**The Thurrock Writers’ Circle**

**Newsletter June ‘14**

**A Writers’ Progress**

Danielle Chinnon has been in print a fair amount this month, first with a press release regarding news from her church and then with the first of her regular columns in the Thurrock Gazette (check it out on Danielle’s page on the TWC website). Joy Ridgewell has also been busy writing reviews (below), whilst Irene Mannering has been improving herself online with Future Learn (below left).

 **Thoroughly Modern Millie**

TOPS at the Thameside Theatre have put on another great show. Set in the 1920’s era when it was a daring thing for any young girl to set out on her own for New York as an aspiring actress. The story centres on the girls that come to New York seeking fame and fortune: unworldly girls with no family to worry about them should they go missing, who fall into the hands of an unscrupulous Chinese hotel keeper, Mrs Meers (played by Vander Mercer), who is involved in the White Slave trade.

There was comedy with the two young Chinese boys who were helping her to smuggle the girl concerned, to be taken out with the laundry and shipped to Hong Kong. Their excuse was to earn money to bring their mother to America. They were brilliant when they sang in Chinese with the words on a screen above the stage. I don’t know if they were singing in that language but whatever; they were both singing the same and it was excellent. Several love stories evolved, one new arrival to New York Millie Dillmount (Victoria Purton) and Jimmy Smith (Matthew Capp) played the lead. Sue Cawley as Mussy Van Hossmere added glamour with her songs, and everyone in the cast, from the stars to the chorus, worked their socks off to give a great performance. The flapper dresses put our modern day styles to shame, they were feminine and colourful; hats and gloves added to their charm: so different from the raggedy jeans and baggy T- shirts that seem the norm for some of today’s young people. The music was toe tapping. It was good to see so many young and older people putting on such an entertaining show. I understand the stage settings were also made by TOPS. Scene changes were performed smoothly and quickly. Thameside Theatre is a great asset to Grays, you have no need to travel any further to get good and reasonably priced entertainment.

Joy Ridgewell

**The Small Print**

Find us online at: <http://thurrockwriterscircle.weebly.com/>

Newsletter submissions to: twcnewsletter@yahoo.co.uk

Poetry, Prose, News… anything wanted.

June has arrived and while some of us are planning our summer holidays and trips, brides all over the world are planning their big day: the wedding!

June continues to be the most popular month for celebrating a wedding event. There are different suggestions for this popularity; some say it's because it marks the start of reasonable outdoor weather and moderate temperatures. Others say it's down to a wider and cheaper array of flowers available during this summer month.



Historians believe June has always been popular as during the 1400 and 1500s it was considered the time when people came outdoors after a long winter and bathed communally. This is known as the 'the yearly bath'. This took place during May, so when June came the population was smelling fresh. So, to many, marrying when one is clean seemed a good beginning.

June is said to be named after the wife of Jupiter and goddess of marriage, Juno. This Roman goddess would bring prosperity and happiness to all who wed in her month. The Romans celebrated a festival on the first of June in honour of Juno.

If you are getting married this June then congratulations and may Juno be with you!

Shona Mawby

**Future Learn Course**

I have just finished my first Future Learn course. This was entitled "The Mind is Flat, the Shocking Truth". The course was run by the Psychology dept. at Warwick University.   The hypothesis was that our mind/brains are not a deep well of knowledge and experience, (like Google) but rather that we see the world and make decisions in comparative rather than absolute terms (it was far more interesting than it sounds).

The subjects covered included national happiness, evolution of language and culture and risk taking in financial markets. There were video interviews with behavioural scientists in the fields of zoology, economics and design.  I found the course engaging and thought provoking, especially the views of the contributors to the forum. I have now signed up for two more courses.

Irene Mannering

**A Decent Proposal**

**Keeping Mum**

Tina Thompson submitted this poem; she wrote ‘It's about my mum. She loves playing in darts and Scrabble tournaments as well as Pub quizzes! She loved it when I wrote it in her Mother's Day card!

Slightly senile, or so it seems.

Conventional? Not by any means.

Regular quizzing, throws her arrows.

Articulate, just about passes,

Blind as a bat without her glasses.

Beyond help, deaf as a post!

Lubricate with drink; becomes a wreck!

Eccentric Mother! What did we expect!

 Tina Thompson

**Lillian Rose Troy Remembered**

Following is the beginning of a story from the pen of Lillian Troy. Sadly it is the only piece of her work that we have at the moment, but hopefully it will remind those amongst us who knew her of her talent and imagination:

**A Little Bit of Powder, a Little Bit of Paint**

Dolly picked up the dress from her bed and held it up to her face. She could still smell the faint perfume that emanated from the soft silk. She couldn’t believe her luck: finding something of this quality on Mrs Murphy’s stall and for only sixpence. It was a shame about the tear that went from the hem to the broad coffee-coloured sash, a perfect complement to the rich cream of the main body of the dress and matched by the coffee lace that drifted at the neckline and cuffs. There were a few tears in the lace and several of the tiny covered buttons were missing, but nothing Dolly couldn’t repair: one of her many skills was a dab hand with a needle and cotton. She would look a treat when she went out tonight: sixpence well spent.

Dolly lit the stub of a candle, even in the middle of the day the small amount of light that managed to get down into the basement room wasn’t enough to sew by. She pulled the hard chair up to the bed to use as a table. The small room was only big enough to hold the two pieces of furniture. She sat cross-legged on the bed and tucked the ragged sheet and blanket round her legs for warmth. She never brought anyone back to her room; this was her bolt-hole: her own space.

Humming under her breath: A little bit of powder a little bit of paint, the catchy tune had stuck in her head. The gentleman had sung softly last night as he had nuzzled her, his brandy-breath on her neck, his hands on her thighs. Tonight she would have a pretty new dress.

Cassey pulled the quilt tightly round her shoulders; she didn’t want to get dressed, she didn’t want to do anything. She got off the bed and went to the window. The heavy silk curtains had been pulled back by Mrs Moore, and the jug of hot water brought for her to wash had cooled. She knew that Mrs Moore would be up soon to see why she hadn’t been down for breakfast. She looked round the room. Her doll Petra still sat in the chair, her collection of shells was still in their glass case: the only thing that had changed was her. He had always been nice to her, petting her, buying her nice things. He was her new Daddy, and now Mummy was in bed because of the new baby he had started putting her to bed. It was a long time since Daddy had gone to heaven; she could only just remember him. Most of her nine years it had just been Mummy and Mrs Moore.

Lillian Troy

**Carpe Diem**

**The Sixth Annual Bartleby Snopes Writing Contest:** Dialogue Only (2014) - Opening June 1st

*Our 6th Annual Dialogue Only Contest will open on June 1st, 2014.*

**The Rules:** short story entirely of dialogue, under 2000 words. **Prizes:** A minimum of $500 will be awarded, with at least $300 going to the grand prize winner. **Entry Fee:** $10 for unlimited entries. **Deadline:** All initial submissions must be received by September 15th. Winners will be announced by October 19th.

**Erewash Short Story Competition**
Judge - Malcolm Welshman.  Seven prizes to win: £100 First, £50 Second, £25 Third, £25 Fourth. 2,000 words maximum. Entry fee: £3.00 for one entry, £5.00 for two, £2.50 thereon. Closes Thursday 18th September 2014. Go to <http://erewashwriterscompetition.weebly.com/blog.html>

**When Push Comes to Shove**

On a wild and stormy night, a man is in bed with his wife. The rain is chucking itself against the windows, and he is glad that he is not out in it. Just as he is getting off to sleep he hears a loud knocking on the door downstairs.

“Who can that be, on a wild night like this?” he says to his wife.

“Well I think you’d better go down, George,” says his wife.

So, with much muttering and grumbling, he gets out of his nice warm bed, goes downstairs and opens the door.

A man is standing there and says “Can you give us a push?”

George looks at him and says “You can’t be serious on a night like this,” and goes back to bed.

Just as he is settling down again more loud knocking comes from downstairs.

“Well he can knock all he likes; I’m not going down again,” says George to his wife. “I’d have to get dressed again to go out in this weather.”

“But George,” says his wife, “Don’t you remember when we broke down in America on a night like this, and a Good Samaritan got us started again. Don’t you think one good turn deserves another?”

George huffed and puffed, got dressed and very reluctantly went downstairs again. He opened the door and the man standing there said “I’m on the swing. Can you give us a push?”

Barbara Spencer

**The Last Word (Almost)**

Terry Brown has sent along the following two links for our members to investigate:

<http://www.50plusshow.com/emails/Photo-Writing-competition-London2014.html>

Get your true story published in the 50+magazine: prize £50 M&S vouchers

 <http://www.nationalbooktokens.com/>

Lots of Literature related goodies to win

**Wise Words (At Last)**

‘[There are two seasons in Scotland: June and Winter.](http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/quotes/b/billyconno379448.html)’

[**Billy Connolly**](http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/authors/b/billy_connolly.html)

Read more at http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/keywords/june.html#fXbsLVh9IzOZsyUb.99
Read more at http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/keywords/june.html#fXbsLVh9IzOZsyUb.99