and not necessarily those of The FWWCP or our funders.

© Copyright for all articles and reviews remains with the authors. The FWWCP is a Company Limited by Guarantee no.: 3371162, Registered Office: Gatehouse Books, Hulme Adult Centre, Stretford Road, Manchester M15 5FQ.

All correspondence should be addressed to FWWCP, PO Box 540, Stoke-on-Trent ST6 6DR.

News, Events & Jobs

New FWWCP Members!!

The FWWCP welcome three new members. They are: **Arts Disability Wales** from Cardiff, Key-in Publications from Bilston (West Midlands) and **Write Now** from Birmingham.

QueenSpark

QueenSpark has revamped its newsletter in a new tall format, and in addition to news of QueenSpark publications is also publishing oral history, stories and articles. Look out their forthcoming magazine and programme of workshops and events. From 49 Grand Parade, Brighton, East Sussex, BN2 2QA

1998 FWWCP Festival of Writing

April 17 to 19 at Bretton Hall near Wakefield. The Festival will feature workshops, discussions, performances and an opportunity to meet writers and community publishers from around Britain and abroad. The Friday night will feature an award winning performance by Jack Drum Arts. Don't miss it! All people are welcome whether you are a member of an FWWCP affiliated group or not. For full details and to obtain the registration form and leaflet phone 01782 822327 or e-mail fwwcp@mcmall.com

Centerprise

Centerprise announce a programme of writing events and courses, including the launch of the Ananse Society, a celebration of storytelling, and a resource for archive information, stories, folk tales and myths from the African Diaspora (for details of this, and Centreprise's Black Literature Development Project contact Kadija George on 0171 254 9632 ext. 214, ; also courses on Essay and Dissertation Writing, Poetry and Performance, Writing Reviews, Novels, Publishing, and Criticism (for details of these and Centreprise's New Writing Development Project, contact Eva Lewin on 0171 254 9632 ext. 211



The Federation of
Worker Writers and
Community Publishers

The FWWCP has established itself as the voice of community writing and publishing. We aim to make writing and publishing more accessible through an inclusive approach to our activities. With a grant from The National Lottery Charities Board

we're appointing a

Training Development Officer

Part-time (.5) for three years.

Salary £8,741 (SCP.29) to £9,318 (SCP.31)

- Responsible for co-ordinating and implementing a programme of community development training at a local level for our members around the country.
- The post is for individuals or organisations and place of work is negotiable.
- Deadline for applications is 2 February 1998

For forms and full details (available on cassette tape and large print) send large A4 S.A.E. (49p) to:

FWWCP, PO Box 540,

Stoke-on-Trent ST6 6DR

or e-mail fwwcp@mcmall.com

The FWWCP is an equal opportunities

employer

Pecket Well College

Next Step Project



Pecket Well College is a registered charity committed to the provision of Adult Basic and Community Education, with a strong emphasis on creative activity. It is a small college managed and run by its members. The Next Step Project, funded by the National Lottery Charities Board, will aim to further develop the college's exciting range of course and volunteer activity. Applications are now invited for two, 3 year appointments (from April 1998). 1. Project Co-ordinator. To be responsible for the setting up and successful running of The Next Step Project. The salary will be on point 29 of the APT&C scale, £17,381. 2. Outreach/Marketing Worker. To be responsible for the development and delivery of an effective Outreach and Marketing strategy. This is a 4/5ths full time appointment. The salary will be based on point 28 of the APT&C scale, currently £16,815 p.a. (pro rata). Applicants should have had experience in the field of adult further or community education, arts administration and organisation, or in the voluntary sector.

For further details and application form write to:

**The Administrator, Pecket Well College,
36 Gibbet Street, Halifax HX1 5BA**

Application should be returned by
2nd February 1998

Pecket Well College is an Equal Opportunities
employer