

# BritLit Update

## BritLit in MA Awards Ceremony

The Salón de Actos at the Universidad de Alcalá in Madrid was the suitably impressive setting for the graduation ceremony of 28 degrees in the University's first Master in Teaching English as a Foreign Language on 2 October.

There was a significant British Council presence at the ceremony as the two strands of the course – Bilingual schools and language through literature (BritLit) – were very much the brainchild (brainchildren?) of Teresa Reilly (bilingual schools) and Isabel Fernandez and Mark Levy (BritLit) from the Madrid office.



One of those receiving her Master's was none other than Liliana Russo, who had been on the latest BritLit training course at NILE in Norwich last summer. Others attending the ceremony were Isabel and Mark, of course, plus British Council Country Director Chris Hickey, BritLit Project Manager Fitch O'Connell and the renowned English poet, Lawrence Sail who read from some of his poems. The event was hosted by the Vice-rector of the University, Fernando Galván and the Diplomas presented by Programme Coordinator, Ana Halbach.

As Lawrence Sail said after the event, as we all sipped wine and nibbled tapas in the courtyard, the hugely enjoyable event was 'a fitting tribute to the pioneering work of the project and the British Council'.

## Bragança Seminar

Following on from the APPI Seminar in Funchal in September, October saw the seminar caravan arriving at Escola Secundária Emídio Garcia in Bragança. Once again BritLit was represented by Fitch O'Connell who gave a workshop called 'Telling Tales and Spinning Yarns'. Our old friend

Verrí Toste also made an appearance with a session on intensive and extensive reading. The opening plenary was given by Porto British Council Director, Duncan Lambe, who addressed some of the issues surrounding the future of English in the world.

# Ron Butlin in Portugal

Scottish author Ron Butlin is visiting Portugal for a brief tour in November as part of the BritLit project. The idea of involving Ron in the project came from colleagues in the Madrid British Council office who have already had the pleasure of hosting a tour by the author, where whisky and literature went hand in hand!



His writings include poetry, libretti, plays and journalism and he is the author of three novels: *The Sound of My Voice* (1987, reissued 2002); *Night Visits* (1997); and *Belonging* (2006). He was awarded a Scottish Arts Council Book Award for his first collection of stories, *The Tilting Room* (1983), and for *Ragtime in Unfamiliar Bars* (1985), a collection of poetry. His book, *Vivaldi and the Number 3* (2004), is a collection of tales about great composers,

written from unusual – not to say surreal - and entertaining angles.

A freelance journalist for the *Sunday Herald*, Ron Butlin lives in Edinburgh. His new collection of short stories, *No More Angels*, was published in August 2007. At present he is working on a new novel, *The Afterlife* (working title) and a libretto for Scottish Opera, *The Perfect Woman*, in collaboration with the composer Lyell Cresswell.

Ron Butlin will be in Funchal, Coimbra and Porto where he will work with teachers and students in local schools.

For further information contact [fitch.oconnell@pt.britishcouncil.org](mailto:fitch.oconnell@pt.britishcouncil.org) or visit <http://www.contemporarywriters.com/authors/?p=auth02C19L040412626885#contact>

## Louise Cooper – More to Come?



Some negotiations with popular children's author Louise Cooper ('Emergency Landing' – on the website) to read some of her stories for us to have mp3

files on the website have led to a rich vein of cooperation which we hope to fully explore over the next few months. In the first place Louise will be interviewed in her

Cornish home for the new kit based on her 'The Wolf's Tale' (due out in 2008) as well as reading the story. She has also offered a new range of stories, free of agent and publisher copyright issues, to be explored by the project. As a result, we can expect to see a significant increase in the amount of material suitable for younger teens over the next year and we promise you a novel new approach to the way that the materials are presented. We'd say 'Watch this space' but Louise thinks that is corny, so we won't. Oh....!

<http://www.louisecooper.com/>

**Getting on the Programme:** BritLit short stories by Louise Cooper and Paul Jennings (and their accompanying BritLit kits) are now on the recommended extensive reading lists for years 7 – 9 published by the Portuguese Ministry of Education.. Now there's no excuse not to get on board!

# Robin Hood Finally Out of the Woods?



The end of what has been the longest saga of materials production in BritLit history is finally coming to an end, and the little collection of poems by Tony Mitton (A Handful of Poems) will finally make it onto the website in November. The problem had been getting a strip cartoon of Robin Hood prepared but Robin and his Merry Men have finally been given form and so now the rest of the kit for 10+year olds is ready to go. To keep your appetites sharpened we've added an audio clip of author Tony

Mitton reading part of his 'Robin Hood Raps'.

## APPI Website Access to Materials

Did you know that you can now access the BritLit resources from the APPI website? What makes this a useful link (to the Teaching English site where the resources continue to be stored) are the net descriptions of the contents of each kit, and the easy to scan format of the page. It is yet another example of the value of partnerships. The page can be found here:

<http://www.appi.pt/act/projectos/itlit.htm>



Contact BritLit on [brit.lit@pt.britishcouncil.org](mailto:brit.lit@pt.britishcouncil.org)

[www.britishcouncil.org/portugal](http://www.britishcouncil.org/portugal)

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