

OPENNEDZINE

ISSUE 1 OPENNED.COM

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April 2010

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OPENNED NEWS

THE SOUND OF WRITERS FORUM

A 36 min documentary made by Steve Willey.

The documentary features eleven poets that have been published by Writers Forum over a period of 50 years. The film had no budget and was made over the course of one week and was first screened at the Off The Shelf event held at the Slade/UCI on the 22nd March 2010.

The film is far from a complete account of the activities of Writers Forum and is meant as an introduction to the topic.

There are plans to make a much longer film over the course of the

year. If anyone wants to be included in this new film please make contact via Openned.com.

The video will be archived permanently on Openned [here](#).

KLATCH 1

The first three Klatch meetings were held in Steve Willey's house (Openned Co-Editor). Klatch 0 was held on the 6th Dec 2008. This first meeting was a gathering of friends to share their poetry with one another. However, no magazine was put together. You can see photos of this meeting [here](#).

At the second meeting (21st Feb 2009) each poet that came brought 50 copies of one page of

their poetry and over the course of the evening the Klatch 1 magazine was made up. You can see a scan of this magazine [here](#). This format was followed for the more recent Klatch magazine which has just been posted out.

We hope you enjoy Klatch 1. Klatch 2 will be posted at some point in the near future.

CANNIBAL SPICES NO. 4

The latest in the Cannibal Spices series will be posted on Openned in the next week and will feature Ken Edwards, Jeff Hilson, slmendoza (aka linus slug) and Timothy Thornton. Watch out for more Cannibal Spices in the near future.

EDITORIAL

welcome to the first issue

By Alex Davies & Steve Willey

The Openned Zine is setting out with one intention: to provide poets, publishers and organisers with a space to publicly present explanations, thoughts, ideas and opinions that may not necessarily be representative of a final response.

The intention is to draw attention to how poetry and the thoughts and activities based on and around it are an ongoing and necessarily ever-changing set of boundaries and equivalent freedoms, which provide a shifting map of communities of poets.

There are other publications which already provide the focus and academic rigor required of full-bodied critique and comment, many of which we read and enjoy. However, the spaces devoted to the development and nurturing of this thought are often, understandably, private.

We hope that by setting out this agenda, the Openned Magazine will come to be seen as a beneficial form where the private formulations of thoughts, ideas and opinions are afforded an exciting and lively entry point into a public and communal space. A flexible space, it is hoped, that might start to play a visible and constitutive role in shaping our poetic thoughts, formulations, publications and organisations.

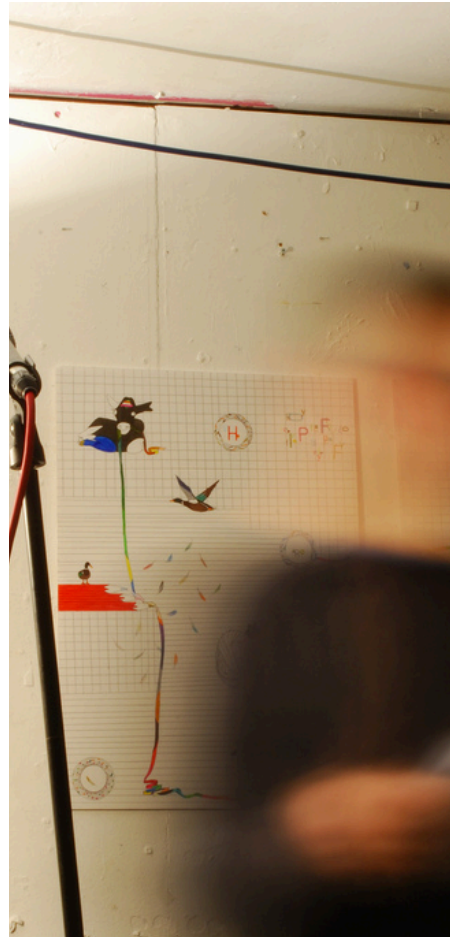
The Openned Zine's intention is to provide a place for open dialogue that is beneficial to both reader and writer, publisher and organiser, where the posing of constructive challenges and ramifications are encouraged with the proviso that pieces that further discussion are encouraged over pieces that attempt to close discussion down.

In order to privilege quick, intuitive response and exchange over full-bodied and lengthy critique the Openned Zine accepts contributions that are between 1 and 3 sides of A4. The Openned Zine will take the form of an online PDF publication (with a print-it-yourself black-and-white counterpart available for download) and will be posted on **opened.com** as well as circulated to our mailing list. In the future, we hope to collect together several issues and publish them in book form.

If there is anything in the first issue that you would like to respond to, or if you would like to contribute a new piece to the second issue of the magazine, please e-mail **opened@gmail.com** and we will respond as soon as possible.

We hope you enjoy the first issue.

Steve & Alex
Openned Editors



Openned is based in London, UK, and is run by Stephen Willey and Alex Davies.

Openned seeks to create flexible spaces for poetry and poetic practitioners by inviting less established and more established writers to read together, curating publications, documenting readings, publishing work, and promoting other writers.

The Openned Magazine is a bimonthly online publication (with a print-it-yourself black-and-white counterpart available for download) intended to document activities among experimental and innovative poetry communities, with a specific focus on the UK. All material in the magazine is written by the poets, publishers and organisers active within the community.

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THE SOUND OF WRITERS FORUM "the devil agfa has been captured"

By Steve Willey

In a very kind post on Thompson's Bank of Communicable Desire, a blog authored by Chris Goode, Goode writes in response to my film:

Cobbing fans and novices alike should, by the way, take a close look at Steve Willey's excellent new documentary on the history and currency of Writers Forum. Steve himself is quick to say that the film is an introduction only, and there are certainly many more stories to be told and insights to be harvested. But as an entry-level account it's great that it exists, and highly recommended. Paula Claire is worth the price of entry alone.

I fully agree with Chris that there are many more stories to be told, so I thought I would take this opportunity to start to fill in some of these gaps. What follows is the first in a series of transcripts from my twelve hours of interview footage. In part one I include comments from six of my interviewees. Later parts will include comments from other participants in the film.

Part One

John Rowan... my wife remembers when he [Cobbing] threw a piece of paper on the floor and stamped on it, so that the imprint of the boards, it was a plain wooden floor, the imprint of the boards came out on the paper as he was stamping on it, and he then read that as a poem, and she said oh that was so stupid [...] that was the 60s. [...] I was very keen on Ezra Pound I've got all his books from first to last, I corresponded with him during the war, and his son Omar sent us parcels, food parcels, during the war /// **Paula Claire**... my research into what I call the gestation of language came out of Bob's work of the 1970 period and I remember there was one called Mary Rudolph's Chromosomes in which he took photocopies of a micrograph of chromosomes, and these were patterns and yet they almost looked like language and having got used to performing that I then started to look everywhere and saw patterns and markings on stones on bark on leaves in the natural world and that led me to do direct improvisations on textures of natural objects. /// **Robert Sheppard**... the collaborations he did with me, he wanted words in it, so I would be the person who would collaborate with him who wasn't going to move into visual fields and inscapes and soundscapes, and all the rest of it, he always maintained that breadth, but it was a long journey /// **Adrian Clarke**... In terms of connections as we started to co-edit AND, I think I was already in touch, yes I was already in touch with, Bruce Andrews and probably with Peter Manson although I only really got to know his work I think editing AND there was a sequence of his called Erratic Heater which particularly impressed me which I think may have encouraged me to apply scissors to my work even more frequently /// **Peter Finch**... Bob, his attitude to Writers Forum was in a sense at odds with the principles he promoted for publishing with ALP. So if a new press came along, you talked to Bob about UK distribution, how to get some money to set up a proper distributor in a warehouse, put a rep on the road (these dreams that we had) and Bob was a front name, he knew about presentation, publications, ISBNs, and all the rest of it, he did not follow any of these things when he did to his own publications, he would do things when the spirit moved him sometimes, and he would do very small editions, or a large edition, but if he wanted to do ten copies of something to get it out for the evening or for the following day then that is what he would do, and if it sold, a bit like William Blake, he would print some more [...] he did productions of his own work, his idea was that they were to be published by 23 different publishers, but a lot of it was actually produced by Writers Forum and then put out as if it was published by other publishers /// **Lawrence Upton**... there are copies of one of the Kroklok magazines where there is a John Furnival Devil Trap printed, and in the middle the word agfa appears because Bob had miss exposed the plate, and it had printed agfa into the plate, and then an aesthetic debate took place with several of us saying "that's not what Furnival did", with Bob saying "no... the devil agfa has been captured!", it quietly disappeared after, but there must be copies that say agfa in them...

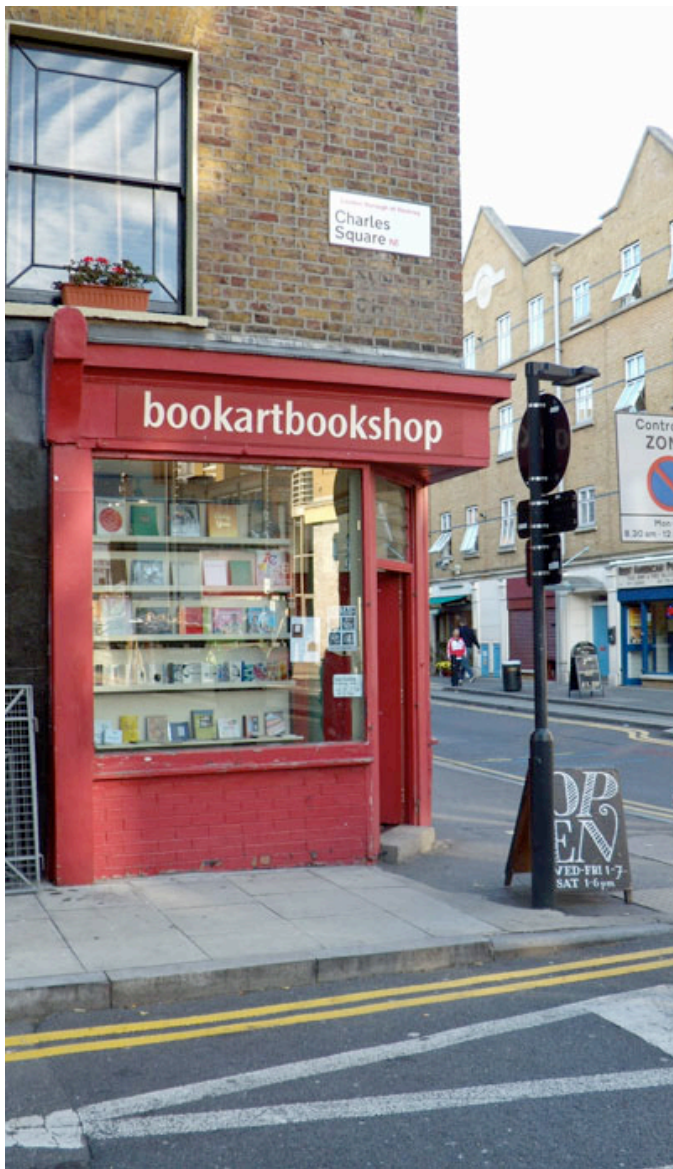
Full accreditation to the poets involved in the film and to the institutions that made the film possible can be found on Openned. Also, please do get in touch via the Openned **Contact** page if you want to be interviewed in relation to Bob Cobbing or Writers Forum. I may well include your interview in a future film. I am currently researching Cobbing 1960-69 and am particularly interested in talking to anyone who knew Cobbing in this period or has any partial or in depth knowledge about the following during this period: Better Books, Writers Forum, The Anti-University of London, the Dialectics of Liberation, The five day festival at the Round House, DIAS, Finchley Society of the Arts, The London Musicians Collective, The London Film Co-operative, the ICA.

Until next time.



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"When I began self-publishing in the punk era, every town and city in the UK had outlets for fanzines and artzines. Record shops, comics shops, art gallery shops, head shops and pre-Waterstone's or Borders shopping mall bookshops."

Mike Weller



HOME'BAKED: LITERARY ARTZINES IN THE AGE OF THE INTERNET

describing recent individualized and collective little press publications produced on shoe-string budgets

By Mike Weller

The 'Home'Baked' of planned 'Home'baked: literary artzines in the age of the internet' exhibition at London's bookartbookshop between April 15th and 30th 2010 is a loose generic term describing recent individualized and collective little press publications produced on shoe-string budgets. They range from photocopied visual writings, jackanories, kitchen poems to print-on-demand e-books.

'Home'Baked Books by Michael John Weller' is simply one individualized imprint in this grouping. I decided to organize an exhibition at the end of last year having completed bookwork 'Slow Fiction'. The printed twenty-three tales 2001-2010 are now complete and available as individual titles. A printed collection, 'Slow Fiction: twenty-three tales in

a box' will be exhibited as display installation. Two supplementary chapbooks will also be available - a '...Guide' to and 'The Making of Slow Fiction'.

When I began self-publishing in the punk era, every town and city in the UK had outlets for fanzines and artzines. Record shops, comics shops, art gallery shops, head shops and pre-Waterstone's or Borders shopping mall bookshops. Exhibition, distribution and music press publicity ensured constituencies of readers, collectors and buyers. Webster's in Croydon's Whitgift Centre installed a customized zine display rack. What producers didn't have was ownership, or affordable purchase on paper stock, foundry or print shop machinery to typeset and make perfect-bound paperbacks –

format for the modern 20th century book. These were the political and cultural reasons xeroxed zines and duplicated little press chapbooks emerged. Electronic means of reproduction has tilted the balance of means towards the independent self-producer in the thirty-five years since. But it's been a partial revolution. Print-on-demand perfect-bound books are affordable in small editions to self-producers but negotiations for US, international, foreign and even wider domestic distribution in leading UK retail outlets remain fraught with difficulties in social relations between busted artist and owner-management control of corporate publicity, distribution and marketing means.

As Steve Willey's film *The Sound of Writers Forum* reveals - a democratic politics and radical aesthetic informed many Writers Forum publications from origination to process. Independent small press poetry books that form cottage industry versions of corporate product are not always linked to peer, collective, community or group development - or to publication as artistic endeavour and process.

I began Home'Baked Books initially to publish Three-Part The Secret Blue Book in 2005 as means of producing bookwork composed of mock academic essay, mock 'tijuana bible' and mock classic 1970s sex novel. Not a bookwork easily accommodated within mainstream publishing or small press lists - poetry or otherwise. The prospect of writing and producing poetry, prose, graphics, fiction as bookwork, bypassing genre and formal constraint - through domestic and personalized means of production - seemed experimentally exciting.

Coincidentally, in the same mid-noughties timeline, exciting and radical work was being produced by students at Royal Holloway University of London, along with overlapping non-university imprints Visual Openned and yt Communication.

A populist culture of zine and comic book production has continued since the days of punk incorporating radical & anarchist politics, poetry, feminism, indie band and nightclub promotion. It seems likely use of internet social networking platforms and expansion of practice-based university cross-disciplinary courses in cultural, media and creative writing studies are challenging and closing perceived gaps between content, form and genre. This has gone hand-in-glove with growth in joyful play on traditional forms and use of pattern- or rule-based poetics.

In less than one year Cleaves international poetry journal and the Arthur Shilling Press have accumulated contributors and a catalogue of publications. Some sort of attention and exhibitiv display of these largely Devon-based domestically produced books, and other homemade bookworks, seemed necessary. London's bookartbookshop presented itself as favourable venue. With a boutique-like performance space the London launch of Cleaves Journal is booked for Thursday night, April 15th, and *The Making of Slow Fiction*, Friday night, April 16th.

Exhibition at London's bookartbookshop is intended as live breather in developments. New media politics of networked place and new communities of interest, from global and local perspectives, seem likely to lead to more scenes within scenes, bubbles within bubbles - organized in the UK around county and district, town and city suburbs, and within region and locality. And in many cases documented as event made available on free-to-view websites.

I would argue locality itself is being re-defined as place by regenerated urban and suburban landscapes, new transport links and pockets of protected conservation for older landmarks (includes present writer of course!).

Assuming London's bookartbookshop survives these uncertain and complex geopolitical, social, economic and psychogeographical developments - there will be more publications to sample online and exhibit, view, collect and buy in real time.

Within this context 'Home'baked: literary artzines in the age of the internet' is a one-off London showcase for a handful of the many British and Irish publications accumulated from graphics, poetry, and writing scenes since 2005.

Home'baked: literary artzines in the age of the internet runs from Thursday 15th April at the bookartbookshop.

CAMBRIDGE LITERARY REVIEW

pleased to announce The Chidiok Tichborne Prize

By Boris Jardine

Whatever you thought you were doing, stop it. The revolution is over - the revolution will now be televised. Bookstacks are pixel-dust. Likewise the scene. The overground is an orange noose & shoals on the underside tie their cravats on borrowed time. Open-toed readings are 'splayed for the millions who sup croc-holed groundwater. The kids, the clams, roof-gardeners basking off the coast of the DLR, hip candidates in regulation beards - these are our neophytes.

Which is to say, there still seems to be *something* going on out there. The CLR's takeovers are all aggressive, none more so than the gift it gives. And, because branding waits for no strophe, we are pleased to announce The Chidiok Tichborne Prize For the Least Innovative and Harmful Genre Poetry that Includes the Word Sutured.

Every entry must contain a total of 9 internal rhymes, where 9 is the total number of internal rhymes. Tactical obscurity is necessary but not sufficient. Acronyms are *de rigueur* - dictionaries will be allowed in the examination hall, but not in your mother's tongue. Every entry must be accompanied by a 5 minute verbal drum solo evoking a) Greek mythology, b) the fact that you will listen and c) the plotline of *Back to the Future*. They were Libyans? Weird.

Poems are expected to be perfectly unreadable, laden with jokes so abstruse that even *they* don't get them. They will (we pray) consist in the generalized communication of language itself to itself, untainted by the will-to-fight-the-power of

hirsute ensembles w/entouragic cool. Any attempts to impose mute compulsion in the absence of semantic or syntactic order will be met with utmost resistance before being wholly succumbed to by homogeneous comrades uttering filth from behind filthy fingers. Gestures toward a poetics of castration will be listened to but not heeded. Those found to be complicit in the ego-show will receive automatic winning status: Your dick in our hands.

Congratulations!

A grand total of 45 winners will be liquidated and mechanically reclaimed in a forthcoming digital number. Implant reading for the new Tube generation. In addition, they will be printed on Japanese rice-paper, bound in each other, doused in petrol and hurled over the blockade. We will now stand for the national anthem. The grand total of 45 winners will not stop winning until they have been dislocated to an unnamed immigration removal centre and stripped bare by the watch-maker's fidgety apprentice. Take a seat in the next room please.

The judgment panel will consist of four horsemen and his dog. I will play strains of late Bach on my Cassiotone while they absolutely on no account read any of the poetry. To evoke messianic drifter-slang, enter Calculator Mode and input the following numbers: 09917273.

Entry costs. Please see the Terms and Conditions. Thank you.

The **Cambridge Literary Review** is a triannual (termly) magazine of poetry, short fiction, and criticism. The CLR was initially founded in 2009 with assistance from the University's 800th anniversary fund. It is edited by Boris Jardine and Lydia Wilson, and is run from the Department of History and Philosophy of Science, University of Cambridge.

CAM
BRIDGE
RE**LITERARY**
VIEW.



Terms and Conditions

The most loving wife alive I commend me to thee, and desire God to bless thee with all happiness. Pray for thy dead husband, and be of good comfort, for I hope in Jesus Christ this morning to see the face of my Redeemer, in the most joyfull Throne of his glorious kingdom.

Commend me to all my friends, and desire them to pray for me, and in all charity to pardon me if I have offended them. Commend me to my six sisters, poor desolate souls: advise them to serve God, for without him, there is no goodness to be expected. Were it possible (dear wife) my little sister Bab: (the darling of my care) might be bred by thee; it were happy for her, and God would reward thee. But I have done thee (poor soul) too much wrong, I must needs confess it, to hasten my death, and impair thy estate by that I should add a further charge unto thee. Dearest wife forgive me, that have by these means so impoverished thy fortunes: Patience and Pardon good wife, I crave, make of these our necessities a virtue, and lay no further burthen on my neck, than is laid already.

There be certain debts which I owe, and because I know not the order of the law, it hath taken all from me, as forfeited by the course of this my offence to her Majesty. I cannot advise thee what to do herein, but if there fall out wherewithal: let them be discharged, sweet wife, for God's sake: I will not that you trouble your self with the performance thereof (mine own heart), but make it known to my Uncles, and desire them for the honour of God to do their best in it. Now (dear heart) what is left me to bestow on thee, a small jointure (God knows), a small recompence for thy deserving: these legacies following to be thine own: God of his infinite goodness and mercy, give thee always his grace to remain his true and most humble servant, that through the merits of his bitter and blessed passion, thou mayest become an inheritor of his kingdom with the blessed women in heaven. Jesus give thee of his peace, and to his glory all the benefits of this transitory life. The holy ghost comfort thee with all necessities for the wealth of thy soul in the world to come: where until it please almighty God I meet thee, farewell loving wife, farewell the dearest to me in all the earth: farewell for ever in this world: farewell.

By the hand and the heart of thy
most loving husband,

Chidioc Tichborne.

ISTANBUL

duck into Pandora for Turkish poetry

By Marcus Slease

5th April 2010 (Istanbul)

Adana kebab is sizzling behind me in Sultanahmet. A man in an all-white suit is getting his shoes shinned as the azan prayer booms from mosque to mosque in surround sound. He lifts his head and turns his hand in circles as he speaks. Leads me down alleys to a carpet shop and speaks of Kurdish and Armenian symbols. Animals. Geometric patterns. Silk. Wool. Silk and wool. Crosses. This is a felt poetics.

I move among the crowds of Taxsim. Duck into Pandora for Turkish poetry. This city is ripping out my irony.

I am reading as I run my hands over the Galata tower. There are worn-out faces among brightly lit structures. There are dark tunnels with tribes gathered round to eat and sing the songs of Gypsies. I eat. This is how I eat.

EDA EDA or is it my idea of EDA? EDA is a foreign tongue slipping into my mouth. Say ghosts. EDA is a foreign land. EDA is the ghost of an idea. EDA is not a verdict. EDA is what moves through 20th century Turkish poetry. Pronouns are fungible. EDA is a crossing, a bridge between continents between minds between tongues. There is unity and mutiplicity in EDA. EDA is pre-rational pre-Islamic. EDA is a godless Sufism. EDA is innovative Turkish poetry. EDA is Istanbul. A profanity and a purity.

Addicted to risk and performing a soul. Some say souled and we grow itchy. Say sincere and we have a million mirrors of theories. Poetry comes when I am doing something else. The connection to poetry and the divine is never broken. The profane. Can we get closer to the poem than the poet? God the lover and god the human lover are one.

Poetry is ACT ION!

There is no sticky tape.

I slept on the banks of Bosphorus and woke to a cold breeze. This is a city of crooked teeth.

Canan is an idea. Canan is the beloved. Canan is pronounced Ja nan. Canan is the lion's milk the lion's inferno. Love is an objective subjectivity.

I learnt the formula for the perfect potato by the banks of the Bosphorus in Ortakoy. The Turkish innovative poet ILHAN BERK:

"I don't like the potato. But all the world consumes it; it grows everywhere, / knows no boundaries, belongs to an international family."

and

"The potato has no personality"

"From the soil it yells: / Hey! The Ground! Hear me?"

The potato is of course underground.

6th April 2010 (Istanbul)

On a mountain of rice on a mountain of unsung songs I am framed by the Hagia Sophia. Mucus of wisdom. Mounds and wombs.

Sultanahmet is continuously old and new. A kingdom of lute players and sellers and mangy cats looking for fish. There are cracks in my mind cracks in my heart.

EDA is an agglutinative language. EDA is an intense subjectivity. The aura that movement creates.

I am waiting for Kübra in Kabatas. Waiting for a ferry to cross over with the hand of Kübra. Waiting for a ferry to the island of Büyükada. I am eating eggs and sipping Turkish coffee. Watching the Golden Horn. I've slept four hours at the EuroAsia hotel. My face is at the foot of a new bed. What are the limits of these eyes? To say yes before knowing the limits of my knowings. Crossings and double crossings.

This is the 36th year of my birth. Ripped open after 6 years of wandering. I've listened to the language of the lonesome in industrial wastelands. Istanbul has taken me. The dark eyes of Kübra have speared me.

There is no master narrative.

I am searching for EDA.

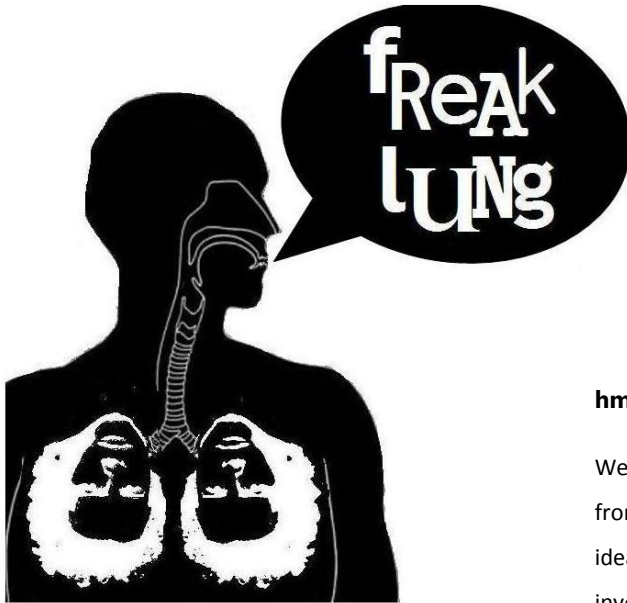
I am framed.

I am still young enough for everything to matter.

FREAKLUNG

Victor Lure interviews Linus Slug

By Linus Slug?



Victor Lure
interviews

Linus Slug

:: <http://ninerrors.blogspot.com/> ::

So, Slug, what is F R E A K L U N G? Should I be asking my doctor for a pamphlet?

F R E A K L U N G is medical condition occurring in only 9% of the worlds population. The disorder was first diagnosed in 1971 by Herr Doktor Hosenschlitz, who discovered the inverted faces of Art Garfunkel on his patients' chest X-Ray. **F R E A K L U N G** the zine is published as part of the **ninerrors poetry pamphlet series** and is dedicated to Harry J Godwin, who singlehandedly [aided only by his magnificent moustache and the Arthur Shilling Press], represents an entire 9% of the worlds population. [See also: the theory that simon & garfunkel are moths (french ones p. 56, *Stretchers*, Jeff Hilson)]

What were the circumstances behind F R E A K L U N G's conception?

F R E A K L U N G is the mutant offspring of a series of obsessions: the number 9, anagrams and Simon & Garfunkel...

hmmm. Please explain...

Well, the first issue of **F R E A K L U N G** evolved from the ninerrors poetry pamphlet series... the idea for *ninerrors* originates from a project involving a collection of 9 pamphlets, each containing a sequence of 9 poems constricted by configurations of 9, for example, each poem has 9 lines or multiples of 9; some have 9 words or syllables per line; others are divisible by 9 - connected & dis-connected by self-imposed limitation...

The first issue of **F R E A K L U N G** assembled the work of the **Poets of the Nine** [Harry Godwin, Edmund Hardy, Frances Kruk, Owain Lee, Georgie M'Glug, Nat Raha, Richard Parker, Linus Slug & Michael Zand], The same restrictions were imposed on each poet, creating a unified interior world bound by numerical constraints.

How do Simon & Garfunkel fit into all of this?

During the original *ninerrors* project I became obsessed with listening to Simon & Garfunkel. In one of those 3.00 am moments of lunacy I thought it would be amazing if lungs were indeed the face of Garfunkel... **F R E A K L U N G** is an anagram of GARFUNKEL, for HE IS ART

There seems to be a new wave of small presses producing limited editions in very short runs. Where does your work stand in relation to micro-publishing?

"Poems require a readership rather than a market"

(Tessa Ransford, *Pamphlet Power*, *Poet Power*)

I like the idea of creating something ephemeral, but at the same time I also want to create something desirable – an artwork; pieces which require an active participation on behalf of the recipient and a conscious decision to maintain their permanence. Works which necessitate to some extent a curatorial approach in order to preserve the fragility of the material [*I'm currently developing an archive of poetry pamphlets*]. I also like the idea of this being associated with an event, such as Crossing the Nine [A Poets of the Nine reading at Xing the Line]... this in itself becomes part of the experience... a "poetry whose social base is through circulation of performance, micro-publishing and zines [disseminated through] blogs and the internet" [Pete Philpott]



How does zine-culture influence F R E A K L U N G and the ninerrors poetry pamphlet series?

In *Bob Cobbing: and the book as medium* Lawrence Upton describes how Cobbing would "distribute his works and others' cost-effectively; and sell them to some degree [...] strongly committed to ideas that one might loosely characterise as democratic, where that is used to mean general public access; and also to a sense of a community of artists" (Readings: Response and Reactions to Poetry, Issue 4, 2007) This 'sense of community' is also very much present in zine-culture. The zine aesthetic and associated ideologies arising from D.I.Y culture [often distributed for free or exchanged with other 'zinesters'] resonates with my own values and beliefs. Zines are often produced collaboratively, democratically and generally at low-cost - politically opposing a culture of consumerism, globalization and the capitalist economy.

With F R E A K L U N G [and Poets of the Nine] I wanted to bring together work by new poets and poets who are publishing others work through small presses [Godwin – Arthur Shilling, Kruk – yt communication, Parker – Crater]... or through 'a continually unrolling magazine' [Hardy - "Intercapillary/Space"]. I think it was important to include a performance with this is for me a primary means of communicating these ideas.

What's on the cards for ninerrors press? Can we expect further material from the 'Poets of the Nine'?

Some of the 'Poets of the Nine' will also be published in the next issue of F R E A K L U N G [in the works as we speak]. My plan is to publish solo pamphlets [or small chapbooks] by each of the poets who have contributed to any of the F R E A K L U N G issues ... in addition to more readings / performances by poets under the 'ninerrors' umbrella.

What can we look forward to in F R E A K L U N G in 2010?

The next issue, **ODES** is a special edition commemorating the 10th anniversary of Barry MacSweeney's death in 2000. I've been overwhelmed by the fantastic response from a diverse range of talented poets. As with Poets of the Nine, there will be a reading to accompany the publication later this year at Morden Tower [Crossing the Tyne] Very exciting indeed!

Editor: **Linus Slug**

Frequency: every 9 months / intermittent special editions.

Format: A5 / A4

Availability: via **ninerrors.blogspot.com** or selected readings.

Cost: £3 / £5

After that?

More ninerreors readings and in September F R E A K L U N G **INSECTS** [Submission deadline **July 31st**] See ninerrors.blogspot.com for details

Finally, is there any plan to publish your original ninerrors 9 Pamphlets?

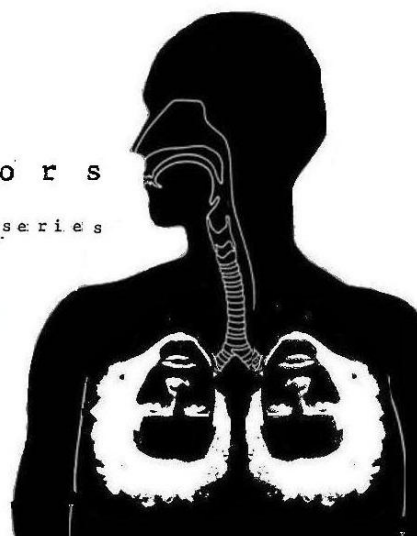
Frass Gazette and *ninerrors* ['Sporangiaphores' chapbook] have been published by The Arthur Shilling Press and yt communication respectively. Currently available from ninerrors is *Factories* - recycled from reconstituted text found in the lyrics of Simon & Garfunkel... a comment on an economic culture in which we are persuaded to consume to meet the needs of the productive process:

*"consume, consume, and consume,
whether we need or even desire the
products forced upon us"*

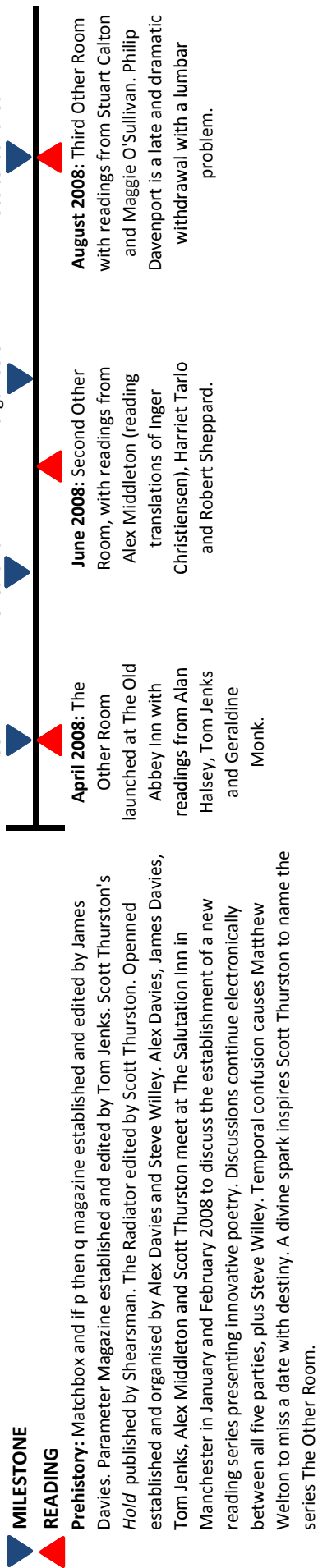
The Hidden Persuaders, Vance Packard 1957

n i n e r r o r s
p o e t r y p a m p h l e t s e r i e s

email: ninerrors@googlemail.com
<http://ninerrors.blogspot.com>



A timeline showing the creation and development of The Other Room, Manchester's experimental poetry reading series, from April 2008 to April 2010.

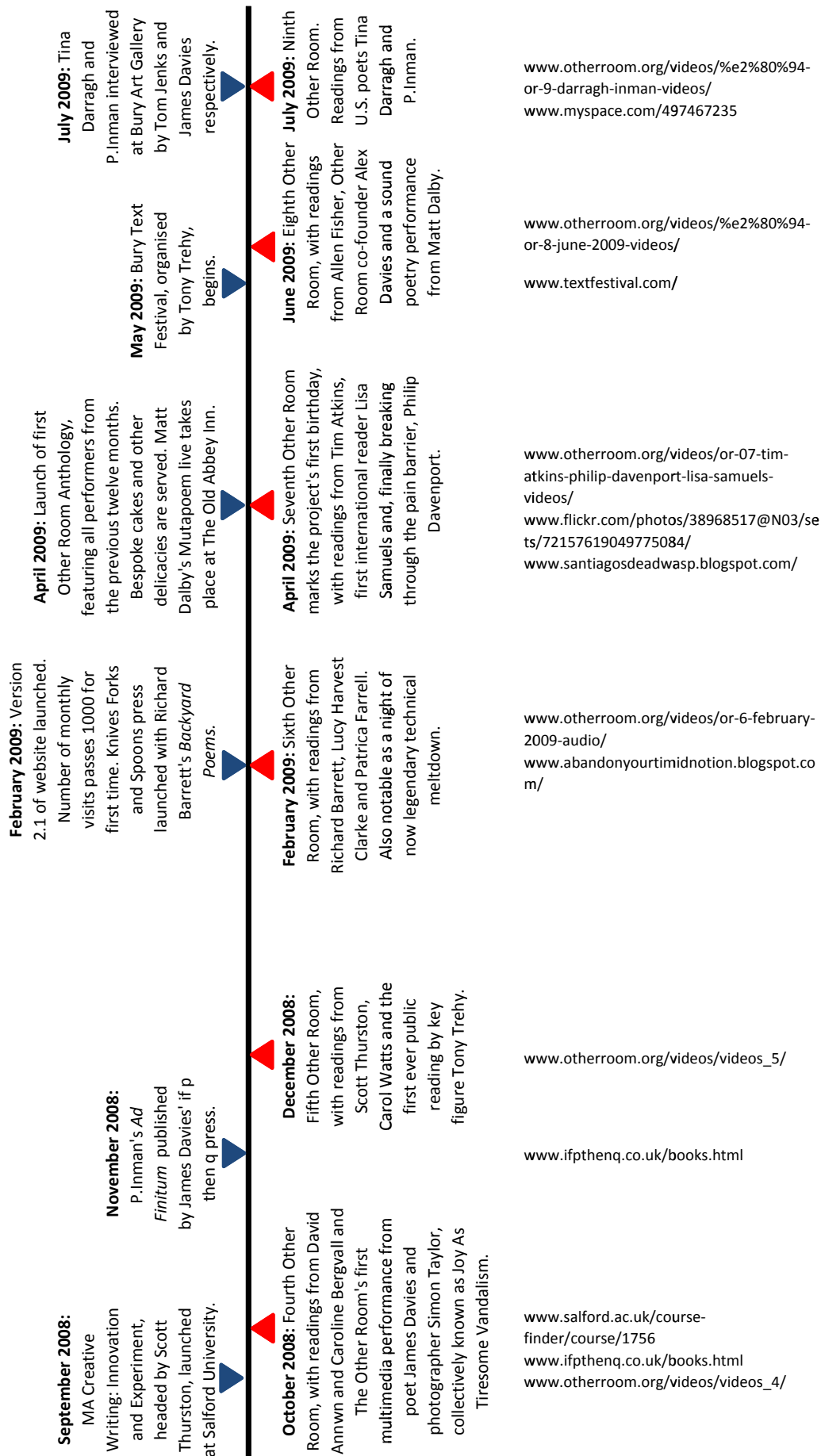


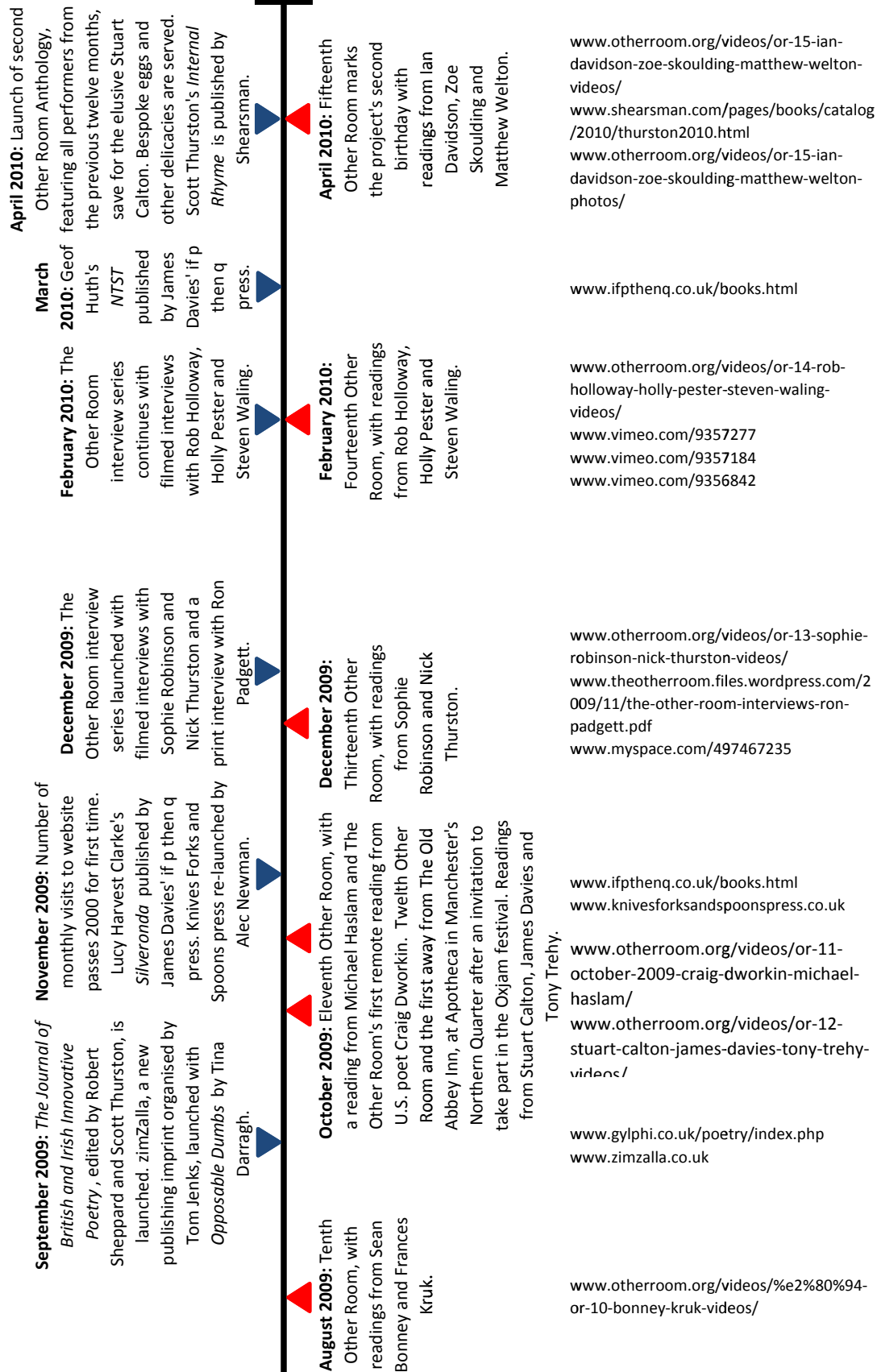
www.otherroom.org/videos/videos_3/

www.otherroom.org/videos/%e2%80%94or-2-june-2008-videos/

www.shearsman.com/pages/books/catalog/2008/thurston08.html

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EBOOKS AND THE SMALL PRESS

how eBooks can, will, and are changing what it means to be a small press

By Alex Davies (with questions by Steve Willey)

Footnote numbers refer to the Q&A available after the piece.

An Object of Value

The printed codex has, for centuries, been the sole method of disseminating a substantial text work on any scale in the majority of industrialised cultures. The codex is a method of production proliferated by its suitability to reproduction, allowing the printing press to produce a high number of replications for a relatively low unit cost to the consumer¹. The standardisation of the codex form was a necessary compromise for the capitalisation of print media.

The eBook, as currently understood, has been born out of attempts to transfer the printed codex into the online space, without realising that the codex form was itself born out of the effect of the creation of a market of distribution, through the print press, of the printed word. The eBook has perhaps the biggest available market of distribution civilisation has ever known - the internet - but no defined form and so no defined value. The eBook is a disconnect from free market values of publishing.

Much of what is seen as resistance to the eBook format can be attributed to this discrepancy. The idea that turning the pages of a book is more convenient, or enriching, or more substantive or what the poet or author originally conceived, is inherently reinforcing the value of the printed codex as an object existing within well defined market conditions. The eBook exists in limbo between attempting to replicate the object of value - the codex - while existing within an entirely separate state of conditions that actually determine its value. It is this discrepancy that leads to a rejection of the eBook on the grounds that it is an unsuitable replacement for the codex.

In order to make the eBook a successful commodity, the market of distribution must be considered in the construction of the object itself, just as the initial configuration² of the print press codex was defined by the codex itself. However, the internet is not bound by definable physical constraints in the same way that print production is. Other considerations instead take priority, most importantly the configuration of the device used to receive the eBook. With print, the object of delivery of information is the object itself - the codex. With electronic text, the object of delivery of information is separate from the object which delivers the information. An eBook requires an eReader.

The eReader is analogous to the print press. It is the set of physical constraints imposed upon the information being delivered. However, whereas the print press is the method of production and ultimately the method of capitalisation³ that defines the market conditions, the eReader is already an independent object with a market value. In other words, we cannot hope to define the eBook as an object of value until the market conditions are established for its distribution through eReaders - whether that be a tablet computer, or a

piece of software on a laptop, or a mobile device. Here a problem arises, as a market for distribution for both the content and the content delivery mechanism must be established concurrently. Whereas the print press was a physical necessity for the production of the codex form, the eReader is not a necessity for the production of the eBook, only for its consumption⁴. It could be argued that anyone could read a freely distributed word processed document sent across the web, but this is not the market of distribution associated with the consumption of content, only for its production, and so it is rejected as being an inferior experience to the print model (it is not as pleasurable an experience, you cannot turn the pages, your eyes get tired).

The inherent flexibility of the eBook and the potential forms it can take does not lend itself to the establishment of clearly defined market conditions, and so the concurrent development of the eReader is leading to a convergence whereby the possibilities of what an eBook can be in practical terms of format, page size and other ostensibly physical attributes are being constrained and confined within the dimensions of the physical device the publication is contained on. As this process is honed, and the perceived value of the electronic book matches its print counterpart through the establishment of similar market conditions - the eReader takes the place of the codex, a standardised set of parameters that are open to flexibility but only to the extent that market conditions allow - the potential for the eBook to become a method of radicalising or democratising the distribution of poetry and other literary work is fundamentally undermined⁵.

Divergence

Until the convergence of the eBook and the eReader, the establishment of immutable market conditions is avoided. The actions of the free market will accelerate this convergence until the parameters under which eReaders are produced result in a homogeneous, or near-homogeneous, interactive experience where the eBook simply becomes a different method of delivery for an electronic version of the printed codex. Pursuing the codex format even at the expense of better, more convenient ways to consume electronic text allows the free market to pursue the path of least resistance in the adoption of consumption of a familiar object in an unfamiliar context, as opposed to an unfamiliar object in an unfamiliar context.

The success of this model is based on the publisher and consumer being entirely removed from the process of production. The consumer purchases the eReader on which a published eBook is read. If, however, the publisher and the consumer were part of the process of production, in the form of the small press existing within a community, the ability to

foster new market conditions is a viable one, as the homogeneous nature of the mass market product could be examined and challenged⁶.

More than this, such encouragement of divergence between the opaque mass market relationship between eBook and eReader would be much easier to achieve as the initial investment of production would be negligible. The production of a printed codex that employs radical or innovative techniques as part of the experience of reading the text automatically exponentially increases the cost of producing that codex in any volume as the mass market conditions are conducive to only a small, well defined variety of methods of production. In the world of the small press, or even the vanity publisher, the production of such a codex is possible as the publisher can be in dialogue with the consumer and can determine whether the initial cost of producing the unique work can be offset or compensated for. The great advantage of the eBook is that the question of initial cost is no longer a barrier to the production of radical texts - the only requirement is that the publisher be in dialogue with the consumer so the consumer understands the requirements of reading that publication. Even more than this, the small press could scale the production of a work in correlation with the ability to remain in dialogue with the consumer. In this context, the eReader now becomes a blank slate, and the poet can choose to become the publisher - indeed, to include the act of publishing as part of the reading act. A poet could choose to what extent she or he wished to define the parameters under which her or his work should be read; should the eReader need to be of a certain size? Does the reader need an eReader at all? Should the reader print the received work before reading it? Should the work be projected?

Rejections

In order for these potentialities to become realities, the electronic text needs to be accepted as an entirely separate method of the dissemination of a text, poetry or otherwise⁷. The current basis of rejecting an eBook as inferior to its printed counterpart is reliant on the blindsiding of these potentialities in favour of awaiting market conditions that allow the replication of the printed codex in an online form, effectively killing off any opportunity for innovation. For decades the small press has been struggling to innovate under the pressure of costs. Despite being in sometimes intimate contact with a potential audience, this has remained a barrier. Now that a new barrier is in the process of being built, it seems that we are still content to wait until the conditions we already know in the printed codex are replicated online before we have anything to act against⁸. Instead, we should be using this time of free market uncertainty and rapid convergence as an opportunity to define entirely new structures of publishing reliant on dialogue between publisher and reader, even if that dialogue leads to something as simple as a word processing document being recognised as a publication of worth, in all the meanings of that word⁹.

Below is a Q&A from a set of questions posed by Steve Willey in response to the above piece.

¹ Not if the book is challenging those conditions. For example, by making a really big book that can not fit onto shelves.

I agree but my point is in the standard free market book-as-profit the codex does not do this - in fact, the only time it does do this is to enhance the fetishization of the book as desirable object - think of a coffee table volume. A small press might be able to do what you describe but my point was that the barrier for a press is the costs involved in stepping outside of the book-as-profit model - once outside the standard configuration of the codex, everything becomes financially difficult, a real barrier for an operation that wants to work outside the homogenised profit model of book distribution.

² What do you mean by initial configuration?

I mean that the physical parameters of a codex - size, weight, paper type - and thereby its market value, are driven by the requirements of the press on which it is made, i.e. the maximum printing area of a press, the economy of large scale printing determining ideal page sizes etc.

³ How is the print press the method of capitalisation? How does it define the market conditions?

See above.

⁴ I think you are doing it intentionally but by using words like 'consumption' you are in danger of thinking about books as only marketable objects. They are that but they are also more than that.

I agree that books are more than that, I disagree that the codex as a form is more than that. The codex combined with the printed content can be more, but the form of the codex itself is driven by creating a text as a marketable object, unless the text itself is addressing the codex form directly, which almost no text does other than through necessity of having to fit into the prescribed market conditions (i.e. chapters make it easier to find your way through a book).

⁵ So another carrier needs to be invented which does not constrain what the eBook has to be like the eReader currently does

Less than this - there are already multiple carriers - laptops, desktop computers, individual windows on screens, the ability to print an electronic document in multiple ways - we just need to not consider these ways of reading in relation to the way we read a codex, a way of reading which is ideally suited to market conditions. I'm not saying it's easy or more pleasurable, but I'd argue it has much more potential for innovation and even radicalism.

⁶ Only if we all became a lot more hands on with how we think about the technology of the eBook. Could you misuse the technology? I doubt it, unless you had a lot of technical expertise.

This is a motivational rather than pragmatic barrier. Could you do the same with a physical press? Only with practice and expertise. You might get different, even more exciting

results just giving it a go, just as you might get different, more exciting results just trying to making an eBook.

⁷ Unless you started making eReaders this could never happen.

I disagree. Existing tools can be used to create something other than the homogeneous codex-on-the-web format the free market is pushing us towards. You yourself said that you could make a book that would not fit on bookshop shelves as a way to challenge the codex form. In the same way, you could use electronic formats to challenge accepted ways of reading - ways of reading which would seem less appealing initially, but only because they work outside of the free market conditioning of what we think of as a comfortable or desirable reading experience.

⁸ I think you could think more about these other possibilities. Because your definition of the eBook seems to be that it is just information waiting to be played with. But it is not just information, it is coded information. You need a degree of expertise to do any significant work with it. That is why people are letting this 'homogenisation' happen, right?

Yes, but you need a degree of expertise to be involved in actual publication of work as opposed to handing the method and tools of publication over to a third-party, which you have pointed out, rightly in my opinion, as ethically problematic. All information is coded information in some way, right? Print material is coded information, it's just the coding is hidden behind the facade of a printing machine, which itself is run on code. Arguably, even a Gutenberg press is a coding machine of some type, being an interlocutor translating the input of a human into the output of a machine pressing ink on to paper? In terms of code in the sense of HTML, or CSS, or PHP, this is just a layer of complexity that is, excitingly, exposed to us to play with and manipulate in service of the text, rather than the text being played with an manipulated in service of mechanical reproduction.

⁹ I kind of agree with this. It really depends on how good the word processing document is though. And if it was really good I suppose it would be enough just to disseminate it as a word document. But a) at the moment someone would want to print it, and b) if this became too expensive a publisher (even an experimental one) would want to find a way to make it stand out from the crowd. This might be organising a reading where by everyone came with a USB stick and downloaded the publication for free during the evening. However, this would mean that the word document/poem would be valued for other reasons (not necessarily cynical reasons) rather than how good a poem it is. I can't think of anyone who would do this and then say - 'wow that was one good word document I read last night'.

I think again this comes down to the free market conditioning of a comfortable and engaging reading experience. If a reputable poet released his or her next work as a freely downloadable word document, the very method of publication would be called into question from the off - what does he or she mean by this? Where is he or she going with it? Except they don't do that, either because it is not what the text itself

- which should always retain priority - requires, or because it is not where his or her interests as a poet lie (not sure if those things are separate). Now, if a press set itself up saying that everything it was going to publish was going to be a word document, and it would be beautifully, beautifully presented, and they were going to charge £1 for it, and they released a work by poets with an already established reputation, do you think people would pay? Now contrast that with the same press charging £1 for work by new, up-and-coming poets?

KNIVES, FORKS AND SPOONS PRESS inventing a press

By Richard Barrett

After about 12 months of attending The Other Room readings I began to feel I wanted to do something poetry related beyond just writing the stuff. I didn't know what I wanted to do though. I talked to a few people and thought about things. I ended up doing nothing. I carried on going to The Other Room. I carried on checking their website daily.

In February 2009 The Other Room asked me to read. I decided to make some booklets to sell. I invented a press. I printed its name on the cover of the booklets. The name of the press was Knives, Forks and Spoons.

The reading happened. I think I flogged around 15 copies of the booklet. Come the next Other Room I was back in the audience. I was back feeling I wanted to do something more than just write. I was back to still not knowing what that could be though.

Around this time three things happened: (1) I bought a bundle of amazing books from Grasp Press as a result of a post on Openned. (2) I came across the blog Celery Lanes. More than likely via Openned again. And on Celery Lanes I read about The Arthur Shilling Press. (3) I received a very unsolicited manuscript submission for the completely non-existent Knives, Forks and Spoons press.

The examples of Grasp and, especially, Arthur Shilling made me realise I could publish books if I wanted. And I realised I did want to do that. And here I was with a MS. Trouble was, I didn't think it was very good. Still, I thought seriously about putting it out. Mainly



"As to how to run KFS the organizational models I had in mind all stemmed from my reading of the NME as a kid and stories I'd read in there of how certain record labels were run: all enthusiasm, energy, discussions in pubs and handshakes. Absolutely no contracts. It was important to me that everyone involved be able to say that they had enjoyed their association with the press."

Richard Barrett

just so I could say I'd done it: published a book. Chatting about all this with one of The Other Room organizers, Tom Jenks, he said he'd leave the manuscript alone if he were me. His advice was to only put out books I believed in 100% otherwise it would feel too much like work. I asked Tom if he had anything he would let me publish. Not very long afterwards, I received a wonderful manuscript from him. I was a publisher.

The immediate question I had to answer then was how I wanted Tom's book to look. Then I had to think about how I wanted to run the venture. Then, which other poets I wanted to publish.

The print on demand service Lulu was very much in favour at that time (The Other Room had just put out their first year anthology via them; Parameter had also used the service). I decided I would also use them. Having a limited budget though I calculated I'd only be able to afford two books via Lulu each year. Wanting to put more books out than just two a year, however, I decided the others I published would be handmade chapbooks.

As to how to run KFS the organizational models I had in mind all stemmed from my reading of the NME as a kid and stories I'd read in there of how certain record labels were run: all enthusiasm, energy, discussions in pubs and handshakes. Absolutely no contracts. It was important to me that everyone involved be able to say that they had enjoyed their association with the

press. I had it in mind that I wanted the books to be produced collaboratively.

And who to publish? That was easy. I saw the collections KFS would put out as being from poets who might later go on to publish with the likes of Barque and Reality Street.

The schedule I settled on was 3 books every six months: one perfect bound by Lulu; the other two to be handmade chapbooks. I asked Posie Rider and Alec Newman to send me manuscripts.

Now, given that the perfect bound book for that first period had already been decided upon I was lucky that the manuscripts from Posie and Alec were both the ideal length for chapbook format: they were both 20-something pages. I wanted the poets, as far as possible, to each decide how their books looked. I guess if I had received something longer from either Posie or Alec and they had wanted their work to appear perfect-bound then I would have had to schedule publication for the second six month period. That didn't happen though. So, as I said, lucky.

I set up a website. I set up a Facebook group.

The Other Room posted about the press. Openned posted about the press. It came to the attention of quite a few people. Then... I went back to doing what I'd been doing before it had ever occurred to me to set myself up as a publisher... I did nothing. And that is



Alec Newman took over the Knives, Forks and Spoons press.

something I'm particularly good at. Then I did nothing for a bit longer.

Josh Stanley sent me a manuscript. It was amazing. I knew if I didn't immediately agree to publish it someone else would. There was no way it would still be available in six months time.

Straightaway then, the schedule I'd been so determined to stick to had been blown apart.

What to do? I know. How about nothing for a while longer.

Then, in July 2009, quite unexpectedly, a significant change occurred in my personal life. Slowly it became apparent that I would no longer have available the time and money necessary to put the books out in the way that I wanted to put them out. It was a very

difficult decision to make and, indeed, one that I resisted making for as long as possible. Eventually there was nothing else to be done, though, other than to contact all involved to let them know that Knives, Forks and Spoons would be closing for business.

About an hour after I'd spoke to Alec Newman he called me back. Could I meet him in The Crescent on such and such a date? I was free; we met.

...

Knives, Forks and Spoons was about to become a success.

...

And what thoughts do I have about the whole experience looking back on it now? Firstly, I regret committing to use Lulu. I love books which are handmade.

I have always loved books which are handmade. I'm just baffled, now, as to why I ever thought Lulu was a good idea. The venture was never meant to be about polished product, but rather about promoting work which deserved promoting. Also, although I know Lulu is cheap, the cost involved was still more than I could bear easily.

Secondly, I think I should have had a run of at least one of the books made up and in the bag before I announced my publication schedule. That would certainly have helped to take the pressure off a bit.

Finally... I should just have talked less and worked more.

STARTING WHERE IT LEFT OFF on where KFS is now

By Alec Newman

It would be absolutely ridiculous to believe that the Knives Forks and Spoons Press would be the success it is today were it not for the support of other small-presses, the enthusiasm of poetry promoters, and the titanic efforts of the published poets themselves. My roll in the growth of the press has been very minor, and even sloppy - I like to think of myself as the British Leyland of the editing world, whilst James Davies and Mark Copley are the Audi and the BMW. However, thanks to the many people who have spread their enthusiasm for my editorship, as though it were an old MG, I have attracted submissions of some of the greatest poetry I have ever read. This is why Knives Forks and Spoons is so spiffing: it's the brilliant poets; the enthusiastic promoters; a loyal customer base with an excellent taste in poetry; and some idiot in-between, who happens to have a massive batch of ISBN numbers and a printer.

As a press we publish Northern Performance poetry, because I have an academic interest in this. I studied Manchester performance poetry from the Victorian period at BA and MA level, and I have been fascinated by the tradition, which continues today, ever since. Doctor Brian Maidment sowed this seed. We also publish Linguistically Innovative and experimental poetry, because this is my bag, and I'm in the

scene, baby. The Northern Performance Poetry, which is underrepresented in print, is actually our bread and butter. We sell about 120 copies of a performance poet's work and about 40 copies of a Language poet's work. Therefore, the Performance Poetry actually subsidizes any expensive experimental work that we believe must be published at any cost. We also develop new talent through workshops on poetics, and if anyone in the Manchester or Liverpool region is interested in attending one of these courses, please send an email to the **Knives, Forks and Spoons**

Press. The press does not receive funding, but we have progressively improved the quality of our products thanks to donations from our readers for new equipment. I took over editorship of the press on the 24th of October 2009, and the endeavor was originally financed by my parents, Sally and Tom Newman, and my girlfriend, Claire Thompson. Thankfully, the press is now self-funding. Since late October we have published 16 wonderful books.