

Editor's Desk

Welcome to this issue of *The Write Place*. Here at Writers Bureau we've been having a little think about the way in which we provide useful information to students and non-students alike.



Diana Nadin
Director of Studies

We've decided that instead of sending out our newsletter, *EzeeWriter*, each month, we'll provide you with all the same information by having more frequent posts on our blog:

www.writersbureau.com/blog. There will still be useful websites, top writing tips, links to writing-related articles and talks on YouTube; plus my ramblings and words of wisdom from our guest bloggers. So check us out on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays for something new every time!

And don't forget, even though we've stopped sending out *EzeeWriter* you can still access archived copies in our 'Resources' section of the website and plunder them for lots of useful tips and advice.

As usual we've had some lovely success stories over the past few weeks so let's start by looking at some of them.

Student Successes

The first was sent into *Freelance Market News* (www.freelancemarketnews.com) by Roy Boardman from Italy and has won their 'Star Letter':

Beginning a Writers Bureau course in my seventies was not an easy decision to take, especially when you're still working full time. But that's what I did, after a lifetime of wanting to be a professional writer.

The most difficult part when you're no longer young is adapting your style to suit the various markets. For my second assignment, I took a scene from an autobiographical novel I've been working on, on and off, turned it into a nostalgia article, changed the syntax of the first couple of sentences on the advice of my tutor, and sent it off to Best of British.

Imagine my delight when the acceptance email appeared in my inbox, asking me for a photo of myself when I was 12 and one taken recently. I'm awaiting the £20 cheque!

It makes me feel a whole lot younger!

The next comes from David Briddock, who wrote the following to his tutor:

It's been a long time since I contacted you. A tsunami of words have passed through my fingers in the meantime.

I still write regularly for the Micro Mart magazine on a wide range of subjects, and for the last two years my name has appeared every week in their regular contributors list.

Student Successes

During 2013 the magazine has run my weekly and monthly series, plus other journalistic, tutorial and feature length articles.

Last year I had an article published in the monthly Nexus magazine. This year I've started to write for the monthly independent PiAddict magazine, and have just finished three articles for a bookazine project on behalf of Imagine Publishing.

I'm poised to pass the 100 published article mark on Thursday this week!

While I've always been a self-starter with plenty of focus, drive and commitment, your course proved highly influential. The publication-centric course material, regular assignment stimulus and your own feedback all helped to generate the confidence necessary to become a freelance writer.

So, all I can say is thank you.

Finally, I recently received the following from Margie Wilson:

Having successfully completed my course with The Writers Bureau some time ago, I have dabbled in quite a few things, and have had many successful articles and short stories published.

However in November last year I participated in the NaNoWriMo exercise of writing a novel in a month. Despite being on holiday for part of the time I completed the script and duly received my certificate and the 'freebies' which go with it. One of these was five free copies of my book, should I go to print.

With the June deadline to claim this prize looming I decided to give it a try. Entering the world of PDF publishing was another learning curve for me, as I duly plodded through the excellent instructions. There were some moments of sheer panic but finally I conquered the beast,

*and can now happily (and a little proudly) announce that my book **Hanna's Home** is available on Amazon in both print and Kindle versions.*

Well done, Margie – I hope it will be a great success!

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

Looking at the lighter side of life

'Mutley' posted the following in the forum:

Fight or Flight?

Dan is teaching his son how to box. As he does so, he tells his friend, "This is a tough world, so I'm teaching my boy to fight."

Friend: "But suppose he comes up against someone much bigger than he is, who's also been taught how to fight?"

Dan: "Tomorrow I'm teaching him how to run!"

And the column wouldn't be complete without something from 'Bruna D':

Unfortunately, we've had some bad news.

Our local ice-cream van owner, Mr. Whippy, was found dead in his van covered with hundreds and thousands, chopped nuts and chocolate sauce.

Police say he topped himself!

Aghhhhh!

Five Minute Interview

A Writer's Life!

This month we've got two for the price of one. Not only have we got the usual Q&A session with a Writers Bureau tutor, but we've also got a piece by the current editor of *Chapter and Verse* – our online magazine written by students and edited by a student.



Karen King

First, let's talk to Karen King who is the author of part of our Writing for Children Course and also tutors on it:

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

I've always written. I had my first poem published when I was eleven. I can't remember ever deciding that I wanted to be a writer, I was just lucky enough to sell some of my stories to children's magazines, then I got asked to do more and suddenly I was writing for a living.

Do you have a writing routine, or are you very flexible about how you work?

I write every day unless I'm on holiday, and then I usually take a notebook with me. I've worked to deadlines most of my writing life, and had to write based around my family when my children were younger, so have

learnt to be organised and committed but flexible.

What are your top three tips for writing for children?

Know your market, know your reader and don't preach.

Who is your favourite children's author and why?

When I was a child it was Richmal Crompton, I laughed aloud at the Just William books. Now there are so many talented authors it's difficult to choose but I do love Neil Gaiman's books. I love his diversity of ideas and he has a gift of expressing himself so vividly. Look at the beginning of *The Graveyard Book: There was a hand in the darkness and it held a knife...* It goes on to describe the knife then says: *The knife had done almost everything it had been brought to that house to do and both the handle and the blade were wet.* Amazing. Sends a chill down your spine and leaves the message that the knife hasn't finished its job yet.

As a tutor, if you could give one vital piece of advice to students about writing for the children's market, what would it be?

Be aware of the current market and write a story for children today, but remember how it felt to be a child. Times change and children live in a different world but their feelings, hopes and fears are pretty much the same.

Thanks for that Karen, I think I'll be downloading *The Graveyard Book* to my Kindle before too long!

And now on to Sindy Roberts, the current editor of *Chapter and Verse*:

Nearer Home

Hello, my name is Sindy Roberts and I am a student on The Comprehensive Writing course with The Writers Bureau. My love of writing began when I was a little girl and I would become absorbed writing poetry and stories. My inspirations were Enid Blyton and later Catherine Cookson as my grandmother would let me borrow a book from her bookcase then exchange for another when I had finished.



Sindy Roberts

In 1999 I won The Editor's Choice Award for one of my poems with The International Library of Poetry. While studying for a degree with The Open University in 2009 I won a hamper full of goodies for sharing my tips for studying during the summer months on the OU's student website called Platform.

As well as being new to the role of editor of *Chapter and Verse* this spring, my (then) fiancé, small son, dog and I secretly made our way to The Old Blacksmith's Shop in Gretna Green, Scotland, where in front of only two witnesses and the minister we got married! Needless to say 2013 has been an exciting year for me so far.

Since starting the course in autumn 2011 I have made friends with other student writers online. I have also found it beneficial to record my journey as a writer on my own blog. One of the things I love about WB is the flexibility to write about subjects you love. For me this includes learning to write articles about genealogy, gardening and local history. More recently I have joined a local writers group where I hope to share what I have

learned so far and continue to improve my writing skills.

I hope you have enjoyed reading a little about me, and I look forward to speaking to some of you on The Writer's Bureau forums soon. Happy writing everyone!

Nearer Home

This month's staff profile focuses on Justine Goodall, who says:



Justine Goodall

I joined the Writers Bureau 27 years ago. I came straight from college at the age of 16 and have been here ever since.

I work in the Data Input Department; so when you enquire about one of our courses I add you to our database. If you then decide you would like to enrol I process your enrolment from beginning to end – from giving you a student number and recording the money you send, to boxing up your new materials for delivery to you.

Also when you successfully complete your course I issue your Diploma or Certificate of Completion.

I enjoy the work I do, and I enjoy working with such a great bunch of people. I've celebrated all the important events in my life here – special birthdays, my wedding and the birth of my daughter; so I can say we are all pretty much a family. Here's to the next 27 years!

[As you can see, we certainly know how to keep our staff at Writers Bureau – and that's how it should be!]

Competition Time

2013 Poetry Competition

Our 2013 Poetry Competition is accepting entries until 31st December. There is prize money totalling £1100 with a first prize of £500. The entry fee is £5 per poem and to enter online or print off an entry form visit www.wbcompetition.com



Freelance Market News

Don't forget, if you're a subscriber to Freelance Market News (www.freelancemarketnews.com/) you get a 20%

discount off your entry fee for the annual Short Story Competition – £4 instead of £5 per story. In addition, they run their own monthly competitions with the chance to win £50



plus publication in the newsletter. The competitions vary and are a mixture of poetry, short stories and non-fiction – so there's something for everyone. Plus the newsletter has a whole page of writing competitions run by other organisations each month. So, if you enjoy this type of writing, it's definitely worth subscribing so that you can build up your own library of competitions.

Special Offer

**Save £50
on Writing for Children
(Students Only)**

In Conclusion

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We will be announcing the winners of our 2013 Short Story Competition on 20th September – if you don't already follow us on Facebook or Twitter, then why not sign up so that you're the first to know. If you're not into social media then just check our website after that date and you'll be able to read the top four stories. I can promise that you won't be disappointed!

And that brings us to the end of our round-up of what's going on at the Writers Bureau, but until the next issue you can keep up with the community in the Student Forum. If you have any queries about your course, just contact studentservices@writersbureau.com or if you've any comments or suggestions regarding this newsletter I'd love to hear from you: dianan@writersbureau.com.