

Up!

ISSUE 9 JUNE 2021

Art Edition

Accentuating the Positive

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



Photo by FLOW



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Lovaine Terrace, Alnmouth, by Joanne Wishart

Up Front!

Welcome to the new edition of Up! Whisper it soft, but we think Summer might have finally arrived, sunshine in one hand and the dreaded high pollen count in the other! But never mind, this month we're awash with bright colours and creativity to make up for every sneeze.

With a focus on Art, you'll find features on a myriad of lovely folk whose sole mission is to make our worlds that little bit nicer. In addition we've got all of your usual favourites, plus we meet renowned poet, Amir Darwish, in our Up Sticks! feature. We were blown away by his story - we think you will be too.

Happy reading!

Bridget & Harry x

This month's front cover features one of the fabulous pieces of artwork produced by Flow - check them out on page 22.



Brush Up!

JOANNE WISHART

Up! talks to an artist for whom colour is everything

Hi Joanne, thanks for taking time out to talk to us. Well, here we are with Summer pretty much underway, what scenes have you got your eyes (and your brush!) on right now?

Right now I'm working on a few new Northumberland scenes. Warkworth is on my 'to do' list as I've not painted that area before. The castle looks pretty splendid with all of the daffodils surrounding it. I'm also going to revisit Berwick-upon-Tweed, Bamburgh, Budle Bay and Beadnell. I like to visit these places and wander around, looking for the best scene to paint and which landmarks I'm going to include.

I take lots of my own photographs and always try to sketch out the scene on site to capture the essence of the view. I've been going out into Northumberland one day a week since the lockdowns were lifted to get some new inspiration.



It's important to me to paint from my own experiences of a place and gather my own referencing material for a painting, giving it some provenance and making it original to me.

How did your relationship with art and painting begin, have you always had an artistic bent?

I've always loved painting and being creative. I guess I'm a bit of a dreamer! At school I would spend most of the lesson on my illustrations and drawings rather than the written work. I sold my first painting at aged 13 for £30 to my friend's mum, which was when I realised that there may be a career path for me in the creative world.

My mother is very creative, and my dad loves building things and works with his hands, so I guess I've inherited some skills.

One of the things we love about your pieces are the vivid colours you use. How did you arrive at your trademark style? Was it a journey or did you always 'see' the world in such bright and deep hues?

My style is very much an evolution. I would say I'm happy with it now but it is always changing and improving, I hope! Ultramarine blue is my signature undercoat for the majority of my paintings. I've always painted with bright, bold colours; the main criticism of my art teacher at



Bamburgh Castle Dunes and Poppies
joanne wishart

Brush Up!

JOANNE WISHART

school was that I wasn't very good at mixing colour tones.

I like to paint work that makes me happy while I paint it and evokes a feeling of joy for the viewer being transported to a happy memory or place. Colour is a big part of this. I like to paint summery blue skies where the weather is nice.

I rarely use black paint. I have one small tube that I've had for about 20 years.



You've painted so many north east scenes, share a few of your favourite locations with us ...

This is hard as there are so many to choose from. Craster is a lovely scene as it has a lot of great content including the harbour, boats, cottages and a castle. What's not to love?

Alnmouth holds a special place in my heart as my grandparents lived there when I was a child, and I spent many holidays pottering along the beach.



from my gallery door. I'm looking forward to spending more time out and about on the beach with my sketchbook.

One location you'd love to paint (but haven't yet) is ...

I enjoy holidaying around the UK coastline and like to paint places I've visited on my travels. One place I'm hoping to visit this year is Portmeirion in Wales, maybe I'll paint it later in the year. I just need the sun to shine to get inspired on my trip.

You're throwing a dinner party and are allowed to invite 3 artists, living or dead. Who's coming and why?

Firstly Frida Kahlo because of her colourfulness and importance as a feminine icon in the art world. She has an amazing life story, and flourished against the odds.

Secondly Derren Brown because I think he's such a talented and interesting artist of many forms. I love his books on psychology and how the mind works. Many people don't know he's also a very accomplished portrait painter.

<https://derrenbrown.co.uk/art-store/>

Thirdly the late children's book author and illustrator Eric Carle. I loved his books as a child, and he was my first insight into creating artwork out of paper cut collages.

Check out more of Joanne's gorgeous artwork here:

<https://www.joannewishart.co.uk>

Colour Up!

STEVE LOWE

Up!'s outdoor man opens Nature's colouring book

'What's your favourite colour?'

A conversation starter perhaps? Or another way to stereotype someone? Actually colour is a really important component of our daily lives. It's also a defining part of the lives of many plants and animals, telling an environmental story.

Most birds can see colours and make use of bright colours, usually for the purposes of reproducing. Frequently it is the male who is the wearer of the colours whilst the females can often be a slightly unimaginative brown. This is undoubtedly to make them noticed.

A perfect example is the peacock, whose plumage has an irresistible palette. Normally found in dark, shady forests, this is quite literally an eye-catcher. In reality it balances the risk of being seen and consumed by predators, against the survival of the fittest.



Some of the world's rarest and brightest birds are the birds of Paradise, the males of which grow lush feathers in a huge variety of colours to make them blatantly obvious in the forest gloom. Posing in a patch of sunlight, often cleared to form a stage, they dance and sometimes sing to get the attention of a female. Sadly, this has also led to their demise, as the exquisite feathers became desirable as headgear for couturiers in the late 1800's. It was this trade that eventually led to the formation of the RSPB.

Many plants use colour to great advantage. Brightly coloured flowers attract insects that are essential for pollination in many species, with the insect lured to a flower and usually gaining a treat of nectar. Yet many insect eyes see things we do not, as they are adapted to a different spectrum. Invisible to us are the 'landing lights' on a runway to nectar, which ensures the plant gets visited and therefore shares its pollen with the next plant via its insect carrier.

Bright red or yellow berries attract birds such as blackbirds or waxwings. This provides a meal for the bird and assurance that the enclosed seed will later be deposited in another area. Watch this yourselves - as the birds strip the fruits, the brightest colours are taken in

Colour Up!

STEVE LOWE

preference (yellow is usually last).



The vibrant hues found on the wings and feathers of some birds and insects can be explained by two different types of

colours - structural colour and pigment. Structural colour is produced by light interacting with microscopic structures on surfaces and it is this sort of colour we see on some bird feathers (kingfisher for example) or on the metallic surface of beetles, for instance.

Meanwhile pigments, found in hair and skin colour, are a group of different compounds that absorb light. Different pigments absorb some wavelengths of light and reflect others, which affects what we see. Sometimes colour is created by the combination of pigment and structural colour.

Vibrant colours might stand out in the wild, but they can also be a warning to potential predators. For instance, insects also use colour, but in this case the bright colours are often a warning: "Don't eat me!"

One example is the cinnabar moth, found on our sand dunes. Its caterpillars are yellow and black striped and the moth itself is black and red. All are warning colours and in this case with good cause, as the foodplant



of these wrigglers is ragwort, which contains a highly toxic and bitter poison to prevent itself from being eaten but which the insects absorb and concentrate in their tissues from constant munching.

Many animals use colour as a form of deception, copying the warning colours as a form of hiding in plain sight.

Camouflage is also a common characteristic of animals whose lifestyles require that they are not easily seen. Examples include the spotted coats of leopards or tigers, helping them hide from the eyes of prey. Vulnerable animals do the same in order to remain hidden from predators. This is usually dictated by the environment in which the animal is found, and the same species can look different in different backdrops.

Of course, the best known are the chameleons, which are famously able to change their skin pigmentation, but did you know that the octopus and squid can do the same thing? Almost instantaneously AND they can modify their skin texture!

Most mammals are mainly restricted to whites, browns, greys, and black, suggesting that colour blindness is a common trait within the group, although higher primates, including humans and baboons, can usually see colours. The brightly coloured rump of a male baboon is one of the obvious displays of colour amongst mammals (excepting the wide range amongst some teenagers).

Flash colour is a special defence in some animals. The peacock butterfly for instance, has brown underwings yet when spread, a pair of bright eyes are revealed, hoping to deter the predator.

Colour Up!

STEVE LOWE

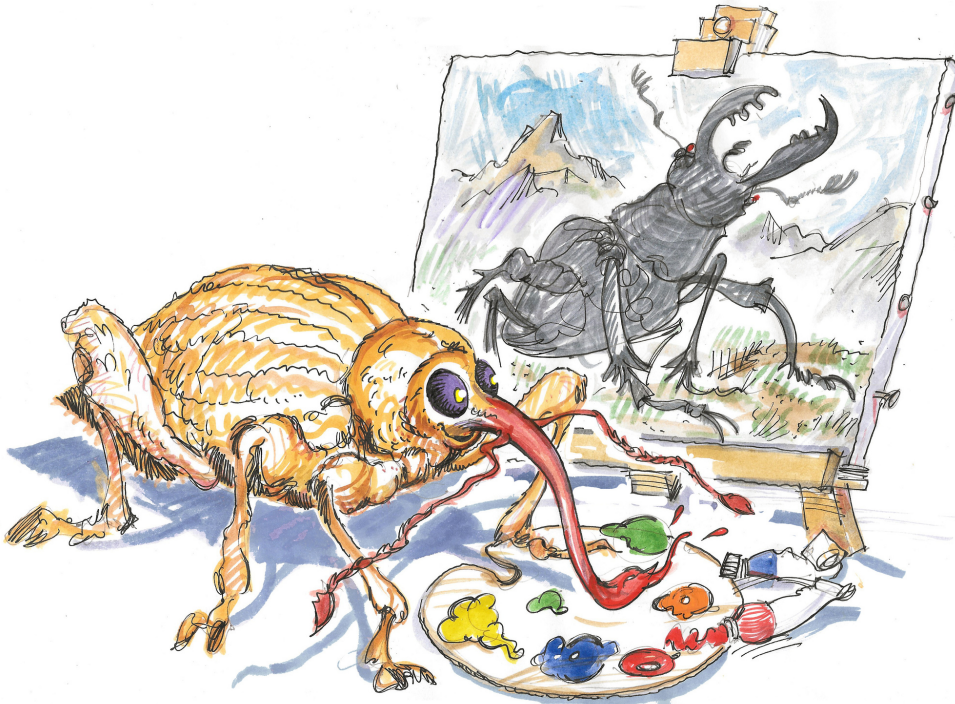
So, in the plant and animal world, colour is essential.

If we look through the lens of evolution, humans come from forests and grasslands where bright and vibrant colours can be seen. Hence, we have a tendency to look for colours and they can effect our mood and thinking. Generally, bright colours release hormones like dopamine and serotonin, which are happy hormones. Seeing beautiful and colourful wildlife can and does have the same effect.

Go try it and come home with a smile on your face!



Cartoon Corner



This month's 'toon, from resident artist John Pickin, features the Weevil ...

Many inhabitants of the insect world have highly developed artistic bents. Here a happy little weevil puts the finishing touches to her new work, 'The Monarch of the Woodpile'. We can see that all those evenings spent watching reruns of Bob Ross's 'Joy of Painting' have not gone to waste.

John says: "I am and always have been a compulsive doodler. During April '20 I set myself the challenge of drawing an ape-a-day. And in January this year - renamed Buguary - the task was an insect cartoon each day. I just love knocking out those 'toons .."

You can contact John at pickinjohn@gmail.com

Word Up!

YOUR POEMS ON THE THEME OF ART

Snow Angel

loosely based on the painting "Wounded Angel"
by Hugo Simberg

We were cutting wood in the forest
and there she was,
on her back in the snow.

That thin night-gown, those cold bare feet,
not fit clothes for Finnish winter!

We used two birch poles to carry her home.
Had to bandage her eyes, couldn't stand
their brightness.

Told my brother Arno
it was to hold her memory in so she
wouldn't forget where she'd come from.

When we entered our village
everyone gathered round,
offering blankets, food, hot drinks -

the girl was shivering,
half dead with cold.

Hurry, Arno, quickly! I hissed,
We must get her home to Mother.
She'll know what to do
with angels who fall.

Gill McEvoy

Next month's theme is 'History'

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

Brush stroke

After David Milne's Bishop's Pond

Here, everything you see is doubled: two worlds
stand looking at one another, unable to see

the other. Out of reach and on a brink.
The eye of water fills with tree tears,

blinks, but won't hide what's there to see.
Imagine cupping water in your palms

and as you bend your neck to sip you catch
the moon of your face. 'Drink', it says,

so you drink in sky, passing clouds,
light gathered in shadows of the wood;

feel them slide down your throat as you swallow,
putting down roots, throwing high their branches

with leaves like notes in a score. Whatever else
it might do, water can't not tell truth.

Rebecca Gethin

Horses, Falling

The Bayeux Tapestry

Each steed is different, needle-drawn,
couched in muted shades, their noble heads
shackled with bridles, chain-stitched threads.
On cotton track, they canter like horses at races
until they come to Saxon 'Beecher's Brook',
when, pulled up short, they tumble to the ground,
heads down, rears up: colliding, knotting, twisting,
while needlewomen sew each snort and whinny,
catching the details of their falling in unlikely
curves. The dying horses claim their place
in history, through this tapestry, as though
their hoof beats rang through yards of cloth.

Angela Topping

Hang Up!

OLD SCHOOL GALLERY, ALNMOUTH

A comprehensive look at a coastal masterpiece

Thanks for talking to us. Up! loves the Old School Gallery. What was it about the old school that made you think, 'Yes, that's the one for us!'?

We had relocated to Northumberland after living in Brighton for many years and the gallery became available, which was incredibly lucky for us as we'd left jobs behind. Penny's mum is the artist Sue Fenlon and she had exhibited at the gallery, along with a host of other local artists. We jumped at the chance to take it on and it really was a case of 'being in the right place at the right time'. Our aim was to create a vibrant and interesting destination for people who enjoy art and coffee, that sits alongside the many wonderful independent shops and venues in the North East.

You're more than just an art gallery though. How important is it to you to be a part of the local community?

To be honest we rely on the busy tourist trade that increasingly supports the Northumberland economy and our online activity to generate interest in buying artwork. That's not to say we don't appreciate our regulars who pop in for coffee, and we have lots of customers from the region, but buying art is not an



everyday activity for most.

It will be great when we can run our programme of workshops again for local people to enjoy. We also have an outdoor performance from the Eliot Smith Dance company happening in the gallery yard in July. We are hopefully known for our willingness to either host or collaborate with other creatives - it's something that's very important to us.

There's so much art out there and it must be difficult to choose what gets wall space. How do you choose?

There is a wealth of talent out there but we have found that it's best to follow our own tastes and instincts about what will work best for the gallery, and ultimately a bit of joy that will wind up on walls in people's homes. This means that we spend time politely stalking artists on Instagram and keeping a watch on other galleries to find interesting work!

We try to have a good mix of print work and original paintings, along with pieces Dale creates, such as the Northumberland book jacket series.



Hang Up!

OLD SCHOOL GALLERY, ALNMOUTH

We're also well aware of your other, linked projects – Books By The Sea for example is a lovely idea. Tell us a bit about it ...

We have loved working on the *Books By The Sea* project, a collection of seven little library huts at various locations on the Northumberland coast. The principle is 'take a book, leave a book' and to encourage everyone to enjoy visiting the little huts whilst out walking on the coastal path.

It's a great example of what can happen without too much money or organisation, with lots of lovely people taking on the responsibility of being a custodian of a little library hut in their village. The zine 'Forecast' is the first edition of poems, stories and artwork to compliment and promote the libraries. It's been well received, so we hope to follow on with a series of zines.



So what's next on your radar?

Our beach huts in Alnmouth are open and available for short stays all year round. They are situated right on the beach and beautifully designed by the brilliant Elliots Architects.

Last year we partnered up with the Baltic Centre For Contemporary Art, to run a residency opportunity for an artist to come and stay with us at the huts and that was just brilliant. So we will be looking to do more residencies in the future with musicians, writers, dancers – who knows!



To find out more about what's going on at The Old School Gallery, click here:

www.theoldschoolgallery.co.uk

To find out more about the great Books By The Sea project, click here:

<https://emblem.org/books-by-the-sea>

Word Up!

YOUR POEMS ON THE THEME OF ART



Ready

Two ballet dancers in the dressing room, Edgar Degas

I love the fact that they are round and ripened,
not the sylph of later epochs, that despite luminous whites
and soft blues of Degas's palette, they remain grounded.

I imagine their chat:

My back hurts when I stretch,
this new choreographer
thinks we're sprites.

Her friend is tying the cerulean blue bow
on her cloud soft tutu -
she seems to be finding it tight:

We'll not be sprites for long if I keep eating late suppers.

Yet, something in their pose suggests possibilities -
the alchemy of music and movement.

Rona Fitzgerald

With Lloyd Wright Up The Cut

Frank came to tea on Friday, told me
he'd had enough of feardycats
and philistines, fake Georgian plastic
widows and half-timbered sheds.
He said he'd met a shepherd in the Navi,
and a navy in the Shepherds Arms,
then the volunteer committee in the Cock
and Bull. Not one of them could see.

Look, he said, taking half
an avocado and a slice of Emmental.
He linked the two with rye bread
and a slim, red arch of water melon.
See: bridge, wood, river and canal
all spanned by curving air. It's simple,
but all the planners said was "Where
do all the tourists park their cars?"

Linda Goulden

Painting

I've put the entire world in it -
chickens, skyscrapers, torn envelopes.
I'm especially proud of my desert canyons
and the way I've placed the twilight just so.

All my life I've been painting the same picture.
I've put my back and soul into it,
the brain-coloured skies, the fields of broom,
where I really splashed out on the yellow.

In my painting you can see
fireflies, wolves hunting, columns of smoke.
Note the trees kowtowing to a violent wind.
The one old woman, with a cat on her lap,
quietly weeping in a kitchen.

Bruce McRae

Up Sticks!

AMIR DARWISH, POET

Our occasional Up Sticks! feature has traditionally focused on people who have chosen a different lifestyle. This month we take a look at a remarkable man who had no choice ...

Thanks for agreeing to talk to us about your experiences, Amir. Firstly, tell us a bit about your country of birth ...

This might sound biased, but Syria is a beautiful country. It has a seaside to the west where the Mediterranean Sea sends waves to it. I grew up in Aleppo city, the economic capital of the country, in my family's house near the famous Aleppo University. I come from a big family, so not much time was given to me by my older family members regarding care, affection, and overall love. Instead, I found love outside the home with friends.

Unlike me, my group of friends were all non-Kurds and came from low to middle-class families. I enjoyed hanging around with them, going to the park, running away from school, and playing games. They used to make fun of me for bringing poetry books to classes instead of my syllabus books. They were surprised I brought books at all. The teacher once caught me with a poetry book by Rumi. I'd covered it with the Syrian national flag to make the teacher think it was a syllabus book, but a friend grassed me up. The teacher picked the book and told the whole class about it. They all laughed at me at the time.

Everyday life was difficult for a teenager as I could not speak to girls. Speaking to the opposite sex was forbidden. There were cultural and religious boundaries. Instead, I explored Aleppo, visiting cinemas, strolling in parks (something I still like doing today) and eating street food.



If it's not too difficult, can you tell our readers about the events that led to your leaving, your journey and how you ended up in the UK?

I was sixteen years old and full of pride. Ever since my childhood, I had questions about my identity, who I am, where I came from, what it means to be without a country as Kurd, and what it means to have a country called Kurdistan that gathers all the Kurds under its banner.

These questions came stronger in my mind the more I read and fed my brain with ideas. Luckily, one of my older brothers was a poet and writer and had a massive library which I read from and started questioning things, even though I was doing it secretly. I did not want my brother to know that I read his books as they were so dear to him. From Russian and English literature to South American poetry, I became a bookworm.

One day I decided to write. The first thing I thought about writing was why there was no country called Kurdistan. I put it in the form of a poem and edited it a few times. I was dying for someone to read it and get a reaction. Eventually, I decided to read it to one of my brother's friends, Ali. The latter turned out to be an informant, and a few days after reading it to him, the secret police started to visit us at home and ask me questions about the poem and whether I had any further inspirations to write some more. In fairness to them, they were good critics. They asked if I get inspired by nature, use

Up Sticks!

AMIR DARWISH



the five senses when I write, which poets I like the most and so on. These guys came with machine guns, and every time there were about ten of them. The entire house would go anxious and worried about what they might do. After a few visits, they decided to take me in. I was put in prison and tortured badly. They used different methods from leaking water sounds to hitting me on the soles of my feet with a belt. I remember once it was winter, and they asked me to strip naked then go outside for thirty minutes. When I came back in, they threw a bucket of very hot water on me. I did not feel my body then. It was there, and I was present, but not present at the same time.

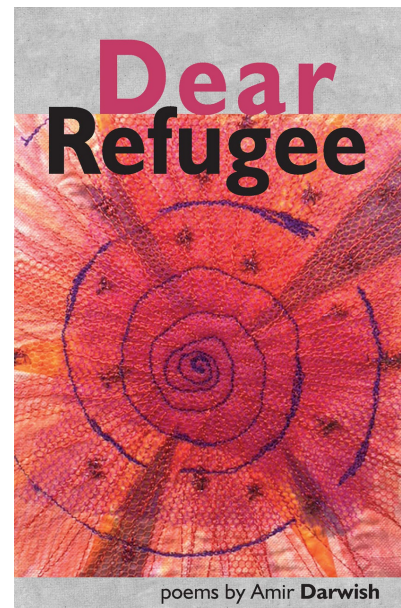
The news reached the family that I was being tortured. My mother sold her gold, bribed a high-ranking officer and got me out of prison. The officer told her that I should leave the country in no longer than three days. Otherwise, I will be under arrest again. My mother gave me the money to travel, and in three days, she and I arranged everything, and I was out of Syria. That was my first experience of exile. I did not know what awaited me, nor where I was headed. After a few years from one country to another, I ended up in the UK aged twenty-three.

Up! first met you when you were at Teesside University, when you read your wonderful poetry on stage at local events. Have you always written poetry?

Ever since that first poem at age sixteen I never stopped writing. That said, I only write in English and not Arabic. I find it more liberating to write in English. Some poets like Seamus Heaney wrote in the language of the oppressor to make their statements. For me it is the opposite. I write in English as it is the language of freedom for me. The language of free expression, the language of where everything could be said and nothing hidden. I will continue writing poetry until the day I die, I think. I have two collections so far published by SmokeStack, and my third is on the way in the next few years.

Nothing gives me pleasure as much as writing a poem. I usually write when my senses get exposed to new places and cultures. I put down the main lines at the time, then later complete it and go through the editing process. Often when I finish, I print it out and read it aloud to myself.

Ever since writing my first poem, I had a message more significant than myself. When I say more significant than myself, I mean a message that



connects to humanity at large and not only to myself. For instance, the first poem was about Kurdistan. Then my poetry moved on to speak of oppression, racism and other conditions humans face in life.

Up Sticks!

AMIR DARWISH

What is it about poetry do you think that drew you in? Was there a strong poetry scene in Syria?

Poetry can say so much in few words or expand to the horizon where a sentence is enough. That was what attracted me to poetry and its way of telling things. A poet could tell a love story in a few lines, where it takes a long time to develop in reality. Similarly, he/she could prolong a lovemaking scene where in reality, it is short. Poets also are social, cultural and political physicians who point to societies' ills and bring attention to them. In that way, they become civil servants, providing a public service for their societies when they most needed it.

There was a significant poetry scene in Syria, but unfortunately, all the poets who in my opinion hit the nail right on the head were chased up by the government and ended up in exile. One example is Nizar Qabbani who could not bear the government's ills, and when he criticised them, he was exiled. After that, he became the Arab world's love poet, and the government (due to his fame) was forced to allow his corpse home and named a street after him in Damascus.

The poetry scene in Syria today is different to the one I left. Poets are trying to make sense of the atrocities and war at the moment. Some are paralysed and unable to utter a word from the shock. Others claim the message of humanity to remind the world that those who are dying are not numbers but human beings. I am with the latter camp.



Here in the UK you've been widely published and gone from strength to strength and are now in London. That must be a bit different from Syria (and Middlesbrough!)...

I believe in human willpower and more so in causation. I am not a great believer in the evil eye, lucky charms, God's decisions and all those sorts of fairy tales.

My move from Syria to the outside world was a turning point in my life. Syria was, and still is, a closed country due to the Assad regime. When I left, aged only seventeen to eighteen, I had no idea what awaited me. I saw the world with all its beauties, its diversity, its cultures, but most of all - and this is something I adore - I discovered the freedom of speech and practised it. The joy I get from doing that in the UK and especially here in London is unmeasurable.

That said, I never forget Middlesbrough, the first UK town I arrived in and lived in for thirteen years. There I became part of the poetry scene, enhanced my English and started publishing nationally. There I also had my first degree, which was in history. Middlesbrough has a big piece of my heart as my friends are there, my first UK home is there. It was there where Andy Croft, who runs Smokestack, saw me and offered me a chance to publish a collection. I was over the moon then.

Up Sticks!

AMIR DARWISH

Finally, tell us something about Syria that would surprise us...

Syria is a connecting point between Asia and Europe, with Europe bordering it from the north and Asian countries bordering it from all other sides. Syria was also on the silk road, and my birth place of Aleppo was a major city on this important trade route. Lastly, al Assad family ruled Syria for fifty years!



To learn more about Amir, and read some of his brilliant poetry, check out the following link:

<https://smokestack-books.co.uk/book.php?book=163>



We have a legal and moral obligation to protect people fleeing bombs, bullets and tyrants, and throughout history those people have enriched our society

Juliet Stevenson

Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free

Emma Lazarus

The world will not be destroyed by those who do evil, but by those who watch them without doing anything

Albert Einstein

No-one puts their children in a boat unless the water is safer than the land

Warsan Shire

Word Up!

YOUR POEMS ON THE THEME OF ART

The exquisite gallery attendants

The exquisite gallery attendants
did not start out so beautiful
and are not as beautiful now
as they, one day, will become.

The exquisite gallery attendants
do not notice how beautiful they are growing,
as they take in the beauty of art with their eyes,
as it seeps in through the pores of their skin,

as they sit in its presence, day after day
as people pass by, in rapture and awe
and start to scrutinise them just as closely –
the exquisite gallery attendants.

There are connoisseurs who dream of collecting
the exquisite gallery attendants:
keeping them in controlled conditions
away from too much light, heat or pollution

but the exquisite gallery attendants
go home to plain partners, eat takeaways,
drink cheap wine, watch soaps, live lives,
never once letting slip their Gioconda smile.

Mike Farren



After Lowry: 'Laying a Foundation Stone' (1936)

Now then, it's not funny you know,
a serious matter is laying a foundation stone;

a put-on-the-best-hat occasion, a line up the children
and stop-yer-fidgeting occasion. That means you, George.

Can't help those flags, the Fete Committee
should've washed them; but we've thon great Union one.

Of course we're patriotic. Yes, in or out of work,
(just keep quiet then Frank, stick to your pipe)

and shoo those flaming dogs before they do something
as they shouldn't. Shush, councillor's arrived.

Such well-chosen words. Education is vital,
prepare them kids for a great future,

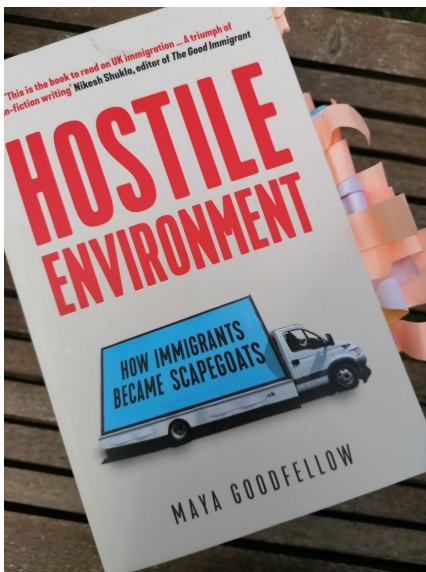
peace and prosperity in their time.
Now then, it's not funny you know.

Ruth Aylett

Read Up!

SOPHIE LIVELY

Up!'s global affairs correspondent shares her recommendations for accessible reads on some of the issues facing us all

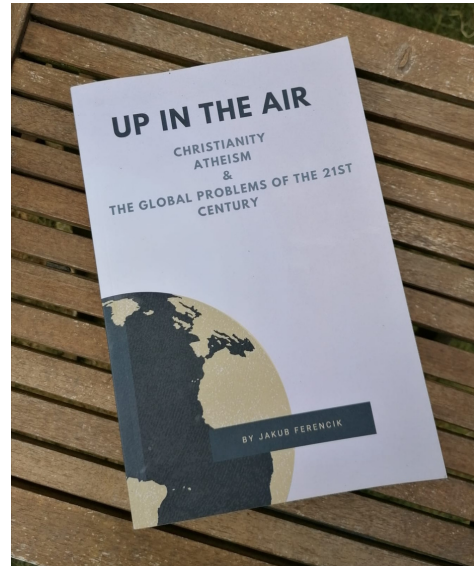


Hostile Environment

by Maya Goodfellow

In *Hostile Environment*, Goodfellow dispels toxic myth so often brandished in the media surrounding immigration. Placing UK immigration in its historical context whilst shedding light on current policy, she is detailed and emotive in her writing. Balancing fact with an array of personal accounts this book is engaging whilst incredibly informative. It offers a great deal to those unfamiliar with current immigration policy and its effects, but also adds to discussion for those already informed.

'Britain has never been an independent country since it came into being in 1707,' Professor Gurminder points out. 'It has always been stitched together with other entities - the Empire, followed by the Commonwealth and then the EU.'



Up In the Air, Christianity Atheism & The Global Problems of the 21st Century

by Jakub Ferencik

This self-published book discusses current global issues such as climate change, human rights violations, animal rights and nuclear war but with a different dimension. Throughout the book Ferencik probes the relationships between global issues, atheism and Christianity and gently argues that, alongside compromise, only through truly understanding each other will we effectively be able to challenge the most pressing issues of our time.

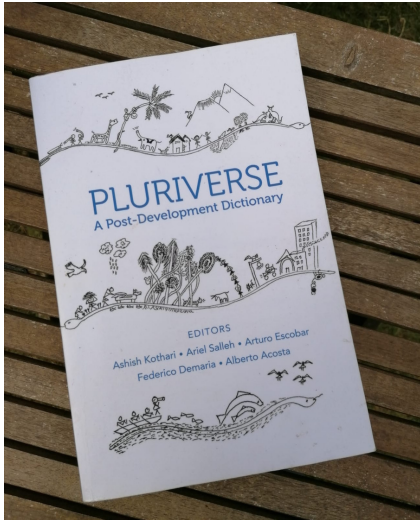
Without pitting one against the other, the focus is on mutual understanding and engaging in discussion. Philosophical insight and the addition of personal accounts really add both depth and warmth to this book. The author provides his own thoughts whilst remaining open and pragmatic. Wide ranging in the issues covered, this book gives lots to think about, like the role of social media and its relation to events with global impact such as the tragic killing of George Floyd in 2020.

'In the end, life is wondrous, and a mystery, and living in perpetual awe of life is enough for a cause of celebration and astonishment.'

Accessible and balanced, *Up in the Air* concludes with sentiments of unity and kindness.

Read Up!

SOPHIE LIVELY



Pluriverse, A Post-Development Dictionary
by Kothari, A., Salleh, A., Escobar, A., Demaria, F., and Acosta, A.

Featured article - Wages for Housework by Silvia Federici

The Pluriverse contains more than 100 short essays on transformative, progressive, and radical initiatives and alternatives for our increasingly interconnected world. The aim is to move towards an ecological, sustainable and socially just world, resulting in a 'world in which many worlds fit.'

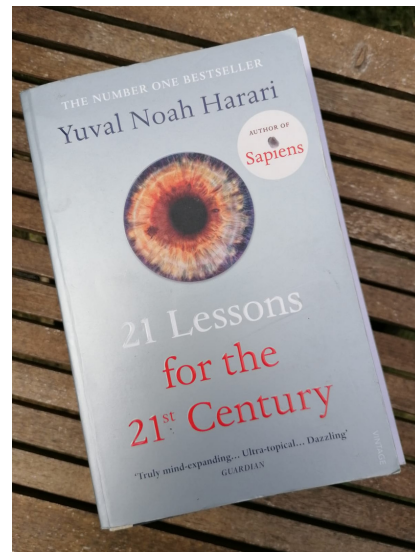
One essay in particular, *Wages for Housework*, encapsulates the prominent and important discussion being had throughout Covid-19 surrounding 'key workers', the care sector and current labour markets.

Rooting discussion in the historical context of the struggles around the liberation of women and housework, Federici highlights the 1970s 'Wages for Housework' campaign - a key factor in the development of reproductive labour as a political concept. The campaign exposed the substantial amount of unpaid work women do which, therefore, embeds them in the capitalist

system that not only relies on their unpaid labour but simultaneously devalues it. Under capitalist systems housework is invisible and imposed - reproducing entrenched gendered power relations.

Supporting calls for appropriate remuneration, such as universal basic income, Federici highlights that although 'Wages for Housework' demands that domestic work is monetised, it is also about a reorganisation of housework in a way that makes it less isolating, more co-operative and social in nature.

Although noted that these struggles are only the beginning, implementation of a universal basic income would aid in the redirecting of wealth in society (from the top to the bottom) bringing with it wide-ranging transformative outcomes - socially, economically and emotionally.



21 Lessons for Life in the 21st Century

by Yuval Noah Harari

'We spend more time and effort trying to control the world than on trying to understand it - and even when we try to understand it, we usually do so in the hope that understanding the world will make it easier to control it.'

Read Up!

SOPHIE LIVELY

In 370 pages this book takes you on a journey through some of the most pressing issues currently facing us all, opening global conversation on issues such as climate change, nuclear war, the rise of artificial intelligence, religion, fake news, terrorism, work, education and more. Harari delves into big questions such as 'what do we do now?' and 'how should we prepare our children, and the next generation, for the impending future?' Presenting what can be rather complex topics (technological advancement often loses me!) Harari is clear and concise with no unnecessary use of jargon or long-winded explanations.

Fast paced, engaging and timely, this book doesn't just examine these issues through a historical lens but shines a light on the ways in which we can all adapt to life in the 21st century.



Sophie Lively is currently studying for an MSc in Global Development with the Open University.

She is passionate about social justice and life-long learning, and spends as much time as possible out of doors with her 2 young boys and chocolate Labrador.

An avid reader, you can find Sophie on Instagram - @whatsophieisreading



When you talk, you are only repeating what you already know.

But if you listen, you may learn something new

Dalai Lama

One of the most sincere forms of respect is actually listening to what another has to say

Bryant H. McGill

Tea's Up!

STEVE LOWE

Up!'s Outdoor Man has a thoughtful cuppa

I was looking at a tea bag yesterday. I suddenly realised I could personally contribute to climate targets with it.

After the last Ice Age, the British Isles were covered in woodland, before human clearance reduced this to only 10% of our land area. These remaining fragments of ancient woodland are vital places for wild species, but they are also significant carbon stores.

Creating new natural woodland - composed of native species without active production management - is a reliable way of capturing carbon and at the same time supporting the recovery of biodiversity. It's important they are in the right places (and the right type of woodland) to ensure they can also contribute to reducing flood risk, stabilising soils and providing recreational opportunities.



So, it was really good news to see government announcements aimed at supporting land managers to triple the rate of planting, including natural regeneration, although considering the £205 billion cost of Trident, the £18 million budget does seem somewhat miserly.



What I am waiting for is a similar commitment to other habitats that do the same thing - and often better. Nature has a fantastic ability to capture carbon safely, if only we could let her get on with it!

For instance, the global oceans play a vital role in trapping and storing atmospheric CO₂ that would otherwise contribute to global warming. Scotland with its almost half a million sq. km of seas, stores more than 1,700 mega-tonnes of inorganic carbon as calcium carbonate, in the form of mollusc and crab shells, skeletons of microscopic plants, coral and maerl.

These carbon-storing habitats include kelp forests, salt marsh, seagrass beds and cold-water corals, but it's worth noting that many of these are also quite fragile. A growing amount of evidence shows that habitats which are damaged - whether by trawling, coastal erosion or development - can't retain as much carbon and may actually become a source of greenhouse gases.

Heathlands and semi-natural grasslands are also important habitats for biodiversity and typically store more carbon than modern agricultural systems. Whilst creating new heathlands and semi-natural grasslands may not be the top priority for carbon, it is important to protect old established sites due to their importance for biodiversity, as well the carbon stocks they hold, as both may have taken centuries to accumulate.

Tea's Up!

STEVE LOWE



The humble pond, once in every field corner, has been shown to be six times more effective at sequestration (locking up) of carbon than the rainforests. This is also true of peatlands and although there

has been a recent announcement of a ban on peat sales, it excludes huge areas of the horticultural sector. And it doesn't come into effect immediately – why not?



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.

It is estimated that up to a third of the UK's carbon emissions could be stored in natural habitats. It makes no sense to continue to destroy these, especially ones that have taken centuries to build up.

So, what about my soggy teabag – how does that help?

Well, it has done already because the contents have avoided my bin and have started decomposing in the composter.

The arising compost will further contribute to climate change mitigation by improving the soil's ability to stabilize carbon and by increasing plant growth, thereby pulling more carbon dioxide out of the atmosphere.

What a great idea ... time to put the kettle on now!



There is no WiFi in the forest, but I promise you will find a better connection

Tiny Buddha

Word Up!

POEMS ON THE THEME OF ART

Life and art and a teenage summer

It was a puppet-stringed barefoot
psychedelic flower-powered summer,
bulk buy tin can posters and vibrant colour.

But far from the crowded swirls
deep in a one-pub Yorkshire dale
I had a bed-making bin-emptying cleaning job
away from home and before minimum pay.
The palette there was lichen and stone.

I climbed the pike and swam the beck
and happened upon a gallery, was
mesmerised by a clear white tarn.

It was nearly all absence, though
there must have been some patches,
some indications, of hills, of edges perhaps,
of ripples? of rushes? of sky? I do not know.

For suggestions in brush strokes and washes
the cost was more than my six weeks wages.
I only saw it the once, this wisp of a painting,
this near nothingness whose possibilities were endless.

Rosie Stacy

Next month's theme is 'History'

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

The Kiss

He captures the soft russet as the fox
brushes the tops of the trees. April-light
he dances over the canvas. I imagine
his fingers dipped in rain. Greedy
as a drought from another country
I watch him mix pigment with spit.
His mouth words paintings
into colours I cannot name. Foreigner,
I hide pencils under my bed. I am sketchy
as a child feeling foolish. Tomorrow
I will walk by the river, catch the same
sunset in a word-net for him. Watch
his brush lick my edges into night.

Hannah Linden

A Response to Nobuko

***After a sculpture display in Leeds by
Nobuko Tsuchiya***

I stand amidst
Twisted metal
Scorched fleece
Melted, manipulated
A meaning implied
Yet try as I might
I cannot translate
The sounds suggested
by the sculpture

I stand on the edge
Of the artist's thoughts
Unable to fathom the depth
Yet keen to take that step
And drop like a stone
Into a reality prophesied,
Suggested, expected.

Antony Stones

Upcycle!

FLOW

Amazing art by amazing people

Meet FLOW, a non-profit, community interest company, who work with people with additional needs. They provide a stimulating, creative, collaborative, purposeful community hub for their students – and you can see by the results here, their work is just fantastic.



FLOW is the brainchild of Mark Crowley and Claire Gladstone who met while working together running an art department in an educational setting. They were quickly inspired to create their own organization where they could truly follow their own ethos.

One thing you might notice is that their wonderful creations are created from upcycled/recycled wood and other items. Says Mark, 'It's at the core of what we do, our workshops in schools and in the wider



community are centred around this. We find it a privilege to work alongside our fantastic young artists and celebrate their individuality.'



They're currently installing their 'music shack', a permanent exhibition in Hadrian Special School, Newcastle and also have plans to collaborate with the wider community of North Shields in a fabulous project bringing the famous Fish Quay to the West End of Newcastle. Up! can't wait to see it!

Up Cycle!

FLOW



Follow *FLOW* on twitter to see more of their inspirational work:
https://twitter.com/Flow_NE_CIC



You might remember that last month we planted some of the free 'Seeds of Hope' sunflowers that Morrisons were giving away as part of their Make Good Things Happen campaign.

We're delighted to report that they're coming on a treat!



Round Up!

AND COMING UP ...

So there we are - told you it was a good one, didn't we?!

We're so grateful to all of our contributors and to you, our readers, for your continued support. Despite continued news stories about Covid variants, we feel confident that things are on the Up! thanks as ever to our wonderful NHS and all the unpaid volunteers who every day ensure that the national vaccination programme continues, come sunshine or rain.

See you next month for our special 'History' themed edition!



Much love
Bridget & Harry xx



As always, if you have any suggestions for future articles or features, we'd love to hear from you.

Just email us at TalkToUp@gmail.com