



PROFESSIONAL WRITING NEWS

July 2010

Authors, producers and agents gather to welcome new writers' website

January's party to re-launch profwriting.com was a great chance to catch up with insiders from the world of writing and publishing, as well as with MA alumni from the past few years. And we're pleased to report that these two groups are now very much overlapping.

Several high-profile guests were expertly interviewed for profwriting.com by current MA student Jess Mayne, and were warm in their praise for the innovative site.

John Yorke, Controller of Drama Production and New Talent at the BBC, said: "Writing can be such a lonely profession, and anything that takes some of the mystery and fear out of it can only be a good thing. And the idea of having your work peer-reviewed is brilliant." John will be returning to Falmouth in November to run a week-long workshop with students.

Opportunity

Leading literary agent Mark Lucas commented: "There's so much pressure these days for writers to succeed first time. This is an opportunity for people to have an 'apprenticeship' in a space that's reasonably public, but where they're not too vulnerable."

It was a view echoed by scriptwriter and radio producer Paul Dodgson: "Sites like this are so important because they allow time for writers to develop below the horizon, so that by the time work does get to an agent it's in a much better state."

Former MA student Gareth May (2005-6), whose non-fiction book *150 Things Every Man Should Know* started life as a course project, saw profwriting.com as a way of sharing some of the skills and knowledge he'd gained on the MA course and which had given him a head-start at the beginning of his journey as a writer.

Video highlights of the launch can be seen at www.profwriting.com/launch.



The symposium panel (left to right): Sarah Jane, Georgia Mason, Christina Bunce, Patrick Gale, Elinor Cooper, Katy Lazenby.

Symposium shines light on how successful fiction is created and sold

When novelist Patrick Gale donated his literary archive to University College Falmouth, we celebrated his generous gift by holding a special symposium - *The Novel: From Pencil to Posterity*.

The event in June brought together Patrick himself with a panel of industry experts, using items from the archive to give insights not just into the creative process but also into the part played by editors, agents, designers and booksellers in making sure that an author's work reaches the widest possible audience.

On the panel were Georgia Mason, Editor at Fourth Estate (the HarperCollins imprint that publishes Patrick's work), Elinor Cooper, from the leading literary agency AP Watt; Katy Lazenby, Manager of the award-winning independent bookshop The Falmouth Bookseller, UCF Archivist Sarah Jane and MA Professional Writing Course Leader Christina Bunce.

The event focused on *Notes from an Exhibition*, Patrick's bestselling novel of 2007, showing how the spark of an



idea was developed into a spellbinding story, and how this was then packaged and sold worldwide.

Notebooks, draft manuscripts and research materials - complete with doodles, crossings out and 'notes to self' - revealed how Patrick built up the book's characters and created authentic backgrounds to different aspects of the story, from Canadian psychiatric institutions in the 1950s to the world of the St Ives artists in the 1970s.

Creative mess

Responding to questions from a large audience, Patrick recommended writing a first draft using pen and paper rather than a computer, observing: "Computers want to tidy up your thoughts, but mess is more fertile." It was a point richly borne out by the archive materials on display.

Explaining why he wanted the archive to be in Falmouth, Patrick said: "It's particularly pleasing that these materials will be staying in Cornwall, which has done so much to inspire my work. It's also very fitting that they should be with University College Falmouth, as its MA in Professional Writing has a unique focus on the more practical aspects of making a career as a writer."

Eyjafjallajökull fails to cast cloud over London Book Fair visit

Volcanic dust may have prevented many foreign publishers from attending the London Book Fair in April, but it presented no barrier to a large group of our students and tutors.

In fact, the dearth of international attendees at this major book-world event played to our advantage, as it meant we were able to spend time on publishers' usually closed stands discussing trends, plugging students' manuscripts and generally getting to know who's commissioning what.

As well as networking intensively, students attended seminars with leading authors and took part in debates on the

future of publishing in a multi-platform world.

Student Matt Cox was even lucky enough to have a one-on-one chat with *Wolf Hall* author Hilary Mantel, who gave him advice on how to complete a historical narrative when the facts are missing. You can read a piece Matt has written about the encounter [here](#).



Students and tutors at the London Book Fair

Where are they now?

Only space for a brief round-up of alumni news this time - more in our next issue...

Elaine Ruth White (2002-3) has been working on collaborative theatre projects. One Day, Two Dawns, an English Touring Opera production for which she wrote the libretto, recently won a Royal Philharmonic Society Music Award and was broadcast on Radio 3.

Kian Northcote (2005-6) writes: "I have just sold STV part of the rights to my first screenplay - a version of the sitcom script that I initially developed for my final project on the MA. I've been working closely with Ruth Underwood [2005-6], who works in Development for STV and has been operating as my script editor. Now we're looking for a co-producer down south!"

Joe Weir (2006-7) is working as a producer at global brand consultancy VentureThree. Joe recently returned to Falmouth to give a talk on cross-platform branding to MA students.