

## Foreword

In October of 2003 I set up my first website about my writing and my interest in writing. When I started out it looked very bare and pretentious as it was more about me than writing. So to fill in the gaps I came up with a plan – interviews. I settled on ten questions which I thought pretty much covered everything to do with writers, their lives and their writing – past, present and future.

So I named this “Perfect 10” as I couldn’t really find anything else to do with the number ten that seemed to work. The interview format for my site was born and has stayed the same ever since. Each and every person I have interviewed for my website has always been asked the same questions but the answers are usually far from similar.

Here I have collected together my ‘Perfect 10’ interviews into a PDF for all of the authors involved, and myself, to enjoy.

Best regards,

James Hazlehurst.

*“Perfect 10”*  
*Collected Interviews 2003-2006*

Perfect 10 is simply brief and informal interviews with other writers, some aspiring and some successful. All interviews were conducted by James Hazlehurst for his website.

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## **Alan Ingram**

James: Before we get to deep - tell me a bit about yourself (where you're from, family, occupation etc)

Alan: Hi my name is Alan Ingram, I'm 42 yrs old and single, I live in a town called Corby.  
I work for Oxford University Press and I live at home with two brothers, my mother and depending on their mood between 6-8 cats, which reside there when the whim takes them.

James: How old were you when you first wrote poetry or prose and what inspired you?

Alan: Seriously when I was 40 yrs old, I was looking for somewhere to post my scribbling anonymously on the net, and voila I found the perfect site ABCtales.com. I was very bored one day, looking for a new easy hobby so I decided to give writing a bash.

James: What was your first story/poem called and what was it about?

Alan: It was called 'I'm just a boy who can't say no.' It involved time travel, murder and a million dollars. It still resides in my sets of work on ABC.

James: Do you still have your first written work, or is it lost forever (and if it is lost are you glad it's gone?)

Alan: No I still have it, read above.

James: What inspires you to write today?

Alan: Sometimes I create from scratch and just go with it, sometimes things that have had a direct impact on me more personal for instance make me write.

I think as you gain in confidence; you find it easier to write things that previously might have been considered a no go area. You also have more faith in your ideas whatever the source might be, and that could be phrase, a passing comment, or a TV item... maybe even a song.

James: What are your favourite three books and who are your three favourite authors?

Alan: Aztec by Gary Jennings, Lord of the rings by JR Tolkien, Wilt by Tom Sharpe.

James: Do you have any current writing projects and what are your plans for the immediate future?

Alan: Just various short stories and other bits, my plans are to continue building my collection and to try and improve. Once I have a decent set of work, I may work on get them published as book... self-publishing of course.

James: Have you ever been published or have you any literary awards/achievements under your belt?

Alan: No.

James: Are you an author who has embraced the Internet or are you a technophobe?

Alan: Without the Internet I wouldn't have writing as a hobby today, Sites like ABC, UKA and Writewords are very addictive, especially in regard to the feedback you get on these sites.

James: Finally. If you had control over your future where would you like your life and your writing to be in ten years time?

Alan: I think I'd like to see some of my stories appear as on screen as plays or dramas, I'm not really that interested in magazines either virtual or real print.

I'm always very reluctant to cut or edit out portions of my work, I can always visualise the whole of my story being played out, hence why I'd like to see some of my work as live drama or film, to see if it would hold up.

I hope in ten years that I'm alive and happy. I can see some improvement in my writing since I began, so I hope to continue up the scale. Apart from that I'd like to think I either needn't have to work or be working somewhere I enjoy.

James: Thanks Alan for your time, it was a pleasure.

**Alex McIver.**

James: Before we get to deep - tell me a bit about yourself (where you're from, family, occupation etc)

Linear: I am a 23 year old from Gloucester. I used to be a struggling student, now I'm a struggling cleaner trying to become a struggling technician. I have two brothers, two parents and one fiancé.

James: How old were you when you first wrote poetry or prose and what inspired you?

Linear: I've had ideas for stories for quite a while. I tried writing them down a few times in my teens but never stuck too it. I started writing properly when I turned 23. I was inspired by reading a lot since I was a child.

James: What was your first story/poem called and what was it about?

Linear: My first complete story was "The exciting world of science", I wrote it when I was around 19. It was a sci-fi story about some lazy scientists.

James: Do you still have your first written work, or is it lost forever (and if it is lost are you glad it's gone?)

Linear: The first version is lost forever, but I re-wrote it this year from memory. I don't really miss it, but it would be interesting to see how different the re-write was.

James: What inspires you to write today?

Linear: Ideas buzz into my head all the time, I am easily inspired. It is picking out the good ideas and making them work that troubles me.

James: What are your favourite three books and who are your three favourite authors?

Linear: Too many to favourite books to choose from, but somewhere in my top infinity are: Tanya Huff's "The second summoning"; Mary Gentle's "Grunts" and Terry Pratchett's "Night watch". And three of my favourite authors are; Robert Rankin, Tamora Pierce and Douglas Adams.

James: Do you have any current writing projects and what are your plans for the immediate future?

Linear: I have a lot of projects on at the moment. A couple of sci-fi novels. A handful of fantasy novels that I can't quite get a handle on. And some horror stories that I have to get out of my head.

James: Have you ever been published or have you any literary awards/achievements under your belt?

Linear: Nope, nope and nope. But I am working on it.

James: Are you an author who has embraced the internet or are you a technophobe?

Linear: I have embraced the internet. I get a lot of my advice and encouragement from other authors over the internet, and I have found this invaluable.

James: Finally. If you had control over your future where would you like your life and your writing to be in ten years time?

Linear: I would like to be married and living in some sort of impressive mansion. That would be nice. As for my writing I would like to get some of my stuff published.

James: Thanks Linear for your time, it was a pleasure.

## **Jen Christabel**

James: Before we get to deep – tell me a bit about yourself (where you're from, family, occupation etc)

Jennifer: I was born in a Birmingham suburb, and came to live in Devon when I was a wee thing of 20, and have stayed here ever since. I had always intended to go into uni at some stage but left it until I was 30, when the kids had both started school. I packed away my secretarial suits and studied for 11 years obtaining an honours degree in history, a postgrad certificate in education and a postgrad diploma in Imperialism. After getting my first degree in 1997 I started lecturing in history, but there is very little work in the field and so I just continued my studies. About 2 years ago I decided to take-up writing again and turn my back on education and that is all I do these days, apart from housework of course! I am married with two children and a faithful old cat. My main hobbies are writing and genealogy and I do this whilst having my ear-drums pounded by UB40! I am also a serial-shopper!

James: How old were you when you first wrote poetry or prose and what inspired you?

Jennifer: I first started writing both prose and poetry when I got my first typewriter at the age of 8. I continued tapping away for years until I married and moved to Plymouth, then it all stopped. I remember writing stories about holidays on my dad's yacht and the teacher accused me of telling fibs! My mom and dad were called in to the school, and the teacher had egg all over her face when they confirmed that what I said was true! I used these stories to make up a series of 'shorts' about a little girl, her dog and her adventures whilst on holiday.

James: What was your first story/poem called and what was it about?

Jennifer: I honestly can't remember as I was too young. But I know it was about some adventure a little girl had whilst on holiday with her parents.

James: Do you still have your first written work, or is it lost forever (and if it is lost are you glad it's gone?)

Jennifer: Noooo, it's long gone. I recall it being on the wall at school though!

James: What inspires you to write today?

Jennifer: I cannot say everyday life inspires me as I predominantly write in the mystery/crime genre. I do read/watch a great deal of real-life crime and often these stories can spark something off in me, and I begin to ponder, twist it around and often end up with a completely different story! Mind you saying that, I will sometimes catch a snippet of conversation in my shopping ventures, a bit of gossip here and there and that can set-off a spark of a story.

James: What are your favourite three books and who are your three favourite authors?

Jennifer: The Lodger (Stewart Evans and Paul Gainey, about Jack the Ripper), Kigsaw Man (Paul Britton, Britain's leading forensic psychologist) and The Autobiography of a Sexually Emancipated Communist Woman (Alexandra Kollontai, she was Lenin's right-hand woman). I suppose the authors I have chosen are fairly predictable: Agatha Christie, Val McDermid and Ian Rankin.

James: Do you have any current writing projects and what are your plans for the immediate future?

Jennifer: I am 7 chapters into Johntorman, which is concerned with a series of murders linked to an internet chat room. I have ground to a halt on that for the moment, as I am busy writing little 'shorts' for UKA and possible publication.

James: Have you ever been published or have you any literary awards/achievements under your belt?

Jennifer: Only this week I have sent off some short stories to various magazines for consideration in their 2006 publications. Fingers crossed, nobody has come back to me and said 'no' as yet!

James: Are you an author who has embraced the internet or are you a technophobe?

Jennifer: I have used computers since my first job in an accountants when I was 17 and have been working with them for employment, study and pleasure ever since.

James: Finally. If you had control over your future where would you like your life and your writing to be in ten years time?  
I am happy with my life and family, but I am really hoping that I can make headway with my writing. I would like to have either my novel or a book of short stories published by the time I am 50.

James: Thanks Jennifer for your time, it was a pleasure.

## **L. Roger Quilter.**

James: Before we get too deep - tell me a bit about yourself (where you're from, family, occupation etc)

QBall: I am a 75 year old retired electrician and served in the Royal Canadian Navy for 22 years. I am married with two children and four grandchildren. Born in London and raised in Croydon I have lived in Canada since 1954. During my navy years I drew several cartoons and wrote many odes. They helped relieve boredom at sea.

James: How old were you when you first wrote poetry or prose and what inspired you?

QBall: I suppose I enjoyed what was called composition in school. I loved writing at the age of around twelve. I prefer writing humour and always sought comical situations in all aspects of life. I write for my own enjoyment and tell people I have a devious mind. I enjoy putting my creative ideas down.

James: What was your first story/poem called and what was it about?

QBall: Absolutely no idea. Since I began to write seriously, after I retired, I have three unfinished projects. One is a detective novel, "Die, Shamus, Die!" entered in a competition for unpublished authors. I received a certificate for 'her' outstanding novel - ticked me off! It was also turned down by BeWrite. I have finished a rewrite and maybe we'll go with that from now on. An autobiography, "Life's a Cockup!" and "Ship of Fools, HMCS Penelope" a compilation of tales woven into a full story about my misadventures in the navy. Trouble is, after being subjected to foul language for years, I hate to include it in my writing and navy life is full of 'fowl' language - what a hang-up!

James: Do you still have your first written work, or is it lost forever (and if it is lost are you glad it's gone?)

QBall: I have retained all my written works for the past 12 years. Some programs from my old computer I haven't been able to reopen yet. Not sure what my first story was.

James: What inspires you to write today?

QBall. Anything and everything. I am very lucky because I never suffer from writer's block. Lately I feel I have to write against war. Read my short story, "The Crater" on BeWrite. Nudge, nudge. Wink, wink!

James: What are your favourite three books and who are your three favourite authors?

QBall: No favs. I read Tolstoy's War and Peace when I was unemployed back in the fifties and found it a bit dry. One or two stories have held my attention, Something of Value, by Robert Rouark (a story about the Mau Mau) and Watcher in the Shadows, by Geoffrey Household. I used to enjoy books by Tom Clancy, but there are a couple of his that I stopped reading after two or three pages. Ludlum and Wilbur Smith I also like. Robert Benchley is a great humourist.

James: Do you have any current writing projects and what are your plans for the immediate future?

QBall: My detective novel is top of the list. I also want to finish off a lot of short stories under the title, "Hysterical History." This is an outlandish project even by my standards. I am contributing to Bewildering Stories.

James: Have you ever been published or have you any literary awards/achievements under your belt?

QBall: Apart from a lot of stories on websites, I have one story in an anthology, "The Thorn in the Rose," published by BeWrite. Proceeds so far amount to about \$4 and I owe the Canadian Diabetes Association half! I still have that certificate for Shamus!

James: Are you an author who has embraced the internet or are you a technophobe?

QBall: Without a doubt the internet has encouraged me. The problem is that feedback is rare. Everyone wants it, but is not willing to give. I have works on BeWrite, UKA, Gold dust, Bewildering Stories and too write among others.

James: Finally. If you had control over your future where would you like your life and your writing to be in ten years time?

QBall: Who cares? I'll be 85. Hopefully some of my work will be published and I can achieve my dream of contributing money towards a cure for diabetes.

James: Roger thank you for your time, it was a pleasure.

## **David Gardiner**

James: Before we get too deep – tell me a bit about yourself (where you're from, family, occupation etc)

David: I was born in 1947, the only son of an Irish country GP and a former nurse. She retired from nursing after she married my father. We lived in a small town in Co. Donegal in the Irish Republic until I was 10, then we moved to Belfast, and finally to Birmingham when I was 16. I was a solitary child, with lots of hobbies like amateur radio, astronomy, photography, chess and model aircraft. I had a very fragmented childhood and attended a multitude of different schools, but I don't think it did me any harm. My father died in Birmingham and my mother and I moved back to Belfast, where I went to night school and eventually University. Financially we were reasonably secure but my mother had what were probably mental health issues and was very difficult to live with. I got on well with my father. After graduating I taught in England for a while, then went to London University to do a full time M.A. in Philosophy. When I completed that I was invited to register for a Ph.D. which I tried to do part time, but never finished. As a part time student I got into the habit of drifting from job to job and was also preoccupied with Utopian communes and trying to find the perfect alternative to the nuclear family. I ended up (you've guessed it) in a nuclear family setup with my partner Jean and our adopted daughter Cherelle (and now Cherelle's boyfriend as well) living in a big, once communal house in London. That brings me right up to the present. I earn my living at the moment as a care worker in an organisation called Maidstone Community Care Housing, which houses and looks after people with mental health problems. I love travel, scuba diving, writing of course, and I have a keen interest in science and the natural world.

James: How old were you when you first wrote poetry or prose and what inspired you?

David: I was taught to read by my mother before I went to school and one of the things we did together was make cartoon strip stories with speech bubbles, so I suppose I was writing stories of a kind from about the age of five. When I went to school, because I was already able to read, I found a lot of the lessons very boring and became disruptive. The nuns who taught me discovered that if they let me sit at the back and write stories I was perfectly happy and didn't bother anybody, so that was what they did. Sometimes they got me to read my stories to the class, and that made me very proud.

James: What was your first story/poem called and what was it about?

David: It's far too long ago for me to remember and has thankfully been lost in the mists of time. My earliest stories were mostly about spacemen and aliens, because the first Journey Into Space series (written by Charles Chilton) was on the radio at the time and I was quite obsessed with it.

James: Do you still have your first written work, or is it lost forever (and if it is lost are you glad it's gone?)

David: I refer the honourable Member to the answer that I gave some moments ago.

James: What inspires you to write today?

David: All kind of things: travel, my own life, what's in the news, overheard conversations—but perhaps most of all, song lyrics. My story The Lodger was inspired by the words of Paul Simon's A Most Peculiar Man, another one (which is presently in a competition and hence removed from my site) by Leonard Cohen's Seems So Long Ago Nancy, my Angel and Musky trilogy (humorous stories) by Olivia Newton John's Sugar Me, and so on. In song lyrics you often get a very concentrated idea that has a high emotional charge and can be unpacked into a good short story.

James: What are your favourite three books and who are your three favourite authors?

David: A very difficult question. Favourite books: Flowers for Algernon by Daniel Keyes, The Last Picture Show by Larry McMurtry and To Kill a Mockingbird by Harper Lee. Favourite authors: O. Henry, Kurt Vonnegut and Kazuo Ishiguro. All these might change the next time you asked me. Generally I like a well-written short story better than anything else.

James: Do you have any current writing projects and what are your plans for the immediate future?

David: I suppose I have two current projects. The first is a follow-up to my Rainbow Man short story collection. I think I'll call this one The Other End of the Rainbow. The other is a project that has already gone on for more decades than I care to admit, and that is a novel loosely based on my student days in Belfast during the rise of the Provisional IRA and the start of the "troubles" that have only just come to an end (we all hope). I have a huge mass of material but it's shapeless and a lot of it isn't up to publication standard. My retirement project when the time comes will be knocking it into shape so that it works as a novel. I think it has good possibilities but still needs a lot of work.

James: Have you ever been published or have you any literary awards/achievements under your belt?

David: Two published books, *Sirat*, which is a sci-fi novel about the first emergence on earth of electronic intelligence, and *The Rainbow Man and Other Stories*, which is a collection of 23 of my short stories, all originally web-published and/or published in small magazines etc. I was also runner-up in the 2002 Fish Short Story Competition with a story called *Letting Go*, and have been placed in a few smaller competitions. My very first success of any kind was with a short story (a parable really) called *Blind Date*, which won a local radio short story competition back in the mid 1990s. That is still one of my most popular pieces and has been reprinted and recycled more times than anything else I have written.

James: Are you an author who has embraced the internet or are you a technophobe?

David: I love the Internet and suffer withdrawal symptoms if I have to stay off line for any length of time (e.g. when I'm travelling).

James: Finally. If you had control over your future where would you like your life and your writing to be in ten years time?

David: I'm happy enough with my life as it is. I would like to be retired so that I could devote all my time to writing. That should happen (fingers crossed and any new legislation permitting) in seven years time, so that part of my wish should come true. The other thing I would like would be for someone to make a film of *Sirat*, which I think would work well as a low budget rather contemplative sci-fi film. I can visualise the scenes very clearly when I close my eyes.

James: David thank you for your time, it was a pleasure.

**Claire Nixon.**

James: Before we get too deep - tell me a bit about yourself (where you're from, family, occupation etc)

Claire: Simply just a housewife, from the North East, Newcastle, who enjoys writing. Married with five kids... what a sentence!!!

James: How old were you when you first wrote poetry or prose and what inspired you?

Claire: I think I was about 27, maybe 28, I think! It was that long ago I can't remember. What made me do it? Reading, one day I thought I could do that, so I did.

James: What was your first story/poem called and what was it about?

Claire: My very first attempt was an erotic piece it was called Freedom. I had almost forgot about that one.

James: Do you still have your first written work, or is it lost forever (and if it is lost are you glad it's gone?)

Claire: I have most of my early written works but a fair bit vanished. I think the aliens took them, wish they never took them.

James: What inspires you to write today?

Claire: Hard one... Allsorts really, the slightest thing can trigger me off, which is very easy.

James: What are your favourite three books and who are your three favourite authors?

Claire: My top three authors are, Stephen King, Stephen King and Stephen King. Okay, so I like Shaun Hutson and Dean Koontz too! Green mile, Dream Catcher and The Dark Tower Books are my favourite reads, of course all done by Stephen King.

James: Do you have any current writing projects and what are your plans for the immediate future?

Claire: Oh crikey, I have few going at the minute. My novel Barry, a horror screenplay Something, a mini series Emily, another novel based on a diary of a sex mad woman. I'm also editing the follow on book to Tabitha and Pirate Jim, so far I have written another two to follow on. I'm also editing a few horror short stories and I plan to send them off to magazines. Also editing an erotica short to send off too. As for immediate future plans, to bloody finish these and submit my works to magazines!

James: Have you ever been published or have you any literary awards/achievements under your belt?

Claire: I have a short story published on TellYouATale.com, Christmas Bloody Shopping and I have self-published a children's story, Tabitha and Pirate Jim for my daughter. As for achievements, I was commended in a competition and that was published in their anthology too. And I've come close in other competitions. Otherwise nothing much.

James: Are you an author who has embraced the internet or are you a technophobe?

Claire: Internet, it has helped me a hell of a lot with my writing, without it I wouldn't be where I am today which is in a small cold room.

James: Finally. If you had control over your future where would you like your life and your writing to be in ten years time?

Claire: Very tough. I'd like to see at least one novel published. As for my life... hmmm... sitting on a beach with half naked men running around after me.

James: Claire thank you for your time, it was a pleasure.

## **Mike Acton**

James: Before we get to deep - tell me a bit about yourself (where you're from, family, occupation etc)

Mike: I was born with the unfortunate name of Michael Jackson on 31/10/1946 (weird in its self!). I was brought up by my grandparents who, as a small boy, I believed were my parents. When I was seven a strange woman appeared in my life who it turned out was my birth mother. She married my stepfather (hence my altered surname) who adopted me in 1956. Despite asking many times I have never found out who my birth father was. There is a suggestion that his name was Bill Davies a soldier from Cumberland but I have my doubts. So for those people who have been calling me a bastard all these years...you were right! I am medically retired after breaking a hip 8 years ago so apart from writing I search for people on behalf of families split by adoption or other circumstances. My latest search has resulted in 2 brothers being reunited after 70 years.

James: How old were you when you first wrote poetry or prose and what inspired you?

Mike: I was a very late developer in more ways than one! I didn't start writing until I was 33 and that was because I suffered a breakdown and was encouraged to write as a "therapy"

James: What was your first story/poem called and what was it about?

Mike: My first story was a sci-fi piece whose title escapes me anyway it was about Jesus returning to earth in a spaceship. No wonder I had a breakdown!

James: Do you still have your first written work, or is it lost forever (and if it is lost are you glad it's gone?)

Mike: The above was my first piece and I still have it buried somewhere. I saw it the other day and nearly died with embarrassment!

James: What inspires you to write today?

Mike: Anger is my inspiration. Those that know me also know the reason for my anger. Without it I would have nothing to write about.

James: What are your favourite three books and who are your three favourite authors?

Mike: My three books are: Cries Unheard (the story of Mary Bell), Oliver Twist because his life and mine have many parallels and anything biographical. Favourite authors; Charles Dickens because his characters live on. Oscar Wilde for his wit and P D James for no other reason than she is a lovely lady and I had the pleasure of meeting her on more than one occasion.

James: Do you have any current writing projects and what are your plans for the immediate future?

Mike: I am writing my first novel UNLOCK which portrays a lot of the anger I mentioned above. It needs working on but thanks to people like Claire and Don from the UKA Press Gang I'm getting there. My plan is to finish this novel and retire from the proceeds of film rights .....I wish!

James: Have you ever been published or have you any literary awards/achievements under your belt?

Mike: My first serious piece of writing was a children's ghost story called SEABOOTS which, in 1982, won first prize in a national competition. I won several small local competitions during my time on the Isle of Wight including having a couple of articles in the Hampshire County Magazine. In 2002 I self published a compilation of my stories along with a friend. I still have over a 100 copies left if anyone's interested! In 2003 I was short listed for the Swanley Writers national short story comp. In November 2004 I was very honoured to be chosen as writer of the month on UKA In January 2005 THE UNFORGIVEN was chosen to be included in a compilation of short stories.

James: Are you an author who has embraced the internet or are you a technophobe?

Mike: I am still learning about the internet. It's a fascinating world which is shouting out to be discovered!

James: Finally. If you had control over your future where would you like your life and your writing to be in ten years time?

Mike: I would love to be responsible for reuniting many more people by the time my ten years is up. As for my writing I hope I still feel angry.

James: Mike, thanks you for your time, it was a pleasure.

## **Michael Treacy**

James: Before we get too deep - tell me a bit about yourself (where you're from, family, occupation etc)

Michael: I'm a 50-something year old married man with 3 children, 1 grandchild and 2 cats. I live on the southern tip of Birmingham, UK and I'm an engineer by trade.

James: How old were you when you first wrote poetry or prose and what inspired you?

Michael: I wrote my first poem at the age of 11, for which I won a 10 shilling book token in a school competition (early 60s). Next time I wrote one, was in 1982 (called '1982' funnily enough) - I was a bit cheesed off with 4 million people on the dole at that time. I took up writing poetry seriously in 2003 and I haven't stopped since. I don't think one particular thing started me off again - it was something I'd thought about all my life and I finally had time to do it. I regard it as an absorbing hobby.

James: What was your first story/poem called and what was it about?

Michael: It was the poem I mentioned above, called, "Running away From School". I still have the poem floating about inside my head - I was packing my bags and running away to Liverpool to join the merchant navy and see the world. The first poem I wrote when I started writing 'properly' in 2003 was called 'My Love'. It's not what you think - it's a humorous poem about 'my love' whereby I take the Mickey out of her - but it's got a twist in the tale.

James: Do you still have your first written work, or is it lost forever (and if it is lost are you glad it's gone?)

Michael: I don't have 'Running Away From School' written down, but could probably recall it if I had to - hopefully I've got it forever. I've still got 'My Love' recorded and it's definitely one of my favourites.

James: What inspires you to write today?

Michael: I write poetry for the sheer hell of it. I can't run marathons and I never got to climb Mount Everest or score the winning goal for England in the World Cup final - but I do like to write a poem or two. I like to write humorous poetry and some more personal, 'spiritual' stuff. I also like to shout out in poetry, against all the social injustices in life (as I perceive them).

James: What are your favourite three books and who are your three favourite authors?

Michael: I just don't have favourite books or authors. I read and enjoy almost anything that I pick up.

James: Do you have any current writing projects and what are your plans for the immediate future?

Michael: I'm currently attempting to put together a collection of 80 poems (10 chapters, each of 8 poems) with a view to getting them published. I'll self-publish if I'm not successful by the 'normal' route. I want to do this for my own sake because I have a desire to leave a book of my poetry for my children, grandchildren and the trillions of nieces and nephews that I have.

James: Have you ever been published or have you any literary awards/achievements under your belt?

Michael: I've had about a dozen poems published in various anthologies and magazines, to date. I also have about a dozen pending publication this year.

James: Are you an author who has embraced the internet or are you a technophobe?

Michael: I've definitely embraced the internet (with a little bit of help from the family techno-whiz kids). I post poetry on a couple of different on-line writers groups and I have my own website...

James: Finally. If you had control over your future where would you like your life and your writing to be in ten years time?

Michael: Concerning life, I'd like to still be fit and healthy and to still have a happy and healthy family around me. Concerning writing, I'd like to have published my poetry collection and safely got a copy of the book into the hands of as many family members, that would like to own a copy. As well as... selling the millionth copy of my latest novel... and having a million pounds in the bank from the sale of books to date... and of course, finally having that hot, steamy affair with Michelle Pfeiffer.

James: Thanks Michael for your time. It was a pleasure.

## 'Hazy-Jo'

James: Before we get to deep - tell me a bit about yourself (where you're from, family, occupation etc)

Jo: I'm a Londoner (well, actually I'm an ex-Essex girl, but maybe we shouldn't go there!) I have one sister, Vicky and I'm a very proud Auntie to her 3 kids. I work as a legal secretary in the City for a corporate law firm.

James: How old were you when you first wrote poetry or prose and what inspired you?

Jo: First wrote poetry in my early teens. It was my 'outlet' for my emotions. I didn't start writing prose until I joined UKA last July.

James: What was your first story/poem called and what was it about?

Jo: I think my first poem was about riding a horse through a forest in autumn. My first story (since school/college!) was "Do You Remember?" as subbed on UKA.

James: Do you still have your first written work, or is it lost forever (and if it is lost are you glad it's gone?)

Jo: Story - see above, and poem - well, haven't got the horse one, but have handwritten all that I wrote in my late teens/20s into a hard backed book. Some of the early ones are just awful... others not so bad.

James: What inspires you to write today?

Jo: For me, it's an interpretation of how I see or feel something. Almost like when you try to recall a dream and you're trying not to lose the thread as you relay it. Absolutely anything can inspire me. A word, an image, a memory, an emotion. I can't bear sitting there trying to force an idea. If something comes to me, I have to get it down and work with it there and then.

James: What are your favourite three books and who are your three favourite authors?

Joe: THREE? ONLY THREE? OH MY GOD! Favourite book ever is REPLAY by Ken Grimwood. Everyone must read it. I love it (am sure you can get it through Amazon or eBay) and have read it heaps. Other two faves probably include WHITE OLEANDER by Janet Fitch and THE INSULT by Rupert Thomson. This list varies often, but the fave stays the same. Sod the restrictions, I'll rebel and also say

WEAVERWORLD by Clive Barker, THE UNBEARABLE LIGHTNESS OF BEING by Milan Kundera, THE RESTRAINT OF BEASTS by Magnus Mills and THE BEACH by Alex Garland. Fave authors include Rupert Thomson, Clive Barker, Jeffrey Deaver... and just to rebel, I'll add Jim Crace, Douglas Coupland, Peter Carey, Milan Kundera, Anne Tyler and Lesley Glaister.

James: Do you have any current writing projects and what are your plans for the immediate future?

Jo: I've got heaps of unfinished stuff now - poems and stories. Saving the book for my retirement ;)

James: Have you ever been published or have you any literary awards/achievements under your belt?

Jo: Nope, it's only in the last month that I've actually sent some stuff off to competitions, etc. I think I'm still finding my feet and believing in myself. Only been writing seriously since last July.

James: Are you an author who has embraced the internet or are you a technophobe?

Jo: I have no idea how I ever managed before the internet!! I am on it constantly all day and at night if I'm not out. I Google just about everything!

James: Finally. If you had control over your future where would you like your life and your writing to be in ten years time?

Jo: In ten years' time, I'll have married Brad Pitt. Fact. We'll have ourselves a couple of sprogs and I'll be able to write all day (in-between the parties, premieres, dirty nappies, etc!).

James: Jo, thank you for your time. It was a pleasure.

## **Elle Bryant**

James: Before we get too deep - tell me a bit about yourself (where you're from, family, occupation etc)?

Elle: I'm from the Midlands, living in a used-to-be industrial city. I'm currently working as a design engineer before I return to university in September. I play sport everyday of the week and fit writing in at every opportunity.

James: How old were you when you first wrote poetry or prose and what inspired you?

Elle: For a long time, I believed that I began writing when I was 14 and inspired by a dream. But this never made sense to me because you don't begin writing a book without any experience at all. Then during a tidy up I found some of my earlier work. The oldest was a six line story in very large, printed handwriting. I must have written it when I was age 7 because after that I joined my writing up.

James: What was your first story/poem called and what was it about?

Elle: The piece I rediscovered had never been given a title but it was about a dog that kicked a ball at a window and broke it.

James: Do you still have your first written work, or is it lost forever (and if it is lost are you glad it's gone?)

Elle: I do now. I am pleased that I do have it. It is a VERY bad piece but it's my first (that I've found) attempt at writing and shows that I was write when I thought it odd to begin so suddenly.

James: What inspires you to write today?

Elle: Nature mostly and the things around me. Most of my poetry is nature themed, just simply capturing a passing moment. My book was originally inspired by a dream, but now seems to continue growing.

James: What are your favourite three books and who are your three favourite authors?

Elle: That's tough. My favourite two authors are JRR Tolkien and Terry Brooks. I'm not sure who a third would. Books – The Lord of the Rings and the Shannara series but I can't be more exact than that.

James: Do you have any current writing projects and what are your plans for the immediate future?

Elle: My current projects are my science fantasy book and a poetry collection I'm putting together. As for future plans, well I'm a planning a sequel to my science fantasy book and a book charting the history of the world in which they are set.

James: Have you ever been published or have you any literary awards/achievements under your belt?

Elle: I've had six poems published in various places as well as one short story and one article. But my main projects are still incomplete.

James: Are you an author who has embraced the internet or are you a technophobe?

Elle: Both. I have found the internet and various sites have given me access to feedback I needed on my work and this has helped me improve and given me access to competitions. But I'm also someone who can really hate technology at times, for instance I will always write with a fountain pen before my works gets anywhere the computer.

James: Finally. If you had control over your future where would you like your life and your writing to be in ten years time?

Elle: Hopefully just to be better than I am now. I don't see myself as a full time author but I do see myself still writing.

James: Thanks Elle for your time, it was a pleasure.

## **Jolen**

James: Before we get to deep – tell me a bit about yourself (where you're from, family, occupation etc)

Jolen: I was born in Chicago, Illinois, and have lived the greatest part of my life in the Midwest. I have two beautiful daughters, Raina, 20 and Seajaye, 18, as well as my gorgeous granddaughter, Bailey. I breed and sell Yorkshire terriers.

James: How old were you when you first wrote poetry or prose and what inspired you?

Jolen: Wow, this is a toughie. To be honest, I wrote a bit when I was very, very young and here and there along the way. I never really took a serious shot at it until about 8 years ago. I wrote about 6 poems then and threw them in a file cabinet. I had a friend that wrote poetry and short stories and so I thought I would give it a shot.

James: What was your first story/poem called and what was it about?

Jolen: Ahh... well, my first poem was 'Ode to Master' and it was a poem about a submissive's love and devotion to her/his master..

James: Do you still have your first written work, or is it lost forever (and if it is lost are you glad it's gone?)

Jolen: I do still have that first poem and I'm glad. Some people tell me that it is one that will be remembered always.

James: What inspires you to write today?

Jolen: Lots of things. A great deal of my work is inspired by some feeling that music gives me and I try to capture that feeling. I do a great deal of social and political poetry as well. I love writing.

James: What are your favourite three books and who are your three favourite authors?

Jolen: The prophet by Kahlil Gibran, the hunchback of Notre Dame, and the wheel of time series.. Favorite authors are Robert Jordan, Anne Mccaffrey and Edgar Allen Poe

James: Do you have any current writing projects and what are your plans for the immediate future?

Jolen: Oh lord! When don't I? I do several series with my writing partner, Len Wilson. Our label, "Bad Penny Productions" is currently

trying to sell several of the series, and we're getting ready to begin another Scoop Malloy, Ace Reporter.

James: Have you ever been published or have you any literary awards/achievements under your belt?

Jolen: I have a book of my work out called "Journeys of a restless soul, poetry for people" and I was voted poet of the year for last year, as well as winning several awards on websites, including a poetry contest last spring.

James: Are you an author who has embraced the internet or are you a technophobe?

Jolen: I love the net, while I'm not an expert, I have come a long way. I think it is a wonderful tool and great way to meet other writers and poets.

James: Finally. If you had control over your future where would you like your life and your writing to be in ten years time?

Jolen: I would be in Hawaii, or somewhere warm and writing another best seller with my writing partner. Oh yeah, and our families.....a wee joke...

James: Jolen thank you for your time, it was a pleasure.

## **'Tara Hanks'**

James: Before we get too deep – tell me a bit about you (where you're from, family, occupation etc)

Tara: I was born and raised in London. Since then I have lived in Brighton, Lancaster and now Derby. I am married with two sons.

James: How old were you when you first wrote poetry or prose and what inspired you?

Tara: I have been reading and writing from an early age. My first stories were inspired by girls' comics, and I would draw endless cartoon strips. I did dream of being a writer, among other things. When I went to university, I began writing poems. Then in Brighton, I joined a writers' workshop and wrote short stories.

James: What was your first story/poem called and what was it about?

Tara: I can't remember much about my childhood work. The first adult story I wrote was an update of Sleeping Beauty, inspired by Angela Carter's 'The Bloody Chamber'. It was for a college assignment.

James: Do you still have your first written work, or is it lost forever (and if it is lost are you glad it's gone?)

Tara: I don't have that story, but I've kept a few of my early poems and prose pieces. I enjoy reading them occasionally, although I probably wouldn't show them to anyone else.

James: What inspires you to write today?

Tara: My first two novels have been inspired by iconic, controversial figures like Marilyn Monroe and Christine Keeler, and their place in history.

Tara: I would describe my style of writing as a blend of fact and imagination. I try to stay close to the truth, using fiction to reveal the hidden thoughts and feelings which lie behind real events.

James: What are your favourite three books and who are your three favourite authors?

Tara: 'Wuthering Heights' by Emily Brontë, and 'To Kill A Mockingbird' by Harper Lee are two of my favourite books. More recently I've enjoyed 'Memoirs Of A Geisha' by Arthur Golden, and 'The Little Friend' by Donna Tartt. There are so many authors whom I admire,

and I find it hard to narrow it down to just three. I enjoy reading the works of Jean Rhys, Willa Cather, John Steinbeck, Alberto Moravia, Tennessee Williams, Fyodor Dostoyevsky, Charles Bukowski and Emil Zola. I also like contemporary writers such as Shena Mackay, Hanif Kureishi, and Clare Boylan.

James: Do you have any current writing projects and what are your plans for the immediate future?

Tara: I'm currently writing 'The Mmm Girl', a novel about the life of Marilyn Monroe – as she might have told it herself. As I'm lucky enough to have found a publisher, I have a lot of work ahead of me.

James: Have you ever been published or have you any literary awards/achievements under your belt?

Tara: My first book, 'Wicked Baby', was published in 2004. It is a short novel based on the events of the Profumo Affair. An extract was showcased on the website of writer Laura Hird. And 'The Mmm Girl' was the winning entry in the 2005 UKA Press Opening Pages Competition.

James: Are you an author who has embraced the internet or are you a technophobe?

Tara: As a research tool, the internet is invaluable and the online community is constantly growing. Posting my work on writers' sites like ABCtales and UK Authors helped me to make contacts, and I have also been able to promote my writing via my own website:  
<http://www.tarahanks.org>

James: Finally. If you had control over your future where would you like your life and your writing to be in ten years time?

Tara: I would love to live by the sea, or in the country. As a writer, I hope I'll continue to improve and find more readers who are interested in what I have to say.

## **'Andrea Lowne'**

James: Before we get too deep – tell me a bit about you (where you're from, family, occupation etc)

Andrea: Born and brought up in London I was, quite a long time ago. Within the sound of Bow Bells too, so I'm a proper Cockney, innit. I'm not sure you really want to know about my family, they were very...er...dysfunctional, to say the least. Suffice it to say that I fled at 15 and finally left the UK for good at around 21. I say 'around' because the old memory is not what it was, alas. Anyway, I bummed around various semi-exotic countries for a few years before arriving, quite by chance, in Holland. Well, not really by chance. I was busking in Paris at the time, and had itchy feet (again) but very little money, so I drew a circle on a map as to where I could go for the money I had. Seemed to me I had three choices – South of France (just came from there), the UK (didn't want to go back there) or Holland. Amsterdam it was, then! Been here, on and off, ever since. Occupation(s)? Just about everything you can think of and some you probably wouldn't believe if I told you.

James: How old were you when you first wrote poetry or prose and what inspired you?

Andrea: Probably around 11 (see below). What inspired me? Well, life I suppose – doesn't it always? I had a pretty miserable childhood, so I expect I wrote pretty miserable 'poetry' to match ☺

James: What was your first story/poem called and what was it about?

Andrea: I have no idea (in answer to both questions). I expect it was some ghastly, angst-filled poem about the cruelty of existence and the meaning of life and the universe. I do remember, though, my first 'real' story. Sadly, it was called 'Let Sleeping Dog's Lie'. I must have been about 12 and was in my Sherlock Holmes/HG Wells/Edgar Allan Poe phase at the time, so it was probably a sort of detective/sci-fi/horror effort. I entered it in the school comp, and it was actually commended by Monica Dickens, bless 'er, who was judging the thing. Quite chuffed I was. Oh, and I won another comp (Camden Borough Council comp, as I recall) when I was around 13, for which I received the princely sum of a tenner. Actually, it was quite a lot of money in those days. Can't remember what it was called though (or what I spent the tenner on).

James: Do you still have your first written work, or is it lost forever (and if it is lost are you glad it's gone?)

Andrea: Lost forever you (and everyone else) will be delighted to hear. Of course, as I mentioned, I wrote the usual tragic, tortured poetry as a child. Dreadful garbage it was, too. I did once attempt a semi-autobiographical novel but I depressed myself so much, I had to give up. It's still unpublished, needless to say and likely to remain that way. Wouldn't like to drive anyone to suicide, now would I? Mind you, that's not a bad idea for a story...I can see the headlines now...Tortuous Tome Tops Twins, or Manic Manuscript Massacres Maude. The News of the World'd have a field day and I'd earn a fortune giving interviews...

James: What inspires you to write today?

Andrea: Everything – It just never seems to manage to progress from brain to paper (or should I say 'screen?')

James: What are your favourite three books and who are your three favourite authors?

Andrea: Must be one and the same, surely? Let's see...difficult one, this. I'd have to say I, Claudius and Claudius the God (I'm counting that as one, see) by Robert Graves. Then there'd be Crime and Punishment (Dostoevsky) and, well, practically anything by Zola. I'm also rather partial to Margaret Drabble, Daphne du Maurier, Saki, Fay Weldon, Iris Murdoch and most of the Russian and French classics. Oh, and Oscar Wild of course, and who's that Colombian chappie? Oh yes, Gabriel Marquez Garcia. One Hundred Years of Solitude has just GOT to be in my faves. Oh, oh I almost forgot! Earthly Powers (Anthony Burgess). Brilliant! Also...nah, just kidding.

James: Do you have any current writing projects and what are your plans for the immediate future?

Andrea: No, dammit, I wish I did. I never seem to get the time to write anything these days. Perhaps I'm procrastinating (for four years?). I've always rather wanted to write a sit-com though. If only the formatting wasn't so difficult...

James: Have you ever been published or have you any literary awards/achievements under your belt?

Andrea: I've had two books published, the first 'Blood and Wine are Red' (now guess where that title came from!) is a collection of 40 humorous tales. The second is 'Giving Your Words Worth' (geddit?) which, whilst hardly a tome, does contain a lot of hopefully useful tips, hard information, advice and ideas on how to successfully publish your work. Well, that was the idea, anyway...

Other than that, quite a few shorts and articles in various print mags.

James: Are you an author who has embraced the internet or are you a technophobe?

Andrea: Ooooh, no, I've embraced it. In fact, I've embraced it a bit too enthusiastically. I've embraced it so much that, with the help of Richard Harris, I set up UKAuthors ([www.ukauthors.com](http://www.ukauthors.com)) Young UKAuthors ([www.yuka.ukauthors.com](http://www.yuka.ukauthors.com)) and UKA Press ([www.ukapress.com](http://www.ukapress.com)) . As a consequence of which, I hardly have any time to write for myself! Besides, I do so love fiddling with the innards of websites and pc's. Sad, I know. Must be the hormones (or lack of them).

James: Finally. If you had control over your future where would you like your life and your writing to be in ten years time?

Andrea: Ah, well, I expect I'll be pushing up the daisies in 10 years time. No, seriously, I see myself (or would like to see myself, that is) in a small, remote, stone cottage (must have open fire and beams) in Wales (North or South, not fussy. Ireland would do at a pinch, though. Bantry Bay area is nice, if anyone's offering) with a large garden in which I can tend veggies and flowers. Chickens and dogs are a must. Cow and goats optional.

As for the writing – who knows? I've resigned myself to the fact that I'll never write a bestseller so, for the moment, I'll plod on stoically and without (much) complaint, with UKA and UKAP.