



WRITE ON



HIGHLAND BEFRIENDERS LITERARY NEWSLETTER

ISSUE NUMBER 6

SUMMER 2015

After a busy time of change at Befrienders Highland it's great to bring you the new issue of Write On! As I am sure you will agree there's as much vibrant and quality content as ever. We have had some new members recently so I would like to take this opportunity to welcome them and hope we see their creative talents displayed in the magazine in the near future. We would love to have you involved, whether it's your contributions, ideas, reviews or to be the next member to complete the Write On profile. The next issue submission due date is the 1st December



We have news of Befrienders Highland involvement in this Year's Highland leg of the Mental Health Arts and Film festival on October the 1st. Befrienders Highland first ever short film will be premiering at the event! Throughout July and August we have been filming footage and working at bringing the piece together. During September Inverness College are going to assist us in editing the film ready for opening night.

We are also proud to announce two Write On members will be performing at the opening night. I hope you will join me in wishing Isolde & Graeme the best of luck & the traditional 'break a leg' for their performances! Both are fantastic talents and have already contributed so much to the festival. There will be other great films & performances on the night from different groups & organisations throughout the Highlands. If you would like to attend the event; seats are free but places are limited, so get in touch and we will put you on the guest list. See the poster on page: 15 for more information. After the festival we will be looking to have some copies on DVD/online for anyone who was unable to attend the event but would like to see the film.

We are creating a special Write On edition for the festival to be given out for the duration. If you have any short pieces you would like to include get in touch on the usual details.

Who Said That?

The winner of the writing prize has been decided ! Our winner is **Norma** with her 'I Really Don't like Broccoli'. Keith Walker, Executive Director Befrienders Highland, was our contest judge. Impressed with the high standard of the entries, Keith extends his congratulations to all of the entrants. To read his comments on our contestants and the winner's entries, please turn to the back cover.



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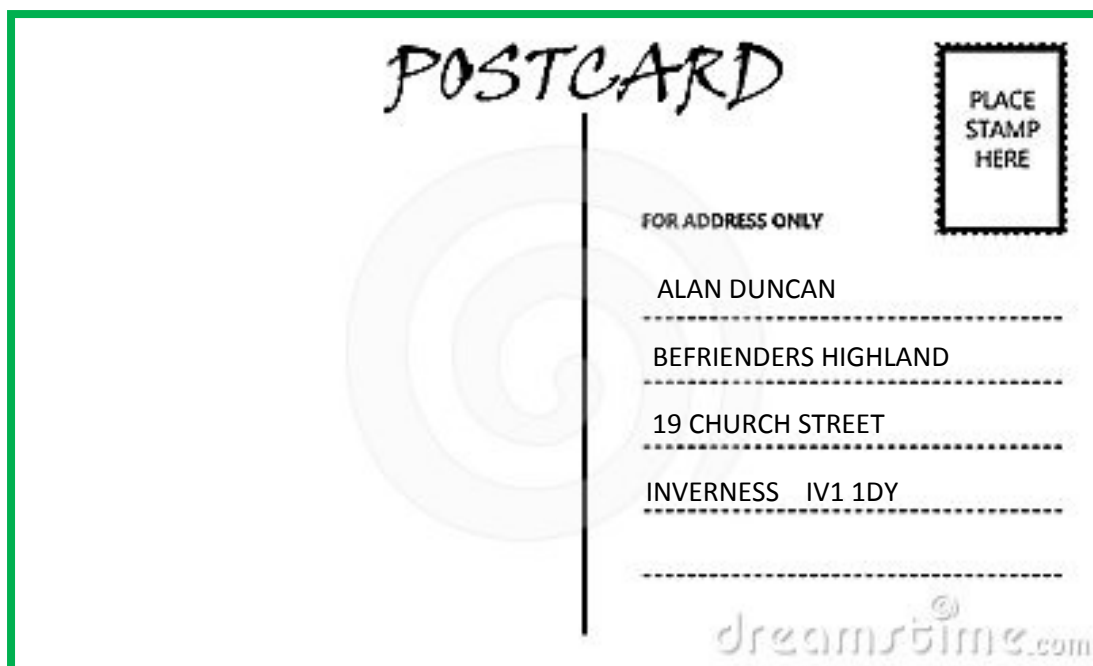
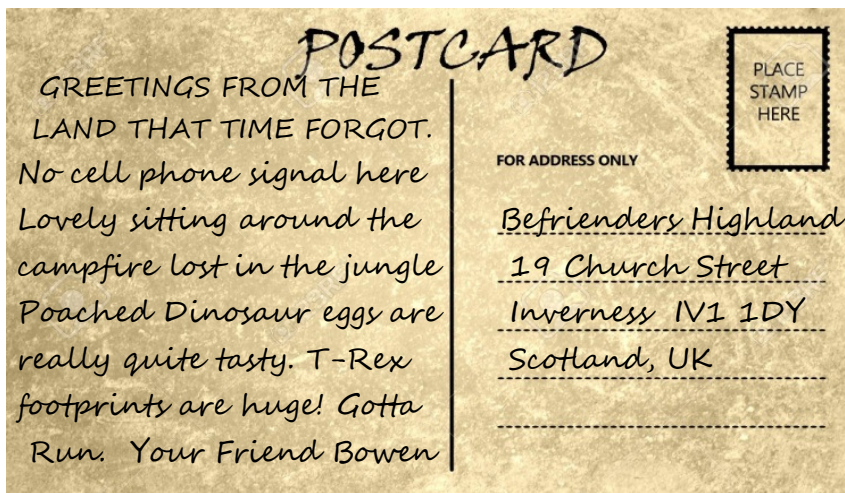
Scottish Mental Health Arts & Film Festival - Highland

Who Said That? Our Winner

TELL US WHAT YOU WOULD PRINT ON A T-SHIRT ?

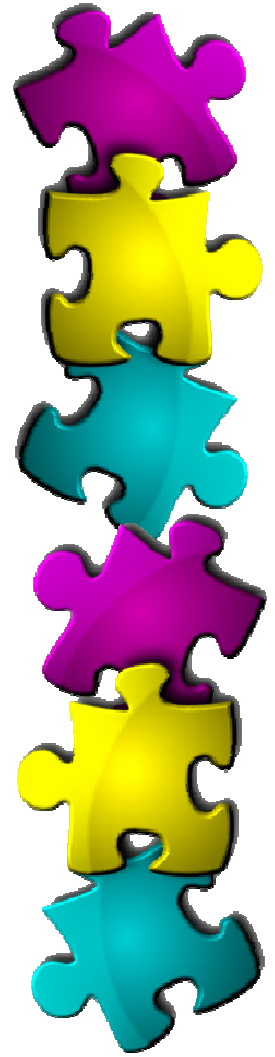


SEND US A MESSAGE FROM YOUR IMAGINARY HOLIDAY



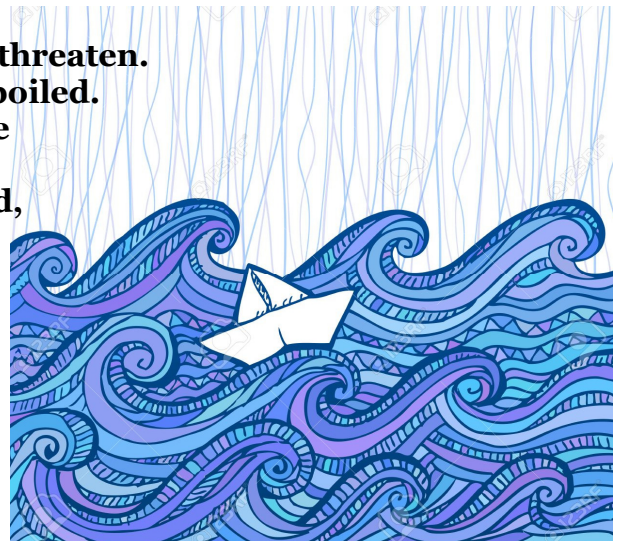
The Puzzle by Vanessa

*“What are you doing?” I asked, then saw
A young girl in a blue dress sat at the table,
Her milky skin and toffee-coloured hair
Iridescent in the shafts of sunlight.
She worked silently, studying each wooden piece -
Twisting each shape around in her hands,
Then suddenly pressing one home where it fitted,
Disturbing the peace with a muffled snap.
Matching colours, matching shapes,
But no picture emerged.
“Edges first”, she said,
“Then you know the size and where the middle is
But that’s when it gets hard...
Would you like to help?”
“Only if you want me to”, I replied.
“But then it won’t be yours.”
She paused and peered intently at a piece
Then sighed, wrinkled her nose and frowned.
I reached out and pressed another into
The palm of her hand.
“Yes!” she cried, and beamed triumphantly
But her joy saddened me because I knew -
The most important piece
Will always be the one that’s missing.*



Seamanship by Vanessa

**The squall came as a slow surprise,
A rift in the bluest of days.
The world turned grey - the wind began to threaten.
The surface of the foaming sea rolled and boiled.
Survival measures absorbed me for a while
But once the sail was reefed,
Alone and too distant for clear sight of land,
I began to unravel.
A brighter sky beckoned beyond my reach.
I could not steer an unswerving course.
Pulled into wallowing troughs of waves,
Punished by lashings of spray that stung,
My heart pounded and my skin burned -
But then, in what seemed just a moment,
The world became subdued again.
There in plain sight was a sheltered beach
To aim for, welcomed, like a warm embrace.
I stepped ashore and felt my solid self return
Yet glanced behind once more to seal the memory.
When safe anchorage is binding,
It’s the storms that set me free.**



Poetry by Keith

So Fast

It's all going so fast:
We've met several times already
And yet it's going so slow
Until the next time we meet

To Science, Commerce, Industry and Technology

I admire your skill and effort
I know your capabilities and complications
Yet I would rather paint a picture
Or write a love poem

An Old Man Going to Bosnia
(1993-the war in Bosnia continued)

John, a recluse, told his housekeeper one bright and sunny morning,
That he was going to Bosnia for a holiday
"Remember how kind they were thirty years ago?" he said.
"Yes," she sighed, "But now?"
"No buts. Get me a newspaper."
When she came back, she found John in bed.
"I've got a touch of flu," he said.
"Just as well," the kindly housekeeper replied,
And knowing he hadn't read a paper for thirty years,
She went on: "Look at this !"
There were pictures of war-torn Yugoslavia.
"Goodness," said John, "Just as well I've got the flu."
Then, with a sly wink: "But will you marry me?"
"Oh yes," she replied happily.
She'd waited for thirty years.

Our Cat by Betty

Our cat is a remarkable quadruped
We'd like him better if he wouldn't shed
His hairs stop our vacuum up
They're even in my mother's coffee cup

When our cat is happy he purrs and purrs
But when he's mad, you wish he wasn't yours
He's like a cyclone on four feet
We even have to run and hide the parakeet

Our cat has things he just must see
We humans call this curiosity
Our family says he has nine lives
When an unfriendly pack of dogs arrives

Still our family loves him very, very true
Even when he tears a couch or two
All and all I'd like to say
I think our cat is here to stay





The Crumbles Part 2 (by Vanessa)



Sometime later on a sunny afternoon, on her rambling, reluctant way home from the Crumbles, Daisy encountered Mr Sutton again, in his front garden. She stopped for a moment and began to closely admire some of the huge, blousy red blooms on the plants near his front fence. Mr Sutton stopped his weeding and walked towards her.

'It's Daisy, isn't it?'

'Yes'.

'Pretty name.'

'Thank you'. Daisy smiled. She thought it was probably okay to say thank you and smile. She had learnt to quickly refer to the parental voice in her head before she did or said anything.

'Your flowers are really pretty'. Daisy thought it was okay to say this too, because it was a compliment. Adults really like children who said complimentary things. She reached forward and gently touched one of the blooms but to her horror, three large earwigs, shining jet black in the sunshine, wriggled out in response to her touch and then quickly buried themselves again deep in the heart of the flower. Daisy pulled her hand away instinctively and failed to suppress an intake of breath in surprised horror. She immediately thought this was probably a wrong thing to do, because it implied there was something less than perfect about Mr Sutton's flowers.

'They are called peonies,' Mr Sutton said with a short laugh. 'I'm afraid the earwigs love them'.

'I ... I don't like earwigs much.' Daisy said this as an excuse to herself.

Mr Sutton gave another short laugh. 'No ... neither do I.'

Daisy thought that maybe she should go but she didn't want to give Mr Sutton the impression she wasn't enjoying talking to him. She thought it best to try and think of a plausible excuse. She shifted from one foot to the other and held her hands behind her back, wringing her wrists with her hands like she often did during moments of awkwardness, until Mr Sutton spoke again to break the silence.

'You like walking down on the Crumbles, don't you Daisy? I've notice you down there a few times.'

Daisy couldn't stop herself from lighting up and blushing a little, because this was like sharing a secret with an adult and something she had stopped doing

around the age of five until she had learnt that adults couldn't be relied upon to keep secrets.

'Oh yes! I love it down there! It's a special place for me! So beautiful with all the flowers! I know all their names – my Dad taught them to me! I like those ridges you get with that tufty grass on that you can run along. Sometimes I meet friends down there and we play chasing games along them.'

Daisy stopped herself short at that point and laughed in a slightly embarrassed way, because she suddenly realised she was speaking in a manner that her parents discouraged and which they called 'gushing'. She assumed it was a childish mode of speaking that you have to give up when you become a grown-up. It was okay though, because Daisy could see that Mr Sutton was smiling – just a *little* smile. She began to hope he wouldn't mention to her parents that she had been talking to him. That might provoke an inquisition – in case she said something a child wasn't supposed to say to someone outside the family. And since it was so difficult to predict what was or was not acceptable, it was entirely possible that she had already broken one of the rules without knowing it.

Daisy began to wonder how old Mr Sutton was. It was so difficult for her to judge people's ages. She thought he was older than her father, possibly even as old as her grandfather. He seemed a nice enough man though. He was not very tall and had a bit of a paunch. His hair was sandy orange and thin at the front. In the breeze a few wisps of hair would drift away from his head just above the ears, trying to escape. His clothes were camel-coloured or in shades of grey or beige but Daisy noticed that he liked checked shirts with a bit of colour in them – very clean, completely creaseless shirts with a tiny, mathematically perfect check in green or blue. Yes, Daisy noticed such things, even though she was only eleven – well *almost* twelve. She felt it was something of a privilege to be spoken to in a friendly way by an adult, and Daisy enjoyed it, whilst at the same time thinking guiltily that perhaps she shouldn't. That was something she had noticed about the rules imposed by grown-ups on children. They always seemed to be designed to quash your fun.

'I know a pond down there where newts are at this time of year. Would you like me to show it to you?'

Daisy thought about Mr Sutton's question for a short while. She knew the pond he was referring to. It was in a hollow fed by a small stream which then drained away into the shingle and then unseen, out to the sea. In the spring there were yellow flag irises there.

She knew plenty of other places where you could find newts and had often caught them in her tiny net, bought on some long forgotten day trip to the seaside. She thought it was unlikely that a grown-up, especially one as old as Mr Sutton, could be as much as an expert on newts, as a child like herself. She didn't want to steal Mr Sutton's thunder by telling him this, however. Daisy knew it would not be okay. It would be what her parents would describe as 'presumptuous'.



Yet Daisy found Mr Sutton's suggestion disquieting, for reasons she could never have articulated. She



thought possibly her parents would say 'What a lovely gesture by this man. Of course you should agree to go. It would be educational too.' Daisy chose not to follow this imagined parental voice. Instead she chose to listen to a tinier, more distant, yet somehow more compelling voice, buried much deeper inside, which despite her indoctrination to always accept the authority of adults, told her to say no.

'Umm... well I might... but I'd have to ask my parents first. I might not be allowed to.' Happy with her escape manoeuvre, Daisy started away with a 'Bye!' and a wave of her hand and ran into her house.



Crush (by Graeme) Part 1

Another Vodka and Coke slipped effortlessly down his throat. He put the shaking sensation in his hands down to his current feeling of trepidation rather than the ten alcoholic drinks he had consumed in the last half-hour. As he stood with his best friend from school, Johnny Payne, Paul Woodcock glanced again at his watch. The moment he was dreading was growing ever nearer.

Ever since Johnny had notified Paul of the upcoming school reunion, Paul's moments of contemplation had always delivered him back to his last day at school fifteen years ago. For five, almost agonising, years Paul felt a strong crush on Dianne Moore. On the first day at secondary school they had met. To Paul she was the perfect embodiment of everything he desired in a girl. Throughout the first year they were in the same academic classes. Teachers often had to draw his attention back to his studies as he often sat gazing at Dianne from his desk. Only Paul's overwhelming shyness prevented him from asking Dianne if she would be interested in going out with him. Paul was not unattractive but he still thought that Dianne was too good for him.



As schoolchildren do, Johnny and the other boys in the class were quick to tell Dianne and her friends of Paul's feelings. The incessant teasing made Paul feel very uncomfortable in Dianne's presence but it did not seem to bother her. In fact at the end of the first year, due to an irritating teacher who forbade the slightest noise in class, Paul found himself sitting next

to Dianne. He took her blowing a kiss to him as a joke but deep down this only furthered his emotional turmoil. For the next four years they were in fewer classes together but Paul's feelings did not diminish. He felt feelings for other girls but he knew Dianne was the only girl he could love. On his last day before starting his first job Paul knew he needed to let Dianne know his feelings. He composed a poem, walked into Dianne's class and read the poem out aloud. Dianne had held her head in her hands before slapping him across the face.

Over the years Paul had seen Dianne fleetingly in pubs, nightclubs, and shops. Dianne always lowered her head on seeing Paul. His lifelong guilt and regret had made Paul unable to love another woman, although he had the occasional relationship they never lasted. Paul always attributed this to comparing every woman with Dianne and the guilt and regrets that this subsequently aroused negated any chance of long term relationships forming. Johnny had persuaded Paul into attending the reunion; admittedly Paul was quite keen to meet a lot of his old school friends. As they entered the taxi to head for the reunion Paul said a little prayer to himself in the hope that Dianne would not be there.

To Paul's great delight, on his arrival Dianne was nowhere to be seen. In his mind Paul was sure that Dianne's friends would remember who he was. Viewing the dance floor and the surrounding tables he could see where her old school friends were sitting. For Paul the bar situated just a few feet to his right seemed the ideal sanctuary. Hopefully after a couple of drinks the sweat that was pouring from what felt like every pore in his body would subside. The first hour of the reunion was spent getting acquainted with men Paul had not seen since his

final day at school. Paul's inbred shyness prevented him from talking to any females. Perhaps he was being paranoid but Paul felt he was receiving some amusing glances from some of the other men and women at the reunion. Nobody at the reunion was rich and famous so they were no better than Paul was. He resolved to ignore any caustic looks or remarks he would receive. As Johnny started chatting to an ex-girlfriend, Paul turned back to the bar away from the madding crowd. His one true friend tonight, apart from Johnny, would be the bottom of a bottle of alcohol.

As more and more alcohol was consumed the dance floor became busier as people started to lose their inhibitions. Smiling to himself, Paul watched as some of the dancers tried to unsuccessfully show that they



were related to John Travolta. Those who were not dancing were making empty promises to keep in touch with their old pals. The barman told Paul that the

same scenario had occurred at the last three years reunions. If people did not keep in touch after leaving school, why would they bother now? Paul agreed wholeheartedly with that sentiment even though he knew that he was one of the guilty parties.

Maybe it was the alcohol or maybe it was the fact that after an hour and a half there was still no sign of Dianne, but Paul felt more relaxed than he had the entire day. He felt he was certainly no longer the centre of attention for people's gossip and glances. As Paul turned from the bar to head towards the toilets all his inhibition, guilt and fears returned. Just entering the door leading from the toilets and the lounge bar of the hotel was Dianne Moore.

She still had the radiant beauty that had attracted Paul to her on that first day at school. The smile that Paul was sure had broken many a stern heart was still in evidence as Dianne acknowledged her old friends. Akin to so many women in these figure conscious times, Dianne had lost some of the curves that enchanted Paul. In Paul's eyes she still had a fabulous figure. On the previous occasions that he had seen Dianne he had been unable to admire her as longingly as he could now.

All the noise and people in the function suite evaporated from his mind as he cast himself back to fifteen years ago. He saw the modern day Dianne Moore sitting in the chair where she had been sitting when Paul read out his poem. Standing in the

function suite Paul recited the words of the poem under his breath as he gazed fascinatingly at Dianne. A snap of fingers brought him back to reality. Johnny was standing in front of him, a broad grin on his face. Paul was vaguely aware of people staring at him. Dianne Moore had gone. A quick furtive glance around the room found her in the far corner; exactly where Paul had hoped she would go. In the build up to the reunion he had tried to summon the courage to talk to her but as he had anticipated his bravado deserted him.

Johnny pulled Paul back to the bar even though Paul had an even more urgent sense to relieve himself. Ignoring his friend's protests, Johnny purchased another drink for Paul stating it would be therapeutic. Johnny said he would return shortly. The first sips did indeed help to calm Paul down slightly.

But Paul's bladder was starting to hurt him. Aware of the looks he was still receiving Paul made his way to the toilet as quickly as he could without trying to draw even more attention to himself. On making his way back towards to the function suite he saw Dianne heading in his direction. With one door being closed there was only room for one person at a time to walk to and from the function suite. Paul waited, being the gentleman he had been raised to be. He could feel his heartbeat increase rapidly as the distance between them diminished. Dianne's head lowered as she walked through the door and passed Paul. Paul's mouth was open but no words were forthcoming.



Once again Paul could feel what felt like a million eyes staring at him. He came to the conclusion that good old-fashioned Chinese whispers had been in operation during the night. All the people who had been blissfully unaware of his crush on Dianne Moore were now fully informed of the facts. Paul was sure that the truth would surely have been embellished to make Paul seem like he had a crazy obsession on Dianne or even worse that he was stalking her. Only Paul and Johnny knew that all Paul wished to do was apologise to Dianne for his past actions. Trying to act as calm as possible, Paul put his hands in his pockets and strolled casually to the bar in the hope of finding Johnny. But to Paul's chagrin, Johnny was nowhere to be seen.

To be continued.....



The Members Profile – Irene

So Irene, thanks for sharing with our readers. Can you start by telling us a bit about what and when first garnered your interest in writing?

I first became interested in Writing at Primary School when we were asked to write something for the school magazine. I wrote a poem called "The Vaccination", about a visit to the doctor to get my polio jab. I can still recite it off by heart today! Maybe I'll send it in to Write On one of these days! From then, I continued to write poems. I also wrote short stories and made up little magazines for my younger brother.

Can you talk a bit about your writing process and how your work comes to fruition?

I don't really have a writing process as such. I just get an idea in my head and "go for it". I must stress that I have never written, or even tried to write, stories for adults. I have never had any desire to do it. I know I would tie myself in knots trying to develop the characters and plot. I just enjoy writing poetry and short pieces of prose, and also rhymes and stories for young children.

What excites/ inspires you to write?

I am inspired by whatever my grandchildren are interested in....at the moment that is dinosaurs!

What do you look for in a good piece of writing/ What do you most value in a writer's work?

For me, a story/piece of writing must "hook" me in the first couple of pages. If it doesn't, I rarely continue with it. I don't like the use of extreme bad language, and have been put off by some of the more modern novels because of this gritty realism.

How do you overcome the dreaded writer's block? What do you do & do you have any tips on how to overcome it?

When I get stuck with something I'm writing, I just leave it for a while and then come back to it, hoping to have a fresh approach. However, with rhymes especially, it is hard to get them out of my head!

Can you tell us a little about your favourite books or ones which have had a significant impact on you during your life, and perhaps what were the circumstances around how you came to read them?

I enjoy Philippa Gregory's novels about Tudor times, and have loved Hilary Mantel's Wolf Hall and Bring Up the Bodies. I am eagerly awaiting the final book of her trilogy. When I was a child, my grandfather bought me a book each birthday from the Olive Classics collection, published by Collins and bound in an olive-green cover which had (and still has!) the most lovely smell! The first, for my 6th birthday was Andersen's Fairy Tales, then Oliver Twist for my 7th, Great Expectations on my 8th, and Nicholas Nickleby when I was 9. Looking back, I can't believe I read them at such a young age, but I have certainly read them since.

What are your other interests outside of writing.....favourite films, music & other interests?

My favourite films are The Graduate, The Shawshank Redemption, and A Wonderful Life.

Music-wise, I like Queen, Simon and Garfunkel, and oldies from the Sixties.

Being a retired French and German teacher, I am interested in other languages. At the moment I am trying to teach myself Spanish. Having moved up to the Isle of Skye ten years ago I decided to have a go at learning Gaelic, but I gave that up. "Difficult" doesn't even begin to describe it!

Over the years what do you think reading/writing has done for you? Do you have any stories on how writing has linked into your life?

I think Reading had helped broaden my horizons and allowed me to see life from different perspectives. Writing links into my life as I write for my grandchildren, and I also enjoy writing humorous "odes" for special family occasions.

Week Ending 8th July 1979

A very uneventful week although we did follow the River Stour looking for a future home, Bures Nayland of which we thought Nayland was the most likeable. Uneventful did I say? This Saturday Madelyn went the whole day with only pants on, using the potty. Of course, come Sunday and we were back to normal. We went to The Swan at Henny for a drink before dinner. Madelyn was to feed the ducks after dinner with bread she had brought except there were no ducks. So it was decided to go strawberry picking which was much more to her liking. We also bought some gooseberries and strawberries for the freezer because the money situation is becoming better. For some reason or other, Madelyn named the sweeper "George" though why we cannot fathom. So she carries on calling it George.

Week Ending 15th July, 1979

Madelyn seemed to be teething. Saturday afternoon we went to Nayland for a drink by the river and then walked round a bit. We quite like Nayland and view it as a possible place to live, circumstances being right. We cut our first visit short because Madelyn seemed to be running a temperature. Later in the evening we called Doctor Baines who pronounced it to be Tonsillitis. That night Madelyn and Grace slept in one room and Evelyn and myself in the other. That morning, Madelyn had brought the alarm clock from the bedroom to the bathroom. Then she decided to get into the bath with me and though I did not see her do it, she must have reached over the bath to pick up the clock and was giving it a dunking. When I realized what was happening, Madelyn was lifting the clock out of the bath while watching the water level falling down the face of the clock. Sunday we went to a farming show at Chadacre which is in between Shimpling and Hartest. There was a lot to see but Madelyn was not up to it. Stupid really, to even think that she might enjoy it, so we went home and packed her off to bed more than once. Still she looked a bad sight.

Week Ending 22nd July 1979

This week culminated in a climax of disaster for Madelyn and Grace and I both agreed we had to be a lot stricter with Madelyn. Saturday, we went to Branthem, the end of the river Stour and the beginning of the estuaries. We walked through Hadleigh and nearly lost Madelyn when she decided to walk through a gap between the gate and the wall. Just caught hold of her hand and pulled her back. Sunday we went to pick some blackberries. Madelyn had a feast from strawberries with Grandad and Nan Harper. After that we all went for a holiday in Scotland. Perhaps the greatest of all surprises was that the bills were paid for; except everyday expenses we intend to spend a little on ourselves.

Week Ending 29th July 1979

Since Madelyn has been sitting at the table this last week, her eating habits have improved a great deal. I took Evelyn to the doctor on Saturday morning to have her eye looked at because it has been weeping. It was diagnosed as either a cold or caused by the Greenfly epidemic we are having. Money short this week so we went to Colchester in the afternoon to deliver a head-board for the firm and to get some Queen Anne legs. Also, we looked at some clothes for the future. Madelyn made me laugh on Sunday teatime, the only time we do not sit at the table and when she must sit on the settee with us. Grace gave her a chicken leg with bread and butter. Gnawing the meat away, the chicken leg bent at the knee joint. She kept putting it up and it kept falling back down. She was just not able to work it out. Earlier she had a wee in the potty, picked it up in one hand and proceeded up the stairs. Or at least she tried to twice before she fell backwards. Wee on the stairs, she kept going until she managed to tip her potty upside down into the toilet.

Week Ending 5th August 1979

An uneventful week and as I haven't the van, we walked to Rodbridge. The exercise nearly killed me! We're getting ready for a couple of days holiday by the sea if the weather holds. Madelyn has a bucket and spade though she has not seen the sea yet. So we left all the housework till Sunday. The car has been made available for 7am. Monday, I am far more excited than anyone else there. One thing worth mentioning, since Madelyn has been having baths, she has now reached the stage where in 10 inches of water, she turns over on her back and lay with her head in the water. Her trust in me makes me very, very proud. Slowly in stages of trust, she will learn to swim.

6th August 1979

Well, after getting away, we got as far as Hadleigh when Madelyn was sick all over Grace. So we turned round and headed back home to change clothes and then tried it again. A bit further on, Madelyn was sick once more though not so much. After a little walk and some fresh air, we carried on to Woodbridge. There we walked through the town and down to the river with its boats and boatyards for which Woodbridge is famous for. We had something to eat and then went to Thropness, expecting a nice sandy beach. True there was sand, a little of it. Madelyn went paddling and but for holding her, she embraced every wave with laughter. She played with the shingle and built a sand castle. We did not stay long because there was a cold wind blowing. Evelyn was happy, wrapped up and warm, being well fed and falling asleep in the fresh sea air. We decided to move on to Aldborough to see if it might be better. Though it was not, we stayed a while longer, enjoying and envying those people with such lovely boats which was the next best thing to having one. Time was getting on so back home the next day.

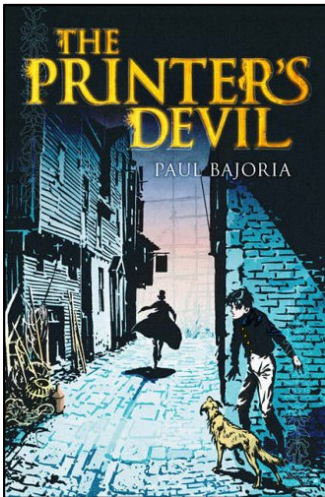
7th August 1979

For this day we agreed to get up earlier then make our way to Norwich. So, after slipping Madelyn a travel sickness pill in with her breakfast, we were on our way. This time we reached Stowmarket before she was sick. However, this time we were prepared with a change of clothes. Norwich was reached and we liked it both for its historical architecture and its shopping facilities; so much so that it became a place to visit without the children. Madelyn ran round the cathedral and got disciplined with everybody looking on as an awkward silence fell in the gift shop. Though Madelyn was none too happy about this, we carried on to the market where we generally looked at beautiful, expensive things we could not afford. Back at the car, Grace was in need of the loo so I said I would look after Madelyn and Evelyn. Well, within minutes, while pulling the pram backwards, I tipped it upwards and out onto the floor tumbled Madelyn with Evelyn following, landing on top of Madelyn's back. After cleaning and feeding we left Norwich and went on to Beccles but decided it was not worth the effort. Then we went on to Bungay which again was not worth the effort so on to Diss which we shall visit again sometime. Then, home via Bury-St-Edmunds.

Week Ending 12th August 1979

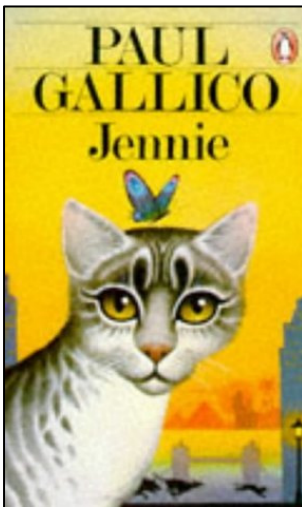
Packed up work early because we were expecting 4 tons of logs. Mum and Dad Harper arrived at 6:30pm for the week-end. Saturday afternoon, while feeding the ducks, throwing them bread, Madelyn tripped in a hole left by a cow. She was up to her knees in river mud. Falling forward, her arms in the mud now as well, she had become completely covered head to foot in mud. Well, we carried her home, stuck her in the sink and washed away both the mud and the smell as best we could. Nan and Grand-Dad left Madelyn and Evelyn each a pound note and a box of Edinburgh Rock which Evelyn thought very tasty, Madelyn not so much. Anyway, Grace and I ate most of it. Sunday night, Grace called be to Madelyn's bedroom to show me that she had taken her rubber pants and nappy off. So from then on, we put her to bed without any safeguards and hope for the best.

Week Ending 19th August 1979 to be continued



The Printer's Devil by Paul Bajoria, is the first part of a trilogy classed as historical-fiction, adventure and mystery.

Paul Bajoria's vivid, suspenseful storytelling will enchant young readers. This shadowy tale set among low-life Victorian London is filled with skulduggery of the highest order. The shady inhabitants of the London underworld are just part of daily life for 12-year-old Mog Winter. There's lots of action and a fairly intricate plot involving Mog and his trusty dog. Employed as a "printer's devil" which is the name for an errand boy in a printer's office, Mog prints 'Wanted' posters for escaped convicts and suspected murderers. A face-to-face encounter between himself and one such prison escapee leads to Mog becoming enmeshed in an ingenious theft, a series of mistaken identities and a murder hunt; all of which are connected to a recently docked ship by the name of the Sun of Calcutta that hails from the Indian subcontinent. Compelled by questions about his own mysterious past which is somehow wrapped up in the seemingly exotic mysteries of the Orient, sets Mog on a dangerous adventure where he will risk his life to discover the plans of a band of opium smugglers and to stop them. Full of plot twists, suspense, and a hint of Eastern magic, this book is sure to keep you on the edge of your seat.

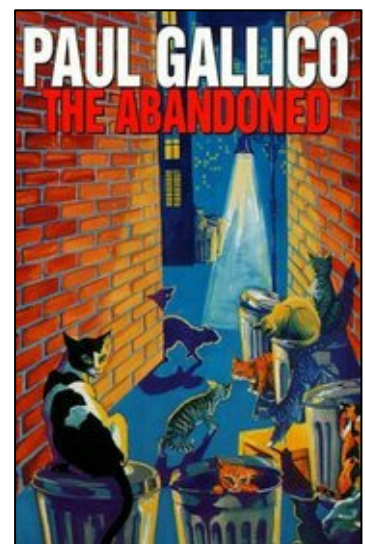


The Abandoned by Paul Gallico first published in 1950 in the UK with the title of ***Jennie***, falls into the genres of Fiction & Sci-Fi and Mystery & Suspense.

This book is about a little, lonely boy named Peter who is eight years old. He has a nanny who he dearly loves and a mother who pays him little attention. He longs for a cat of his own, but his mother can't be bothered with such things. He's hit by a truck and to his considerable astonishment, when he wakes up he is not a young boy any longer. He suddenly finds that he has turned into a white cat. What is worse, his nanny tosses him out of the house. He runs away terrified and confused. After a run-in with a local tomcat who gives him a severe beating, he is rescued by **Jennie**, a bone-thin, scrawny but sweet-tempered tabby cat. She is a cat who had been abandoned by her family when they moved. Because Peter doesn't know the first thing about being a cat, she takes upon herself to educate him in the wiles of the feline world. ("When in doubt - wash!") The book is a chronicle of their adventures. The story is by turns funny, sad, poignant, and riveting, as you follow them on their adventures and wonder if Peter will ever make it back home. Will he stay a cat with Jennie, or return to being a human boy?

This is also a touching story that speaks to animal lovers of any age. It reminds us of the loneliness, the piteous abuse and abandonment of the forgotten, and the longing for the sweetness of home, love, and family that is part of life experienced by too many cats.

Paul William Gallico was an American novelist, short story and sports writer. Many of his works were adapted for motion pictures. He is perhaps best remembered for *The Snow Goose*, his only real critical success, and for the novel *The Poseidon Adventure*, primarily through the 1972 film adaptation.





The Bet – (A Play Review by John H.)

"**The Bet**" is an 1889 short story by **Anton Chekhov** about a banker and a young lawyer who make a bet with each other about whether the death penalty is better or worse than life in prison. The story has a twist ending. They agree to a bet of two million rubles that the lawyer cannot spend fifteen years in solitary confinement. The day before the fifteen-year period concludes, the banker finds a note written by the lawyer in which he declares that in his time in confinement he has learned to despise material goods as fleeting things and he believes that knowledge is worth more than money. To this end he elects to renounce the reward of the bet.

Many years ago in Wick, **John tells us he saw a play of Chekhov's "The Bet"**, adapted for the stage by Miles Matheson. This version has some similarities and differences from the original story. Here, over a Coffee House assembly of libertine academic gamblers, well-oiled with too much claret, a wager is hatched being that a hermit could not survive with 100 books as his only companions for 1 year. Provided he lasts out the year and he is still alive, he will receive a million pounds. At first, he counted the days but he becomes so absorbed in his reading that days gradually turn into weeks, then months. Seasons pass and then the year is finally up. The bet has been won but the hermit waives the money.



13 Minutes : Elser (Film Review by Graeme)

During Hitler's anniversary speech on November 8, 1939, a man is arrested on the Swiss border for possession of suspicious objects. Just minutes later, a bomb explodes in the Munich Bürgerbräukeller, immediately behind the Führer's lectern, killing eight people. The man is Georg Elser, a carpenter from Königsbronn in the Swabia region. When a map of the site of the assault and detonators are found on him, he is sent to be questioned by Arthur Nebe, the head of the Criminal Police in the Reichssicherheitshauptamt, and by Heinrich Müller, the head of the Gestapo. From them, Elser learns that his attempt has failed - that the man he wanted to kill in order to stop the bloodshed of the World War that had just begun, has left the Bürgerbräukeller 13 minutes before the explosion. For days, Elser is interrogated by Nebe and Müller, and for days, he holds out against their questions until he finally confesses and



relates the story of his deed. During the ordeal he looks back at how National Socialism slowly "metastasised" in his home village, how he attempted to oppose it with his best friend Josef Schurr and how he had to turn away from those he loved because of his plans.

Whilst having heard that there had been an attempt on Hitler's life, I knew nothing about George Elser (played with conviction by the actor Christian Friedel). Oliver Hirschbiegel, the film's director, crafts a story focusing on the aftermath of Elser's capture and structured around flashbacks after he is arrested. Whilst parts of George Elser's life are fictionalised for dramatic purposes, the film is a true representation of how one man nearly changed the course of history and saved millions of lives.

**A tense World War II drama, overall I found this film thought provoking
It made me think - what if he had succeeded?**

Besides giving viewers a very interesting insight into Elser's life, we witness Gestapo interrogation of people during this time and how brutal their methods were. This is an excellent film which exposes how countries try to suppress history and how the whole National Socialism doctrine made people fall into line and believe everything they were told.



Maureen's workshop experience

This summer, Maureen attended a *Scottish Recovery Network (SRN)* workshop, a 2 day event, 9:30am - 4:00pm, designed to assist participants in managing and maintaining wellness through the development of a personal action plan called a "WRAP" (*wellness recovery action plan*). The group session introduced methods for gaining control over our own lives and recovery through the use of several "wellness tools". Maureen shares with us what these are and how they help us to deal with everyday challenges to our mental health.

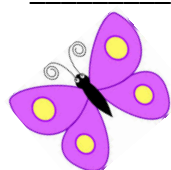
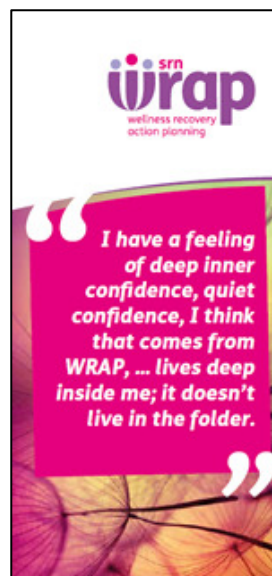
First are the **Wellness Tools** which she describes as "things that make you feel better and bring a smile to your face." Activities, hobbies and pastimes would go on this list which becomes part of a **Wellness Toolbox**. Maureen suggests that "you keep any books that cheer you up in it and a list of things that make you feel good." You are going to actively use these tools to counter difficulties.



She goes on to tell us about the **Daily Maintenance Plan**, the daily routine we do to keep feeling well and in control, which she says "is again a list of things you like to do on a regular basis when everything is fine". For her WRAP plan, this includes keeping a diary of things you enjoy doing. Another important component to the action plan is to identify **Triggers**, those things and events that bring on low or stressed feelings. With reference to this Maureen says "to

write down things that cause a mood dip and also write what helped to stop the mood dip when it happened. Also put down things that you tried that didn't work which will help you to rethink and try again."

Associated with this is recognizing the **Early Warning Signs** of a change for the worse in your well-being so that you can refer to your plan and get things under control earlier. Maureen advocates creating a contingency plan just in case things begin to break down in spite of your efforts to stop them. Along with this **Breakdown Action Plan** she tells us that a person's WRAP should have a plan to deal with really difficult times called your **Crisis Plan** and another one for afterwards to get things back on track. Lastly, Maureen invites all of us to visit the SRN website to obtain further information about WRAP.



2016 Calendar What makes you smile?



We are looking for photographs for next year's BHL calendar.

The subject for the calendar is 'What Makes You Smile?'

This could be anything from a rainbow to a storm cloud, from a field of corn to a bouquet of flowers.

We would like **all entries to be submitted to us by Friday, 25th September 2015** when they will be judged by a panel of 'experts' to decide which 12 get to be in the calendar. We look forward to seeing all of your lovely photographs.

Entries should ideally be submitted by e-mail to Alison at:

admin@befriendershighland.org.uk



See the full story behind the winners of this year's school Rock Challenge®

**SCOTTISH
MENTAL
HEALTH
ARTS & FILM
FESTIVAL**
HIGHLAND

Screening of award winning film '**Sea Front**' and chat with creator Claire Lamond

Passion for the Highlands

Thursday 1st Oct 6:30pm
Town House, Inverness

A taster of this year's **Passion for the Highlands festival** including the announcement of the winners of this year's Passion for Highland photography competition and an exclusive first look at art work from the Eden Court exhibition!

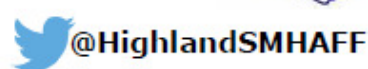
Hosted by STV's Nicola McAlley

Fantastic short films

Free admission:
Booking required

Creative writing performances

Email: policy6@highland.gov.uk to book your place now!



Scottish Mental Health Arts & Film Festival Highland



The winner of the “**Who Said That?**” writing challenge is **Norma** for ‘*I Really Don’t like Broccoli*’.



Keith had this to say about the entrants & winner:

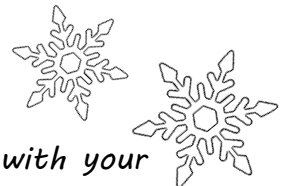


I enjoyed reading all the Who Said That? Entries. They each took a different approach to the task and were well-written. My congratulations to all of the entrants on the high standard of their entries.

The one I’ve chosen as the winner is “I Really Don’t Like Broccoli” by Norma. I was impressed with the way she’s woven the alternative expressions into an interesting story, and has skilfully used the alternatives in some cases to convey actions as well as words. She’s done that in a way that seems natural and reads well.

Keith Walker (Executive Director Befrienders Highland)

Next Submission date December 1st



Let’s celebrate the season with your creative writing. It might be something festive and full of fun. Or something more thoughtful, taking a moment to reflect about 2015. Or a few poetic lines to cherish family and friends? Or some sagely advise about the holidays? Or maybe you just prefer to be the Grinch that stole Christmas. Give us the gift of your ideas. Let’s make our end of year issue the best!

Alan Duncan
Distance Befriending Coordinator
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