

## CQ:WORDplay – Visiting Authors

### JOANNA BOULTER

Joanna grew up in Wiltshire and sampled several countries in the Far East and Middle East before moving to Darlington with her family in 1989. She's been writing poetry forever, but in common with many other women wasn't published until she was 40. Since then her work has appeared in many magazines and she's had several competition successes. Her latest is to win First Prize in the *Poetry London* competition.

Her first collection, *Running With The Unicorns*, was published by The Bay Press in 1994. In 1997 she won a Tyrone Guthrie award from Northern Arts, enabling her to complete a long sequence of poems, *On Sketty Sands*, based on her maternal family history (right back to the ancestral Welsh pirate!), published by *Arrowhead Press* in September 2001. Her third collection *The Hallucinogenic Effects of Breathing* is from the same press, published May 2003. She won a Northern Promise Award this year to continue research into her sequence of poems on the composer Shostakovitch. Joanna received mentoring, as part of the Award, from David Morley of Warwick University.



### CAROL CLEWLOW

Carol Clewlow's first novel *Keeping the Faith* was short listed for the Whitbread Prize while her second, the best-selling *A Woman's Guide to Adultery* was translated into 15 languages and turned into a TV mini series. A further novel *Love in the Modern Sense* plus a number of her short stories have been read on Radio 4. A stage version of the fourth, *One For The Money*, was performed as at the Edinburgh Fringe.

Carol will be reading from her last novel *Not Married Not Bothered*, also a best-seller and was described by one reviewer as a 'refreshing and hilarious' celebration of a woman's right to chose the single life, and by another a 'clever and sharply funny probe into relationships.'

Carol is also a founder member of Operating Theatre ([www.operatingtheatre.org.uk](http://www.operatingtheatre.org.uk)) a ground-breaking theatre group which produces plays on medical and health issues and is based in Northern Stage in Newcastle. She teaches on the MA in creative writing at Teesside University and has just finished a further novel.



### KITTY FITZGERALD

Kitty is the author of 4 novels: *Pigtopia* (2005 Faber & Faber) *Small Acts of Treachery* (2002 Brandon), *Snapdragons* (1999 Brandon) and *Marge* (1985 Sheba); A volume of poetry: *For Crying Out Loud* (1994 IRON Press) written with V. Laws. Four plays for BBC Radio 4 and eight theatre plays. She has just won the Notes from the Underground/Latitude Festival National Short Story Competition.

Short Synopsis of *The Intimacy of Strangers* by Kitty Fitzgerald

Kitty Fitzgerald's latest novel centres on a Tyneside-based epileptic woman, Laura. When Laura's medication goes wrong, and the truth about her dead mother begins to emerge, she is launched into a dramatic confrontation with her father, and a struggle to assess the reality of the world around her.

## CYNTHIA FULLER

Cynthia's new collection is concerned with personal histories and how we begin to retrace the paths that lead from then to now. In *Background Music* we discover the stories behind landscapes, families and individuals, as Cynthia Fuller reflects on how choices made and chances taken have shaped the present. Here are secret glimpses of her parents on holiday in the 1930s and the grandmothers she never knew as she looks for continuities between generations and the underlying rhythm connecting the different selves we have been.

Cynthia Fuller was born in Kent, but has lived in the North East since the 1970s, working freelance as a teacher of literature and creative writing in Adult and Higher Education, and also with groups in the community. She has co-edited several poetry anthologies, including *Smelter* (Mudfog, 2003) with Kevin Cadwallender, *The Poetry Cure* (Bloodaxe, 2005) with Julia Darling, and *North By North East* (Iron Press, 2006) with Andy Croft. Her previous collections, *Moving Towards Light* (1992), *Instructions for the Desert* (1996), *Only a Small Boat* (2001) and *Jack's Letters Home* (2006) were also published by Flambard. *Jack's Letters Home* was a Poetry Book Society Recommendation.

Praise for Cynthia Fuller's previous collection *Jack's Letters Home*:

*'The most moving and most life-affirming book I've read for ages – so marvellously sustained, so unsentimental, so spare, so poignant.'* R. V. Bailey

*'The real skill and art was to use his language and turn it into poetry. Nothing else would have done to create such a poignant memorial to ordinary chaps like him; self-effacing, gentle, sensitive, and yet uncomplaining and brave.'* S. J. Litherland

*'The collection is wonderfully accepting of ordinariness; and an ordinariness so familiar, so known.'* Gillian Allnutt

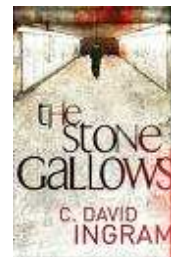
## RICHARD W. HARDWICK

Richard W Hardwick teaches creative writing in Frankland Prison near Durham. His debut novel 'Kicked Out', Waterstone's Recommended Read and Borders Book of the month, was inspired by his time working in an emergency access homeless hostel and as a social worker in a youth offending team. Previous to this Richard worked as a journalist for the BBC. The novel he is currently writing is based around his young family dealing with cancer, and the relationship with his partner that journeyed through Israel, Greece, Amsterdam and a myriad of obstacles and adventures.



### C.DAVID INGRAM

C.David Ingram lives with his wife and young child in Paisley, Renfrewshire. After legal training he worked for a spell as a debt collector and is now a full-time nurse. His hard-boiled debut novel, *The Stone Gallows* was published by Myrmidon in May of this year. It introduces Scotland's latest crime hero, the eponymous disgraced cop, Cameron Stone, a big man with a big heart- but not many scruples



### NIK JONES

Nik is a teacher and occasional barman from Consett, County Durham. He attempted to live in Canada but, having been asked politely to leave, he had little option but to attend Bath Spa University and study Creative Writing and Media Communications. It was here he started his first novel, *9987*. He is currently working on his second novel, and plotting an escape to Peru.

#### 9987

by Nik Jones

*Fiction, Thriller*

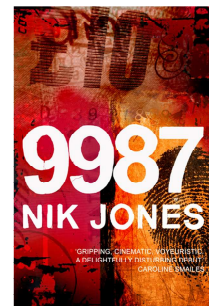
Tonto Books 19 January 2009

ISBN 9780955632662, paperback, rrp £7.99

The shop is everything to him – always neat and tidy, safe and reliable, the rental DVDs carefully categorised, alphabetised and memorised. He thinks he knows his customers, until the bloodstains begin to appear – on grubby banknotes, on porn DVDs, and on the shop's fresh new carpet.

Then the girl comes into his life, green eyes and fresh scarlet slashed beneath her thin cotton blouse. He wants to rescue and protect her. He wants to be with her. Forever.

Murky and disturbing, *9987* is a jagged, tragic crime story set in a disturbing, uncaring world where only three things are constant: fantasy, loneliness and love.



### PRU KITCHING:

**Pru Kitching:** born in Sunderland, schooled in North Yorkshire and County Durham; wrote a lot; trained in theatre in Manchester; wrote a lot; married a painter and was widowed; didn't write; ran away to Copenhagen; travelled a lot; came back to Weardale in the North Pennines; writes a lot again. Her first poetry pamphlet, *All Aboard the Moving Staircase*, was published by Vane Women Press in 2004. She joined Vane Women in 2006. *The Kraków Egg*, Pru's second poetry pamphlet, was published by Arrowhead Press in 2009, the same year that she was awarded a Northern Promise Award from New Writing North.



## SIRKKA-LIISA KONTTINEN

Born in Myllykoski, Finland, in 1948, Sirkka began taking photographs at the age of twelve, inspired by her aunt Oili, who was a skilful amateur photographer. She developed a keen interest in documentary photography and later decided to study film making in the UK, enrolling at the Regent Street Polytechnic film school in London. Whilst there, she met up with Murray Martin and a number of other fellow students, with whom she formed the Amber Collective. In 1969, the collective moved to Newcastle upon Tyne in the North East of England, with a commitment to documenting working class communities, in film and in photographs, and in 1977 established the Side Photographic Gallery. Since then, Sirkka has played an active part in most aspects of Amber/Side's work. Her central involvement has been in the production of a number of long term photographic projects, resulting in exhibitions, books and documentary films.

Sirkka is perhaps best known for her book 'Byker' of 1983, a seminal portrait of the terraced Newcastle community, eventually bulldozed to make way for the Byker Wall and the wholesale redevelopment of the area. She began her project in 1969, when she moved to the North East of England and lived in Byker for seven years, until her own house was demolished. Thereafter she continued to photograph and to collect testimonies from the residents for a further five years.

### Byker Revisited

Sirkka-Liisa Konttinen moved to the Byker area of Newcastle in 1970 and shortly after her arrival she began to capture the spirit of the community in evocative photographs that formed the basis of a book and film. Since leaving Byker in 1976, Sirkka has maintained contact with the area and its many residents who have become her friends. "Byker Revisited" is a visual and verbal documentary, a portrait of a contemporary community that is in flux - a community of the poor, the disadvantaged and the refugees who demonstrate a life-affirming humanity which is captured in their words and Sirkka's stunning photographs. Lee Hall, the writer of the film "Billy Elliot" and the play "The Pitmen Painters", provides an introduction.



### VALERIE LAWS

Valerie is a poet, novelist, playwright, sci-art specialist, mathematician and swimmer.

Her first crime novel, *The Rotting Spot*, was published by Red Squirrel Press and selected as one of four Read regional titles, to be promoted by New Writing North at events across the region. Set on the Northumbrian coast, it involves secrets and skull hunting! The book won her a Northern Writer's Award, with mentoring from Lisanne Radice.

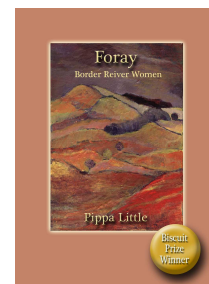


### PIPPA LITTLE

Pippa was first prizewinner in Biscuit's International Poetry Competition 2008.

*Foray, Border Reiver Women* is a full collection of poems describing the, often harrowing, lives these women endured. In the sixteenth century the lands surrounding the Scots/English border resembled a war zone. Violence created poverty and raiding became a means of survival. Much has been written about the men's brutality, the raids or forays, but it fell to the women to raise children, grow crops and keep animals. These poems make us more aware of their existence.

Pippa Little has received the prestigious Eric Gregory Award. She writes full time and is editor of *Writing Women*. Her first full collection "*The Spar Box*" (pub Vane Women) was a Poetry Book Society Choice. Pippa lives in Northumberland with her husband, three sons and a dog.



### JEANNE MACDONALD

Jeanne Macdonald is an experienced poet who has studied writing poetry at Newcastle University for several years, and currently attends *Writing from the Inside Out* (tutor Gillian Allnutt). She completed her MA in Writing Poetry at the same University in 2003. Jeanne has read her work on Radio 4, *Word on the Street*, and her work has been read on Radio 3, *The Verb*.

She has also started a career as a publisher: the Blinking Eye poetry competition for the over-fifties is now in its second year; the first year's winners were announced at the end of September, and Blinking Eye has published its first two volumes from their work

### ANDREW MCMILLAN

Andrew McMillan has been poet-in-residence of his own life for 21 years. He splits his time between Lancaster (where he studies) and Barnsley (where he was born and raised). His poetry has been published widely in online and print publications including *The North*, *The Reader*, *Acumen* and *Pomegranate*. He is co-editor of *Cake Literary Magazine*. His debut pamphlet, from Red Squirrel Press, is published in October.'

### **TIM MURGATROYD**

Tim Murgatroyd is an English teacher who lives with his family in York. He has remained fascinated by ancient China since his teens, when he discovered a slim volume of Chinese poetry in a second hand bookshop. *Taming Poison Dragons* is his first novel. He is currently engaged in writing a sequel chronicling the turbulent events of the Mongol invasion of China.

His book is titled *Taming Poison Dragons*:-

Western China, 1196: Yun Cai, a handsome and adored poet in his youth, is now an old man, exiled to his family estates. All that is left to him are regrets of a growing sense of futility and helplessness and the irritations of his feckless son and shrewish daughter-in-law. But the 'poison dragons' of misfortune shatter his orderly existence.



### **PETER MORTIMER**

Peter is a playwright, poet and editor who has been closely involved with the north-east literary scene since the early 70s. He has written 22 plays which have been performed in the region by the likes of Live Theatre Co, Durham Theatre Co, Théâtre Sans Frontières, Pocket Theatre, Cloud Nine and Dodgy Clutch, as well as on BBC Radio 4. A commission for the Customs House, South Shields, to write a play based around the little-known Yemeni seamen's riots in that town in 1930 led to *RIOT* first produced in spring 2004 and since revived. The photograph above was taken recently in the Lebanon, where Peter spent three months in Shatila, the refugee camp in Beirut. His book about his experiences there (working title: *Shatila - through Western Eyes*) will be published by Five Leaves Publications in October.



He is the founder and artistic director of Cloud Nine Theatre Productions, which was established in 1997 and only commissions new work, only by northern writers, and has thus far produced new plays by eleven dramatists, including Julia Darling, Tom Hadaway, Sean O'Brien, Kitty Fitzgerald, and Steve Chambers

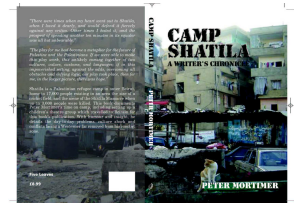
Peter Mortimer is also the founder and editor of Iron Press, which since 1973 has brought out a whole range of new poetry, fiction and drama, from this region and elsewhere, and continues annually to publish four or five important new titles.

Mortimer's own poetry has been published by, among others, Flambard and Iron and his latest collection, *I Married The Angel of the North* came out in 2002 from Five Leaves Press. His children's collection of poems *Utter Nonsense*, (illustrated by Geoff Laws, Iron Press) is in its seventh edition since first appearing in 1979. Flambard also published his children's fable, *Croak, The King & A Change in the Weather* (illustrated by Gaynor Devaney).

Mortimer is a former journalist, and for six years was the region's theatre critic for *The Guardian*. He has also been a satirical columnist for both *The Journal* and *Newcastle Evening Chronicle*. *Mortimer at Large*, a collection of his newspaper columns for the North Tyneside based News Guardian series of papers was published by IRON Press/North Tyneside Libraries in spring 2008

## Camp Shatila by Peter Mortimer

Peter Mortimer reports on Shatila, the Palestinian refugee camp in Lebanon – scene of the Shatila massacre of 1982, now home to about 12,000 people living in one square kilometre. The author developed a children's theatre group in the camp, whose members will be visiting the UK around publication.



## ELLEN PHETHEAN

*'These poems occupy the imaginative space that settles around the arc of a life asking to be understood. In its focus on death and loss, Breath is a celebration of the fullness of life. It marks time like music – from the retrospective staccato of 'before' to the tentative, opening crescendo of 'after'. A song to a city, this island and the sea that circles it.'*

Linda France

In two short months in 2005, Ellen Phethean's life was brought to a halt. In April she lost her close friend and long-time collaborator Julia Darling to breast cancer; then in June, her husband, composer Keith Morris, and close friend musician Joe Scurfield were killed in a hit-and-run accident. In despair and turmoil, all she could do was write: to make sense of the past and to come to terms with the present.

These poems chart the course of the last few years, reflecting on childhood, family life, the cultural landscape of Newcastle upon Tyne and how it all seemed to lead to these events. There is sadness and anger here, but also humour and candid observation. Journeys and water crossings are recurrent themes in poetry that explores love, loss and the life that insists we carry on.

Ellen Phethean is a sound artist, poet, playwright and editor, and co-founded Diamond Twig Press with Julia Darling. She spent 2003–04 as Writer in Residence at Seven Stories, the Centre for Children's Books, in Newcastle upon Tyne where she wrote *Wall (Smokestack)*, a teen novel in poems. Her poetry is included in *Sauce (Bloodaxe)* and has been widely broadcast and anthologised, but this is her first full-length collection. She is a graduate of the Creative Writing MA at the University of Newcastle upon Tyne and teaches Creative Writing at the Centre for Lifelong Learning in Newcastle.

### MIKE PRATT

*Wild* is a beautiful book by environmentalist Mike Pratt. Mud Fog Press is publishing these prose pieces which explore his encounters with animals, birds and the landscape of the North East over several decades. Beautifully and poetically written the pieces are infused with his love of nature and his Buddhist spirituality.

Mike Pratt is the Chief Executive Office of the Northumberland Wildlife Trust and a teacher of Tai Chi. Of the book Chris Baines, environmental broadcaster said

*'accounts here of spectacular and unusual wildlife, this book is mainly about the familiar and the commonplace – wildlife at a neighbourhood scale – and for that reason more than any other, it is of direct relevance to each and every one of us.'*



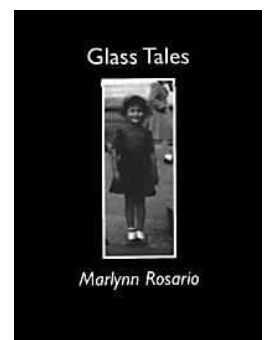
### NOREEN REES & PAUL MILLER

Noreen is a graduate of the MA in Creative Writing course at Northumbria University. In 2001 she won 'The People's Play' competition sponsored by New Writing North for 'Bloodlines.' She later went on to write 'Passion Play,' and 'Shipwreck! Beware the Black Middens' (which was performed as part of the Tall Ships Festival 2005). Two short stories of Noreen's have appeared in the Biscuit anthology and a previous children's picture book 'The Picnic Tea.' was published by Thomas Nelson.

Paul is a deaf illustrator and animator who has completed a Foundation Degree in Illustration and Animation at Newcastle College and currently works as a freelance. He was nominated for the RST award (Best Drama and Entertainment Production) for a short animation called Rory's Teeth. This was part-funded by Northern Film and Media and shown at the Wolverhampton Deaf Fest 2007 (where Paul was again nominated) and the Royal Television Society awards 2008.

### MARLYNN ROSARIO

Marlynn was born in Burma but lives in the North East; her poems are informed by the awareness of crossing cultures, linguistically and socially. Her style is rich and satisfying.



### BARRY STONE

Barry Stone has compiled and edited fifteen books of community writing. His work has been produced on radio, television and stage. He is currently working on a quartet of novels called *The Winston Tails* and is under commission to write a play entitled *Miss Lavender And The Boy Who Would be A Star* for Northumberland Theatre Company.

**DAVID WILLIAMS**

Author and playwright David Williams has been writing professionally for more than thirty years and has been published in the UK, Australia, Germany and Scandinavia. Many of his plays have been broadcast by the BBC. At the Whitley Bay Festival he will be reading from his book of short stories 'We Never Had It So Good', a local best-seller which has recently been reprinted by publisher Zymurgy. David is a popular reader of his own work, regularly performing at public events and festivals, and for both adult groups and school audiences.