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Stay Strong, Stay Sane, Stay Writing!

‘WRITES’

*The visible hand of friendship*



Captain Sir Tom Moore 1920 – 2021 R.I.P.

IPA Section UK Writers Special Interest Group and Global Writers Forum Magazine

No. 16

**January 2021**

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***This is ‘Writes No.16’***

***May we all prosper in friendship and health throughout 2021***

***All copy to: The Editor:*** [***davidlewis@brynstowe.co.uk***](mailto:davidlewis@brynstowe.co.uk)

***Editorial Chair David Lewis writes:***

*Dear writers all,*

*As we go to press this evening the sad news of Captain Tom’s passing is in the news. It is a sobering moment of reflection, but we should celebrate his life and his inspiration to us in our darkest moments. Bless you Sir Tom, you brought us hope, joy and a sense of belonging. May you rest in peace and may your inspiration live on in all our work and lives. Thank you, sir, you were one hundred years young.*

*The new year is well under way and we need Sir Tom’s sense of fun and hope, I think? In these pages you may once again find some of both. More great writing from our members and I have as ever enjoyed editing this latest wonderful edition. There is so much going on it is almost hard to keep up. We had a great and electric Zoom meeting to start the year with ideas buzzing backwards and forwards, most, if not all of which, we will be implementing over the coming months.*

*Peter Bleksley was the first event of the year with a great turnout to hear him tell us all about the behind the scenes ‘Hunted’ programme from Channel 4 which he fronted for several series. It was fascinating and he held the audience in his grasp for an hour of riveting presentation. If you have the chance to see Peter again (and we are planning to ask him for more in due course) he is well worth listening too.*

*The next good news we had was from Ulrike at IBZ who has offered us new dates for Gimborn from* ***26th September to 1st October 2021.*** *More details appear inside this edition but please do let us know if you are intending to go. It is a brilliant week and this year we are planning to produce a book throughout the week-long programme and presenting on all the stages and techniques of writing an anthology plus much more. If you want to appear in this volume you need to be there! Book now as places are restricted to a maximum of twenty.*

*The next day event is* ***Saturday 13th February*** *for a seminar followed by a weekend event in April, both still online of course. The ‘Murder Mystery’ weekend is being postponed until the late summer/early autumn. We are planning regular Zoom events throughout the year and hope that at some stage we can all meet up in person at long last.*

*More good news is that Helena Hutt has agreed to take on ‘The Bookshop’. See the article inside for details. Thank you, Helena.*

*Meanwhile please enjoy this packed edition once again, there are new writers emerging, great stories from existing members and lots of things to consider in these pages. In particular, please can you read and engage with Fizz and Bill’s Irene Mawer Mime Project? It is yet another brilliant initiative from the group. Thank you all so much for your support and friendship: it is proving vital.*

. ***Love to everyone, David xx***

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*It was intended to include a supplement to this edition entitled ‘Nellie’s Knickers’ but after initial consideration the editor decided not to publish at this moment in time. Apologies to you all and a huge thank you to all who contributed, they were excellent submissions, but a couple could be considered ‘politically tricky’. The issue of ‘Freedom of Speech’, is a recurring question for us within IPA publications and needs to be considered by the editor and perhaps by us all. Once carefully considered we may still publish!* ***Ed.***

***Our regular features will return (eventually) in 2021***

**January**

***by Ann Cumberland***

Winter branches laden

with powdery flakes of snow,

willows, proud, upreaching,

winds begin to blow.

Weathered brows uplifted,

weary, pushing on,

whisper through winter pillows,

wondering where life has gone.

Whitewashed walls, bewildered,

weathered and distraught,

waiting patiently for springtime

while summer sun is sought.

**2020**

***by Ann Cumberland***

The year of living on the edge,

peeing in the hedge,

washing hands until they’re sore

running out and buying more…

Toilet rolls.

Obsessing with the loo,

have we not enough to do?

Stock piling just in case,

the shops run out and can’t replace…

Toilet rolls.

Steamed up glasses with a mask,

it is becoming quite a task,

shopping when I cannot see,

the loos are closed, no place to pee…

And *no* toilet rolls…

**Ode To Flint House**

***by John Burgess***

We arrive at various times of the week

In a state which relates we are really off-peak,

We are suffering from aches, pains, and also from stress

All in all, we're in a bit of a mess.

Through the front door we enter and loom

In the reception where we are allocated our room,

They book us all in and give us a key

And send us to wait in a room by the TV.

Slowly but surely the queue begins to disperse

As each gets their turn to visit the nurse,

She checks out your pulse and then blood pressure

And fills out a form which shows how you measure.

Next to the dining-room when once you are seated

You are looked after by staff and very pleasantly treated,

Their friendly approach puts you totally at ease

And you soon realise that their aim is to please.

After dinner is over, you will find it's not far

To slope down the passage and into the bar,

Now this watering-hole can become quite focal

With the visitors who transform it into their local.

Across the lounge there is a table

Where spherical objects get stroked if you're able,

But do not despair if you cannot get in the queue (cue)

There's always chess, cribbage, and ludo for you.

The evening passes peacefully and closes when

There's a shout from the bar "It's half past ten",

People by now who are stretching and yawning

Make off to bed until the following morning.

Next morning after breakfast with cards we go

To the gym searching for sauna, sunbeds, and physio,

I suppose the physios' job to them is a hobby

Trying to repair the pieces of the broken old Bobby.

At Flint House everyone doth give of their best

Helping to revive the needy, wounded, and often depressed,

All of the staff members it really does seem

When it comes to helping are the "A" team.

For the help given now, and in the past

To you I give a toast and raise my glass,

Flint House for your efforts each and every day

God bless you, and thank you, hip-hip hooray!



Flint House, Berkshire, the Police Convalescent Home

*Having spent some weeks at Flint House over the past years I fully endorse this wonderful tribute from John. A huge thank you to them all. Ed.*



**New Post-Covid Dates Now Confirmed!**

 **It may have been delayed but it IS here…!**

**International Writers Seminar**

**26th September-1st October 2021**

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| |  | | --- | | Dear friends of the IBZ,  You can download the new program here: [IBZ seminar program 2021](http://mailing.ibz-gimborn.de/c/41183140/b988bdc41bbd-ql0j3x)  Secure your participation in the September Writers Seminar today at  [www.ibz-gimborn.de/seminaronlinebuchen.html](http://www.ibz-gimborn.de/seminaronlinebuchen.html)  or by email at [info@ibz-gimborn.de](mailto:info@ibz-gimborn.de) .   For further information, please contact the editor at:  [davidlewis@brynstowe.co.uk](mailto:davidlewis@brynstowe.co.uk)  ================================================== | |

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| |  | | --- | | **Information and Education Center Schloss Gimborn eV | Schlossstrasse 10 | D-51709 Marienheide** Telephone: 02264 40433-0 | Fax: 02264 40433-69 | Email: [info@ibz-gimborn.de](mailto:info@ibz-gimborn.de)  It is strongly suggested that we all book early to secure a place at our wonderful spiritual home, the castle where we first came together to found the group in 2018. Please book directly with IBZ Gimborn. We will keep you posted on Brexit and Covid developments but securing the place is the essential first step. *The excitement mounts! Do contact me, Neil or Sean if you would like further information. (Ed.)* | |



**Meet the Writer: *Andy Gregory***

I joined West Midlands Police on the 16th February 1987 aged twenty-one and enrolled in the IPA on my second day in the job. I retired in February 2017 after thirty years’ service. I was a sergeant for over twenty-four years and loved the variety of roles I carried out. My last position was that of Crime Reduction Team Manager and Force Crime Prevention Design Advisor. I held a number of posts over the second half of my service where I specialised in partnership working, neighbourhood policing and crime prevention, all with the aim of reducing crime and making communities safer.  I am a qualified police trainer and also hold a Certificate in Education (Post Compulsory), as well as being a Counter Terrorism Crime Prevention Officer (CTCPO). Over the last five years of my career, I regularly had to brief ACPO members across the Midlands forces on national campaigns and was the Midlands representative on the National Crime Prevention Design Group, as well as other national panels such as Banknote Watch, Operation ‘Safer Gems’ and the ATM Security Working Group.

I am proud to have been able to specialise in those roles and feel I really made a difference in all the positions I held. I’m also proud of the fact that I spent over half of my thirty years on the frontline in uniformed roles as both a constable and sergeant.

In respect of the IPA, I had very little involvement until 2003 and sadly allowed my membership to lapse. However, after a two-year break, I re-joined in 2005 and since then have become heavily involved both at Branch and Regional level. I became Chair of the Birmingham Branch in March 2008 and oversaw the merger with the West Midlands Branch in 2011. I continued as Chair until March 2018 and since then have been Vice-Chair for a year and Secretary since March 2019. At Regional level I became 5 Region Vice-Chair in March 2010 and in 2011 was elected as Regional Chair, a position I held until handing over the reins to Clive Wood in March 2016. I remained as Clive’s Vice-Chair for a year to help with the transition. I have relished the positions I have held and really tried to give great service to our members. I particularly enjoyed my time as Regional Chair while Sean Hannigan was secretary. I have been fortunate to have visited Gimborn on five occasions, delivering lectures on three of the courses. I have represented the IPA at a security conference in Italy with my good friend Pete Connolly (2 Region) and played at the World 5-a-side Soccer Championships in the Netherlands. Through the IPA, I have a wonderful group of friends across Europe and in the USA.

I live in Coventry with my wife Joanne; we married in 2017 a few months after I retired from the police. I have two sons, Louis (28) and Oliver (24) from my first marriage as well as two stepchildren, Sarah (27) and John (24) from Joanne’s previous marriage. Since retiring from the police I have set up and run a number of part-time business ventures: - (1) a training and consultancy business (2) a photography business and (3) a utilities business. In my spare time I enjoy photography, football, growing bonsai trees, attending concerts, gigs and festivals, playing snooker in the Midlands Snooker League and I am also a qualified snooker referee.

I do not yet consider myself to be a ‘proper’ writer, well, not compared to many of the other members of our wonderful group. I have had articles published in many Security, Policing and Crime magazines over the years, as well as many articles in ‘Police World’ about my Gimborn visits and other IPA activities. I have also been a regular guest on a huge amount of radio shows over the years, in particular the BBC Radio WM breakfast show and Drivetime with Danny Kelly, Saga Radio, BRMB and Coventry and Warwickshire to name but a few. I also delivered my own weekly show (The Five-O show) on South Birmingham Community Radio for four years. In recent years I have also contributed photographs and articles to the online concert review website called PatchChord News as one of their gig photographers.

It has been mentioned a few times at Writers SIG Zoom sessions that I was the reason the Writers Group started. Let me explain; following one of our branch meetings where I delivered a presentation about Gimborn, some of the more senior members commented that the Castle sounded fantastic, but there were no courses for those that had retired from policing. I raised the issue with Sean Hannigan and suggested some non-police related topics could be presented there, e.g. form a ‘Photography SIG’, a ‘Walking/Rambling SIG’ and a ‘Writers SIG’. Sean decided there was some mileage in the suggestion and put a huge amount of effort into developing those suggestions. Sadly. The first Photography course at Gimborn had to be cancelled, but with Sean’s sterling work, coupled with the efforts of David Lewis and Neil Hallam, we now have a thriving Writers Special Interest Group. It is they who should be thanked, all I did was plant the first small seed.

**Andy Gregory**Secretary, IPA Birmingham, West Midlands Branch and Writers SIG Member

***Editor’s Note:*** *You are a fine writer Andy and technical articles most certainly count. You are a very welcome member of this SIG, as you say, a founder really. Your biography is going to make great reading so pick up thy pen and write away dear chap! Your readers are waiting.*

**Best Years of our Lives?**

***by Andy Gregory***

I have (mostly) very happy memories of my days at Waverley School, although many of the memories are hazy now. I started in September 1976 having moved from Redhill Primary school in Hay Mills. Myself, David Lewis (NOT the editor of this magazine!) and Robert Horton were the only three children moving from Redhill to Waverley (as our older siblings already attended Waverley when it was a grammar school) and I recall feeling daunted at the prospect as most of my friends were going to Washwood Heath or Beirton Road Schools. Those first few days and weeks were quite scary moving from a small primary school of around 250 pupils to a much larger comprehensive school. The initial fears of getting lost *en route* to class, or missing the lessons completely were soon overcome and we settled into the new school life and routine. It is amazing how quickly things that were once alien become the norm and I enjoyed my time at Waverly immensely. I remember growing in confidence as I moved through the years as the teachers and regime prepared us for adulthood. Friendships grew and developed, and the inevitable ‘fall-outs’ occurred. Some lads and lasses formed relationships and some even went on to marry after they left school.

In those days the girls were all called by their first names by the teachers, but the boys were called by their surnames – that was so alien at the time; however, it stuck quite quickly and even after leaving school I was called ‘Greg’ for many years by friends that I stayed in contact with.

I remember the initial games lessons and being placed in the relevant ‘School Houses’. Forget Harry Potter’s ‘Gryffindor’ – we had our very own rivalries within the Waverley Houses (based upon the Waverley novels by Sir Walter Scott). There were three forms/classes of around 32-35 pupils in our year and the students were mixed into four ‘Houses’ (Red Gauntlet, Ivanhoe, Talisman and Pirates). I was proud to be placed in Red Gauntlet with some friends from my class and other pupils from the other two classes. As a keen footballer and budding-sportsman I looked forward to the weekly games and P.E. lessons and particularly enjoyed sports days where ‘proper’ athletics events replaced the junior school ‘bean-bag’ and ‘egg-and-spoon’ races. I was proud to be selected for the school football team and represented the school throughout my five years. Our highlight was being runner-up in 1979 in one of the Birmingham Cups, losing 2-1 to Sir Wilfred Martineau school. I still treasure my finalist’s medal to this day.

I remember the bell sounding for break times and having to be quick on my toes to be at the front of the ‘tuck-shop’ queue before all the decent

snacks were sold out. Break times consisted of (for many of us) games of football, chatting with friends about ‘Top of the Pops’ and the scams ‘Tucker Jenkins’ was up to in ‘Grange Hill’. We also played ‘*closest to the wall*’ - by flicking pennies or skimming the latest football cards towards the wall and the ‘closest to the wall’ won the bounty.

The more ‘sophisticated’ music aficionados would spend ages discussing ‘The Old Grey Whistle Test’ and any other occasional music programme that graced TV at the time. Apart from TOTP and OGWT there were very few music shows on the **three** channels we had - how did we cope with just BBC1, BBC2 and ITV? We felt spoilt a few years later when Channels Four and Five appeared and I now know I’m sounding like my parents when I use phrases like “It was so different back then.” Anyway, I recall the OGWT with fondness and the different groups of kids that gathered at break and lunchtime to discuss the various genres of music such as ‘the mods’ (The Jam, Secret Affair, The Lambrettas etc…), ‘the rockers’ (Meat Loaf, Black Sabbath, Whitesnake etc..), ‘the punks’ (Sex Pistols, Souixsie and The Banshees, Stiff Little Fingers etc …) and the general chart stuff (Bowie, Blondie, ‘Saturday Night Fever’ and ‘Grease’

etc …). I loved it all and still have a great love of music to this day – mainly influenced by the bands I listened to in those formative years.

If we weren’t discussing music and ‘who-fancied-who’ then we would be discussing what was happening in the world around us – the first Concorde flights, the Olympics Boycott, the Cold War, the Silver Jubilee street parties in 1977, the first female Prime Minister in 1979, Elvis Presley’s death, John Lennon’s shooting, the ‘Winter of Discontent’, the first ‘Test Tube Baby’, Trevor Francis becoming the first ‘million-pound footballer’, Liverpool and Nottingham Forest dominating European football and Virginia Wade winning Wimbledon in 1977. Much of the above was lampooned by the comedies of the era – particularly ‘The Goodies’ and ‘Not the Nine O’clock News’. I even recall back in ’77 or ’78 all the children going on strike to support the teachers and marching into Birmingham City Centre a few days running!

We were encouraged to play instruments in music lessons, and I tried my hand at both the guitar and trumpet for a while and even appeared in a few school shows. At the time I disliked standing up in the concerts in front of all the parents for fear of dropping a few notes; however, I now wished I had kept playing as I think an ability to play music well is a real talent to cherish.

Wet breaks and lunchtimes resulted in us making our way to the woodwork room and queue up for a game on the small snooker table. Lots of the snooker balls had been lost, so we played billiards as much as possible and in the fifth year (when we were allowed out of school at lunchtimes) we raced to Paul Weir’s house nearby to play snooker on his six-foot snooker table. This is a game I still enjoy playing competitively to this day and it all started in that Waverley woodwork room.

Good friends at the time included Martin Sewell, David Lewis, Paul Weir, Robert Curley, Kamran Malik, Michael Layton, Ravinder Sembi and Carlston Walters. Some of us have kept in touch and many others are now in contact again via Social Media (Facebook). Paul Weir, Martin Sewell and myself all joined the police and nearly twenty years after leaving Waverley we were all posted at Acock’s Green Police Station together.

The above recollections make it sound like my school years were more of a social event; however, I did a lot of studying as well. In the main, I enjoyed the lessons and later in life (having married a school-teacher and become a parent) I now know that my teachers put in a huge amount of effort to educate us. It is a difficult profession and takes a certain kind of person to be able to look after, control, educate and inspire a group of thirty-five young people. I have a lot to be thankful for and although at the time I probably did not realise it, I now look back with fondness at

the amount of effort the teachers put into making Waverley a great school and giving us a decent education.

Returning for the reunion in March 2013 was my first visit back since leaving in the Summer of 1981. It seems a lifetime ago, but my visit brought back many, many more wonderful memories of what were some of the best years of my life.



**Celebrating 70 Wonderful Years**

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***by Andy Gregory***

In January 1985, after three years in the electrical retail trade I changed careers and began working at the Hippodrome Theatre in Birmingham. My good friend Martin Sewell had been promoted from Barman/Cellarman to Assistant Manager and I took his place. After a year, I was promoted to Head Barman/Cellarman, a position I really enjoyed. I met some amazing and rather famous people including Lauren Bacall (Humphry Bogart’s wife), Rowan Atkinson, Mel Smith & Griff Rhys Jones, Victoria Wood, Morrissey, Wayne Sleep and loads more besides. I also had the pleasure of preparing the ‘Royal Rooms’ for the Queen and personally waited on both Princess Anne (twice) and Princess Margaret when they attended various productions.

On one occasion in the Summer of 1986, Princess Anne (prior to receiving the title of *Princess Royal* in 1987) visited the Theatre to see a production of The Gang Show and her second visit was for a fundraising show for the Army Benevolent Fund. As Head Barman, it was my responsibility to look after the Royal Party and ensure everything ran smoothly.

After one of the events on a Sunday evening, I was asked by the Royal Aide to arrange for a line-up of bar and kitchen staff, so Her Royal Highness could thank them all prior to leaving the Theatre after the production and ‘After-Show Reception’.

As Princess Anne made her way towards us, we all waited eagerly to see if she would speak to us personally. I was at the end of our line-up, and the last person she would potentially speak to before the Theatre Manager and Director.

Her Royal Highness spoke to a few colleagues and then suddenly stopped in front of me. She asked me about my role, and during the brief conversation I commented that although I enjoyed working at the Theatre, I really wanted to be a police officer. She suggested I “Go for it” and finished by saying that although I had done a great job for her visit, she didn’t expect to see me still working at the Hippodrome next time

she attended a show. With that, she said her goodbyes to the Theatre Bosses and left the building.

A few weeks later, my father arranged for his friend Barry McKay to visit my sister Jayne and I to discuss the potential of joining the police. Barry was a Detective Chief Inspector in Birmingham at the time and we both listened intently to his tales of policing. Jayne decided not to apply, but the two conversations I had with HRH and DCI McKay in those few weeks changed the course of my life, as they convinced me that I should pursue my dreams. I submitted my application and after a series of assessments and interviews I joined West Midlands Police on the 16th of February 1987.

I mentioned earlier about my pal Martin Sewell; we had been through senior school together from 1976 to 1981 and later worked alongside each other at the Hippodrome Theatre. In 1988 after travelling the world with his wife-to-be Clair, Martin also joined West Midlands Police. Martin was from a Police family as his father David served for thirty years in Birmingham. David had been heavily involved with the IPA throughout his career and Martin and I followed suit, with both of us serving as 5-Region Chair at different times.

As mine was not a police family, I truly believe those two encouraging conversations in the Summer of 1986 had a profound effect on my destiny. Barry McKay finally retired about fifteen years ago as Assistant Commissioner of the City of London Police and he and my father Frederick are still great friends. I was fortunate to serve for thirty years, retiring as a sergeant in February 2017. Throughout my career I have had some wonderful experiences with the IPA and I am delighted to see Her Royal Highness Princess Anne, The Princess Royal has agreed to become our IPA Patron, as we celebrate our seventy years anniversary.

Today, 8th December 2020, I was delighted to be invited with a number of other IPA members to participate in an online Zoom call involving Princess Anne. Different National Executive Members gave Her Royal Highness presentations about the IPA and its history. Although I did not have chance today, I hope at some stage while she is our Patron, I have an opportunity to thank her for those few small words of encouragement she gave me thirty-four years ago.

**Reflexion Along Latitude**

***by Udo Lauterborn***

With a bottle of Singha-beer, I make my way down to the sandy beach. It‘s so peaceful here. All I can hear are voices in the distance and the sound of the sea.

I‘m on holidays in Thailand. A pretty place on earth, good food, friendly people, lots to see and experience. Some research with my mobile phone told me that I‘m at the 10th latitude. The sun will go down soon. That yellow bright ball will turn orange and later it will drown in the ocean, colouring the blue water into red. Silent but unstoppable. It‘s still not possible to peep into the sun directly but this process of sundown is a very quick one, being close to the equator.

Facing West. Anticipating a beautiful sundown like in a picture book. A so called romatic moment. What‘s romatic about it? A day goes to rest, that‘s all. Night time kicks in. Tomorrow morning the sun will rise again. Is that a romatic moment as well?

Facing West. At this very moment somebody on a beach in Somalia had his lunch. Hopefully. What are his circumstances in life? Why is he sitting on the beach right now? In the shades of a palm tree, I asume. Is he a

tourist? A tourist in Somalia? Probably not. Does he have a task to fullfill and what is his name? I will never meet him.

Facing West. At this very moment somebody in Guinea hopefully is looking forward to his lunch. The sun will be at it‘s highest point soon. That‘s usually lunchtime. Or it might be too hot to eat. A good sip of water would do the job for a while. Does he have access to water, to clean water, to drinking water?

Facing West. At this very moment somebody is sitting on a sandy beach in Venezuela, facing East, watching the sunrise. A new day begins. Does he enjoy the sunrise? Is he looking forward to this new day? It‘s the same sun that will go down in a few minutes in front of me.

I get up, leaving this beautiful sandy beach, heading back to my hotel.

Facing East, while at this very moment somebody on a ship, south of Japan, snores his brain out.

18 h Thailand

14 h Somalia

11 h Guinea

07 h Venezuela

**The Six Degrees of Separation**

***by Andy Gregory***

Over the years when people asked me what I did for a living or my occupation, quite often as soon as I mentioned I was a police sergeant, their immediate response would be ‘*Oh, my friend’s a police officer, do you know them? Their name is Fred or Freda Bloggs’.*

In 2010, before the police cutbacks, there were over 14,000 police officers and staff employed by West Midlands Police and when I retired from policing in 2017, there was still a workforce of over 10,000. Even though I worked at a number of police stations during my thirty years’ service, with those numbers, I would suggest that the chance of knowing Fred or Freda were quite remote.

Across the UK in 2019, there were over 210,000 police officers, staff and PCSOs, so if Fred or Freda worked outside West Midlands for another police organisation then surely it would be even more unlikely that I would know them or even heard of them? Or would it?

Outside the Police Service, like many police officers I had a ‘declared business interest’. Having started my part-time business in 2007, I was looking for a way to generate customers, so I was introduced to an organisation called ‘Business Network International’, or BNI. It is an

American concept started by Dr Ivan Misner in North Carolina in 1985, where members meet regularly at a networking event and actively look for ways to help other members. I joined BNI in Birmingham in December 2007 and attended the weekly breakfast meetings. It really helped me build my network of contacts and grow my business. At each meeting one of the delegates would deliver a four or five minutes ‘Education Slot’ in order to improve the business skills of the other members.

A few years ago, at one of the meetings, one of the members delivered an Ed’ Slot on the ‘Six Degrees of Separation’. This was aimed at members who were trying to offer their services to a particular sector or client and show that even if the other members in the room did not know the name or company they were looking to be introduced to, that one of the members’ wider network may know the individual concerned.

Now if you are not aware, the notion of the ‘Six Degrees of Separation’ grew out of work conducted by the social psychologist Stanley Milgram in the 1960s. Even though there are over seven billion people on earth, the theory aims to show that we are all connected by no more than six links.

To prove the theory, the person delivering the Ed’ Slot at BNI that morning asked the members to shout out a person they would like to do

business with. The first name bellowed across the room was “Barak Obama”. After a few moments of laughter from fellow members and guests *Barak Obama* was duly written on the whiteboard. The presenter shouted back …. ‘That’s a really easy one’, then immediately opened his smartphone. After a few clicks he brought up a picture of Dr Ivan Misner (BNI Founder) at a conference shaking the hand of Mr Obama himself at the White House a few months earlier.

We all realised we were connected through our Midlands Regional BNI representatives Peter & Penny Higgs, who had been to an international BNI conference in America only a few months beforehand (I have also personally spoken to Dr Ivan Misner since then via Zoom). So, on this occasion:  
***Andy Gregory* → *Peter/Penny Higgs* → *Dr Ivan Misner* → *Barak Obama***

Wow! I was only 3 connections away from the President of the USA!  
  
 A few weeks later at BNI, one of our members Sandy (I won’t disclose her surname in case someone knows her) mentioned her friend’s daughter was terminally ill and on her bucket list she wished to meet the Singer/Songwriter Jessie J (she of ‘PriceTag’, ‘Who You Are’ and ‘Bang Bang’ fame). Sandy circulated a message across the BNI Midlands

network to see if anybody could help and a day or so later a gentleman named Steve Saul, a member of another BNI Chapter responded. Steve owns a business arranging conferences, gala dinners, and sports auctions; he replied to say that he knew Jessie J’s manager personally and would see what he could do. A couple of weeks later at a BNI meeting Sandy showed me some wonderful pictures of Jessie J visiting a Midlands Hospice to see her friend’s daughter and presenting her with loads of signed memorabilia. Jessie J had said she was delighted to attend, but did not want any publicity, so the images were never shown on social media. So, on this occasion: -

***Daughter* → *Mother* → *Sandy* → *Steve Saul* → *Jessie J’s Manager* → *Jessie J***

The young girl was only five connections away from Jessie J!

In a recent Writers SIG online Zoom meeting, one of the members, Janet Curtis, mentioned she was only a few connections away from Nelson Mandela. I won’t spoil her article as it is outlined below where Janet describes her connection as follows-

**Janet → Bernard Atha → Nelson Mandela**

Only two connections away!

Having discussed these connections with Janet after the Writers SIG Zoom it reminded me of some of my earlier experiences: -

* From January 1985 to February 1987, prior to joining the police, I was Head Barman/Cellarman at the Hippodrome Theatre in Birmingham. I met some amazing and rather famous people including Lauren Bacall (Humphry Bogart’s wife), Wayne Sleep, Rowan Atkinson, Mel Smith & Griff Rhys Jones, Victoria Wood, Morrissey and loads more besides. I also had the pleasure of preparing the ‘Royal Rooms’ for the Queen and personally waited on both Princess Anne (twice) and Princess Margaret when they attended various productions. Although I did not shake hands with members of the Royal Family, I did speak to Princess Anne,
* who was absolutely charming.
* In 1998 while a uniformed police sergeant I was seconded to the HQ Operations Briefing Team for the G8 Summit in Birmingham. The Summit was attended by both Boris Yeltsin and Bill Clinton and again, although I didn’t speak to either President, I did deliver briefings to their aides and security teams. The conference lasted for a few days and on the Saturday afternoon I was out patrolling Birmingham City Centre, working alongside Mr Clinton’s
* bodyguards as he went on his rather famous ‘Walkabout’. I remember distinctly being a few feet from Mr Clinton for a few hours as he met members of the public, while his ‘Men in Black’ security team watched his every move. At the end of the ‘Walkabout’ as the President returned to his hotel to prepare for the evening meal, his private security team leaders thanked me for the thorough briefing and successful operation that had passed without any problems. Unbeknown to them, there had been utter chaos elsewhere in the City Centre, as members of ‘Jubilee 2000’ and ‘Reclaim the Streets’ had rioted with colleagues as they tried to disrupt the Summit!

Now I cannot confess to have the contact telephone numbers of Messrs’ Clinton, Yeltsin, or the Royal Family members I mentioned, but I can say that I shook hands with someone very close to them on the days in question. Part of the Six Degrees of Separation theory also explores the ‘Six Handshakes’ alternative view, in that we are only a maximum of Six Handshakes from anyone else on earth.

And finally, if you still are not convinced about how we are all connected, only a few days ago a strange thing happened while my wife

Joanne and I were taking our regular ‘Covid19 Lockdown Walk’. We walked past Hearsall Golf Course in Coventry, through Canley Woods, back towards home, and as we were enjoying the last bit of the Autumn sunshine, we saw two ladies walking towards us. We moved across the pathway to let them past and one lady called out “Hello Miss McDonagh”. My wife Joanne and I were introduced through a mutual friend in 2012, started dating in 2013 and married in 2017. When we met, I lived in Solihull and Jo lived in Coventry. Although I have occasionally worked in Coventry while serving in the police, I know very few people this side of Solihull and Birmingham. Prior to our marriage, Jo was previously Joanne McDonagh and in 2018 she was made redundant from her post of nineteen years as a Teaching Assistant at King Henry VIII School in Coventry due to their restructure. The lady walking past us in the Woods had now stopped to face us and Jo then realised it was the mother of one of the girls she used to teach some years ago. As they were chatting about the lady’s daughter, who was now aged 15, she said ‘And what about the other Mum’s …. Do you ever see Lou Yarker?’ At that moment my ears pricked up; when I was a probationary constable a colleague of mine was Scott Yarker. Scott joined the police seven weeks after me and we worked on the same team at Bromford Lane Police Station for a few years prior to us both being promoted. It transpires that

Scott married a lady called Louise and their children were both taught by my wife Joanne and the teacher she worked alongside. Some people may just say “What a small world ….” Whereas others would say ‘Six degrees of Separation!’  
 So next time somebody asks, ‘Do you know Fred or Freda Bloggs?’ …. Maybe you know somebody, that knows somebody, that knows somebody, that knows … well I’m sure you get the idea!

**The Six Degrees of Separation**

***by Janet ‘Fizz’ Curtis***

During the recent IPA Writers SIG weekend, we started discussing the subject of the Six Degrees of Separation. Following Andy Gregory’s piece for the magazine, he asked me to describe my links to Nelson Mandela, so here goes:

***Janet Fizz Curtis → Bernard Atha → Nelson Mandela***

**Bernard Atha** - Bernard was 91 years of age when I met him in 2019.  In the 1930s and 1940s he trained at the Pamile School of Dance and Drama

in Leeds.  Bernard is from Leeds.  He was a talented ballet dancer in his younger days, and also a clever academic.  He studied law at university and went on to work in law, and then in local politics.  He had a very busy career, eventually becoming Lord Mayor of Leeds.  My reason for meeting Bernard Atha was to interview him about one of his drama teachers in the 1930s and 1940s - Noni Brown (Durling) who was my mime teacher in the early 1980s.

There are plenty photos on the web showing Nelson Mandela in Leeds Civic Hall during the official ceremony, and you can see Bernard Atha next to him, Bernard is wearing his official Lord Mayor’s robes and is officiating at the ceremony.  I think it is safe to assume that Bernard Atha shook hands with Nelson Mandela.

**Nelson Mandela** - when former President Mandela visited Leeds for the first time in 2001, he was made a freeman of the city and it was Bernard Atha, in his role as Lord Mayor, who conducted the ceremony.  I am so honoured to have shaken the hand of someone who has shaken the hand of a truly heroic person.

Just as an aside, I have also shaken the hand of someone who personally knew the President of the United States in a work capacity.  I can’t

remember names, but I know I was very impressed.  It was on a training course and my group of students had lectures from all sorts of different people who were teaching us about drugs.  This guy in question was like one of the ‘Men In Black’ with his sharp suit and very, very smart appearance.  He was the one of the top chaps in the U.S. Justice Department Drug Enforcement Administration (the DEA).  I got on with him really well and talked with him on a one-to-one basis for several minutes and he explained that he personally had the ear of the President of the United States.  The most powerful person in the world knew the name of the man that I was talking to.  That did feel a bit special and for many years I kept the guy’s business card with a very impressive Special Agent golden eagle embossed on it.  As for the president?  I actually can’t remember who it was.  It would have been either Bill Clinton or George W Bush, but I am not interested in him as a person.  I do accept and understand the power that he held, whoever he was.

Finally, I have also shaken the hand of a stranger who I HOPE will become someone really special.  I am very interested in the stories of people who have not just flown in space, but who have landed on the moon.  My friend Martin, who lives in Cambridge has shaken the hand of Buzz Aldrin, and I was most impressed to find that out.

But that is not the connection that I want to tell you about.  Here is my blog post from February 2018, which shows how much I enjoy the six degrees thing...

***The Urban Spacewoman*** Today’s blog post is about someone I met who I found to be very interesting.

Before I start the blog – for the Young Un’s, today’s title is a play on “I’m the Urban Spaceman” by none other than the Bonzo Dog Doo Dah Band. Yes, that is their real name. If you are British, then they are part of your culture and heritage. Check them out.

“I’m the urban spaceman, baby, here comes the twist, I…don’t…exist”.  
Today’s blog post:

Space, the final frontier. It fascinates me. I contemplate what it must be like to have stood on the moon, and what it must have been like to be the third man in the capsule – the one who wasn’t allowed to get out. The one who had to face the dark side all alone. I am not so worried about him facing the dark side of the moon, but I don’t know how he refrained from nobbling his Captain in order to take his place!

Did you know that the universe is expanding? But what is it expanding in to? If the universe is the total of all existence then how can it expand? Can you get your head around galaxies and how many of them there are – and they’re just the ones we know about. And are we really the only life in the universe? Perhaps there was life before we existed, or perhaps there will be life after we have gone – on a different planet somewhere else, far away from Earth. Maybe there is life here now, “It’s life Jim, but not as we know it”. How do we know that there isn’t life on the sun? Maybe there is, but we just don’t recognise it as being life…

I found myself discussing the finer points of cosmology, philosophy, geology and general brainy things with a young man called Cameron, halfway up a mountain at Glenfinnan in the Scottish Highlands. I was trying to teach myself about the formation of said mountains and their lochs but wasn’t doing very well. I had visited ‘the geology shop’ in Fort William, collected their free leaflets and photographed their display boards. Back in the van I studied to the best of my ability – but my ability is not good enough. I still couldn’t get much further than folding and then being gouged by ice.

My husband, Andy, is interested, but not as interested as I am, so it was up to me to find out for myself. When I saw someone else (Cameron) who like me was looking at the rock beneath his feet rather than looking at the view, I accosted him. “Do you know what kind of rock this is?” I had managed to pick a geologist alright, but not the type of geologist I was expecting. This guy studies the geology of the moon.

I took into account his youth, and the fact that space tourism is a growing possibility and I said that, who knows, maybe one day he would actually get to the moon. He humoured the dishevelled mad woman on the side of the mountain and said “Yes, maybe”.

Cameron is studying what the moon is made of and has given a talk about it at NASA. Wow, how cool is that! I started gabbling on about how I can’t believe that there are only very few people still alive who have actually walked on the moon (five, I think). Just imagine, one day very soon, these old men will all be dead and then there will be NO-ONE alive who will know how it feels to walk on the moon. There are plenty of astronauts and cosmonauts, but none who have set foot on a different planet. I find it difficult to comprehend, sad and mind-blowing at the same time.

Cameron listened patiently to me gibbering on. I noticed that he didn’t appear to be edging away from me – so that was a good sign. Eventually, when I forcibly shut myself up in order to let him speak, he mentioned that he knows one of the men who had walked on the moon. Well, you could have knocked me over with a feather. I went all girly and teenybopperish. My train of thought was that if Cameron has met Mr

Moonwalker, then they must definitely have shaken hands with each other. I couldn’t help it, I touched Cameron’s hand and blurted out “I’ve touched someone who has touched someone who has walked on the moon”.

Come on everyone, admit it, how many of you know someone who has spent quality time with a real live spaceman who has walked on the moon? I know it is completely ridiculous and stupid, but I love that ‘six degrees of separation’ thing – where we can all connect to everyone else through a chain of six people who know someone who knows someone who knows someone else…

As I chatted to Cameron, I digested what he had told me:

1. He knows about moon geology

2. He has given a talk at NASA

3. He spends quality time with real, serious astronauts.

Then it dawned on me. He hadn’t been humouring the mad-woman, he really did mean it, he really does have a chance to go to the moon. Well,

I don’t know about knock me down with a feather – for once, I was speechless. Completely stunned.

I have waited a solid week before writing this blog post, because I wanted to come down off my high – so that I didn’t sound completely looney/luney (hey, see what I did there? I am a genius). It hasn’t really worked, I am still as excited about having met Cameron as I was a week ago. We spoke about so many things: plate tectonics; whether or not you need water to sustain life; harvesting water from asteroids to create fuel/drinking water/oxygen; claustrophobia; Trump & funding for science; who gets picked to go into space. We spoke about our parents; about retirement; his partner; my husband; we spoke about so many things in such a short length of time. I wanted to sit down and have a coffee with him and discuss all the mind-blowing ideas we touched on about the universe; space; how to be an astronaut; science; God; the big questions; the universe and everything (I know, I know, the answer is 42). He told me that his sister has also applied for the space programme and has done really well. She hasn’t succeeded yet, but has progressed deep into the selection process, doing all of the physical and psychological tests that are required nowadays. Cameron has his own application in the pipeline.

I noted gratefully that he still did not have a look of fear in his eyes and seemed happy to talk to me. I am old enough to be his mother, possibly his grandmother.  My hair was all over the place, and I was wearing pink wellies, livid green leggings, and a dirty, dark green, waterproof jacket that was so old it wouldn’t fasten because the zip was bust. As we parted company, I shook his hand and thanked him for such an interesting conversation. I wished him luck and said that I really hoped he made it to the moon. As an afterthought I added “Think of me when you get there”.

Just imagine it, when I am about 80 years old, Cameron might step onto the moon. When he does, he will think about all of his family and then he will think about all of his friends. And then maybe, just maybe, he might think of me – and I, too, will have been to the moon.

**The Editor’s View: Six Degrees of Separation:**

**DBL** ***→* PC Mick Hills *→* HRH *→* DBL *→* AG*→* FIZZ**

I love the creativity of all these experiences. Utilizing the theory makes for great reading. It also prompted me to see if I could link Andy, Fizz, HRH and myself in the same manner.

Easier than I thought, but the process provides an interesting historical link, some of the details of which can be found in my first book *‘A Little Bit of Trouble in London’* ([www.brynstowe.org](http://www.brynstowe.org)). In December 1974, aged 19 years and a few months, I joined my first police station, the famous ‘Cannon Row’ (Or ‘Canon’ Row, but that is another story) situated within the curtilage of the even more famous ‘Scotland Yard’, for those who may have recently watched the Edgar Lustgarten 1950’s TV series of the same name. Within days I had met PC Mick Hills who was also serving at Cannon Row at the time. Mick Hills was a bit of an instant legend at the nick because he was one of the officers who saved the life of our patron, Princess Anne, in The Mall kidnapping attempt in April of that year, for which heroic act he received serious gunshot wounds and a George Medal.

In later life I met HRH on several occasions, mainly through my career break work with The Mission to Seafarers of which organization she is also proudly the patron. I also came rather close to meeting her on a

slightly less auspicious occasion, an occasion which I reproduce in this magazine in the hope that our new most respected and truly lovely patron will not read it. Or, if she does, is in a benevolent enough frame of mind not to send me to The Tower for a long period of retrospection armed with a pen without ink and no paper.

Andy Gregory, being another clearly devoted subject, (I put this in, just in case, by way of attempting to curry royal favour), has met me (via Zoom of course) and I met our very own Fizz Curtis at Fox Road at the ‘Crafty Copper’ weekend of 2019 where we were both exhibiting. I even bought some of her craftily made jewellery. I wonder if HRH would like a piece? Sorry Ma’am, I claim ‘Freedom of Speech’ in my humble defence and hope you have changed the plumbing at Tower Hill since my last visit.

**Ed.**



**Royal Encounter**

**b*y a Loyal Subject***

**O**f my various encounters with members of Her Majesty’s nearest and dearest, a run in at Buck House was my first. It was a dark, whispering sort of night, the sort older novelists pen stuff about God-fearing types being tucked up in bed with hot toddies and last night’s ‘Pink Un’. Eerie if you follow me? Quiet. Owls toot tooting, the simpering sound of the distant combustion engine, the gentle crackle of the creeping copper’s radio assuring the sleeping world that ‘All might be well (but we cannot *really* guarantee it).’ In short, a slumbering sort of night but only for honest folk, peace reigning as surely for them as for our Good Lady Queen herself who lay snoozing a few short yards away from this; the ever-ready Buckingham Palace Night Patrol. ‘All was well in the Metropolis’ wrote the diarists of that night.

And all would have been if the unfortunate copper’s radio had been switched to the ‘quiet’ mode rather than the ‘loud’ setting just as he was passing under a third-floor sash window on the south-eastern side of the Great Palace. A loose bootlace conspired with a bored base-station

communications operative of literary turn to drown the gas-lit angled stone with dulcet decibels of purest poetry. It was as if a strident cockney crow had far too early foretold the telling of the hour, or the ghost of Oscar Wilde had picked this very night to seek his just revenge upon the articles of law and order for their sins of omission long ago. You probably have the picture?

In short, the radio rang out in rhyme; the night was shattered, the constable jumped. The well-guarded gravel, so crunchingly reassuring to the Grenadier’s glorious boot steps, scurried in a haste of abnormal activity and the window sash, three stories high above, sashed. Unnervingly.

There was no denying the sincerity of the ensuing dialogue. It was as eloquent as it was precise. Dialogue writers could learn from it. Sort of hit the mark if you follow my drift. Just nine syllables. There was no doubting the voice. It had a youthful ring to it. A right royal one and no holds barred. Resounding imperiously down The Mall were heard the words,

‘Would you please turn your radio off.’ (Or words to that effect).

*From ‘The English’ A Collection of the People’ by D.B. Lewis. Unpublished.*

**Peter’s Pen: A Letter to Santa**

***by Geoff Jackson***

Peter had been out in the garden wrapped up warm against the chilled wind when mum called him in for tea. “Come in now Peter, your tea is going to be getting cold”

Peter stopped what he was doing and ran through the garden to the kitchen door, kicking off his boots and tearing off his scarf and coat as he ran in through the kitchen.

“Here I am mum” he called as he ran over to the table, pulled out a chair and sat himself down.

Mum came in and put Peter’s tea on the table. “Thanks Mum” said Peter, “I do love toasties, and that cake looks tasty.”

“Thank you” said Mum, who carried on back into the kitchen.

Peter demolished his toasties and did the same with the cake.

“What are you going to do after tea?” said Mum.

Peter thought a bit, and said “I’m going to write a letter to Santa”

“That’s a good idea” said Mum, and with that, Peter pushed back his chair, jumped off and went upstairs to his bedroom.

In Peter’s bedroom by the side of his bed, a beautiful looking pen, began to softly glow a beautiful blue.

“Hello Peter”, a quiet voice said. “Hi Coral, how are you doing today?”

“I’m fine thank you Peter, what do you want to do? Draw something or write something?”

Peter was a bit pensive and thought for a minute, then said with a big smile on his face, “I’d like to write a letter to Father Christmas”.

‘That’s a lovely idea Peter” said Coral. “Do you know what you want to say?”

Again, Peter thought a bit and said “I have a couple of ideas, but I’ll probably have some more soon.

Peter looked in his drawing box and found some nice paper, and even a couple of envelopes, which he put on his desk ready to write.

“Are you ready for me to write Coral,” asked Peter.

“Yes, I am Peter, off we go.”

Peter gently picked up Coral, his very special pen friend, and began to write.

Dear Santa, my name is Peter, and I’m writing to you to ask if I could have something special for Christmas this year.

Coral spoke quietly and glowed brighter, “Peter, do you know what you are going to ask Santa for?”

Peter smiled and looked directly at Coral “Yes Coral, I do.”

Peter continued to write very carefully. I would like to ask you for a very special friend for my beautiful pen Coral.

“Oh Peter, that is so very lovely of you to think of me, what a beautiful thought.

Peter continued, “I would like a big box of chocolates for my Mum and Dad, and I would like to have a bicycle for myself.”

When Peter had finished writing his letter, he carefully folded the paper to the right size for the envelope, and popped it in. Peter pulled away the covering for the sticky strip on the flap of the envelope, and stuck it down. He tapped it to make sure that it had closed properly.

Coral asked Peter what he was going to do next. Peter said, “I think I’m finished”.

“Where is your envelope going to go Peter? said Coral.

“Well, it’s going to go to Father Christmas, Coral”

“Mmmm” said Coral “But you haven’t put his name and address on the envelope”

Peter looked in shock “Oh crikey” he said, “You’re right” Coral glowed and gave a small chuckle. Peter took the envelope and went downstairs. His Mum and Dad were both sitting in the lounge.

“Hi Mum and Dad” said Peter. “I have written a letter to Father Christmas, and I need to post it. Have you a stamp that I could have please? “

Dad said, “We haven’t got any at the moment Peter, so I will take it into work with me and post it for you.

Peter gave his dad a great big smile and a hug. “Thank you, Dad, thank you very much”. With that Peter ran back upstairs to his bedroom.

Dad looked at Mum and said, “I’ll put Peter’s letter down by the Christmas tree for now, then post it when I go to work tomorrow”. Not too long after, Peter went to bed, he and Coral had a little chat before he went to sleep. Coral glowed for a while longer then also went to sleep.

Mum and Dad finished watching their programmes, and, after making sure their coal fire was out and covered with the fireguard, both went up to bed.

The coal fire was glowing slightly and about to go out, when suddenly there was a draught of wind that came down the chimney. A cone of light came from the chimney and whisked its way across the room to the Christmas tree, and to Peter’s letter to Santa. It was as if the cone of light had a life of its own, as it suddenly picked up Peter’s letter and whooshed it back up into the chimney, and away. The strangest thing though, was, as it did this, there was a soft sound, heard across the house of “HO, HO, HO”, then all went quiet., No-one in the house stirred, except for Peter’s pen, Coral, who lay on Peter’s desk glowing brightly, and giving a quiet chuckle before going back to sleep.

**Letters to the Editor**

The *Writes* editorial desk was swamped with messages of friendship, goodwill, and much cheer over the festive season. Thank you all for your generous wishes and endearing thanks. Is it really February already? Here is a selection,

Season’s Greetings one and all. What a fabulous bumper edition of the magazine. It has taken me two days of reading and revisiting the magazine as I wanted to really appreciate and enjoy every contribution. Such variety. Poems, stories, anecdotes and so much more. Thank you for all your hard work David editing, and thank you Sean for inviting me to join the SIG.

Looking forward to catching up in the new year.

*You are to be congratulated on a wonderful compilation!*

I have had a quick read through the latest edition.  I am so honoured to be included amongst such a talented and diverse group of people.  The content is amazing, and I look forward to settling down at some point to read the variety of stories and poems.

*Thank You for chairing this wonderful Special Interest Group, for your council and encouragement it is appreciated.*

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Wow what a brilliant Edition.  A huge ‘Well Done’ to you for all your hard work compiling, editing and producing such a huge tome.

Most importantly from me, a huge Thank You for the kind comments you have made in recent weeks and months about my early works being part of this wonderful group & for the kind comments you made in Writes 15 making my poem the Editor’s Choice of the Month.  A great honour, especially amongst such talented writers.

In the crazy world we live in at the moment, it’s been lovely, after attending a pal’s funeral today (heart failure at 54) to take a breather, sit quietly for a couple of hours and reflect on the words that have been shared in the magazine.

A Fantastic read.

Dear Editor,

I am in receipt of your New Year greeting - Thank you and Best Wishes to you and your family for a GUID 2021. Re the Writes - I did receive my copy. With respect to the ‘shape’ of IPA Writers group. I am a recent interloper and not privy to the birth of the group and what it was set up to do. I will take a stab at it. Getting like minds to meet and exchange ideas, experiences and just chat is a good base. It may be that some are happy to do nothing more, and that’s OK. It may also be the case that the group could explore writing, perhaps widen their experience, take risks, within the support and friendship the group offers. I will put a couple of ideas into the mix at this stage; (1) read out short pieces of prose (or

sections of poetry) that have made an impact on the person presenting it and why.  (Spread out over a period, only one person a session presenting - may be that person will read out three or four short examples - even if only a sentence or a line. Then tell us why they hold these words in such regard). We could spread that exercise out over a few months. (2) A literary quiz every now and then. Just a bit of fun. (3) The five most influential books you have read and why. (Not the Bible). Again, this can be spread out over months - not necessarily on successive sessions -   a schedule of members drawn up to present their choices. Only one a session. (4) Publish an anthology of stories and poems written by the group. Annually?  I have a couple more thoughts, but a chat will perhaps be a better way to express my thoughts. I hope these are helpful and fit the direction you want to take the group in.

Best wishes Ian (McNeish)

**Editor’s Reply:**

This is really thought provoking and has generated a lot of discussion both on Zoom and through the mailbox. All the ideas are sound and will be actioned during the year so thank you Ian and everyone else who has contributed to the dialogue: it is really important to help the group make the best of their writing and continually improve their skills. It is a group effort all round and we are going from strength to strength. Brilliant!

Dear Editor,

I trust you are well.

Please find attached details of a book relating to my memoirs with the British Transport Police between 1971 and 2020 and still counting.

In addition to the blurb there are details of my Great Aunt who served in the Met from 1941 to 1971 and became the first female DCI in the force. Also there are details of my fourth cousin who was brutally murdered by a Doctor in 1935 ‘The Buck Ruxton Murders’. The IPA also gets a mention.

I am writing to see if you would be kind enough to publish details in a forthcoming edition.

Should you require any further information please don’t hesitate in contacting me.

Thanking you in advance of your kind and valued assistance.

Kind Regards

Yours in friendship.

Bill

Bill Rogerson Member No. 78078

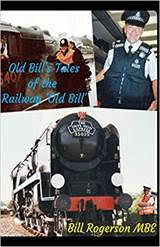
Chair North Wales IPA Branch.

Bill Rogerson, 30 Lôn Gardener, Y Fali, Caergybi, Ynys Môn, LL65 3DN

Bill Rogerson, 30 Lôn Gardener, Valley, Holyhead, Isle of Anglesey,  LL65 3DN

Ffôn  / Tel: 01407 740039 / 07899 896689

Ebost: / Email [bill.valley@btinternet.com](mailto:bill.valley@btinternet.com)



  (Really hoping you will join our little band Bill: letter in the post. Ed.)

Dear Editor,

Thanks for your note.

I retired from Merseyside Police in 2012 where my final post was in the HighTech Crime Unit in Liverpool. Following the usual honeymoon period, I decided to fulfil a long ambition of having my own business. Utilising the skills provided to me by the Police in Fraud and Digital media investigations, this is a service I now offer the private sector.

I also provide talks to relevant industries in the Private sector, one of which I title 'The Digital Crime Scene', which is designed to be as educational as it is entertaining.

I have prepped to write several books and use a mind mapping App called 'Mindly' to note my thoughts usually occurring at 5 in the morning! but the content is then left to return to another day and as yet I have not really taken those first steps to penning something that will become a book!

One such project emanates from the anomaly that the very Office I started in as a Cadet in 1980, was the same office I finished in at the HTCU come retirement in 2012! Back in the 80's we could not have conceived how that office would look with all its technology just 25 years on - nor could we have anticipated the fruitful nature of recovering evidence from digital storage media.

To that end, I have tried to envisage what Crimes will occur in 20-30 years time! One of the problems I have encountered is when I try to bring a future scenario into being, I often find it's already happened!

So, I start to write about how we may be utilising investigative techniques with digital media complemented by good old fashioned Detective work.

I am closer to envisaging how this piece of fiction will come together and have mapped some scenarios!

I now suspect those few lines you asked me to pen have gone on far too long, so I will stop there. Maybe I should put together a couple of pages for the monthly mag!

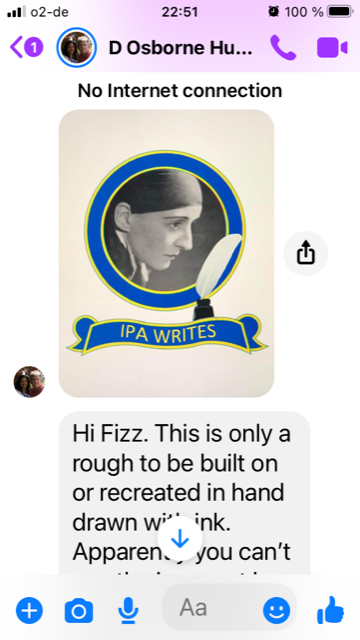
Best wishes

Tim Mobbs

**Editor’s response:**

Please do put a couple of pages together for us Tim! Also please send us a photo and we will put a ‘Meet the Writer’ piece together. Interestingly I also use Tony Buzan’s ‘Mind Mapping’ techniques when putting books together: it is a useful way of capturing all the lines of a story. Maybe you could do us a piece on the App and the techniques Tim? But welcome to the group and we look forward to seeing you in print soon. Ed.

Please address all letters to: The editor, Writes Magazine, The IPA Section UK Writers Special Interest Group and Global Writers Forum.



**Stop Press! Action Needed!**

**‘Project Irene’ is on the way!**

***by Janet Fizz Curtis and Bill Petherick***

**This fantastic and exciting SIG project arose from the last weekend seminar in 2020 and was enthusiastically encouraged by everyone of us attending. The project is coming to fruition and Fizz and Bill now lay out the next steps.**

**Proposal: Mime Play Competition**

The proposal is to ask members of the IPA (in particular, the Writers Group) to consider engaging in and supporting the following charity project. The charity project is called (name to be decided)

- something similar to IPA/IRENE MAWER MEMORIAL MIME PLAY.

**Aims of The Project**

The aims of the project are to

1) Increase confidence in young people anywhere in the world.

2) Consider the possibility of raising funds which will be donated to

a charity authorised by IPA Section UK.

The aims will be achieved through a mime competition which will be

organised by the Writers Group of IPA Section UK.

**How The Project Will Work**

- the intended participants are any type of youth group, eg, Scouts, Guides, drama or dance groups, schools, etc.

- the groups will be invited to record a short mime play (8-10 minutes)

- video entries will be viewed by nominated persons

- a winner will be chosen by nominated persons

- a shield will be awarded to the winning group

- certificates of participation will be awarded to every individual child participant.

It is hoped that children of all abilities will take part in the competition, therefore it is not possible to require that each child submits a written entry alongside their group video entry as this would limit participation. However, children could either be encouraged to submit a short, written interpretation of the play, or a drawing (to be retained by the youth group - not sent to the IPA.)

In addition, a narration will be required at the start of each play to explain what the audience is about to see. The children could be encouraged to write this themselves if able.

**Writing Opportunities**

Within the IPA there are many possibilities for writing opportunities:

- members are encouraged to write mime plays for children. These could be made available to any of the groups wishing to use a ready-made play. The written work will describe the story of what is to be acted, who the characters are, and stage directions.

- publicity will be required, therefore members are encouraged to write articles for magazines, newspapers, press rooms at radio stations and tv programmes, etc.

- members are encouraged to submit designs for the Certificates of Participation; the Winner’s Certificate and for all of the registration forms and other paperwork which will be required.

- members are encouraged to submit designs for a logo (any format: computer designed; pencil drawing, etc).

**Participants Video Activity**

The mime competition will be a video-based activity. This works well in regard to both Child Protection, and also Covid-19 issues. The children will not be required to attend any ‘away-from-home’ locations and will not be required to come into intimate or prolonged contact with adults who are not part of their youth group. Adults who work with the children will already have in place their Covid-19 strategy. Video entries will allow participation from anywhere in the world and it will not be necessary to travel to a specific location to give a performance. The narration at the start of the video will need to be in English.

**Timeline and Deadlines**

**End of February 2021:** for background information from Janet Curtis (Cambridgeshire Region)

**End of March 2021:** advertising leaflets; information pamphlet, entry form, and guidelines printed/ready for online circulation

**End of March 2021:** completion of the letter to be sent to the representative of the agreed area Education Department

**End of March 2021:** confirmed date fixed for final submissions of the videos

Local IPA branches and Region to be made aware so that a member(s) can involve themselves. Contact made with local Press as needed.

**Awarding the Shield and Certificates**

Youth groups may, if wished, stage their own live performances and invite representatives of the IPA to attend. The shield and/or certificates can be awarded in person with arrangements being made locally. If no live performance takes place, arrangements would be made between the local IPA and the winning group for presentation of the shield. Certificates of participation in the rest of the world could be disseminated via local IPA branches.

**Costs**

Costs are expected to be minimal, with much of the information being disseminated electronically. However, provision should be made for some printed publicity material and the shield. Also, possibly some physical certificates would be required, though it is expected that the youth groups or local IPA branches themselves would carry out the main bulk of the printing, using an online template provided by the IPA.

**Promoting the IPA World Wide**

This charity project will promote the IPA, and the police in general, among children and adults.

It will also promote the work of members of the IPA, e.g., members of the Writers Group. It will promote the memory of Irene Mawer who is the subject of a biography being written by a member of the Writers Group: Irene Mawer used mime both as an educational tool and as a charitable tool in Britain in the era between the two World Wars; her educational work spread around the world. Members of the IPA will have the opportunity to practise their own creative skills in many different forms: writing, artwork, publicity (dealing with the press, public speaking, radio and tv interviews, etc).

Finally, this project will promote the main aim of the IPA – ‘Service through Friendship’; serving the community by developing the confidence of children and by forming bonds with the adults who run the youth groups; and by providing friendship in many inter-related directions both within and between the IPA and the youth groups. There is no reason why this should not be a world-wide project.

**Initial responses from the Writers Group on the following aspects would be greatly appreciated, please:**

1. Suggestions for the title of the competition which should combine the IPA with the promotion of the memory of Irene Mawer.
2. Consideration of how to write the required publicity materials; creation of entry forms/certificates, etc.
3. Consideration of artistic interpretation, for example, creation of a logo, etc.
4. Consideration of writing mime plays which can be used by any of the groups.
5. Any other aspect of how this competition will work.

Thank you all,

***Janet***

Janet ‘Fizz’ Curtis. Email:

[fizzycloud@hotmail.com](mailto:fizzycloud@hotmail.com)

**Please Help Design the Project Logo!**



**Doz (*D. Osbourne Hughes*) has put the logo framework together as above but we are looking for a collaborative approach here and would welcome further ideas and submissions for the final project logo. Please do send a logo submission into Fizz who will collate the ideas and come up with the final logo version! Thank you to all our artists and photographers out there! Ed.**

**Body Talk**

***by Ann Cumberland***

***Editor’s note:*** *Ann approached the editor to say she needed an inspiration to re-start writing after a short break away from it (as we all should do perhaps?). The editor suggested recording a conversation with her own body. This is that record of her body talking back to her. And yes, we should take risks with our writing. Ed.*

‘Will you ever stop? The sun comes up, and you’re off. The race has begun. Running down the stairs, making breakfast for Andy, he has not even moved yet, he hasn’t had too, he constantly gets everything handed to him. No need for a maid then. And you think he should lose weight? How? With a four step walk from the bed to the chair, if he made it down the stairs, he could at least burn off some calories.

I am getting fed up with being last in the queue, everything for everyone comes first. One would think, a night’s sleep should leave me refreshed and ready for a new day, but you just will not relax long enough, I think you don’t know how to, which is half the problem. I need eight hours, but you are burning the candle at both ends. Super woman or super silly?

The visitors can look after themselves, you do too much always trying to please. Cooking, cleaning, washing their clothes and shopping for them, is it any wonder they don’t want to go home? You think you are helping but it is annoying everyone, more than you realise. Take a step back and relax, they will survive, just watch.

Racing around Tesco’s every week with a trolley piled high, then dashing into the house with heavy bags, it’s too much pressure. Coat still on, you’re cooking dinner and you still haven’t gotten to the bathroom.

Spending too much precious time with your head down on your mobile phone, is it any wonder the physiotherapist sees you so often? I feel sorry for you, you are fighting a losing battle. A more supportive chair at the computer would be helpful and if you would at least use your laptop stand that would ease the neck pain and encourage you to sit up straight. Take a break every hour from the laptop, your sore eyes are from not blinking enough.

And that’s another thing, you don’t feed me properly and expect me to go walking every day. I thought you had no time for McDonalds, the coffee isn’t that good.

You better start listening to me, I am finding it hard to keep up with the constant running around, forgetfulness is becoming more frequent and stress levels are on the rise. Today was the last straw, not just one but four large needles injected into the shoulder area for pain relief and no prior warning about the extra-long cotton buds up the nostrils for Covid-19 testing beforehand. The twelve-minute wait was the longest twelve minutes of my life, I was just relieved when they said it was negative.

It doesn’t matter how much udder mint you rub on your foot; the pain won’t go away if you stay on your feet so long every day. Tune in and listen to me. I know you can hear me. You simply just ignore me. Have it your own way. I will stop sending the messages. And when it all comes crashing down on you. Remember. I told you so.’

*Excellent Ann! A very incisive response and a very neat piece of creative writing. Love the shouting at the end. Ed. (Oh yes Ed., and we should all listen to our bodies, shouldn’t we?)*

**Latest News: ‘The Bookshop’**

***by Helena Hutt***

**Following an approach to the membership for volunteers for various roles withing the SIG, Helena has very kindly agreed to take on the management of ‘The Bookshop’. It has been a long-standing ambition to deliver on this and we are very grateful to her for agreeing to take it on. Thank you, Helena! Ed.**

Dear all,

I am very excited to be involved in this way and ‘The Bookshop’ is proving really interesting and inspiring. The idea is to help market our members’ published works. The intention is to launch a website with all our members’ books listed with links to their own sites. To make it work we need the following from all of you published authors:

* A colour image of each book front cover
* A short description of the book content and genre (Three lines)
* The Recommended Retail Price (RRP) and any member discounts
* The link to your own website
* An image of the author
* A short biography of the author (5 lines)
* Any testimonies the book has received (No more than three)

Please send all of the above in one mail if possible, to: [**helenahutt@btinternet.com**](mailto:helenahutt@btinternet.com)

The Bookshop is going to take several weeks to compile so please look out for further press releases in this magazine! Thank you all, Helena

**Police World A Writing Opportunity!**

Police World has a writing opportunity, and a development challenge, for any of our writers wanting to try their hand at journalism.

In our July edition, we are planning to highlight the activities of IPA Special Interest Groups (SIG) and some of the less formal interest groups.

It is not always easy to get articles from these groups, because their members are not natural writers. However, we have a pool of excellent writers within our own SIG who could take the role of journalist / reporter.

What we hope to achieve is a double page (aprox 1500 words) article about each group.

I am looking for volunteers to each take on one of the groups as a project.

With support from the Police World Editor (Neil), the task will be to: contact their chosen SIG, interview one or more of their members and write an article.

Each article should cover:

* What the SIG is about
* What they have done
* What they plan to do
* How to make contact
* Around 6 photos to illustrate the article

The deadline for submission of your finished work is 9th June. (Pre-submissions for discussion and guidance are encouraged)

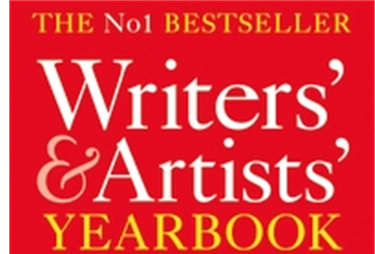
**The interest groups are:**

* Family History
* Camping & Caravanning (claimed by Fizz)
* Writers
* Educators
* Defensive Tactics
* Walking
* Whisky / Wine Tasting

Please contact Neil if you would like to discuss the project.

Support and guidance will be provided throughout, so don’t be afraid of coming forward.

***Well done all our SIG writers who appeared in the latest edition of ‘Police World’; you continue to stun and amaze with some fascinating insights into the IPA world of friendship. Ed.***

**The Writers’ & Artists’ Yearbook**

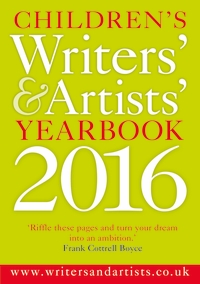
***by The Editor***

It is just possible that some of the SIG do not know about this essential book for any writer and artist. If you are serious about your writing or your art, then this tome should be on your bookshelf. If you are a children’s writer or artist, then there is a companion volume which likewise is an essential reference work.

Just as importantly you can be listed as a publisher, which several of us are, within the pages **free of charge. The closing date for entries for the 2022 edition is 25th February 2021** and the publication date is July 2021**.**

Contained within the volumes are details of nearly every publisher of books in the UK, agents, virtually everything you

need to approach a publisher, useful writing tips from the leading writers in just about every genre, all about ISBNs, public lending rights, theatre, illustration, societies, prizes, festivals, copyright, libel, finance, poetry, magazine writing and a lot of useful information.

Over 800 pages of essential reading. It is priced at £25 so not cheap but a very good buy. The online presence is also worth checking out with podcasts on a range of publishing subjects plus competitions and an online shop besides much more.

[www.writersandartists.co.uk](http://www.writersandartists.co.uk)

* **If you are thinking of submitting an entry as a publisher, please let myself or Tony Granger know, and we can send you a form. Or you can apply direct from the website. Ed.**

If you are thinking of

**Peter Johnson’s Boots**

***by Sean Hannigan***

**P**eter Johnson had a fine home, a fine wife, and a fine pair of boots. In many ways Peter had everything he ever wanted. As a boy he had been brought up by his Mummy to believe that if you worked hard ‘You possibly will achieve whatever you want and indeed go beyond that but remember to keep your feet firmly on the ground!’

Peter remembered his mum’s words well and indeed worked hard and achieved much. At Primary School Peter was never in the top set unlike his twin brother Matty who was. Peter was a very contented young boy and loved learning facts about history and geography and science. However, Peter really struggled with reading and writing until he reached the age of ten when something just clicked, and he was off like a rocket.

Peter remembered the exact moment it happened. He was reading page four of a book called Brear Anansey which was the story of a South African Spider and her friends in the woods. Usually, Peter stuttered, and word-tripped his way through page one and today was no different except he would have to somersault through four of them.

Peter’s teacher for ‘Primary 7’, Brian McGinn, was absolutely wonderful and gifted at helping students to learn and love their education. He used to teach way out in Canada and had the pictures to prove it. When the class did *show and tell*, so did he. His pictures showed snow filled mountains and plains with tepee-like tents where other children peeked out in very thick fur coats. Peter thought they looked like seals, so Peter called them ‘The Seal People’.

*These were what the class named the Inuits, the native people of northern Canada.*

Mr McGinn showed more pictures of their clothes and Peter remembered him saying that everything they wore, they made. Nothing was wasted and clothes and boots were handed down between families. Peter knew how they felt because in his house *everything* was handed down. He called them ‘Hand-me-downs’ which included boots and shoes and Peter was always last in the queue, so his boots and shoes had been worn at least three times.

Peter began with page one of Brear Anansey and read it out loud with a confidence Mr McGinn seemed puzzled by. Page two, three and four quickly followed at a pace and unfaltering flow which caused the rest of the class to become silent, not an easy task for ten-year-olds. Quickly, Mr McGinn sent the class runner to fetch Mr McCreanor, the ‘Primary 7’ eleven-year-old’s teacher who promptly entered the room un-noticed by Peter who by this point was at page seven.

As pages turned, pictures whizzed past with words, sentences and full paragraphs being devoured by the still listening class and the teachers. The story had humour and at the obvious places where the author expected at least a simple chuckle and appreciation of his craft there was not a single sound. Peter suddenly stopped. There was the same silence which should not have lasted as long as it did.

Mr McGinn looked up at his fellow professional and then at his ‘Primary 6’. As if carefully scripted by the teachers and class, everyone burst simultaneously into a volcano-like cheer and a ripple of applause soon became a torrent. Peter looked up from his book!

He was not quite sure why Mr McCreanor was close by and puzzled at the applause of the class because Peter was in the world of Brear Anansey which had just ended on page thirty-two. Mr McGinn had more than a tear in his eye which he tried to conceal under his glasses.

‘My God…. he can read…he can actually read…the whole book!’

Both teachers gave Peter a scholarly slap on the back and said nearly in sync ‘W*ell done, well done my boy, we are both so proud of you’****.***

So, Brear Anansey was the start of Peter’s meteoric rise through an academic world. He was fourteen when he sat six ‘O’ levels and fifteen when he sat eight more, then five ‘A’ levels and a good first-class honours degree. However, his shoes were still the third generation and I do not mean Apple. He longed to be able to have his own shoes and on his sixteenth birthday his wish was granted.

Peter came from a family of four siblings and his parents worked so hard to provide for everyone. He had a great sense of humour and appreciated that his circumstances were different to most of his classmates at school and university. As with most things, his life and prospects continued along a happy path. His own children wanted for nothing and Peter was able to buy any shoe or boot he wanted.

THE END……………………………………………..or so you would think.

**P**eter Johnson had a fine home, a fine wife, and a fine pair of boots.

Peter on a lovely, lovely, Christmas shopping trip was in Oxford Street when his wife Annie dragged him into Clarke’s. ‘Have you not enough shoes my love?’

‘Yep, but we are going to the basement where it was signposted ‘’Men’s’’ ’.

So about forty-five minutes later two pairs of boots, one in blue and one in brown, were duly purchased. Peter loved the boots and had a good eighteen months out of them. He wore them nonstop in the house, in the car, in the office and if he could….in the bath.

But the blue ones, the most favourite pair he had ever bought were just so tight and yet they were the same size and width as the brown. They just did not seem to fit any more, so with regret off to the Downe charity shop they went with a few shirts and the usual fifteen pairs of birthday socks.

Over the next twenty years Peter thought about the boots, the colour he just loved which really surprised Annie and him. He never forgot his roots and still insisted on going to the odd car boot sale. So, on a cold Saturday while Annie and the girls were off on a pamper day, and we don’t mean nappies, Peter arrived and headed straight for the second-hand books which was his passion since Brear Anansey. He picked up several incredible bargains which he would have to explain to Annie.

As he walked, skipping back to the car with his joyous purchase he stopped dead in his tracks. The stall keeper gave a wry smile through his silver whiskers. ‘So, you spotted these beauties then…?’

‘Yep………How did you come by them…?’

‘Well, I have had them for nearly twenty years. Picked them up in the Downe !’

‘What, the charity shop?’

‘Yes, Sir, I have had them for that long and re-soled them once, but I don’t have the use for them any more so maybe you could use a pair of boots?’

Peter paid the thirty pounds even though he offered much more.

He could not even wait to get home, so he straddled his legs half in and half out of the car and put them on to a snug fit…

Peter Johnson had a fine home, a fine wife, and a fine pair of boots.

‘You possibly will achieve whatever you want and indeed go beyond that but, remember to keep your feet firmly on the ground!’

**The Fish Supper**

***by Ian McNeish***

It was late, it was a Friday, and the hostelries were spilling. A well-known local worthy had headed out early from his watering hole of choice to avail himself of sustenance. In his case a massive fish supper, or as referred to in some areas, fish and chips, maybe haddock and chips or even cod and chips. It was difficult to tell which species as I couldn't see through the Guardian newspaper wrapper. What I could see however was that the well-known local worthy was in a state that rhymed with 'fished'.

He was engrossed with the task at hand, head down, deep in concentration, as he considered his options; a carefully selected chip, or perhaps a piece of fish? Decisions, decisions? Totally engrossed, oblivious of the police presence. He momentarily glanced up from his deliberations, perhaps a balance thing. It was then he caught sight of the patrol car, or in this case, van. His survival instincts kicked in immediately. He had lived in this gritty community long enough to understand the rules and identify the dangers. He immediately drew himself to his full

height, head up, shoulders back and attempted to look sober. However, perhaps due to the weight of the fish supper in one hand, or the attempt

to stand up straight too quickly, who knows, he suddenly started swaying from side to side. He was standing, or to be accurate, swaying, right next to a lamp post. He urgently, in a kind of uncertain lunge, reached a hand to grab said lamp post and steady himself. The fact that it was the hand innocent of fish supper was perhaps more luck than judgement. Whatever, he missed his target and his sway morphed into a kind of sideways and out of control topple, resulting in the join between his shoulder and upper chest coming into contact with the lamp post. He was now in a perilous position. Instinctively, to stop this unexpected sideways lunge, he wrapped his arm around the lamp post. His movement however was not arrested and had merely altered course. With arm desperately hugging his saviour lamp post, the top half of his body kind of pitched forward, the momentum causing him to spin round the lamp post and round and round, his head leading. Like some kind of slow motion, bizarre, synchronized pole dancing routine, getting lower and lower. His legs however, in a different rhythm, more Dashing White Sergeant like, were going at a hundred miles an hour as they fought to gain traction and balance.

After three descending circuits of the pole and still closely attached, he seemed, for an instant, to have gained control, but momentum is a funny thing, difficult to simply stop it on a sixpence. He violently straightened up, to no avail, now his top half lurched backwards. His legs seemed to give up the uneven struggle at that point and shot out in front of him and a millisecond later his arse reached 'terra firma' and he kind of sat, still facing out towards his nemesis. However, the momentum was not completely inert and in a final wee burst of energy, it rent asunder his grip on the pole, throwing him, rather urgently, onto his back, his legs flailing into the air.

Despite all his body gyrations, the precious contents of the Guardian wrapper remained intact, as though the hand holding it had assumed the properties of a gyroscope.

As we drove off, he had regained a modicum of balance and dignity and was sitting beside his saviour pole, happily tucking into his precious brown sauce and vinegar soaked, melanogrammus aeglefinus and chips.

And life moved on.

***The Station Cat Writes***

The Cat is aware of several members who have been affected by Covid-19 in different ways. Eleni Cotton was struck down just before Christmas and we send all our wishes for a speedy recovery Eleni. Naturally as writers no experience is ever wasted, so hopefully after recovery the experience, unpleasant as it no doubt was, will be put to good creative use.

The Cat has also been reflecting upon the year past and all the magnificent contributions made by our members. It is striking how everyone’s writing continues to develop and improve, so from The Cat a huge well done to everyone.

But there is a but.

Of course.

Common errors do *keep* cropping up and so this year The Cat is launching a regular column called:

**‘SIGnal Errors’**

In order that no one is put off writing these will appear one by one, but if the errors *still* persist the author might well receive a **‘Note from The Cat’** to see the relevant **‘SIGnal Error**’ entry! It is meant light heartedly, but it does cause the editor a lot of extra work editing the errors out so as not to expose the author. Your attention to these errors would

therefore, not only improve your writing but save the editor a lot of extra eye strain! Here is the first:

**‘SIGnal Errors’ No.1. The Ellipsis**

*(Misused most often by a row of many dots or used too frequently, particularly by your editor…)*

**This is a common ‘inconsistency and misuse’ rather than an absolute error but as in all such misuse it tends to indicate early writing efforts or a lack of proof reading.**

The ellipsis, known informally as dot-dot-dot, is a series of, usually three, dots which *in the UK* are usually written without spacing … it indicates one of several things:

* an intentional omission of a word, sentence, or whole section from a text without altering its original meaning.
* to indicate an unfinished thought,
* a provide slight [pause](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pausa),
* to suggest an echoing voice
* to provide a nervous or awkward silence
* In poetry, to give a line break or to indicate sarcasm.

… should be used sparingly and consistently …

*Just out of interest the word ellipsis (plural ellipses) comes from the*[*Ancient Greek*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ancient_Greek_language) *ἔλλειψις, élleipsis meaning to 'leave out'.*

***Thank you all, wonderful writers; please stay safe and well and continue to have a quiet and peaceful 2021!***

***As if…***

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***The Editor, ‘Writes’:*** [***davidlewis@brynstowe.co.uk***](mailto:davidlewis@brynstowe.co.uk)

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