

# SURVIVORS' POETRY NEWSLETTER

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 1998

NUMBER 2

## THE SHAPE WE'RE IN



photo: Stephen Block

Paulette Ng at Jacksons Lane, London.

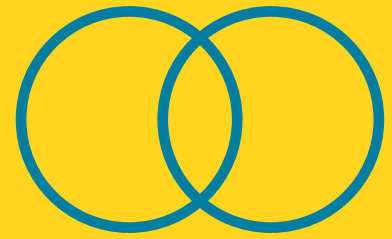
This ambitious Disability Arts Conference and Season took place during September and October at Jacksons Lane Community Centre, London. It encompassed dance, theatre, multimedia, film, music and POETRY. Hazel Lezah, Alison Smith, Paulette Ng and the Virtuosos gave an enthralling performance and Victoria Field took part in a lively on-stage debate with Johnny Crescendo, Simon Smith and Martin Davis. Our congratulations to Pat Place and her team for organising such an interesting series of events.

### SPREAD THE WORD

The London Festival of Literature will be a carnival celebration of The Word from the first stages of literacy to the greatest poets of the age taking place in all 33 London Boroughs during the period 19-28 March next year. Survivors' Poetry is delighted to be working together with this exciting initiative. We will have full details of our events in the next newsletter.

Also on the Festival front, we are delighted that Ruth Padel

and Kit Wright will be reading at the Bath Festival of Literature on



A SURVIVOR IS DEFINED AS A PERSON WITH A CURRENT OR PAST EXPERIENCE OF PSYCHIATRIC HOSPITALS, A RECIPIENT OF ECT, TRANQUILLISERS OR OTHER MEDICATION, A USER OF COUNSELLING SERVICES, A SURVIVOR OF SEXUAL ABUSE, CHILD ABUSE AND ANY OTHER SURVIVOR WHO HAS EMPATHY WITH OUR EXPERIENCE.

#### !!! STOP PRESS !!!

Are you under 30? A survivor? A poet? Tired of the city? There are still a few places to fill on this day trip to the Aldeburgh Poetry Festival. Tickets to events, all meals and travel included for just £3. Leaving London and returning on 7th November. Contact Alison Smith a.s.a.p on 0171 916 5317 for further details.

Saturday 6th March 1999. Bristol Survivors' Poetry will also perform their acclaimed The Truth is Out There Somewhere at the Bath Festival.

# PJ FAHY

7 December 1943 ~ 19 October 1998

It is with deep regret that we must announce the shocking and tragic news that Patrick 'PJ' Fahy died of serious head injuries on Monday 19th October 1998. The head injuries were sustained from a fall down a flight of steps.

He was a much loved friend and colleague whose creativity and generosity of spirit touched everything he did. He was a gifted musician and poet and his unshakeable belief in everyone's creative potential was central to his work; he always referred to fellow artists as 'geniuses'! His life inspired many others, and PJ's encouragement helped launch the careers of many new artists and musicians.

For the past ten years PJ has been actively involved in the promotion of acoustic music and poetry in London. Most recently he released a CD, 'Freshtracks' and had many plans for a new acoustic club to be held here at the Diorama Arts Centre. At Survivors' Poetry he worked tirelessly as our London Events Programmer. He will be terribly missed by us all.

A memorial event will be planned, probably to take place early next year. If you are interested in attending or participating please let us know in writing (our small office has been inundated with calls recently) and we will get back in touch.

If you wish, you can make a donation, in memory of PJ, to the The National Missing Persons Helpline. PJ admired the work of this charity and was himself missing for nearly two days.



Patrick 'PJ' Fahy

## THE FIDDLER OF DOONEY W. B. YEATS

When I play on my fiddle in Dooney,  
Folk dance like a wave of the sea;  
My cousin is priest in kilvarnet,  
My brother in Mocharabuiee.

I passed my brother and cousin;  
They read in their books of prayer;  
I read in my book of songs  
I bought at the Sligo fair.

When we come at the end of time  
To Peter sitting in state,  
He will smile on the three old spirits,  
But call me first through the gate;

For the good are always the merry,  
Save by an evil chance,  
And the merry love the fiddle,  
And the merry love to dance:

And when the folk there spy me,  
They will all come up to me,  
With 'Here is the Fiddler of Dooney!'  
And dance like a wave of the sea.

[This poem was one of PJ's favourites.  
It is printed with the permission of A.P.  
Watt Ltd. on behalf of Michael B Yeats]

Please contact Tina, in the fundraising department on 0181 392 4545 for details of how to make your donation.

# SURVIVORS IN BRISTOL ADD DRAMA TO WORLD MENTAL HEALTH DAY



The cast of 'The Truth is Out There - Somewhere'

## The Truth is Out There - Somewhere

The Bristol Survivors' Poetry Group's (aka Stepping Out Theatre Company) recent performance at The Hope Centre, Hotwells Road, Bristol was a sell out success. "The Truth is Out There - Somewhere", part of Open Minds Theatre Festival and an event for World Mental Health Day took place on Friday October 9th and Saturday 10th.

Steve Hennessy, secretary said, "The venue said they could easily have filled the theatre again with the number of ticket enquiries they had. Audiences were extremely enthusiastic! We are all on a real high at the moment, basking in the glow of achievement after six months of hard work. We received coverage in the 'Bristol Evening Post', 'Venue' magazine (Bristol's 'Time Out'), and on BBC Radio Bristol. Our group was also

the subject of a short radio documentary on Radio Bristol."

## Stepping Out - a very special theatre company

Stepping Out Theatre is open to people who use and work in mental health services. Most of the participants appeared on stage for the first time in their lives last year after six months working on the production of "The Voyages of the Starship



The cast collapses after a long dress rehearsal

'Lunar Sea'. The play won a national award. Here is what some of the participants have to say about the experience of being in Stepping Out.

"When I was doing the play last year, I really came alive. It felt like I'd been asleep for thirty years and then I'd come awake".

"Being in Stepping Out has done me more good than anything. More good than all the doctors and all the tablets I ever took".

"The play brought out so many different feelings - happiness, sadness and excitement ... It has brought back hope for the future for me"

Thanks to Jill and the Hope Centre for all their kindness and loveliness. For more information

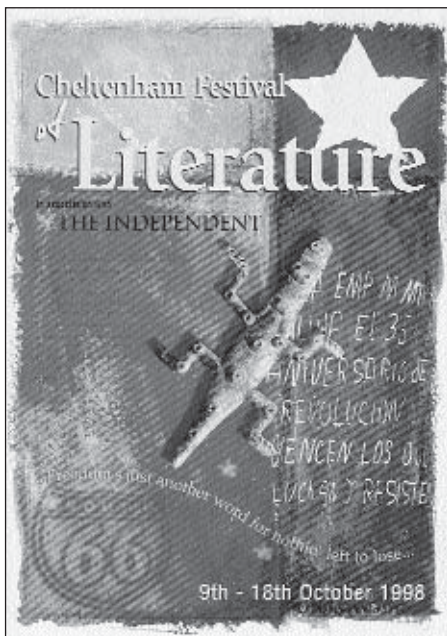


about Stepping Out Theatre Company, telephone Steve Hennessy on (0117) 9832790 or Una Corbett on (0117) 9663629.

# CHELTENHAM FESTIVAL OF LITERATURE

13 OCTOBER 1998

The leafy Georgian squares of Cheltenham and the Festival of Literature were host to the first Survivors' Poetry event to hit the Voices Off fringe directed by poet Marcus Moore. The presiding theme of the festival was Revolution, the struggle for freedom or change as expressed through creativity - so we fitted right in!



Marcus warmly introduced the evening performance and dedicated it to the efforts of all at Survivors who had worked so hard over the years to make the organisation what it is today.

Jack Withers of Survivors' Poetry Scotland kicked off in his inimitable soft Glaswegian style with tales of the docks and tenements in poetic form.

He was followed by Char March from our Leeds group who also had childhood memories of Scotland.

Char gave a witty, vibrant

and moving dramatic performance of a range of her poetry using the many voices she has at her disposal.

The wonderful Jean 'Binta' Breeze rounded off the event with a story she had told at this year's Windrush celebrations in Liverpool, along with her own particular brand of rhythm and rap poetry.

Altogether it was a fabulous evening which overran by half an hour such was the response from the audience. Cheltenham 1999 here we come...!

## SURVIVORS' POETRY IN THE NEWS

An article in October's Positive Health magazine examined the ways in which creative writing can help during times of distress. This article was picked up by 'The Editor' supplement of The Guardian on Saturday 10th October. Victoria Field gave an interview on the BBC World Service Outlook programme which was broadcast to a global audience on Wednesday 14th October. BBC Radio Bristol are also planning to feature our work. An article on Survivors' Poetry also appeared in the September issue of Umbrella.

# FORTHCOM

2ND NOVEMBER

JOINING FORCES

HEALTH-EDUCATION-ARTS

IN SEARCH OF COMMON GROUND

A ONE DAY SEMINAR TO BE HELD IN NOTTINGHAM IN CONJUNCTION WITH EAST MIDLANDS SHAPE. THE SEMINAR WILL BE OF INTEREST TO ARTS AND MENTAL HEALTH PRACTITIONERS AND SURVIVOR ARTISTS. FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, CONTACT ALISON SMITH.

TUESDAY 3RD NOVEMBER - 7.30PM

CAMDEN WORKSHOP

MIND IN CAMDEN, 9-15 CAMDEN ROAD

LONDON NW1

FREE

A FORTNIGHTLY WORKSHOP FOR SURVIVORS OF MENTAL DISTRESS. THESE PROVIDE PARTICIPANTS WITH AN OPPORTUNITY TO HAVE WORK REVIEWED AND DISCUSSED IN A FRIENDLY, SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT. TWO FACILITATORS WILL BE PRESENT AT EACH SESSION. PARTICIPANTS SHOULD BRING ALONG A POEM (TYPED OR VCLARELY HANDWRITTEN) FROM WHICH WE CAN TAKE PHOTOCOPIES.

SATURDAY 7TH NOVEMBER

1PM

BEYOND BEDLAM

JUBILEE HALL ALDEBURGH, FREE

READINGS BY SELIMA HILL, SCOTT VERNER AND LARRY BUTLER. FOR FURTHER INFORMATION ABOUT THE ALDEBURGH POETRY FESTIVAL, PLEASE CALL (01728) 453543

SATURDAY 7TH NOVEMBER

YOUNG SURVIVORS' DAYTRIP

TO ALDEBURGH

SURVIVORS' POETRY IS PLANNING A SPECIAL EVENT TO ALLOW YOUNG SURVIVORS TO VISIT THE FESTIVAL AND SEE A NUMBER OF EVENTS INCLUDING THE ONE LISTED ABOVE. ARE YOU UNDER 30? A SURVIVOR? A POET? TIRED OF THE CITY? THERE ARE STILL A FEW PLACES TO FILL ON THIS DAY TRIP TO THE ALDEBURGH POETRY FESTIVAL. TICKETS TO EVENTS, ALL MEALS AND TRAVEL INCLUDED FOR JUST £3. LEAVING LONDON AND RETURNING ON 7TH NOVEMBER. CONTACT ALISON SMITH A.S.A.P ON 0171 916 5317 FOR FURTHER DETAILS.

TUESDAY 17TH NOVEMBER

CAMDEN WORKSHOP

(CREATIVE WRITING) - SEE ABOVE

# ING EVENTS

SATURDAY 21ST NOVEMBER - 8PM

(DOORS 7.30PM)

SURVIVORS POETRY IN PERFORMANCE

SOMERSTOWN COMMUNITY CENTRE

150, OSSULSTON STREET, LONDON NW1

(£3.50, CONC. £1.50)

THIS REGULAR EVENT GIVES NEW AND ESTABLISHED POETS A CHANCE TO PERFORM TO A SUPPORTIVE AUDIENCE. NOVEMBER WILL FEATURE POETRY BY PASCALE PETIT, VICTORIA FIELD AND MUSIC BY PETER G. BROWN. MC WILL BE SURVIVOR POET, JOE BIDDER. CONTACT THE SURVIVORS' POETRY OFFICE IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO DO A FLOOR-SPOT.

TUESDAY 1ST DECEMBER

CAMDEN WORKSHOP - SEE ABOVE

FRIDAY 11TH DECEMBER - 7.30PM

SURVIVORS' POETRY AT

THE POETRY CAFE

22 BETTERTON STREET, LONDON WC2

(COVENT GARDEN TUBE)

FREE ADMISSION

GET DOWN TO THE POETRY SOCIETY FOR OUR CHRISTMAS WORD FEST ON FRIDAY 11TH OF DECEMBER. IVOR GAME AND PASCALE PETIT WILL BE OUR GUESTS + YOU, IF YOU WANT TO DO A FLOOR SPOT!

TUESDAY 15TH DECEMBER - 7.30PM

CAMDEN WORKSHOP

(PERFORMANCE) - SEE ABOVE

SATURDAY 19TH DECEMBER - 8PM

(DOORS 7.30PM)

SURVIVORS POETRY IN PERFORMANCE

SOMERSTOWN COMMUNITY CENTRE

150, OSSULSTON STREET, LONDON NW1

(£3.50, CONC. £1.50)

POETS MALA MASON AND ROBERT FRIEDBERG PERFORM TOGETHER WITH MUSICIAN LUCIA BIRCH. RAZZ WILL BE MC. CONTACT THE SURVIVORS' POETRY OFFICE IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO DO A FLOOR-SPOT.

EVERY WEDNESDAY - 6PM

FULHAM & CHELSEA GROUP POETRY WORKSHOP

TAMWORTH PROJECT, 11 FARM LANE, LONDON SW6. FREE

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT

GAVRIEL PHILIP ON 0181 386 5699

## WHAT'S ON AT SOMERS TOWN

You could say it's the long goodbye theme we'll be playing out at our regular SomersTown event in November, because our MC for Saturday 21st November is our former director Joe Bidder, a survivor poet as you all know. Joe will introduce our new director Victoria Field, whose poetry on 'dreams of Russia and other lovers' sounds like a new journey we are all going to enjoy.

"Magical", so says Selima Hill and Selima is referring to Pascale Petit's first poetry collection, Heart of a Deer. So we are in for a treat from Pascale.

Peter G Brown will round off the evening with his thoughtful songs on the inner experience.

The music of Lucia Birch will swoon you to Avalon and other destinations on December 19th at SomersTown. Our fresh voice this month will come from Robert Friedberg, who is 'a poet with a cause'.

Another destination is on the cards, because you will hear from Mala Mason, who is 'an inspired eclectic poet influenced by the East'.

You will enjoy getting into the 'progeny of the instant life', as created by Razz, our MC for this, the last event of the year.

## YOUNG VOICES REPORT

It was a day for sowing poetic seeds.

There were six of us present throughout the day on September 26th at the Diorama Arts Centre. We were taking part in a 'Young Voices' poetry/performance workshop, which was funded by Camden Arts & Leisure. Our facilitator for the day was the brilliant poet Martin Glynn, who guided us in the art of performing dramatic poetry in various styles. He also made some good suggestions on which dramatic tools it is best to employ, helping sharpen the impact of some of the poems he heard from Paulette Ng during the performance section of our day.

We went away with our heads full of dramatic ideas. Unfortunately some of the 'young voices' could not attend on the 26th, but we do have plans to hold a similar workshop in the future. We also attracted six 'new voices' to our Camden Workshop on the 20th of October. All this from the contacts we made during the period of publicising our programme. I feel there will be more interest in our Survivors' Poetry as time passes by, so it's a big thanks to you all at Camden Arts & Leisure.

'tis been a good year for us.

We at Survivors' Poetry wish you the same for 1999.

- Patrick Fahy

(This page was written by PJ in early October)

# PASCALE'S PUBLICATION



Pascale Petit

Pascale Petit, one of Survivor's Poetry's long-standing facilitators and performers, has just launched her first poetry collection, Heart

of a Deer, published in October by Enitharmon Press.

Pascale Petit's first collection uses startling imagery to journey through Venezuelan rainforests and the icy realms of Tibet.

Transforming memories of childhood and marriage, she encounters a man changed into a butterfly, a bride who is a frozen waterfall. At the core of this book are two prizewinning longer poems: 'Eisriesenwelt' the ice mother and 'Kanaima' the forest father - parents recreated as geology and Amerindian demons, in a landscape of orchids, jaguars and talking waterfalls.

## WORLD MENTAL HEALTH DAY & NATIONAL POETRY



Survivors' Poetry, as in previous years, was in great demand over the period around these two days in October.

different places and took the opportunity to introduce new audiences to our work. An event at the Rio Cinema in Hackney attracted an enthusiastic audience for the poetry reading of over eighty people. We also participated in the lively 10th birthday party of Studio Upstairs at the Diorama Arts Centre. A staged series of poems, including some from Beyond Bedlam was intensely dramatic. Our thanks to all promoters and poets at these events: Fatma Durmush, John Horder, Jeanette Ju Pierre, Rhamone, Dee Light, Tasse, et al.

**MINDS EYE**  
a performance afternoon to launch  
a series of educational workshops  
for young people

featuring dance, drama, story telling & poetry  
aimed at 14 - 18 year olds and relating to the  
P.S.E., Drama & English curriculum.

Monday 12th October

We were invited to several

"Magical is not a word contemporary poetry likes to apply to itself but Pascale Petit refuses to stay on the street, refuses to connect with what we know. She takes us boldly to another plane, which, by virtue of her fine intelligence, doesn't go soggy on us. It's packed, to use Yeats's startling phrase, in ice. Perverse, untamed, delicious. Like granita". Selima Hill.

## NOMAD

The latest issue of Nomad (the publication of Survivors' Poetry Scotland) features a wide variety of work by survivor poets. The magazine will consider original and previously unpublished work for publication. Please submit no more than six poems with an SAE to Survivors' Press at 30, Cranworth Street, Glasgow G12 8AG.

### The Poetry Cafe

Friday December 11th 1998.  
7.30pm. 22 Betterton Street,  
London WC2. Admission free.

Get down to The Poetry Society for our Christmas Word Fest on Friday 11th of December. Ivor Game and Pascale Petit will be our guests + you, if you want to do a floor spot!

### Christmas at

## POETRY IN THE OFFICE

We are attempting to work more effectively at promoting Survivors' Poetry through the many poetry magazines published in the UK. Many have already showed interest in our work and have offered their support. We have begun collecting these magazines and have set up a small library in the office. We also keep information on forthcoming literature events and competitions. Anybody who works or has worked as

a volunteer, facilitator, or

performer for Survivor's Poetry is welcome to come and browse through these magazines during office hours. We hope you will find them a source of inspiration! Please ring to let us know you will be dropping by.

## E-MAIL IN THE OFFICE

It's official! Survivors' Poetry is now on the Internet. Our e-mail address is [survivorspoetry.org.uk](mailto:survivorspoetry.org.uk)

## CREATIVE WRITING FOR

## RESIDENTS OF LEWISHAM

A creative writing course for students experiencing mental health difficulties is taking place at The Lee Centre, Aislip Road, Lee, London SE12 8QH. The course started on 21st September and is for 30 weeks. New students are welcome to join the course at any time but you must be a resident of Lewisham. It is free to take part and takes place on Mondays from 1-3 pm.

Course information: Writing helps us make sense of the world. It can uncover and clarify our most private feelings. It can connect us with others through its power to illuminate and amuse. When we put our creations out into the world we bring our public and personal lives together. This course will help you develop yourself alongside your skills through fun exercises, reflection and sharing of work done both inside and outside the group.

The focus will be on imaginative writing and writing about personal experience, using short prose (articles and stories) journal (diary) techniques and poetry. For more information contact Maggie Taylor, Special Needs Co-ordinator, CEL Holbeach Centre, Catford SE6 4QB. Tel/Fax 0181 314 0370.

## SURVIVORS' POETRY

*promoting poetry by survivors of mental distress*



### Beyond Bedlam

*Poems written out of Mental Distress*  
Edited by Ken Smith and Matthew Sweeney  
Published by Anvil Press in co-operation with Survivors' Poetry. 1997.

Witty, brittle, serene, remote, tortured - here is poetry that is testament to the transforming power of the imagination, poetry that catches the reader in the full glare of its light, challenging the isolation, stigma and myths of mental illness.

Illustrated anthology ~ 160pp ~ paperback.  
Price £7.95. p&p free of charge.



### Under the Asylum Tree

Edited by Jenny Ford, Colin Hambrook & Hilary Porter.  
Published by Survivors' Press. 1995.

This beautifully produced anthology was short listed for the "Mind Book of the Year Award", and the "Arts Council/Raymond Williams Community Publishing Prize".

Illustrated anthology ~ 208pp ~ paperback.  
Price £7.95. p&p free of charge.

#  
**BUY BOTH BOOKS AT THE REDUCED PRICE OF £15 (INCLUDING P&P)**

I wish to order \_\_\_ copy(s) of *Beyond Bedlam* at £7.95 per copy. (p&p free)

I wish to order \_\_\_ copy(s) of *Under the Asylum Tree* at £7.95 per copy (p&p free)

I wish to order \_\_\_ copy(s) of both books at the reduced price of £15 (p&p free)

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

I enclose a cheque/PO for £\_\_\_\_\_ payable to Survivors' Poetry.

r This is an institutional order. Please invoice me.

Please send this form with payment to:

# WHO'S WHO AT SURVIVORS' POETRY

## TRUSTEES

Jim Green  
Richard Hallward  
Danielle Hope  
Roger Moulson  
Anne Rouse  
Julian Turner  
Scott Verner (Chair)

## OFFICE STAFF

Lisa Boardman  
(Information, enquiries)  
Clare Douglas  
(Administration)  
Victoria Field  
(Director)  
Alison Smith  
(UK Outreach)

## VOLUNTEERS AND OPERATIONS COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Valeria Melchiorretto  
Anna Neeter  
Hilary Porter  
(Camden Workshops  
Co-ordinator)  
Dave Russell

## ADVISORY GROUP

Paul Beasley, Joe Bidder,  
Christina Dunhill, Kwabena  
Gyedu, Miriam Hastings, Mimi  
Khalvati, Jane Law, Peter  
McDonald, Emma McMullen,  
Andrew Pinnock, Richard Sutton.

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London Borough of Camden

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TEL: 0171 916 5317  
FAX: 0171 916 0830  
E-MAIL:

survivorspoetry.org.uk  
Registered Charity No. 1040177

"THE VALUE OF SURVIVORS' POETRY IS THAT IT OFFERS OUR  
EXPERIENCE A VALID VEHICLE FOR EXPRESSION.  
IT GIVES PEOPLE THE CHANCE TO CLAIM BACK SOME OF  
THE DIGNITY AND SELF-RESPECT PREVIOUSLY TAKEN FROM  
THEM". ~ A SURVIVOR ~

## Contacts

I am interested in setting up  
a group in London for survivors  
from ethnic minority communities.  
A supportive and friendly space  
in which to share poetry and  
other creative, artistic work and  
experiences.

Hopefully we can create an  
atmosphere that will be stimulating  
and inspiring to all whilst also  
providing opportunities for  
individuals to develop their writing  
should they desire.

I am a poet and performer of Asian  
origin and keen to make contact  
with other survivors. If you are  
interested you can contact me,  
via Survivors' Poetry (see address  
below). Please mark your envelope  
"Survivors from ethnic minorities".

## Survivors' Freepost

Some of you may have received  
freepost envelopes from us in  
recent weeks. We would like to  
reassure you that this service is  
offered at very limited expense to

used and posted by you. We  
want to encourage the active  
involvement of as many people  
as possible in Survivors' Poetry  
and our Freepost service is a way  
of ensuring free access to us for  
everyone.

## New Telephone System

We have recently had a new  
telephone system installed  
with the help of The Arts'  
Council's Capital Lottery Grant.  
It means all the office staff are  
now 'networked' to the same  
telephone number. We should  
be able to answer your calls more  
often and more effectively in the  
future. The UK Outreach and the  
London Events numbers are no  
longer in operation.

If you wish to contact Survivors'  
Poetry you can do so by telephone  
on 0171 916 5317 (minicom  
available).

Survivors' Poetry. We only pay for  
the envelopes that are actually



CALOUSTE  
GULBENKIAN FOUNDATION

cpf  
CITY PAROCHIAL  
FOUNDATION



The Esmée Fairbairn Charitable Trust