

### Editor's Desk

Welcome to this issue of *The Write Place*. I always enjoy January as there are two things going on.

The first is reading through the entries for our Writer of the Year Award –

there are some great success stories. But success can be measured in a number of ways and we're not just looking at the money that the entrants have earned. We also take into account the satisfaction they've got from seeing their work published and the enormous confidence boost that this can give.

Congratulations go to the worthy winner, Hannah Evans, and to the four runners up. You can read all their stories at:

<http://www.writersbureau.com/writing/writer-of-the-year-2013.htm>

The second is that we now have our winners for the 2012 Poetry Competition. They'll be announced on Facebook and Twitter on 21st February and will then be available on our



Diana Nadin  
Director of Studies

website to read and, we hope, admire. I can't say anything further at this point, but I'm sure you'll enjoy them.

Finally, congratulations to the winner of our monthly competition for January – Jacqui Cooper. I hope you'll enjoy your Novel and Short Story Course, Jacqui! The brief was to write the first paragraph of a novel entitled: *2013 – The Year the World Burned*. She certainly did it with style. Because it's short, I thought I'd share it with you:

*The end of the world began on a Tuesday at 5.47 pm GMT and it came as a nasty surprise to everyone except Samael who had started to think it was never going to happen. As the power died and the traffic rolled to a halt, Samael climbed from his Lexus and glanced up and down the city street. Total gridlock. Already, frustrated motorists were emerging from their cars to find their phones were as dead as their transport. Pleased, Samael shook a celebratory cigar from its tin and tried to light it. Couldn't. Embarrassed by his lack of foresight he tossed the electronic lighter. The irony wasn't wasted on him; the entire world was soon to be engulfed in flames and he didn't have a light.*

We hold a different free-to-enter competition every month – you'll find details of this month's later in the magazine.

As I said earlier, you can read about the winners of our Writer of the Year Award on our website, but lots of other entrants had interesting things to say and I've chosen a small selection for this month's success section. So here goes...

# Looking at the Lighter Side of Life

## Student Successes

Sherri Matthews had this to say:

*My life changed when, in July this year, the deputy editor of Prima called me to say that my story for their 'Winning Story Competition' had been selected and would be published in their November edition. I almost dropped the phone! I received a year's subscription to Prima. I then received another call from the feature's editor at Prima about an article I pitched to them entitled 'My Dad's Alcoholic Prison'. This will run in their April, 2013 edition, with photograph. I will be paid £500. I have also had a reader's letter in 'Yours' published.*

Sarah Myles has also had quite a year! She says:

*Being a professional writer has been my life-long ambition, but I never had the confidence to pursue it. A variety of jobs across a range of careers came and went, but none inspired much passion or interest.*

*Marriage and children came along, and my life completely changed. My family gave me confidence and my ambition and passion crystallised and I took the enormous step of enrolling with The Writers Bureau. I knew I could write, but I didn't know how to do it professionally. The response to my first assignment was so overwhelmingly positive, I could not wait to put pen to paper for the second. My article 'On the Beaten Track', about the appeal of town trails in rural North Yorkshire, was sold to The Dalesman Magazine. I was being published. I would be paid. I had become a professional writer.*

And finally Janet Traill had this to say:

*Firstly, the course focused my ideas and helped me to think more creatively. I found I could write about topics that I had never thought of before, drawing on experience, interests and new research. For instance, I had never contemplated writing a letter to a magazine and was amazed to find that the first one I sent – to the Reader's Digest, South Africa – was chosen as their Letter of the Month. I was already well on the way to reaping back my course fee!*

*The added benefit of being able to subscribe to Freelance market News has also proved very positive. Every month the long list of publications is full of variety and there's nearly always one or two that spark an idea. I live in a rural area of South Africa, where access to English language magazines is sparse, but through FMN I feel in touch with the world of UK publishing, and these publications are the ones I target.*

Congratulations to all of you! If you'd like to share your successes either post on the forum or email me ([dianan@writersbureau.com](mailto:dianan@writersbureau.com)) with the details and we'll give you a mention in the next issue.

## Looking at the lighter side of life

This issue we've some short quips for you – but there do seem to be some misogynists out there!

*I'm not saying my wife put weight on over Christmas but she fell down the stairs the other night and I thought Eastenders was starting.*

Michael N

# Five Minute Interview

*My wife was hinting about what she wanted for our wedding anniversary. She said "I want something shiny that goes from 0-150 in about three seconds" – I bought her a set of bathroom scales!*

And something to redress the balance a bit:

Recent notice in a shop window:

*'Husband and dog missing. Reward for dog.'*

*When doctors at the New York City hospital told Hilary Clinton she was being discharged, she asked; "What about the clot?" The doctor replied; "Take him with you !"* Paul H

And finally...

*How do you contact Super Mario after he dies?  
A Luigi board.* John G

## A Writer's Life!

This issue, children's author and tutor, Stephanie Baudet, is in the hot seat. So let's see what she's got to say for herself:



**When did you decide that you wanted to be a writer and what triggered this?**

I've wanted to write since I was a child, but was useless at telling stories! There was a period at school when we had to write a

story every weekend for homework, and I found it extremely difficult. One of my efforts was read out to the class by the teacher, with the sarcastic comment: 'Well, that was interesting with a capital I.' Everyone laughed, of course, and I've never forgotten it. I wrote a short book when I was about 13, entitled 'Happiness Returns'. I know! Feel free to groan. Perseverance paid off, though.

**What kind of stories/books do you enjoy writing most?**

I particularly like writing historical stories. Immersing myself in the period and doing the research is fascinating, but there's always the danger of including things just for their own sake and which are not part of the plot.

I love catching out anachronisms in period dramas.

**Who is your favourite children's author at the moment, and why?**

My favourite author? This is a question I'm always asked when I do school visits, and I try to avoid it or deflect it back to the children. It's impossible to have a favourite, but I'd like to name a few whose work I enjoy. Linda Newbery, who writes in a variety of genres and age groups. Her intricate story-telling is astounding. Bernard Ashley writes gritty stories, many based on his experiences as a head teacher in a tough area in South London. His ability to empathise with the characters is something I admire. I think Helen Cooper is my favourite picture book author/illustrator. Her illustrations are detailed and beautiful works of art. Often reading a really good book results in a 'favourite' and that book at

the moment is 'Butterfly Summer' by Anne-Marie Conway. I hope to read more from her.

## **What are your top three tips for anyone who wants to write for children?**

1. Read newly published books. Never mind what you read as a child, it's what is out there now which is important.
2. Talk to children about books. Volunteer to help in a school or read stories in a library. Watch their faces as they enthuse about favourite stories.
3. Join Internet sites for children's writers, attend talks or conferences, join relevant organisations, e.g. The Federation of Children's Book Groups or the Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators, sign up for publishers' newsletters.

## **As a writing tutor, if you could give one vital piece of advice to students, what would it be?**

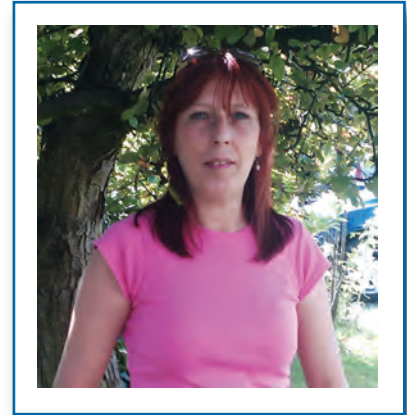
My vital piece of advice for writers is all about viewpoint. Get right inside your main character's head and experience the story through his/her senses. You, the author, must be invisible. This is your character's story.

Thanks for that Stephanie and if anyone wants to hear more from Stephanie on the subject of writing picture books, you'll find a short video of her at:

<http://www.writersbureau.com/video.htm>

## Nearer Home

Our staff profile for this issue focuses on Chris Gallagher. I'm sure that many of you will have spoken to Chris or had contact with her about your



*Chris Gallagher*

assignments. She's the person who makes sure that everything gets sent out to the tutors and is then returned in a timely manner! So over to Chris...

"Since 1988 – yes, that's 25 years! – I've worked for the Writers Bureau. In fact, I was one of the first members of staff to work here and, over the years, I've watched it grow from strength to strength. In that time, I've worked in many different departments, doing lots of interesting things. But my favourite job is the one I have now – receiving and dealing with assignments. If you send your work by email, it's me you get your confirmation from.

It's a great privilege to be dealing with our students' writing and I understand how precious it is; so I try to make sure that everything runs smoothly.

I also work as part of our Student Services team and enjoy doing my best to help as much as I can. Being at the Writers Bureau for so long has turned colleagues into not only good friends but family."

# Competition Time

## 2013 Short Story Competition

With prizes of £500, £300, £200 and £100 it's definitely worth sending an entry. The fee is £5 (£4 if you subscribe to Freelance Market News) and the closing date is 30th June. Visit: <http://www.wbcompetition.com/> for full details, to submit your story online or to print off an entry form. You'll also be able to read last year's winners.



## February Competition

Our free monthly competition for February gives you the chance to win a copy of our Art of Writing Poetry Course (<http://www.writersbureau.com/courses/poetry-writing/>). All you have to do is write a love poem in no more than 10 lines. Perhaps not as easy as you think! But remember, details of this competition and each subsequent monthly comp can be found at: [www.writersbureau.com/writing/monthly-competition.htm](http://www.writersbureau.com/writing/monthly-competition.htm)



## Freelance Market News

And don't forget, if you subscribe to Freelance Market News (<http://www.freelancemarketnews.com/>) you can enter their free writing competition each month and win £50 (themes vary) in addition to getting a discount of £1 per entry off our annual Short Story Competition (see above).



## Miscellany

I was really disappointed that no-one sent a video clip to us for The Writer of the Year Award – everyone chose to play it safe and send a print entry. So, come on, will some of you please send us a short video telling us why you enjoy writing or what you feel you're getting from your course and tutor feedback? It doesn't have to be professional – so don't be shy!

The latest issue of *Chapter and Verse* (our magazine written and edited by students) is now available in the student area – just log in to read it and submit to the next issue. The theme for this will be 'Scarlet' and your submission can be fiction, poetry or prose – so it gives you plenty of scope to use your imagination.

But we are without an editor at the moment. The position is voluntary and unpaid, but if anyone would like to take up the baton (for as many or as few issues as you like) please contact me and I'll provide you with more details.

## Special Offers

In addition to our courses we also offer a Review and Appraisal Service. Each month we choose one of the categories and have a **10%** discount. This month you can get the discount if you have a TV, radio or theatre script that you'd like one of our tutors to comment on. But it does change each month – so keep checking at: <http://www.writersbureau.com/writing/review-appraisal.htm>

# In Conclusion

## Save **£75** on the Proofreading and Copy Editing Course!

Proofreading and Copy Editing Skills will always be in demand. There are 130,000 books published in the UK alone each year – and they all need checking before they go to print or are uploaded as e-books. That doesn't take into account all the promotional brochures, internet pages/articles, charity leaflets etc that need an eagle eye, too. And if you're a writer – then being able to proofread will give you an advantage by helping you to spot mistakes before sending work off to editors or publishers.

This course teaches you all you need to know to provide a professional service to these markets. It will give you advice on grammar and punctuation; typography, setting and style; working electronically and, most importantly, how to set up as a freelance and find work.

Full details of the course are available at:

<http://www.writersbureau.com/courses/proofreading/course-details.htm> and to claim your **£75** discount and get started visit [www.writersbureau.com/write-place-proof](http://www.writersbureau.com/write-place-proof) or phone 0161 819 9922.

## In Conclusion

And that brings us to the end of our round-up of what's going on at the Writers Bureau. Until the next issue, you can keep up-to-date by joining the Student Forum, or following us on Facebook and Twitter.

If you have any queries about your course, just contact [studentservices@writersbureau.com](mailto:studentservices@writersbureau.com) and if you've any comments or suggestions regarding this newsletter I'd love to hear from you – [dianan@writersbureau.com](mailto:dianan@writersbureau.com).