

*It's been nearly a year since the previous Update. In that edition we explained that an uncertain future meant that further issues were likely to appear at very irregular intervals, and so it proved.*

*Now, however, we are able to re-establish Update on a regular basis, one every two months or so. Welcome to the first of the new look Updates!*



## 'Coming Home'

'Coming Home' is the name of short story by [Melvin Burgess](#) and consequently the name of a new look BritLit kit. The new look concerns the way the story is told. Instead of students being handed a straightforward text, they 'read' the story through two short videos 'rants' and an audio playlet, all linked by text. In other words, three separate sources of media are used to tell the story. What's more, the end of the story isn't definite and there are two possible variations, and you can be sure that Burgess's story doesn't shrink from touch subjects! We think that this is an exciting new way to present stories and language use to students. Try it out and let us know what you think.



Video rants are part of the narrative

## 'Flash Poetry'

This [Cambridge Seminar](#) inspired project is very simple in its concept. Students use computer generated animation ('flash' movies) to make very short animated films to accompany some poems. Engaging different aspects of multiple intelligences students interact with each other and design their film, and then consult with the poet (face to face, in the pilot scheme, as well as on-line) and finally produce the final result. Teachers, working with poet [Moniza Alvi](#), have been thrilled at the degree of involvement their students have shown during the pilot – including very mixed ability 10<sup>th</sup> year students. Once the films are completed some classroom materials will be created around them, and the results made available on-line. The animations are due to be shown at the [APPI Conference in Guimarães](#), Portugal on May 1.



Student designed animations

## TE gets more literate

We've been busily updating the [literature in language teaching](#) web pages of the Teaching English website. There are a growing number of articles about the role of literature in teaching languages and we are keen to see this become a meeting place for teachers wishing to share experiences. There are opportunities to join in blogs, or even start your own.



New web resources

## Chain Reaction

One of the newer kits available, [Chain Reaction](#), was designed by two teachers from Portugal, and was originally planned for use in their workshop at the Literature in language Teaching seminar in Coimbra, Portugal in the autumn of 2009. Just as the teachers were putting the final touches to their work, the author on whose story 'Chain Reaction' was based, [Louise Cooper](#), died suddenly. Their presentation – and the resource kit – became something of a [memorial to Louise](#), who was a good friend of the project.



New resource kit

## Revised kits

There is an ongoing programme of revising kits which makes sure that the resources available are as fresh and as up to date as possible. Teachers suggest additions and improvements, information gets outdated and links become broken and all this needs to be incorporated into the revisions. The main purpose of revising the earliest kits, however, is to make sure that similar standards are kept up and many of the features developed for the later kits are now being fitted into the earlier models. It's a bit like the painting of the Forth Bridge in Scotland – it's a job that never ceases for no sooner do you think you've finished than you have to start all over again!



New brooms

## Children's Literature in Language Education

The International Conference subtitled 'from [Picture Books to Young Adult Fiction](#)', in association with the Young Learners and Teenagers SIG (IATEFL) was held at Hildesheim University, Germany between 25<sup>th</sup> – 27<sup>th</sup> February. The BritLit flag was proudly flown by Ellen Darling (BritLit Italy).





UK audiences targeted

## BC seminars

The British Council has been making a special effort to keep its UK audience up to date with what the Council is doing by running a series of seminars in different locations in the country. BritLit was featured in two seminars in 2009, the first being in London in June, where Fitch O'Connell was joined by Romesh Gunsekera and Louise Cooper. The seminar was then given in Manchester in December, when Fitch was joined by Levi Tafari. Highlights of this second seminar can be [seen on this video](#).



## The Bridport Prize

As part of the annual Bridport Literary Festival this competition invites authors and poets to submit previously unpublished short stories, flash fiction or poetry. Budding creators of literature of heart-stopping beauty and imagination should check this out on [www.bridportprize.org.uk](http://www.bridportprize.org.uk)



## Tony Mitton

Children's writer [Tony Mitton](#) was invited to the annual APAC Convention in Barcelona in February as well as visiting Badalona to share poems with 3<sup>o</sup>, 4<sup>o</sup> and 5<sup>o</sup> year students. Tony's 'Down by the Cool of the Pool' and a collection of his poems for children ('A Handful of Poems') have been popular BritLit resource kits for primary school pupils for a couple of years. Tony says of the convention "What a lot of delegates! And all there in the name of the teaching of English. I hope my poems made good sense, or at least inspiring nonsense, for most of my audience. They seemed to be listening. What more could a poet ask for?"



## Levi Tafari

Performance poet [Levi Tafari](#) revisited Barcelona recently to great acclaim as part of the BritLit project in Catalonia. He visited a number of schools where he made numerous new friends. Jo Dossetor, BritLit coordinator in Barcelona said "Levi's visit was a huge success; students really enjoyed meeting him, and he gave them a very positive message to know themselves, and to keep poetry alive." Levi said "Barcelona was fantastic; every session was mega. It was a brilliant tour."



## Romesh Gunsekera


One of the original authors involved in BritLit, [Romesh](#) is currently the author in residence at [Somerset House](#) in London. In March he is holding a salon to which invites guests are invited to consider the theme 'Writing without Ink', which will be led by Chris Meade presenting his 'if.book'.



## WordPowered

[WordPowered](#) is a companion to BritLit and was created when the future of BritLit looked in doubt in 2009. It is the brainchild of some of the key players in the original BritLit project and now provides a place where new ideas and formats can be tried out, with resources for teachers and a platform for writers of short stories and poetry to share their creations with peers.

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