



INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE OF MODERN LETTERS

Te Pūtahi Tuhi Auaha o te Ao

Newsletter – 5 February 2010

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This is the 152nd in a series of occasional newsletters from the Victoria University centre of the International Institute of Modern Letters. For more information about any of the items, please email modernletters@vuw.ac.nz.

1. J C Sturm and Hugh Price.....	1
2. Christopher wins Costa.....	2
3. Changing the guard.....	2
4. Lyrical foliage.....	2
5. A whale of a time.....	3
6. From the whiteboard.....	3
7. Sorting the sheep from the goats.....	3
8. Digital cinema.....	4
9. Iowa residency.....	4
10. Parking up.....	4
11. Hue and Cry.....	5
12. Fringe poetry.....	5
13. Children's writing with Joy Cowley.....	5
14. Recent web reading.....	5
15. Great lists of our time.....	6

1. J C Sturm and Hugh Price

New Zealand literature continues to lose its elders and betters. We were especially sad about the recent deaths of J C Sturm and Hugh Price.

There are many things that could be said about J C Sturm (aka Jacquie Sturm, aka Jacquie Baxter): that she was married to the poet James K Baxter; that she was married to the scholar Peter Alcock; that she was one of the first Maori women to receive a university degree; that she was a particularly important friend for Janet Frame; and, of course, that she cared deeply and actively for her family. But she will also be remembered for her remarkable short stories and poems - all of which are

informed by the gracefulness and dignity of voice and character that marked her as a human being. Jeffrey Paparoa Holman's obituary can be read [here](#) and Roma Potiki's interview with her for *Trout* is available [here](#). (The interview runs through several pages: use the arrows at the foot of the page to scroll through.) And [here](#) you can read about her memorial service.

Many of New Zealand's leading contemporary scholars and writers owe much to the publisher and writer Hugh Price, who among many other things was instrumental in helping set up Victoria University Press back in the 1970s and 80s. He died just after Christmas, following a long spell of illness. He and his wife Beverley and daughter Susan made a formidable trio in their support for writers (for example, through the Randell Cottage) and especially in their fostering of children's writers and writing. We wrote about Hugh in one of last year's newsletters when he received an honorary doctorate from Victoria. His acceptance speech can be read [here](#) while Peter Kitchin's *Dominion Post* obituary is [here](#).

2. Christopher wins Costa

We were delighted to hear that Christopher Reid's collection *A Scattering*, written in memory of his late wife, was named winner of Britain's Costa Award in January. *A Scattering* was competing with the winners of the fiction (Colm Toibin's *Brooklyn*), biography (*The Strangest Man*, Graham Farmelo) and children's fiction (*The Ask and the Answer*, Patrick Ness) categories for the £30,000 overall prize. Christopher Reid visited New Zealand last July to teach a poetry masterclass for the IIML's MA students, who found him a genial and generous teacher. *A Scattering* was published by Reid's old friend Craig Raine, with whom he founded the so-called Martian school of poetry. He follows in the footsteps of Douglas Dunn, Ted Hughes and Seamus Heaney – the last two of whom he published when he worked at Faber & Faber – to become only the fourth poet to win the prize, which was formerly known as the Whitbread.

3. Changing the guard

Last week we said farewell to 2009 Creative New Zealand / Victoria University Writer in Residence Paula Boock, who leaves us with the manuscript of a novel in her satchel, and will soon start work on her second tele-feature for Lippy Pictures. We've very much enjoyed having her in the building, and appreciated her contribution to both the Script and Page writing students. This week we were pleased to welcome the new resident, poet Jenny Bornholdt, to the writing room – especially as she arrived bearing cake.

4. Lyrical foliage

Tomorrow (Waitangi Day) at 8 pm Radio New Zealand Concert will broadcast a [concert](#) that was recorded last year in the Massey Conservatorium of Music Concert Hall, in which Wellington jazz pianist and teacher Norman Meehan collaborated with

singer Hannah Griffin and saxophonist Colin Hemmingsen to produce settings of poems by Bill Manhire. Some of the lyrics (in both senses of the word) are soon to appear in Bill's new collection, *The Victims of Lightning*, which will be launched at New Zealand Post Writers and Readers Week on 11 March.

5. A whale of a time

We're very much looking forward to Writers & Readers Week (9-14 March): the full [programme](#) was released last week, when the Festival announced several late additions to the guest list, including the wildly successful author of *The Time Traveller's Wife*, Audrey Niffenegger, and the winner of the 2009 Samuel Johnson Prize, Philip Hoare. Hoare is a biographer whose passion for whales led him to write his award-winning work of creative non-fiction, *Leviathan, or The Whale*. You can hear Kim Hill's 30 January interview with him [here](#).

Tickets for the Gala Opening (in which Niffenegger appears), the three Town Hall Talks (with Richard Dawkins, Simon Schama and Neil Gaiman), Afternoon Tea with Jenny Patrick, and the Concession Pass are on sale now, and general bookings for all Writers Upfront sessions open on 9 February. The best bet for finding books by Writers and Readers Week authors is to visit the official bookseller, Unity Books (Wellington and Auckland).

6. From the whiteboard

'Most new poetry is unmemorable not because it's obscure, or self-absorbed, or trivial – terrific poems can be written in all these ways – but because most young poets have lost their sense of human sound. Or they know what it is, but can't write the shape of it. All the wit and learning in the world can't compensate for an inability to render persuasively the distinct voice of an actual breathing person.'

— Glyn Maxwell

7. Sorting the sheep from the goats

We enjoyed this recent advertisement for a fixed-term 'communications advisor' contract with Federated Farmers:

"No two days are ever the same. You will work on truly meaty issues going to the heart of New Zealand's future. You will need to be a style guide martinet with impeccable grammatical skills. You must combine the subtlety of Ban Ki-moon with the tenacity of Alastair Campbell and if you don't know who they are, don't apply. You'll have to know your cow from a bull and the difference between a Texel sheep and a Mohair goat. If you do, then this fixed term contract will truly extend you."

Applications close on 9 February.

8. Digital cinema

Victoria University's Film Programme is offering a free one-day symposium on Cinema in the Digital Age, bringing together industry professionals, creative practitioners, scholars and film archivists in 'Wellywood' next Thursday. The symposium's keynote speech will be given by world-class scholar in Film and Media Studies Professor Sean Cubitt of the University of Melbourne, and it will feature a panel discussion from New Zealand filmmakers Geoff Murphy and Gaylene Preston, and multiple-Oscar winning cinematographer Alex Funke. Event organiser Dr Tim Groves says the symposium 'will explore the creative and industrial opportunities and challenges that have emerged as a result, as well as some of the aesthetic and cultural implications of the transition to digital cinema—the most significant development in cinema since the arrival of sound.'

The symposium run will from 9-5.30 pm in the Old Government Buildings, Pipitea Campus on Thursday 11 February; check out the schedule and abstracts [here](#) or email film@vuw.ac.nz for more details.

9. Iowa residency

Creative New Zealand is calling for applications for the International Writing Program, University of Iowa Writers' Residency 2010. This residency brings established writers from around the world to the University of Iowa International Writing Program where they become part of the literary community on campus. It is open to nationally recognised New Zealand writers in all literary genres who have previously published at least one volume of work. The residency runs from 28 August to 12 November 2010, and the closing date for applications is 26 February. For further details and criteria visit the [Special Opportunities page](#) of Creative New Zealand's website, or contact Felicity Birch, Programme Advisor on 04 498 0735 or felicity.birch@creativenz.govt.nz.

10. Parking up

Closer to home, applications are now sought for the 2010 Auckland Regional Council parks-based artist in residency. This residency is for the creation of new work in response to living and working in a park environment, and is 'intended for mature, independent and adventurous artists' with an Auckland connection. Applications from writers, composers, choreographers, film-makers as well as visual artists are welcomed.

It is for an eight week period within mid Sept - mid Nov 2010, and will be based in the Waitakere Ranges Regional Park. Applications close on 19 February, and more information is available from the [website](#) or from Michelle Edge, tel 09 366 2000 x 8007.

11. Hue and Cry

The editors of writing and art journal *Hue and Cry* are now looking for submissions for their fourth (as yet untitled) issue. Deadline is the end of February, but the sooner the better, they say. Send them an email (hueandcryjournal@gmail.com) for more information, or just send new work to Hue & Cry, PO Box 6386, Wellesley Street, Auckland 1010.

12. Fringe poetry

Haimona is a [Fringe Festival](#) show performed by Mike Eager that tells the story of his friend Simon Williamson, using Simon's own poetry. Simon died in 1999 at the age of thirty-one. He was well known in the New Zealand underground poetry scene and was regularly published in publications such as *Takahe* and *JAAM*. Two of books of his work (*Storyteller* and *Twenty-five Cars*) were published posthumously, and a copy of *Twenty-five Cars* will go with every ticket purchased. *Haimona* runs from 3-7 March at 8 pm, Katipo Café, 76 Willis St, Wellington. Bookings: 021 064 5893 (text or call). Cost: \$15/12/11.

13. Children's writing with Joy Cowley

Joy Cowley will run a workshop on children's writing at Wellington Girls' College on the weekend of 20-21 March. It will cover Getting Started, The Disciplines of Writing for Children, Writing for Early Reading, The Importance of Humour, Dialogue, Plot, Character, Picture Books, Junior Fiction, YA Novels, and Presentation of Manuscripts. Proceeds of the workshop will go to the Wellington Central L.E.C. of the NZ Labour Party. The fee is \$350 (includes morning/afternoon tea); for registrations or inquiries contact Paul Maskill, 027 329 5501 or email maskillp@wellington-girls.school.nz.

14. Recent web reading

[The Book](#)

[Donna Banicevich-Gera interview](#)

[What Bill Manhire's been reading](#)

[LOLcat Wasteland](#)

[Katherine Mansfield's blog](#)

[The Vintner's Duck](#)

[Irony marks](#)

[Literary lists](#)

[Literary quotes of 2009](#)

[Travelling home](#)

[A googlemaps literary tale](#) (is this a new genre?)

[Eleanor Catton short story](#)

[Paula Morris short story](#)

[Higgs](#)

[Ern Malley's ongoing life](#)

[Nic Cage as everyone](#)

[Philip Roth interview](#)

[Essential facts and figures from the world of poetry](#)

[Dedications](#)

[Death of the slush pile](#)

[Clonehenge](#)

[The Gettysburg Powerpoint Presentation](#)

[100 poems in a day](#)

[100 things we didn't know last year](#)

[Werner Herzog Reads Curious George](#)

[Neil Gaiman interview](#)

15. Great lists of our time

Nicknames for Leonard Cohen:

Lord Byron Of Rock'n'Roll

Bard Of The Boudoir

Ladies Man
Grandson Of The Prince Of Grammarians
Master Of Erotic Despair
Master Of Romantic Despair
High Priest Of Pathos
Poet Laureate Of Pessimism
Grocer Of Despair
Prophet of Despair
Poet Laureate Of Commitophobes
Bard Of Bedsits
Dr. Kevorkian Of Song
Beautiful Creep
Godfather Of Gloom
Prince Of Bummers
Troubadour Of Travail
Laughing Len
Laughing Lennie
Captain Mandrax
Poet of Rock and Roll
Master of the Egg Salad Sandwich
Poet of the Holy Sinners
Poet Of Existential Despair
Jikan, Jikan The Useless Monk, Silent One
Poet Of Bedsit Angst
Gloom Merchant
Bourgeois Individualist Poet
Grand Master of Melancholia
Durable Hipster
Legendary Ladies Man
Existential Comedian
Spin Doctor For The Apocalypse
Grizzled Prophet
Damaged Priest
Hippie Icon
Apocalyptic Lounge Lizard
Jeremiah Of Tin Pan Alley
Amiable Gangster
Poetic Playboy
Emotional Imperialist
Restless Pilgrim
Patron Saint Of Angst
Smiling Dada Of Despair
Montreal Mensch
Prince of Pain and Crown Prince of Pain
Joking Troubadour of Gloom and Troubadour of Gloom
Master Of Sexy Melancholy
High Priest Of Solitude
Disappearing Mr. Mysterioso
Master Of Misery
Maestro Of Melancholy

Poet Of Love
Patron Saint Of Disappointment
Prince of Precision
Poet Of Pleasure And Pain
Bard of Our Great Depression
Godfather Of Miserablism
Coolest White Man On The Planet
Poet Of Swinging Suicides
Master Of Duende
Bleak Baritone
Troubadour Of Love
Cat In The Hat
Mel Torme of the Terminally Downbeat

<http://1heckofaguy.com/leonard-cohen-aka-the-nicknames/>

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Supporting the IIML

The International Institute of Modern Letters was established at Victoria University in 2001 to promote and foster contemporary imaginative writing. Our founder, philanthropist Glenn Schaeffer, continues to contribute to IIML activities in a range of ways.

While not everyone is able to match Glenn's level of support, we value all those who have helped us to foster the development of emerging writers – for example through scholarships, prizes, and grants. We would welcome the opportunity to talk with you about continuing your support for the IIML, for example through a gift in your will.

All gifts are managed by the Victoria University Foundation, a registered charitable trust established to raise funds in areas of strategic importance to the University, such as the IIML.

For further information on how you can provide philanthropic support to the IIML, please contact our Director, Bill Manhire, Ph: 04 463 6808, Email bill.manhire@vuw.ac.nz, or Diana Meads, Fundraising Manager, Victoria University of Wellington Foundation Ph: 0800 VIC LEGACY (0800 842 534), Email: diana.meads@vuw.ac.nz