

# WORDPLAY

## Writers' Forum

Intelligent, Interesting, Informative, Inspirational

Ezine, Issue 12, January 21st 2011

**NOW YOU CAN BE A PART OF WORDPLAY:**

[www.wordplaywriters.com](http://www.wordplaywriters.com)

## NEW YEAR, NEW IDEAS

Happy New Year, everyone. We hope you all like the new way of receiving the Ezine. By doing it via a link rather than an attachment we have hopefully made it more user friendly whilst combining it with a monthly news update on WordPlay's activities and successes. We have also updated our website, making it easier to access the information you need, and will be continuing to respond and act proactively to the needs of our members, readers, and writers everywhere.

One year on and the Ezine has grown and changed. Whilst retaining favourites such as 'Ton Up' and 'The A-Z of Words', amongst others, we have introduced some new, what we hope will become, regular features.

Not all will necessarily work. 'Make the Case' lasted only a few months last year. Our aim is, however, to encourage writing and reading.

To this end we now include 'Spoof Horoscopes' and 'Have a Word', which hopefully will be fun to write and read.

Additionally our poetry section will now include a 'Poetry Explained' feature – for those ('Like me', says Ian) who find this form of

writing a mystery. Talking of the mystery of poetry – is this the year when we find out who Roberta is?

Anyway, we hope you like the changes, and, as ever welcome your comments at [wordplayenquiries@mail.com](mailto:wordplayenquiries@mail.com)

Look out for our new look next month!

Enjoy 2011 and keep playing with words.

Michael and Ian

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### WORDPLAY PUTS WRITERS AND READERS FIRST.

[READ MORE INSIDE](#)

### THE STORY BEHIND THE STORY

January sees the release of the first issue of our new 'glossy' fiction quarterly, 'The Story Behind The Story'.

Having received over 130 submissions, it was a tough job cutting these down to a final thirteen. The quality of writing and story telling that we received really was terrific.

Each accepted story author has received a WordPlay annual membership, and those authors already WordPlay members receive £10 for accepted stories.

If you like reading quality fiction, this really is a publication for you.

If you want to try your hand at writing short stories, why not submit for the next issue?

To download your free copy, and find out more about submitting your story for consideration, visit

<http://www.wordplaywriters.com/thestory.html>

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Editorial	1
WordPlay Annual Writers Awards	2
Internal Competition Joint Winner	3
Off the Wall	4
What are you reading?	5
Ton Up	6
WordPlay Services and Activities	7
Spoof Horoscopes	8
The Travel Spot	9
Write On	10
Intelligent IT	11
Poetry Explained	12
Poetry Page	13
A Final Rant	14
Guest Feature	15
The Story behind the Story	16
Why and Wherefores of Writing	17
A2Z	18

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# WORDPLAY ANNUAL AWARDS

## CELEBRATING YOUR SUCCESS

WordPlay has celebrated its first anniversary with the announcement of its first Annual Awards to recognise writing talent. There really is a great deal of talent around.

There are six categories: we feel it inappropriate to present a 'Lifetime Achievement' award after just one year of existence!

**Non-Fiction Award** goes to **Rob Innis**. Although he has contributed widely, including winning our short story competition earlier in the year, his consistent advice on technical tips (IT Intelligence) has become a regular and popular feature in our monthly Ezine.

**The Poetry Writer of the Year**, despite stiff competition from four or five others, went to **Migel Jayasinghe**. Though having only written half a dozen poems before joining WordPlay, Miguel has produced various verses throughout the year, and is now in the process of publishing an anthology of his work called 'A Year in Spain'. He has agreed to write a regular article about how poetry works for our Ezine during 2011.

**The Fiction Award** was effectively no contest. Our local Short Story Competition wherein which the winner is voted for by other members, went to one writer more than any other. WordPlay co-founder **Michael Barton** has been head and shoulders above all others during the year when it comes to story telling!

One of the best things about WordPlay has been watching writers branching out into areas other than their normal format: poets writing prose, and so on. To this end we recognise the '**Developing Writer**' of the Year – **Mery Kilduff**.

Our '**Contributor**' of the Year category had several individuals in the frame. Ultimately it was decided that **Joy Lennick** was the stand out candidate. Her consistent and varied contributions, added to the quality of her output, meant that we had a relatively easy decision to make.

Finally our top award was '**Member**' of the year. Once more there was one outstanding candidate. The winner has contributed to every aspect of our Ezine, set up a poetry sub-set of the group, contributed to our local monthly forums, and organises WordPlay 'Open Mic' nights. Step forward **John Edwards**.

So over to you: all members of WordPlay are eligible to receive these accolades. Why shouldn't it be you next year? Start sending in your writing for the ezine, The Story behind the Story, send us ideas and initiatives, tell us what you are doing within your writing groups wherever you are and, who knows, next year it could be your name on the trophy!

**WORDPLAY**

**Writers' Forum**

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**How our internal competition works:**

Any genre of writing is allowed.

The maximum length of work is 1,000 words of prose, or 40 lines of poetry.

Entries are judged by all the members of WordPlay, on an anonymous basis, so the winner is the piece most enjoyed by readers of writing.



## **THE WORDPLAY INTERNAL WRITING COMPETITION JOINT WINNERS**

Theme: A New Beginning

### **A HAPPY NEW YEAR TO A SOMEBODY**

by

**JOY LENNICK**

She staggers towards me  
Her face a road map of life;  
Mouth denuded of furnishings,  
Rambling mumblings mangled by traffic.

A pathetic scarf tries warming her ears,  
A masculine overcoat, string belted  
And layers of wool, nylon and tatty cotton garments  
Present an inflated figure.

Rheumy eyes stare from a gaunt face  
Above urine scented stockings,  
A collection of coloured bags (plastic)  
And air conditioned boots.

No sandalwood perfumes her cardboard pillow;  
No-one brushed her cheek with a mistletoe kiss.  
'Happy New Year' I say with a hesitant smile.  
She looks up blankly – sadly her attic is clogged and dusty.  
Someone lets off a firework – she flinches.  
The first day of a new year means little to  
Somebody who thinks they are a nobody.

# **RING IN THE NEW**

by  
**MIGEL JAYASINGHE**

‘Ring in the new’, the shibboleth of the day  
Sanctioned the plunder of resources, where we pay  
For carbon emissions and radiation leaks  
With cataclysmic seasons of troughs and peaks.

‘Ring in the new’ has infected the planet;  
Technological progress, unstoppable juggernaut,  
For the past four centuries of Man’s domination  
Whetted consumer greed for crass accumulation.

‘Ring in the new’ though overwhelmed by debt  
May not be settled over generations to come;  
A pity, that Man has not realised yet  
He’s playing a zero-sum game – how dumb!

## **OFF THE WALL**

From the US (In reply to a yearly competition set by The Washington Post) Alternate meanings for common words.

Coffee	n. The person upon whom one coughs
Flabbergasted	adj. Appalled by discovering how much weight one has gained
Esplanade	v. To attempt an explanation whilst drunk
Negligent	adj. Absentmindedly answering the door when wearing only a nightgown
Lymph	v. To walk with a lisp
Gargoyle	n. Olive flavoured mouthwash
Flatulence	n. Emergency vehicle that picks up someone who has been run over by a steamroller
Balderdash	n. A rapidly receding hairline
Testicle	n. A humorous question on an exam paper
Rectitude	n. The formal dignified bearing adopted by proctologists
Pokemon	n. A Rastafarian proctologist
Oyster	n. A person who sprinkles his conversation with Yiddishisms
Frisbeetarianism	n. The belief that, after death, the soul flies up onto the roof and gets stuck there.

Jjoy Lennick



# WHAT ARE YOU READING?

Our members review their latest read.



## **Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy by Douglas Adams; Folio Society Edition (2010).**

Douglas Adams' *Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* was first published in book form in 1979. A comic novel satirising life on our planet in the guise of a usually strait-laced sci-fi story, it became an instant hit with the reading public. The book immediately attracted a cult following which has been growing over the years. Strange, I had not read this book during more than three decades of its existence until I bought it recently as part of a Folio Society special offer Christmas package. Although I had heard of it often enough, I had never even thought of borrowing it from a local library.

The statistics are amazing. By 2005, four years after the author's untimely death, it had been translated into more than 30 languages and had sold more than 14 million copies. I finished reading the 174-page book within a couple of hours and looked up Google to read the reviews. As expected, the majority of nearly 1,000 reviews were quite favourable, with only a few pointing to the lack of character and plot development as a weakness. On Google I found websites entirely devoted to (memorable?) quotes from the book. After all those accolades from devoted fans who claim to read the book over and over again, I have asked myself whether I am brave enough to critique it.

But, here I am; this is my take on 'HHGG' for what it is worth. The stock characters and the lack of a story with beginning, middle, and end, are not my concern. I grant that the satire on human institutions and academic pretensions are spot on. The unexpected twists in the narrative and the verbal exchanges between characters are original and amusing, although not to the extent of provoking belly laughs. Under the rubric of the science fiction genre the author has the freedom to stretch the reader's credibility, but there are limits. For example, in a story with an intergalactic setting, speaking always within the earth time-scale of 'minutes', 'hours' and 'years' sounds amateurish. (e.g. 'On arrival we will stay in dock for a seventy-two hour refit, ...' p. 50). The two-headed, three-armed Zaphod in conversation with the two earthlings, Arthur and Trillian talks about everyday earthly situations when he is not indulging in the comic, contradictory ruminations for which he is designed by the author. The author also tends to overdo the satire in ascribing human emotions to computers and the constantly 'depressed' robot Marvin. My verdict? The book is good, but not as clever or perfect as to merit mass adoration.

**Migel Jayasinghe**

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# TON UP!

Let off steam in 100 words....

Leave Sport to the People.

The Queen's Xmas speech centered around extolling the virtues of sport in bringing people together. She managed to pronounce it 'spaught' or some such. That'll be Polo, Henley and the like. This year she attended that bastion of egalitarianism, Wimbledon, for the first time in over a quarter of a century. Get down The Den, Ma'am.

The Eton educated PM gets in on the act with the England Ashes team's success. Encourage more school sport, and get a cabinet minister dedicated solely to it. What next? His lifelong dedication to football, Millwall perchance (ref Tony Blair being a member of the Toon Army). Spare us ordinary folk your spurious sporting sincerity.

**Ian Alexander**



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## SPOOF HOROSCOPES

By our 'Mystic Meg'

**Joy Lennick**

**Aries** – With memories of Hallowe'en still hovering...A week of procrastination. You won't be able to get your teeth into a neck...sorry! much at all, due to unforeseen circumstances. Pay no heed to the rumour that your local football match will be played without floodlights. They are on top form and should score several ghouls...sorry goals. Lucky colour: khaki. Lucky number 13.

**Taurus** – Turn down an invitation to go mountain climbing this Tuesday. The friend inviting you hasn't forgiven you for marrying her former fiancé. Likewise turn down an alternative suggestion to attend a wine tasting ceremony... Better to be safe than sorry. Improved conditions on the distant horizon. Lucky colour: puce. Lucky number none.

**Gemini** - Give careful thought to your blind date on Thursday. The tea leaves see a man/woman of largish proportions with a temper to match. (The fact that he/she has a wooden leg might hamper your plans to take him/her hill walking.) Give urgent attention to the contents of your fridge. Not your best week for trying anything new. Lucky colour sludge green. Lucky number maybe 7.

**Cancer**- Your work prospects are not good this week, unless considering Undertaking or becoming a Mole Catcher. Don't despair, better news ahead. Ignore the poison pen letters you will be receiving shortly. Some people have no hobbies...With Hallowe'en still in mind...give cleaning the attic a miss on Friday the 13th and leave the wine in the cellar. Your liver will thank you. Do the lottery (it will give you a focus.) Lucky colour black; Lucky number 66.

**Leo** - Because of uncertainty in your current relationship, check all foodstuffs and liquids. I see a sharpening of knives in my crystal ball. Don't worry unduly – maybe your partner has a bad case of "Jamie Oliver syndrome"...The horrendous thunderstorm forecast for Wednesday is not a portent for murder. (Stop watching horror films and CSI.)

A pleasant surprise on Saturday makes a change. Lucky colour Purple; lucky number 7.

**Virgo** – An imminent visit from your mother-in-law shouldn't throw you into a panic. So what that she's an ace cook and was voted Mother of the Year in 1978. Send your rebel punk son to a Boot camp and cheat in the kitchen. (Alternatively, you could always invent an infestation of mice the day before?!) There's a surprise in store in your bedroom, but the tea leaves were unclear as to its exact nature. Be optimistic.

Lucky colour white; lucky number 1066.

**Libra** – Full speed ahead with your ambitious plans to tackle Everest. However there is some confusion as to whether you mean climbing the mountain or buying a new bed. You really must improve your hand-writing. The cards suggest a confused cousin in Bognor? Taking a cookery course might improve your chances of snaring a partner...Lucky colour baby pink; lucky number 99.

**SCORPIO** - Forget your plans to take up ballet. Spending more time at the bar as opposed to the barre will make the guys at the fire station more sympathetic. Furthermore your intentions to take up knitting can lead to misinterpretation. Your secondary career as an architect might be a sensible alternative. Stay focused. Watch your intake of bananas, and spend more time with your father. Lucky colour mustard; lucky number 77.

**SAGITTARIUS** - Still have uneaten mince pies over from Christmas? Watch for wrongly-date-stamped ones...Re-wrap unwanted socks for next year's gifts! I see a vacuum cleaner given to a lady in my crystal ball. If it applies to you, don't worry she'll forgive you soon. If you really can't stand the thought of entertaining your "Mrs Bouquet" sister-in-law again, conjure up an illness such as mumps/measles or better still bubonic plague. Lucky colour red; lucky number 1.

**CAPRICORN** – If you are toying with the idea of calling your new son Mavis, don't (remember the song about "Sue"?) The tea leaves warn of a choking incident so be careful when nibbling the turkey carcass in the New Year soup. Keep one eye open when having your after dinner nap...All that apart, it should be a reasonably successful New Year. Oh yeah...Lucky colour Mauve; lucky number 88.

**AQUARIUS** – Nothing fishy about this sign. Go full steam ahead with your plans to travel, but give Iraq and Afghanistan a wide berth at present. Don't fret if you've only lost two pounds in weight so far; lots of people weigh eighteen stone these days...At least you're in fashion. Many people have been disappointed that Liz hasn't awarded them an OBE or a DSO, or whatever, this year, especially Bruce...so don't despair, your work with the Vertically Challenged Vegan Charitable Society could pay off next year. Lucky colour Lupin blue. Lucky number 1812.

**PISCES** – If you think you were unlucky last year, think again...Things will not improve until early spring, but don't lose heart. There's a strong chance of being hospitalised with a broken limb so tread carefully. Be extra nice to your boss as a redundancy is also forecast. However things could be worse. PS Have the foundations of your house checked ASAP. Lucky colour beige; lucky number 1,000.

# THE TRAVEL SPOT

hosted by  
**MAUREEN MOSS**

**This month, Maureen takes us to...**

**Paraty, Brazil**



I sit at a heavy wooden breakfast table, sipping cool fresh water while watching three slinky cats gaze in fascination at a tiny bright blue humming bird hovering near an enormous heliconia plant. I am comfortable among this rustic furniture, as are the horribly smelly dogs stretched out on the old stone floor. A mosquito buzzes slowly past my ear, and I wonder if it is heavy with the blood of one of the canine residents. It is cool, quiet and sleepy.

Suddenly a drum starts to beat outside, and within minutes there is music and the sound of dancing - a fiesta has just begun. Here in Brazil, parties can start at ten in the morning. My feet begin tapping to the hypnotic, sensual rhythm. I move to the open doorway, drawn to the laughter and passion in the voices of the crowd.

I'm in the colonial town of Paraty, Brazil's second most important port during the eighteenth century. The old 'pousada' (inn) with its terracotta roof tiles nestles amid the watercolours of the beautifully preserved façades along the seafront. Along the pier's edge, skinny children dressed in flimsy sun bleached clothes sit dangling their legs and sucking flesh from the claws of whole baby crabs in their shells, licking their fingers clean. Cannons line the waterfront, horizontally striped fishing boats are bathed in a glowing light, and the flat sea seems to hold a reflection of the gold and precious stones once shipped from here.

I go for a stroll along the shore, amid butterflies, almond trees, bougainvillea, hibiscus and poinsettia plants. An army of red and orange crabs wait, like multi-coloured tarantulas in ambush, in the mud of the mangrove swamp. Three large vultures pick their way awkwardly across the dusty sands of the estuary shore. I wonder if they are the same ones I saw hacking at rubbish sacks at the back of the hotel earlier on.

It's now early evening; as I make my way back to the pousada I come across an outdoor cabaret show. Five adolescent girls are prancing and miming to the music of The Spice Girls. I find the way Brazilians encourage very young girls to dress and dance sexily distasteful and I am uncomfortable with this untimely display of sexuality. I think of Gabriela, the young mulatta (one black and one white parent) housemaid, who seduces her respectable employer, Mr. Nacib, in Jorge Amado's classic of Brazilian literature – 'Gabriela, Clove & Cinnamon' - filmed in Paraty.

Early tomorrow morning I am to board a bus to the world's largest falls at Iguazu, a journey which will take all day and night, and I remember that Brazil is bigger than Australia. I retire early and as I slip in between crisply starched cotton sheets, I breathe in the heady scent of jasmine until, despite the tingle of anticipation and thoughts of Gabriela's forbidden love affair, I succumb to a deep sleep.

# WRITE ON

## Tips for all writers, from WordPlay Co-Founder MICHAEL BARTON



Louis D Brandeis famously said there is no such thing as good writing, only good rewriting. Proof reading, combined with editing, is the process of checking work for spelling, grammar, word use, etc before it is published.

Whilst separate skills, proof reading and editing are inexorably linked and form the hardest and most arduous part of writing. Self-proof reading and self-editing are often thought to be the most difficult tasks for a writer to perform. Having said this, agents and publishers expect submitted work to be of proof read and edited quality -even if further editing will be undertaken. This is why most successful writers use professional editing services.

For those just starting out as writers, or lacking the funds to engage an independent, professional editor, there are some basic steps that can be taken which will improve the quality of your finished piece.

Firstly, and perhaps most easily overlooked, use a spellchecker! Microsoft Word's will show up your spelling mistakes as you go. Turn it on, but don't let your work suffer from constant editing whilst writing. However, a spell checker will not catch all errors. So, still plenty of manual proof reading to do.

Next, always take a breather from your writing. Leave a gap of a few days between completion and proof read. Your mind and your eyes will be fresh and more prepared to look at your work differently, and without your writer's hat on.

A good proof read will start with a read through, a read aloud, and a read backwards! Examine each word alone, and in connection with those around it. Take great care with homophones: words which are spelt differently and with different meanings, but similar pronunciation. Common examples are 'affect' and 'effect', and, of course, one of the most usual, 'too', 'to', and 'two'.

Many proofreaders will check for single types of error, one at a time. This method concentrates the mind, and often prevents the odd hiccup slipping through even the most capable hands.

Finally, keep a notebook by your side when proof reading and write down your most common errors. This will make your eye keener throughout the process, and also improve your initial writing next time.

These are just some of the points covered more fully in WordPlay's Basic Proof Reading e-course. You could, of course, choose to make use of WordPlay's editing service to polish your manuscript, not forgetting that WordPlay members benefit from such a service with a massive discount from standard charges.



### **A Broken Man**

Peter 'Hud' Hudson, ex SAS officer, is on the road to recovery from post traumatic stress after a failed mission in Iraq first time around. His life is torn apart for a second time when his brother Jack – the UK Government's Foreign Secretary – is brutally assassinated in his own home.

### **A Secret Society**

The reason for Jack's murder is detailed in a file of research that he leaves for Peter to discover: a file that reveals the truth behind an organisation known as Schengen. And Schengen want it, for the time has come for them to realise the prophecy of the Fourth Reich, and see the creation of an empire that will encompass the whole of Europe and seek world domination.

### **A Race Against Time**

Enlisting the help of his ex-wife, Hudson finds himself in Paris and framed for the murder of his brother. As Schengen's net draws tighter around him, he finds himself with nowhere to run and nowhere to hide. His is now a race against time to clear his name and save Europe from the grips of Schengen and an Al Queda plot that would see the future of the continent changed forever.

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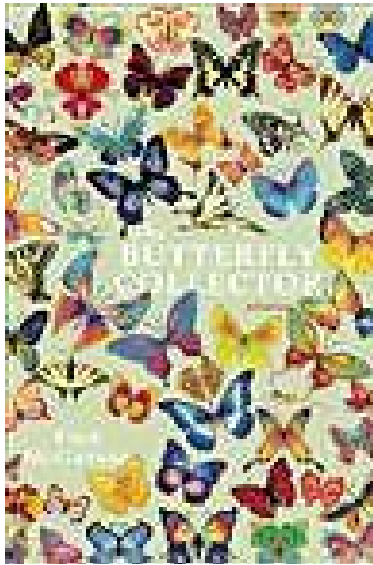
**WHERE ARE YOU, ROB?!!**

**Our IT writer has disappeared on holiday this  
month...  
how dare he!**

**Don't worry normal service resumes in February**

## THE BUTTERFLY COLLECTOR

by Fred McGavran



A collection of gems. By day Fred McGavran is a highly regarded Harvard-educated lawyer. My moonlight, he crafts page-turners that draw on his deep experience with law and life. McGavran's masterly writing invites comparison with John Grisham. But stir in Stephen King and Kafka—an eye for the absurd, an ear for dialog, and a wicked sense of humor. McGavran ranks as a top lawyer-writer. His abiding concern with moral values reaches into literary traditions that include the best of Melville, Chekov, and Graham Greene. His stories go down smoothly, but they linger and haunt. These stories are required reading for law-and-lit fans, lawyers with a sense of humor, and devotees of the art of short fiction. **Michael H. Hoffheimer, Professor of Law, University of Mississippi, USA**

'sardonic, erudite, and unexpectedly frightening. He will leave you wanting more.' **P.F. Kluge, Writer in Residence, Kenyon College and author of *Gone Tomorrow* and other novels**

Fred McGavran's first collection of short fiction, *The Butterfly Collector*, etches the American *haute bourgeoisie* with satire that stings in carefully observed detail but then predictably swerves into generous invention. The world he works with is O'Hara's and Upkike's suburbia, mildly Midwestern, citified—but populated by lawyers, priests, occasionally therapists and academics, most of them aging badly, few of them attractive to women. His Dickensian devastations of the law, updated with *voir dire*, take turns with a magical realism. McGavran writes about memory, often about an unfortunate inability to remember selectively. Things keep coming back—submarines that rise years later to disgorge their dead or, elsewhere, unkillable bears and stags. Oddly, dismembered limbs run through his stories, metaphors for what travels uselessly. **Britton J. Harwood, Professor of English, Miami University, USA**

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## **POETRY EXPLAINED**

Since joining the WordPlay Forum almost since its inception, I have been for the most part, a regular contributor of poems to this ezine. Before this, I had never thought of myself as a poet. Hitherto, my entire poetic opus consisted of just five poems which appeared among several short stories, essays, and a one-act play in my book *A Miscellany*, self-published with Outskirts Press in 2008. My 2009 book by the same publisher *Renditions* was a collection of essays. During 2010, except for a short article and a sketch, I did not spend much time writing prose.

I have to thank the WordPlay Forum for turning me into a poet in 2010. I admit to having half-dozen poems in my portfolio when I started attending the monthly Forum meetings at Maggie's Bar in Playa Flamenca. However, the majority of the 48 poems (to be) published as *One Year in Spain* were written as a direct result of my Forum attendance. When I volunteered to give a talk on 'why I write poetry' at the Forum meeting on 12<sup>th</sup> December 2010, I did not bargain to have an audience of just five highly committed members including one of the two Executive Directors of WordPlay. After the talk, Michael invited me to write a column for the monthly ezine elaborating on the concepts and issues opened up for discussion in the art of poetry writing. Perhaps he felt that I deserved a wider audience. I readily agreed.

I can answer the question 'why I write poetry' giving two reasons. First, the ease of merely sitting on the terrace of my home in the sun and scribbling in a note-book without worrying about the lack of 'facilities' to be a serious writer. Second, the help and encouragement I have received throughout my time of membership with the WordPlay Forum. This includes the monthly writing competitions organised by the Forum (although I didn't win any). John Edwards lending me Stephen Fry's *Ode Less Travelled* was a milestone in my development as a poet. His open mic evening was another. Joy Lennick's comments and criticisms of some of my poems were also helpful.

In my future contributions to this page, I will speak less of myself and deal with what I have learnt about the forms, techniques and language of poetry, inviting comments from interested readers.

**'It is necessary to study the words you have written, for the words have a longer history than you have and say more than you know'** (George Oppen (1908 – 1984).

Why not send us your poetry, tips, advice, or comments? WordPlay members can contribute to the WordPlay monthly Ezine and have their words read worldwide. You may even become our Poetry Writer of 2011! Visit [www.wordplaywriters.com](http://www.wordplaywriters.com) to find out how you can become member and start participating.

## New Horizon

Compelled to earn a living throughout my youth  
By hard physical labour was not such a bad thing;  
When promoted to pen-pushing in early middle age,  
Acquired a spare tyre, most unprepossessing!

Now too old (or lazy) for vigorous exercise,  
A walk round the block would more than suffice  
To prevent falling prey to everyday disease;  
Still, two pills on prescription, I need to take.

Dementia and Alzheimer's are conditions I dread  
No history in the family, unless kept very quiet.  
Lunch, our main meal, a half-decent spread  
Has salad as the constant companion of my diet.

Drinks in moderation, just a convivial glass  
Of wine, spirits, beer; the cigar on occasion.  
Cryptic crosswords do stimulate grey cells,  
But it's in poetry, I glimpse a new horizon.

**Migel Jayasinghe**

### WORDPLAY: OPENING DOORS FOR POETS WORLDWIDE

Poets abound. Not only can members get their efforts read here in the Ezine, but WordPlay will be holding quarterly competitions dedicated to the verse voices amongst you. (Scriptwriters note that we will be running similar opportunities bi-annually). Keep an eye on [www.wordplaywriters.com](http://www.wordplaywriters.com) and our other publications for details.

Poets around the  
world have been on a  
Christmas / New Year  
Break.

Next month we  
promise more!

### **My Husband's Perfect Gift**

I got a Wii for Christmas  
I'm not sure that it's me  
You see it says I'm seventy two  
When I know I'm thirty three

It introduces me to lots of friends  
Across the world wide web  
I've started tandem cycling  
With a Malaysian girl called Deb

I stand and balance on my board  
With hands struck out each side  
It's better than struggling at the gym  
Where there was never a place to hide

Oh my Wii, the freedom I've found  
I'm no longer tied to the sink  
I'm getting fit with my friends on line  
While my husband's out having a drink

**ROBERTA**

## ONE FINAL RANT FROM JOHN EDWARDS

Let me have just one more blast to end last year. Let me have one more rant before I turn my attention to more important matters. I have been to New York and back via London and Amsterdam and I was able (just) to get there without a problem and back again. I avoided closed airports, made a northerly detour to get to London, vacated Spain before the air controllers went on struck, battled down the M1 in a snow storm, fought off the cold weather in NY and almost beat every passengers' germs except one.

However, that is not my beef because before I left the English media were trotting out their usual moronic repertoire of how the transport system gets beaten by even a smidgeon of snow and it all grinds to a halt because we cannot cope. May their snowballs stay frozen in a fiery hell. If they were to look over the rim of their mug of tea they would see that airports were closing all over Europe or preparing to. Perhaps they could be usefully suggestive and create a plan to remove 18" of snow from Gatwick's runways in a thrice. I bet Harry Potter could!

## WRITERS' CHALLENGE HAVE A WORD

Ok, can you tell a story in 100 words, with each sentence holding a word from the previous?

Here's an example.

### Expecting

'Can we talk?'

Talk is cheap. None is cheaper than that on the pillow. I plumped the pillow up. I wasn't up for it, stuff like this, I thought. It was going to be the usual stuff. Nothing unusual in that. It would be something or nothing, as ever. Something was bothering her. That was for certain, why should I bother? Certainly I would be on the receiving end. Was this actually the end? Actually it was nothing of the sort.

'Can we sort the backroom later?'

'The backroom?' I asked pausing pregnantly.

'Yes we need to .... I'm pregnant'

**Ian Alexander**

Send your short shorts, to [wordplayezine@mail.com](mailto:wordplayezine@mail.com)

## GUEST FEATURE

### VIVA LA PLAZA

Anyone familiar with Torre de la Horadada will agree how pleasant it is to visit – if you haven't you should - whether it be to paddle or swim in one of the small, seductive bays; find crabs with kids in the shallow waters, or just relax in the attractive plaza, where fixed "three-seat" groups amuse. Not that many years ago, the "plaza" was not so impressive. We came across it whilst exploring our surroundings, being fairly new to the area. However, it was to soon be given a deserved face lift and has, for many years now, attracted an international mix of visitors, who sup, lunch and dine cheek by jowl with the local, and visiting Spaniards.

Talking of plazas, being English, the first famous "square" that springs to mind is Trafalgar, surrounded by huge chunks of history, including The Mall leading to Buckingham Palace; and numerous buildings of note, with Admiral Nelson in such an elevated position on his column, he can keep an eye on acres of green-fringed land, the harmless lions and the pigeons...

Another, is Washington Square in the U.S.A, lush front garden to a wealth of historical and interesting edifices, many long since the homes of a thriving publishing industry. Laid out in 1682 by William Penn's surveyor Thomas Holm, it was used both as a potter's field and a burial yard for strangers in the city, and later as a resting place for the unfortunate victims of the civil war and a serious outbreak of yellow fever. Perhaps the latter facts are relevant to the flourishing of sixty varieties of tree seeds sown there.

Merely scratching the surface, Russia's Red Square evokes a turbulent past, energetic Cossack dancers, the balalaika and nests of garishly painted Russian dolls; while St. Mark's Square, Italy, ah...unique, exquisite St. Mark's...echoes a fascinating history and appeals to all five senses.

Spain too can boast of plazas that stand proud with the rest: the Plaza de Cibeles with fountain, and statue of the Roman Goddess Sybele, in Madrid, the Plaza de America and the Plaza de Espana, the latter built in theatrical style by Anibal Gonzalaz. The Plaza Mayor in Salamanca, one of Spain's grandest and largest plazas, begs an adjective: magnificent. Built by Felipe V to thank the city for its support during the war of the Spanish Succession, and completed in 1755, it was once used for bullfights. Built of warm, golden sandstone, The Plaza Mayor is particularly resplendent at dusk.

Humble plazas too are important and valued places: to sit and ponder, read, let your dog take you walkies...gobble a quick sandwich, or just stroll and enjoy the surroundings.

Before signing off and heading towards it...I must mention another favourite: La Plaza de la Constitucion, in Torrevieja, a verdant oasis – a lung amongst the concrete and brick – a place of calm (at times!) a place of celebration at others - venue, too, of the yearly, praiseworthy, Christmas Belan which attracts a host of visitors and always delights.

Viva La Plaza!

Joy Lennick

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# A TO Z OF WORDS

PLAY WITH WORDS

## FOOTIE A2Z

WordPlay's regular last page is the final, favourite part of the ezine. Here members are simply invited to do what we all do - Play with Words. Sign up at [www.wordplaywriters.com](http://www.wordplaywriters.com) and start playing. Whatever you do, enjoy writing.

**Arsenal:** Pretty but no penetration. I have known women like this.

**Birmingham:** A life of snatching defeat from the jaws of victory. A sleeping pygmy.

**Cardiff:** The only team to take the FA cup out of England – and then they hosted it!

**Derby:** 'Interesting, very interesting. Look at his face, just look at his face!' Muddy.

**Everton:** Fabulously still run out to the theme tune from Z cars.

**Fulham:** Top club. They even have a section for 'neutral' supporters at the ground.

**Grimsby:** The clue is in the first syllable.

**Hull City:** Famous only for being the only club whose name has no letters which can be coloured in.

**Ipswich:** Until recently Roy Keane's Ipswich. Now, once again, 'The Tractor Boys'.

**Johnstone:** Saint – the only club with a J in their name.

**Kilmarnock:** Well at least their name begins and ends with the same letter. Strangely they play at Rugby Park.

**Leicester:** Been to more FA Cup finals (4) than any other club, without winning one.

**Manchester:** United or City? Salford or Moss Side?

**Norwich:** The pies are good, thanks Delia.

**Orient:** Eastern exotic only in the London geography sense.

**Plymouth:** Argyle – named after a pub. Their home ground is imaginatively called Home Park.

**Queens Park Rangers:** There is no park near Loftus Road, so no need for rangers. Queens, then.

**Reading:** Often confused with curling up with a good book.

**Southampton:** Not to be confused with Northampton. That would be cobblers. Why no Easthampton or Westhampton?

**Tottenham:** Or Tottenham as Ossie used to call them.

**United:** Plenty to choose from.

**Villa:** Clearly not a full house.

**Xeter:** The real St. James' Park.

**Yeovil:** In cup giant killing days, famous for their sloping pitch.

**Zenit:** Okay, they are foreign – so what?

Ian Alexander

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