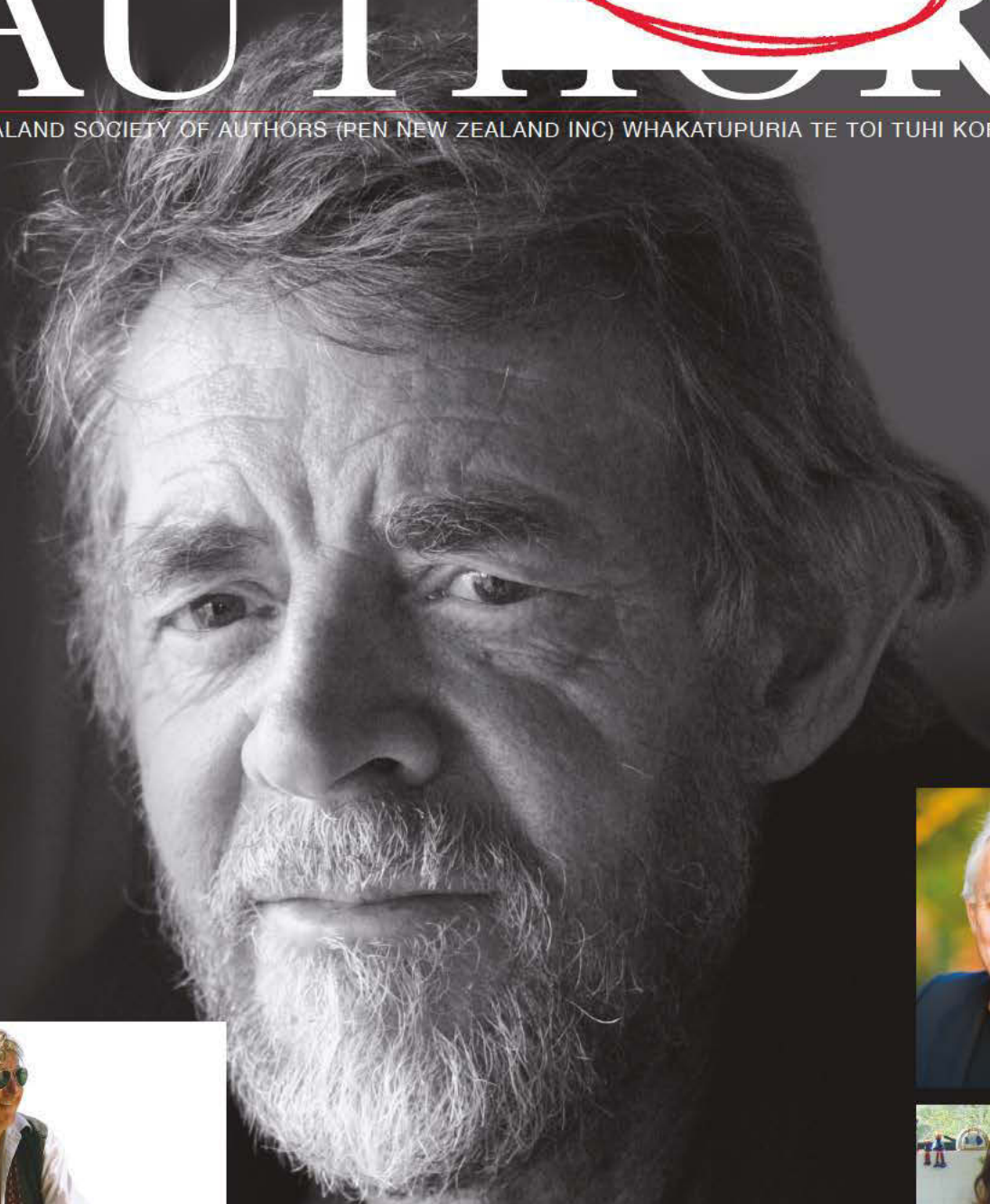


NEW ZEALAND AUTHOR

NEW ZEALAND SOCIETY OF AUTHORS (PEN NEW ZEALAND INC) WHAKATUPURIA TE TOI TUHI KORERO



**P
P
PREVAIL**
Surprise bestsellers

Frankfurt roundup
Ghostwriters unmasked
Time thief tips

NEW ZEALAND AUTHOR
(PEN NZ INC) TE PUNI KATUHI O AOTEAROA

THE BIMONTHLY JOURNAL OF THE
NZ SOCIETY OF AUTHORS (PEN NZ INC).

Contributions are welcome: all care but no responsibility taken for unsolicited material. Letters may be edited for reasons of space or clarity.

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Clockwise from centre,
Brian Turner, Bill Manhire (Photo:
Ed Swinden), Paula Green,
Sam Hunt

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ARTE CULTUREL DE NEW ZEALAND / THE AOTEAROA

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Auckland branch's spit.it.out programme for writer readings will be the biggest individual effort at the Queen City's Fringe Festival of the arts this coming summer. Co-organiser ANITA ARLOV details plans involving up to 60 writers and seeks support in implementing the ambitious programme.

Sooner or later it had to happen. NZSA SUBSCRIPTIONS are on the rise.

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A full round-up over the following six pages, with contributions by: ADRIAN BLACKBURN, who with RICHARD WEBSTER and CEO MAGGIE TARVER, manned our stand.

CLARE FEENEY, who gives a detailed rundown of her energetic approach to the Fair.

And another half dozen of our authors who paid their own way to travel to Frankfurt, GREG SCOWEN, RACHEL McALPINE, OWEN SCOTT, TUI ALLEN, IAN CLARKE and JENNIFER MORTIMER tell their own stories about a daunting few days amongst the crowds at the biggest and oldest book fair in the world.

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THE NEW ZEALAND
SOCIETY OF AUTHORS

Having trouble understanding your publishing contract?



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THE NZ SOCIETY OF AUTHORS OFFERS A CONSULTANCY SERVICE FOR ITS MEMBERS. OUR PANEL CAN ADVISE ON THE BEST WAY TO NEGOTIATE A FAIR AND REASONABLE PUBLISHING CONTRACT AND HELP RESOLVE ANY CONCERNS YOU MAY HAVE.

If you suspect you are being exploited, contact us about protecting your author's rights. This covers the unauthorised use of your copyright material, moral rights, publishers not honouring the terms of your contract and so on.

If your query is to do with an issue over a contract, please remember to send a copy of your contract and specify exactly where you think the publisher is in breach.

Comments and advice are intended to be used as a guide only and are not a substitute for professional advice. They are based solely on our non-lawyers' experience in the publishing industry. It is not legal advice in any jurisdiction.

This service is free to members and is subsidised by Creative New Zealand.

We get hundreds of queries every year on a range of issues to do with writing and publishing. All communications are treated in confidence.

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Membership Subscription Increase

The New Zealand Society of Authors (PEN NZ Inc.) is committed to keeping membership subscriptions as low as possible to ensure that writers wishing to join are not prohibited due to high subscription fees.

However, due to increasing overheads, the NZSA Membership Subscriptions will be increased as from 1st January 2013. Subscriptions will be:

Associate/Full	\$120
Student	\$60
Affiliate	\$165
Overseas	\$140

All prices include GST. Overseas subscription includes bank transaction charges.

All subscriptions due from 1 January will be at this new amount.

Please note that any overdue payments made after 1 January 2013 will also be at the higher amount.

If you have any questions please don't hesitate to contact Jan on office@nzauthors.org.nz



APOLOGIES

to photographer Marti Friedlander for failing to credit her with the wonderful portrait of Margaret Mahy run on Page 6 of the last issue of *The Author*.

MEMBERSHIP UPDATE

JOINED: Philip Braithwaite, Tania Roberts, Dallas Gopi, Gwendolyn Needham, Barbara Stanley, Clare Lilley, Angela Wanhalla, Jodie Rendell, Louise de Varga, Michelle Child, Colleen Toomey, Whiti Hereaka, Fiona Drummond, David Catt, Vivienne Hamlin, Bruce Gilkinson, Immi Paterson-Harkness, Rose Stanley, Gareth Renowden, Colleen Ellison, Pamela Chivers, Gerard Bruij, Rex McDowall, Marnie Anstis, Michalia Arathimos, Dione Jones, Julie Glamuzina, Jack McKerchar, Frances Edmond, Caroline Barron, Lizelle Herman, Sarah Tanburn, Janet Marshall, Russell Meek, Katherine Anne Swain, Theresa Sjoquist. **REJOINED:** Anna Milliken, Warwick Pudney, Robert Nimmo, Ingrid Horrocks, John Terris, Trudi Caffell, Jacqui Gibson

Fight for Authors' rights

Noted British writer MAUREEN DUFFY recently took the fight for authors' rights to a critical international forum. Duffy, who is current president of the European Writers' Congress, spoke out strongly at the recent meeting in Geneva of the World International Property Organisation's (WIPO) standing committee on copyright and related rights. Her particular target was the proposed expansion of educational exceptions to copyright. Her speech follows:

I am the author of 31 published works of fiction, poetry, and nonfiction, as well as plays for stage – 10 performed – television and radio. And today I am speaking to you on behalf of the International Authors Forum (IAF) where we hope to give authors world-wide a voice, but, particularly, to give a voice to visual artists and writers.

I want to speak to you specifically about the position of writers as an example of what authors in general are facing. The Authors' Licensing and Collecting Society (ALCS), and we hope eventually the IAF, covers every kind of writing and its workers in every field: academics, scientists, novelists, screen and audio writers, and poets. Some are employees of, for example, academic institutions, schools, colleges, others are self employed, trying to support and continue their work in an increasingly hostile environment, where the very concept of the professional artist, able to earn enough to go on producing creative work, because they are protected by an enforceable droit d'auteur, is under attack from multi-national companies that want to be able to make our work, 'content' as it is degradingly called, free to a public which increasingly does not want to pay for it while making their

profits from advertising.

The old structures which supported creation are breaking down. Where once a writer would receive an advance against projected sales, enabling the work to be written, and then earn royalties from the further exercise of their primary rights, now writers must produce the work and then attempt to sell it, unless of course it is the memoir of a celebrity, footballer, television personality or politician, when a large commission will be paid to secure this desirable 'product'.

In this situation secondary rights assume a new importance. It is the struggle to protect and enforce those rights which provide supplementary but essential income, which underpins the emergence of the IAF, as a global answer to authors' now global problems, because of the ubiquity of the internet, and the growing hostility to the concept of droit d'auteur, without any compensating proposals on how creators are to be supported. Now these rights are under attack as barriers to open access.

And this is not just a problem for supposedly richer countries with a copyright system developed over centuries. The internet which can give our work such worldwide exposure, can be made to serve creativity, not only with an audience, but with an income by a system of national and global licensing and interchange between authors' organisations. ALCS for example already pays the writers of over 100 countries moneys earned by their secondary rights in the UK.

Increasingly this valuable support income is under threat by

the proposal for example to broaden the education exception. Such an exception in the UK would diminish ALCS' income by 1/3, and abolish its payments to those 100 countries since that is largely for educational use. The cost to education of a license which allows them to make multiple copies of a huge range of material in the UK is in the region of pence per pupil while in return some 42,000 authors benefit annually. Many author respondents to PricewaterhouseCoopers' recent research into the impact of such an education exception replied that they would not continue writing educational material. It was estimated that a drop of 20% in the licence income would lead to a 29% reduction in the production of such works, or 2,870 titles per year in the UK alone.

But the fundamental question is: Why should the author be the only one expected to give free 'for the public good'? Teachers, librarians, dinner ladies, caretakers are paid.

Equipment such as computers must be paid for. Only writing, or illustrating must be made available for free. It is believed that we will go on because we love it, because we must, because we are driven. This attitude hides a basic mixture of envy and contempt for the creator. How else can we understand what would deny us our universal human right enshrined in the 1946 Declaration and embodied in the Berne Convention? That is why we are promoting the IAF, and that is why it is needed now, even more than in the last two hundred years since the first UK Copyright Act.



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Ashton Wylie
CHARITABLE TRUST

2013 ASHTON WYLIE UNPUBLISHED MANUSCRIPT AWARD

The Ashton Wylie Charitable Trust in association with the NZ Society of Authors is calling for entries for the 2013 Ashton Wylie Charitable Trust Unpublished Manuscript Award.

This \$10,000 award rewards excellence in the mind, body, spirit genre.

The deadline for entries is 31 March 2013

For submission forms, conditions and details of eligibility criteria visit

www.authors.org.nz

or email

office@nzauthors.org.nz

NEWS

COME ON – JUST SPIT IT OUT

A major Auckland branch initiative over summer, spit.it.out will see up to 60 writers reading from their works at the increasingly popular Auckland Fringe Festival, which will run from mid-February before and alongside the official Auckland Arts Festival. The project is a big step forward for the branch strategy aimed at bringing writers and readers together. Co-organisier ANITA ARLOV details the plans.

This summer, spit.it.out connects Auckland writers and readers in a celebration of one of our most enjoyable treasures – stories. Premiering at the Auckland Fringe Festival, which runs from 15 February to 10 March 2013, spit.it.out will showcase Auckland writers in up to 30 separate events spread over seven venues.

At each thirty-minute event spit.it.out presents three writers reading or performing their best works. Many of our region's most celebrated writers including Peter Bland, Siobhan Harvey, Tessa Duder, Ian Wedde, Michelle Elvy, Michael Morrissey, Wong Liu Sheung, Michelle Elvy and Vivienne Plumb and many more will share space with rising new storytellers, playwrights and poets such as Renee Liang, Storm, decolonise crew, and South Auckland Poets' Collective.

We'll hear exquisite writing, words of passion and conviction, pieces you know and love as well as revitalising new works. We'll hear all kinds of writing – flash fiction, poetry, rap, children's and young adult writing, excerpts from novels and more.

The venues, popular and easy to find, include the Pumphouse in Takapuna, the new Q lounge on Queen St, Mangere Arts Centre, Basement Studio, Alleluya Cafe in the iconic St Kevin's Arcade on Karangahape Rd, Myers Park and Karanga Plaza along Wynyard Wharf promenade. Events are timed to suit early evening and lunchtime crowds, and are free.

What is the Fringe? The Auckland Fringe Festival is an open-access non-curated arts festival, where participants create, fund and stage their events themselves. It has grown hugely over the years; in 2013 the Fringe will hosts over 100 events. spit.it.out ensures storytelling and spoken word are represented, as they should be, alongside



ANITA ARLOV

theatre, dance, music and other forms of entertainment. Many events premiered at the Fringe in the past have enjoyed popularity and reruns long after the Festival.

The spit.it.out creative team have made good progress, and will be working hard over the coming months to ensure all goes smoothly. At time of writing we have 50 writers already keen to participate, with more considering joining in.

Soon people will start seeing promotional material, be invited to join spit.it.out's face book page and so on. Unique posters are taking shape and the timetables will soon be finalised and made available. We'll keep you updated.

We'd love more Auckland writers to be involved? There are several ways in which we all, NZSA members and friends, can take part at ground level and through the festival itself. For example, each venue requires one or two people to work as the venue operator, managing all spit.it.out gigs to be held there – usually three gigs spread over the three weeks of the festival.

This involves liaising with the venue and the



Grant Winner Credits NZSA For Growth as a Writer

Dunedin poet, novelist and short story writer Sue Wootton, who has just been announced as the winner of the 2012 NZSA Mid-Career Writers Grant, credits the award of an NZSA mentorship in 2003 as instrumental in her development as a writer.

Her most recent success, in winning the valuable and hotly-contested \$6000 mid-career award, has left her, as she says, "delighted and empowered".

The grant was open to writers of fiction, literary non-fiction, poetry, short fiction collections and plays (self published work included) and seeks to recognise and celebrate the contribution of a mid career writer to NZ literature. Further provision of this award is subject to sponsorship.

Sue came through to win the award from a field of writers the judging panel convenor James McNeish said provided many worthy applicants. He and his fellow panellists, Sue McCauley and Jillian Sullivan said they had put together a shortlist with considerable difficulty.

The NZSA would like to congratulate the others who made the short list, Anna McKenzie, and Zana Bell, as well as those who were highly commended: Fredrik Brouneus, Mary Ellen O'Connor, Rhonda Bartle and Owen Bullock.

Sue is the author of three collections of poetry *Hourglass*, (2005), *Magnetic South* (2008) and *By Birdlight* (2011) and a children's storybook, *Cloudcatcher*, published in 2010. Her poetry and short fiction are widely published and anthologised.

She has twice been a runner up in

the BNZ Katherine Mansfield short story competition and has won several literary awards, including the Aoraki Literary Festival Awards, where she became the first writer to walk away with top honours for both fiction and poetry. Other such awards include the 2007 Inverawe (Tasmania) Poetry Competition, the 2010 Takahe International Poetry Competition and the 2011 NZ Poetry Society International Poetry Competition.

Sue has also received a number of accolades for her work. Her poem *Countdown* appears in *Best New Zealand Poems 2004*.

In 2008 her story *Virtuoso* won a place in the prestigious NZ Book Month anthology, *Six Pack 3*. That same year she was a finalist in both *Takahe* and *Sunday Star Times* short story competitions. Sue was a runner-up in the 2009 and 2010 BNZ Katherine Mansfield short story competitions.

Her fiction and poetry is widely published in New Zealand and internationally. Some of her work has been translated into Hungarian, Romanian and Spanish.

In 2008 Sue held the Robert Burns Fellowship in creative writing at Otago University.

As well as writing for adults, Sue also writes poetry and stories for children. Her children's book, *Cloudcatcher*, was published in 2010.

In 2010 she was an invited poet at the VI Festival International de Poesia in Nicaragua.

Some years ago she set down her busy physiotherapy and acupuncture practice in order to write full-time.

performers, making sure fliers and advertising are in place, setting up the microphone, packing in and out efficiently and so on. Another job is delivering and posting up our fliers and posters (poster pal) at cafes, pubs, libraries etc in individual areas of city.

Spreading the spit.it.out message via social and electronic media – sharing and updating information on websites, face book etc – could also do with extra hands. If you would like to be part of spit.it.out, as venue operator, poster pal or in the social media field, or in any other way, please contact me or co-organiser Miles Hughes now. We are preparing as much as we can now before the holiday season.

Once the timetable is confirmed we will print a spit.it.out gig guide and circulate it. We will also have the gig guide on the NZSA website. Conversations and information about the participants, the gigs and so on will be posted regularly on spit.it.out's dedicated face book page.

Over summer, Aucklanders and visitors will come across word.out posters as well, in cafes, libraries, at Auckland Fringe venues and so on. These posters, housing short poems and tracts of fiction, are a celebration of Auckland writing and a taste of the events to come in spit.it.out. To be involved contact: writermiles@gmail.com anitaarlov@hotmail.co

For more Fringe information go to www.aucklandfringe.co.nz

Tryst by Sue Wootton *Museum of Modern Art, New York*

She leans several angles at once, is all planes of Picasso, tilting. How will she stand, her six-sided shins, her five-walled thighs? How will she talk, one lip a cylinder and one a box? Her tongue is a skewed guitar; her three unblinking eyes dropped bombs, falling. He is a handsome proportion of blue, was mixed on a Matisse palette and is gaze upon gaze from his frame a window onto all astoundingness, such blue truth. So he comes to her who is all quaked scaffolding, shifted. Like sapphire, cobalt ink, like tide, like midnight over Lapland in July,

like withheld rain is how he comes to her, and takes her fractured fingers in his blue kiss. Now they spend their small hours in the waterlilies, wading from one end of the triptych to the other, through blurred and purpled Monet-water, setting the cerises rocking, rocking.



Left to right Greg Scowen, Clare Feeney, Maggie Tarver, Richard Webster, Owen Scott, Tui Allen, Jennifer Mortimer



Richard Webster and Maggie Tarver at fair entrance

Gerry Paul entertained passers by

Maggie putting up signage

There's no getting away from The Hobbit movie

Fun, frantic and a fabulous first foray for NZ Authors – that was October 2012 and the NZ Society of Authors’ venturesome immersion in Frankfurt, the world’s biggest and oldest book fair. ADRIAN BLACKBURN, along with NZSA CEO Maggie Tarver and old Frankfurt hand Richard Webster, was there on our very own stand.

Frankfurt

ROUNDUP

The big questions, of course, are: Was it a success? And should we consider doing it again? Given the reaction of the near dozen independent authors who backed up the presence of their books on the stand with their own self-funded presence in Frankfurt, the answer to both questions would seem to be a loudly resounding “yes”.

Perhaps members of “our” little group of authors at Frankfurt were still basking in some sort of pink-tinged afterglow when they penned their personal responses to the *Author’s* invitation to offer some thoughts on the Fair.

But whether or not they had individually done well – and the measure of doing well in terms of contracts and foreign rights sold is measured over months and years rather than a few weeks – there was a strong consensus that Frankfurt was a positive experience and one many were considering repeating.

The bonus of New Zealand’s Guest of Honour status at this year’s Fair certainly seemed to bring extra interest in what NZ literature, in all its forms, had to offer. It definitely benefited NZSA in providing the right time to push the marketing barrow for our many members who publish their work independently or who have worthwhile books which after a first life with a mainstream publisher in NZ have resumed their rights, including those for overseas sales, and can come out to play again.

What did make the NZSA effort special was that, after originally signing up to displaying two smallish panels of books on the NZ publishers’ stand, we were able to take up the late opportunity to use a stand only a couple of rows away which had originally been allotted to a British independent publisher. Why it became clear is itself not clear.

But to have the space of an 8-metre by 2-metre stand all to ourselves was an absolute luxury. It meant we had ample space in which to display our 40-odd books. If we’d known from the start what would happen we could probably have represented

the full 80 who bid to come.

Most important though was that, while the jammed publishers’ stand had very little space for anyone to browse and do business, we were easily accessible to passing publishers. Many did in fact just drop in, and more than a few such contacts are already looking good for future business.

Almost more important, though, was that our red and black styled stand, provided space for our own authors to have a break from the fray, find somewhere to sit, have a coffee and chat with other authors before plunging back into the crowds filling the fair’s eleven mighty halls in search of business.

NZSA can be proud of the authors who made it to Frankfurt. They were hard-working, mutually supportive and ballsy in their focused approach to seeking interest from some of the biggest publishers in the world. A little ignorance of what is seen as “appropriate” can be a boon when seeking a hearing, say, from a Simon and Schuster executive who would in more normal circumstances never entertain the idea of talking directly to a “new” author from some strange place across the globe.

Whether it’s all worth doing again in 2013, well, between this issue of the *NZ Author* going to press and its distribution, the National Council will be taking at least a preliminary look at the pros and cons.

At this time it would seem a shame to let the good work of 2012 go to waste by not following up. But any future venture would need to be structured carefully to make sure it fully pays its own way, including the high administration costs. It’s likely that would mean taking a stand perhaps half the size of the big 2012 one which fell into our lap. (Early bird rentals are much cheaper.)

We’d also have to be careful to ensure that whatever number of members’ books we might represent, they are all of high quality, both in content and production.

Whatever eventuates, Frankfurt 2012 was a worthwhile, and extremely memorable, experience for everyone who took part. ●



Among the dozen-odd NZSA authors who made the courageous commitment to travel independently to Frankfurt to support their books, CLARE FEENEY was perhaps the most energetic and indefatigable. Here she recounts how it all worked out.

A New Author's EXPERIENCE

The Frankfurt experience has been of incalculable value to me – even before I left New Zealand, it had paid off. I owe the New Zealand Society of Authors and in particular, Maggie Tarver, Richard Webster and Adrian Blackburn, a huge debt of gratitude for creating this opportunity. It has exceeded my expectations in every way.

Three years ago I heard Richard address a National Speakers Association writers' workshop. When he described how he had got himself to the Frankfurt Fair, I thought, "One day I'm going to do that." Without the support of NZSA, that dream would still be five to ten years in the future.

Before the Fair, under Maggie's guidance, I practised packaging my knowledge and enthusiasm for my subject into 10, 20 and 100-word bites and into more detailed formats to allow publishers to assess my work. I learned how to navigate the Buchmesse website to send the information to publishers I was confident were looking for authors like me. And even before I left New Zealand, this resulted in an expression of interest in my work from CSIRO Publishing, with whom I am in continuing discussions.

Richard opened his home to an eager gaggle of travelers to the Fair and much useful discussion ensued. Under the guidance of Geoff Walker (formerly of Penguin Books) and travelling to the Fair with Carole Beu and listening to Maggie, Richard and Adrian at the Fair, I learned more about the ecology of the publishing world – how together, authors, publishers, printers, distributors, sellers, agents and scouts create the diverse global reading experiences we now enjoy. I learned the difference between buyers and sellers of rights, sales and editorial or publishing staff.

Maggie, Richard and Adrian made us all warmly welcome at the Fair: I truly felt I had a home base and a support network. Richard accompanied me to my first pre-arranged interview and

was so kindly, expert and supportive that within a very short time my nerves had abated and I was able to enjoy talking with a publisher about my work.

The presence of the other authors at the Fair made me feel part of a group of aspiring, emerging and experienced authors from each of whom I learned a huge amount. These people were immensely supportive, and particular thanks go to Greg Scowen, Tui Allen and Jenny Mortimer for discussions and team work beforehand. Working closely with Niki Harre, a fellow environmental author who was unable to attend the Fair, also eased many of my anxieties, and helped me initiate discussions at the Fair on her behalf (and occasionally my own as well) in a way that helped me become more comfortable with "cold-calling" at selected stands. I found that publishers, whom I'd feared would be intimidating at best or condescending at worst were (even the very big ones) kind, receptive, helpful and efficient.

Lastly, my confidence, which had been badly dented by many (albeit graciously) declined applications for writing awards from creative sources was restored: the responses I gained from publishers both at and after the Fair showed me that my topic – business and the environment – was indeed of interest to the right publishers.

In conclusion I cannot sufficiently praise NZSA's vision in supporting the showcasing of the work of 40 New Zealand authors at the 2012 Fair, at which New Zealand was Guest of Honour – an unparalleled opportunity. The catalogue was a work of art and I was proud to give it out. Equally superb was the advice and support that NZSA provided the 40 Frankfurt authors, which prepared us so well for the event and its follow up.

I would love to think that other New Zealand authors could benefit from such support next year. I am making every effort to attend in 2013 and play some role in supporting the Society's work.

TO CONCLUDE, SOME STATS:

- time invested: a good 5 weeks FTE in preparation (research, emails, travel planning, social planning and production of promotional materials)
- funds invested: probably \$4-5,000 all up for a three-week trip, including a frenziedly social week in Berlin, Brussels, Antwerp and Paris in between the two working weeks in Frankfurt and London
- emails sent to publishers before the Fair:
- 34 to publishers about "Seven Steps to Successful Environmental Training Programs"
- 24 for other books about business and the environment
- meetings at publishers' stands arranged before the Fair: 3
- Anand Prakash, RSTECHNOMEDIA (a no-show); India
- Eric Dobby, MD of Global Professional Publishing Ltd (UK)
- Sonia ("Breezy") Santiago from Breezy Santiago, RBSI (Rex International, Philippines)
- other meetings held at publishers' stands: 2
- Sam McLeod, HRD (Human Resource Development) Press, USA
- Harvard Business Review Press, USA
- promotional materials handed out to about 50 other targeted publishers
- meetings held in London with other publishers:
- Gavin Jamieson, Senior Commissioning Editor and Rachel Gerlis, Commissioning Editor, ICE Publishing and Thomas Telford (wholly owned subsidiaries of ICE, the UK Institution of Civil Engineers): ICE were at the Fair but the London meeting was arranged to allow more time
- Dr Nick Bellorini of Dō Sustainability, a new publishing firm that produces short, expert ebooks that distil sustainability best practice and insights for busy professionals: they were not at the Fair but another publisher recommended them to me
- what else happened: as a result of my decision to do some wider marketing, I held the following further meetings in London about training, consulting and speaking:
- David Tullet and Neil Armstrong of CECA, the UK Civil Engineering Contractors Association
- Ben Newsom, Business Development Manager, Verdantix, an independent analyst firm that provides data, analysis and advice to help its clients resolve their energy, environment and sustainability challenges
- Philip Charles, Technical Sales Coordinator for CEEQUAL, the UK sustainability assessment and awards scheme for civil engineering.

THE UPSHOT OF ALL THIS ACTIVITY IS THAT I:

- have received offers of terms from:
- Global Professional Publishing Ltd (UK)
- Dō Sustainability (UK)
- am in active discussions about publishing my books with:
- CSIRO Publishing (Australia): a manuscript submission form has been completed and is being evaluated
- ICE Publishing (UK): two manuscript submission forms will be completed
- will follow up further with:
- Sam McLeod, HRD (Human Resource Development) Press (USA)
- Cat Russo of ASTD (American Society of Training and Development) Press (USA)
- Jai Raj Kapoor of Ane Books, India
- Christine Thomson, New Holland Publishers (NZ), contacted with a favourable response received before the birth of the Frankfurt initiative

These results – even if nothing further eventuates from them – are truly beyond the wildest dreams of a first-time author.

Thank you, NZSA! ●


**Lowndes
Jordan**

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For more information and a price list contact
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* Lifetime starts Dec 08 or publication date if published after Dec 08

Frankfurt Authors report in



And even “mummy porn”

On my first day at the fair, I was wandering through one of the cavernous halls when I overheard a conversation between two slick Italian businessmen in suits and shiny shoes. It was clear a deal was being done – I assumed in a serious category like politics or war weaponry – until one businessman broke out of Italian and said, “mummy porn...”

It seems there's no translation for the literary world's current favourite genre.

The Frankfurt Book Fair was a fantastic, overwhelming and at times hilarious experience. Publishers are there to do multiple deals and organising time to talk about just one book – my book – was not really on their agenda. I did, however, have a good meeting with a Spanish publisher (and his translator), and I have leads to follow up with agents in Spain and Korea and a publisher in Ireland.

Cold calling on publishers is intimidating. However, the publishers I did meet were very gracious even when declining my suggestion to discuss my book further.

The coolest part? I met lots of other Kiwi authors and saw the business side of an industry that often seems to be kept secret from authors. And on the weekend, the publishers mostly disappear and the Book Fair turns into Frankfurt's answer to Comic Con. There were hobbits and vampires posing together and anime characters eating sausages... It was the most spectacular display of homemade costumes I'd seen since my primary school book day in 1988.

ANNA GOWAN



OO-ER, HERESY!

The Frankfurt Book Fair... so historically and literally huge the name is almost onomatopoeic. Like Rugbyworldcup. Bill English seemed to acknowledge that. He said the Buchmesse was bigger for NZ than the world cup! Oo-er, heresy! Few in the southern hemisphere realise quite what a big deal the Frankfurt Fair is. Until they've been there.

I walked the walks and tried to talk the talks (though nowhere near as much as others in our group). Now it's a waiting game to see if there is any glint in the pan. Frankfurt is about face-to-face contact. I liked that. The little NZSA band played the tune in the freshest way. It was noticed. Maggie Tarver, Adrian Blackburn and Richard Webster can be proud. The NZSA having its own stand was the best thing. A mouse-hole on the PANZ stand would have been hopeless. Even some recognised publishers there had only two inches square within which to operate.

Aside from the business of the Fair, the experience of Frankfurt was great in itself. The S-Bahn and U-Bahn worked with enviable efficiency. The people of Frankfurt were gentle and hospitable, proud of the Fair and very aware NZ was the guest country. NZ's presentation at the Pavilion was emotional and sophisticated, almost too sophisticated! Kim Hill deserves a medal for delivering her Saturday morning show in the maelstrom of a noisy bar.

But for me the highlight of the week was the shy elegance of Bill Manhire's speech at the opening ceremony. With his humility, quiet humour, and almost shocking choice of words, New Zealand's literary soul was eminently represented, and maybe newly understood.

OWEN SCOTT

DAUNTING BUT EXCITING

My objectives in taking myself and my book 'Knock The Bastard Off' to Frankfurt were: to learn more about the publishing industry, find a publisher, and enjoy the experience of Frankfurt.

On number 1: Publishing is a marketplace. There are buyers and sellers, rogues and idiots, published rubbish and unpublished gems, and seasons for everything. Daunting but also exciting.

On number 2: it is worth going along as an independent writer, because guess what? There are small independent publishers looking for good books to publish and this is one of the places they find them. I had a good meeting with a Canadian publisher, plus with a French and an American publisher, both of whom 'dropped in' to the NZSA stand. Because I was there, I was able to make an unexpected pitch, and they both took my book to have a look at.

On number 3: it was a terrific week. Loved the opening ceremony where Bill Manhire put in a plug for my book. Loved the kiwi pavilion. Loved the company of fellow writers, and of Maggie, Adrian and Richard, who gave us great guidance and helped plug our books.

Loved Frankfurt. Will do it all again next year if I can.

JENNIFER MORTIMER



NZSA Needs to be There

Exploring the Book Fair's eleven huge halls, the scale, the driving energy and intensity of the crowds overpowered my senses. I was trying to locate the stands of the few publishers who'd responded to my emails. Some stands displayed hundreds of titles. What a tiny drop we were in this ocean of books – books in every language, from all over the world.

Beyond My Comfort Zone

We had been warned it wouldn't be easy. Compared to marketing your book the usual way, the whole process was condensed in space and time so you had to take all the



rejection in a few days that you might normally face over months. But there were also more of those promising flashes of hope.

The NZSA stand became a home away from home and the friendly faces there so reassuring after hours of such ego battering.

I've always found my biggest rewards are out there beyond my comfort zone and for a stay-at-home like me, Frankfurt was certainly that.

Time will tell if any of the conversations I had there will come to anything but even if none are fruitful, the trip was worth it for highlights like the opening ceremony, wearing my magic "Ripple" cape for my pitch on the Sparks stage, my bizarre invite to the Latvian reception, my conversation with Witi at the NZ pavilion, my talk with Linda Cassells at the PANZ stand, the fun had with fellow authors Greg Scowen, Jenny Mortimer and Clare Feeney from our shared base in Kaiserlei, the NZSA dinner on the Saturday, and many conversations with folk I could never otherwise have met from all over the publishing world.

Being such a country bumpkin, I was hopeless at navigating the biggest city I'd ever experienced, but the locals proved fantastic at sorting me out whenever I lost my way.

Frankfurt Book-fair? Mind-blowing for a simple kiwi girl like me.

TUI ALLEN



Now the hard work starts

Frankfurt Book Fair 2012: Thank you, New Zealand Society of Authors! Thanks for organising a stand to display work by NZ writers. Thanks for stern advice in advance about how to set goals and prepare for the big event. Thanks for support throughout the Fair. This was a first, and no mean achievement. As a result, I am delighted to have found a British literary agent. She is an experienced editor and a commercial fiction specialist with strong opinions about how to develop *Scarlet Heels*. At last—where have you been all my life?

I'll also be restructuring *Global English for Global Business* with a very interesting publisher of business books, based in Abu Dhabi.

After the Fair, the hard work begins. So let me say this now, before I feel the full impact of merging a full-time business with some alarming writing deadlines. At the Fair I had a ball, met great people, learned heaps, and intensified my motivation to write more fiction.

Going to the Fair was a crazy idea—and I'm thrilled with the results.

Warmest thanks to the New Zealand Society of Authors for this initiative.

RACHEL MCALPINE

DEALS IN THE WIND

I'm based in Switzerland and used the services of my International Rights Agent: Mladen Jandric, Books and Rights, Zürich to make prior approaches. This proved beneficial in every way.

Mladen and his co-workers were always pushing my work hard and the results appear to be paying off. There are still no contracts on the table but very promising negotiations are under way.

Between us we approached about 20 publishers regarding my book, *The Spanish Helmet*. I have since contacted a literary agent in the UK who made a request for a two-weeks exclusive consideration period. Fingers crossed he comes back and want to represent the English rights. He is a highly respected agent with clients (present and past) of very big names. At the moment, things look promising.

NOTE: This contact was found and contacted one month after the fair so has no direct link to Frankfurt other than that I mentioned the book had been presented there. Which probably helps some.

Not directly related to that book, but I also made a contact with a children's book illustrator (we met at the fair by chance) and she has drawn up some samples for a book I wrote some ten years ago. She loved the work and has requested specific stories with the same character to meet requests that she has from a very successful German publisher.

Let's see how that one pans out.

My Swiss agent is currently in negotiation with four major German and four major Spanish publishers. He claims that offers are on their way.

He is also following up with

<https://www.amazon.com/author/gregscowen>



publishers from Brazil, Korea and numerous smaller European markets. These are all interested in multi-book deals.

Meantime an audiobook publisher from Canada wants to produce *The Spanish Helmet* and have a seven-year exclusive contract. I have their contract already but have told them I will hold off signing until the British agent mentioned above has given his response. If he wants to represent me then he will negotiate with them further.

Did I feel that the Frankfurt experience was worth it? It was more than worth it. Despite getting a nasty cold for the first few days, I had a ball. I met fantastic people, ate great food, forged new friendships (and even found a nemesis or two), and have hopefully been able to get attention from the right publishers and agents.

It is important to note that absolutely none of these examples is the result of New Zealand being in the Guest of Honour program, rather it is through my own independent hard work. I didn't feel supported in any way whatsoever by the official GOH program and was not presented to any media nor involved in any events. This, however, did not stop me from securing my own interviews and some very good German media attention.

The NZ Society of Authors was very supportive and directly involved with the forging of one of the relationships mentioned above. It's a shame that the GOH program didn't embrace them more.

GREG SCOWEN

Apart from some contacts made by email, none of the staff attending publishers' stands was waiting to welcome this unknown author. From their haunted expressions and the way they quickly busied themselves in their laptops, they might as well have yelled, 'Go away, I don't want to talk to you.' Feigning interest in their books was a better approach, but they soon cottoned on.

Amidst established international publishers, it was wonderful to see

the NZSA stand, so ably managed by Maggie, Adrian and Richard. Here, passers-by were invited in to discuss a selection of titles by New Zealand authors.

Visiting the fair brought it home that publishing is a giant, global industry, which shapes the thoughts of mankind. For New Zealand authors to be part of it, our NZSA representatives need to be there.

IAN CLARKE

NZ POETS' PURPLE PATCH

Poetry collections taking up to four of the top ten spots on recent local bestsellers lists? That seems to merit a tabloid-style “shock, disbelief, delight” response. ADRIAN BLACKBURN asks some questions.

Bizarre, some sort of a statistical mistake, or at the very least a rare anomaly. That was my reaction two or three months back when catching up in the NZ Authors' weekly newsletter on Nielsen's Book Scan listings of New Zealand fiction bestsellers.

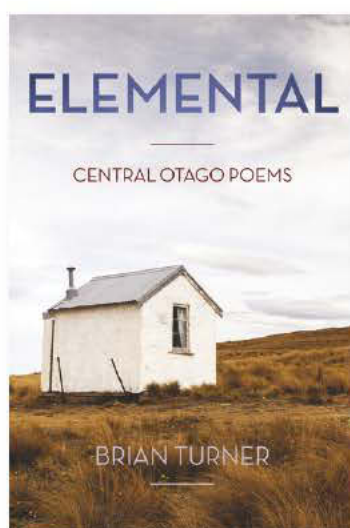
There, standing proud amongst the usual tall timber of literary, romantic, historical and mystery fiction, were listed titles – and not just one book – by local poets.

It's always interesting to go through the listings, to see the rise and fall after their trumpeted releases of the latest novels from Grimshaw and Ihimaera, Cleave and Patrick, to see which of them soar, then plummet, which have the stamina to hang around for more than the usual two or three months.

But poetry? Not very bloody likely. We all know how little, traditionally, poetry sells in practical, prosaic New Zealand, even poetry by some of our best. Slim volumes, a few hundred at best, to an aware, rather specialised, maybe a little precious, readership.

At first it seemed almost possible, reading the emailed newsletter from my temporary haven in a Cotswolds village cottage, that the 20,000-kilometre transmission from home base in Auckland might somehow have seen an aberrational twist in cyberspace.

But that was surely too fanciful. Even if the inclusion of poetry in the category of NZ fiction itself seemed rather odd. Poetry could certainly be seen as representing the ultimate reach of human imagination. But it might also be totally rooted in, and bring into the lives of its readers, the deepest reality. Yes, I suppose, like the best fiction.



And I guess if poetry is selling like the best fiction, that mightn't be the worst category in which to place it.

Enough contemplation. I decided to take a special look at Nielsen's figures the following week. And the week after. And the week after that ...

Astonishing. Back there in mid-September, for the week ending the 15th, Nielsen had southern man Brian Turner's *Elemental: Central Otago Poems*, first released back in May, as No. 2. Back in No. 8 was our best-known poet/troubadour Sam Hunt's recently out *Knucklebones: Poems 1962-2012*. Right behind in ninth place was the Paula Green-edited anthology, *Dear Heart: 150 New Zealand Love Poems*.

The following week *Elements* was still there in second. But while *Dear Heart* had slipped to tenth, *Knucklebones* was up to fifth. For the week ending the 29th, Brian Turner was, astonishingly, at No. 1. As if to compensate Hunt was back to seventh and Green had slipped out the back door from the top ten.

The next week, ending October 6, *Elements* had allowed Charlotte Grimshaw's new novel *Soon* to slip in ahead to top spot,

but still held strongly at No. 2 while Hunt was surging, back into No. 5. And from the pack, changing the mix, came Bill Manhire's new *Selected Poems* from Victoria University Press at No. 8.

Another week, and Turner had fought back, pushing Grimshaw to second, with Hunt up to No. 4 and Green making a comeback into eighth place.

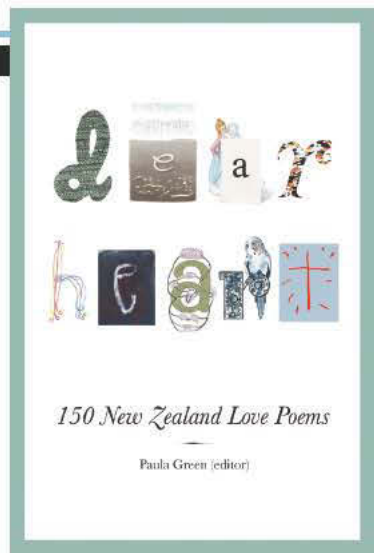
I had to be satisfied that New Zealand poets were not just shy and retiring types. Up into the limelight, and loving it, so it seemed.

For the next week or three I failed to keep up with the contest, distracted by the aftermath of the Frankfurt Book Fair, a return to New Zealand, and domestic displacements in Auckland. But when I finally looked again, checking the top ten for the week ending November 3, the pattern seemed familiar: Turner at No. 1, Manhire at 8 and Green 9. Only Hunt was missing.

What was going on? Time to find out. Anna Hart of Nielsen's Book Scan told me that the makeup of the bestseller lists the company produces differ depending on the client, in this case NZSA. That partly explains why volumes of poetry are competing with general fiction in this particular list.

But had poetry overall made some special surge in popularity? Anna dug up some figures, breaking out the Year To Date volume and value sales for NZ-published poetry against those for NZ fiction. To November 3, this year sales of NZ poetry were up marginally from last year to 6335 with a sales value of \$187,271. But NZ fiction sales dropped by 17.7% to 30,517 for a total value of \$882,561, itself down 18.4%.

I wondered whether the significant decline in sales of local fiction since last year, against the slight rise in poetry, might have just allowed poetry into the bestseller lists? But that didn't tally with the high positions



reached, particularly by Turner and Hunt.

The figures did tend to support the view that New Zealanders, while professing to be keen on local fiction, do not put their money where their mouths are. A total of just over 30,000 recorded sales of NZ fiction in the first ten months of the year could only be seen as pathetic. No less pathetic, in reality, even when you factor in that Whitcoulls' withdrawal from participation in the Nielsens surveys means Nielsens only cover around two-thirds of total NZ book sales. No wonder mainstream publishers concentrate on cookery and sports books.

Even so, the performance of poetry is surprisingly creditable, at roughly one NZ poetry volume selling for each five of local fiction. It's not surprising perhaps that those making it into the bestseller lists are well-established poets, with relatively accessible works, who are themselves widely known within New Zealand. The books selling well have also tended to be substantial volumes, offering canny buyers good value for their mainstream prices (\$35 to \$40).

But there's also another factor, made clear by Nicola Legat, publishing director for Random House New Zealand, whose specialist Godwit imprint put out two of the top sellers, *Elements* and the Paula Green love poems anthology.

A special effort was made with the design of both these handsome hardback volumes to make their look match the rich content. In the case of the anthology, part of that design efforts was to commission nine well known NZ artists to each interpret one of the letters of the alphabet making up the title: *Dear Heart*.

And to add visual effect to the packaging of the Turner poems about his much loved Central Otago, the publisher commissioned photographer Gilbert Van Reenan, who has worked previously with Turner, to provide both existing and new colour images of the region.

Such concentration on design, along with special touches like ribbon markers, make for books which simply look special, a look which can translate into strong sales.

Random House's Godwit imprint is its outlet for poetry, but rarely for the slim volumes which are typical of NZ poetic output, leaving such to the more specialist publishers like the Victoria and Auckland university presses.

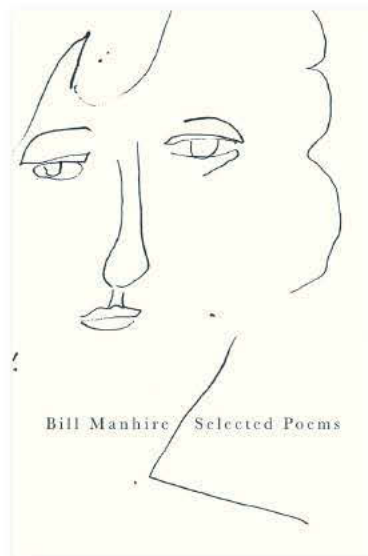
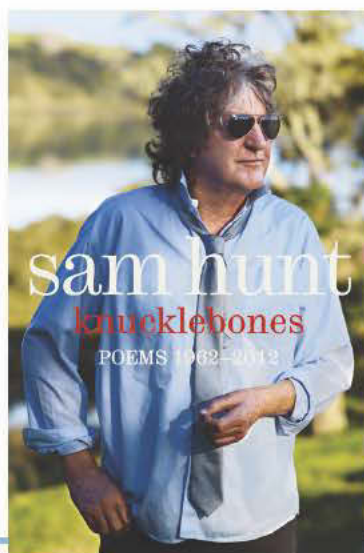
"What has worked very well for us are anthologies. In the early 2000s we sold thousands of copies of *Essential New Zealand Poems*. Then in about '06 we worked with Amnesty International on a very successful anthology of prominent New Zealanders' favourite poems. But again a lot of effort went into packaging it."

Other successful themed poetry ventures have include an Emma Neale-edited anthology about childhood, while another, edited by Andrew Johnston, and created in association with Hospice New Zealand, concentrated on the other end of life, death and dying. Another, *Our Own Kind*, edited by Siobahn Harvey, concentrated on poems about animals.

"We're not interested in slim volumes selling a couple of hundred. But New Zealanders do love poetry. We want to cater for people in just becoming more comfortable with poetry, so those who walk into a bookshop are not scared of it, but see that poetry is lovely, that they can manage it, will go on to look for more."

That New Zealanders are ready and keen to learn more about poetry, and how to access it, was shown, believes Legat, by the success of last year's scholarly but accessible *99 Ways Into New Zealand Poetry*.

Meanwhile Craig Potton Publishing, which recently has been putting out Sam Hunt's work, is also known for making



books beautiful. While Hunt himself doesn't "do counting" the Potton website is not shy about proclaiming that Hunt's 2008 *Doubtless: New and Selected Poems* has sold over 5000 copies.

That is now out of print, but has been replaced by Hunt's current strong-selling *Knucklebones* which at 350 pages makes good value for its \$40 cover price.

So how does NZ's current Poet Laureate regard the emerging prominence of poetry? "I think it's great," says Ian Wedde. While poetry in New Zealand does not share the huge place in our own culture that it does in areas like the Middle East, where Palestinian poet, the late Mahmoud Darwish, would read to crowds of 25,000, there are encouraging signs of greater participation.

"But we do have people like Brian and Bill who read to quite large public audiences.

"There's also been a big increase in poetry events such as poetry slams, which might be just a small group somewhere like Upper Hutt. Poetry is also being influenced by hip hop when the poets have to remember quite long works and stand up and perform them. There is a real energy around, with people like Selina Tusitala Marsh finding readership of her *Fast Talking PI* book extended as a result of her public performances."

Wedde mentions another world of poetry, poetry in Maori, which most New Zealanders are unaware of. "Pita Sharples is a stunning poet. If he were in the Middle East he would be introduced as a poet, not politician."

All very encouraging. But as this issue goes to press, I take a moment to check the latest NZSA newsletter and its tale of the sales figures. Damn. Not one poet in the top ten for the week ending November 10. Shy and retiring it once again is. ●

THE SHADOWY WORLD OF THE ghostwriter

I

These are some of the questions I get asked most often when people discover I am a ghostwriter by profession. And I understand. You see, we all know they exist, but then so too do we know about other types of 'deception' like stuntmen who stand in for the real actors or speech writers who pen speeches for politicians.

Even comedians have gag writers and nobody complains about that (unless the gags are poor, that is).

The thing about ghostwriting is that by its very nature it is largely a hidden profession, and for good reason. Not that there is anything sinister about it. Getting professionals to do things in exchange for money is something that has been going on for as long as business itself has been in existence. In fact, it's good business practice, isn't it? I mean, why would you struggle to fix a leaking tap if you hadn't the foggiest idea of how to go about it or if you simply didn't have the time or the tools? You wouldn't. And if you did, you'd be considered an idiot.

WHY SHOULD THE WORLD OF WRITING BE ANY DIFFERENT?

It has long been suspected that William Shakespeare may not have written all his plays himself. And we certainly know that Mozart often ghosted pieces for wealthy patrons.

When you think about it, it's not just gifted writers who have good stories to tell; sports stars, politicians, surgeons or housewives often have stories that have the potential to be best-sellers, don't they? All that's needed is for them to be properly crafted so they become acceptable to publishers and the reading public.

ENTER THE GHOSTWRITER.

I have been ghostwriting on a full-time basis now for 12 years and have learnt two things: my name on a cheque is far sweeter than my name on the cover of a book, and I get to fully enjoy what I like doing best – writing.

WHY WOULD
YOU WRITE FOR
SOMEONE ELSE?
WOULDN'T YOU
WANT TO SEE
YOUR NAME
ON THE FRONT
COVER OF THE
BOOK INSTEAD OF
SOMEONE ELSE'S?
IS IT ETHICAL?

Widely experienced
ghostwriter
GRANT McDULING
has the answers.

When you really think about it, most of us writers are writers because we love to write. In fact, many tell me that they HAVE to write; it's something they can't help doing. I agree. I am convinced that writers are born to write. But in this digital age, the publishing world has changed so much that all traditionally published authors are expected to spend a far greater proportion of their time marketing, working the social networks, doing book signings, travelling for promotional appearances and the like that there is hardly any time left for writing.

On top of that, it is common now for publishers to favour longer-term relationships with their authors, so they issue contracts for follow-up books with fairly short deadlines. This might sound like heaven to an unpublished author, but that's not what many already on that treadmill tell me. They simply want to write.

Another drawback for the modern day author is that many of them are introverts. Writing is, after all, a very solitary profession.

It is the curse of modern-day publishing that, I suspect, relies more heavily on platform building than talent (some world-wide best sellers aren't well written at all). Remember, publishing is a business.

This is where the benefits of being a ghostwriter comes in. We get to do the writing and nothing more. Everything from the editing, design and layout, dealing with agents and publishers, book signings, promotional work, platform building or waiting for royalty cheques to come in are things the author, our client, has to deal with while we get on writing our next book.

IT'S AN IDEAL SITUATION, IF ALL YOU LOVE DOING IS WRITING.

The other thing I love about writing other people's stories is that I get to meet such a wide range of people. Not only that, I get to 'live inside their heads'. I need to become them for the duration of the project. I get to live their lives without having their troubles. I get the ups but not the downs.

There's another very important consideration that weighs heavily in favour of this specialist area of the writing profession

and it's this: your cashflow isn't strung out over years. You don't have to wait for royalty cheques to dribble in every six months. You get your money as and when you want it.

There are no hard and fast rules regarding remuneration; that's entirely up to you. Some ghosts prefer 50% up front with the rest spread out in equal chunks over the estimated duration of the project. Others go for equal monthly instalments. Some prefer it all up front. But very few will write on the basis of a share of the royalties. It's simply too risky.

SO HOW MUCH DO GHOSTWRITERS CHARGE?

Again, it's the 'how long is a piece of string' question. Most ghosts seem to charge between \$15,000 and \$30,000 for an average length book. More if research is required. If a reputable publisher is involved and the 'author' is a well-known personality, the fee can be huge. It's reported that the ghost earned \$500,000 for writing Hillary Clinton's book.

By all accounts, writing opportunities in New Zealand tend to be limited, with publishers looking mainly for works in the areas of non-fiction and New Zealand heritage and culture. This is an area where the ghost can excel.

"I have been ghostwriting for four years now, though most of my projects have been within the last two and a half years," says Les Bill Gates, a ghostwriter based in Tokoroa.

AND WHAT LED HIM INTO THE SHADOWY WORLD OF GHOSTS?

"My own first novel, *Windows on the World, Part 1: Faith* was published in May 2007. Following that, I made a career change and decided to enter the world of freelance writing, editing and proofreading. This led, somewhat by accident, to ghostwriting for other people."

He found his first client on the popular freelance website www.elance.com. The job was to write an ebook for a US client on arrowhead hunting.

"All of my clients to date have been accessed remotely on the web. In most cases I have spoken with them via Skype, but they also supply electronic copies of their requirements using Microsoft Word via email, or via the workrooms of outsourcing sites," Les continued.

"Follow-up is also via Skype or, more often, by email." The world truly is the modern-day writer's oyster.

One of the key aspects a ghostwriter has to bear in mind is the author's (the client's) voice. This is important as readers must almost be able to 'hear' the author talking as they read. So how does Les achieve this?

"There are two ways," he says. "If the client provides me with their own notes on the topic to be included in the book, then I adapt their notes by correcting and editing, and use them as part of the written material for the book. I then write chapters for the book and wait for comment and requests for change from the author before rewriting. If, on the other hand, the author just provides an outline, then I use my own voice and wait for feedback from the author, who may request changes; but they are usually happy to go with my voice."

One of the interesting aspects to being a ghostwriter is that you get to delve into so many topics you normally wouldn't. This makes for a very interesting career.



Ghostwriter Les Bill Gates finds a worldwide audience from his Tokoroa base.

"In the case of the ebook on arrowhead hunting, a lot of research was required as I knew very little about the topic," Les explains. "In the case of a fictional novel, research may only be required for background information. For example, the main character in the book I am currently ghostwriting lives in Mumbai, India. I had to do a lot of research on the geography and history of that part of India."

Les says that he prospects for new clients online, either through his own websites www.editaddition.com and www.lesbillgates.com or through outsourcing sites such as www.guru.com, www.ifreelance.com or www.elance.com.

"I think the reason why I have been most successful using [ifreelance.com](http://www.ifreelance.com) is that it is small compared with the other two, and I have been able to build up a reputation. The site also allows for direct communication with the client rather than using the constraints of a workroom."

Les, like many others in this profession, also offers other writing services to supplement his income and his workload.

"I write my own novels and short stories. I have completed the first two parts of the Fantasy trilogy *Windows on Our World* and I am currently writing a Science Fiction novel entitled *The Great Sage* for Raven and Bear Publishing (www.ravenandbear.com). I am also a freelance editor and proofreader and have edited and

proofread a number of dissertations written by students at the University of Waikato, Hamilton, which were sourced through direct advertising and word-of-mouth. I also specialise in writing mathematical questions for websites such as www.mathsisfun.com and www.mygretutor.com."

If working in the exciting and varied world of ghostwriting appeals to you, here's some advice from Les:

1. Do not offer your services for a low fee. If you persevere at a reasonable fee to earn an affordable income, and you provide a quality service, then success will come. There is nothing to gain by writing for 'peanuts'.
2. You should never enter into a ghostwriting assignment without a contract that spells out exactly the requirements, the rate of pay, and the milestones for the project. This must be signed by both parties. ●

Brisbane-based Grant McDuling has written 39 books since he began writing in 1978. He has published seven as Kindle books and says that since buying a Kindle, his reading habits have changed.

Grant is a well-known ghostwriter, having written for a range of clients all over the world. Many of his books are now international best sellers with sales in the millions. His other interests include amateur radio, computers, electronics and classical music.

Fighting the THIEF OF TIME

If you've ever cleaned the entire house to avoid writing your novel, then read on. TRUDI CAFFELL offers a few tips on how to avoid killing your writing dreams with procrastination.

"Never put off until tomorrow what you can do the day after tomorrow." Mark Twain.

We all do it. Some task that seems too big, or too hard, or just plain annoying, gets put to the bottom of the pile, while you pursue the chores that seem more within your grasp. When you think about it, it's a natural reaction. But if you're writing a novel, and it keeps getting put to the bottom of the pile, you're never going to finish it. It took me ten years to finish my first book, and nine months to finish the second. What was the difference? Some of it was increased knowledge of the craft, a few more writing skills learned along the way, but mostly there were some very specific changes I made to how I was writing from one book to the next.

The one thing these changes all had in common was that I was determined it wouldn't take me another ten years to write the second book. I had decided to stop wasting time.

Writing the first book had been hard. I started, I faltered. I began again. I had bursts of speed, and then I had months of nothing. I wanted to be a writer; I read about writing; I took courses about writing. But finishing the book seemed to be outside of my control. Then last year I did it. I came to the end. By the end of last year, I had a polished version of my very first book.

Then, while waiting for replies to the query letters I'd sent, I decided to start another book. But this time I did it differently.

First things first

It might seem like a silly question, but do you really want to be a writer?

Once I finished my first book, I stopped and looked around. It had been hard work.

It had taken time and dedication to finish. Writing in my spare time, when other people were relaxing, spending time with family, or even just going to the movies, wasn't easy. I wondered if it had all been worth it. Could I really imagine spending the rest of my life hunched over a computer, writing about imaginary people I'd never meet?

For me, the answer was yes, it was worth it. And, yes, I love those imaginary characters and all the terrible situations they get themselves into. But I know other writers who have taken stock, only to realise it wasn't really what they wanted, that perhaps the *idea* of being an author was more alluring than the realities of everything they'd have to give up to achieve what they wanted.

My point is that to write a novel is a huge effort, and you need to make sure you really want to do it. Nothing is more disheartening, more destructive to your sense of self, than talking about it for years on end and never getting anywhere, simply because your passion doesn't really lie with writing.

Prioritise your writing

Once you've made the decision that you're really determined on this course, the next step is to put writing higher on your list of priorities. What do you have to fit into your day? Family? Work? Housework? Okay, so you'll probably want to keep all those fairly high on your list.

But what about watching television? Or wandering the shops on the weekend? Or playing on Facebook or Pinterest? Those are all things that can be put below writing on your priorities list. There will be any number of other options you can put to the bottom of the list; just think through your day and dig them out.

Basically, you need to look at your day

and find time to write. I started my second book when my daughter, who wasn't a great sleeper at the time, was eight months old, and I was just starting back at work part time. If I can do it, so can you.

Set a goal

This is straight from Life Coaching 101, but it was also integral to finishing the second book. Having a goal gives you a destination, a measurement of success and helps keep you focused. For me, I decided in February to go to a writing conference in the US, to meet agents and publishers. The conference was in the middle of the year and if I was going to spend all that money, I needed something to show for it. So my deadline was to finish the book before the conference. If you do the maths, you'll figure out that I didn't make my mid-year deadline, but I did have three quarters of the book finished, and I did finish it soon after the conference so I could send chapters to the American agents I'd met. Nothing like a bit of pressure to get you writing.

If a big goal freaks you out, I can also recommend setting small goals. Monthly or weekly ones can be less intimidating than a big one sitting at the end of your calendar. For me it was just writing every night, no matter the word count or even a particular time limit. But as the months and the pages added up, I saw the results of my little increments of time and I soon became addicted.

Get rid of the props

Can you only write on days when the sun is shining? Do you only work when your coffee is at room temperature, you've got your lucky hat on, and your iPod is pumping out classical music? These kinds of crutches are self destructive, because they limit when and where you can work, meaning that instead of a professional



LESSON LEARNED: Trudi Caffell's daughter Zoey was only eight months old when Trudi began her second book, yet she completed it in just nine months.

writer, you're a superstitious worry-wart. Working as a journalist has taught me that I have to write at any time if I'm going to meet my deadlines and being a professional author is no different. The most successful writers I know are workaholics. They don't wait for the muse to strike; they take control of their writing, and don't let it control them.

Just write

Over and over, I've heard and read the advice from professional writers that the best way to become a writer is to just write. What I've learned in the last year is that it's *completely true*.

But perhaps because I'm a slow learner, or maybe because I learn by my mistakes, it's only since I've been writing regularly, every day, that I've realised how important that little piece of advice is. I recently saw a quote that said, "A year from now, you'll wish you started today". It's very true. I am so very glad I started my second book when I did, and that I managed to get it finished in less than a year. And it was all because I decided to just write.

Find a time and stick to it

The one main habit change between my first book and my second book is that I wrote every day. It was only for an hour most days, sometimes less. But I did it every day. It kept me up to date on the storyline, I was more motivated to keep going, and I didn't have to spend huge amounts of time reminding myself of what I'd written last time.

I found my perfect time to write after talking to a prolific writing friend of mine. She told me that she sat on the couch at night with a headset on, writing while her husband watched television. I tried it out. It was perfect. I got to sit with my husband, instead of locked away in a separate room somewhere, but also didn't end up wasting my evening watching replays and reality television.

Some nights I didn't feel like it. But I still opened up the computer, read through the last couple of paragraphs from the night before, and wrote a few lines. What I invariably found was that once I was in there, something clicked, and I just started to write.

Learn to forgive the first draft

This is a big one. Sometimes it's hard to let it go. You want everything to be perfect, and somehow there always seems to be something wrong with what you've just written. And there's always a writer somewhere who makes out that their words tumbled out onto the page like water in a bubbling brook, each one more perfect than the last. You desperately want your writing experience to be like that, but it's not happening.

I can tell you right now it doesn't happen like that. Ever. I don't care if some writer somewhere said it was easy. They're lying, I promise you.

Being successful as a writer isn't about having talent, it's about putting in the hard work, doing the drafts, editing the crap out of it, and making it into something

worth reading. Editing is as much a part of writing as the actual writing is. But for you to get to the editing stage, you have to have a first draft, and you have to let its imperfections go.

You need to keep moving forward, keep the momentum going. Don't look back!

Learn the craft and the industry

My first book took me a long time to write. Part of that was due to procrastination; the rest was time I needed to learn about writing. I learned how to put a novel together, how to write about character, viewpoint, and setting, how to structure the plot, how to make every word count. I learned about the business, the kind of books I wanted to write, and where I saw myself in the industry. I know more about myself, and my writing, than I did ten years ago. I know what I want, where I want to go, and the kind of books I want to write. It's a powerful thing, this self-knowledge.

So don't confuse procrastination for learning your craft. Forgive yourself if it's taking you longer than expected, because maybe it's all part of the process.

Most of all, I firmly believe that the only way to get better, to succeed, is to put in the hard yards. Start today, right now. You'll be so happy you did when you see your finished novel printed out in front of you, waiting for someone to read it. ●

"Only put off until tomorrow what you are willing to die having left undone."

Pablo Picasso.

ASIAN TIGERS AT HOME IN NZ

Hundreds of buyers attending a book launch? Hardly common in this country. But the recent launch of a history of Chinese market gardening in New Zealand was a signal that in both fiction and non-fiction the growing Asian community in New Zealand is being reflected with much vigour and talent. SUE GEE reflects on some of the activity.

S*ons of the Soil* by Lily Lee and Ruth Lam looks back on Chinese market gardening in New Zealand from the goldmining days of the 1860's through to the commercial growing industry of today. Its companion book *Success Through Adversity* by Nigel Murphy, is a history of The Dominion Federation of NZ Chinese Commercial Growers, who on July 22 celebrated 70 years as the representative organisation for Chinese growers in New Zealand.

Coinciding with their annual conference, over 500 growers, and supporters from around the country, put on their good clothes and packed the Mangere Chinese Community Centre to celebrate the completion of the six-year book project. The growers had wanted their story told for a long time. A conference remit in the 1980's first mooted the idea.

The two books were launched on July 21 at an event of great excitement and abundance: three roasted pigs, several hundred home-made lamingtons, multiple plates of sandwiches, fruit, banana cake, dim sims... the committee, who worked long hours catering for a massive crowd, can be proud. No one went hungry.

Great interest was taken in the photo display, enlargements from the book, of families, portraits and gardens. The community had dug deep into their archives to find relevant and rare pictures. The historic display later toured the

libraries. There were flowers. Enormous bunches of them, wrapped in red for good luck, for the many presentations of appreciation. A three dimensional green display of cabbage, cauli, silver beet, onions, parsley and pumpkins decorated the dais and items were taken home by the late leavers.

Oh, and there were the books. Hundreds of them, stacked behind tables staffed with efficient sales volunteers, money takers and order takers. But not enough books. Deadline pressure on the authors combined with a production glitch, saw only 600 of the 3000 print run available at launch date.

Author Ruth Lam told me she and Lily discussed possible structures for the book and decided starting from the South, working North and writing about individual regions would work best. They travelled the country, recording 100 oral history interviews, following National Library protocols, and transcribing them.

Many families wrote their own stories and the authors made a conscious decision not to analyse or try to read weird or wonderful things into these accounts. They presented the stories verbatim leaving readers to accept the surface story, or find deeper meanings themselves.

Ruth says that we, the early Cantonese sojourners turned settlers, all come from one small area of China, Guangdong. As the stories unfolded, it became clear that the connections spanning the generations were

the most important aspect of the book. My own mum and dad and grandfather C S Chong are in the book, and I remember whenever we met Chinese people, without fail, they would ask each other where they had come from and there would be exclamations when the village connections were made.

Howe Young, commercial grower from Pukekohe and head of the book committee that initiated and supported *Sons of the Soil* said after he read the book two or three times he began to really understand all the connections between the families. Towards the end of my chat with Ruth, I asked her what she would be working on next.

Something about fruit shops, she said, *there were three in Papatoetoe*. Goodness. My parents lived there. When Ruth said her parents were George and Daphne Chan, I realised I'd heard their names mentioned at home, and our parents had been friends.

Launching the book, Mayor Len Brown aligned himself with the growers, quipping of his long working hours, he simply keeps 'market gardening hours.' When he remarked that at school he had been in the same year as author Ruth Lam, but she looked 20 years younger, the wit who yelled "At least!" got the bigger laugh. This comfortable exchange, a European cracking a joke and a Chinese raising a laugh at his expense, is a far cry from the contempt that greeted Chinese when they first made their appearance in Aotearoa New Zealand.

James Ng, doctor and author of *Window on a Chinese Past* gave a talk in Melbourne last year, an over-view of writing and film on the NZ Cantonese. He described an earlier time when there was limited fiction, but many histories which dealt with gold mining, immigration, legislation, discrimination,

Chinese Societies and churches, Cantonese counties and villages of origin. He said accounts were beginning to move past the 'victim' view.

An official apology for the injustice of the Poll Tax was made by the Labour Government in 2002 and in 2005 the Chinese Poll Tax Heritage Trust was formed. Its task is to support the language, literature, history and heritage of descendants of Poll Tax payers.

Dunedin writer Eva Ng, who published *China Town Girl* in 2005, says she felt new confidence after the apology. Although she didn't suffer personally, she was brought up being self-conscious of her presence. She would avoid drawing attention to herself. The apology gave permission to say, Yes, we are New Zealanders.

Sons of the Soil received funding from the CPTHT which is providing support for writers and others, working on projects that further its aims, and they don't have to be Chinese to apply for grants. James Ng says the Cantonese writers are fairly well catered for by the CPTHT and now more funding is required for what he calls the newcomers. He describes the NZSA (PEN NZ Inc) Asian Short Story competition as a softer, easy entry point, a way to bring new writers to the public domain.

One such writer is Suzanne Chan-On who last year entered three stories, one on Greys Avenue and one titled *The Jade Turtle*, a Chinese folk tale. She won an ASB short story competition as a young person, always liked writing and travelled to Wellington to research her family history at the National Library. Her grandfather's bones were in one of the last 10 coffins to be loaded on to the ill-fated SS Ventnor for return to China and she wrote a private, 50,000-word, family history that is precious to her. Now in her sixties, she clearly has stories to tell. Whether she continues to write remains to be seen.

Of the NZSA competition, Renee Liang, poet, playwright and judging convenor writes: "From a field of 57 entries, 30 – 35 were from very good writers who should be encouraged to actively practise their craft and publish. This shows an exciting and promising future ahead for writers of Asian descent in this country. The best stories were both universal and specific, found an unexpected viewpoint, and came across as both authentic and imaginative.

The very best also demonstrated a willingness to take risks and experiment."

The winning story *Ghost*, was written by Karen Tay, a journalist who worked at the *NZ Herald* and the *Sunday Star Times*. She is currently at AUT on the Masters in Creative Writing course with Mike Johnson as her mentor. She came to New Zealand from Malaysia as a 13-year-old and went to a girls' school in Ponsonby. Her guardians were her older siblings who'd come here for university. "There's a really strong perception that Asians don't value creativity, the arts, but that's untrue." Asked if she had strong views, she said: "There's a feeling writers from Asia should write like Amy Tan, but she's done it, it was ground breaking and people don't want to be pigeon holed."

Of the poll tax apology, Karen says she studied it in school, was aware of the injustice, thinks everyone should be interested in current events, and it was the right thing to do. "Across the world, historically, horrible things have happened to immigrants. I felt a sense of solidarity when it happened."

I said I'd tell her something surprising. When the apology happened, I'd never heard of the Poll Tax. My parents never spoke of it. We never studied it at school, and my father, (whose father would have paid it in 1893) and quite a number of people of my father's generation (born 1923, Taranaki,) were angry that the apology had even been made. *The past is the past. These things should never be brought up. It only brings back the pain.*

We discussed that old fashioned Chinese repression thing. *If I don't talk about it, it never happened.* Karen said: "It's only by acknowledging the past that we can move forward."

When I told *NZ Author* editor, Adrian Blackburn, I'd attended the Mother of All Book Launches for *Sons of the Soil* he suggested Asian writing was in good form, and maybe I could write a few words.

Looking at the talent, I think he could be right: Lynda Chanwai-Earle, Alison Wong, Manying Ip, Helene Wong, Gilbert Wong, Helen Wong (*In the Mountain's Shadow, a century of Chinese in Taranaki 1870-1970*), Jenny Lee (*Jade Taniwha*), Mai Chen (*Public Law Tool Box*) and what they are working on Eva Wong Ng – a biography of NZ's first Chinese Woman Doctor; Renee Liang – several plays including *Paper Boats* and a poetry collection; me, *Sixty Poems* and

Pics for the Year of The Water Dragon; Ruth Lam – *Fruit shop stories*; Karen Tay, a novel relating a post apocalyptic love story...

Renee Liang comments on the continuing great interest in Asian-theme or written plays.

"This year saw the inaugural Asian Ink competition, run by Playmarket for Asian playwrights, plus a number of plays produced by mainstream venues – *Man In A Suitcase* by Lynda Chanwai-Earle at Court and *Two Fish n a Scoop* by Carl Nixon at Fortune.

"Last year I did *The Bonefeeder* (to a very good all-round critical reception, plus audience response) and The First Asian AB toured to Wellington and Hamilton and was popular with schools). Michelle Ang and Jo Holstead's play *Chopstick* was to premiere at Basement on November 20.

"My feeling is that plays written by or casting Asians are going to become more and more 'mainstream' in both audience and theme. We're still to see Asians colourblind cast in non-specifically Asian roles but there are an increasing number of Asian actors, and increasing experience on stage and screen."

Renee herself is working on a number of plays, most actively *Paper Boats*, a collaboration between 10 Kiwi-Chinese actresses using oral histories to devise a new theatre work. She is also working on a poetry collection and in 2013 will run a repeat of New Kiwi Women write, a workshop series for migrant women on the North Shore.

"There are things that I think still need work: continued stereotyping of Asians/Asian roles on screen and to a lesser extent stage. Although lately we've had a young, sassy, very Kiwi role on *Hounds* played by a young Chinese Kiwi actress and the rumour is that a leading prime time series might have a Kiwi Chinese core cast member. This can only really change as we get involved in writing, funding and programming.

"We also need to gently work on audience expectations – that there is no such thing as an "asian" play or short story or novel, that we all write informed by our backgrounds but find stories and themes that resonate universally.

As to Asian writing in general (says Sue Gee) the question has to be asked. The field is dominated by women. Where are the men? Why aren't they writing? ●

IT'S A PUBLISHING SCAM (DOT CON)

The world is full of con artists, writes **CHRISSIE WARD**, and some of them prey on writers. Publishing cons are usually called scams, but cons are what they really are.



Put simply, a con is where you think you are getting one thing, but actually receive something completely different – and usually inferior. All con artists use persuasion and deception to satisfy a need, which in this instance is the writer's desire to see their work published.

While researching this article, it didn't take me long to find three people, all NZSA members, who have been taken in by writing scams in recent years. They don't want their real names to be used, so I'll call them Mike, Casey and Ruth. I won't give the real names of the publishers they had dealings with either, even though one went into liquidation in February 2012 and another is currently being prosecuted in a US court. All three writer victims suffered. They all lost money, and all experienced constant frustration and disappointment. Worse, Mike – who was the most seriously scammed – has ended up bitterly disillusioned about the future of what he sees as his "tainted" book.

Mike spent a long time searching for an agent who could place his genre novel in the US. Eventually he found LW Agency mentioned on a website. As he says: "Their assurance is that *they* don't make

any money (commission) unless you make money; so you can trust an agency, because they have every incentive to protect your interests. (Unless, of course, they are actually the wolf, in sheep's clothing.)

"My 'agent' only referred me to boutique publisher BS after exhaustively searching, unsuccessfully, for large publishers – yeah, right!"

Mike subsequently discovered that the "agent" and the publisher "she" referred him to were actually the same person, operating under assumed names.

"As his victim I lost in excess of NZ\$8000... The book was 'published' but instead of the projected turnover of 10,000 books that was discussed before signing the contract, BS subsequently revealed (after taking a chunky 'editing' fee) that it was a print-on-demand publisher. It claimed to have sold only six books by the time I discovered the fraud and terminated the contract two months later.

"In fact, six people that I know personally bought from their website, and this lends credence to other authors' accusations that sales figures are falsified to cheat them of royalties. Several months after terminating the contract and adding my complaint to the 179 other authors involved in the US prosecution, I was still finding my book on sale on Amazon, Flipcard etc, and I had to follow up separately with these organisations to have them withdraw it from sale.

"BS has no distribution or marketing capability, and gains its profits almost entirely by charging fees to its victim authors and charging excessively for books that the author is trying to personally sell."

At least Mike has the satisfaction of knowing that BS is being prosecuted, although given the glacial rate of progress through the court it is unlikely that he will receive any financial recompense.

Writer Ruth also dealt with a US company, although she initially approached XY Publisher through its Auckland office. At first XY was eager to help, but "after I had paid over the money (\$2000), then things changed. Later I couldn't even raise the Auckland office: email and telephone had been cut off. I tried to get in contact with Head Office in Indiana – what a run around! They finally told me (this was after my book had been published) that they didn't have me on their books as an author!"

Ruth arranged book launches, which had to be cancelled twice when the books didn't arrive. When they did, she found that the dedication and acknowledgement pages were missing, and the corrections she had asked to be made had not been done. This was particularly gruelling as she had spent laborious hours correcting errors that had been introduced by the publisher, and had signed a release form on the understanding that all corrections would be made before books were printed.

"Please tell everyone NOT to deal with XY Publisher," she begs. "They promise the moon, then hit you with extra costs. They do not reply to calls, emails, or even letters – they have your money, they printed some books, and that's it! They will keep bombarding you with advertising, but what's in the brochures is TOTALLY different to what you will receive."

Are you thinking that Mike and Ruth took a risk in entrusting their books to overseas publishers, and that this couldn't possibly happen in New Zealand?

Think again: it did – to Casey, among other local authors who dealt with publisher EF. Here is what happened to Casey:

"I signed up with EF in 2005 on a traditional contract. I explained up front that the book was not suitable for digital printing, as it was 330 pages all in colour, with 177 illustrations. The publisher said she understood that and would do an offset press edition, with some digital ones first for reviews. The book had lots of merchandising opportunities and she said: 'We like to form a company with our authors for this sort of thing, because it works better for both parties.'

"So we formed a company. When it all turned to custard she admitted she had

never actually formed a company with any of the other authors!

"She never did an offset press run and never sent books out for review. She didn't get the website ready in time for the launch, despite agreeing it was essential. She didn't sell any of my books after the launch, and only at the insistence of a friend of mine sent three copies to an Auckland shop. No other attempts were made to get books into shops. The website eventually worked and several orders came in from people I knew, including a big one from England. She didn't respond to any of the website orders, and people were asking me why.

"I had sold almost all the books I had, and begged for a stock take on the rest and on the merchandise. A satisfactory stock take never materialised. The figures she gave me for the number of books printed kept changing. She refused to pay my royalties because I had sold the books, not her!"

Casey approached NZSA for help. The Chief Executive wrote to EF on her behalf, and eventually Casey received a cheque for some of the royalties owed.

EF is the publisher that is in liquidation. Casey says charitably, "I think she needed turnover, i.e. cash coming in, and was not able to do a project requiring long term commitment. She admitted that her policy was to promise people what they wanted, regardless of whether she knew how to do it or not."

And there we have a good description of what these publishing scammers do.

Why do they do it? Because they are con artists, and all con artists share certain traits. They think fraud is fun; they lack compassion; they believe they are smarter than everyone else; and they know they will probably get away with it.

So how does a writer avoid becoming a victim? Healthy scepticism is a good start. That doesn't mean becoming paranoid, but there are warning signs to watch out for. Don't trust any firm that advertises via the Internet (as XY Publisher is still doing). Genuine publishers and agents don't solicit custom – they don't need to.

Beware of firms that only give a Post Office Box number, rather than a physical address. Don't succumb to time pressure. "Hurry! Sale ends tomorrow!" is acceptable from a shoe shop, but "Hurry! Submissions considered for a limited time" is *not* acceptable from a publisher. Legitimate companies give you time to study the fine print. Most important: question any proposal that involves you parting with money or some kind of right.

Writer Mike makes a sensible suggestion when considering overseas markets, which is to deal exclusively with members of those countries' Publishers or Agents Associations.

Do some research. There are several websites that give feedback and warnings about publishers and agents. The best known are:

www.writersweekly.com/whispers_and_warnings.php

www.sfw.org/for-authors/writer-beware

www.pred-ed.com/pubwarn.htm

www.absolutewrite.com/forums

www.fictionfactor.com/scam.html

www.hipiers.com/publishing.html

If you can't find the publisher or agent mentioned on any of these, do your own Google search: enter the organisation's name + scam, and see what comes up.

Don't forget NZSA, which can act directly on members' behalf, as it did for Casey. There is a helpful section on Writing Scams on the website: www.authors.org.nz/wawcs0139328/writing-scams.html

NZSA also has a consultancy service designed to help members in understanding and negotiating fair and reasonable contracts (see the website for details).

The best defense against scams is knowledge. If this article prevents even one more New Zealand writer from becoming a victim of a con artist, it will have been worthwhile. ●



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FROM ELSEWHERE

AN INTRODUCTION TO NEW ZEALAND PUBLISHING

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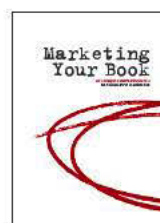
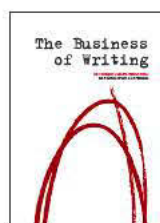
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DUNEDIN – University of Otago Bookshop 378 Great King St.

NATIONWIDE – Bennetts Bookshops, www.bennetts.co.nz Dymocks Booksellers, www.dymocks.co.nz



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by John MacKinven

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TOPICAL MATTERS**

- Several of this author's fictional works, including her most recent, a novel, have titles consisting of a single word. She has also received awards for her work as a book reviewer and columnist. Who is she (and, for an extra point, name her latest novel)?
- Wellington actor Matu Ngaropo was the narrator for the multi-media show about our best-loved writers that featured in the New Zealand pavilion at the Frankfurt Book Fair in October. What was the show called?
- Still on the subject of Frankfurt, which two New Zealand writers spoke at the opening ceremony?
- What is the title of Lawrence Patchett's collection of 'gritty frontier tales' published earlier this year?
- Patchett is not alone among New Zealand fiction writers in shining a new kind of light on local history. Eleanor Catton's second novel, due out early next year, is set in the gold-rush era. What is the title of Catton's forthcoming book?
- In which fiction genre have e-book sales now outstripped print sales?
- In his new crime novel, *Death on Demand*, Paul Thomas brings back which fictional detective after a 15-year hiatus?
- Which TV personality has been appointed Chief Judge of next year's New Zealand Post Book Awards? And for a bonus point, who will preside over the judging of children's books?
- The current New Zealand poet laureate is?
- Friedrich Krull was a German settler who arrived in New Zealand in 1859. Awa Press have recently published a remarkable collection of his letters home, filled with lyrical descriptions of the natural beauty of this country. The title of this book is?

Answers on page 24

No responsibility can be accepted by NZ Author for claims made in these advertisements. Casual rates for up to 30 words, \$37+GST, \$22+GST for multiple bookings of 4 or more. Payment with booking. Deadline 11 January 2013

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OUR CRIME FICTION: A MIXED BAG

Geoff Walker, now a freelancer after many years as Penguin New Zealand's publishing director, takes an independent look at the wider world of books.



It was great to see a group of NZ crime writers featuring in a panel at the Frankfurt Book Fair. Paddy Richardson tells me they acquitted themselves well, and enjoyed the experience. She says she even said giddy to the president of Germany.

It was a further sign that crime writing now is now a significant part of NZ fiction. And it was perhaps an acknowledgement, too, that our crime writing sells better in Germany than anywhere else in the world – which probably includes the home market of NZ. Paul Cleave, Vanda Symon, Paddy Richardson, Alex Bosco/Greg McGee – there's an impressive list of our crime writers published in Germany, and doing well (particularly Paul Cleave of course).

Some of the new crime fiction is just outstanding, in my view. Vanda Symon's *The Faceless* and Alex Bosco's *Cut & Run* are terrific crime novels on any terms. I haven't read Paul Thomas' new *Ihaka* novel, but there's been much praise for it.

But from what I hear, actual sales of NZ crime fiction haven't been meeting expectations, and it's disturbing to report there's even evidence that a couple of the big publishers are pulling back. In the recent past:

Paul Cleave has left Random House (they wouldn't have let him go if his books were selling in New Zealand) and his new novel has been published by Penguin.

But Penguin for their part have actually turned down Paddy Richardson's new novel, which has gone to Hachette, who are also committing to Paul Thomas.

Random House are clearly publishing fewer crime novels, with their publisher Harriet Allan admitting to me that 'local readers will buy overseas crime but very few will buy local titles'.

On the other hand, I hear that HarperCollins have signed up Donna Malane for a second novel, and they have the youthful Ben Sanders, whom

I've not read.

So it's a volatile scene, despite all the enthusiasm. The fact remains that local crime books continue to account for less than one per cent of total crime book sales. And there's apparently little evidence that sales are increasing, book for book, author for author.

Why? It's a version of the cultural cringe: New Zealanders, it would seem, would rather their crime was set in London or Los Angeles or Stockholm. We don't seem to be interested in reading novels set in Matura ('a smattering of pubs, stores and churches', Vanda Symon) or 'louche, bohemian Ponsonby' (Alex Bosco).

'There is a massive lack of faith in our local talent,' Harriet Allan of Random told me recently. 'At the heart of it is a conviction that if it's from this country it can't be good. Which is nonsense.'

Craig Sisterson, the indefatigable promoter of local crime fiction (www.kiwicrime.blogspot.com) lamented on his blog recently that 'we've been a little hopeless at supporting our own writers, no matter how good they are'. I agree with him, that's the crux of it.

But I also think we should look at why people read crime fiction in the first place – it's essentially escapist. They don't get the same charge out of reading about murders set down the road.

There's also a view, offered by Sisterson, that we're 'too peaceful to have believable crime set here – for instance there has never been a real-life serial killer in New Zealand'. Unlike Tasmania, one might add. I suspect that's part of it too.

So what should we do about it? Keep on writing, I say. And publishing. And displaying prominently in bookshops and promoting as hard as we can. And, as readers, buying and reading the best of them. We do have excellent crime writers. We should all be reading them more. ●

Geoff Walker is a writer and publishing consultant. geoffwbooks@gmail.com

THE NEW ZEALAND SOCIETY OF AUTHORS (PEN NEW ZEALAND INC) TE PUNI KAITUHI O AOTEAROA

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peterblakeborough@yahoo.com

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Branch meets 3rd Monday of each month 7pm at the Hearing

Centre, 40 Wellington Street, Hamilton East.

Entrance at back of building.

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SECRETARY: Carmel Hurdle carmelhurdle@yahoo.co.nz

MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY: Adele Broadbent

adelebroadbent@slingshot.co.nz

Branch meets four times a year, usually on Sunday pm.

Visitors welcome.

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jenny.argante@gmail.com

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Branch meets 3rd Monday of every month. Tauranga venue is

The Alzheimer's Society House, 116 13th Avenue, Tauranga.

Five meetings a year will be scheduled elsewhere within the

region. Check Branch Page on Website for full details

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maggie@at-the-bay.com

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Meetings are at Thistle Inn, Mulgrave Street, Wellington

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jean_gorman@ihug.co.nz

BRANCH CHAIR: Dorothy Scott dotscot@kinect.co.nz

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The branch committee meets monthly in Nelson or Blenheim, and

regular events are held in Nelson, Marlborough and Golden Bay.

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jhaworth@xtra.co.nz

BRANCH CHAIRS: Julie Folkers julie2424@xtra.co.nz

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Branch meets monthly.

Contact Jenny Haworth for dates and times.

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ak.trebilcock@xtra.co.nz

BRANCH CHAIR: Kyle Mewburn nzsasotagosouthland@gmail.com

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Branch meets on first Monday of the month.

For details of Branch meetings contact the Branch Secretary

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