

Up!

FEBRUARY 2022
COLOUR

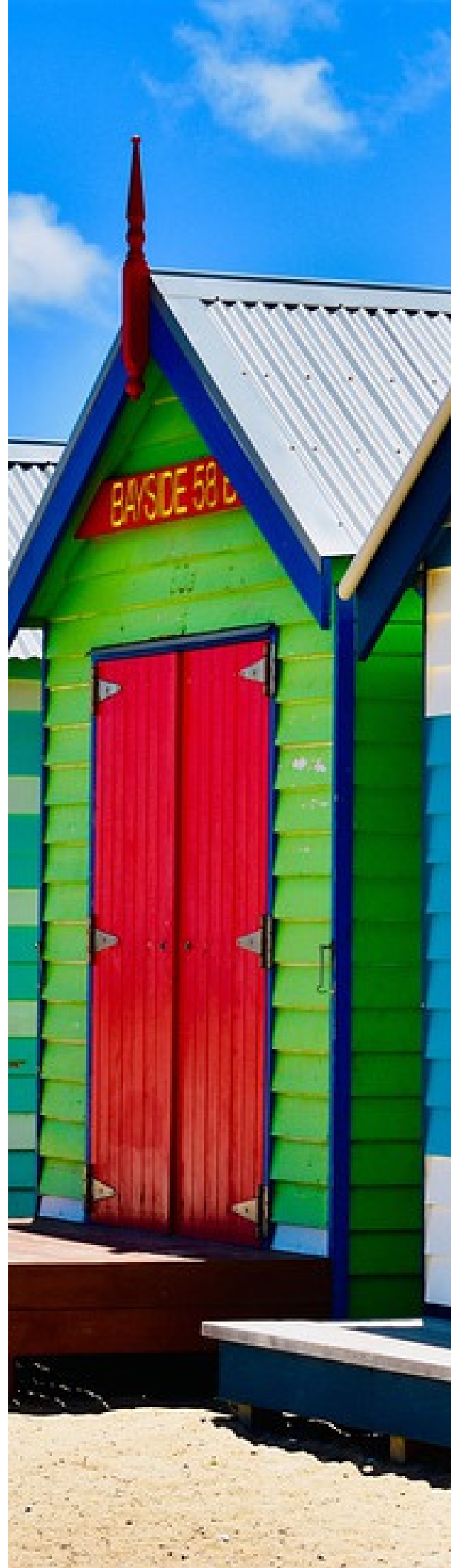


Making the world a better place -
one page at a time



Contents

Up Front! The Team	1
A warm welcome whatever the weather	
Brush Up! Bridget Wilkinson	2
Oh, we do love to be beside the seaside	
Cartoon Corner John Pickin	4
A rainbow trail	
Word Up! Poetry Corner	5, 10
Your poems on the theme of Colour & 14	
Up Sticks! Adam E. Holton	6
Life as a Flying Bookseller	
Dressed Up! Steve Lowe	10
All things bright and beautiful	
Up Town! Fiesta, Whitley Bay	15
Celebrating community	
Read Up! Jenna Warren	18
Colourful reads reviewed	
Coming Up! 'Til Next Month	21
Staying positive	





Up Front!

Hello, and how are we all doing? Been duffed up by Dudley or yanked by Eunice?

As we type this welcome it's raining outside and Valentine has long been and gone. But fear not, Up! is here to lift the mood. We're particularly delighted to be welcoming our new readers, we're so glad you could join us - welcome to the magazine that accentuates the positive. There's enough doom and gloom on TV and in the newspapers, so our mission is to highlight all the good stuff that's happening in our communities.

This month, regardless of what the weather may be doing, we have our sights firmly set on the coming Spring. Snowdrops are here and before you know it they'll give way to the glory of bluebells, daffodils and all manner of splendid colours to brighten all of our days.

So, what have we got for you this month? Well for a start how about possibly the most colourful artist you're ever likely to meet? We're also talking feathers, fiestas and a flying bookseller. Intrigued? Put the kettle on and come join us ...

Bridget & Harry x



Brush Up!

BRIDGET WILKINSON

Up! meets the artist for whom colour is everything

Hi Bridget, thanks for talking to Up! First things first, how did you get started as an artist?

I'd been creative from being quite small. My biggest influence was my grandad who was always making things. I spent many hours with him in his workshop where he encouraged me to have a go. At school I loved art and in my teenage years I went to a Steiner School where art was fundamental in every subject. I continued to be creative but was encouraged to get a 'real' job so I went on to study business and from there got a job in a wages office.

It wasn't until later on in life after my children had grown up that I wanted a change in direction. I decided that I wanted to be an artist and took up painting. I still laugh now with my daughters as I sat on the sofa those years back and stated 'I'm going to be an Artist.'



You have such a distinctive, vibrant style. Is this something that's evolved over time or is it a style that was there from the beginning?

So I have to say, that I absolutely adore colour. It plays with my emotions and it's how I express myself.



I started painting in abstract using fluid forms and pattern and continued in this style for a couple of years. The style I have now developed quite randomly when I went on holiday to Cornwall. I took a tiny tin of watercolours, water colour paper and gel pens with me so I could doodle/paint when I was relaxing. I was doodling one day, drawing lines and filling in with pattern when I filled one section with little fish. I thought this looks cool and it just developed from there. Who'd have thought?!

Brush Up!

BRIDGET WILKINSON

Much of your work features coastal scenes. Do you have a favourite location?

I love the coast, it's my favourite place to be. Any coastline will do. I'd love to travel around the coast of Britain and am currently converting a VW Transporter into a camper/travelling art studio so hopefully I can do this in the future. I live in Whitby so I'm definitely spoilt and draw my inspiration from my surroundings.



I have an infatuation for clear water and looking through to see what's below. Shame the north sea is so murky! Most of my work does come from imagination but can be triggered by anything from colour, shape and local scenes. You can probably tell that I love the moon too, and am now moving onto the solar system in my work. It's all very exciting!



We're increasingly aware that colour can have an impact on our mental wellbeing. As an artist specialising in colour, what are your thoughts on this?

Without a doubt. Colour can draw on all emotions and affect our mood instantly, it can make us feel calm, exhilarated, sad, happy, energised, relaxed and peaceful to name but a few.

It is written that certain colours evoke certain emotions but I believe the reactions you get from colours are very individual. I certainly feel very affected by colour.

Colour is one the greatest pleasures in life! Can you imagine our world in black and white? I believe I'm quite a quiet, reserved kind of person but in my painting I'm shouting out loud! When I buy art it's always the colour I'm attracted to and not the subject matter.

Last question: if you were only able to choose 3 colours to work with, which 3 would you choose and why?

I have to choose 4 - sorry!

Brush Up!

BRIDGET WILKINSON

Turquoise - it's such a clean colour - clear water, clean planet. I like using this in my underwater scenes in all its shades.

Orange - so vibrant and warming, a fireball.

Prussian Blue - The colour of midnight, an intense deep blue. I love using this colour in my dark skies.

Aubergine - Not quite purple and not quite maroon. It features a lot in my landscapes. I love its richness and it reminds me of the North Yorkshire moors.



If you'd like to find out more about Bridget's work, she can be contacted here:

<https://www.facebook.com/bridgetwilkinson.artist>

<https://bridgetwilkinson.co.uk/>

bridget@bridgetwilkinson.co.uk



Cartoon Corner



He may be a dull, grey gastropod but he knows how to mix a rainbow slime trail

**You can contact Up!'s resident 'toon artist at
pickinjohn@gmail.com**

Word Up!

YOUR POEMS ON THE THEME OF COLOUR

my father's garage

green tomatoes on the windowsill
queued to ripen in the sun
oregano tied in bundles
hanging upside down to dry
pepperoncini weaved into tresses
like the braided purple garlic
all adorning the bare walls
of my father's garage

crates of zinfandel grapes
from California stacked- empty
their musty sweet scent
and the droning of flies
surround me with their music
as my father crushes the
black sweet grapes into juice
poured into the old wooden barrel

the september-october rituals
of harvesting and preserving
the making of wine and tomato sauce
was a joyous time for my family then
they were the signature scents of autumn
they were the warmth of kitchens
the laughter of my father, mother and nonna
by memories made immortal

Joe Farina

Scarf

It's burnished red with muddy yellow leaves -
vibrant autumnal dabs on a generous background
of sumptuous black silk.

A gift of light - sensuous and soft -
a gift of love & redress, of missing
and missed moments.

Yet sometimes, I still feel blue.

Rona Fitzgerald

Four hundred and five lines

I was dazzled by Uncle Jack's tropical aquarium,
neon tetras floating on the retina,
neighbour Fred Dexter's Zebra Finches' scarlet beaks.

Colours had been kept under wraps
like the golden sandstone of Wakefield Cathedral
cloaked by soot despite dots of acid rain
which unfolded dull macs
and hair-covers diffracting blue rinses.

Exotic pigments were invisible behind the 405 lines
of Black and White telly.

Royalty had beige Emerald, Bishops vanilla Amethyst.

Only the posh and poetic afforded colour and travel.
Kodachrome postcards of Scarborough
matched the Mediterranean blue skies
of the small Spanish fishing village of Benidorm
where Sylvia likened melons 'turtle-dark green'.

Common place dyes of Tandoori Chicken
stain my fingers scarlet
flanked by Neon Tetras
in the restaurant wall aquarium of the local Taj Mahal.

Steve Harrison

Up Sticks!

ADAM E. HOLTON

Up! meets the Flying Bookseller

Hi Adam. Thanks for talking to Up! You're a man of many talents ... author, ethicist, piano player, and we love your description of yourself as a 'Flying Bookseller'. What led you to this way of life?

Thanks for the invitation to talk with you. If there was world enough and time, I could entangle more strands of the answer to your question, but for now I'll try to be concise.

I was born a curious child. As I grew up, my dad read *Danny, The Champion of the World* to me. That was, perhaps, my favourite book as a child. The story made me feel that life could be interesting, mischievous and ripe with adventure. From then on, as much as a seven-year-old can decide the fate of their own life, I decided that I wanted such an existence for myself.

And, so far, I'd say that Life and I have had a pretty good balance of joy and bother.

I found myself most at ease, most engaged, aroused or inspired when I become aware of how people interact, synergise and cooperate – as a teenager I played ice hockey in Slough, was captain of the South-East conference and part of team England; later I helped on building projects and many odd-jobs. Most of the circumstances I would find myself in had collaboration at the root of the experience. Throughout all of this I was writing.

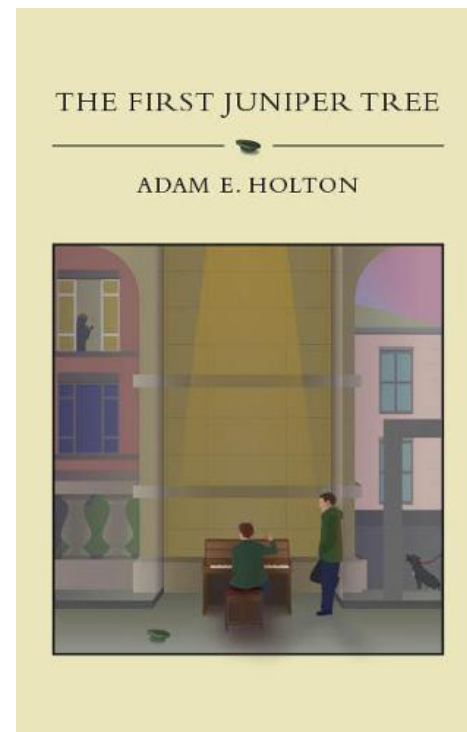
As a child, my mum encouraged me to write my thoughts out. It helped me to make sense of the world. I had a very active imagination and could easily become overwhelmed. That hasn't changed



much. When I finished writing what became *The First Juniper Tree*, I decided to make it into a project that would create opportunities for interaction and debate. That is how I came to be a Flying Bookseller.

We see your novel *The First Juniper Tree* is set locally to us, and also shares some themes we ourselves hold dear: community and collaboration. Tell us a bit about the book ...

In 2016 I was living in Newcastle. In the Autumn of that year a series of events and realisations arrived together. As a bit of context, I had been aware of, and uncomfortable with, the cultural narrative and expectations that surrounded me, that envelope all



of us, but wasn't sure how to express what I was thinking. Then, one night in September, I arrived at Alphabetti Theatre (when it was in the basement of the New Bridge Project). The audience was inside watching the show. The lights and fridges in the bar area

Up Sticks!

ADAM E. HOLTON

kept cutting out. I helped fix the problem by spreading out the work of the electrical current instead of overloading one point. Perhaps it was in the moment that everyone came out of the show, joyful, chatting and able to stand in the light, unaware of the situation with the electricity, I realised I wanted to make an argument for the collaborative side of human nature. Collaboration is really the thread of existence that is made invisible by a culture built on insecurity, greed and a desire to control reality, but we all know it is there no matter how deeply buried. I think we're approaching the end of this 'Master of the Universe' phase of humanity and I want to help deconstruct that perspective. If we had the collaborative and communal side of human nature reflected back at us through our arts and culture, as something to consider, to focus on, to grow from, then perhaps we could address the current predicaments we face from a new, but also much older perspective.

Therefore, *The First Juniper Tree* started as an attempt to make the question 'what is human nature?' exist in a non-academic world. To be more accessible. Living in Newcastle was a transformative experience for me, so I decided to set the conversation on a doorstep in Fenham. This then grew into a journey through parts of the city, out to the coast and back again. The city is, in a sense, the third character of the novel.

The book also includes original music, written for the main character Hieronymus Peach. The desire to include real music in a book was a childhood dream of mine. It means each time I play it in concert, or tell people about the music for the book, I get to experience my inner child.

What does being a Flying Bookseller actually entail on a day-to-day basis? Do you live out of a suitcase?

Yes, pretty much, but I do also have a rucksack. During the Winter it's a bit different. At the moment I'm organising events, contacting people and working on the second novel.



© Adam E. Holton, 2021

In Spring, Summer and Autumn, the diurnal activities are: breakfast, put 12 copies of the book in the little red suitcase I was given by an ex-fire juggler and go outside, in whatever city or place I find myself in, and choose a place to busk. I also carry a sign with me that reads: "Fancy a chat? Travelling Author. New book available here."

Sometimes I read passages out loud. Sometimes I watch the world go by, waiting for people to follow their curiosity towards me. Apart from two grumpy men in Vienna, I can't remember ever having trouble or a problem on the streets.

I'm more likely to get into a chat, listening to the stories people don't often have a place to share, or be invited to dinner, a gig, a squat in Naples. I seem to attract these opportunities by listening and I go with them. Being present in public life

Up Sticks!

ADAM E. HOLTON

presents us with such invitations that I really don't think can happen in a purely virtual space.

Bear in mind there are also days when the sun does not shine, when no one wants to talk, when there's no good spot. It is not always comfortable. The practical aspect is not romantic, but the situations that it makes possible are what help me continue to believe that human nature is more collaborative and community minded. There is such wonder to be found through interaction.

They say travel broadens the mind. Do you find this yourself and do your travels influence the characters you create and write about?

Yes. Without a doubt. However, I want to point out that tourism and travel are two very different realities. It is important to hold that in mind. Tourism is a consequence of Colonialism. That is a long conversation, but it is what I think. It fosters ignorance instead of curiosity, hierarchies of demand and expectation instead of humility and gestures of reciprocity. Travel, on the other hand, is a human activity. It requires us to be inquisitive and humble, vulnerable and trusting; to participate.



The book is now in 20 different countries despite the pandemic. Some of those are because of word of mouth, but for the most part I have travelled to them

either by train, car-share or on foot. I do not fly. Lugging the larger case around (full with 130 books at a time) has been an entertaining challenge, especially during the connections on international night trains, or on cobbled streets or up the side of mountains. But I have endeavoured to do so for the love of travel and for the love of meeting strangers.

We all need strangers in our life. Without chance encounters or unfamiliar conversation, it becomes easy to miss the magic in being alive, or to learn about ourselves and other people. I believe silence between strangers is more unsettling than between friends. It's about respect, listening to people and the world. It's about learning, not lording over people. But I digress.

Yes, the characters and stories I dream of and write are influenced by my travels. *The First Juniper Tree* is book one in a four-part series. The second novel, *Witness*, involves more stories inspired by interactions whilst travelling; including a story about the only jellyfish to be found in Ljubljana.

Book three and four will also include more of the influences from the outside world and I am eager to begin working on them.

Finally, in this colour-themed issue of Up! we have to ask – what are Thomas' and Hieronymus' favourite colours and why ...

For Hieronymus Peach, his favourite colour is green, in all its hues. Green appeals to Peach because it is a natural, mysterious colour. It is secretive and illuminating. Imagine the young leaf on a beech tree. From a distance we see only the leaf, solid, tangible, discreet; resembling the drawings of a child. But as we get closer, touching the leaf and gently urging it towards the light of the sun, we see the threaded veins, the chambers, the finesse of existence, the intricacies of the living tree. As light passes over, and cool shadows return, the demurer green of the leaf returns; leaving us with the knowledge of what resides within.

Up Sticks!

Adam E. Holton

ADAM E. HOLTON

For Thomas Oliver, his favourite colour is blue, again in all its shades. Blue appeals to Thomas because of his connection to water and to daydreaming. Both sky and sea are full of water, the air we breathe, the bodies we inhabit. For Thomas, the colour blue is woven into all of existence, a connecting thread between ourselves and life. He's also a keen wild swimmer and has dove into the mysteries of the North Sea on many occasions.

Author - <https://thefirstjunipertree.com>

Hieronymus Peach -

<https://soundcloud.com/hieronymuspeach>

Member of the Society of Authors -

<https://societyofauthors.org>

Recent publications:

[How to Sell a Book During a Pandemic by Adam](#)

[E. Holton - Writing.ie](#)

Upcoming Events:

22nd February - *The life, lot and comedy of a Flying Bookseller (spoken word) at LTB*

Showrooms Coventry

23rd February - *Throw out your hands - Guest Lecture Coventry University.*



*I am not the same, having seen the moon shine
on the other side of the world*

Mary Anne Radmacher

*There's a sunrise and a sunset every single day, and they're
absolutely free. Don't miss so many of them*

Jo Walton

Travel makes one modest. You see what a tiny place you occupy in the world

Gustave Flaubert

*The real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new landscapes,
but in having new eyes*

Marcel Proust

Word Up!

YOUR POEMS ON THE THEME OF COLOUR

Prism

When I was green and knew no better,
I would flush a sailor's evening sky,
too shy to take a word of praise.

When I was blue, I'd raise my voice,
defiant songs, righting wrongs,
the heartstrings lifted high.

Disguised by age, my blush turned grey,
the songs defiant still.
Unchanged inside, unchained inside,
with all the colours freed.

Gerda Pickin

Colours

She is talking in purple
the words burst around me
in blossoms of sparks
and the sound tastes of sherbet
the popping of bubbles
makes waves in the
puddle of sludge
at the heart of me
I try to speak rainbows
but as always
I answer in grey.

Tim E Taylor

Green

"What is your favourite colour?"
She asked the question like a teacher,
as if she were just testing me.
I had no answer. "Mine is pink," she said,
but though, at almost nine, she was so old
and wise, I knew that pink was not for me.
I looked around me, quickly spurning
feeble pleas from grey and brown.
I shook my head at yellow flowers,
shouting too loudly to be picked.
The blue sky asked quite prettily
and I was tempted by its smile.
But then I saw the forest: trees
all draped in folds of shining green
that had a sweetness to the eye
like honey dripping on the tongue.
"Would you like a jelly bean?" she said,
not knowing she had changed my life.
I found a green one, and chose that.

Tim E Taylor

Next month's theme is -
LEARNING

Feel free to interpret the theme as you
see fit and send up to 3 poems (no
more than 20 lines each please) to:
TalkToUp@gmail.com

Dressed Up!

STEVE LOWE

Up!'s outdoors man on Nature's wardrobe



An electric blue flash of the speedy kingfisher, winging its way upstream is a highlight of a watery wander. Dressed to impress?

The brilliantly bright plumage of the kingfisher looks exotic compared to the modest hues of many birds in Britain. In motion, the kingfisher's contrasting colours – orange, cyan and blue – produce a startling flash of colour. But those feathers are actually brown!

Blue is a favourite colour of people around the world – 35% apparently! But the production of intense blue presents challenges to nature and it is therefore unusual. In fact, most vertebrates are unable to produce blue pigment.

The orange within kingfisher plumage is the product of tiny pigments, but its cyan and blue feathers contain none. Instead, these colours are created by an intricate structural arrangement of a transparent material which produces a range of colours by 'incident light' – in other words light shining on the structure. It's known as "structural colouration", first

noted by Isaac Newton (he was on the £1 note before it became a coin – I liked them, they took up less space).

Light is surely then the critical factor? After all, if it's properly dark, you don't "see" colours. The primary colours of light are red, green, and blue. Mixing these in different proportions can make all the colours of the light that we see (that's how your printer functions too). Many animals living in dark places do not need pigment yet many of them, especially marine life like some fish, squid, tiny crustaceans and algae, produce "bioluminescence". This emission of light by organisms is a chemical reaction to confuse predators, attract prey or even lure potential mates. Just like being in a rave perhaps?

Colours in nature are boundless. They serve an essential role in displaying a wide range of signals: "I am fertile!", "I am tasty!", "I am dangerous".



In my opinion, camouflage is the ultimate use of colour, allowing animals to be hidden from view, even in plain sight – just look for a little owl on a wall for instance!

There can be few of us who haven't been startled when a hidden hare or pheasant bursts from cover just as you are about to step on it. It shows how good this deception can be and has resulted in many a profanity (I admit).

When I am shopping for paint, I always notice how many of the shades are light pastels, some don't even look different to the next one, slightly darker

Dressed Up!

STEVE LOWE

or lighter but also complemented by similar tones. Brighter tins are contrasts and there is less choice.

I am not adventurous to be honest, I think magnolia was put together just for me. I think this is also reflected in my personal favourites within the natural world, where I enjoy the wonderfully complex plumages of birds such as snipe or the marvellous bittern, that are full of russet, dark brown and cream hues.

It's also amazing to see the breadth of complexity on the patterning of what we call LBJ's (little brown jobs), such as pipits or the elusive warblers. Tricky to tell them apart sometimes (secretly I think, "what's in a name, it's beautiful"). But it's part of the enjoyment of being in the countryside, marvelling at the variability, and subtle differences in colour found in the same species in different parts of their range, depending upon the surrounding environment.

Breathtaking as well to peruse a moth wing under



a lens, following an overnight moth trapping session. The magnification reveals a myriad rainbow of browns in the Silver Y, or the 50+ shades of grey in the Merveille du Jour.

I have the same pleasures in the garden, where shape is often preferable to me than colour. In nature flowers usually must be inviting, as colour acts to attract certain species upon which the plant depends for pollination. They are also usually short-lived. Many of the "colours" are invisible to our eyes, set up for the compound or simple eyes of insects. Some plants have developed "landing strips", guiding the pollinator to the rewards of nectar, thereby allowing transfer of pollen. Some produce showy flowers, whilst others have subtle, sometimes colourless flowers which are strongly scented.

Nature and its entire colour palette have inspired so many people. William Morris, for instance, not only drew plants but used them in dyes for his wallpapers and textiles, rejecting the recently introduced artificial colours made from coal tar (he described it as 'one of the most useless inventions of modern chemistry'). He chose instead to return to natural dyes derived from plants, such as madder (red) and weld (yellow), using a 15th-century French dye book from his friend Dante Gabriel Rossetti. His biggest challenge was dyeing with indigo, which he proclaimed to be 'the only real blue dye.' Did he try Woad - used as a dye since prehistory and worn on the face by Boudicca and her troops when fighting the Roman invaders?



Dressed Up!

STEVE LOWE

Take a close look at Monet's paintings; his focus on picturing nature and capturing the sometimes-fleeting effects of natural light are obvious, the colours often soft and glowing, conveying an intimate feel.

But, great as these humungous names may be, Mother Nature tops them all.



Photo - Tom Lowe

Thanks for all the "in your face" mandarin ducks, peacocks, golden pheasants, the mandrill, and flamingos. Bravo for the octopus and chameleon, those deceptive and awesome colour changers, showing mimicry, camouflage, and mood.

But, for me, bigger thanks for the thrill of the hidden flash of the yellow underwing moth, the skin of a trout, magpies in flight and most of all, for squabbling starlings that visit my garden like a bunch of iridescent hooligans, scruffy coats but alive with multi-coloured hues, constantly in motion, shifting like a screensaver. I love them all, they make me breathless.



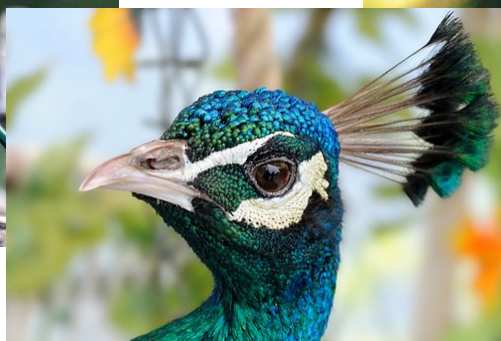
An experienced wildlife professional, Steve currently works freelance with Northumberland Rivers Trust as well as undertaking work with volunteers on local heritage and archaeology projects.

His hope is to leave the world a better place.



Lilac-breasted Roller

If you've got it - flaunt it!



Peacock



Mandarin Duck

Word Up!

YOUR POEMS ON THE THEME OF COLOUR

**I tried to write a poem
a one that rhymes with orange**

I tried to write a poem,
a one that rhymes with orange.
I knew it wouldn't be easy,
like a hike up Bloreng.

I tried to write another verse
knowing nothing rhymes with orange
got distracted by a Google search
and read an article on sporange.

In my concluding stanza
I thought of tangerine
got distracted by another search
and what rhymes with aubergine.

Janette Ostle

Distant traffic light - Maybe
the only hint of color
then pink aurora

Jessica Swafford

Galway

Late June flow, pigeon-grey clouds
jet ski ducks fling themselves at the Corrib.

A zen fisherman perches on a stone slab
head down - a lone heron waiting to pounce.

The horizon is bruise purple against a blue green haze -
light trying to break through.

Later, twenty pink tutus, Hens, not swans
bridal banter, buzz- cackle, cacophony.

Rona Fitzgerald

Next month's theme is - LEARNING

Feel free to interpret the theme as you see fit and send up to 3 poems
(no more than 20 lines each please) to: TalkToUp@gmail.com

Up Town!

FIESTA, WHITLEY BAY

Up! talks to Fiesta, Whitley Bay committee member Sue Miller on bringing colour to the community

Hi Sue, thanks for talking to us about Whitley Bay's Fiesta. Tell us a bit about how the Fiesta came to be set up.

Lockdown and the pandemic have meant we missed opportunities to be together. It felt timely for local people's spirits to have a much-needed lift. We are a group of residents with different talents who enjoy working as a team and had ideas for developing an event in Whitley Bay. Coincidentally the Council were able to access EU and Central Government funding for re-engaging people in using the town centre post-Covid. The Council used this to obtain equipment and provided it for us to initiate *Fiesta*. We had experience of running community activities and so decided to create a regular fun event where local businesses, traders and a range of talented musicians, artists and sports organisations in the town could reconnect with residents. We wanted to have stalls and entertainment appealing to a wide range of people, attracting them back to the town centre. Also to make use of green space around St Paul's Church. It was an exciting time! We formulated a vision



based on values that matter to us and decided on a name to encapsulate our inclusive and community nature: *Fiesta, Whitley Bay* would be local, creative, sustainable and promote health and wellbeing.



What could someone coming along to a Fiesta expect to find?

Lots of conversation, colour, activity and fun! Fiesta is all about rekindling and building relationships in friendly indoor and outdoor environments around the town. You can take part in different activities, listen to music, eat, chat, share information, buy and sell products, many of which people have made themselves. We hope *Fiesta* will not only make us feel better but also help our town's economy to thrive. Local artists and makers can test the market, sell their work and showcase their talents. You can take part in free activities and have fun without spending money. We try to make sure that there is something accessible for everyone, whatever your age or situation.

Up Town!

FIESTA, WHITLEY BAY

Here at 'Up' we love a good community event. Do you think the benefits of a Fiesta are felt long after the event itself?

Our aim is to do something that, in some small part, contributes to the health and wellbeing of everyone in the local area in a creative and sustainable way. Zoom calls and social media have their place, but over the past two years I have certainly missed the hugs, chance meetings and incidental catch ups that we used to have. *Fiesta* is, at its most basic, a space and time for those activities to reoccur spontaneously. It is held in public spaces to allow everyone to take part in a way that's comfortable for them. This is our town, and we can all play a part in developing its character. It's good to spend time away from screens and not just with those we already know but to get outdoors, listen and look, develop understanding of differences and be together.



We are lucky that there are plenty of people living in or connected with Whitley Bay who are contributing to the town's development, engaging and enjoying working together.

I get a lot out of seeing the impact, often 'under the radar', that those activities and events make, not just to the connectivity between ourselves, friends, neighbours, residents but also to the way Whitley Bay is perceived more widely. I think there's a sense of pride and belief in the place which has been building over the last ten years.

But there are always lessons to reflect on in order to maintain a direction of travel for any town. We may be out of the worst of the pandemic, but you only have to listen to the news to know that there are environmental and economic challenges coming that will affect us all. We can't afford to sit back.



What does 2022 hold for the Fiesta?

We are planning to deliver 4 events during the year on Sundays: Spring: March 6th, Summer: June 5th, Autumn: September 4th, and Winter: December 4th are the Fiesta dates for your diaries. There is determination to

maintain the quality of the events and we constantly check back to see if we are staying true to our core values: to be local, creative, sustainable and promote health and wellbeing.

There are some challenges ahead however. Working as volunteers means a reliance on goodwill, as everyone is doing tasks for *Fiesta* alongside family and work commitments. We need to respect those and not over burden ourselves. *Fiesta* is a chance for everyone to get involved in whatever way they can. We are looking for more people to help: you can contact us by email on info@fiestawb.com if you think you might be interested. Our facebook page is Fiesta Whitley Bay and website is <https://fiestawb.com/>

Fiesta is a not-for-profit event. Everything we take in stall fees or donations is ploughed back into making it happen, though of course

Up Town!

FIESTA, WHITLEY BAY



stallholders keep their takings. We need funds and/or partners to assist with storing and transporting the gazebos and equipment to support the

event. The gazebos are high quality, colourful and give stallholders much needed protection from the elements. If anyone came to the December *Fiesta* you will know how important that can be! Storage space and the transporting of gazebos to the town centre is critical. We are currently seeking sponsorship to cover these costs four times a year. The return on that investment for the town as a whole is enormous. If anyone has ideas or can help we'd love to hear from you.

What advice would you give to anyone thinking about setting up something similar in their own town?

Creating a strong team is essential. Members need to have a range of knowledge, skills and experiences and be a group with shared values, clear leadership and direction. We meet regularly, minute what we've agreed and follow up on actions. We move at a pace that maintains momentum but does not create too much pressure on anyone. We work hard, but with a shared purpose. We enjoy what we do: having fun is essential for building good morale.

Good communication is also a key factor. The team members need to discuss issues openly

and know that their views will be respected. Talking, listening and planning what is realistic is critical to success. There also needs to be good communication with potential partner organisations and members of the public. We try to look for opportunities to connect with individuals and organisations that add value to *Fiesta*.

Develop links with your local authority. The support and advice of North Tyneside Council staff has been crucial. In addition to providing access to equipment they have informed us about procedures, licences and the permits that are required as well as providing practical input to the events.



Be open to ideas. We have learnt from each other, the Council staff, our partner organisations, listening to people attending our events and from experience of running *Fiesta* events.

All successful projects take energy and resources to turn ideas into reality. You have to stay focused, work step by step and enable busy people to keep involved. Timing is important - great ideas sometimes have to wait for the right moment. Everything doesn't need to happen at once.

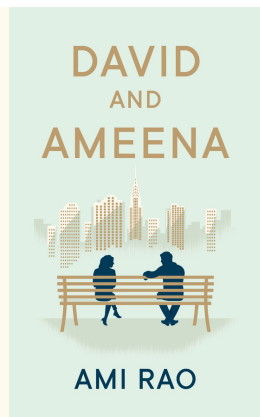
Read Up!

JENNA WARREN

Colourful reads from our resident book reviewer



I thought this month's theme of 'Colour' would be a good opportunity to review some books about people who use colour in their work: artists. I've interpreted my chosen theme broadly, incorporating books about famous real-life artists, and fictional artists too.



First up, I've chosen *David and Ameena* by Ami Rao. This novel is set mainly in contemporary New York and follows two main characters: David is an American-Jewish jazz musician, and Ameena is a British-Pakistani artist who has left her home city of Manchester to pursue her career. While these two young people are from different backgrounds, they've both been shaped by the pressures and expectations from their families. The novel follows their blossoming romance as they navigate the city and try to forge a path in their chosen artistic fields.

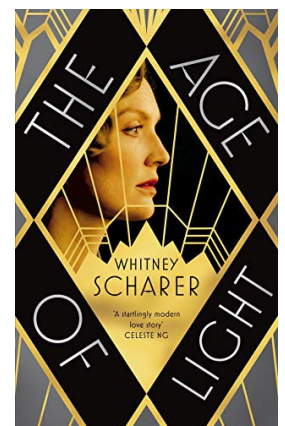
Ameena is a very talented artist, but a negative reaction from her family to a portrait she painted as a child has left her unable to paint from real life subjects. Instead, she creates colourful works of abstract art. Through one of David's contacts in New York, she manages to secure an exhibition of her work at a prestigious commercial gallery.

The novel beautifully explores the potentially fragile ego of an artist. The same passion and sensitivity that allows Ameena to create vivid works of art can also be crushed by harsh critics. In one painful (in a good way!) scene, Ameena talks back to a powerful art collector at her exhibition. This temporarily derails her career, and as a reader I really rooted for her.

David and Ameena is a great novel about art, music, love and identity, and how these things don't always sit easily alongside each other.

My second recommendation is *The Age of Light* by Whitney Scharer. This novel follows two real-life artists: American photographer Lee Miller and surrealist artist Man Ray.

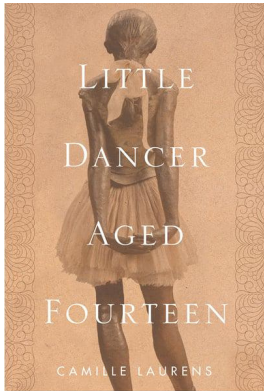
After working as a model for Vogue, Lee arrives in Paris in 1929 to pursue her dream of becoming a photographer. She finds a job as assistant to Man Ray. She becomes his lover and muse, and the subject of several of his own photographs. But Lee does not wish to be a muse. She wants her own artistic career, and Man Ray becomes jealous when she starts to express herself and find success as an artist in her own right.



Read Up!

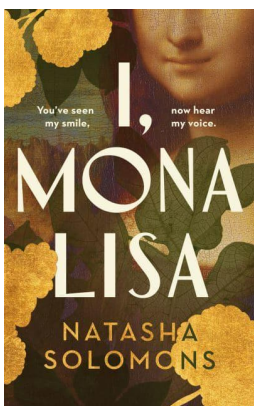
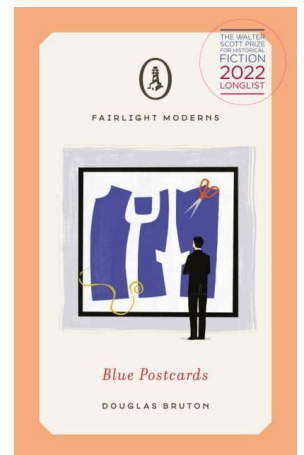
JENNA WARREN

The novel paints a vivid picture of life in Paris in the late 20s and early 30s, particularly in artistic circles. Man and Lee visit cabarets and exhibitions of surrealist art work. I warmly recommended this novel to anyone with an interest in art history, or a love of literature set in Paris.



This seems like an appropriate place to recommend another book about the relationship between artist and subject, a work of non-fiction this time. **Little Dancer Aged Fourteen** by Camille Laurens is a fascinating study of Edgar Degas' famous sculpture. In this powerful book, Laurens aims to uncover the life story of the real girl behind the sculpture. Marie van Goethem danced as a 'petit rat' (a young student ballet dancer) at the Paris Opera in the 1880s. Little is known about Marie's life, but the author pieces together her possible history using a variety of contemporary sources. The book challenges romantic notions of Belle Epoque Paris and shows how hard life could be for a dancer at that time. It also gives an insight into the working life of Degas, and how his work was perceived in the nineteenth century.

A novella with colour (in this case the colour blue) at its heart is **Blue Postcards** by Douglas Bruton. This clever and intriguing book tells the story of the real French artist Yves Klein, who is best known for his blue monochrome paintings. The novella combines his story with that of two fictional characters: another man who is fixated on the colour blue, and a tailor from whom Klein orders a blue suit. The three stories are created from a series of fragments, each one short enough to fit on the back of a postcard. Many of these feature observations of the colour blue. The book feels a little like a literary puzzle, and I love the way blue is used to tie the three narratives together.



I would like to give an honourable mention to the book I'm currently reading: **I, Mona Lisa** by Natasha Solomons. This novel has a very interesting device: it tells the story of the Mona Lisa from the painting's point of view. Lisa del Giocondo, the real model for the painting, features in the story, but Mona Lisa herself is a painting. She can observe her surroundings, but people can't always hear her voice. I'm intrigued by this device and I'm enjoying the insight into Renaissance Italy. I'm looking forward to seeing where the author takes me next.

Read Up!

JENNA WARREN

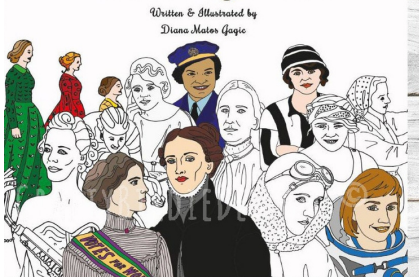
The Great Art Herstory Colouring Book



Finally, I don't think I can finish this column without mentioning a fabulous colouring book by illustrator Diana Matos Gagic. *The Great Art Herstory Colouring Book* features works by women artists to colour in, complete with potted biographies of each artist. The book would make a great gift for both teenage and adult art lovers. Also in the series is *The Great Northern Women Colouring Book*, which features portraits of notable northern women. This is one of the bestselling books in my bookshop.

Happy reading (and colouring).

The Great Northern Women Colouring Book



Jenna Warren is a bookseller and writer from Teesside. She studied Theatre and later Creative Writing at university. She runs Book Corner, an independent bookshop in Saltburn-by-the-Sea, which she opened in 2014. Her debut novel will be published by Fairlight Books in autumn 2022.



*Clouds come floating into my life,
no longer to carry rain
or usher storm, but to add colour
to my sunset sky*

Rabindranath Tagore

*Be uniquely you. Stand out. Shine. Be colourful.
The world needs your prismatic soul!*

Amy Leigh Mercree

Life is about using the whole box of crayons

RuPaul

Coming Up!

Once again, thanks for supporting our little magazine - we hope we managed to inject some colour into your day.

When Up! started way back in 2020, our sole 'raison d'être' was to cheer people up in the depths of the pandemic. What we've learned, as we begin to recover from two years of Covid-related turmoil, is that we all need each other. People are stronger together, and so Up! will continue to do what we've always done - accentuate the positive and focus on all the things we can do, rather than what we can't.

Next month our theme will be Learning, and we've got all sorts of goodies planned for you.

Happy trails!



Much love
Bridget & Harry xx

PS - If you've enjoyed reading this issue we'd love it if you would consider inviting your friends to join the group - it really helps us to see how many people we're reaching.

Thank you!



Don't forget, if you have any suggestions for future articles or features, we'd love to hear from you.
Just email us at TalkToUp@gmail.com