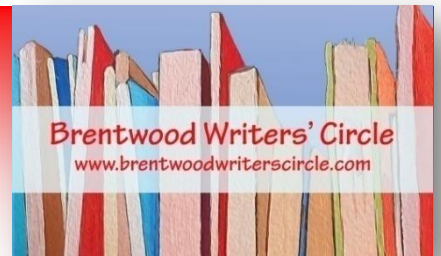




Write On

APRIL

Volume 26 – Issue 4



MARCH REPORT

Robert Welham, standing in for Chair, Helen Finch, opened the meeting. He reminded members that entries for the Jack Kendall fiction competition were due in today. Colin Taylor described the grid that is used for judging BWC competitions, which contains headings beneath which points are awarded. Awarding points for grammar and spelling is fairly straightforward, but the rest of the headings are subjective. This is why there are always two judges who discuss the entries at length in order to agree on the winners.

A members' Showcase followed. Louise Searl read a delightful piece about going on holiday. The key takeaway was not to bore everybody with holiday photos on your return. Colin read Derek Davis' piece, 'The Search for the Holy Grail of Fountain Pens'. Derek likes fountain pens. In fact, he obsesses over them. There was one particular pen he had been pursuing for years, a wonderful Japanese pen that would enhance the writing of anyone who used it. After searching for many years, and with the help of a friend, Derek was finally able to purchase one of these amazing pens at a surprisingly low price and it is now the prize pen in his collection. Dennis Stoner talked about his science fiction story, 'Beings', then read an extract. On an island far from anywhere, genetically modified babies were raised to adulthood. Two of them, twins, escaped and because they were telepathically linked, they realised that each was the only friend they had. A sequel to 'Beings' is now being written. Michael Shearer's story, 'Who Comes Here?' features Arthur, who, giving up on the destructive Me, Me, Me society, goes to live in the Colombian jungle. Toby, an Englishman dressed like an old-fashioned Boy Scout, finds him. Toby is on his way to the Kogi, a mystical people living deep in the jungle. He returns with a message from the Kogi, but it is too late! The world is doomed! Sam Hammerson's YA crime thriller involves a group of children undertaking a robbery. Despite the bulletproof, locked door, the children enter, break into the safe containing the most splendid jewels and escape. Who is the leader of this band of schoolchildren? Ah, that is a secret yet to be revealed.

Just before the break, the spring raffle was held and some excellent prizes were won.



Michael Shearer, Sam Hammerson and Nihal Paul, read their stories.

Photos: Robert Welham

The next reading was taken from Nihal Paul's excellent biography, 'The Tunisian Inquisition'. When he was 14 years old and living in the foothills of the Himalayas, Nihal went to a wedding and afterwards, ignoring the advice of older and wiser heads, he returned home by the difficult path. Missing his footing, he went over a cliff and began the long fall to the ground 1,500 feet below. He screamed! Two strong arms grabbed him and he awoke to find himself in bed at the Tunisian hotel where he was staying on holiday. The final offering was a poem by Michele Feneley, 'A Palermo Love Song', read by Colin. Written in perfectly rhymed and cadenced lines, this touching, emotional poem tells of a young man in Italy who takes the beautiful Carlotta as his lover. They lived together for many years before she was cruelly taken from him by fate. The young man is now old, but Carlotta is forever young beneath her marble stone. An excellent variety of stories that will stay long in the memories of the audience.

Before the afternoon ended, Dennis explained that the April meeting will be a Group Forum, when small groups will have the opportunity to ask questions, be advised and discuss marketing, publishing, and writing and AI.

Colin Taylor

WRITERS' QUOTES

"Writing is a profession for introverts who want to tell you a story but don't want to make eye contact while doing it."

John Green

WORLD BOOK DAY

The Longest Classics Revealed. Reading all 100 greatest books of all time would require 784 hours and 51 minutes of continuous reading, equivalent to 32.7 days. Victor Hugo's Les Misérables tops the list as the longest read, requiring 31 hours and 35 minutes to complete its 568,647 words. 19th-century classics dominate the list, with Russian and French novels claiming five spots in the top 10 longest reads.

| Rank | Book title | Author | Reading time (hours) | Word count |
|------|--------------------------------|------------------------------|----------------------|------------|
| 1 | Les Misérables | Victor Hugo | 31:35:29 | 568,647 |
| 2 | The Stand | Stephen King | 27:02:06 | 486,630 |
| 3 | Atlas Shrugged | Ayn Rand | 26:03:35 | 469,075 |
| 4 | Gone with the Wind | Margaret Mitchell | 24:28:16 | 440,478 |
| 5 | Don Quixote | Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra | 23:54:16 | 430,279 |
| 6 | The Pillars of the Earth | Ken Follett | 21:46:36 | 391,978 |
| 7 | The Complete Stories and Poems | Edgar Allan Poe | 20:23:50 | 367,149 |
| 8 | The Brothers Karamazov | Fyodor Dostoevsky | 19:39:36 | 353,881 |
| 9 | Anna Karenina | Leo Tolstoy | 19:36:00 | 352,800 |
| 10 | The Chronicles of Narnia | C.S. Lewis | 19:16:22 | 346,912 |

<https://marketsherald.com/world-book-day-study-reveals-the-longest-classic-books-ever-written/>

Submitted by Carol Baker

LOCAL AUTHOR

I was in Billericay Library and noticed the information on the Brentwood Writers Circle and thought I'd introduce myself and share information about EVER LAND with you. I'm a local author, and EVER LAND, my debut novel, prize winning, short listed and endorsed by authors Rose Tremain, Louise Kennedy, Priscilla Morris and Colum McCann among others - is forthcoming with PRH this July. I'm speaking at Essex Book Festival on 25 June. Amy Abdelnoor



Next month (the April meeting) Andy Stuart will talk about marketing. He m

OUR PROGRESS

KATEE PARTRIDGE – Murder mystery now at editing stage.

CHERYL TWYDELL – Sorting out cover for my second novel.

LAURA BURKIN – Working on next draft of novel and short stories for competitions.

PETER GURTON – I organised a book sale day at The Institute in Kelvedon on the 8th of March. Included were BWC members Carley-Ann Osborn and Sam Scott. Aki McKenzie was also there, but I don't know if they're a BWC member yet. The event went well so I will organise another two events at the same venue next year, one in March, the other in November. This time they will be on Saturdays so footfall should be higher.

MICHELE FENELEY – Newly inspired to continue with novel set in an Essex vineyard.

JIM REEVE – The 'Survivor's Daughter' - finishing off.

PATRICK FORSYTH – The talk I gave to the group a few months back as repeated the other day as a Zoom workshop - Getting Published, Getting Paid - lessons I have learned - for SWWJ, seems to have gone well and I have asked to do it again in October.

PROGRAMME CHANGE

Please note, the Away Day planned for May, has been cancelled. Using an interesting venue to inspire writing was confirmed as a worthy idea by our February speaker, Anna Hayward. We will try and organize one for next year.

ATTENDANCE FOR MARCH:

25 members; 1 guest = 26

WORDY TRIVIA

The word 'set' has more meanings than any other English word.

Details of payments to Brentwood Writers Circle
BWC bank details: NatWest
Account no.: 67969356 Sort code: 60-02-36

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY – 2026

May 9th – Speaker: Andy Stuart

An author of novels dealing with WW1, Andy will talk about marketing.

June 6th – Members' Showcase

An opportunity for members to read their work, and receive advice and positive criticism. Winners of the Jack Kendall comp. read their entries.

July 4th – In House Speaker: David Worsfold

Subject to be decided.

CONTACT DETAILS

For information on BWC please contact **Helen Finch** (Chair)
07808 188090
helenfinch69@gmail.com
or **Julie Gowers** (Secretary/Publicity)
0747 8339943

brentwoodwriterscircle1@gmail.com
www.brentwoodwriterscircle.com
facebook.com/brentwoodwriterscircle



Brentwood Writers' Circle
is a member of
Brentwood Arts Council