

January 2009
Issue 5:1

BritLit Update

Full Agenda for the New Year

Happy New Year!

The first few months of 2009 look like being as busy a period in BritLit – since ever. For a start, the programme for new kits appearing on the website is full, with at least one a month appearing between now and the end of the project in March.

This month, 'Orange Juice' by Michael Rosen will join 'The White Towel' as the second of the NILE 2008 contributions, and the trilogy will be completed in February by the publication of 'The Hand that Feeds'. Meanwhile the filming for Melvin Burgess' 'Coming Home' has been completed and you can expect to see this new type of multi-media kit appearing in March. Before all that, however, there will be a new

author kit on Bali Rai, which will be produced in time for the visit of that author to Italy. Also by the end of March another 'first' is planned, also based on a work by Melvin Burgess – his book based on the film 'Billy Elliot'. This will be the first time that a whole novel has been attempted by BritLit, and we hope that the availability of both the book and the film will make this ambitious project a very attractive proposition to teachers.

These new kits will be joining the recently added new kits: 'The Wolf's Tale' and 'The White Towel' and if you haven't had a chance to look at these new offerings yet then you will find them in the usual place on <http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/try/resources/britlit>

Top Ten

According to user votes of the kits which appear on the Teaching English website, the top ten, most popular BritLit kits, with ratings between 'Great' and 'Awesome' are:

		1	2	3	4	5		
Pink Bow Tie	4.7	[Orange bar]						1
Ex-poser	4.6	[Orange bar]						2
Carapace	4.5	[Yellow bar]						3
Jack and the Beanstalk	4.5	[Orange bar]						4
The Copy	4.5	[Pink bar]						5
Old Macdonald's Farm	4.4	[Orange bar]						6
The Return of the Moonman	4.3	[Orange bar]						7
A Handful of Poems	4.3	[Yellow bar]						8
Down by the Cool of the Pool	4.3	[Orange bar]						9
Whose Face Do You See?	4.3	[Pink bar]						10

The numbers in the second column are the rates awarded out of 5. The results show a more or less equal distribution between material for older teens, younger teens and primary.

Author Visits



The first of the year's author visits will get underway at the very end of January when popular performance poet Levi Tafari once again visits Portugal. This time he is combining his tour with a tour of schools involved in the British Council Integration and Diversity in Education project (INDIE). As far as BritLit is concerned, Levi will be visiting Funchal, Beja, Torres Novas, Barcelos, Braga, Maia and Porto over the period of one week. Levi says this should coincide with the much anticipated publication of the CD of him performing some of the poems (with handy teacher's notes and classroom activities).

In February, the writer of the 'Short and Scary' stories, Louise Cooper, will be visiting Barcelona for the APAC teachers' conference in the days following Carnival.. This is the first time we've managed to entice Louise away from her Cornish hideaway and we're all looking forward to it immensely. She will also take the opportunity to visit some local Catalan schools.



In the second week of March the British writer with Punjabi roots, Bali Rai, will be visiting schools in Trento and Milan in Italy. Bali is a new addition to the stable of BritLit writers, and some of the teachers from Italy were involved in producing 'The White Towel' kit recently after working with Bali in Norwich last August.

During this period there will also be some BritLit training workshops for teachers in the three participating countries: in a school initiated project in Carregal do Sal, Portugal (January), at the APAC event in Barcelona, Spain (February) and at the YL Conference in Milan, Italy (March).

More on all these events will be reported in the February, March and (final) April editions of BritLit Update

And What Happens Next?

On March 31st 2009 BritLit will cease activities. What exactly will come after that isn't yet clear, but we are hoping that we will be given the green light to take the project to its next stage, which will be truly global in scope – sourcing stories and poetry from all over the world not just the UK – and which we have called 'World Voices'. This would ensure that the work of the project will continue in Europe

in an expanded form, but under the different name, as well as exploring exciting new realms. Should we not be successful in securing funding in these difficult financial times then we are pretty confident that the BritLit resources will continue to remain available on the British Council Teaching English website for the foreseeable future, but we will be unlikely to develop new materials or engage in author visits. Fingers crossed, please!

Final BritLit CDROM

We are in the final stages of producing what, in any circumstances, will be the last BritLit CDROM. We plan, of course, to include all the existing BritLit kits – including a few that haven't been posted on the web page – and, as always, we welcome any additions or alterations you might want to suggest to any of the kits. If you want any of your ideas to be included in this last edition then please let us have your suggestions by January 31st – send to the e-address below. The CDROM will be available by the end of March and will be sent to everyone on this mailing list who sends us their postal address for mailing purposes, free of charge. Please, once again, send us an email and put 'CDROM' in the subject line. Many thanks.