



## The Reader Online

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## **Penny Reading Tickets – SOLD OUT!**

All of the tickets for this year's Penny Readings have been snapped up from Liverpool and Birkenhead Central Libraries!

Due to huge demand for the tickets, we have made twenty available to bid for on eBay. So if you're really keen to come, you still have a chance. These tickets will be available from next Friday (27th November) – more details nearer the time.

## **Event: Ian McMillan Jazz Orchestra**

The Ian McMillan Jazz Orchestra, in association with North End Writers, is performing as part of the Cornerstone Festival on Friday 27th November. The event is being held in the Great Hall, Cornerstone Building at Liverpool HOPE University (entrance is on Haigh Street in Everton – just opposite the Staples building).

The tickets are £8 and £5 and the event will start at 7.30 pm. The number for the box office is 0151 291 3578.

North End Writers would desperately love to buy up some of the tickets themselves to distribute them to the local community in Everton but they do not have the resources to make this possible. So, if you have a rich uncle or know a local firm that would buy ten tickets and donate them to the festival it would be an amazing help! (Please email Pauline Rowe at North End Writers if you know of anyone that may be able to assist.)

## Letters to the Editor

Not a letter *to* the Editor of *The Reader*, but a letter *from* the Editor of *The Reader* to the Editor of the TLS, on the subject of Research in the Humanities. Philip Davis says:

In my own experience, the attempt to launch an MA testing the claims of “bibliotherapy” – asking what kind of good it is that literature might do in the world of non-academic readers – found that the resistance from hard scientists was no greater than that from orthodox literature scholars.

[Click here to read the letter in full.](#)

## **World Toilet Day**

Today, 19th November, is World Toilet Day. What we want to ask is, what are you reading?!

## Winter Writing Workshops

**1. Remember that Novel?** – For anyone writing one; **20-22 November at South Hooe, Devon**; a weekend to revitalise flagging plotlines, sagging middles or crumpling climaxes (fictional). See website.

**2. Sound and Silence** A weekend exploring the interplay of poetry and meditation. Facilitated by Roselle Angwin and Martin Pitt **4th-7th December 2009**

**At The Barefoot Barn, Chagford, Devon.**

This experimental weekend will explore the dynamics of inner peace and creative expression. Meditation, silence and mindfulness practice will be woven together with periods of creative writing and other forms such as movement, landscape work and visual media. The aim will be to nurture our personal stillness from where creativity can flow naturally; to allow our silent depths to find expression through the meaning and music of poetry. In this process we hope to share our experience within a small group in a spirit of dance, dynamism, and fun. Meditation practices will be introduced and conducted according to the mindfulness tradition of Zen Master Thich Nhat Hanh. No previous experience of meditation techniques is needed. The cost of this event has been kept low to encourage a wide-ranging participation. However, places are limited and early booking is advised.

**[www.fire-in-the-head.co.uk](http://www.fire-in-the-head.co.uk)**

## Sefton Writing Competition Winners Announced

The winners of the 19th Sefton Writing competition were announced on Sunday 15 November at the annual writing awards presentation at Crosby Civic Hall.

Hundreds of people entered this year, of all ages and from across the UK, there were even two entries from abroad. They came from writing groups, schools and individuals.

Brian Wake, Head of Sefton Arts Development said:

As the judges, we whittled the hundreds down to tens, we read them quietly to ourselves, we then read them out, we read them upside down and inside out, got ten down to seven or so in each of the three categories and then after much, as they say, deliberation, we began to comb through the seven pieces of work.. We began to ask what the work did in terms of emotion, in terms of the language itself and then we allowed our personal taste to help us decide.

Keep an eye on the Sefton Arts website for more Sefton Celebrates Writing events throughout the year.

The winners and runners up of this year's Sefton Writing Competition are:

### **Writing (including poems) by young people**

First Prize: Child Soldier by Philip Meakin (12years) Birkdale, Southport.

Runners-up: Past or Present by Katy Heron (12years) Southport; The Lift Off by Harry Draper (12years) Formby; Journey Home by Sarah Cutler (14years) Netherton; Snowflake's Journey by Katy Louise Minko (12years) Formby.

### **Poetry**

First Prize: Fetch by Margaret Gleave, Ainsdale, Southport;

Runners-up: Cuckoo Spit by Nicholas Hancock, Liverpool; In Vino Memoriam by Celia Gentles, West Kirby, Wirral; Journey's End by Michael O'Leary, Formby; The Cataraque by David Costello, Wallasey.

### **Other Writing**

First Prize: Travelling Light by Glenys Adams, Waterloo L22.

Runners-up: Persona Non Grata by Kay Frame, Maghull; Trudge of the Valyries by Andrew Highton, Waterloo L22; Holiday Journey by Alison Rutherford, Cardiff; Aliens Welcome by Frank Conlan, Maghull;

For more information on next years Sefton Writing Competition please contact Netherton Arts Centre on 0151 525 0417 or email: [Philip.Wroe@leisure.sefton.gov.uk](mailto:Philip.Wroe@leisure.sefton.gov.uk)

## Featured Poem: A Drowsy Day by Paul Laurence Dunbar

Rain. The permanent marker of the good old British climate, the failsafe topic of idle conversation and the cause of vague annoyance for many of us. It seems like this month in particular has been marked by persistent rainfall and, if the not-too-distant future forecast is to be believed, there's plenty more in store. Not that it's necessarily a bad thing – a long walk in the rain sheltered under a brolly can be quite soothing, and in the right circumstances even romantic – and after all, we should really be used to rainy day after endless rainy day. But after a while, our moods can start to be influenced by the weather; if the rain clouds linger much longer, spirits may be well and truly dampened (excuse the pun).

To lift our collective dispositions, here's a poem by Paul Laurence Dunbar which is perfect for the rain-lashed, windswept days we're currently experiencing. Admittedly it doesn't start too optimistically, although in the drowsiness and darkness of the day described, a range of sights, sounds and feelings quietly grow under the surface. What really strikes a chord with me is the sense of escapism that later emerges – how easy it is to find yourself surrendering to dreams, distant memories and utter distraction when all around seems cold and uninviting. Indeed, it makes us feel that rain doesn't automatically equate to gloominess; it offers us the chance to take time out, reflect and put our work and worries to one side in order to indulge more frivolous and fanciful matters (of course, nobody at The Reader Organisation would advocate neglecting urgent workloads for too long...but five minutes can't hurt, surely?).

Now if you'll excuse me, I'm off to gaze at the rain hitting the pavements from my window and lose myself for a while...

### *A Drowsy Day*

The air is dark, the sky is gray,  
The misty shadows come and go,  
And here within my dusky room  
Each chair looks ghostly in the gloom.  
Outside the rain falls cold and slow–  
Half-stinging drops, half-blinding spray.  
Each slightest sound is magnified,  
For drowsy quiet holds her reign;

The burnt stick in the fireplace breaks,  
The nodding cat with start awakes,  
And then to sleep drops off again,  
Unheeding Towser at her side.  
I look far out across the lawn,  
Where huddled stand the silly sheep;  
My work lies idle at my hands,  
My thoughts fly out like scattered strands  
Of thread, and on the verge of sleep—  
Stil! half awake—I dream and yawn.  
What spirits rise before my eyes!  
How various of kind and form!  
Sweet memories of days long past,  
The dreams of youth that could not last,  
Each smiling calm, each raging storm,  
That swept across my early skies.  
Half seen, the bare, gaunt-fingered boughs  
Before my window sweep and sway,  
And chafe in tortures of unrest.  
My chin sinks down upon my breast;  
I cannot work on such a day,  
But only sit and dream and drowse.  
Paul Laurence Dunbar (1872-1906)

## **Penny Readings 2009 – Tickets available from Monday 16th November**

### **The Penny Readings 2009**

**Sunday 6th December, 7pm at St George's Hall**

The sixth annual Penny Readings, hosted by The Reader Organisation will take place at 7pm on Sunday 6th December in the Small Concert Room in Liverpool's magnificent St. George's Hall.

A wonderful start to Christmas – like mulled wine for the soul.

This year, the Penny Readings will feature readings by Liverpool's award-winning author and screenwriter Frank Cottrell Boyce.

In Dickens' time public readings were the equivalent of a big music gig today – think Beyoncé at the Echo Arena – Dickens was a hot ticket! For the past six years, the Penny Readings has continued the tradition that Charles Dickens began in the 1840s, when he would travel around Liverpool reading to thousands of ordinary people and charging just one penny.

Previous years have included readings from actor and director Janet Suzman, actor Annabelle Dowler and poet Jenny Joseph. The 2009 line-up is still under wraps (announcements coming soon), but it can be guaranteed that the fantastic live-readings will be combined with the usual exciting array of music and dance. All this and a good measure of festive cheer, still available at the rock-bottom price of one penny!

Tickets will be available for collection from **10am on Monday 16th November** from both Liverpool Central Library (William Brown Street, Liverpool, L3 8EW, 2nd floor Helpdesk – 0151 233 5829 – ask for Mike Taylor or Janet Graham) and **Birkenhead Central Library** (Borough Rd, Birkenhead, CH41 2XB, Music Counter – 0151 652 6106 – ask for Susan Boote). But don't forget to pay your penny on the night!

The ever-popular readings have repeatedly sold out well-short of demand in previous years, so those wishing to attend are advised to get their tickets early to avoid disappointment.

In addition, twenty tickets will be released on eBay on **Friday 27th November**, for those really keen to come and willing to bid away!

## The Reader Magazine – New issue now on sale

### The Reader 36 'Emotional Surges'

**“Emotions make up the richness of human experience and they need to be understood, not lobotomised”** Angela Patmore in The Reader 36

- \* New poetry by **John Kinsella** and **Michael Parker**
- \* New fiction by **Vanessa Hemingway**, a writer with a very famous grandfather, and a great voice of her own
- \* **Seamus Heaney's** prose poem about Thomas Hardy
- \* **Peter Robinson** writes on his poem, 'Otterspool Prom', the latest in the series Poet on His Work
- \* Essays by **Angela Patmore** on why stress is good for you, and **Hans van der Heijden**, the architect behind the fabulous redesign of Liverpool's Bluecoat, on Wittgenstein
- \* **Eric Lomax** (*The Railway Man*) talks to Angela Macmillan
- \* **Blake Morrison, Philip Davis** and **Josie Billington** discuss the importance of reading in groups, the latest contribution to The Reading Revolution series

And much more inside!

**Buy your copy online now**

**One copy not enough? Subscribe here for quarterly Reader goodness.**

You can now **view online or download for free** the previous issue of The Reader 'Starting the Reading Revolution'. It's nearly Christmas, you need a treat.

## **New Beginnings: The First Get Into Reading National Conference and Readers' Day, 8th and 9th January**

### **New Beginnings**

#### **Get Into Reading National Conference**

**Friday 8th January, 9am – 5pm**

**Blackburne House, Liverpool, L8 7PE**

This conference will be a fantastic opportunity for everyone involved with, or interested in, Get Into Reading, and to share your experiences of the project from within your organisation, area of the country, profession, or personal interest.

**Speakers include: Blake Morrison** (author and Chair of TRO), **Susan Blishen** (Mental Health Foundation), **Dr David Fearnley** (Medical Director and Deputy Chief of Mersey Care NHS Trust) and **Dr Jane Davis** (Director of TRO).

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**\*SPECIAL ADDITION\***

#### **Friday Night Supper**

**Friday 8th January 7 –10 pm**

Join The Reader Organisation and some of our panellists and writers for a special Friday Night supper which will feature a conversation between TRO Director, Jane Davis and guests, as well as live music. Not to be missed.

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#### **New Beginnings Readers' Day**

**Saturday 9th January, 9.30am – 4pm**

**Blackburne House, Liverpool, L8 7PE**

Join Tim Pears, Brian Keenan and Clare Allan and many more in thought-provoking workshops and discussions, on the theme of New Beginnings, for an inspiring day hosted by the BBC's Roger Phillips.

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Tickets for all events are now on sale!

**Book now** for the full New Beginnings experience – Conference, Friday Supper and Readers' Day – for only £100 until the end of November.

For more information about New Beginnings, please email Claire Speer or visit our website.



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