

The Society of Civil Service Authors

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Diary

Victoria Neilson Gattey Memorial
Prize (date to be announced)

Saturday 16th October 1999 – The
Society's Annual Lunch

31st October 1999 – Closing date for
the Douglas Morgan Millennium
Novel Competition

January 2000 (date to be announced)
WF and FG Froud Autobiography
Competition

Leicester 2000! – Writers' Weekend
(date to be announced)

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EDITOR'S NOTES

By Howard Frost

Yes a new Editor for Civil Service Author.

As some of you will know, Iain McIntyre has not been well recently and has reluctantly decided the time has come for him to hand on the Editorial baton to someone else.

So here I am, at your service Ladies and Gentlemen. Of which more in a moment.

Perhaps I ought first to introduce myself. By the time you read this I shall be Fifty Three and have served in the Inland Revenue since 1985. I have been a member of The Society since 1986 (I think) and also serve members as Chair of the Poetry Workshop. My literary pedigree is that of a working poet and I have written poetry of one sort or another for approaching thirty years, and performed it in public for most of that time.

I do not actually like the label "Performance Poet" with which I am frequently pasted, but I have to admit that much of my oeuvre works better on the ear than on the page and my performances have taken me to the U.S.A. twice, including Harvard and other colleges and I currently help to run two open microphone performance venues in West Yorkshire. So as the cap fits, I wear it.

Now on to the "main course" as it were. My Editorial Policy. I do not intend to burden you with my views in every edition of "Author", but I do hope to be able to chair lively debate amongst the members about The Society and the place of our magazine in it, so please write to me and give me your views. I promise to heavily edit letters so as to deliver as succinct a version of your ideas as possible to fellow members, but nonetheless to publish as many viewpoints as possible. It is after all *your* magazine.

I am also aware, as a still-serving Officer that The Society needs to constantly recruit and retain new members, particularly (in my view) amongst serving officers. The problem being of course that the Departmental Civil Service most of us grew up with no longer exists, having been replaced in the late 1980's by Quango style "Agencies", with very American influenced ideas on matters like "House Style" and "Corporate Communications".

As a Trade Union Official I am only too aware that Agencies are very difficult to deal with and tend to employ professional journalists to run their "communications" sections and In-House magazines, and that these professionals have no time for what they see as "amateur writers".

There is however, I think, a glimmer of light at the end of the dark tunnel we have found ourselves travelling through for the last fifteen years or so. There are a lot of people out there in the U.K., fellow Civil Servant included, who have things to say that they want to share with anyone who will listen. Furthermore, they are also open to being encouraged to find better ways of saying what they have to say. I know, I've seen some of them blossom in a very short space of time from mumbling, inaudible "say-nowts" to powerful poets and mind-blowing short-story writers.

We may be tempted to think "it's literature Jim, but not as we know it!", but I venture to suggest that even literary time does not stand still and what matters is that the art of using words to captivate reading and listening audiences as literature always has done is at the heart of what we are about as writers.

Having struck the customary "note of optimism" expected of a new Editor, I shall now give the usual note of caution (or disclaimer?).

So far as the membership level of the Society goes, it is the job of all of us to preserve it and increase it, by doing two things.

First. Do you know anyone

who qualifies for membership, but is not a member? Are you sure you do not? Most of us are, I would guess, members of either a weekly, or a monthly Writers' Group. Writing would be far too lonely a pastime for most of us otherwise. Do you know what your fellow members do/did for a living? Despite living in society that classifies people by what they do, rather than who they are, I suspect that we often miss the opportunity to publicise the S.C.S.A. to others and if we are Serving Officers and let the chance go by at work, shame on us!

Second. Don't blame "The Committee" for the way the Society is run, or what it does or fails to do for you. "Voting with the feet" is fast becoming the preferred option for people who want to change things. Believe me when I tell you, it doesn't work. Of all the options available to us in the world of Writers' Organisations, going away and starting your own rival to the one you have just left "in a huff", is the *most expensive* way to achieve change, in more ways than one.

I expect I shall hear from more than one of you on the subject of my views on our Society. Good. I like having mail. ■

Letters

Dear Iain,

I am writing to comment on the article in No. 145 on “Fundamental Fact Finding” by Robert Church. I know that it is “Article Writing Year” and that facts are very important, but I think the case is a little over stated, particularly in relation to creative fiction.

I do not feel that even locations have to be portrayed with “complete accuracy” in all instances. As for characterisation and dialogue, can these be measured in terms of accuracy or is it sufficient realism to engage and convince the reader that is required? I am not convinced that the majority of readers are lying in wait to pounce on factual shortcomings in creative fiction; I certainly hope not!

I agree, of course, that obvious factual inaccuracy, particularly in the description of identifiable locations or objects, is undesirable and could be harmful. However, I find it difficult to accept the underlying assumption in the article that a work must be 100% factually accurate in order to be saleable. I am sure that there are

many successful works of fiction that are less than fully accurate in every detail. I hope that there are other factors that are equally important to saleability, most notably the ability of the work to capture the imagination or the heart of the reader.

I realise that you may think that I simply dislike the rigours of research and fact finding and that I am possibly inviting a more detailed inspection than usual of my own submissions! However, I do enjoy pursuing those little details which add realism and credibility. I have to say that I have found the internet a very powerful and convenient resource in this regard. I was surprised that there was no mention at all of this highly valuable research tool in the article. It is certainly worth a look before making time consuming trips to libraries and record offices.

Yours sincerely,

Jason J M Waterman

(Jason is in fact wrong about the exclusion of the Internet from Robert’s article. It is mentioned at the bottom of the first complete paragraph on page eleven - Ed.)

Statement of Income & Expenditure for the period
1.4.98 to 31.3.99:

	Income £	Expenditure £
Subscriptions	5,539.30	
Subscription refunds		72.00
Subscriptions paid to Poetry Workshop		249.00
“Author” printing & distribution costs		3,601.63
AGM receipts	111.00	
Readings receipts	101.00	
New Year Party receipts	108.00	
Annual Luncheon receipts	765.00	
Cost of room hire & refreshments		1,258.45
Honoraria		480.00
Committee members expenses & stationery		325.90
Bank interest & charges	40.65	0.37
Competition receipts	464.00	
Competition prizes		635.00
Competition sponsorship contributions	150.00	
Competition judges fees		25.00
Gifts, reimbursements & advertisements	289.50	
Total receipts/expenditure per above	7,568.45	6647.35

Income less expenditure	921.10	
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	Balance @ 31.3.98 £	Balance @ 31.3.99 £	Difference £
Treasurer account	852.57	1,188.84	336.27
Moneymaster account	1,301.55	1,872.47	570.92
Joyce Brennan account	507.19	521.10	13.91
Totals	2,661.31	3,582.41	921.10

Prepared by A F Danson Audited by A S Watts

Writers International Ltd.

Writers' Forum has joined forces with the short story magazine *World Wide Writers* and is to be published six times a year.

All subscribers will have the unexpired portion of their subscription honoured

All good features in the magazine will be retained

Many new features will add to your knowledge on the craft of

writing

Morgan Kenney, who has done so much to establish the standards in *Writers' Forum* has agreed to be Poetry Editor

The re-launched issue will be with you the first week in August.

We aim to make *Writers' Forum* an indispensable resource for authors. Readers' letters, queries and comments will be welcome.

Solution to 'Garden' Crossword from last issue

compiled by Karen Lowe

Across:

2 Secateurs 8 Hoe 9 Par 10 Era
11 Tea 12 End 13 Mower 14 Sap
16 Acers 20 Blooms 21 Barrow
23 Hymns 26 Set 29 Erect
30 War 31 Gap 32 Obi 33 Ski
34 Nee 35 Cold Frame

Down:

1 Wheel 2 Seeds 3 Clamp
4 Trowel 5 Ultra 6 Spade
7 Trugs 15 Acorn 17 Carve
18 Root 19 Clay 22 Die off
23 House 24 Magic 25 Sepal
26 Stoma 27 Twine 28 Green

Turn to page 36 for this issue's 'Trees' Crossword

THE SOCIETY OF CIVIL SERVICE AUTHORS ANNUAL
COMPETITIONS 1998/1999
THE PATRICIA CHOWN SONNET COMPETITION
RESULTS

ADJUDICATOR'S REPORT

By Joyce Thornton.

There were twenty three entries for this competition which I have had the privilege of judging. Selecting an outright winner was a daunting task as most of the entries were of a high standard conforming in the main to the strictness of the sonnet form and although failed to fulfil the iambic pentameter line rule this did not detract from their poetic value. After much sifting and sorting, reading (aloud) and rereading I selected '*Now and Forever*' by Mrs. C. P. O. Elvidge for first place, a Shakespearean sonnet which concludes with a strong couplet about the power of love and force of destiny.

It was interesting to find two unrhymed sonnets among the entries and of these I would like to commend '*The Quest*' by Caroline Buddery, which with effective imagery describes the search for enlightenment and demonstrates how metre plays an important part in the musicality of the sonnet form which grew out of 'sonnetto' - Italian for 'little song' - vide Stilman.

In conclusion, my thanks to all the competitors for the pleasure of being entertained by your 'little songs'.

WINNER - Prize £10:- NOW AND FOREVER

Mrs C P O Elvidge, Consett, Co. Durham. Dept. E.S.A. (D.E.) Retd.

COMMENDED:- THE QUEST

Caroline Buddery, Gt. Yarmouth, Norfolk.

NOW AND FOREVER

By Mrs C P O Elvidge

Some things, it seems, were
always meant to be
When patterned life goes suddenly
awry,
Spins on a random glance from
you to me
Stopping my heart, I did not
question why.
I knew that we belonged from that
first hour,
You came through shadow, out of
ages past,
Driven by a blind primeval power
Our bond of love already forged
and fast.
How strange, I did not even know
your name,
A good man or a rogue, I had no
fears,
You were the one who held the
vital flame
To light us down the dark
uncharted years.

But when we part in death, keep
faith, my dear
For we shall meet in some other
sphere. ■

THE GARDEN

by Iris Breese

The gates were not locked
this time and he slipped
through with the stream of

people.

Drifting along the paths, he
noted the omissions and
alterations and walked round the
lake with its newly planted banks.
On the whole he approved of the
strenuous efforts being made to
re-create the garden. They didn't
have the expertise of the Head
Gardener, old John Kent, but they
were doing their best.

He had almost given up hope
when he saw them. Just
discernible, leaning against the
shadowy wall where they used to
eat their midday bread and cheese.
A few were smoking, Jack still
had his unlit clay pipe jutting from
his mouth and Walter was
whittling a stick.

Two of them raised a hand in
greeting, but made no move
towards him. He was the outsider,
the survivor. They had died
together in the trenches and were
for ever workmates in their
beloved garden.

He left them patiently watching
the visitors and found the old side
gate. It was securely locked but
he walked through it into the
overgrown lane outside. Lifting
his face to the sun he set off on the
long walk home.

He could rest easy now, the old
garden was being cared for again. ■

Chairman: Howard Frost, Denefield, Bradford Road, Tingley, Wakefield, WF3 1QN
Treasurer: Terry Rickson, 48 Marlborough Road, Ashford, TW15 3QA
Secretary: Mike Boland, 11 Boxtree Lane, Harrow Weald, HA3 6JU

PW '99

The annual PW gathering took place at Birmingham University over the Weekend of 9-11 July. As usual, members attending sweltered through a heat-wave and in addition suffered from repeated failures of the fire alarm system on the Saturday night which involved the local fire brigade and kept everyone awake until the early hours. Apart from that excitement, the Weekend was its usual mix of hard work (in the workshop sessions), fun (the Quiz) and information (the three talks). A full report of the Weekend will appear in the Autumn Newsletter.

AGM

The 1999 AGM took place during the Weekend. Full details will be given in the Autumn Newsletter, which will also include the audited accounts for last year. The main items of news were that the current officers were re-elected unopposed, and that the subscription fee for 2000 will remain unchanged for yet another year at £3.

30th Anniversary

The year 2000 will see the 30th anniversary of the founding of the Poetry Workshop by Bill Barnes. Several events are being planned to celebrate the occasion. Again, more details will appear in future Newsletters.

PW Annual Competition

There were 30 entries for the second annual poetry competition that is open exclusively to PW members. The judge is Bill Douglas, editor of "Waves". Results and the winning poems will appear in the Winter Newsletter.

Finally, congratulations and good wishes to our chairman, Howard Frost, who is the new editor of "The Author", and also thanks to Iain for his excellent work over the past years.

POETRY PAGES (Editor John Ward)

EASY PEASEY

Ken Muncer

Beautifully dressed, her friends were amazed
Lisa sparkled with brooches and rings
How does she do It they asked almost crazed
The answer was simple
She nicked things.

She had a quite lovely home with rugs on the floor
Decorations galore and nice fittings
Folks gasped with delight as they came in the door
All acquired quite simply ...
She nicked things

A shoplifter she with great cunning and skill,
She enjoyed the great thrill that crime brings
Though short of cash her needs she'd fulfil
Easily really ...
She nicked things

They asked how she did it
She said it's real fun
I go into a store dressed as a NUN
That way it's quite easy ...
To nick things

AERIAL EXERCISE

Barbara M. Stewart

We stood at the centre
of a painted circle
exposed in the cold air,
duffle coated against the wind,

cold fingers gripping notebooks.
Theodolite sighted, the plane screamed
towards us from above,
tearing the sky apart, in hurtling flight,

towards the circle's centre.
The tension taut, the plane dived
and soared again and again.

Exercise over, it disappeared,
leaving our terror to subside.

THE ORCHARD **September 1935**

Victor D. Negus Moore

In our pearmain days
we met outside the orchard
where copper vipers zig-zagged
across yellow meadows
burnished by brazen suns.

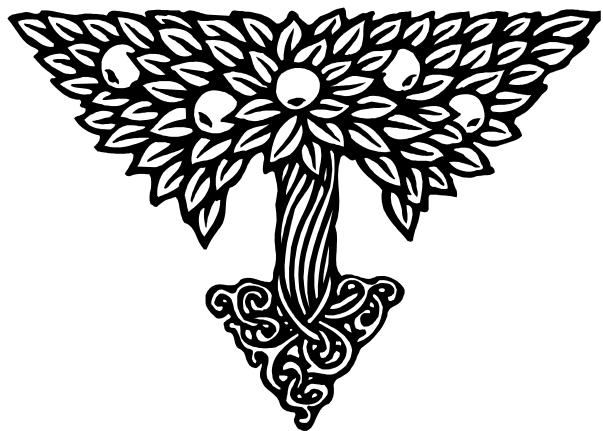
In those russet days
of crab apple love
the scent of hair and hay
and liquid amber from the press
Dunkirk was years away.

They were Pam, Stella, Susan,
long limbed lissom girls
with solid bourgeois names
escaped from convent stripes
and brown Windsor rosaries.

We were not stayed there by
flagons
or comforted with apples
nor at sea by lissom girls
who mothered our children
whom others lived to see.

We made secret wigwams
from dry grass and bracken
and sat cross legged
talking about school
and things parents did.

Inside the orchard,
Gideon, the golden goat,
nuzzled into satchels
and nearly nubile thighs
straying inside his boundary.



Bram Stoker in Scotland

by Brian Jones

At the age of fifty, Dublin born Bram Stoker, novelist and manager of London's Lyceum Theatre, following a 'too generous helping of dressed crab at supper one night', had a nightmare of a vampire rising from his tomb, and the tale of 'Dracula' was born. The novel, published in 1897, stands today as undoubtedly one of the most brooding and ghastly ever written. Here is the dark, sinister Transylvanian castle, the frightening, mist enshrouded countryside, the vampiric master of the castle and his un-dead relatives, the transformation into the form of a bat and wolf, the attacks on sleeping innocents: all the horrors of a life that reaches beyond the grave.

The story of 'Dracula' is well known. The basic idea is the removal of the vampire curse from its native Transylvania to England. The area around Castle Dracula has been drained of its blood. It is a sterile, hostile land; centuries of feasting by the count and his followers have taken their toll. Dracula seeks the greener pastures of England and seduces the young legal clerk to his castle so it may be possible for him to stay in England. Dracula arrives

in Whitby, Yorkshire, in a ship which is found with all its crew dead; the count leaves the death vessel in the form of a wolf. He settles in London where he finds new victims.

Much of the book is a masterpiece of eerie atmosphere, seldom surpassed. The first chapters devoted to the journal of the young Jonathan Harker, are as chilling as any prose in the English language. Stoker created, in Castle Dracula, perched high on a naked mountain with its bleak towers and battlements reaching upwards to a livid sky, a corner of hell on earth.

Bram Stoker never visited Transylvania in Eastern Europe. His research on this region and vampirism came from the library of the British Museum. The novel was mainly written in Cruden Bay in Grampian, Stoker's favourite seaside holiday haven. Just how much of Scotland is to be found in Stoker's 'Dracula'?

One mile north of Cruden Bay and located off the A975 is the Bullers of Buchan. Here is a great rocky cauldron, awe inspiring in rough weather. This area of cliffs has always been regarded as a natural phenomenon. It was visited by Samuel Johnson and James Boswell. The two friends

stayed at Slains Castle to the south. The castle's wild settings was said to have inspired Stoker's creation of Castle Dracula. It was built in 1597 for the 9th Earl of Erroll.

In ruins it looks far more sinister and Transylvanian than it must have done in its heyday.

Bram Stoker first encountered Cruden Bay while on a solitary walking tour in the 1890's. In *'The Mystery of the Sea'* he wrote: 'When I first saw the place I fell in love with it. Had it been possible I should have spent my summer there in a house of my own, but the want of any place to live in forbade such an opportunity. So I stayed in the little hotel, the Kilmarnock Arms. The next year I came again, and the next, and the next ...' On ensuing holidays he brought along his beautiful wife Florence.

It would be incorrect to equate Slains Castle with Dracula Castle, this is a local myth. There is no evidence that Stoker had Slains in mind when portraying the Count's fortress. The castle was not a ruin at the time of Stoker's visits and would not have been the kind of edifice to strike terror in anyone's heart, even when viewed in moonlight. The Dracula Society in England have shown little

interest in Slains Castle and Cruden Bay, though they have organised trips to Whitby, and there seems very little chance of a 'Dracula Trail' in Grampian or a local industry in Dracula souvenirs.

It is possible that something of Cruden, on a wild and stormy night when the surf was lashing the rocky shores and a strong south east wind was shrieking about the village, seeped into the horror scenes in 'Dracula' and added to the Gothic gloom.

Stoker became very interested in the local people of Cruden Bay, especially the fishermen and their families and they feature in several of his stories. Stoker noted that the herring fishermen had not only much hard work, but many dangers to contend with. While far out to sea tending their nets during the night-time, storms of wind suddenly come upon them. Anxious to save their tackle and unwilling to lose any chance, the men in some boats would frantically be hauling up nets; other boats would be driving past them with everything in confusion and their sails flapping in the wind. Others were scudding for Cruden Bay and other harbours with everything snug and lucky were these boats to reach port without loss of tackle or life.

Frequently by waiting too long, while trying to save their nets, the fishermen were driven helplessly to sea, where they were either tossed about at the mercy of winds and waves until the storm abated, or they were swamped and lost.

At other times an onshore wind dashed the herring boats against the iron-bound cliffs and the crews would perish before the anguished eyes of wives and families.

The results of Stoker's conversations with local people, in and about Cruden Bay, were several works of fiction of varying merit.

In 1798 the Water of Cruden, which before flowed into the sea through an inlet to the north, was diverted into a seaside hamlet known as the Ward of Cruden. This work was financed by the Earl of Erroll. In 1870 a new harbour, known as Port Erroll, was constructed, which attracted fishing boats and an expansion of the village. In 1899, the Great North of Scotland Railway Company built the opulent Cruden Bay Hotel. This hotel brought a steady stream of middle-class tourists from the regions of the dark satanic mills of the north of England and further afield. These visitors included a number of

painters and writers coming to Scotland with visions of quaint whisky drinking locals, and a longing to hear the skirl of the pipes across misty lochs.

In the later years of the 19th century the Scottish crofter and fisherman became a sentimental figure in art, appropriated by English salon painters as a symbol of an untouched and simple past, living a rugged, wholesome existence, against a background of rugged mountains, misty glens and remote lochs. This highly coloured view of Scotland refused to acknowledge the terrible deprivations and sufferings of Scotland's rural poor.

Bram Stoker, who like most British novelists of his background, could be highly sentimental and patronising when describing uneducated people does recognise the stark poverty of fishermen in such tales as *The Watter's Mou*: 'Our coo died, and the shed was blawn doon, and then the blight touched the potatoes in our field. Father could dae naething, and had to borrow money on the boat to go on with his wark; and the debt grew ...'

The Cruden Bay Hotel became so important for attracting visitors that, in 1924, the name of the village was changed again, to

Cruden Bay. After the Second World War the hotel was demolished, but the first class golf course continued to be a popular amenity.

Bram Stoker's last visit to Cruden Bay was a sad one. In his sixties he was broken in mind and body, suffering dreadfully.

He was short of funds and no longer able to afford a stay at the Kilmarnock Arms. Instead he rented a fisherman's cottage, known as 'Isie-leay's', with a view of the sea. He was now very much alone. His world famous associate in the theatre, Sir Henry Irving was dead, and most of his friends from the world of stage and literature had passed away or were abroad. He knew that he was dying and that his reason was fading – sometimes he would lose his temper over trifles and then forget everything he had said. His marriage had failed and that was another source of great pain.

After spending a month of physical and mental anguish in Cruden he returned to London to die. He was sixty-four years old and the date of his death was 20 April 1912. The funeral was a very quiet one and his demise created little stir in the literary world. He himself had

always believed that posterity would remember him for '*Personal Reminiscents of Henry Irving*' and not for his Gothic horror novels, which had never sold that well.

Interestingly, in one of his last published short stories '*In the Valley of the Shadow*' there is a vision of Scotland from the air.

'Suddenly I am borne in a winged machine up, up into the cool air. Far below and infinitesimally small lies the 'New Town', half-hid beneath the fluffy smoke; yonder, clear and blue and glittering, is the Firth of Forth; and beyond the sunlit hills of Fife are the advance-guards of the Grampians. A moment only of sheer palpitating ecstasy, then a soul-shattering fall into the black abyss of oblivion.'

Cruden Bay has changed little since the last century. The green swards of the golf course, the picturesque white-washed fishermen's cottages, the harbour busy with its summer yachts, the superb sands, the distant views of Slains Castle, rising like a pink finger above the cliffs, still continue to delight the eye. Telegraph poles and an oil pipeline are the only disfigurements, but these are minor features of the resort.

Could Bram Stoker return here, he would still be in love with Cruden Bay.

THE SALESMAN

by Elvira Bridges

It all started because he wanted chips. Thelma Brooks held her breath, a habit she'd got into when Roy irritated her. She said, "You said you wanted to lose weight."

"Once in a while wouldn't hurt would it?"

"Look, if you intend to do something about that paunch, then you are going to have to eat sensibly." She saw him pull in his stomach. "There you are. Look!"

"What?"

"You pulled it in. I saw you."

"I did not."

"You did."

Roy sighed and shut his eyes, a habit he'd got into when his wife irritated him. "Not another argument, please."

"You started it."

"I did not." Roy looked at his wife, "Not another row, please."

"Here you go again. I said you are always arguing."

"Oh no. I'm not. It's you. Always making out I'm wrong." Roy glared.

Thelma didn't reply but cleared away the dishes with a clatter.

"Oh, to hell with it. I'm going out."

"Where to?"

"Just out."

"Got a woman somewhere I bet." Thelma's voice indicated she wanted an argument.

"Let's drop it, shall we?"

"No, let's not drop it. Who is she?"

"For God's sake, woman. There isn't anyone ..." His voice dropped and he muttered, "But I'm sure no one would blame me if there was."

"What was that? What did you say? Roy Brooks, tell me what you said."

"Nothing."

"It's someone at school, isn't it? I heard there was a new school secretary. You weren't going to tell me, were you?"

Roy lifted his hand to his head in exasperation.

"Don't hit me." Thelma took a step back.

"Don't be ridiculous, woman, of course I wasn't going to hit you. He sighed, "Have I ever hit you?"

"You did then."

“Here we go again.” Roy gritted his teeth, “I merely lifted my ... Oh God. What’s the use. You won’t believe me whatever I say ... I’m going out.”

“Go on then, see if I care. You go, and you needn’t be in any hurry to come back.” She picked up the tray and clumped out of the room, calling over her shoulder, “Just like your old man. And HE had a paunch too.” She smiled, “Good he is going out.”

Roy opened the front door and left.

In the High Street he fantasised and grinned at his thoughts. As he walked past The Crown his image reflected in the window and he automatically pulled in his stomach. Suppose the old waistline is spreading a bit. He pulled back his shoulders and admired his reflection. Must remember to do that. Good posture, that’s the thing.

The pub door opened and he was almost felled as a youngish, attractive woman came down the steps. This woman was seriously beautiful, the sort men drooled over, the answer to any fantasy, and he was no exception.

Roy laughed, “Whoa, you nearly had me over. Do you always run out of public houses like that?” He tightened his

stomach muscles.

“Sorry, wasn’t looking where I was going. Had to get away from that creep of a husband of mine.” She dashed off.

Oh well, a bit young for me. Roy grinned. I should be so lucky. He looked at the Church clock and quickened his pace.

Back in the kitchen Thelma washed up with more force than was needed. A plate broke. “Blast! Second one this week.” She picked up another, raised it above her head, changed her mind and put it in the cupboard. The doorbell rang. “Go away, I’m not in.” There followed an insistent knocking.

Thelma grabbed a cloth, wiped her hands and opened the door.

“Yes?”

“Good afternoon, madam. My company are in this area and we’re looking for houses. How would you like a porch built here? Absolutely free.”

“What?”

“Wouldn’t you like a smart porch, completely free? Or perhaps a conservatory at the back of the property.”

“What’s the catch?” Thelma stared unblinking at the salesman.

He stared back. "My dear young lady. There is no catch. I can see you're a discerning person. Your house ... the care and attention that's been lavished on it. Beautifully kept, if I may say so." He gave a dazzling smile.

"No, I don't think so, thank you." She started to close the door.

The man leaned towards her, "There's no catch. My firm will build a front porch, completely free of charge. Honest."

Thelma hesitated a fraction too long, looked into the pleasant face and said, "No one does anything for nothing these days. Why would you do that for me? I don't believe you."

"You are a cynical lady. The idea is that we put a notice outside advertising our firm. Then if anyone is interested they simply ring us. No one would come to your home. And the property will increase in value. You look as if you'd appreciate a bargain." The man pulled papers from his briefcase, "I can show you, look."

Thelma stepped back, "I don't know. Sounds too good to be true."

"Perhaps if I could come in?" He gave her one of his dazzling smiles again. "It would be so

much easier to show you what's on offer."

"Oh, I don't know. My husband told me to be careful of callers. How do I know you're genuine, that this is a bona fide firm?"

"You'll just have to use your judgement I'm afraid. Don't I look honest?"

"We-ell, yes ... I suppose so. You are a bit like my son. Similar eyes, he's big too. And yes, he is honest." She looked at his eyes, lovely colour, an unusual greeny blue.

"There you are then. You can trust me."

"OK, come in." Thelma opened the door and showed him to the sitting room.

"What a lovely home you have. This is a beautiful room. Professionally done?"

"No, my husband did it all." She smiled, and indicated a seat.

"A talented man, I can see."

"We-ell, yes I suppose so."

"You said you have a son? Any more children?" The man sat back on the settee and made himself comfortable.

"Mmm, a girl, Wendy, she's in the fifth form." Thelma sat opposite him. "And you, are you

married?”

“Yes, and a couple of kids ...” He shifted his position, “Right, I’d better show you these brochures. Why don’t you sit here, next to me, they’d be easier to see.”

“Mmm, suppose it would.” She sat on the sofa and crossed her legs.

The salesman gave them an appreciative glance. She appeared not to notice, engrossed in the pamphlets. “I like this one, this porch, could I have it in dark wood?”

He took the brochure from her, his hand lingering on her fingers. She didn’t take them away. Lowering her eyes she felt him watching her. She flushed and shivered. It was a delightful feeling.

The man asked, “Are you all right?”

She didn’t trust herself to answer.

He smoothed the skin on her other hand. She started to withdraw it but he squeezed her fingers, leaned towards her and brushed her cheek, “You are very attractive, you know?”

“Don’t be silly.” But she was pleased and shuddered with excitement. She smiled, coughed, and said, “Erm, don’t you think

we should get down to it?” Immediately she realised the implication of her remark. She blushed.

He laughed, “That’s what I thought.” He put his lips to her ear, whispered and nibbled her lobe.

“That was rather naughty.” She sounded disapproving, but she giggled.

The man said quietly, “I do find you attractive ... I think ...”

Thelma interrupted him, “I thought we were talking about porches. Do you behave like this with other women you meet?”

He grinned, “Only the good looking ones.” He moved closer. “Would you let me kiss you?”

She started to speak, “I ...”

Later, in bed, as she lay beside him, she whispered, “Love me?” Before he could reply the phone rang. Thelma stretched out her hand to answer it, “Yes, this is Mrs Brooks. What?” She stifled a chuckle, “No thank you.”

“What’s so funny?” Roy Brooks raised himself on one elbow and looked down at her, “Who was it?”

“Would you believe he’s selling conservatories and front

porches?” She sat up, “You’ll have to think of a different fantasy next time.”

➔ **The Salesman**

Continued on page 28

LYKE WAKE COUNTRY

by Steve Raymond

Of all the long distance routes in Britain, few are as beautiful or remote as the Lyke Wake Walk. Its 40 miles of bog and heather have been eulogised in song and verse, and the Lyke Wake dirge is at least medieval.

The walk began on October 1 1955, when author Bill Cowley and friends completed the initial crossing ... at night. Since then the interest generated by this tough walk has resulted in the Lyke Wake Club being formed, and members some of whom are in their 60's are proud to wear the club badge which features a coffin and candle.

When I first became involved in walking, I was told that coffins had been carried across these moors in bygone days. This apparently is incorrect, although many walkers probably felt like corpses at the end.

Starting at Osmotherly, 4 miles east of Northallerton, the route also referred to on the map as the Cleveland Way, snakes past Cod Beck reservoir along the road to Scarth Nick and finally up into the woodland area of Limekiln Bank. Now the path descends to the ford below Hollin Hill and joins a

metalled road to Huthwaite Green. The track continues on over Live Moor, giving superb views (weather permitting) across the Cleveland Plain. This pasture land is flanked in the east by Roseberry Topping (1,052 ft), and was known as Odinsberg by the Vikings.

Immediately to the left of Live Moor is Whorl Hill and the hamlet of Faceby. This Scandinavian nick-name means Fatty's farm, and has endured centuries in its original form. The path climbs past Carlton Bank with the glider station on the right, then on to Cringle Moor. In the distance one can gaze towards the smoky blur of Middlesborough before dropping down to Hasty Bank and a well earned rest.

The following section over Urra Moor (possibly named after Ura, the Celtic heather goddess) is steep. This old smuggler's path carries on up to Botton Head, and at 1,489 ft is the highest point on the North Yorks Moors.

Presently the Cleveland Way splits from our route and meanders north. The Lyke Wake continues east and along the length of the Bloworth Crossing, a railway disused since the 1950's, until it reaches a minor road at Rosedale Head some six miles further on

and halfway through the walk. Because this vast moorland is so remote, the use of map and compass is essential. It is possible for the lone hiker to walk all day and meet no-one else, particularly so here.

From Rosedale the broken track veers past Loose Howe (1,419 ft), cutting through another three miles of bog to Shunner Howe. Ahead lies Wheeldale Moor with views across to the MOD station on Fylingdales. Of all the places on the Lyke Wake, it is here you may feel like giving up. With a large party there is no problem, because the moor is bisected by minor roads where support groups can render assistance. For the lone walker however, this is not an option. From here the track wends past the ancient standing stone marker known as Blue Man i' t' Moss. Taking care not to wander off into the Wheeldale plantation, carry on towards the Roman road, a first century link between the practice camps of Cawthorne and the signal stations near Whitby and Goldsborough. Dropping down the steep slope to Wheeldale Beck with its handy stepping stones, the footsore and weary can bathe their blisters while gazing at the delightful Wheeldale Lodge youth hostel set back a little on the left.

Although some climbing is done at the beginning of this walk, it is now that any ascent really starts to bite. The struggle to the top of Howl Moor is something one can do without, but once there the path levels off, slanting past Simon Howe and continuing towards the Newtondale railway and nature reserve of Fen bog. This fairly easy stretch leads to Ellerbeck. Immediately over the road lies a stile and an old salt track pointing the way to Cross on Lilla Howe, reputed to be the grave of Lilla, an officer who died saving the life of Bowin, King of Northumbria in the seventh century. It is supposedly the oldest Christian monument in the north of England.

By now the end of the route is almost in sight. Two miles on past Burn Howe the track drops into the gorge of Jugger Howe Beck, then up the far bank and onto an army road which leads to the main Scarborough Whitby highway, one mile south of the Flask inn.

Over this road the path strikes east across Stony Marl Moor for the last two miles until the beacon is reached. There is a minor road here which support groups can use and this also leads back to the A171 towards Whitby.

→Lyke Wake Country
Continued on page 28

The Essential Ingredient
by Derek Taylor

One of the first absolute necessities for a good short story is CONFLICT. Yes, in big capital letters just like that. No conflict, no story, is one certain “rule” you can rely on.

Conflict breaks down into three types. Conflict with the elements; conflict with another person; conflict within your leading protagonist.

As an example of the first I recall reading a story many years ago by Winston Churchill, no less, entitled, I think, “Man Overboard!” A man falls from an ocean liner, watches it sail away from him, struggles in the sea and eventually drowns. It is not my favourite story and I did think Winston might have done better. (I wondered, too, if it would have been published had I submitted it!) Stories of this type are usually straightforward adventure stories and often for children.

A stronger story results if the second type of conflict is employed – conflict with another person. This most common of

conflicts is used again and again in every type of story. And providing there is a genuine clash it rarely fails. If used with the first type of conflict see how the story is strengthened. Imagine that instead of one man falling overboard there were two – and only one lifebelt!

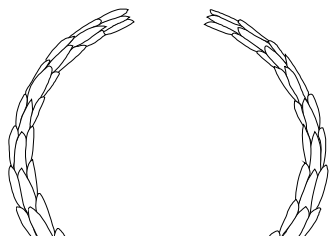
Possibly the most fascinating of the three types of conflict is the third – conflict within the hero/heroine. If you want to get to your reader this is the one. I have recently had success with this very type. A daughter, who loves her father dearly is left with the problem of telling him of the family decision that he should go into an old people’s home. She drives him to his favourite beauty spot to tell him, inwardly dreading the moment. The story consists entirely of the car journey and the tumult raging within her knowing that when they stop she can put it off no longer.

You do not *have* to use all three types of conflict. Many good stories are written employing only two or even just one of them. But generally speaking if all three types are used a very strong story can emerge. Imagine our man overboard (conflict with the elements); then we added another man and only one lifebelt (conflict between persons); now add that

the second man is the young father of a family who befriended the first man on the boat when he was ill and lonely. The first man is older and perhaps dying. Imagine the turmoil within him. Should he let go of the lifebelt and leave it for the younger man who might then get rescued – or should he fight for his life?

An often used plot with all three types of conflict is the hero chasing a murderer who turns out to be someone to whom he owes his life, i.e. a doctor, a wartime buddy or some such. Another version of this is the detective who falls in love with a suspected woman murderer. I recall this happening even to Inspector Morse!

There are a million ways you can introduce these conflicts. The main thing is that you are aware of them. Read published stories, watch films, plays and take note. Has the author used one, two or three of these conflicts, and how? Re-read your own rejected stories to see if they can be strengthened in this way not only by introducing a further conflict, which is often quite easy, but also by intensifying the existing conflicts. And don't be surprised if you turn a reject into a winner!



VINCENT BRENNAN TRAVEL ARTICLE COMPETITION

Judge's Report by John Bird

In this, the Society's article writing year, it is pleasing to report that there were some admirable examples of the craft among the 21 entries for the Vincent Brennan travel writing competition.

Once again there was a rich variety of destinations and activities to whet the judge's appetite and stimulate the recurring itch in his feet. Entrants took their notebooks and their imaginations to a dozen countries from Austria to the Yemen, and also managed to find plenty of fresh and interesting material closer to home.

One entrant mused that 'the trouble nowadays is that everyone has been everywhere'. A slight exaggeration perhaps, but it served to highlight the need for travel articles, especially those covering the more familiar destinations, to have an original slant and a well focussed theme if

they are to grab readers' attention.

While the content and presentation of many of the articles was of a high standard, some would have benefited from a little more careful editing to correct punctuation (especially the use of commas), tidy up layout and eliminate typing errors. Other minor quibbles concern instances of indiscriminate switching between past and present tense, leaving of additional spacing between paragraphs, and use of different, larger, fonts for headings and sub-heading. Such practices are best avoided in work submitted for publication.

In choosing the prize winners, my prime consideration was the overall quality of the writing, taking particular account of the usefulness of the articles as a guide to other potential visitors and what might be termed the 'good read' factor. My selections are:

1st. Sheffield: Steel City Forging A New Bright Future by Michael Webster. This is a fine example of the kind of travel writing in which a familiar location is presented in a fresh and exciting way. The writer skilfully weaves into his narrative a battery of striking facts and figures to produce a picture of 'the world's cleanest industrial city' which left me wanting to go and see for myself. If I have a criticism of this polished piece of writing, it is that it's a little

too relentlessly upbeat.

2nd. Game For Game by Stephen Bibby. A tightly written account of a safari in Kenya, which graphically evokes the sights and sounds of the animals and their habitats. The writer brings an eye for the telling detail to such experiences as 'hearing the crocodile's crunch, feeling an elephant's breath, watching a pride of lions flex their waking muscles.' Stephen Bibby effectively conveys the excitement he felt during the safari, though he was aware of an element of showmanship and stage management.

3rd. In Flanders Field by Margaret Pelling. In this well researched and sensitively written piece, Margaret Pelling explores the Belgian town of Ypres and uncovers some fascinating facts about the rebuilding and restoration work that followed the town's devastation in the First World War. He concludes that 'Ypres had never died. The builders had merely re clothed its spirit ...'

Highly commended:

Journey Into Cyprus by Dr Vivian Edwards. A long delayed return visit to the divided Mediterranean island.

High Wall by Philip Cook. Enjoying village hospitality in Lower Austria.

An Enduring, Endearing Landscape by James Lancaster.

Exploring the Ardennes.

**Bakewell: The Peak Park's
Rambling Rose by M J Webster.**

Sampling the pleasures of the
Derbyshire market town.

Going with the Force

by Derek Rhodes

A frequently presented picture of the creative artist is of someone driven to produce a piece of work, by a force over which he or she, has no control – a force that will give them no rest until they have got down the paint, or the words, or the notes. This had always struck me as a highly romanticised view; that is until I experienced the force, myself.

It started on a Friday evening in March, 1988. As I left the office, I stuffed the latest edition of 'The Economist', into my briefcase, for reading over the weekend. On the train I started to flick through it and stopped at the 'Science and Technology' section. The article was entitled, 'A Year in the Death of a Star'.

The star in question was called Sanduleak, in the galaxy, Large Magellanic Cloud, and it actually passed away 170,000 years ago. But because of the distances involved, the news only reached earth in 1987. What was special

about Sanduleak, was that it gave scientists on earth the first ever opportunity to study the process of the death of a star, virtually from beginning to end. They knew all about the final stages of the process, the so called supernova stage, which occurs several weeks after the catastrophic collapse of the star, under its own gravity. They knew about that, because they could hardly miss it; a supernova at its peak, is 250 times brighter than our own star, the Sun.

Of course, scientists had a theory about what happened. A star is a fine balancing act between its tendency to collapse under its own weight and forces of the nuclear fusion acting within it, which would rip it apart. But the thing about fusion is that it is a process that turns light element atoms (hydrogen) into heavier ones (cobalt, nickel, and ultimately, iron). Slowly, the balance shifts in favour of gravity and the star begins to collapse, until its iron core implodes to form a neutron star, sending out a wave of neutrinos. As the shock wave from the imploding core moves up through the body of the star, it causes further fusion and a huge discharge of the star's material into space. For some time after this the star grows

brighter, reaching its peak of brightness about three months later.

On 23 February 1987, around 100 billion of the neutrinos that had started out 170,000 years ago from the core of Sanduleak, passed through each of our bodies. We didn't notice it, but some specialist instruments set up especially for the purpose, collected some of these particles (19 to be precise) and alerted the scientific community that something was happening out there. On 24 February an astronomical satellite picked up evidence of the burst in the ultra violet region of the spectrum.

From that point on, scientists were able to observe what happened and compare it to theory. Sanduleak became known simply as SN 1987A, and with some minor divergences, followed the predictions of theory. The supernova peaked in its brightness in late May 1987.

Until reading this article, I knew nothing of these things, and what I have set out above is, I am sure, a very crude account (the article itself was longer and much more detailed). But I became deeply engrossed with the idea of this star that died 170,000 years ago. It set in train other thoughts.

Did Sanduleak have its own planetary system? If so, might one or more of them have supported life? And what would have been the effect of Sanduleak's decline and eventual violent death upon that life? Will our own star perish in the same way?

As I went through the normal Saturday routine, these thoughts wouldn't leave me. They nagged away, until when I got into bed, I knew they wouldn't let me sleep. So, I tossed and turned, annoying my wife, because my restlessness disturbed her. Finally, at two o'clock in the morning, I had to get up.

I am not a poetry person; I rarely read it, and have never felt any inclination to write it. That, I am well aware, is my loss. Yet at two o'clock on a Sunday morning, in March 1988, writing a poem was the only way I was going to get any sleep. Here it is.

Epitaph

You didn't hurry, Sanduleak,
To let us know.
Perhaps you thought we wouldn't
care;
Not family – at least, not close.
But it's difficult to grieve across
170,000 years.

The coroner's report is labelled
SN1987A.
You died from undersize and
overweight.
Explosion; 250 times the
brightness of our star.
Classic termination – Supernova,
Blazing across 170,000 years.
Energy of vibrant life, now
energy of decay.
We watch your death in infrared,
Check frequencies pulsing from
your corpse.
Cobalt, nickel, iron – signals
race.
Speed of light across 170,000
years.

Will it be the same for us?
Our bright star collapse, explode,
engulf.
Will scientific nostrils twitch in
Magellanic Cloud?
Scent of death,
Wafting across 170,000 years.

Will instruments detect trace
elements of humankind?
The likes of Einstein,
Shakespeare, Mozart?
Or will it be bestriding leaders?
'Isms' for a perfect world,
Unheeding, across 17 0,000
years.

Will sensors glorify the gods,

Proclaimed by Ayatollah, Rabbi,
Priest, Evangelist born again?
Gods in whose names men have
plundered, tortured, killed.
No! Faint trace of cobalt, nickel,
iron, seen from Magellanic
Cloud.
Epitaph across 170,000 years. ■

→ The Salesman Continued from page 20

“OK. What do you think of
this? After the row you walk out
on me then come to the door
dressed as a French maid who's
looking for a position ...”

“Which position would that
be then ...?” They fell back on
the bed and collapsed with
laughter. ■



→ Lyke Wake Country Continued from page 22

At one time the Lyke Wake
Walk finished in Ravenscar
itself, but because large numbers
of people were entering the

village simultaneously this caused a few problems. To offset any disruption the beacon is now accepted as the official termination. However, the traditional end of this walk is the bar of the Raven Hall Hotel and for the lone hiker there could be no better destination.

THE SEA WOLVES

by Steve Raymond

Mist billowed in from the icy reaches of the Mare Germanicum. Upon the hill overlooking the narrow strip of sand, stood a small fortress, built to repel the invaders from Germania Inferior, the Saxons and their confederates. Allies in arms, rapine and plunder.

“Gallows bait,” stormed the heavily muscled man as he glared through the arrow slot in the artillery tower. “I will hang any of that band of thieves who survive a landing.” The speaker was Fullofaudes, and his title was that of Dux Britanniarum, (Duke of Britain) as his name implied he was not Roman but of barbarian descent and he stared in anger at the ships sailing past his position.

“Lucius.” He called over to the man standing nearby. “Take the duty detachment of cavalry and bring them close to the beach, but don’t allow them to be seen. I want those bastards to think they can land unopposed.”

Lucius grinned savagely, when the Dux issued an order like that it was executed immediately. He grabbed his cloak and left.

The year was AD 367 and Roman fortunes were wavering.

On every border here in Britannia and on the continent, the floodgates had opened and hordes of barbarians were plundering and destroying. The heart of the empire was being torn out.

Fullofaudes listened to the marshalling of his cavalry. The infamous *clibanarii* armoured from head to foot and irresistible, solid units of men and horse were now cantering out from the main sally gate. Three hundred of them sending up clods of earth and stone as they rode into the thinning mist.

The Saxons were in the act of landing some two miles down the coast and out of sight of the fort. There would be rich pickings of gold from the Roman villas inland if they could outwit the garrisons defending them. If not they were ready to fight. The warriors had never bothered themselves about the possibility of combat, it was after all their *raison d’être*.

The invaders came in five longships each containing forty men. There were no horses however, these men were essentially infantry and the tactics hit and run.

Cerdic led them, he was a man of vast girth and through the unkempt grey hair his blue eyes stared fiercely. No one knew his

age, but what counted was valour and that had never been in doubt.

His nickname was 'the devourer' an allusion to bravery as well as his eating habits.

"Pull the bloody ships right up on the sand, we'll need them quickly if those damned horsemen get our scent," he thundered. The men leapt out and dragged the vessels from the water. They were well versed. Already scouts had moved swiftly onto the high ground to watch for enemies.

"We're finished with the ships Cerdic," shouted a swarthy man who was covered in tattoos. The leader wasted no further time. Ordering his men into line they settled down to a run and disappeared over the hills.

The horsemen were in no hurry and rode their mounts at a canter. Earlier they had sent out a scouting party of their own and even now they awaited the return of these men. In the strengthening light they looked like wraiths surging through the thin mist. The heavy armour and weapons chinked and rattled as the great horses strove to run faster. Commius the troop commander was an old veteran of sixty, his tanned features were impassive as he rode on. The soldiers many of them German auxiliaries joked

and laughed. They were no strangers to this kind of work, but their constant talk irritated Commius.

"In Jupiter's name shut up," he demanded. "I want your eyes and ears ready to intercept the Saxons." Commius called the halt. "Form up in battle line, I don't think the enemy will try anything but we'll take no chances." The troopers obeyed in silence. Behind and deep within the ranks, someone's voice carried unwittingly to the van of the riding men. Commius grinned as he heard himself referred to as that old bastard. He thought that he knew from whom it came. Later on he would have a word with the offender.

Suddenly riders appeared in the distance. Pulling rein they gave Commius the information he had sent them out to gather. The spokesman said simply, "The barbarians are heading for the villa of Ambrosius, by the time we get there, they'll be engaged in plundering the place."

It was four miles to the villa and Commius urged his men on at a fast trot. Fifteen minutes later the besieged farmstead came into sight. Flames rose from one of its outbuildings and men swarmed like ants everywhere.

Commius raised his lance, turned to the expectant men and ordered the charge.

The *clibanarii* lumbered into position, riding slowly over the five-hundred or so yards separating them from the Saxon force. As they did so, their momentum gained pace. The unstoppable power generated would smash any opponent and the enemy hadn't even seen them yet.

Although Cerdic's greed for loot violated good military practice, he swiftly corrected it. Bawling to his immediate followers he formed a group of around ninety men to which others quickly added their numbers. But it was not enough. Caught in the open on flat ground the Saxons turned at bay. Under the terse commands of Cerdic, the front rank knelt holding their spears against the oncoming whirlwind. Behind these the remainder wielded swords and the fearsome 'francisca' the throwing axe of the Frankish tribes.

Now the *clibanarii* came in like an avenging thunderbolt. Lances at the level, the first wave smashed the Saxon shield wall flat and rode them into the dirt. Their mail armour more than a match for the cumbersome weaponry of the barbarians. Close on their heels swept in the second line, destroying any cohesion the warriors may have mounted. The long *spathas* of the

clibanarii rose and fell in glittering arcs of steel. Cerdic himself was split from head to chest by a flashing swordstroke.

Suddenly those few men remaining fled. Their code of honour binding them to the dead chieftain was forgotten. Commius gave the order to run them down. "No prisoners, no prisoners," he repeated. "I will flay anyone who takes captives." The horsemen tore after the fleeing group before they could reach the trees, surrounding them in a loop of steel.

Slowly the ring tightened, the Saxons for the most part had thrown away their weapons. Some still held axes and these were slung overarm at the riders several of which were struck. It mattered little, with savage oaths the Roman cavalry stormed into the mass cutting at the doomed men. The stench of blood rose high on the air and the cries of the vanquished received no mercy.

After the action was over, only then did Ambrosius venture forth. "I thought you would be too late," he gasped. "Thank the Gods only two of my retainers were killed, those scum are getting braver by the week."

→ The Sea Wolves
Continued on page 35

“The Vincent Brennan Travel
Article” January 1999
The Society of Civil Service
Authors

BAKEWELL: THE PEAK PARK’S RAMBLING ROSE

By M J Webster

Nestling in a bowl-shaped depression beside the A6 between Buxton and Matlock in Derbyshire lies the world famous market town of Bakewell. It is a diminutive route centre which, assisted by a false complacency, basks in a heady blend of tongue in cheek modesty and that certain brand of impressionable elegance so difficult to ignore. It is compact to say the least, but this practical attribute could never detract from its significance in being the only town in the Peak District National Park. Everyone has heard of it, and those who have seen it, particularly on a Monday, will never forget it for it disports itself in a level of bustling exuberance seldom experienced in other places of this size. It is always busy here throughout the whole year, and this makes for an easily understood message which seems to be apparent in every quarter – namely that of a healthy *joie de vivre*. Quite clearly, this location provides a tonic for everyone, residents and visitors alike.

If England be ‘that jewel set in a silver sea’, then Bakewell, in its superb setting in the country’s oldest national park is at its heartland. Surrounded as it is by some of the most splendid, even if windswept, hills in England, the most sceptical of visitors will rapidly accept the fact that this area of truly outstanding natural beauty is one which, like a fine old vintage port, should be savoured slowly. Resplendent as it is beside the glass clear magnificence of the River Wye, upon which, with the advent of spring, wild flowers grow upon rafts of weed, Bakewell exudes that timeless grace which is so difficult to equal.

It is an area with an unashamed, yet remarkably unassuming exclusivity. An aspect reinforced on literally every day of the year come rain or shine by way of the ceaseless battalions sporting traction treads, woollen interlocks and wisely chosen outdoor clothing who have found themselves captivated by all that this part of the Derbyshire Pennines has to offer. They are of course the walkers and rock climbers, a most discerning bunch in the extreme, but who know first hand how to experience that uncompromisingly solid ideology in support of England’s green and pleasant land.

Several generations ago, Bakewell’s prosperity was founded mainly on farming and quarrying but

latterly of course, tourism has established itself as a natural money spinner. The town's inherent magnetism as a route centre has effectively ensured that many countryside pursuits continue to be exploited around here. By far the most popular are rambling and rock climbing with this exquisite locale holding a selection of truly spectacular walks to suit every walker's ability and rock outcrops and edges to suit everyone from beginner to the most hardened enthusiast.

The buildings here, of a creamy brown stone, offer up a rich mellow glow when caught in the afternoon sunlight, none better than the striking 14th century five arched bridge spanning the Wye. This happens to be one of the nation's only two surviving examples of such a structure. Another, 17th century packhorse bridge can be found a little farther upstream, near a very picturesque area of water meadow. Derbyshire stone is the uniform building material here and it tirelessly demonstrates a rugged appearance in tandem with the unquestionable promise that it will last forever. Many of Bakewell's edifices are already well on their way to eternity yet they still show no appreciable signs of wear. Bridge Street has an early 16th century structure with attractive glazed-in arches. Once the 'Old Market Hall', this is now used as a

Peak District National Park Information Centre, where the most patient staff in the business expertly dispense answers to the multitude of questions which arise from world wide visitors every day.

Interest seems to ooze from every corner of this fascinating old town, with the handsome and imposing Rutland Arms Hotel, a Georgian coaching inn facing Rutland Square, laying a dual claim to world fame. It was here in 1859 that the harassed cook made the most celebrated *faux pas* in culinary history when she poured an eggy mixture on top of the jam in a pudding. Her mistake, if ever it could have been misconstrued as one, resulted in her being instructed to carry on making the new concoction, whereupon the famous Bakewell pudding began its meteoric rise to the confectionery big-time all around the globe. (The dish is definitely a pudding and not a tart, those made in Bakewell being deliciously different and always eaten warm!) There are two establishments here which purport to be the 'original' Bakewell pudding shop, and both of them jealously guard their recipes under lock and key. Adherents of Jane Austen may or may not know that part of her novel 'Pride and Prejudice' was written in the Rutland Arms Hotel where she once stayed. The 'Lambton' she refers to in the book is in fact an

allegory of Bakewell.

Of all the parish churches in this country, precious few could occupy a more grandiose situation than Bakewell's All Saint's Church. The 13th century building dominates the whole town from its guardian position high on a nearby hill. Constant sources of interest here include the 1,200 years old Celtic cross near the porch, reckoned by some to be even older than the town, along with a collection of Anglo-Saxon and Norman carved stone coffin lids and monuments in the south porch and inside the church. They are reckoned by some to be the most important of their type in England. The 14th century wooden carvings in the choir stalls are nothing short of fabulous.

Situated very close to the town are Haddon and Chatsworth, two of the most famous houses in the world. There are monuments in the church to the famous Vernon family of Haddon Hall, which is situated just a mile down the road towards Matlock. Haddon, generally considered to be one of the best preserved Jacobean houses in the country, was, so we're led to believe, the scene of the romantic elopement of Dorothy Vernon with Sir John Manners in the 16th century. Some doubt has been cast upon

the authenticity of this liaison of late, but for most, it is a story which can only complement the intense fascination within these elysian fields. Even the most cursory glance around the house and immediate precincts seems to invoke the power to make almost any fairytale come true. It is open to the public, as is the incomparable Chatsworth House – 'The Palace of the Peak', which also borders onto the Bakewell area. The first sight of Chatsworth House in its majestic setting in this fabulous parkland is absolutely stunning – ask anyone who has seen it. If this were not all, the addition of Britain's highest fountain must add the perfect foil for the number one des-res in the country. The sheer enormity of the Duke of Devonshire's Chatsworth Park estate is open all year round to walkers and traffic.

The Rutlands have enjoyed much prominence in Bakewell's rich history. Early in the last century, an ancestor of the present Duke of Rutland formulated a business plan consistent with transferring the town into a spa to rival that of the Duke of Devonshire at Buxton. Botanical gardens were laid out and a bath house developed, but the venture was doomed to failure from its

inception. Fortunately, the very attractive Bath Gardens have been preserved.

Perhaps the 'Old Town Hall', off King Street has had the most chequered history of all Bakewell's buildings. It has in turn been the courthouse, Lady Manners School, fire station and chip-shop prior to its present use as an antiques emporium. The oldest house here, built around 1534, is now the 'Old House Museum' which displays collections of local life and work. Sir Richard Arkwright, of cotton spinning factory fame divided the building into two around 1800 when he also built the cosy looking cottages in Arkwright Square. These were for his workforce at Lumford Mill nearby.

For all its character and charm however, Bakewell is a working town where, if proof were ever needed, it surely arrives every Monday morning. General and livestock market day sees another population descend on both the large market place and the recently removed and newly rebuilt cattle market nearby. Tweeded farmers and white-coated auctioneers, all with twinkling eyes and pleading poverty, know each other as well as their own relatives. As the weekly banter gets under way yet again, history repeats itself in this lovely old town where the same old traditions have been exercised for

over eight centuries.

As the aromas of fresh cooked pies and puddings mingle with those of a myriad pub lunches, the atmosphere and bustle created generally promotes this as one of our most interesting yet still completely natural market towns. With some of the finest hostelrys for miles to be found hereabouts, and with a backcloth fit for kings, Bakewell is greatly favoured as the ideal base for touring this undeniably beautiful and totally unspoilt district, be it on foot or on wheels. ■

→ The Sea Wolves

Continued from page 31

Commius glared at the carnage. "Aye, you're right. One day they'll come in such force, even we won't be able to stop them." He sheathed the long wicked spatha. "But at least this lot won't be going home to tell of rich harvests."

Cerdic, identified as warlord by his handling of the Saxon defence had his head struck off and displayed on a spear. Fullofaudes would be disappointed that there were no prisoners to hang. Still as Commius said later, why deprive the wolves of a feast. It was entirely fitting he thought that they should scavenge upon the flesh of their human counterparts. ■

Karen Lowe has compiled a book of garden crosswords.

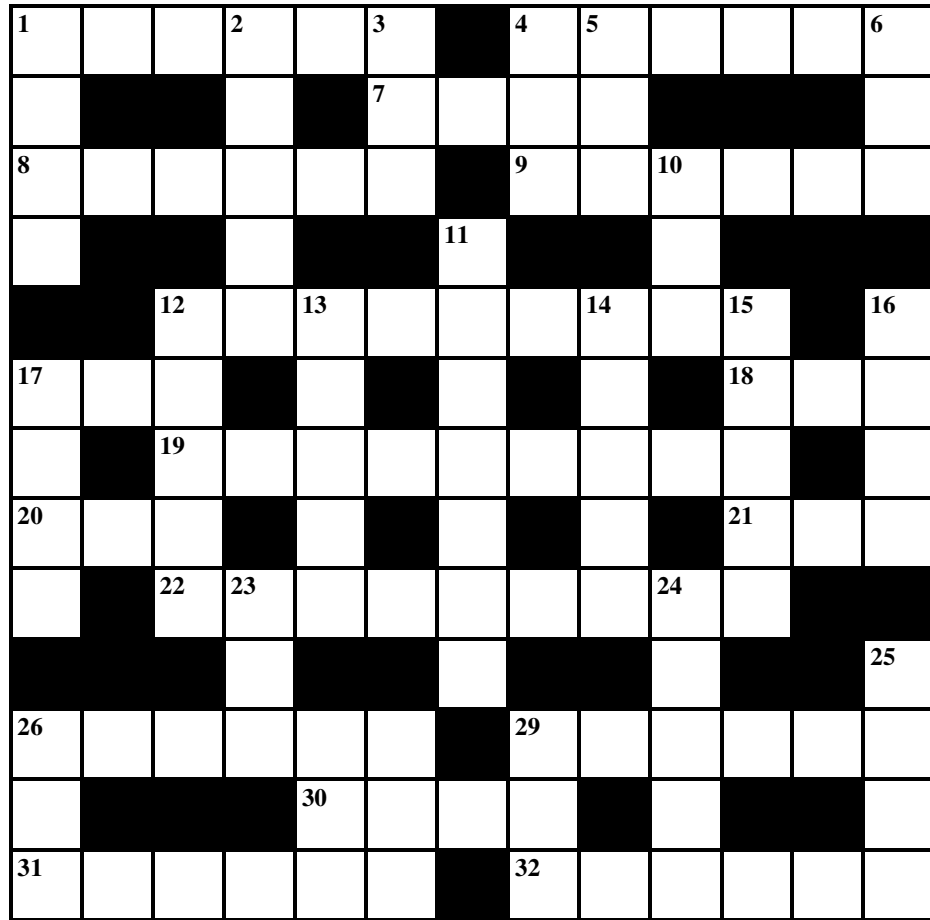
This one's called 'TREES'

ACROSS

- 1 Interlace branches (6)
- 4 Hedge shrub (6)
- 7 Is in debt (4)
- 8 Leaf of 1d (6)
- 9 Wattle-maybe false! (6)
- 12 Fruit tree – with shell? (4,5)
- 17 Tree – or what's left! (3)
- 18 Plant - bit of a madam! (3)
- 19 Collection of trees (9)
- 20 Pixie with cup for fungus (3)
- 21 Tree - a soak if out after 17ac! (3)
- 22 Shrub ablaze with spines! (9)
- 26 Dogwood (6)
- 29 Laurel - from Nassau, Cuba? (6)
- 30 Metallic wrap (4)
- 31 Tree may be weeping (6)
- 32 Tree from Lombardy (6)

DOWN

- 1 Lonesome tree? (4)
- 2 Tree may be Witch - White or Black? (5)
- 3 Garden tool (3)
- 4 Sweet legume (3)



- 5 Shakespearean theatre company (1,1,1)
- 6 Beverage of Rose? (3)
- 10 Completely (3)
- 11 Birds with tulips? (7)
- 12 Grain husks (5)
- 13 Fossilised resin (5)
- 14 Yard (5)
- 15 TV's Mr Andrews of red book fame? (5)
- 16 Tree surface (4)
- 17 Maple (4)
- 23 Hostelry (3)
- 24 Go back over (abbr.) (5)
- 25 Fur for Grass? (4)
- 26 Bovine with parsley? (3)
- 27 Flying saucer? (1,1,1)
- 28 Plant seeds (3)
- 29 High spot for rock plants (3)

Copies are available from Karen at:
 34 Grange Road,
 Shrewsbury,
 SY3 9DF **£2.99 inc p&p**

The Society of Civil Service Authors

Annual Literary Luncheon 1999

AT THE CIVIL SERVICE CLUB

13-15 Great Scotland Yard

Whitehall, LONDON SW1

ON SATURDAY 16th October 1999

AT 12.30pm

The chair will be taken by the President of the Society, Charles Neilson Gattey.

Reception of guests is at 12.30pm in the ground floor lounge of the Civil Service Club, for lunch at 1.00pm. The lunch will cost £16.00 a head and receipts will be issued in lieu of tickets.



To: Ethel Corduff
10 Malcolm Road
South Norwood
LONDON SE25 5HG

Please reserve.....places for me at £16.00 each for the Annual Luncheon on 16th October 1999 at the Civil Service Club. I enclose a cheque (*payable to Society of Civil Service Authors*) for..... and SAE for my receipt.

I wish to order.....meals – roast beef as the main dish

I wish to order.....meals – chicken as the main dish

I wish to order.....meals – vegetarian meals – (please say how many)

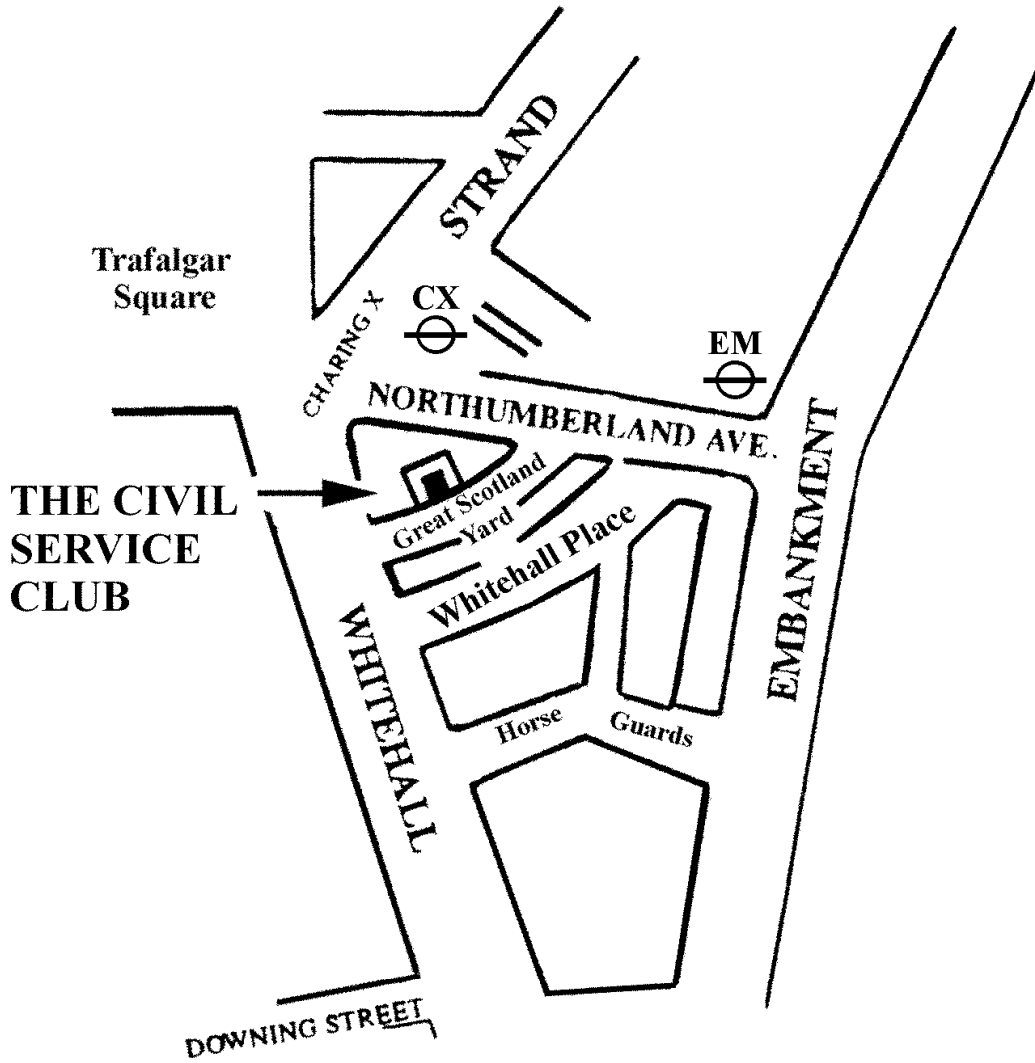
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