

Wordsworth's *Dead*

No. 1 March 2010

news views + the muse from 21st century Cumbria@

We're going through changes ...



... but this is the first and last time we'll use an old Black Sabbath lyric as a strapline. After 12 years of sterling service, **Sue Allan** has left Eden Arts (New Writing Cumbria's host organisation) to pursue a new and adventurous existence as a freelance. [Cumbria Life](#) readers can look forward to seeing her journalism more frequently, and she'll be an almost permanent fixture at the [Words by the Water](#) festival in Keswick next month if you want to catch up. We wish her all the best for future projects and endeavours.

For now, **Mick North** has agreed to take over as caretaker manager until the end of the season. Mick has worked in Cumbria's arts sector for almost 20 years and literature is his passion—he's a published poet and a former director of [Lancaster Litfest](#), was a founder member and officer of the [National Association of Writers in Education](#), and served time on the management committee of [Arvon at Lumb Bank](#).



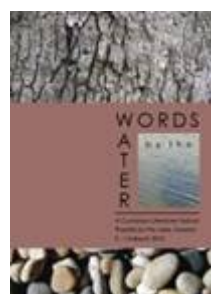
Please direct your New Writing Cumbria queries (and your news) to him at enquiries@newwritingcumbria.org.uk or call 01228 670076.

Wha's gan on? Your guide to words in action

Words by the Water

Cumbria's major lit fest is lapping at our shores again, flowing from 5-14 March through Theatre by the Lake in Keswick. You're already too late for **Gervase Phinn**, **Martin Bell** (on the MP's expenses scandal, *not* his *Little Toller* event), **Jeremy Hardy's** stand-up show, **Shirley Williams**, **Stuart Maconie** and **Melvyn Bragg**.

Melvyn Bragg fans can still catch their man in an unscheduled appearance, occasioned by the late withdrawal of brilliant nonagenarian memoirist **Diana Athill**. Lord B comes on as sub at 9.30am on Sunday 7 March. He'll be there from 9.00am to sign copies of his latest book—*The South Bank Show: The Final Cut*—and will be talking about his 30 year love affair with the much-missed ITV arts programme. [Read more >>](#)





The Poetry Shop

Under the beady eye of manager **Nick Pemberton**, various Cumbrian wordsmiths are donning their shop coats and asking you if there's anything they can help you with. For one day only—Saturday 6 March from 12 noon—drop in to Penrith's **Devonshire Arcade** and see what they've got under the counter. Part of the [Arcade Art Town 2 Town Project](#), putting empty shops to creative use in Carlisle and Penrith.



Cheap thrills in Orton ...

... on Monday 8 March (7.30pm) at the Market Hall, where **Orton Scribblers** invite you to join them at their open evening discussing fiction and non-fiction, with thriller writer [Zoe Sharp](#) and humourist [Jackie Moffat](#).

[Read more >>](#)

Words *in* the Water

The National Trust's [Wordsworth House](#) (William's birthplace) in Cockermouth, is due to re-open on 13 March. The normal visitor route through the house has not been affected by the floods - miraculously escaping - but this year you get to go down into the cellars and see how high the water came up. A new display in the cellars, **A Force of Nature and the Human Spirit**, tells the story of how the flood affected the house and staff, and how the Trust continues to work as part of the community to help get the town back on its feet again.



A Cumbrian Canticle

[Cumbria Rural Choirs](#) have commissioned [Ruth Padel](#) to write four poems on Lakeland themes, set to music by Keswick composer [Ian Hare](#). **A Cumbrian Canticle** will be premiered at the choir's 60th anniversary concert at The Sands Centre, Carlisle, on Saturday 13 March at 7.30pm. Tickets priced £15 are on sale from [The Sands](#) (01228 625222).

In the footsteps of Wordsworth ...

... with **Jack Mapanje** (pictured) and **Paul Farley** at the Wordsworth Trust's Jerwood Centre on Tuesday 23 March (7.00pm), when the two former Dove Cottage Poets in Residence will look back on what their residencies meant to them and read new work. Current incumbent **Emma Jones** runs the **Dove Cottage Poets** workshop group on the last Friday of every month—the next session is 26 March. For more information, visit www.wordsworth.org.uk



Open up on open mic

Two free-for-alls we know about in Carlisle and Kendal: **Speakeasy** at The Source Café in bohemian Denton Holme holds forth on Wednesday 3 March at 8.30pm (and on the first Wednesday of every month thereafter—free entry, get there for 8pm if you want to read/perform), while **Warehouse Open Mic** at Kendal's Brewery Arts Centre spouts off on Saturday 27 March at 7.30pm (always the last Saturday of the month). Warehouse gigs are preceded by a workshop from 4.00-6.00pm. For more info have a slurp of the Brewery's website [here](#).



If you've never been to an open mic gig before and don't know what to expect, you can sample the Speakeasy vibe on [You Tube](#) (that link takes you to a bravura and typically grumpy old man performance by founding father and guiding spirit **Nick Pemberton**, amongst others).

Competitions & Opportunities



5 Minute Funnies

In cahoots with Theatre by the Lake, we're looking for very short *comic* short stories and poems (10 minutes max, 5 minutes better) by writers living in Cumbria. Selected work will be read by actors Dennis Herdman and James Nickerson at a series of half-hour lunchtime events in the theatre's studio in April. **Submissions by 12 March.**

[Read more>>](#)

Compete!

There are so many competitions out there it's hard to keep track, but The Poetry Kit's [website](#) does a very good job. You can also sign up for their monthly email to sharpen your edge if you're that way inclined. They list short story and other writing competitions as well as poetry.

Looming deadlines this month include [The Michael Marks Awards for Poetry Pamphlets](#) (organised by the Poetry Book Society and the British Library -12 March), [The Sentinel Literary Quarterly Competition](#) (25 March), the [Queen Mother Memorial Poetry Competition](#) (we kid you not—30 March), the [Hannah Frank Art Poetry Competition](#), the [First Segora Vignette Competition](#), the [LXV Spring Books Poetry Competition](#), and the [Tom Howard/John H. Reid Short Story Contest](#) (all 31 March). Prizes for this little lot range from £30 to £5,000.



Laurels latest – good news for Cumbrian writers

British Short Screenplay Competition

Carlisle's **Stephen Atherton** and co-writer **Ian Gilbertson** are into the final round of this prestigious gongfest. Their screenplay—*Meet MrSuccessful*— is being read by a judging panel that includes Kenneth Branagh, Sir Alan Parker, and Michael Grade amongst its A-list membership. Fingers crossed.

Mirehouse winner announced

[Jennifer Copley](#) from Barrow has won the Words by the Water/[Mirehouse Poetry comp](#) with her poem *Now You're Gone*, and Carlisle's Terry Jones was amongst the eight runners-up. The Mirehouse is a national competition and attracted over 250 entries this year, judged by poet **John Burnside**. You can hear the winning poems at a free (but ticketed) event at The Garden Hall at Mirehouse on Saturday 13 March at 11.30am. Book via Theatre by the Lake on 017687 74411.

Wordsworth's Dead is produced and edited by **bigupnorth** for New Writing Cumbria, on behalf of [Eden Arts](#), with funding from the [Northern Rock Foundation](#).

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