



## INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE OF MODERN LETTERS

*Te Pūtahi Tuhi Auaha o te Ao*

### Newsletter – 4 May 2011

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This is the 168<sup>th</sup> 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](mailto:modernletters).

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1. Come join the CREW .....	1
2. Auckland Writers Festival .....	2
3. Sport .....	2
4. A bit more best .....	2
5. Literary lanes and garden paths (part the first) .....	3
6. Literary lanes etc (part the second) .....	4
7. Nominations corner .....	4
8. A question of copyright .....	4
9. Citrus theft outbreak in Menton .....	5
10. Boy oh boy! .....	6
11. Bloggers .....	6
12. The expanding bookshelf .....	7
13. Television scriptwriting competition .....	7
14. Recent web reading .....	7
15. Great lists of our time .....	8

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#### 1. Come join the CREW

A quick reminder that applications for our second trimester workshops can be made now. The workshops run between July and October, meeting weekly in three-hour sessions.

The Poetry Workshop is led by [James Brown](#) and the Children's Writing Workshop by [Eirlys Hunter](#).

For full information about each course, check the pdf files [here](#) and [here](#).

More general application information is [here](#)

If you have any difficulty making your application, feel free to contact us at [modernletters@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:modernletters@vuw.ac.nz) ; or phone (04) 463 6854.

PS – You can also apply now for our trimester 3 Iowa Workshops – condensed six-week summer versions of our fiction and poetry workshops, led by graduates of the famed Iowa Writers' Workshop. For timetable information look [here](#) and [here](#).

## 2. Auckland Writers Festival

It's nice to see how many of our very best friends are taking part in this year's Auckland Writers' Festival. So far we've spotted Craig Cliff, Laurence Fearnley, Tina Makereti, Jenny Bornholdt, Bill Manhire, Tusiata Avia, David Vann, Emily Perkins, Paula Boock, Fergus Barrowman, Mandy Hager, Elizabeth Knox, Paula Morris, Sue Orr and Sarah Quigley. The festival runs 11-15 May, and there's a full programme [here](#).

It won't surprise anyone to learn that we're especially looking forward to the launch event for *The Best of Best New Zealand Poems*, 5.30 on Saturday 14 May, with readings from Tusiata Avia, Paula Green, Cilla McQueen, Bill Manhire, Emma Neale, Vincent O'Sullivan, Elizabeth Smither and Robert Sullivan. Fergus Barrowman introduces.

If you were really keen, you could choose to read the anthology before it's published by checking out the contents list [here](#) then reading (or listening) to the relevant poems on the [BNZP website](#). But we recommend waiting for the book – especially as we've just glimpsed an advance copy.

## 3. Sport

Also publishing to coincide with the Auckland Writers Festival is a whopper issue of *Sport*, with some 50 contributors and a mysterious bus called DOODLEDASHER on the [cover](#).

The new *Sport* contains the winners of [The Long and the Short of It competition](#). The winning stories will also appear in a special – and wonderfully handsome – [publication](#) with a number of other highly commended entries.

## 4. A bit more best

[New Zealand's best first novel 2009](#) just became [Canada's best first novel 2011](#). Eleanor Catton's *The Rehearsal* has won the Amazon Canada Best First Novel Award.

'*The Rehearsal* is everything a first novel ought to be: bold, inventive, self-possessed,' jury head Stuart Woods, editor of *Quill & Quire* magazine, said in a statement. 'The novel offers keen insight into the worlds of high art, music, and theatre while brilliantly decoding the rituals of adolescent life. In the hands of a less talented writer, *The Rehearsal* could easily have become a tiresome experiment, but Catton has imbued every page, every paragraph, with wit and insight.'

As we may have mentioned from time to time, *The Rehearsal* first came to life in Damien Wilkins's 2008 MA Workshop here at Victoria, and won Ellie Catton the Adam Award – the first of many such honours. And just today we hear that filmmakers Alison Maclean & Bridget Ikin have optioned *The Rehearsal*.

## 5. Literary lanes and garden paths (part the first)

For some time we've contemplated making a list of streets named after New Zealand writers. The news that there's now a Kidman street in Rolleston, named for novelist Fiona Kidman, has encouraged us to get down to business. Outside New Zealand there's probably only the rue Katherine Mansfield in Menton, but there must be lots of local stuff. As we went about our contemplation, via Google Maps, we vaguely recalled ancient controversy over the naming of Janet Frame Place, which you can now find in Whiteman's Valley, just off, yes, Katherine Mansfield Drive. A slightly less vague memory led us to Stephen Stratford, editor of the much lamented [Quote Unquote](#), and now author of the much-admired blog of the same name. The fine Mr Stratford – who of course has the distinction of sharing a name with the Taranaki township where Janet Frame once lived – was quickly able to supply the following clipping from the July 1994 issue of the Upper Hutt Leader:

### **'Janet Frame Street Name Not Wanted**

It seems the writings of Janet Frame are not too popular with some Upper Hutt City Councillors reluctant to name a Whitemans Valley street after her.

At last week's policy and planning committee meeting Councillor Hilda Billington was adamant the new cul-de-sac off Katherine Mansfield Drive not be named after the New Zealand author.

Cr Billington said she does not like Janet Frame's books and she has no relevance to Upper Hutt.

Council's director of corporate services Jenny Bentley said that when considering street names the developer usually comes up with some names which should continue the area's existing theme. In Whitemans Valley's case, famous New Zealand authors.

Subdivider Don Robinson suggested four names, Ainsdale Way, Janet Frame Way, Dame Ngaio Marsh Place and Pukeko Place or Way.

In his council report city planner Grant Birkinshaw singled these down to Janet Frame Grove or Ainsdale Grove. He said the city should be honoured to have the opportunity to use Janet Frame's name alongside Katherine Mansfield. Janet Frame has given permission for the street to be named after her.

Cr Pat Christianson suggested author of Upper Hutt's history Jack Kelleher, or editor of the *Leader* Rosemary McLennan, who recently wrote a history of Normandale, as possible names for the street. Jack Kelleher has a service lane named after him.

After much discussion the committee recommended council adopt Ainsdale Grove which is associated with subdivider Mr Robinson's farming operation.'

## **6. Literary lanes etc (part the second)**

We would still like to compile our list of literary lanes, streets and – if they exist – boulevards. We note, for example, a James K Baxter Place in Christchurch, and an Ashton Warner Way not far from Janet Frame Way (which, we're pleased to note, eventually won out over Ainsdale Grove). But these things are never easy without local knowledge. So we appeal to you, dear reader, to send us as many suggestions as you can. We promise to post the full list in a future newsletter. Just to encourage you, this issue's Great List of Our Time consists of literary street names spotted by the afore-mentioned Stephen Stratford not so far from his place of residence. No wonder he writes so well.

## **7. Nominations corner**

The National Library is calling for nominations for the next New Zealand Poet Laureate, whose term will be for two years from July 2011. The Award carries a monetary value of \$40,000 per year. The nomination form and background information are available on the [National Library's website](#).

Nominations close on Friday 17 June 2011.

Further information from [Peter Ireland](#) at the National Library.

Nominations for the [Prime Minister's Awards](#) are also open, and close on Friday 6 May.

## **8. A question of copyright**

The Dominion Post's classical music reviewing person, John Button, complained recently about a loud cough from an audience member at an NZSO show. The audience member fessed up in a subsequent letters column, outing herself as Viv Walker (mother, we're pretty sure, of Janie, who did the scriptwriting MA here with Ken Duncum some years ago).

I want to confess to reviewer John Button that it was I who performed the "extraordinarily insensitive cough at a delicate moment in the Mahler Symphony".

It was an unplanned cancer spasm, not deliberately timed for a "delicate moment".

I did consider climbing over the railing to leave, but judged that I didn't have enough oxygen to complete the move. Thank goodness I didn't because there was a four-foot drop to the aisle below. I could have ended up with a broken leg or two, and I'd have screamed more loudly than I coughed.

Given that it was hard to spot anyone younger than 70 in the audience, I'm surprised there weren't a few heart attacks, strokes and at least one "insensitive" death.

Button needs to get over himself. His review was "extraordinarily" shallow, not surprising given how easily distracted he obviously was.'

Anyway, this called forth a subsequent letter from Leslie Austin. He congratulated Viv Walker on her brave admission of guilt, and helpfully added, 'A cough is a cough, no matter how loud. I am ever [sic] reminded of conductor Benjamin Zander, who conducted the NZSO National Youth Orchestra in 1999. He gently but firmly gave the audience a classic lesson on how to stifle a cough during a concert. This might have shocked a few, but it worked. It's my habit to record most broadcast NZSO concerts. I did this one, and Viv Walker's cough was captured loud and clear.'

The last word seems to have gone to Viv Walker, who then replied (April 15):

'Tis me, the NZSO concert-cougher again, responding to Leslie Austin. He says he recorded the concert and my cough can be heard "loud and clear." Well, I've just had a wee chat with a lawyer friend, who says there's a copyright issue here because I didn't give him permission to record it. It's my cough and I want it back.'

Which is where, as far as we can tell, the matter rests.

## **9. Citrus theft outbreak in Menton**

Chris Price has been keeping a loose poetry journal since she arrived in Menton, and has given us permission to occasionally quote from it. We can't remember what we were doing on April 20<sup>th</sup>, but this is what Chris was up to:

Vicente Blasco-Ibanez, I have stolen your lemons.  
From under the nose of Cervantes I took them,  
in the ruined garden of writers  
at the Villa Fontana Rosa.  
But they were lying on the ground.  
But the house and garden are being restored –  
though Flaubert is still a headless plinth  
and your ceramic benches, little Alhambras,  
becalmed amid the mostly unmade lawns and flower beds.  
Still, Don Quixote and Sancho Panza set off from La Mancha  
to journey across the tiled comic-book of their story every day.  
Valencia is on its way back, but it's taking its time:  
the external walls of your house are already bright, but inside  
they haven't yet sanded down the wall where  
Sex Drugs Music is scratched into the paintwork.

A few years too late to meet KM, you built Fontana Rosa  
of bestsellers and the A-list movies made of them, and when  
you died 8 French and 8 Spanish sailors were required  
to shoulder the weight of your fame, contained  
inside a wooden book with gilded pages.  
It weighed 800 kilos, but time  
has put you on a diet since then.

As I slipped out, a tiny brilliant cosmos of lemons  
stashed with the laptop in the darkness  
of my backpack, Dickens, Cervantes  
and Balzac smiled down upon me  
from the ruined heaven of your gateway.  
They were lying on the ground. But on the terrace,  
you might like to know, grew one perfect red rose.

Each morning, the juice from just a quarter  
of one of your lemons  
in a glass of cold water primes  
my digestion.

## **10. Boy oh boy!**

Jo Smith, Ocean Mercier and Alice Te Punga Somerville are hosting a one-day symposium on Taika Waititi's *Boy* on Friday 13th May in the Hunter Council Chambers at Victoria University. Some learned papers are already scheduled ('Childhood as Affective Time-Space in Boy'; 'Discursive Identification in Boy'), but the day doesn't sound too forbidding. There's clearly plenty of time set aside for general discussion and round-table talk, and the event ends with a publication planning party and fish 'n' chips. To register your intention to attend, or just to find out more, please [email](#).

## **11. Bloggers**

VUP is promising a blog. 'We have a tasty new regime lined up for the VUP blog. Each week we'll be featuring some of our top talent with guest posts from our authors and extracts from new titles. This week you can look forward to some musings on poetry from Kate Camp and a new poem from the *Hill of Wool* by Jenny Bornholdt.' Try looking for it [here](#).

[Susan Pearce is keeping a Reading Journal](#)

[Joan Fleming is piecing things together](#)

[Fiona Kidman has revamped her website](#)

[Booksellers NZ has started its blog](#)

[Emma Neale has a blog](#)

[Guy Somerset is blogging](#) on the (rather promising) new Listener site

[Nosebleed Cinema is up and running](#)

## **12. The expanding bookshelf**

Trina Saffioti's new book [Stolen Girl](#) has just been published by Magabala Books who also published her 2008 title [The Old Frangipani Tree at Flying Fish Point](#). The books were recently launched at [Wellington's Children's Bookshop](#). Trina has done the Poetry, Short Fiction and Children's Fiction workshops here at the IIML.

Also launched recently from Gecko Press, is Barbara Else's [The Travelling Restaurant](#)

Says Kate De Goldi: "This is one of the most enchanting books that I've read for a long time. I loved it."

Mary Cresswell's new poetry collection *Trace Fossils* is out now from Steele Roberts. Tim Jones has posted a very interesting [interview](#) with her on his blog to mark publication.

[Jenny Bornholdt's new book of poems](#) appears this month from VUP. We feel especially connected to *The Hill of Wool* as some of the poems were written on our premises. The book mostly came into being while Jen was the CNZ/Victoria writer in residence last year.

## **13. Television scriptwriting competition**

The New Zealand Writers' Guild Script Writing contest is now open. This year the format is television and there is already interest from TV producers and production companies. More information [here](#).

## **14. Recent web reading**

[Simon Sweetman reviews Making Baby Float](#)

[Abbotabad](#)

[Over the Net's 'ongoing series celebrating the Ministry of Land Transport and Local Body support of New Zealand artists'](#)

[Trans-Tasman poetry!](#) A new issue of Snorkel

[The lost city –Christchurch on film](#)

[Writing enters its punk rock phase](#)

["We can't go round taking axes to the frozen sea all day long" – Kim Hill with John Newton](#)

[Richard Ford on the writing life](#)

[This is taking Shakespeare worship just a bit too far](#)

[I AM THE COIN](#)

[Want to contribute to a conference based on \*Man Alone\*?](#)

[George Saunders interview](#)

[Paula Morris finishes a novel and sees a meerkat in a muffin](#)

['My advice for young female writers would be to shoot high and not cower' – Jennifer Egan](#)

[Robert Falcon Scott tweets his way to the Pole](#)

## **15. Great lists of our time**

### **The street names of Leamington**

Addison Street

Alley Place

Alpers Ridge

Arnold Street

Austen Place

Baxter Place

Belloc Place

Bracken Street

Bronte Place

Brooke Terrace

Browning Street

Burns Street

Byron Street

Campbell Street

Carlyle Street

Chaucer Street

Chesterton Drive

Christy Brown Place

Coleridge Street

Conrad Place

Cowley Drive

Cresswell Place

Curnow Place  
Dallas Place  
De la Mare Drive  
Dickens Place  
Drayton Place  
Eliot Place  
Fairburn Place  
Fletcher Place  
Frame Street  
Glover Street  
Goldsmith Street  
Gordon Street  
Grace Avenue  
Hemans Street  
Hilliard Place  
Houseman Place  
Hulme Place  
Hunt Grove  
Ihimaera Terrace  
Keats Terrace  
Kingsley Street  
Kipling Street  
Knox Place  
Lamb Street  
Longfellow Street  
Mansfield Place  
Marlowe Drive  
Mason Place  
Milton Street  
Murray Street  
Pepys Place  
Raleigh Street  
Robyn Hyde Place  
Ruskin Place  
Sargeson Place  
Scott Street  
Shadbolt Drive  
Shakespeare Street  
Shaw Street  
Shelley Street  
Sheridan Crescent  
Southey Street  
Spencer Street (possibly a literal for Spenser?)  
Stevenson Place  
Swift Place  
Tennyson Street  
Thomas Place  
Thwaites Place

Walpole Street  
Wordsworth Street

\* \* \*

### **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](mailto: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](mailto:diana.meads@vuw.ac.nz)