

# NAWG

## LINK newsletter

### Editorial

By Steve Bowkett

I suppose it was inevitable given the recent changes in NAWG that LINK would need to undergo something of a transformation. What you see before you is the product of much discussion, many decisions, and the time, effort and skill of a group of people who feel, as we surely all do that our Association champions a very worthwhile cause.

In taking on the role of newsletter editor, my job principally is to choose which items to include in each issue and which submissions seem not to be suitable. At the moment my main guidelines are the points of editorial policy that the current Committee formulated late last year. Hopefully you've caught sight of them (the guidelines, not the Committee!) in the December LINK mailout, but if not you can find them on the NAWG website.

Guidelines however are just that. I also rely on what I consider to be entertaining and informative writing, and I hope increasingly to be influenced by what you the readers would like to see. So your feedback is going to be very valuable. One idea that we the Committee would like to try is offering an email version of LINK as well as the paper-based one you're used to. Further details in the next issue but please let us know what you think.

I am acutely aware that I have a great deal to live up to in helping to ensure that the new LINK approaches the standards set not only by Mike Wilson but by your own expectations. These are my first faltering steps. Bear with me. I hope as I gain more experience that I may edit LINK as the military strategist Sun Tzu said one should fry a small fish – lightly.

[www.nawg.co.uk/guidelines](http://www.nawg.co.uk/guidelines)

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## Got something to tell us?

[nawgeditor@live.com](mailto:nawgeditor@live.com)

# Taking it easy? of course not!

by Mike Wilson

**You may think that now I have retired from helping NAWG in its endeavours, I would be taking it easy. Far from it! My days are full and I am enjoying all that I now do.**

Diane and I judged the Christmas competition which ended in December. That gave us a lot of entertainment and we hope the winners are delighted with the result of their work. I have completed my entry into the Self-Publishing Award run by the David St John Thomas Charitable Trust. My book *More Bridlington* was the central point of the entry and I hope to be invited to the prizegiving in London on May 6. And here is where coincidence plays its part. On that day, Diane and I just happen to be returning from Poperinge by train. We shall arrive in London in time to be able to visit the prizegiving before continuing our journey home. That means there will be no need for the expense of train fare and accommodation in London

for the event. Not spending unnecessary money is just what a Yorkshireman likes!

Self-Publishing Magazine's reviewer of *Little Tyke*, my book of poetry through the eyes of a Bridlington lad in the 40s and 50s, gave me immense joy when they spoke highly of the work and of the book as a whole.

On other fronts, I have helped Diane Impey publish her novelette, and created a book for Val McLane via Brian Lister at Biscuit Publishing. Two local authors have published historical works and I've been able to help there too.

My self-imposed task for the next few months, however, is to continue with collating everything I can find on the men whose names appear on Bridlington's Cenotaph. Among the 300 or so names is that of my grandfather and Remembrance Day thrust the need for the men's lives - as well as their deaths

- to be recorded for the future. The Commonwealth War Graves Commission site provided much information, which was then extended via Ancestry.com. On top of those two sources, the *Annals of Bridlington*, housed in the local library, provided me with cuttings from the town's newspapers of the time. What I am going to do with the resulting information I'm not sure yet, but at least I can provide a ring-bound archive for the library.

My next self-published book on Bridlington is still on course for May publication. Over the winter I have collected much material via eBay to provide inspiration for a multitude of pages. Currently I am negotiating with local artists to include their work to give them publicity.

And I'm sure something else will come along after I've finished all that.

[www.nawg.co.uk/taking-it-easy](http://www.nawg.co.uk/taking-it-easy)

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## I wrote a novel in a month

by Judith Taylor, WritersBlock

**On 30 October this year I heard for the first time about Nanowrimo (National November Writing Month - [www.nanowrimo.org](http://www.nanowrimo.org)), an international novel writing programme, the aim of which is to complete a novel (50,000 words or more) in a month.**

'A crazy idea,' I thought. On 31 October I thought again. 'Why not? What have I got to lose?' On 1 November I (and 167,000 others) decided to go in for it. Almost immediately I received a reply welcoming me and promising me advice and pep talks throughout the month. So that was that. I had to start writing.

What makes someone go in for a competition like this? My answer is that I am a slow writer, drafting and re-drafting many times and allowing details of the plot to impede progress and erode motivation. The last novel took 25 years to write, mainly because I couldn't decide how to end it, so I was determined to finish the new one more speedily. Even so, after a year I had only reached chapter four. So the idea of writing a novel in a month appealed to me. Cheating slightly, I decided to build on the 20,000

words already written, and try to complete it by 30 November.

Readers, I did it! At 5pm on 30 November I sent off my novel, and had an almost instant reply from the automatic word counter that I had written 50,632 words. It was a real boost; with the story completed, I can now concentrate on building up some of the characters, spicing up the descriptions, and improving the quality of the writing.

There are a few things to bear in mind if you are tempted to go in for Nanowrimo 2010. First, and most important, the exercise is about quantity not quality. If you are the sort of writer who cannot move on until you are sure that the sentence you have just written is the best you can possibly write, then don't do it. As the website makes clear, the exercise is about enthusiasm and perseverance, not painstaking craft. If, on the other hand, you are a ditherer and procrastinator like me, then it may help you to make decisions and get on with the story. You may also find that the externally imposed deadline makes you more disciplined about your writing. I wrote every day, watched very little televi-

sion, had virtually no social life, and was able to say to family and friends who wanted more of my time "I can't stop now, I have a novel to finish," an excuse that had worn thin over the 25 years of the last one.

Nanowrimo started in a small way in the United States ten years ago, and is now international. If you sign up you will receive lots of encouraging emails, some useful tips, and you can join a regional group. It is free of charge, although you are asked to make a donation.

In 2009 there were over 167,000 participants, 32,000 winners (i.e. people who had completed 50,000 words.) There is, incidentally, no prize, just electronic cheering and a downloadable certificate.

I find editing much more enjoyable than structuring and plotting, so now I have a complete but very rough draft to work on over the next few months, and I have given myself a deadline of Easter 2010 to complete it.

[www.nawg.co.uk/novel-in-a-month](http://www.nawg.co.uk/novel-in-a-month)

# NAWG Competitions 2010

by Gary Carr, NAWG treasurer

**The free NAWG competitions form a central part of our commitment to members and getting the right mix is important. We have returned to the traditional nine categories plus anthology competition this year, but have tried to introduce new elements to whet the collective writing appetite of our members.**

The categories we have are as follows:

## 1. Open Poetry

As the category suggests this can be in any style or form, we have increased the line limit to 40 lines this year.

## 2. Sonnet

This is to be written in a traditional form. Entries that stick closely to Petrarchan (Italian), Spenserian, Miltonian, or Shakesperian forms will certainly be acceptable; a 14 line unrhymed or unstructured poem will not be considered. As ever the judge's decision on the matter will be final.

## 3. Poem to Include Six Specific Words

Any form or subject, up to 40 lines but must include the words:

silver, broken, ache, taint, bubble, arcane.

## 4. Open Short Story

Up to 1500 words, fiction on any subject or in any style.

## 5. Short Fantasy Story

Up to 1,500 words. State whether for adult or child, and if for a child the approximate age.

## 6. Short Story for Children

On the subject of 'Discovery', up to 1,500 words.

## 7. Novel Opening

Up to 1,500 words as the opening of a novel plus a 500 word synopsis of the remainder of the plot.

## 8. Ten Minute Radio Play

A ten minute mystery for radio.

## 9. Article on a Local Custom

1,000 words maximum on a custom or event specific to an area, not necessarily local to the writer's home. May be accompanied by up to 2 photographs, the author and author's family must not appear as recognisable characters in the photographs.

## 10. Group Anthology

### The Denise Robertson Anthology Prize

The trustees have debated the anthology guidelines at considerable length following concerns expressed by members over the previous couple of years and have come up with the following guidelines on what constitutes an anthology for the purposes of the competition.

Anthologies found not to meet the following standards will not be submitted to the judges. The competition administrator's decision is final on this matter and correspondence regarding entries will not be entered into.

The body of work to be judged in an anthology must be the work of group members. By this we mean that if you have an anthology with competition winners external to the group then the anthology is now eligible, but will not be judged on that work, the main body of work in the anthology must still be the work of the group.

### The minimum presentation standard for an anthology

- Book format or a format suitable for presentation to a publisher.
- Consistent layout and typeface.
- Cover with the title and group name clearly printed.
- This opens up the competition to work from groups unable to afford the cost of professional publishing, while ensuring the group gains experience preparing an anthology.

We hope that you can find something to suit you in these 2010 competition categories and that the notes in this article will help you to meet the challenges we have set.

**“We have returned to the traditional nine categories plus anthology competition this year.”**



Congratulations to NAWG member Joan Condon of Bourneville. Joan has won second prize in the Yorkshire Open Poetry Competition, judged by George Szirtes'

# NAWG Who's Who

Established 1995

Registered Charity No. 1059047

## Executive Officers of the Board of Trustees

Chairman	Nicolette Ward
Hon. Secretary	Jo Sadler
Treasurer	To be appointed

## Other Members of the Board of Trustees

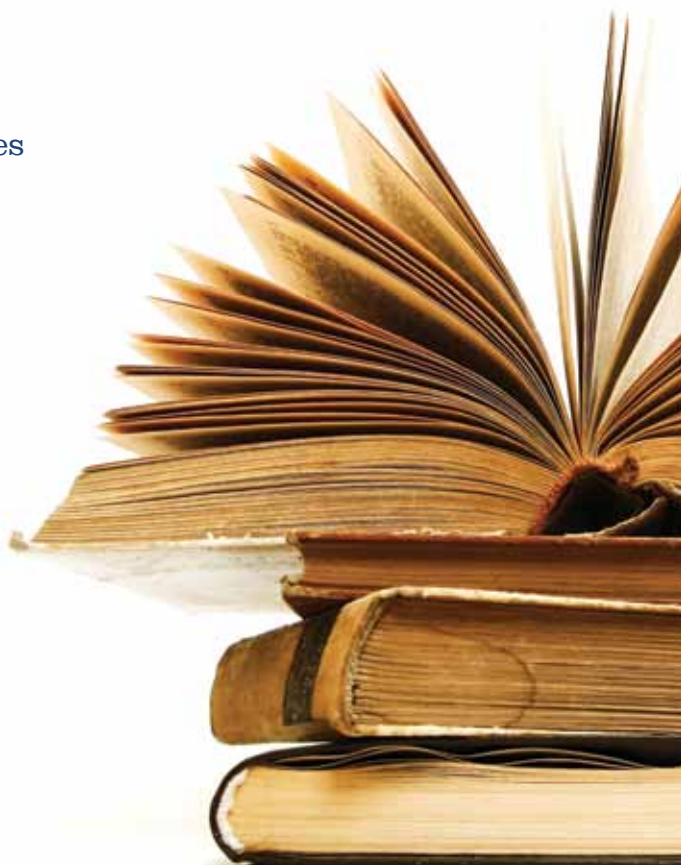
Board Member	Steve Bowkett
Board Member	Aine Maire Chadwick
Board Member	Peter W. Davidson

## Volunteer Roles:

Membership Secretary	Jo Sadler
Festival Administrator	To be appointed

## NAWG Publications

Link Editor/Production Editor	Steve Bowkett
Link Distribution Manager	Wendy Bowkett
Publications Distribution Manager	Aine Chadwick



## New NAWG Contact Information



### Email addresses:

nawg@live.co.uk - general email address for the Secretary or other committee members.

nawgeditor@live.com – articles, letters etc for the Link Editor, Steve Bowkett



### Postal address (unless otherwise stated):

NAWG  
PO Box 3266  
Stoke-on-Trent  
ST10 9BD

Mail for the Link Editor should be marked as such; other mail will be distributed to other committee members as required.



### Phone number:

We are in the process of setting up a NAWG number and will let you know when this becomes available. Please do not use any number previously given in Link, or on the website, for NAWG related calls.



The **LINK** newsletter is edited by Steve Bowkett.  
Magazine design and layout by Adrian Robinson. [adrian@writecreative.net](mailto:adrian@writecreative.net)