

The Writers' Guild Weekly e-bulletin No. 370, Friday 8th May 2009

On the Guild's blog this week at writersguild.blogspot.com:

- [Vamps, Vixens and Feminists - The Elephant In The Room](#)
- [Comedy and politics](#)
- [JJ Abrams interview](#)
- [Alison Hume: writing Summerhill](#)
- [Edge Hill Prize for the Short Story](#)
- [Susannah Grant on adapting The Soloist](#)
- [AL Kennedy on inspiration](#)
- [Marilyn French 1929-2009](#)
- [Ending Lost](#)
- [Tom McGrath 1940-2009](#)
- [The end of an era for professional writing?](#)

Guild News

- 1. The Writers' Guild of Great Britain turns 50**
- 2. 50 is the Magic Number!**
- 3. Questionnaires for Guild Playwrights**
- 4. Conference debates whether theatre is all about togetherness**

Industry News

5. BBC2 to Prioritise its Original Drama Commissioning

Guild Events

6. Event/Digwyddiad in Wales

Events

7. Beg Borrow Steal - a new initiative to develop film scripts (Newcastle)

8. Future Britain: Arts leading the way

9. 50:50 Quest for Gequality (2010 –2015)

10. Unlocking the BBC Archive: Challenges & Aspirations

Courses and Workshops

11. Carte Blanche: A New Women's Writing Group (Newcastle)

Opportunities

12. Ulla's Nib Issue 8 - Submissions

13. Writing Tutor Needed

14. The 24 Hour Plays: Old Vic New Voices

What Members Are Getting Up To

Guild News

1. The Writers' Guild of Great Britain turns 50

The Writers' Guild of Great Britain is celebrating its 50th anniversary next week. On Wednesday 13th May 2009, the Guild will have been in existence for a half century and we are keen throughout this year to commemorate and celebrate all our achievements and successes on behalf of writers since our inauguration in 1959.

An official History of the Writers' Guild, written by member Nick Yapp, will be published later this year and will document various long-standing members' experience of working on behalf of the organisation and establishing its place in the British trade union movement and entertainment industry.

We are very proud of our story and hope members will enjoy reading it. Watch this space, our website and UK Writer for news of more events and activities celebrating the Guild in its 50th year.

2. 50 is the magic number!

The Writers' Guild of Great Britain is celebrating its 50th anniversary on Wednesday 13th May 2009 and, to commemorate this momentous occasion, we are offering

50 PEOPLE THE CHANCE TO JOIN THE GUILD ON ITS 50TH ANNIVERSARY FOR JUST £50

If you are currently a member of the Guild, please publicise this offer to your friends and colleagues who might be interested. What better way to celebrate our half-century than to welcome 50 new writers to the organisation and further increase our collective strength and negotiating power!

This special one-offer membership offer applies to a new member's first year of membership only.

To be one of the lucky 50, call the Guild's Membership Team on 13th May 2009, between 9.30am and 5.30pm, on 01952 214 063 and quote 'WGGB Anniversary Offer'. You can pay your £50 over the telephone by credit or debit card and your welcome pack will be sent on within a few days.

Alternatively, members of the Writers' Guild of Great Britain Facebook Group can take advantage of the special offer by:

Sending a Facebook message with their name and contact details to fellow group member Naomi MacDonald AND changing their status on 13th May to "Happy 50th Birthday to the Writers' Guild of Great Britain"

Please note that this special offer is only available on 13th May 2009.

We look forward to welcoming our 50 new members.

3. Questionnaires for Guild Playwrights

All Writers' Guild members who write for theatre should have received a questionnaire this week, which we've been asked to distribute to as wide a range of British playwrights as possible. It is from a group conducting research on behalf of Arts Council England to assess new writing in the British theatre from 2003 to 2008, to see what effect the Arts Council's big injection of money had, and to look at more profound trends (like the move towards greater intervention by theatres in script development, more collaborative procedures, etc). The group includes our President, David Edgar. The research will culminate in a report with recommendations about the future of new writing in the subsidised theatre, to be presented to the Arts Council in the summer.

If you write for theatre but have not yet received a copy of the questionnaire, please email naomi@writersguild.org.uk to request one.

The Writers' Guild's Theatre Committee is also going to be independently surveying members about their experience of working in theatre, for use by the Guild in its lobbying and various ongoing campaigns, so playwrights should expect to receive a further email from us next week. This study will be conducted online.

We would be very grateful if playwrights in the Guild would take the time to contribute to both pieces of research, which I'm sure will generate some invaluable information for British theatre.

If you have any queries about either study, please do not hesitate to give the Guild office a call.

4. Conference debates whether theatre is all about togetherness

Michael Boyd, Richard Eyre, Vicky Featherstone, Kwame Kwei-Armah and Stewart Lee are among theatre practitioners who will be gathering at the Warwick Arts Centre near Coventry in June to discuss whether theatre has a role in defining Britishness and bringing communities together. Titled **All Together Now? British Theatre after Multiculturalism**, the conference will be held over the weekend of 13-4 June.

Under Labour, the arts were charged with challenging social exclusion, celebrating diversity and reasserting Britishness. But is there a contradiction between diversity and national identity? Should theatre foster cohesion or challenge it? If multiculturalism is dead, should theatre be promoting it? Is the theatre's role to encourage tolerance or provoke outrage? What has been the experience of the National Theatre of Scotland and the National Theatre on the south bank?

These and other questions will be debated during panel discussions, whose subjects will embrace national arts policy, how repertory theatres should relate to their communities, whether identity politics still has a role in drama's agenda, and if theatre should be allowed or even encouraged to offend. The conference will begin with a discussion on Shakespeare and history, led by the artistic director of the Royal Shakespeare Company, and it will end with a panel consisting of a former director of the National Theatre in London, the current director of the National Theatre of Scotland, and the chair of the 2012 Cultural Olympiad.

The current line-up of speakers includes playwrights **Richard Bean**, **Howard Brenton** and **Kwame Kwei-Armah**, comedian and writer **Stewart Lee**; directors **Richard Eyre**, **Simon Reade**, **Michael Boyd** (RSC) and **Jonathan Church** (Chichester); **Barrie Rutter** of Northern Broadsides and **Vicky Featherstone** of the National Theatre of Scotland; **Stuart Rogers** of the Birmingham Rep, and **Lisa O'Neill-Rogan** of the Bolton Octagon; academic **Lynette Goddard**, commentator **David Aaronovitch** and writer **Kenan Malik**; **Barbara Matthews** of the Arts Council, Conservative arts spokesman **Ed Vaizey MP** and 2012 Cultural Olympiad chair **Jude Kelly**.

The conference organisers are playwrights **Steve Waters**, **Julie Wilkinson** and Guild President **David Edgar**, playwright/academic **Dan Rebellato** and **Janelle Reinelt** of Warwick University. In December 2007 the organising group produced a sell-out one day conference on the last decade of British Theatre (**How was it for us? Theatre under Blair**) at the Writers' Guild Centre in Kings Cross.

The Warwick Arts Centre conference starts at 11.00am on Saturday 13 June and finishes at 4.00pm on Sunday 14 June. The registration fee is **£100 (£50 student rate)** which includes attendance on both days and a conference banquet on Saturday evening. Onsite accommodation for the Saturday night is available at a supplement of £50. Bookings can be made at the conference website: <http://www.britishtheatreconference.co.uk>. For other booking methods and enquiries, please contact Janelle Reinelt at j.reinelt@warwick.ac.uk.

The conference is supported by generous contributions from **Royal Holloway University of London**, the **University of Warwick**, and **Warwick Arts Centre**.

Industry News

5. BBC2 to Prioritise its Original Drama Commissioning

The Stage has reported this week that the new BBC2 controller, Janice Hadlow, has revealed she plans to make original drama “the major event of the week” on the channel and draw inspiration from its previous successes including literary adaptations and series such as 'Our Friends in the North'.

Hadlow also said there would be space on the channel for new writing talent and added that BBC2 had a vital role to play in light of the fact commercial broadcasters have been affected by a poor advertising market.

She said the BBC had an “enhanced responsibility to protect areas of creativity that find themselves pushed elsewhere”. She added: “There are many reasons why you want drama on BBC2 to be an important part of the channel. Most are to do with audience, but there is also the other reason, which is to do with nurturing a production community in difficult times.”

For the full story, see <http://www.thestage.co.uk/news/newsstory.php/24264/bbc2-to-position-original-drama-as-major>

Guild Events

6. Event/Digwyddiad in Wales

Following last year's successful collaboration with Sherman Cymru, the Guild's Welsh branch have arranged another Writers' Event for 4.30pm on Saturday May 9th.

Ian Rowlands, writer-director and an experienced international collaborator, will be chairing a forum discussion on the choices and challenges inherent in working creatively in a bilingual country or community. Joining Gary Owen on the panel will be Rosaline Ting, who writes eloquently about the experience of being Chinese but living in Britain, in English, Cantonese and Mandarin, and Jeroen Van Der Berg, a writer and director who works in Dutch and German throughout Europe.

We hope very much that you can join us for the discussion, and contribute to a discussion that has such a strong resonance to us living and working in Wales.

(The event will last approximately 1½-2 hours giving you time to eat and relax before the performance at 8pm) You can also book discounted tickets for Amgen:Broken on May 9th (£10/£8) please contact box office on 029 20646 900 quoting Writers Event should you wish to take up this opportunity. Please be aware that seating is restricted and that tickets will be on a first come first serve basis. So book early!!

If you would like to attend the Event beforehand, I would be very grateful if you could contact the Literary Office to confirm attendance, either by email – sian.summers@shermancymru.co.uk or by telephoning Branwen Davies at Sherman Cymru on 029 20 646901.

Yn dilyn ein digwyddiad llwyddiannus ar y cyd llynedd gyda Sherman Cymru rydym wedi trefnu Digwyddiad Awduron arall am 4.30 y.h.Ddydd Sadwrn Mai'r 9fed. Bydd Ian Rowlands, awdur, cyfarwyddwr a chyd-gynhyrchydd rhyngwladol, yn cadeirio sgwrs fforwm yn trafod y dewisiadau a'r her sy'n dod yn sgîl gweithio'n greadigol mewn gwlad neu gymuned ddwyieithog. Yn ymuno â Gary Owen ar y panel fydd Rosaline Ting, sy'n ysgrifennu'n huawdl am y profiad o hannu o Tsieina ond byw ym Mhrydain, gan wneud hynny drwy iaith Canton, Mandarin a Saesneg. Hefyd bydd Jeroen Van Der Berg, cyfarwyddwr ac awdur sy'n gweithio yn yr Is-Alameneg a'r Almaeneg, ledled Ewrop yn rhan o'r drafodaeth.

Gobeithiwn yn fawr bod modd i chi ymuno â ni ar gyfer y sgwrs, a chymryd rhan mewn trafodaeth sydd mor berthnasol i ni sy'n byw a gweithio yng Nghymru.

(Bydd y drafodaeth dros tua 1½-2 awr, gan adael digon o amser wedyn i gael bwyd ac ymlacio cyn y perfformiad am 8 y.h)

I archebu tocyn pris gostyngol ar gyfer Amgen:Broken (£10/£8) ar gyfer Mai`r 9fed, cysylltwch â'r swyddfa docynnau ar 029 20646 900 gan ddynodi Noson Awduron. Mae nifer cyfyngedig o seddi ar gael ac felly cyntaf i'r felin fydd hi. Archebwch rhag blaen!

Petaech chi am ddod i'r drafodaeth yngh ynt, byddwn yn ddiolchgar iawn pe allech gysylltu â'r Swyddfa Lenyddol i gadarnhau, ynghynt, unai drwy ebost – sian.summers@shermancymru.co.uk neu drwy ffonio Branwen yn y swyddfa ar 029 20 646901

Events

7. Beg Borrow Steal - a new initiative to develop film scripts (Newcastle)

Beg Borrow Steal is an events and performance company based at the Tyneside Irish Centre in Newcastle. Professional actors will read screenplays from new and emerging writers to an invited audience for feedback and exposure with a view to developing the writers' work. The event will be held at the Tyneside Irish Centre on Thursday 23 July 2009. For a chance to get involved in this, please submit your script along with a brief biog and synopsis of your film by Wednesday 20 May. Submissions and enquiries can be emailed to joanprods@aol.com.

8. Future Britain: Arts leading the way

How can the arts help to rescue Britain's ailing economy? How can the arts sector make its voice heard in troubled times? What is the vision for the future of the sector and the country?

The National Campaign for the Arts is pleased to announce *Future Britain: Arts Leading the Way*, a cross-sector national conference which will look at the

development of the arts sector over the coming years and its role in shaping Britain's future.

Monday 15th June 2009, 10.00am - 4.00pm, at TATE Britain. Speakers include: Dame Joan Bakewell CBE, Tim Joss and Sir John Tusa. Keynote address: Lord Melvyn Bragg.

A buffet lunch will be provided free of charge and the day will conclude with a keynote speech from NCA President, Lord Melvyn Bragg. Other confirmed speakers include Hasan Bakhshi, Research Director at NESTA; Julia Fawcett, Chief Executive of The Lowry; Gerri Morris, Founder of Morris Hargreaves McIntyre; and Kerry Michael, Artistic Director of Theatre Royal Stratford.

The conference will also see the launch of the Arts Manifesto for the next General Election. The Arts Manifesto is the product of consultations held up and down the country and is intended to form the basis for an advocacy campaign to promote the value of the arts around the time of the General Election.

More information can be found on the NCA website at www.artscampaign.org.uk and tickets are available from <http://futurebritain.eventbrite.com/>. Early bird discounts are available until 5th May 2009.

9. 50:50 Quest for Gequality (2010 –2015)

A catalytic project aiming to unite the theatre industry in a pro-active & permanent redress of gender-balance in dance, drama & dramaturgy (UK & ROI)

Aberystwyth & Cardiff

Artistic & Freelance Directors, Producers, Choreographers & Playwrights, are warmly invited to participate in discussion with other industry professionals, about the ongoing problem of gender-imbalance on stage, and the urgent need for recognition by the industry of its responsibility for full and fair representation of both genders in both dance and drama

Two development meetings will be held at:-

ABERYSTWYTH ARTS CENTRE

CHAPTER ARTS CENTRE

The Chapel

Market Road

Penglais

Canton

Aberystwyth

Cardiff

SY23 3DE

CF5 1QE

Wednesday 13th May at 11am

Thursday 14th May at 11am

These meetings will include a presentation, outlining the Fifty-Fifty Group's proposals for strategic initiatives, and the Group's aim to inspire a rapid and permanent adoption and implementation of GEQUALITY POLICY throughout the industry (UK & ROI) by the year 2015. (More info available on request).

Please let them know whether you will be attending one of these meetings – so that we can gauge numbers in advance. If you are unable to attend, they would value your opinions, and welcome your written (or financial) support, in furtherance of our aims.

Helen Alexander

+44 (0)208543 4085 / 07876 128 418

Project Director

fiftyfiftywales@ymail.com

10. Unlocking the BBC Archive: Challenges & Aspirations

ROLY KEATING delivers his first keynote speech since being appointed as the BBC's first Director of Archive Content. Roly will cover areas including the value of the BBC Archive to audiences, the challenges of technology and rights, and the importance of partnerships to the archive project.

VENUE:

The London Television Centre, Upper Ground, South Bank, London SE1 9LT

Nearest Underground and Train Station – Waterloo

Refreshments, tea and coffee will be available

Please Register for a place to attend:

DATE: 13 MAY – WEDNESDAY

TIME: 19.00pm

COST: FREE

Please e-mail your intention to attend to LondonCentreEvents@rts.org.uk

Courses and Workshops

11. Carte Blanche: A New Women's Writing Group (Newcastle)

This new women's writing group will meet on Thursdays at 9.30am-12.30am, upstairs at the Brunswick Church (behind Fenwick's) in Newcastle and welcome you to join them from this week. Guest tutors will be: Anna Woodford (pictured) on 7th May, Linda France on 18th June and Peter Mortimer on 2nd July.

The cost is £60 for ten weeks (this includes all three guest tutor dates), £15 for each individual tutor-led session, or £10 for each group-led session. Places for the three guest tutor days are limited, so please book early. Email Liz for further information at lizkirsopp@madasafish.com.

Opportunities

12. Ulla's Nib Issue 8 - Submissions

Ulla's Nib are especially interested in articles and reviews, if you have an idea, email them. Still keep sending poems, any length and short-fiction of up to 2000 words. **£50 star prize for best submission.**

Email submissions to: editor@creativewritersnetwork.org or hard copy to CWN, 109-113 Royal Ave., Belfast, BT1 1FF. Handwritten submissions cannot be considered. Please include your name, postal address and daytime contact telephone number. If you are selected they will not contact you, but you will receive a copy of the issue in the post. **Submission deadline for issue 8 has been extended to May 18, 2009.**

13. Writing Tutor Needed

Experienced screen writer with tutoring skills required for MA Screen course at Drama Centre London. Sense of practical application in relation to other pathways (acting and directing) crucial. Contact Alan Dunnett, Course Director: a.dunnett@csm.arts.ac.uk

14. The 24 Hour Plays: Old Vic New Voices

The Old Vic is looking for the most fearless, talented and original actors, writers, directors and producers to take on the ultimate theatrical challenge:

The 24 Hour Plays: Old Vic New Voices

If you're 18–25 and eager to launch yourself into the world of professional theatre, then they want to hear from you.

Following rigorous auditions and workshops, successful applicants will have just 24 hours to prove their talent by creating engaging, edgy theatre for the Old Vic stage. The results will be seen by 1,000 industry professionals, family and friends.

This riveting event has been wowing audiences for the last three years and has launched over 150 careers; securing agents, West End contracts, TV roles and commissions.

Go to www.ideastap.com to apply. Deadline for applications is 10am on Friday 29th May

What Members Are Getting Up To

SIMON ASHDOWN wrote the episode of *EastEnders* going out on BBC1 at 8:00pm on Friday 15th May.

SARAH BAGSHAW wrote the episode of *Emmerdale* going out on ITV1 at 7:00pm on Tuesday 12th May.

HELEN BLAKEMAN wrote the episode of *Hollyoaks* going out on C4 at 6:30pm on Thursday 14th May.

RAY BROOKING wrote the episode of *Doctors "Impact"* going out on BBC1 at 1:45pm on Wednesday 13th May.

ROY BOULTER and JIMMY MCGOVERN co-wrote the episode of *The Street* going out on BBC1 at 10:45pm on Wednesday 13th May.

SIMON BOVEY'S radio play *Sargasso* is going out on Radio 4 at 2:15pm on Tuesday 12th May.

RICHARD BURKE wrote the episode of *Hollyoaks* going out on C4 at 6:30pm on Tuesday 12th May.

MARK BURT wrote the episode of *Coronation Street* going out on ITV1 at 7:30pm on Monday 11th May.

TONY COTTRELL'S new play *The Thick of it All* opens on Thursday 7th May until Tues 12th May as part of the 2009 Daphne du Maurier Festival. For further information, Festival Box Office- www.dumaurierfestival.co.uk

JOHN CHAMBERS wrote the episode of *Emmerdale* going out on ITV1 at 7:00pm on Thursday 14th May.

ROY CLARKE wrote the episode of *Last of the Summer Wine* "Who's That Looking Sideways at Nelly?" going out on BBC1 at 6:30pm on Sunday 10th May.

DAVID CROFT and JIMMY PERRY co-wrote the episode of *Dad's Army* "My British Buddy" going out on BBC1 at 7:30pm on Saturday 9th May.

STEVEN FAY wrote the episode of *Hollyoaks* going out on C4 at 6:30pm on Friday 15th May.

PETER FLANNERY wrote the episode of *Inspector George Gently* "*Gently in the Night*" going out on BBC1 at 8:30pm on Sunday 10th May.

JEREMY FRONT wrote the episode of *Murder Unprompted: a Charles Paris Mystery* going out on Radio 4 at 11:30am on Wednesday 13th May.

CHRISTOPHER HAMPTON wrote the screenplay for *Cheri*, adapted from the story by Colette, which opens in cinemas next week. He has teamed up again with director Stephen Frears and actress Michelle Pfeiffer; they last worked together on *Dangerous Liaisons*, twenty years ago.

JONATHAN HARVEY wrote the episode of *Coronation Street* going out on ITV1 at 7:30pm on Wednesday 13th May.

CHRIS LANG wrote the episode of *Robin Hood* "*Too Hot to Handle*" going out on BBC1 at 6:15pm on Saturday 9th May.

JANE MARLOW wrote the episode of *Hollyoaks* going out on C4 at 6:30pm on Wednesday 13th May.

ANDREW MCCULLOCH wrote the episode of *Heartbeat "Ups and Downs"* going out on ITV1 at 8:00pm on Sunday 10th May.

DAVID NOBBS co-wrote the episode of *Reggie Perin* going out on BBC1 at 9:30pm on Friday 15th May.

ASHLEY PHAROAH wrote the episode of *Ashes to Ashes* going out on BBC1 at 9:00pm on Monday 11th May.

MARTIN RILEY wrote the episode of *Emmerdale* going out on ITV1 at 7:00pm on Monday 11th May.

SHELAGH STEPHENSON'S dramatisation of *The Siege of Krishnapur* is going out on Radio 4 at 3:00pm on Sunday 10th May.

TIM STIMPSON wrote the episodes of *The Archers* going out on Radio 4 from Sunday 10th till Friday 15th May.

DAN TETSELL co-wrote the episode of *Rudy's Rare Records "Get Up, Stand Up"* going out on Monday 11th May.

TINA WALKER wrote the episode of *Doctors "Worlds Apart"* going out on BBC1 at 1:45pm on Friday 15th May.

PETER WHALLEY wrote the episodes of *Coronation Street* going out on ITV1 at 7:30pm and 8:30pm on Friday 15th May.

KARIN YOUNG wrote the episode of *Emmerdale* going out on ITV1 at 7:00pm on Friday 15th May.

and requests to be removed from the distribution list should be sent to erik@writersguild.org.uk. Items are included from a variety of sources. The Guild does its best to check everything and make corrections when necessary but we will not accept responsibility for mistakes and omissions. You are advised to check terms and conditions before entering any commitments. Copyright Writers' Guild of Great Britain and suppliers of items 2009.