

Scribbling to Success!

By Ellie Weedon and Hannah Halliday

An award-winner in the National Poetry Competition, 2011. You can imagine our excitement at the chance to meet and get the low down on poet Zaffar Kunial.

Tucked away in a corner, surrounded by the sweet smells of homemade cake and fresh coffee, Zaffar awaited our grilling in anticipation.

Welcoming us with a big smile and a friendly handshake, no one could tell that he was tired from the weeks of school workshops and poetry competitions that he's been involved with as the festival's Resident Poet.

Zaffar has spent the last two weeks sharing his knowledge on the art of words and language to people of all ages. Just talking to him allowed us to see the passion he has for the effects words can have on different people. He described how he was inspired by words, as he sits in his 'bubble of thought' in various cafes (Saltaire being the place of choice). He explained, "Every word has its own context- any word is beautiful in the correct sentence." I believe a small part of my literary heart fell in love with him after he said this; not to mention this can be seen clearly the use of words in his poems.

Hill Speak was the poem that won Kunial the third prize in the National Poetry Competition. This poem really explores his appetite for language. This award winning poem was scribbled down in Kunial's mind as he travelled to work (Hallmark cards) in the back of a taxi. Somewhere between Saltaire and Shipley, Kunial got talking to his taxi driver and ultimately found out that he was from Kashmir, Pakistan – the same place where his dad was from. They began discussing the local language in his hometown and Kunial was fascinated by the fact that it didn't have a name, as the taxi driver told



Ellie talks to Ilkley Literature Festival resident poet Zaffar.

him, "It's just our language." From this, Kunial researched the area and found out that the nearest thing the language had to a name was, 'Hill Speak' or 'Mountain Speak', hence his poem. Being his first published poem and his first public reading (trembling in front of literary geniuses such as Carol Ann-Duffy), this poem awarded Kunial with a great deal of success – no more scribbling verses on the back of hallmark cards!

Other than Zaffar's interest in the beauty of language, he also mentioned how he was inspired by a range of other poets, claiming that we "HAVE TO COME TO SEE JACKIE KATE'S READING TOMORROW NIGHT!" Furthermore, he also name-dropped the likes of Jo Shapcott and Angela Carter, finally mentioning how his highlight of the festival had to be chatting with Brian Blessed over breakfast, claiming that

he is "larger than life in every way." His enthusiasm for literature was contagious.

Finally, before we had to say goodbye and he had to be whisked off to present some sort of exciting event, we asked him if he had any advice for aspiring authors hoping to achieve his level of success. He laughed humbly and admitted that - apologising that it may seem cliché - the best advice he can give was to make sure you are reading widely and reading what you enjoy. "It is important that you find as little as three authors that you love and study their work closely." Become inspired. Over concluding handshakes and thankyou's, he finished with, "Remember to never see literature as not being written by people like yourselves – we are people who make mistakes – normal people", then, he pointed to a small, green pile of books, leaned in close and whispered, "I'd recommend this one."



If you can't write, write!

By Lizzie, Rianna and Sian



"Everyone wants to write well and enjoy themselves. Make it possible then get out of the way."

So said author and poet Peter Sansom when we met him shortly after he had given a workshop at Ilkley Literature Festival today. Peter is a very fun and caring man who loves his work. He is the author of many books including *Writing Poems*, *Talk Sense* and, his latest work, *Be Careful What You Wish For!*

Peter is experienced in what he does and has been inspiring others to write for 30 years. He says that he never stops improving and learning from his pupils. Peter's tips for writing are: Graze through work that you like and pick out two to focus, use and be inspired from and if you can't write; write. He also says: Keep focused when you are young as it is easier to look closely at pieces of work, at that age. Peter published his first poem at 17 and thought it would be plain sailing from then but after that poem he didn't publish another poem for 7 years. Peter's plans for the future are to publish more books to help others with their poetry but he is also following the advice in the title of his latest book, *Be Careful What You Wish For!* At the festival, Peter is doing workshops for experienced poets to try and help advance their skills and all of the people we saw taking the workshop had smiles on their faces when they left the room.

"It never gets any easier, but it does get more fun."

Tricks of the trade

By Niharika and Ben

Stephen Bates is a British writer and an award-winning journalist who has written for every major newspaper you can think of! He has won multiple awards including the British religious writer of the year in 2005 and 2006.

Stephen grew up as the youngest child in the family as his brothers were 10 years older than him and his sister was 13 years older. Stephen says that he was the most annoying member in his family because of one incident: When he was 5 or 6, his sister came home from work and it was raining. He refused to let her in the front door and made her go round the back!

Stephen was stuck after university and he didn't know what to do. He had always been a keen writer so he decided to have a go at journalism because he thought it might be fun and interesting. He applied for his local newspaper company and he only just got the job because he applied the day someone left which meant they didn't even have to advertise the job!

Stephen has about 9 or 10 rivals that are all other main newspapers in England. He says that when you are a journalist, you always have competition against the other newspapers to see who can get the best content for the readers.



When he's not interviewing anyone, he goes to the theatre, the cinema, reads or walks his pet labrador.

Stephen Bates' tips on how to be a journalist

- Read/watch/listen to news.
- Observe they present information.
- Always include the 5Ws and H (who, what, why, where, when, how)
- Be interested in news and current affairs.



Amazing Sinead



By Sophie

Recently, I met up with and spoke to a first year college student, Sinead, who is studying Business and Maths A-Level at Aspire I-gen College in Leeds. Not dissimilar to many 16 year old girls nowadays, Sinead's interests involve singing, shopping, spending time with her family and friends and walking her dog.

She first heard about the Ilkley Literature Festival through a teacher at the college where she is studying, and was chosen alongside another boy, who is here at the fantastic Festival today, to do a placement here for two weekends.

One of her roles at the festival involved

helping out the "Breaking News: Make a Newspaper in a Day" workshop- a workshop where youths aged 12-18 had the chance to 'become a real-life journalist' for the day! Sinead particularly enjoyed sorting out newspaper names and interviewing Stephen Bates, a journalist for The Guardian, as she felt as though it "really boosted her confidence!"

Sinead felt as though this was particularly helpful, as her career interests consist of Customer Services and the Police Force; both of which require you to have a high level of confidence!

As well as helping out at the "Breaking News: Make a Newspaper in a Day" workshop, Sinead has also been involved in a number of events involving assisting authors before they went on stage to speak at the Literature Festival. Just last week, on October 7th, Sinead had the exciting job of helping out Alex Perry before he went on stage, bringing water to his dressing room. How interesting!



Q and A with Festival Director Rachel Feldberg

By Alfie

Q: What are the highlights of this year's festival?

A: I think that the children's weekend last Saturday and Sunday were amazing. Two first world war writers came in, they were great.

Q: What are your greatest achievements?

A: Probably having my children Ben and Pipa, who I am terrifically proud of. I also helped build an art centre in Otley which cost $\frac{3}{4}$ of a million pounds.

Q: Did you change the festival at all, and if so, how?

A: I am very proud to say that I increased the number of events from 40 to 240.

Q: What was your school life like?

A: I loved primary school but hated my bossy secondary school, I nearly got expelled!

Q: How do you choose the writers who take part in events?

A: I chose some of them because they are very interesting or very good writers.

Q: What skills are needed to be the Director of Ilkley Literature Festival?

A: You have to love English and you have to love writing and know other languages because some authors that come don't write in English.

Q: How long have you held your position?

A: I have been directing since 2003, so 12 years. I wanted to work here because everyone was so friendly and good at their job.

Q: What do you think the future holds for you?

A: I might retire in 10 years although I might stop working here before that. At the minute I am working on a book, and so I might write some more after I finish working at the festival.

Meeting Helen Cross



On the seventeenth of October Zeshan, Junaid and Aryaan and I travelled to Ilkley Playhouse in order to interview guest speakers at the festival. We spoke to volunteers, authors and community workers who had travelled from far and wide.

Then we spent five calm relaxing minutes in the theatre taking in the emotion which was travelling through the calm crowd as a nice jazz piece filled the room with a sense of relaxation.

When we met Helen, she described her emotions in detail, saying how much she loved the festival. She told us that she liked modern fiction but wished she read more science fiction.

She has been writing since she was six years old. Her advice was 'never look back at a piece of work you did in case you think less of it'. We think that's great advice!

Meet the Journalists



Hannah is 17 and studies Photography and Textiles at Titus Salt School in Shipley. She is interested in Fashion Design and is planning to study Fashion at University. She has a cat, a dog, a tortoise and two goldfish!



Niharika, 11, loves baking, singing and acting. When she is older she would love to be an inventor. She loves Summer and her favourite festival is Diwali. She is currently in Year 7. and her favourite subjects at school are Maths and Science.



Sian, 12, is from Silsden and loves tennis, drama and ice skating. She hates Physics but she is good at drawing. She has two geckos, four chickens and three ducks and when she is older, she would like to go to university and do something to help the environment.



Ben, 12, is from Leeds and his ambition is to be a doctor. At school he loves football and science and in his spare time he loves football and cricket.





Ria, 12, is from Leeds and loves drawing, singing, photography and video games. She goes to drama club and is a dedicated YouTuber with her own gaming vlog. She describes her main strength as perseverance and she is also, apparently, a super awesome person and obsessed with *Gravity Falls*.



Ellie is 16 and is a Media student. She loves acting and making films. Her inspiration is Heath Ledger and she loves cooking, photography and going out with friends. She has appeared in *Macbeth* and is currently preparing for a production of *Annie*.



Sophie is 15 and lives in Leeds. She is studying art, music, history, maths English, science and RE and her interests include reading, spending time with family and friends and listening to music.



Lizzie, 13, is from Leeds and loves dancing, shopping and drama. She is funny, good at communicating and loves expressing herself.



Alfie, 13, is from Silsden and enjoys reading and writing. At school his favourite subjects are food technology and chemistry. In his spare time he enjoys horse riding and running.

Luqmaan, 12, loves science and human biology. When he's older, he wants to be a doctor, maybe because he's had three operations. When he's not learning about medicine, he enjoys playing video games and reading.

Zeehan is 11 and from Bradford. He loves football, supports Real Madrid and his inspiration is Cristiano Ronaldo. At school he loves English and in his spare time he enjoys video games.

Aryaan, who is 10 and from Bradford, decided to come to the workshop because he finds journalism interesting. His favourite hobby is playing cricket and when he grows up, he would like to be a policeman.

Junaid is 11 and his favourite hobby is writing stories and reading. In his spare time he plays football. When he is older, he would like to be a doctor and his ambition is to win the Nobel Prize!



Jean Moorcroft Wilson

Hidden voices from the front line

By Niharika and Ben

It was a cold but sunny afternoon, when we interviewed Jean Moorcroft Wilson.

She was a very nice and friendly lady who openly welcomed us. Jean is a writer, who writes biographies about poets. The first biography she wrote was about the poet Sorley.

Jean loves the Jewish poet Isen Rosenberg and researched him in South Africa, where she had her first major lecture. When she had finished, the people she had met begged her to come back so

she has been each January for 8 years.

On the day we were interviewing her she was going to give a lecture about Edward Thomas. She said the thing she liked about him was that she didn't understand him. Why did he go to war? Was it to escape his wife?! Was it because all his friends were going, or was it for his country.

She says that her greatest achievement was being the first person to write a biography about Sasoon, who is a very popular poet. When thinking about writing a biography she will only do it if they're a good poet.

'My favourite thing about writing is when I finish!'

