

## The Writers

### Mark Goodwin

Mark has won various literary awards, including a Society of Authors Eric Gregory Award, and was BBC Wildlife Poet of The Year 2003. He was awarded a Nottingham Trent University M.A. Bursary and an M.A. in Writing. Mark's work (including fiction) has been published by a wide range of literary magazine and ezines, and has been broadcast on radio. His first collection, entitled *Else*, was published by Shearsman Books in May 2008. Further collections are forthcoming from Shearsman Books.

Mark's work is increasingly becoming linguistically inventive - he is very keen on playing with forms and styles of written and spoken creativity. He enjoys fresh mainstream writing as well as risky otherstream (or what, for need of a better/kinder term, is sometimes labelled 'avant-garde') literature. Mark is experienced at reading and performing his poetry.

He has often collaborated with other artists, such as photographers, visual artists, digital artists, sculptors, and dancers to facilitate community workshops and projects both in and out of schools. Mark has received various commissions to work with other artists, for example, in 2005 Leicester's Phoenix Arts commissioned him to collaborate with poet and new media artist Gavin Stewart to produce a digitally animated and interactive poem on the theme of 'moving' entitled 'Slippage' ([www.gavinstewart.net/cybertext/slippage/sliphome.htm](http://www.gavinstewart.net/cybertext/slippage/sliphome.htm)).

He has worked as a freelance community poet for the last ten years, working regularly in primary and secondary schools. He has worked with a wide range of people from the very young to the elderly, and from various backgrounds, and is experienced at working with mental-health service users and has also worked in special-needs schools. He has done a lot of work with Creative Partnerships, mostly in Nottingham but also in Leicestershire, Leicester and Derby.

Mark is experienced at working with various learning providers. For example, he has delivered a workshop for head teachers at Nottingham's Head Teachers' Conference and has been a member of Creative Partnerships Derby Creative Lab Project - helping teachers to connect science and art, and focus on creative learning.

For the past 7 years Mark has delivered workshops and long term projects for Leicestershire's Open Museum. He is also a mentor for Nottingham Museum's Community Mentor Programme. In addition to working with museums, Mark has also used other heritage resources for creative inspiration. For example, working with Gateway College, Leicester, he encouraged pupils and staff to produce poetry inspired by BBC Radio Leicester's broadcasting house and the Norman Undercroft beneath it.

## Deborah Tyler-Bennett

Deborah has over 400 poems and short fictions published in anthologies, reviews, and journals in the UK and internationally. These include the anthologies *Speaking English: Poems for John Lucas* (Five Leaves), *Poetry: The Nottingham Collection* (Five Leaves), *The White Car* (Ragged Raven), *A Cornish Assembly* (Boho Press), *Her Mind's Eye* (Pyramid Press), and *The Contemporary Review of Poetry* (Bluechrome). A wide selection of her work appears in *Take Five* edited by John Lucas (Shoestring, 2003). Her first collection was *Clark Gable in Mansfield* (King's England, 2003).

With Gillian Spraggs she's co-author of the Victoria and Albert Museum's creative writing web-package ([www.vam.ac.uk/creativewriting](http://www.vam.ac.uk/creativewriting)). She's edited an anthology of poems and fiction for reading aloud: *Speaking Words* (Crystal Clear, 2005), and has just written a creative pack to accompany Nottingham Museum Service's 1950s and 1960s resource box. A pack for ESOL tutors on School Days was recently completed for Leicester City Museums.

She also worked with textile artist, Ruth Singer, on the *ArtBox* project for Leicestershire's Open Museum's Artworks Collection, for which she also wrote the collection *The Ballad of Epping and Other Poems* (Leicestershire: LCC Press, 2008). Deborah is currently working as a mentor for Nottinghamshire Museums. Recent readings and workshops include venues such as the Science Museum (see poems at [www.bshs.org.uk/bshs/outreach/object-stories/index.html](http://www.bshs.org.uk/bshs/outreach/object-stories/index.html)), state schools at Eton College, The University of Ghent, Bilston Craft Gallery, Leicester's City Gallery (using the *Nicola Malkin Exhibition*), The Callander Poetry Weekend, The Flying Goose, Beeston (with Matthew Sweeney), and the National Gallery (for New York University). Her poems have won many awards including The Hugh MacDiarmid Trophy.

She regularly performs her poetry, as well as doing writing workshops in schools, colleges, bars, art galleries, and museums (these sometimes reflecting ideas inspired by vintage fashion, which she collects and often wears). She's edited the journal, *The Coffee House*, for 8 years, and her second collection, *Pavilion*, with sequences set in Brighton and on dandies is forthcoming in 2010 from Smokestack. Her illustrative work has also begun to be published.

An exhibition with visual artist Lora Redman, *An Occasional Man*, was displayed at Market Harborough Museum (30 April-28 June, 2007) as part of the Write: Muse project linking artists and writers.

Her web-pages can be found at: [www.poetrypf.co.uk/deborah Tyler-Bennett page.html](http://www.poetrypf.co.uk/deborah Tyler-Bennett page.html).

Deborah and Mark have often worked together to deliver workshops through Leicestershire's Open Museum. They both have been involved with the Write: Muse project from its inception, and they co-wrote *Poetry, Prose and Playfulness*, a creative writing anthology and workshop manual published by Leicestershire County Council in 2004.

## The Education Consultants

### Joy Mather

Joy works as a trainer and consultant focusing on partnership working and inclusion. Following her first degree, she trained as an English and Liberal Studies teacher and worked with young people and adults in Further Education and non-traditional settings for a number of years, including work in prisons and long-stay hospitals. She co-ordinated a community education and mental health project for 10 years, and also worked as a member of a university disability support team, a voluntary sector partnership officer, a tutor for vocational and introductory mental health courses and a co-ordinator for inter-agency mental health training.

Joy has been designing, developing and piloting specific course materials throughout this time. In 2003 she was the co-writer (with Dr. Sue Atkinson) of a NIACE resource, *Learning Journeys*, which is a practical support manual for providers and tutors working with learners who have mental health difficulties. During the last year she's also been involved in voluntary sector training as well as providing consultancy for three museum and learning projects: researching and writing a consultation report for Write:Muse, designing and delivering advocacy workshops for Imperial War Museum North in Manchester, and developing an advocacy workshop and publication for a local authority Museum and Heritage Service.

Joy loves being a learner, and also enjoys creative writing, but she says this output is less productive, averaging about one completed poem every two or three years when she's feeling particularly inspired!

### Vicky Utting

Vicky has many years' experience, in the social care sector and social services' day services, of working with adults with mental health difficulties. Over the last 7 years she has been closely involved with a number

of Leicestershire's Open Museum projects focusing on people with mental health difficulties working with community artists.

Her first contact with the Open Museum initiated a partnership between the Open Museum and Day Services, as well as creating two Moving Objects displays: *Not What It Seems* and *JunKit*. Vicky was then involved in a partnership between museums and a local learning provider, which led to the 'Year of Sunshine and Rain' project - created and exhibited in Charnwood Museum, followed by a mental health awareness exhibition in Melton Carnegie Museum. During this time Vicky also developed experience in facilitating creative writing workshops which focus on museum objects.

For the last two years Vicky has been working for NIACE as a Regional Project Officer (mental health) on a national project which focused on boosting demand, building capacity, improving the quality of provision and increasing attainment levels for learners with mental health difficulties. She is currently working for Leicestershire County Council's Adult Learning Service, developing opportunities for people with mental health difficulties and adults on incapacity benefit. This work has focused on inclusion, and involves membership of a county-wide inter-agency group helping to deliver person-centred approaches and recovery awareness.

Vicky has worked as a consultant and member of the editorial board for the Write:Muse project. She continues to provide consultancy support in relation to museums and learning projects.

Joy and Vicky have both worked on projects which have brought museums and learning providers together, and have included other agencies such as Health, Social Care and the Voluntary Sector. Joy and Vicky are completely convinced of the value, fun and creativity which results from this kind of collaborative work!

## The Project Managers

### Nikki Clayton

Nikki is Open Museum Officer with Leicestershire's Open Museum, which she helped establish. In 1999, to complement the Open Museum's Resource Box and Artworks loans schemes, she created a third loans scheme called Moving Objects.

Much of Nikki's work is based around the creation of projects and initiatives to engage hard-to-reach audiences and promote the museum's resources to non-museum goers.

She initiated the Behind the Scenes Poetry Workshops series, based at museum locations. This has resulted in successful anthologies of writing, the fifth of which was launched in 2008.

Previously, Nikki was a part-time lecturer at De Montfort University and a Distance Learning Tutor with the Department of Museum Studies in Leicester. She received a PhD from the University of Leicester in 2003.

Nikki is a photographer whose work has featured on the front cover of a poetry collection. She also creates art installations which use everyday found objects to explore concepts of the past and museology.

### Kerry Featherstone

Kerry has been the Literature Development Officer for Leicestershire and Rutland since 2004. His role includes organising school writing groups, poetry workshops, open-air poetry performances and supporting individual writers, as well as collaboration on region-wide projects with the Literature Network.

Before this, Kerry was a university lecturer, in England and France, Having written a PhD on travel writing, globalisation and the work of Bruce Chatwin. He has taught a wide range of literary subjects, and is now a lecturer in Creative Writing at Loughborough University. He is also on the board of Apples and Snakes.

He writes poetry, often inspired by his knowledge of French culture and language. He is also a songwriter; his first, self-produced CD *Concealed Exit* will appear this year.

Kerry and Nikki both conceived of and co-managed the Write: Muse project. They work together to promote the collaboration of museums, literature and the arts.

## The Contributing Writers

The following writers were involved with the Write: Muse project delivering creative writing workshops with learning providers, and they provided the exercises in this publication.

### Katie Daniels

Katie was born in 1971 and grew up in East Anglia, moving to Leicestershire in 1990. She still lives in the county, where she works as a freelance arts development consultant.

Katie is a poet and fiction writer. Her work has been published in various national literary magazines. Katie's first full-length poetry collection, *Catch*, was published by Redbeck Press in 2007.

Katie has delivered poetry workshops with a wide range of groups including children and young people, rural groups and offenders. She is a member of the poetry group Inky Fish, who were awarded Arts Council funding to tour the East Midlands region in 2006-07.

### John Gallas

John was born 1950 in New Zealand and came to England in the 1970s. He has taught school-excluded students for 20 years for the Student Support Service in Leicester and Leicestershire. He has also delivered workshops in a variety of Leicestershire museums, and he is an ongoing workshop leader in the Write: Muse project.

John is an internationally published poet and has 7 volumes of poetry published by Carcanet, and two ballad books by Agraphia Press. His work in progress includes: *Yellow* (yellow poems), *26 Euros* (translations of European poets in an A-Z), *40 Lies* (with artist Sarah Kirby) and *Molecule* (a New Zealand tale in sonnets).

### Helen Johnson

Helen began writing in 1990. She was awarded an East Midlands Arts Writer's Bursary in 1992 and was later selected for the *New Voices* poetry reading tour of the region. In 1998 she was one of 24 East Midlands writers chosen to take part the 24:8 project, producing new work based on the region and giving a series of readings.

She has had poetry published in numerous magazines and broadcast on local radio. Successes in competitions include first prizes in the Hastings National, the Southport Open and the Leicestershire Literature competition (twice). Her poetry pamphlet, *Things That Fall*, was published by Waldean Press in 1998. Helen has also written short stories for adults and children. *Fasta Pasta* was a prizewinner in the 1995 Independent/Scholastic competition and was published in *Story of the Year 3*. She has had four children's books published by Ginn and Heinemann for their *Impact* series.

Helen worked as an adult tutor of Creative Writing for several years before studying for a degree in English, then undertaking a PGCE course. She is currently teaching at a high school in Leicestershire and working towards a full collection of poetry.

## **Bead Roberts**

Bead moved 22 times before settling in Leicester. She writes short stories and many have appeared in commercial magazines. She's also had successes in writing competitions. Some of her work has been published in anthologies, small presses and newspapers. Local radio, BBC World Service and Radio 4 have broadcast her stories and plays. While working for Leicester Adult Education College's Writing School she was twice nominated as a Tutor of the Year.

In 2008, as a tutor for the newly-formed Writing School Leicester, Bead took part in De Montfort University's *cultural eXchanges*. She also ran a story workshop in Oakham's museum and tutored radio writing at Lincoln's Book Festival. Her story *Letters to Freddie Mercury* was published recently in an anthology under that title.

## **Peter Rumney**

Peter is a writer, actor, director, and community artist, who works in schools, and with people who might consider themselves marginalised or disenfranchised by mainstream culture or education. He has spent the past 5 years working with Creative Partnerships to research and develop innovative ways of developing literacy in primary schools, and has published a number of research papers on the subject. He has also pioneered a number of arts programmes working with younger children with emotional and behavioural difficulties.

Many of Peter's plays have been written for young audiences. He prefers to work with his audience to create the themes, images and characters that inhabit the plays. *Jumping on my Shadow* (2002) was the first play for young people since 1967 to win the prestigious Arts Council England John Whiting Best Play Award.

Peter is Joint Artistic Director of *Dragon Breath Theatre Company*, which creates theatre with and for young people, and whose *The Icarus Project* was short-listed for the 2007 Times Higher Education Supplement/Arts Council England Award for Excellence and Innovation in the Arts. He is also Senior Lecturer in Theatre Design in the School of Art & Design at Nottingham Trent University.

As we indicated in the introduction, *Words & Things* has grown out of the major project Write: Muse. This project was itself a follow-on from Write Words, which aimed to raise the confidence of teachers in their own creative writing skills.



Write: Muse group

With funding from a Regional Arts Lottery Programme bid, Write Words employed six writers to lead workshops for primary and secondary school teachers. The project addressed the statements made in the *All Our Futures: Culture, Creativity and Education* document, particularly the implications of the following: 'Teaching for creativity is no easy option. Consequently there are important issues of staff development to address...'

Over the course of 4 workshops, groups of teachers experienced creative writing facilitated by two writers, learning new techniques, sharing their work and gaining confidence about their own writing. This was presented as a boost to their own creativity, rather than as a series of teacher-training sessions, however, ultimately the process did have a positive impact on their teaching practice. Examples of the resulting work, as well as exercises contributed by the workshop leaders, were gathered together in the 2004 publication *Poetry, Prose and Playfulness*, edited by Mark Goodwin and Deborah Tyler-Bennett.\* It is an invaluable resource, and notable for its inclusion of writing by teachers and students alike. The book showcases what is possible with guidance, inspiration, and above all, the confidence and support to be creative. *Words & Things* is meant to complement this publication.

\*Copies of this book are still available from the Leicestershire Literature Development Officer.

Write: Muse built on several other aspects of the Write Words project, drawing on feedback and evaluation from its predecessor in order to shape a larger plan. In particular it was felt important to continue to work with learning providers, rather than learners themselves. However, Write: Muse had a wider remit, in terms of participants, than primary and secondary school teachers. Participants also included, for example, adult learning tutors, community education workers, mental health service workers, youth workers, museum and libraries employees and freelance community artists.

Write: Muse also used the formula of each participant undertaking 4 creative writing workshops. The most important development in terms of workshop content however, was the focus on using resources from Leicestershire Open Museum's 3 loans collections. The workshops were intended to make wide use of the museum objects and artworks available from these collections, and were structured accordingly. As well as ensuring that each participant experienced two workshops with a poet and two with a fiction writer, we asked that each writer prepare a workshop using artworks, and a workshop using museum objects. In this way, participants learned more about what was possible with the whole range of resources, and experienced how different writers made use of different parts of the collections.



Write: Muse exhibition at Snibston

Most importantly, this approach also gave each participant more chance to find a resource, technique or approach that suited them and their own writing: as with Write Words, the emphasis was not on teaching methods, but on giving participants confidence in their own ability, their writing and their creativity. We hoped to encourage a sense of belief and enablement relating to their creative writing, rather than a new set of teaching skills. Of course in reality these things are linked, but for the purposes of the workshops we concentrated on personal development, not classroom achievement.

The project management team felt that it was important to take teachers and other education sector workers out of their working environment, in order for them to feel freed from the structures of time and behaviour which they inevitably associate with the workplace. Most of the workshops, therefore, took place in libraries; places which are associated with reading for pleasure, for personal interest or for information. Book-stock, including collections of poetry, short stories and how-to guides were gathered from libraries around the county, and made available to participants. At the end of this first stage of project, an Inspiration Day for participants and a celebratory exhibition of all the Open Museum resources used, and the creative work they inspired, was held at Snibston Discovery Park.

The Write Words project, like Write: Muse, was the subject of an evaluation process and report. The findings of those reports have been used to structure this guide, as have the findings of a consultation report produced by Vicky Utting and Joy Mather in 2007.

The Write: Muse project owes a lot to Write Words, in that the managers of the first project, notably Chris Jones, the then LDO, Osyth Dalton and Gabriella Maffioli simply got it right first time.

These projects, although they have planned endings in terms of dates, do not suddenly stop like a 100 metre sprint. They give rise to long term impacts on participants and their learners: this part of the process is usually described through metaphors relating to foundations, solidity, roots, flowering/blossoming, starting journeys, opening doors, widening horizons, landscaping, taking flight and many others. All are relevant in their way, but most ignore the process that has taken place before the moment of lift-off, departure, leaping or kick-starting. In terms of creativity, as well as project design, nothing takes place in a void, with no history. Memories of self and language are what is being drawn on in the act of creativity; although it can be profoundly changed by acts of creativity, the self must exist for this to take place. Similarly, in order for the Write: Muse project to build on the work of Write Words, that first project had to take place, inspired by its own antecedents.

*"It's given me a tool...  
simple but effective...  
a kick-off point".*

Write: Muse participant

Write: Muse has effected fundamental change in the course of its work. As with artworks, museum objectives and writing creatively, it is a product of language, and the realisation of the self. This is heavy, serious stuff, and can be intimidating, but the experience of these workshops, and, hopefully, using this guide, will be enjoyable, rewarding and fun. So put your GLOs in the fridge, pick up a pen and a piece of paper - any piece of paper. And off you go.

Quotations have been taken from the following publications:

George Mackay Brown, *Northern Lights, a Poet's Sources*, London, John Murray, 1999.

John Lucas, 'Yours Sincerely', is taken from *The Long & Short of It*, Redbeck Press, 2004.

John Mole, 'Writing Poetry', *Observations Collected by John Mole in Writing in Education*, 39, Summer 2006, supplement, I – VII.

Vasko Popa, 'The Little Box', is taken from *Vasko Popa: Collected Poems*, translated by Anne Pennington, revised and expanded by Francis R Jones, Anvil Press Poetry, 1997.

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