



January 2015

The year 2014 has come to an end and I'm sure on 31st December, at the stroke of midnight, many would have sung 'Auld Lang Syne', bringing the New Year in with a wee dram. Resolutions would be made and hopefully kept for a while . . . or at least a week or two. With all that said, our Council would like to wish you all a Happy New Year, hoping that 2015 brings you all great writing success.

Message from Marc

Hi All,

I would like to thank the many people who have got in contact with offers of help with the Association business following the untimely death of Barbara Hammond. The Council met on Saturday the 10th January and welcomed Catherine Walker and Cathie Devitt who will be joining us 'pro tem' in the roles of Competition Secretary and Affiliation & Outreach Secretary respectively. Both persons have helped out with various aspects of the Association in the past and I know will do good work leading up to the 46th Annual Conference in March.

It is with regret we note the resignation of Lesley Traynor, (Affiliation & Outreach Secretary) who has had to retire from the Council, due to work commitments.

Marc R Sherland - President

SAW Scholarship Competition Winner

The winner of the SAW Scholarship Competition this year is none other than long time supporter of the Association, Ronnie Mail. The piece is called 'The Final Decision' and Ronnie is a member of Eastwood Writers. Congratulations to him and may his ink never run dry.

Annual Conference
2015

**Westerwood Hotel & Conference Centre,
Cumbernauld,
G68 0EW**

27th to 29th March

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SAW 100 Club

**The more members
we have, the bigger
the prizes!**

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Meet Alison Craig



Q Tell me about yourself, where you come from, what you do?

A. I was born in Birmingham but have lived in the Scotland since 1981, mostly on the West coast or around Glasgow. After graduating with a BA in English Literature and Economic & Social History and later taking a Masters degree in Sport and Exercise Science, I now work professionally in sport, as a Senior Officer in Sport Development at K:A Leisure in North Ayrshire and as an Associate Lecturer for the Open University, teaching a range of sport and fitness subjects. I live in Dalry with my husband (a freelance artist, graphic designer and photographer), my daughter, and the newest addition to our family, a wee Border Terrier called Poppy. I write much less than I would like, but keep the pen moving as best I can. Of course, I love poetry, but this stems simply from a love of words, and I will write whatever needs to be written in whatever form. I have published poetry, fiction and non-fiction. Current projects include a poetry pamphlet, a memoir and a novel.

Q. When did you become a member of Ayr Writers?

A. I can't remember exactly, but I reckon about 12 years ago.

Q. What inspires your poetry writing?

A. Three things, mainly: everyday life; reading other poets; and necessity.

Q. What do you look for in a good poem?

A. I look for language that transcends the paper and the ink, bringing new truths, sounds and insights that resonate, and structure and technique that support the meaning of the poem in its fullest sense.

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Please visit our SAW shop. We hold a range of shop items available for purchase all year round, many of which are branded with our SAW logo.



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AFFILIATION

Once again it is the time for affiliation membership renewals. Please renew today. Your membership is invaluable and your SAW needs you. For bank details please contact: pajamurs@btinternet.com

Q. *Do you have a favourite poet?*

A. There are many poets I enjoy, but I will return again and again to Norman MacCaig, Alice Oswald, Sharon Olds, Gillian Clarke.

Q. *Are you looking forward to the conference in March - are you excited about adjudicating the poetry category?*

Q. I was astonished, honoured and delighted to be asked to adjudicate the poetry category, and relish the task of reading and commenting on the submissions. Also, having attended the conference for some years now as a delegate, it will be interesting to see things from the other side of the table, so to speak!

Q. *Any words of wisdom for budding poets?*

A. I think that wisdom only comes when you have a pen in your hand and it is moving across the page. I try to think little, write as much as I can and write from the heart. Also, poetry is a craft as complex as that of the painter, the sculptor, the composer, the bricklayer, so it has to be studied just as assiduously.

Many thanks to Alison for taking part in our newsletter and we look forward to the conference and hearing more from you.



Saw Alumni

An opportunity to ensure the expertise of former Scottish Association of Writers' Council Members and Authors is not lost to the Association once they leave post or become successful.



Donations

Should you wish to make a donation, please download our SAW Donation Form, complete and forward along with your contribution to our valued and wonderful treasurer, Jacklin Murray. All donations are greatly appreciated.



The 46th Annual Conference



The 46th Annual Conference is just round the corner, once again in the first class amenities of the Westerwood Hotel, Cumbernauld.

If you have not already done so, download the prospectus from our website, www.sawriters.org.uk. It shows a programme full of learning and fun.

Promote Your Club at The Conference

Please note that there will be two panels of exhibition space for clubs to display information about Club programmes, to sell anthologies and promote successes. Should you wish panel space, please email Marc as soon as possible at president@sawriters.org.uk.

Have You Registered Yet?

Please note a few easy steps that will see you registered For the 2015 conference – you can do this without leaving the house!

Go to the SAW website and access the registration form.

Copy and paste it to word (or your equivalent.)

Fill it in and save.

Go to your online bank service.

Transfer £30.00 to the SAW account – Clydesdale Bank account number 50401535.

Sort code 82-20-00 using ref: CREG

Attach and save registration to an email. In the body of the email put your name, address and the date and time of the bank transfer. This information will make it easier for Jacklin to match the registration to the payment

Send the email to Jen at jen.butler@blueyonder.co.uk and a copy to Jacklin at pajamurs@btinternet.com.

Simples ☺



The Guillotine Choice

Please sign the petition to help clear Bashir's fathers name at www.change.org



Promote Your Club

Should you wish your club to feature in future newsletters, please contact Susan McVey at susanscribes@gmail.com



Meet Michael Malone



Michael Malone, a self professed Bookaholic, first joined Ayr Writers in the mid 90's and it was from there, was introduced to the wonders of the Scottish Association of Writers. Michael openly admits that the competitions, workshops, feedback and the people he has met over the years through both organisations have been instrumental in what modest achievements he has made.

Finding early success as a poet, it was his ambition to become a published novelist. February 2015 will see the release of his fifth book 'Beyond the Rage' in just over two and a half years. Michael says - "Seems like you wait all those years and book deals come along like buses. Wish I'd known, it would have saved SO much heartache."

Sadly, the book sales are not sufficient to support Michael financially, and therefore he continues to work as a Regional Account Manager for Faber and Faber (Faber Factory Plus). It's not too bad as Michael gets to visit book shops throughout Scotland and North England pretty much every day of the year. To that . . . Michael says "Lucky, lucky lucky me."

So I sent Michael over the usual questions. Let's see what he said to them.

Q. *Where did you grow up?*

A. I'm born bred and buttered in Ayrshire. The early part of my childhood found me in Kilmarnock. In a convent orphanage that made it into my first book 'Blood Tears', as Bethlehem House. Since that less than auspicious start, I've spent most of my days in Ayr. Moved as far as Prestwick when I got married. Divorce, and I was back in Ayr.

Q. *What is your favourite colour?*

A. Colours don't do a whole lot for me. I mean, they're nice and all that. The world would be pretty bleak without them, but I wouldn't say I had a favourite. I do notice the primary colours (I'm not colour blind), but shades with daft names? Magenta . . . Please! Having said that I've been buying a lot of purple recently. Is that a trend or something?

Club Affiliation

Do you know of any writers who meet together but are not affiliated to the Association? Please pass them our details and we can encourage them to join our community.



Promote a Member

Do you have a member in your club who deserves some well earned recognition? If so, please let us know and we would be delighted to feature them in future newsletters. Contact Susan McVey on susanscirbes@gmail.com

Q. *What was the inspiration behind your passion for writing?*

A. Reading was my gateway drug to writing. I can't remember a time when I was not a reader . . . and ever since I held a book I nursed the dream that I would produce one of my own. Took me a long time like, but I got there in the end.

Q. *What was your first pet and what was he/she called?*

A. We had a wee black dug when I was a wean. Can't remember anything about said wee black dug, apart from those details. It was wee and it was black, and it was a dug.

Then when I moved into my first flat, I inherited my friend's wee black dug. She was called Pepsi. I also inherited my neighbour's cat called George. Now we have Bob, a golden Labrador.

Q. *What is your 'all time' favourite book?*

A. Oh jeez, I only get one? SO many books and I've enjoyed them all for different reasons. And if I answer this next week, or even tomorrow, the answer will be different. But I'll settle on (for now at least) 'The Power of One' by Bryce Courteney. For sheer storytelling skills and emotional impact this book (first published in 1989) floored me and I go back to it every five years or so for another read.

Q. *What is your burning desire?*

A. Not sure that I would call it a burning desire, but I would love to see one of my books adapted for the small or the big screen. I'm not fussy what size the screen is, but it would be wonderful to see.

Q. *Do you have any words of wisdom that will help those who are entering the SAW 2015 competitions?*

A. After writing the best piece you possibly can, get it all shiny by considering the basics – spelling, grammar and punctuation. (And read it out loud. The ear will pick up what the eye has missed.)

The first thing that will remove you from the judge's good book is poor presentation. Looks like the author couldn't be bothered to get it right. And if they can't be bothered, why should the judge?

Look out for Michael's new book:

"Kenny O'Neill is raging. His girlfriend has been attacked and his father is reaching out from the past - despite abandoning Kenny as a child after his mother's suicide. He embarks on a dual mission - to hunt down his girlfriend's attacker and find out the truth about his dad. Instead, he unravels some disturbing family secrets and finds that revenge is not always sweet."

Quote from Caro Ramsay - "Malone has the enviable and rare talent of crafting hard-hitting noir that is also emotionally intelligent and engaging. A fabulous read."

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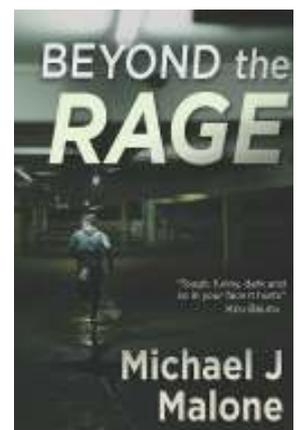
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Federation of Writers

<http://www.writersfederation.org.uk>



Sam Waddle



In our October Newsletter we introduced Sam Waddle, our 'young writer' from 'Write up North'. Sam has kindly agreed to share her story with us.

Deaths Hand

I thought it was the first occurrence, but then again, I couldn't be entirely sure. I had had either a very disturbing dream or a never-ending nightmare, but it was still enough to wake me, feeling as if I was about to relive an absolutely horrific memory.

Eventually, I had to let out a gasp so I knew that I was in fact awake and of course, I was. I was still in the familiar, darkened room that I called home and when I heard the gentle and childlike breathing that belonged to my young daughter ringing throughout my house, warmth was instantly brought to my body. I was slowly beginning to ease from being panicked, my palms were no longer sweating uncontrollably and my heart was back to beating steadily again.

I quickly shook it off though, and I simply began taking in the silence that had been in place for half the night, alongside basking in the uncomfortable darkness as my thoughts went into overdrive. I wasn't meant to have violent dreams interrupting my sleep as sleep was supposed to be a peaceful state of controlled unconsciousness; it wasn't meant to be disturbed by violence.

I shot up on the spot as I felt like some kind of entity had been watching me and when I was comfortable, I began recalling the bloody dreams I had had previously. I was trying not to think too hard, because if I started over-thinking, it would destroy me....



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In the dream, a dark crimson liquid had been dripping down from an elevated ceiling to create a darkened puddle on the floor and in one of the room's corners, there was a mysterious body. The body had been perfectly laid out within the crimson and as I was about to investigate the random person who had met their untimely death, I woke up and unsurprisingly, confusion had won me over.



I questioned the fact whether it was a reflection of what I had done five years beforehand. The look of horror on his face and the screams of pain were certainly exact to what I had conjured up in my sleep and maybe, it was an indication that I had to admit to the disgusting thing that I had done. I honestly didn't know the answer and that was unfortunate. All I did know was that my life had already been destroyed and I didn't want that to happen to anyone else.



"Mummy?" I was glad Lily had ventured into my room and disrupted my thoughts, because if she hadn't, there was the possibility that I was going to drive myself insane. I silently thanked God for blessing me with her even though I wasn't religious at all. Despite my non-belief in a possibly mythical entity, I still prayed as I was hoping for the miracle of my error being erased, but that was never going to occur. "Yes?" I quickly brushed my thoughts away and my sole focus was on her. Besides, what parent would I be if I put my needs before my own child's?



I moved on the spot to get a closer look at her, fully ready to hug her in a comforting and loving manner, but as I moved forward, it wasn't even her. I saw complete darkness and my theory about driving myself insane had evidently been proven. I had imagined our entire conversation and as I stared out in the darkness ahead of me, I knew that I definitely wasn't alone, I felt someone's presence. It wasn't a ghost, it couldn't be as there was no definitive proof that they actually existed. There were just some things in life that were considered paranormal, but they certainly weren't the activities of poltergeists or anyone else. It was just my mind playing tricks on me, it had to be....



I shook my head, I tilted my shoulders back and I slowly began working my way out of the bed. Even if my paranoia was non-existent, it was still paranoia nonetheless and I didn't want it to weigh me down. I wanted to rest; I didn't want my mind eating me alive.

My feet touched the ground first and I shivered as I took in the cold touch of my wooden floorboards. I had always been used to a warm temperature, not something that sent a chill down my spine.



Either way, I began to walk closer to my bedroom door to determine whether or not I was alone and there was a disturbing possibility that whatever it was, it was beside the door or even worse, beside Lily. I eventually took in the cold and I managed to make it to the outside of my room.

The temperature strangely heated up as soon as my feet transitioned from being on wooden floorboards to soft carpet and as I began to move closer towards her room, the temperature was getting to the point of becoming extremely uncomfortable. It was causing me to break out in boatloads of sweat and it felt like I had the cruel hand of life around my neck suffocating the young life out of me. I just embraced it though as my main priority was to protect the most important thing in the universe to me.

I had made it to near enough the entrance to her room when I came to a sudden halt. I tried to move, but there was an invisible force stopping me from doing so. It had my feet pinned to the floor, along with my legs and my arms had been pinned down to my sides. Practically, I had no control over my entire being.

I tried to fight of course, but it was a wasted effort. Despite my initial disapproval of paranormal entities existing, there was most definitely some supernatural force at work and it was most likely going to harm my daughter. If she was at any risk, I wanted to grab her and get the Hell out of there, but I was of course bounded by something I couldn't see.

I continued struggling for a further few minutes, but again, it was a wasted effort. I hadn't succeeded and I wasn't going to, my position was just going to stay the same. My mind was just telling me to give up as giving up was easier than fighting for a life that had already been lost. I just took the coward's route by giving up and I waited desperately for it to be over, or at least for something new to happen. To my surprise, something did happen. My feet had all of a sudden become loose and I could move again, but I had only moved a short distance when something else happened.

I had literally taken one step forward from where I initially was and a voice began to speak.
"Sometimes we need to deal with the fact that sometimes life doesn't go our way..." A random voice spoke out and it was highly disturbing. "Lily's gone, now it's your turn."
Suddenly, nothing even mattered anymore, everything had faded to black.

Many thanks to Sam once again and we look forward to seeing more of her in the future.

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SAW 100 Club

Congratulations to Michael Malone, our SAW 100 club winner for January

Could you be the lucky winner in February? Remember, the more members we have in the SAW 100 club, the bigger the prize. Download our membership forms today so you don't miss out!

The more who take part, the bigger the prize ☺

Important Reminder

Could all trophy winners from last year's conference remember to bring back the trophies?

Card Reader

The S.A.W has dragged itself into the 21st Century with the acquisition of a card reader for use in the shop. Your Treasurer laid down her quill and sat down to learn. Thanks to Chris Longmuir and the infinitely patient bods at PayPal I've got the hang of it! The card reader will be available at the Conference and doesn't have to be used exclusively for shop purchases. If you want to join/renew membership of the 100 Club or pay affiliation, simply take your completed forms to the shop and we will take your payment there and then. I think it will be handier for everyone unless I go into technology meltdown before then! Purchases must be £5.00 and over.

Jacklin

Finally

Once again it has been a pleasure bringing our newsletter to you. I would like to take this opportunity to wish you all happy writing for 2015 and I hope our association will be able to enjoy many successes with you, our wonderful members.

The deadlines are now closed for our conference competitions and I'm sure the judges will be busy enjoying your efforts and preparing critiques.

In the meantime, should you wish to promote your club or a club member, please contact me on susanscirbes@gmail.com. I look forward to hearing from you.

Kind regards as always

Susan McVey

Publicity Officer



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Let's Have Fun

Conundrum:

TYHIICSCNYONR

Riddles:

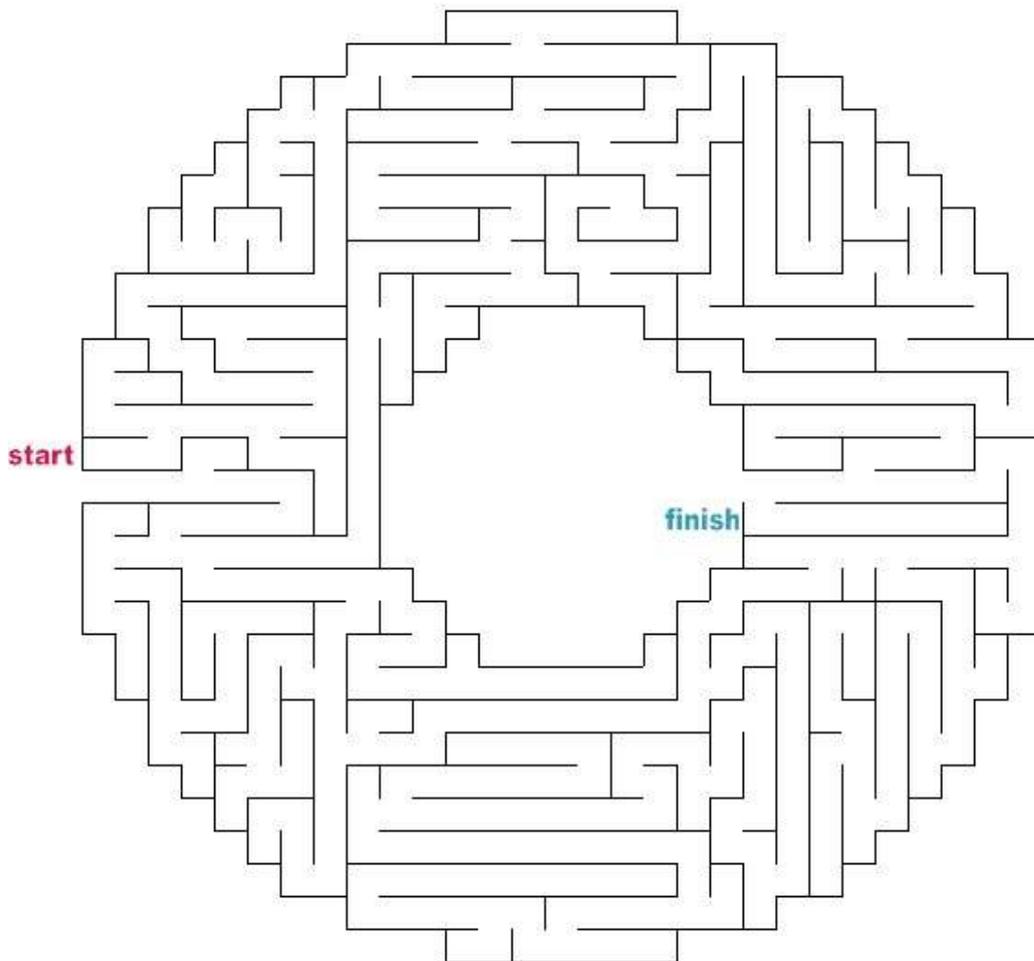
Brothers and sisters I have none
but this man's father is my father's son.
Who is the man?

What can travel around the world while staying in a corner?

What gets wetter and wetter the more it dries?

Paul's height is six feet, he's an assistant at a butcher's shop, and wears size 9 shoes. What does he weigh?

Find your way through the maze



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