

PROFESSIONAL WRITING NEWS

June 2007

New website celebrates Falmouth's creative buzz

MA Professional Writing students are to launch a new website to showcase the exceptional wealth of creative talent in the Falmouth area.



The site - CreativeFalmouth.org - features profiles of people making waves in design, film/TV, music, visual arts and writing. Some are already well-known nationally and even globally, others have only recently set out on what look set to be stellar careers. They talk about their work and what Falmouth means to them, with each profile accompanied by a portrait taken by a photography student at the College.

To achieve a highly distinctive visual identity for the site, the student team worked closely with Falmouth-based design agency BRANDlab.

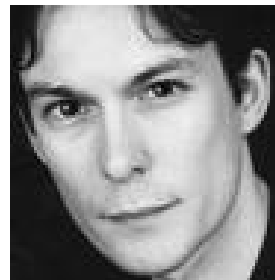
Team member Joe Weir says that the project has been a valuable learning experience, as well as a great chance to build real-world portfolio: "Seeing the concept evolve and understanding all the stages that a professional team of website developers go through has been a real eye-opener for me as a writer, and it's been fascinating to meet so many talented people while researching the content for the site."

Tom Scott, who teaches the Writing Creatively for Business unit of the Professional Writing course, comments: "Quite a few places around the UK are pitching themselves as 'creative hubs', though few can show much in the way of genuinely exciting new work as Falmouth.

People tend to think of the town as a historic port and a beautiful holiday destination - which of course it is. But there's also an extraordinary range of creative enterprise in the area that deserves to be celebrated - and the students have done a fantastic job of doing so."

Visiting author shortlisted for world's top book prize

Professional Writing students were entranced by the quiet charisma of Peter Hobbs, one of the UK's most original



young novelists, when he talked to them recently about starting a career as a writer.

So it may have come as less of a surprise to them than it did to

some literary commentators when Peter's name appeared on the shortlist for the world's biggest book prize, the International IMPAC Dublin Literary Award, alongside Salman Rushdie, Cormac McCarthy, Julian Barnes, Per Petterson, J. M. Coetzee and Jonathan Safran Foer.

After reading from his first novel, *The Short Day Dying*, and his acclaimed book of short stories, *I Could Ride All Day in My Cool Blue Train*, Peter described how he had started writing as a way of staying sane during a long convalescence following a near-fatal bout of malaria, contracted while travelling in Asia. He had lacked confidence that his work was publishable, but was persuaded by a friend to submit a sample to Faber.

The book when published attracted rave reviews, but word of mouth also played a big part in its success. Susan Hill, one of the UK's most influential literary bloggers, was so struck by the profoundly moving novel set in 18th century Cornwall that she bought

ten copies to give away to readers of her blog.

The rest, as they say, is history – and an inspiration to any aspiring writer.

It's Cornwall, but not as we know it...

Opening their copies of the Falmouth Packet newspaper on 2nd May, some residents of southwest Cornwall may have come close to choking on their cornflakes.

Headlines told of the feared drowning of a shipload of desperate climate refugees in Mounts Bay, an outbreak of deadly malaria and a massive Atlantic storm threatening to engulf southern Britain, still reeling in the wake of Hurricane Jade.



It may have been a few moments before some startled readers spotted the date on the front page of the special pull-out section – 2nd May 2057. As a panel inside explained: “This special issue is designed to take an imaginative look at how our small corner of the world might look 50 years from now if climate change is allowed to continue unchecked.”

Paul Sullivan, the College’s Business Fellow for Writing and a former Sunday Times journalist, helped set up the project and worked with Professional Writing students to produce the supplement. He says: “The insert was timed to coincide with a Climate Awareness Day at the Combined Universities in Cornwall campus, the aim being to help promote awareness in the wider community.”

The newspaper was delighted with the special issue, which sparked intense debate amongst its readers and generated more hits on its website than any other item it has run. It also attracted favourable coverage in both the UK Press Gazette and the Times Higher Educational Supplement.

There was an added bonus for Professional Writing students Emily Apple and David Bate, who shared a £500 prize for ‘Best Media Intervention’, awarded by the College to mark the Climate Awareness Day.

Where are they now?

In which we track down Professional Writing alumni, to the ends of the earth if necessary...

It seems that the web-writing skills of our former students are in high demand. **Karen Miller** (2003-4) is editing filmstreet.co.uk, a website designed to engage children with film and filmmaking. She authors, edits and moderates all of the content for the site, as well as promoting it to the target audience. “Completing the Professional Writing course gave me the confidence to write for the education market,” Karen says. Meanwhile, **Cassie Young** (2002-3) has been commissioned to create an online learning resource aimed at migrant workers in the UK, and has also been freelancing as a features journalist and business writer.

Also enjoying a successful freelance career, as a photojournalist, is **Katarina Boijer** (2003-4), who has been placing work on everything from haunted pubs to organic food in outlets including The Times and The Sunday Times Travel Magazine.

Nor have last year’s graduates been hanging around. **Kian Northcote** recently met with legendary TV producer Beryl Vertue to discuss his sitcom script, while **Aurvi Sharma** has been appointed Senior Content Executive at MakeMyTrip.com, India’s biggest travel company. Aurvi reports: “There are a lot of like-minded people around, they pay me decently and the best part is that I get to travel – all expenses paid – and write about it... All this would not have been possible without having studied at Falmouth and the great feedback and support that I received from all the tutors.”