

The Swanwick Standard

Thursday, August 16, 2018

Weather: Fabulous

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ON THE ROAD NOT TAKEN by Pauline Mason

Paul Dodgson's latest project is more than a book, it's also a road trip and a BBC 4 Radio play. The title derives from 'a combination of Jack Kerouac and Robert Frost' he said. When asked why he chose this method he answered, 'It was something I'd wanted to do for a long time and I was bringing it to the surface after thirty years.'

His dream as an adolescent was to be a rock singer and guitarist and finally he found a way to fit that together with his adult dream by going on the road with his guitar, playing and singing in different places in Britain and Europe. He said, 'Music and singing is deep in our souls, so my purpose was to let this music out into the world.'

His research for the book and the radio play involved digging into his youthful memories for names and titles then checking on the internet and, as an adult using quotes from other authors about performance and singing, then going on the road not taken earlier in his life.



THE ONE THAT GOT AWAY by Tiggy Hayes

Swanwick 70 may have been oversubscribed, but before the famous summer school had even begun, 5 men dug their way out to escape the confines of the Hayes. The building now known as the Hayes Conference Centre has gone through many transformations in its lifetime. The most famous is during the second world war when a team led by Franz Von Werra dug their way to freedom.

The daring escape took place in November 1940, after the Hayes had been requisitioned and turned into a prisoner-of-war camp, housing German Air Force Officers. The aforementioned Von Werra planned to dig his way out, pretend to be a Dutch officer, steal a plane and fly home to Germany. He and four fellow officers began digging, having first armed

themselves with silver soup spoons. It took them a month.

The plan may have worked had an eagle-eyed booking clerk not become suspicious of him at Codmor Park Station. He did manage to fool a delivery man and the police before being recaptured.

The story did not end there. For many years the method of escape remained as secret as the tunnel in which

they travelled. It was not until building work on what had been the Garden House was being undertaken in 1980 that the tunnel was discovered with the spoons still intact.



Editorial

It's always exciting to be part of the creation of the Standard, but how much more so as Swanwick celebrates its 70th year. So it's a delight to see how, in only its third issue, the Swanwick Standard has developed. We've been fortunate to bring you a wonderful range of stories about the adventures of an extraordinary number of talented writers, by a great team of dedicated news-hounds.

It's quite an achievement to master the basics of journalism in just a couple of hours. But the Swanwick Standard news team of 2018 have done exactly that. I'm very proud of the results, and of what the paper means to the reporters and their fellow writers in helping to chronicle another magnificent year for our dear Swanwick.

Simon Hall
Executive Editor,
The Swanwick
Standard, August
2018.

HERE WE AYR AGAIN by Maggie Bolton

This week 'Swanwick Magic' has drawn even more Ayr Writers Club members from the west coast of Scotland to the wonderful Writers' Summer School here at Swanwick in Derbyshire. For many of us this is an annual event (no, make that 'necessity') but we do have some more recent converts. Gill Sherry, here for the first time this year, says her first impression was that Swanwick is 'a giant drinking party with writing,' but is 'very welcoming.' Kirsty Hammond, who gained a Top Write place last year, and Susan McVey are back again for more. Kirsty said, 'Last year I learned a lot as a writer, but it was the community that made me come back.' Susan said, 'Yes, Swanwick is a wonderful writing community.'



She also commented on the high quality of the speakers and the good choice of workshops and courses. When asked what special memories they thought they would take back from this year, all agreed it would have to be the 1940s themed fancy dress disco, which was a reminder of the very first summer school back in 1949. I'll go along with that. The vision of Grace Kelly (Gill), Rosie the riveter (Kirsty) and 'Fat Pat' the land girl (Susan), will stay with me for a long time, as will the Home Guard, nurses, Naval Caprain and countless elegant ladies!

Pictured are, from left to right - Kirsty Hammond, Fiona McFadzean, Maggie Bolton, Gill Sherry and Susan McVey

THERE'S NO ESCAPE by Samantha Ridgeway

When Sylvia Edwards visited the Swanwick Writers' Summer School for the first time thirty years ago, she was unaware that there would be no escape. Despite the basic accommodation being like 'a Summerset Mourné novel', everyone was so helpful and friendly, she became hooked. She remembers the grape vines in the conservatory and that people wore evening clothes to dinner.

There were two main speakers every day and the programme covered similar subjects to the current ones. Inspired at Swanwick, she woke at five every morning and wrote for two hours before work. Her first non-fiction book was published around 1993. She now has twelve non-fiction books, many short stories and articles published. She won £50 at the Winchester book festival and was shortlisted for a monograph by the National Association of Writers' Groups. Her plans include, writing a novel set in the Victorian Lancashire, poetry which is inspired by unfortunate events and to convert her non-fiction works into e-books. Returning to Swanwick every year, her confidence and enthusiasm to write has intensified. Having developed many friendships there, Swanwick has become part of her life. Returning, she is delighted when someone asks how she is getting on when she meets them again after a year – escape, impossible.



RUN FOR YOUR LIFE—WITH THE SWANWICK STRIDERS

by Rifka Hindmarsh

You'd be forgiven for thinking Swanwick Writers' School was a safe place to spend the week, sipping the odd gin and tonic, possibly shaken not stirred, discussing the topics of the day with friends old and new. 'Deep throat' informant, Lance Mitchell, quickly disabused me of this facade as I learned of the hidden health assassins lurking in all of us, which prompted him to create the running and walking group, Swanwick Striders.

To discover more about this underground movement and its clandestine fight against our inner killers, I met Lance and new recruit, former Brighton and Hove Police Commander and author, Graham Bartlett, at a secret location (outside main Reception) at 7am. I can reveal that they ran a 6km route in the vicinity of the Hayes Conference Centre and are often joined by other comrades in arms (or legs). Lance, author and former Warrant Officer in the Royal Engineers, said of his route into running *'I needed to shout at the recruits when we ran over the hills with all our gear. I needed to be fit. They didn't need to shout and run. They had it good'*.

Graham expressed concern at this point that he may, in fact, be going on a route march and if Lance shouted at him, he was going home.

Lance's later career in IT, saw a sedentary lifestyle take its toll on his health, causing type 2 diabetes to rear its ugly head. A challenge by his Doctor brought out his competitive streak leading Lance to beat his own target of 16 weeks, to losing 50lbs in 13 weeks. The now poster boy for his local doctor and the joy of running, is an enthusiastic and welcoming guide through the Swanwick Striders' chosen path in and around the beautiful grounds of the Hayes.

Graham, relieved that he had not been shouted at through any part of the run, afterwards described himself as a 'born again runner'. Life and understandable career stresses also encouraged him to take up running once more to improve his health.

First day Swanwick Striders, Kathryn Aalto, Paul Dodgson and David H, also stumbled across a burglary haul while running with the group, giving a great opportunity to assist the local police and help tackle crime off the page.

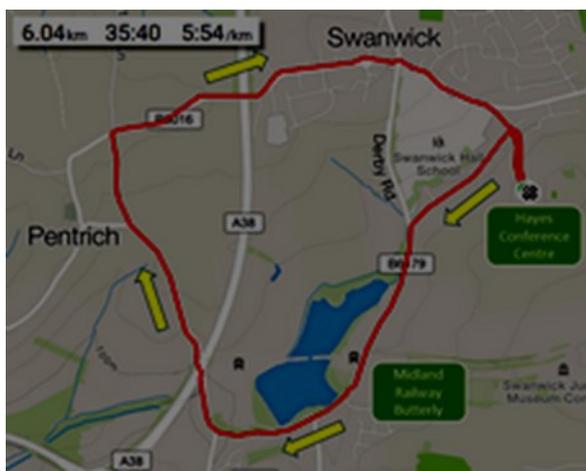
If, like me, something a little more gentle would be appropriate, you can still join the Swanwick Striders and walk in the grounds, enjoying the many health benefits associated.

NHS England always encourage people of all fitness levels to take part in exercise saying 'A brisk 10-minute daily walk has lots of health benefits and counts towards your recommended 150 minutes of weekly exercise.' Lance joins in echoing this, promising that anyone who completes a walking lap of the lake also qualifies as a member of Swanwick Striders.

This unique group, and many such comradeships, strike a distinct blow at the secret assassins of a long and healthy life. Will you join the fight?



Lance and Graham 'Running up that hill'



The (not so secret) running route

'INTRAVENOUS NUTMET WILL KILL YOU' by Ryfka Hindmarsh

This spicy killer was not the only unusual method of murdering a person she had come across, revealed Greater Manchester Scenes of Crime Officer, Kate Bendelow during the Swanwick Writers' School specialist course 'Making Crime Pay'. The author, consultant, wife and mother, stressed these were for literary purposes only as she captivated her audience with moving and humorous first hand experiences of crime scene procedure during her 16 years on the job.

Within her Swanwick sessions, Kate explained forensic collection methods of DNA, Finger Prints, bodily fluids and incriminating evidence. She joked that *'people think you have to be super intelligent to do this job. I'm just a Womble'*.

As author of 'The Real CSI', Kate's original ambition was to be a Police Officer but her eyesight prevented this at the time. She expressed her motivation for her work as a wish to help people, especially the vulnerable.

Kate has also penned lyrical and witty poems such as STI, Tesco and My Girls, which do not fail to amuse or enrich your experience of modern poetry. Also showing the many colours of Kate. When asked what gets her out of bed in the morning for her job she explained *'when finger prints or DNA come back with a positive result, it's like gold dust. Don't bother paying me, I'll ride high on that'*. Kate added that if her employers read this, she still might need her wages for the mortgage.

Kate also partners with author and former Police Commander, Graham Bartlett, and other experts, to share their collective knowledge through Crime Writing Masterclasses. In her vital work alongside Greater Manchester Police and through encouraging and equipping keen crime writers, Kate's knowledge and humor are an inspiration that won't quickly be forgotten at Swanwick. Vive la Real CSI!



ANOTHER KILLING AT SWANWICK by Samantha Ridgeway

Why is crime always on the agenda at Swanwick? Is it the food, or the water – who can say? But without people like Graham Bartlett, a retired Chief Superintendent from the Sussex and Dymchurch police service, and retired Commander in the Brighton and Hove public disorder and firearms unit, we would be found guilty of neglect in our writing. Graham advises on police procedures for novelists and TV programmes, what to look for at crime scenes and how to collect evidence that stands up in court. With advice on writing from Peter James, Graham has written his first non-fiction book, *Death Comes Knocking*. Published in 2016, it was on the top ten in the Times newspaper. This give us the evidence we need to pen our crime novels. Graham provides joint workshops with Kate Bendelow, a scene of crimes investigator, and other colleagues. Recently he has developed a Guardian Masterclass course which has been provided in Harrogate, Cambridge and other UK venues. Reflecting on his work as a police officer, he says he gets a 'buzz' when the evidence collected, gives results. With his recent workshops at Swanwick, he has certainly made a killing with his audience, whom I'm sure will survive the week.



'STAR FORCE' THE JOURNEY ENDS by Andy Cain

The stars are out in force one last time as the journey ends. Star Force is the final part of the Star Stone Trilogy created by Richard Hensley.

In the past two years, parts one and two emerged in the form of 'Star Fall' and 'Star Found'. Set against a background of the dark ages, World War II and our future unstable sun, humankind must seek a new home.

Billy Carter, the boy who found the ancient bracelet on a Canterbury bombsite, battles through time and space to fight the Star Miners, who want the universe for themselves. Billy and other bracelet users, force the Star Miners from our universe into one of their own. The battle has dire consequences for Billy. His fight puts him in great peril and he is lost to his family and friends.

The ending is a happy one, but you must read the book to see how Billy resolves this seemingly impossible situation, ironically, with the help of one Star Miner.

Richard says: "The Star Stone trilogy has been a long journey for me - over twenty years.

Swanwick Writers' Summer School has been a major influence in that journey, with the instruction, encouragement and friends found within its helpful and enthusiastic environment."

LET THEM EAT CAKE by Angela Lansbury



"Let them eat cake," Marie Antoinette never said, possibly because she had not visited Swanwick Writers' School at The Hayes in 2018. A choice of at least four cakes delighted our eyes and tastebuds on the night of our arrival, followed by strawberries and cream, sliced fruit including kiwi fruit and watermelon.

Almost every meal I found bowls of fresh fruit including grapes, bananas, pears and red apples, and, if you were quick, the occasional plum.

Mid-week, Swanwick committee organized a tea dance in 1940s costume, reminiscent of the first Swanwick gathering. A giant sponge cake with cream and jam, made to celebrate our 70th anniversary, was cut and saved for supper time. On other days, we enjoyed New York cheesecake, sticky toffee pudding and local favourite, Bakewell Tart.

Calorie-conscious diners who did not have a sweet tooth could sample the cheese and biscuits. But the cakes were the most eye-catching displays. Did I mention chocolate cake, or lemon and ginger cake? As Marie Antoinette didn't say, 'What's not to like!'

Angela Lansbury, author of twenty books, has been attending Swanwick Writers' School for 20 years, and is the author of a book of quotations, Who Said What When. See more of Angela on Facebook, LinkedIn, Amazon and Lulu.



Ingrid at the Tea Dance