



NEW WRITING COMPETITION WINNER GETS INTO THE SPIRIT

Glasgow, 9 October 2008 (embargoed until 18:30):

Former shipyard worker and educational psychologist Billy Bonar of Glasgow was declared winner of the **Best of words 2008** writing competition at Waterstones in Sauchiehall Street tonight. His poem *Real Writing (in Residence)*, composed during the **words 2008** exhibition at the Mitchell Library last month, beat over 100 other entries to the winning slot and features a Hollywood scriptwriter whose props include a bottle of bourbon and a pack of *Lucky Strikes*. Fittingly, Billy receives a bottle of Jura *Superstition* malt whisky as his prize. His winning entry will also appear on the Isle of Jura distillery website.

words 2008 was a new interactive writing exhibition held at the Mitchell Library between 9 and 11 September. Organised by Lucy Adams, Susan Kemp and Fiona Rintoul of the Edwin Morgan Centre for Creative Writing at Glasgow University and the public artist Nicola Atkinson, it sought both to promote new literary talent in Scotland and to engage a wide range of people with contemporary writing.

"We were very impressed with the standard of work submitted for the competition and really pleased that four out of six of the short-listed entries came from members of the wider community who had participated in the workshops," said Fiona Rintoul.

"We wanted to involve as wide a cross-section of the public as possible with the creative process. Writers were on hand to share the skills they'd learned on the MLitt course through a series of prose and poetry workshops, readings and writer-in-residence slots. It took the normally solitary process of writing out into the public domain," she added.

The other short-listed writers are: Mary Paulson-Ellis, Christine Byrne, Felicity Parsons, Ingrid Lees and Amanda Ferguson who will have their work published on the **words 2008** website.

The exhibition featured a half-hour film about new writers directed and produced by former BBC producer Susan Kemp. There was a reading room with an extensive collection of as yet unpublished work by new writers on the Glasgow University MLitt, a writing room where members of the public could pen a poem or piece of prose and either pin it up on the noticeboard or enter it in the **Best of Words 2008** competition,

as well as an art installation inspired by the writing produced by the Glasgow-based public artist Nicola Atkinson.

A feature of the **words 2008** exhibition was the daily writer-in-residence, who took up position at a desk in the centre of the room for a morning or afternoon slot and composed while exhibition visitors watched. Writers-in-residence, workshop participants and visitors to the exhibition were all eligible to enter the **Best of words 2008** competition.

Jura Marketing Manager Philip McTeer said: "The standard of writing has been incredibly high and we offer our full congratulations to the winner. The Isle of Jura has a long established link to literature – it's where George Orwell wrote his classic *1984* – and the tradition continues with literature events and initiatives like our annual Writer's Retreat which has played host to Will Self, Janice Galloway, Romesh Gunasekera and John Burnside. We are delighted to be presenting the winner with our best wishes and hearty congratulations as well as a bottle of Jura Superstition. We look forward to seeing what he and all the other entrants produce in the future."

A collection of short stories by new writers at the Edwin Morgan Centre for Creative Writing, entitled *Let's Pretend – 37 stories about (in)fidelity*, was also previewed during the exhibition and was launched officially on 9 October at Waterstones, Sauchiehall Street, Glasgow.

For further information please contact Fiona Rintoul on 07866 471711, Susan Kemp on 07595 675427 or email: wordsexhibition2008@googlemail.com or see the website www.words2008.com

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