

Shelf Life

The Newsletter of the Working Class Movement Library

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A Culture of Peace

The first Frow Memorial Lecture reflected Ruth and Eddies' interest in Chartism and their love of poetry. With the level of aggression in the world today it was fitting that the second one should be about their life long participation in the peace movement.

About 100 people heard Bruce Kent speak about the need to change to a culture of peace.

Delivered the day after the royal wedding the talk commented on how ingrained militarism was in our culture with the predominant male wedding attire being the uniforms of aggression, including the carrying of swords. 'How much better it would have been if the uniforms had been of those working to save lives like fire fighters, ambulance staff and nurses instead of those working

to destroy it?'

'How strange it must be for a French person visiting London to arrive at Waterloo station and visit a square called Trafalgar. Why do many of our monuments and places have to be named after acts of aggression and not peace?'

'Our language is made up of so many military terms like *last line of defence and battle lines.*'

Instead of thinking about having a Trafalgar Day as a possible public holiday why not have a public holiday on 21 September



the International Day of Peace.'

Bruce made the telling point that whilst famous battles and warriors are commemorated and remembered, the first English Nobel Peace Prize winner William Randal Cremer is long forgotten.

He thought that every child should be given, at a very early age, a copy of the UN Charter and the Declaration of Peace.

Bruce concluded by reminding us that like all social gains in the past we cannot expect those above to change things, we have to do it from below and that means everybody getting involved.

Whilst we may have our differences about what ultimate society we want to see these must not become a barrier that stops us working for a common goal of a peaceful society.



From
The

Collection

Federation of Worker Writers and Community Publishers

In common with earlier working class cultural movements, the Federation of Worker Writers and Community Publishers (FWWCP) grew as part of a campaign of dissent.

Established in 1976 to campaign for the recognition of working class writing, the initial membership was made up of eight groups who were part of a country-wide movement of alternative community-based publishing that emerged in the late 1960s.

Two of the original groups, QueenSpark Books in East Brighton and The Scotland Road Writers in Liverpool, are typical examples of how writing as a cultural activity developed alongside political action. Initially the QueenSpark

Campaign, organised to contest the proposed redevelopment of the Royal Spa into a casino, produced a street newspaper. This led on to publishing writings by local people and the development of QueenSpark Books. The Scotland Road Writers in Liverpool, formed in 1973, were also originally linked to campaigning activities. In this case the writers' workshop was one of the activities organised by the local residents association, along with picketing and writing for a community newspaper.

From its inception, FWWCPC has represented a wide number of groups within the working class, including trade unionists, unemployed people, adult literacy students, black activists and women. More recently, The Big Issue, the charity for the homeless, has become an active member together with ex-prisoners groups, disability groups, and mental health survivors.

The majority of individual group members are first time or developing writers and generally have little or no experience of the writing process.

In recent years the FWWCPC has developed its

TALES of the RAILS

by Ernie Ross



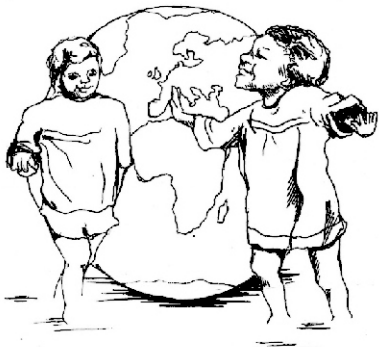
Bristol
Broadside

campaigning activities to include international interests and now has seventy member groups in fifteen different countries. Part of the Federation's role has been to encourage co-operation between its member groups to share expertise in alternative uses for writing and publishing.

The archive at the Library contains examples of writing published by a variety of groups, including Commonword and Gatehouse in Manchester, as well as minutes, publicity material and the Federation's magazine, Voices.

To search for items from the FWWCPC collection go to our catalogue at www.wcml.org.uk/catalogue/adlib-catalogue

IT'S OUR WORLD AS WELL



Poetry and Prose

by Children of
The Federation of Worker Writers
& Community Publishers

Welcome Tara

Tara Sutton took up her post with us as Library Assistant on 11 April. She had previously worked for Salford City Council as a Co-ordinator on a Bookstart Scheme. Another of those short term grant funded schemes that come to an end only too quickly. This one ending on 31 March. Her task was to encourage parents and carers to enjoy books with their children from an

early age.

Prior to that she worked at a University library in her home town of Birmingham.

Tara is in a similar position to Jane, our Librarian, in that we are only able to offer her a 12 month contract until we see the results of our appeal for increased income. Not satisfactory by any means, but it is the honest thing to do.



Trustees Fix Budget

The annual meeting of the Trustees in April fixed the budget for 2011-2012. Full consideration was given to our financial situation following Con-Dem cuts, and the staffing needs to run the Library successfully.

It is anticipated that our income this year will be in the region of £74,000 and our expenditure, at present staffing levels will be nearly £111,000. It was agreed that for one year we would dip into reserves to make up the shortfall and review the

situation towards the end of the financial year.

Clearly this is not a position that can be sustained for long. The long term viability of the Library requires that our reserves are only used to generate interest as an additional source of income and not as a far from bottomless pot to be dipped into to meet short term expediencies.

The outcome of our appeal for additional finances will determine what staffing costs can go into the budget next year.

Shelf Life by e mail

It has been suggested to us that one way in which the Library could save money is by sending out Shelf Life by e mail to those who would be happy receiving an electronic copy. This is not an easy one to get our head round as an institution whose reason for being is the collection of hard copy. None the less it is a sensible thing to do, and could be of benefit to those, particularly trade unions, who may wish to pass on copies to a wider membership.

We can't envisage a day when we won't produce a hard copy version but with postage now running at 37p for a second class stamp every little would be of help.

If you would be happy, or prefer, to receive a pdf file copy instead of the traditional method please e mail us at enquiries@wcml.org.uk with details of your e mail address and we'll start with the Autumn edition. You can always change back if you find you don't like the idea.



BOSS: "These horses cost too much to keep going. Cut down their corn."
OSTLER MAC: "Yes sir, leave it to me, sir."

Trade Union Support



As we move away from City Council grant as our principal means of financial support there is no question that donations from our supporters are vital to the prosperity of the Library, and trade unions have an important part to play.

In the last issue of 'Shelf Life', and again below, we ask all our supporters if they would consider taking out a standing order for the Library, and we hope that unions will seriously consider this. We already have 18 branches or regions making a monthly or annual donation this way, could yours' do the same?

Standing orders apart regular support is still coming in, with almost £4,000 received from the movement in the last quarter. That is, of course, excluding the fabulous donation from T&GWU Chloride referred to on your right.

Our thanks to NASUWT for their annual £1,000 donation and from regions and branches of ASLEF, CWU, GMB, NASUWT, NUJ, NUT, UCU, UNISON Unite and 4 trades councils.

Standing Orders

26 more Friends have taken out standing orders with the Library since our Spring appeal. We now have 234 supporters contributing towards an income of over £12,000 a year for the Library. This means that they don't have to think about writing out a cheque and we get peace of mind.

From our total mailing list to Friends and supporters this still leaves 700 donating by cheque or cash. With cheques being phased out, why not have another think about changing to a standing order now?

Chloride T&GWU Branch Remembers the Library



There are not many activists in the Salford area who have not heard of the Chloride branch of the T&GWU (now Unite).

During its' heyday members enjoyed some of the best pay and conditions in the Greater Manchester area, and it was not down to a benevolent employer. The trade union was well organised, disciplined and well led and as a result were able to extract good working conditions from the employer. The branch was also always outward looking giving solidarity support to workers in struggle at home and abroad.

Now with the demise of the factory at Clifton Junction the branch has been reduced to a hand full and has closed down, but not before making its' last decision about what to do with the branch funds.

The Library was pleased and

honoured when we learned that the principal beneficiary would be ourselves and so in early May we welcomed the last branch secretary, Alan Ogden, and three comrades who presented us with a cheque for £7,000.

Thank you very much indeed to the Chloride branch. We can assure you that your members money will be wisely spent.

