

Ian Collier 2003

'As Derrek taught me, I'll keep my response as tight and as efficient as possible.

After graduation I worked at ContentTeam Online in Penzance, producing interactive learning products for three years (as you know). Since, I have been at Cambridge University Press and have risen through the ranks. Now I put other people's writing into e-learning products and advise on the use of technology in the classroom, spend a lot of time in New York and I would give just about anything to live there, play the electric guitar passionately but very, very badly, and I still write comics for cash every now and again.

'As for the course, it seems a long time ago. There were two principle rewards for me. The first was the set of new skills and a clear direction for practise and improvement - a one year course doesn't and can't turn you into a writer, naturally, but at its best puts you on the road and gently pushes you in the right direction. The second reward was a whole year's worth of time to write. Out of the two I'd say that the latter is the more valuable to me, no offence intended, but the combination of the two can be life-changing.

'So I suppose what I am saying is that the course, you, and everyone else in it and on it, changed my life.'

Elaine White 2003

After graduating, it took some time to focus on the type of writing in which I wanted to specialise.

2003–2005: Focussed on journalism - The Times (internship offer), newspapers, magazines/journals then moved into press office work for 18 months to subsidise research into exposé stories. Undertook some web editing. Also edited a range of newsletters.

2005 – current: Decided to follow my heart and focus on drama and poetry. Completed a stage play and a radio play. One-act play submitted to Windsor Fringe 2008. Had a dramatic monologue selected and broadcast by Radio Five Live 2006; shortlisted for Radio 4 comedy 'For Training Purposes Only' 2007.

Currently working on a drama project (writing) with Hall for Cornwall on birth culture (the lovely Jane Pugh is one of the other participants!!).

Editing an original poetry anthology for the national Poetry Society (Brighton Stanza), that will be illustrated by MA Illustration students.

Writing and performing own poetry/monologues. Putting together first poetry collection.

*Christina - Derrek and Jane are to blame for me going astray!!

Katy Moon 2004

'Almost three years at Inside Soap magazine, as Editorial Assistant and now Junior Writer. Hoping for a promotion this August. I get to write regular features every week, go to photo shoots and the odd party. I'm also doing some freelance work at Sky Magazine. In the past I've done freelance bits and bobs for Crime Confidential magazine and Cosmo Girl (both sadly now out of print). I do a fair bit of radio work, I've had regular slots BBC Radio Asian Network, Gemini FM, Today FM and various regional stations and this week I was on Five Live chatting about Rickaay and Bianca's return alongside Sophie Lawrence and Kate Spicer (Times journo). I felt very glam it was live at London's TV Centre and I even had a cab there and back!

'If I had not have done the Prof Writing course I don't think I'd ever have made it in to the industry, it seemed so inaccessible before. It helped develop my writing, confidence and contacts.'

Rowan Clarke, 2004

'Leaving Cornwall for Bristol immediately after graduation, I started picking up freelance work as a corporate copywriting working on corporate branding and promotional stuff, the majority of which was with a copywriting contact given to me by Christina. I then picked up a full time assignment with the Environment Agency as Staff Writer - corporate journalism, branding and plain Englishing.

'I left the Environment Agency after a year to go on maternity leave, then started to pick up freelance projects again nine months later. Clients included the DWP, Clarks shoes and a yacht brokers in Antibes, France. I stopped working to go on maternity leave - again - in September 2007. I have just started picking up work again, my first project being script editing for a corporate dvd. I also have a job lined up to rewrite an entire website.

'The course gave me contacts which got me started, thus giving me experience to get more work. It also introduced me to copywriting, which was an area of which I hadn't been aware previously. Practically, it taught me web editing through bloc, honed my Quark, subbing, and editing skills, taught me the basics of structure that I should have learned at school. It also set me up with an invaluable network of writer, and gave me invaluable support and confidence.'

Mark Spence, 2005

'I'm still the Deputy Features Editor for Nuts magazine, which is great and I'm thoroughly enjoying what I do.

'My role involves sourcing true life stories/features, commissioning journalists, organising interviews with celebs/sports stars, photoshoots, cover features, online

content, newsletters. On top of what I do on the editorial side of the magazine, I'm also involved in generating ideas for everything else associated with the brand e.g. the Nuts football awards which are due to be broadcast on MTV this year. Woo hoo!

'In all honesty I don't think I'd be doing what I'm doing now without the help and encouragement of the course tutors. I'd probably still be sitting in a bedsit somewhere in the South West beating my head against a wall wondering how to get a break. The course made me realise that opportunities were not going to just land in my lap and if I wanted to make something happen I'd need to get out and make it happen for myself. For example while I was doing the course I pestered the Western Morning News and an interview I did with a band called Thirteen Senses made the cover - thanks to Christina getting me the interview in the first place!

'Also, through the contacts of one of the course tutors I managed to secure myself a work experience week at Front magazine, pestered the editor there to give me a chance, pitched a story, he loved it, worked at Front for a while after the course before aforementioned Editor moved over to Nuts and a few months later headhunted me to come and work for them. I've been there ever since and I've never looked back. Since then I've covered stories in Vegas, LA, Moscow, Athens, New York and everywhere else in between. I get access to genuine A-List celebs on a weekly basis and the perks are incredible. However, I wouldn't be doing what I'm doing now without the extra push the Prof Writing course and the tutors gave me.

'Confidence is such an important thing in this business and this is something else the course gave me. For example only a couple of weeks ago a group from my old Secondary School in Belfast heard that I was working at Nuts, called me and I arranged for them to come over to the Nuts office to see me and the rest of the team at work. I arranged for the Deputy Editor and myself to give them a talk and their teachers loved it so much it's going to be an annual thing with their A-Level students. The thought of doing something like that used to horrify me, but now I love it.'

Jon Stanford 2005

'Well, the course helped me get more interesting jobs. Before Prof Writing I was a Technical Author working in the software industry. With the experience of the course and a work placement at the Environment Agency, I was able (after a stint unloading lorries) to get a job as a Media Officer, then Editorial Assistant at the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council, now as Editor at the Met Office.

'Who knows what next - I certainly have more options than I did in the pre-prof writing days...maybe I'll go back to unloading lorries again.'

Karen Miller 2005

'Since leaving in 2004, I combined my teaching experience and new knowledge of professional writing and started marketing myself as a writer for education, I began picking up freelance writing work for educational publications - writing product and book reviews for Scholastic's Junior Education magazine and notes for parents to accompany Oxford University Press' reading books. I then got a full time job as the editor of www.filmstreet.co.uk a website designed by First Light Movies, CBBC, the British Film Institute, the UK Film Council and Creative Partnerships, to engage under 12s, their parents and teachers with film and filmmaking. Freelance work now is in the more specialised area of film education - I have written double page spreads for Junior Education on the subject including recently teaching resources to support the release of 'The Golden Compass'. I have also written teaching notes for the BFI's Screenonline Project (www.screenonline.org). Work on bloc most definitely helped me get the Film Street job and had I not done the course (although it seems obvious) I would have never have thought of becoming an education writer!

'The course introduced me to script writing (an area of creative writing I had never considered before - it was all about crap poetry and dreams of novel writing before I came to Falmouth) and although I have had no solid success with this I have had some positive nods! My work on Film Street has given some fantastic opportunities to see more films and interview filmmaking professionals - I regularly attend press screenings and press conferences, I've been to the Edinburgh Film Festival and have met and interviewed some fabulous filmmakers such as Shane Meadows! I now have a clear focus for my creative writing and am more motivated than ever to write scripts, using what I learned on the course and the knowledge of filmmaking I have picked up through my job. I would not be here without the Profwriting course!'

Gareth May 2006

'For me the course was a steep learning curve, breaking my 'traditional' views of what a writer was and sending me on my way mentally and practically prepared for a life spent trying to make it as a successful writer in my chosen fields. Falmouth changed the way I look at things in many ways, it made me realise that what I thought was unrealistic was possible and vice versa. The multi million pound book deal I used to dream of was unrealistic but understanding the industry, applying my knowledge of trends and markets and then writing to fit those markets was well within my limitations - something I never ever correlated with writing. As though to prove my point. In the past year I have had features appear in two South West magazines. Reviews, although unpaid, published in a national newspaper. Worked with an illustrator to conceive, create, produce and send a children's book to over ten publishers. Developed my website so that I am currently preparing a Press Release to be sent to a series of

magazines, radio programmes etc. As well as this, have a part-time job in a bookshop. OK, I don't have the lucrative city job so many of my peers have and I don't earn vast sums of money but I am carving a way forward for my writing and regardless of whether I achieve or fail my goal I know this is the right choice for me. A choice I never would have had if I hadn't attended Falmouth.'

Cheesy I know but I guess I'm trying to show the other side of the coin. How the course can encourage creativity in a professional way. That's what I've taken from it anyway and it really has changed my life to be honest. Whether I'll be saying that when I'm flipping burgers in McDonalds at the age of sixty-five is another matter but only time will tell.

Anyway I'll let you get on. The course changes look good by the way - I hope you'll be teaching more as well, I know you're always bogged down with admin stuff and what not but I must admit I think the students would benefit from you taking a few more sessions, I think you have a unique get-up-and-do-it attitude and I think for a lot of writers, young ones in particular, they just need to be told - I should know!

Elfrea Lockley 2007

'Even before graduating from the MA in Professional Writing (in 2007) I had landed a non-fiction book deal with Octopus, this wouldn't have been achieved without the support and contacts of course tutors. The book is due out in July and I'm currently writing full time, establishing a career as a freelancer – I write regular articles for a web optimisation company and have had features commissioned for a range print and online publications. My MA project was a film script. I'm currently developing this with a professional script editor who I met via the course. The aim is to rewrite to a sufficient standard to apply for UK Film Council development funding in order to generate interest with agents and production companies.

'The MA helped me in many ways – but overall I think the key thing it gave me was confidence in my skills and the confidence to pursue a full time career in writing gained through a working knowledge of contemporary markets. I left a full time teaching position to join the MA and can, quite honestly, say that I've never looked back.'

Joe Weir 2007

'Since leaving the course, I've been working as a writer at The Writer, a brand language consultancy that does all kinds of creative writing for businesses, trains businesses to write better at work and helps brands define themselves through the words they use. So far I've written for lastminute.com, O2, Nike, Toshiba, and BT, just to name a few.

'The Professional Writing MA has to take a lot of credit for this break. I started at The Writer as The Writer's Apprentice – a scheme organised by the course. I worked for The Writer in between terms, and then came back to Falmouth to carry on the course. This chopping and changing between working life and studying was great, as one would really benefit the other. As well as a great job, I also left the course with a screenplay which has found its way to an agent, so watch this space.'

Jenny Wight 2007

'This the blurb I email out when applying for jobs or pitching articles: 'I am a London based freelance writer – currently a contributing editor for Not for Tourists' new London guide, restaurant reviewer for www.viewlondon.co.uk, reviewer for night life website www.clubcollective.com and a local 'expert' for travel website www.wcities.com.

'I have a regular column in a London magazine, N16, have written film and book reviews for Big Screen Magazine and Cornish World, profiles for Friction Climbing Magazine and www.bloc-online.com, and features for Third Sector and Wed. I work with Factiva (Dow Jones) to produce media analysis reports for their clients. If you'd like to see examples of my work, the portfolio page on website is a good place to start'
[.http://www.jswight.co.uk/portfolio_jw.htm'](http://www.jswight.co.uk/portfolio_jw.htm)

'I really feel that I learnt a GREAT deal on the course. The main impact it had was to help me to break the formal wordy way style of writing I had and start developing my true voice. The session on reviewing, the work experience at Big Screen and winning the camera helped me get my first paid reviewing gig. Then this led to two others.

'When I applied to Not For Tourists, due to the experience I had writing London reviews, they asked me to do a sample neighbourhood blurb and I wrote it in the same style as other content on their website. Rob (the editor) said I'd got the work, as I was a good writer but more importantly I nailed the NFT voice. I then had to lie down until my head shrank to its normal size. But it was great to apply something we'd learn on the course in the real world and get a good result. I have also carried on working for the voluntary sector and need to dip back into more formal writing from time to time. I recently presented a report to a group of staff from a charity on a new project. Afterwards someone came up and said to say thanks and that she thought the report was really easy to read unlike some other voluntary sector gumph.

'So basically the course has improved - out of sight - my writing ability and my confidence – which is exactly what I wanted to happen. '

