



A WRITER of Real and Rare Range at your disposal

with IanGenuity EPLC

Oxford modern language graduate **IAN MILES** (New College, 1981) qualified and taught in independent schools for many years before turning freelance in 2002. Since then he has, with equal success, supported a dozen and more subjects to GCSE and beyond, serving an unusually wide range of students: from face-to-face GCSE Maths with Young Offenders and children in public care, to online and distance tuition for adult and younger learners worldwide.

By way of recent illustration, two consecutive housecalls within the Oxford ring-road took him to teach A2 French to the daughter of a then-Cabinet Minister, and KS2 Maths to the child of a Bangladeshi-born cab-driver.

As you will see, Ian is also an active educational author: informative, persuasive, interesting and entertaining communication (verbally, and on real or virtual paper) is his stock-in-trade. He has written texts, quizzes and puzzles to educate, entertain and inform; drama and verse; business and cultural project proposals, and worship materials. A regularly-published compiler of specialist cryptic crosswords (eg quarterly for *Organists' Review* since 1994: 80 puzzles and counting!), he has turned literally thousands of fair and precise clues ~ possibly one of the most exacting and sustained linguistic challenges there can be.

He is a committed semi-professional musician with 30+ years' experience as an organist, pianist, *répétiteur*, singer and community choir director; also an avid & omnivorous reader and lifelong quality talk-radio listener ~ having been active with the Oxford University Broadcasting Society, and since appearing briefly on regional radio and television, in a commercial DVD promotion and professional native-quality voice-overs (in three languages) produced in his home studio.

As a literary-trained linguist and musician he has a finely-tuned, sophisticated yet natural ear for the flow and thrust of text. An erstwhile teenage letterpress tyro, he ran his own press and taught the craft as a hobbyist for nigh-on 20 years, so brings an experienced eye to layout, typography and balance, besides being a scrupulous proofreader and copy-editor ~ of academic texts, parish magazine copy and orders-of-service, concert programmes, commercial niche 'blogs' and publicity, multilingual menus, and, over many years, the formal printed programme for Oxford University's honorary degree ceremony.

Through the Drafting, Grafting and Crafting stages of any writing project (including this present one) Ian is thus fully engaged at every level. This paper offers examples, rationales and contexts under three broad headings:

Educational and Informative Writing (p.1)

Commercial and Persuasive Writing (p.4)

Ceremonial and Cultural Commissions (p.5)

Such background is offered to illustrate the cultural breadth of 'where he comes from', his tastes and formative & chosen influences. These are among the skills, experience and accomplishment he looks forward to bringing to your own creative / persuasive writing project.

Educational and Informative Writing

Since his years of routinely creating and illustrating countless worksheets across various scholastic subjects, Ian has undertaken wider recent commissions such as re-editing complete public examination courses for Oxford Open Learning: in IGCSE French (2009, extensively remodelled from existing material but with significant original additions), and a similarly overhauled, expanded and enhanced 3-year KS3 Maths course (2010), each now successfully in action internationally with several hundred students enrolled.

Here is a sample of his original approach to assessing students' grasp of the Imperial and Metric weights-&-measures system:

1. (a) In 'the good old days', a healthy weight for a newborn human baby was regarded as being about 8 lb (pounds). Reckoning roughly at '1 lb = 450g', what is this weight in kg?
(b) A fairly respectable weight for woman (pregnant or otherwise) would be around 10 stone.

- (i) How many *pounds* is this?
- (ii) How many *kg* is this, at the accurate conversion rate of 454g to the pound?
- (iii) What would this be to the nearest whole kg?
- (iv) Returning to your accurate answer for (ii), let us assume that a woman registers exactly this weight – lightly clothed and heavily pregnant – when she arrives to give birth in a hospital. She produces an ‘average’ baby such as in part (a) of this question. What does she weigh *after* the baby is out? (You may ignore other natural losses in blood, sweat, tears *etc* for the purposes of this calculation ...)
- (v) What is her new weight to the nearest kg?
- (vi) A newborn baby is typically 20 inches long; what would this measurement be in cms? (You should show your working)

Oxford Home Schooling KS3 Maths Y8 Assignment I, 2010

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 At an earlier stage in his freelance career Ian taught for the Satellite School (the online arm of the National Association for the Education of Sick Children, since assimilated elsewhere), again in a range of subjects. For a mooted 2004 Summer School ~ which did not eventually run, for a variety of unrelated reasons ~ he was commissioned to write original course materials on five topics including Codes and Cyphers, and Creative Writing.

The latter of course is of particular relevance here: the following extract comes from the ‘Crafting’ module, where aspirant young writers are introduced to the ticklish discipline of editing their own material.

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 It may be tough saying goodbye to words you wrote yourself but, if the result is a leaner, tighter story ~ then get rid of them! Is there any need for extra phrases, adjectives and adverbs?

She opened the heavy door cautiously and walked very slowly out across the vast carpet towards the distant centre of this silent room. Not a single bird was singing in the frosted winter trees outside. She could see her uncle's two big brown eyes peering at her over the top of his morning newspaper ...

All very well, but, line-by-line:

1. Whatever this situation is, there are too many ‘y’ sounds in the top line: 4 of the 1st 10 words end with it. Aren’t we laying it on a bit thick? ‘Walked ... out’ could be unhelpful: is she moving out of the room, or into it?
2. If the carpet’s vast, the centre must be distant; need we really say both? In fact, do we need to mention that the floor is carpeted? Unless the colour of the carpet’s important (or perhaps symbolic, eg black or red), all it does is help deaden any sound in the room, as we’re already about to say (‘silent’). It could probably go altogether.
3. The ‘purple passage’ about the trees is largely wasted too. We may already know it’s winter, in which case it’s tiresome to repeat; ‘frosted’ might be enough, as we also know it’s morning (maybe from the context, and now from the ‘morning paper’). Incidentally, where else would birds be singing anyway, and where would trees be other than *outside* a house? (If there were trees indoors, you *would* have the makings of a story!) And while we’re at it, ‘single bird ... singing’ doesn’t quite work: that quick repeat of ‘sing’ strongly suggests the insistent sound of birdsong, yet the whole point is that there’s none at all. Better, perhaps, to say ‘not one bird was singing’?
4. We don’t need to say ‘she could see’, as it’s surely obvious that she did; we’re already more or less looking over her shoulder as she enters the room. And there’s really no need whatever to remind your readers that her uncle has two eyes!

Perhaps the passage would work just as well like this ...

Edging open the heavy door, she crossed slowly towards the far centre of this silent room. Not even a bird was singing in the frost outside. Her uncle's big brown eyes peered at her over the top of his morning paper ...

... and we’re down from 54 words to 41, de-cluttered by a factor of around a quarter and setting the scene more crisply for whatever dialogue is to follow. You could well improve it still further yourself.

Satellite School, 2004

Ian has worked for many years with young students to enlarge their vocabulary, consolidate their spelling, and boost their comprehension and reasoning skills for independent transfer exams and GCSE. His original anthology of over 200 verses encourages such children to work independently, or with guidance, to develop such skills alongside their general knowledge. Here are a few of his particular favourites to illustrate the style, method and range of subject matter:

THE POINT OF SHEEP

Mary had a little lamb
 Which, in a year or so,
 Grew up to be a hefty
 (As male ones do, you).
 He had his way with many ewes
 And fathered fleecy flocks,
 So folk like us can line our
 With pairs of woolly

HARD TO UNDERSTAND

The outside of our kitchen kettle
 Gleams with lovely shiny ;
 When I peeped inside today
 It looked quite different,
 drab &
 Mum says it's solids that appear
 Because our water's hard round
 A liquid, hard? Sounds daft to me;
 Who wants a cup of solid ?

KEEPING ME BUSY

My uncle sent a birthday parcel,
 A jigsaw of a famous
 There are about a thousand bits,
 You have to find where each one ,
 And every piece I seem to try
 Shows either stone or grass or
 This could take weeks to do, I fear ~
 It might not be complete next !

NATIVITY SCENE

We're practising our Christmas play,
 We have to do it every
 Last year my sister, who was 'Mary',
 Found the whole thing really ;
 I came on dressed as a sheep,
 Said 'Baa!', curled up and went to
 This time I hoped to be a King,
 But Miss wants someone that can !

Rhyme and Reason, www.lulu 2006

In 2009 Ian joined the Coordination Group Publications (CGP) commissioned authors' panel, helping update their popular A4 paperback learning support book range ready for a fresh round of GCSE workschemes. On the strength of a smaller original submission, he was invited to contribute several pages to their *Higher Tier Creative Writing Guide* including the top-grade model answers.

The extract opposite is from that publication. Ian explains that the useful ~ and examinable ~ literary skill of transposing an idea between genres, eg a folk-tale becoming a musical, appealed to him considerably, not least as a lifelong subscriber to *Private Eye*, with its consistently clever satirical miniatures (in the occasional *Nursery Times*, *Rocky Horror Service Book* columns and elsewhere).

This task requires students to start from an established work of mainstream literature: Ian chose George Orwell's *Animal Farm*: not only on the merits of the iconic story, but because the allegory lay open to further development ~ such as Orwell himself had wisely refrained from exploring beyond what he recognised the narrative originally needed.

'Orwell', meanwhile, lies buried under his birth-name of Eric Blair in the parish churchyard at All Saints', Sutton Courtenay, where Ian became organist in 2008: a typical serendipity which prompted this choice of tribute.

The following partial mock answer appears as marketed to top-grade aspirants by this widely recognised publisher of accessible academic support. CGP's typically upbeat blurb (written by their editors, rather than Ian!) claims

'These A/A* answers are so hot, we had to get a special type of ink made just to stop them burning through the page. That's not actually true, but they really are useful – so take a look ...'

Pick a key incident or character from any 20th-century text you have studied. Create a piece of non-fiction or journalism based on the issues raised in the original.

At first, this word seems a bit odd, but its significance is revealed at the end of the sentence.

Complex vocab.

A typical journalistic ending, combined with detail from the novel is perfect here.

'Newspaper-style' language is appropriate for the new genre.

It's fine to put in modern details to make the article more realistic or entertaining.

Pigs Might Fly
 History took a wobbly turn for Manor Farm (formerly Animal Farm) yesterday as its self-styled leader Napoleon became the first ever pig to face magistrates' bail on a drunken cycling charge.
 Responding to an anonymous tip-off after a spate of drink-fuelled disturbances, officers allegedly discovered Napoleon astride a lady's bicycle. He was found to have a breath alcohol level substantially exceeding the human safe driving limit. The bicycle, said to have insufficiently maintained lighting and brakes, together with a Crown Derby tureen and a quantity of home brewing apparatus, has been removed from the scene for forensic examination.
 Napoleon's spokesman, Squealer, was unavailable for comment.
 A full report of the court case will follow in our next edition ...

AQA Higher Tier Non-Fiction and Creative Writing Study Guide, CGP 2010, p.58

Writing for EducationQuizzes.com, Ian has since also set 1500 explained multi-choice ESL questions at three levels, of which EQ's feedback gratifyingly said:

We are delighted with a wonderful set of ESL quizzes written by Ian. His attention to detail is second to none. He went the extra mile on every quiz to explain the English language. Highly recommended!

Commercial and Persuasive Writing

Through the PeoplePerHour website and elsewhere, Ian is building up a portfolio of expertise in persuasive writing for business audiences.

During the high summer months when regular tutorial work is quieter, and besides undertaking various writing projects, he and his wife welcome language-study visitors from abroad. In 2008 a Chinese businessman preparing his CIPD dissertation came to brush up on his English; Ian duly consulted on the writing and phrasing of the document. Qinghua Liu has remained in contact and some months later approached Ian again with a draft international business proposal.

This required the opening of contacts with a GB-based global industry training and standards body. Ian spruced up the language of the initial proposal, and on the Chinese end's English-language website, in preparation for this initiative.

An extract from the 'polished' Proposal and the e-mail response it elicited, follow below.

Predication of Future Market Demand

According to the *Statistical Communiqué of the People's Republic of China on National Economic and Social Development* issued by the National Bureau of Statistics (2003), China's steel output for that year was 220,000,000 tons, an increase of 21% compared with 2002. On the basis that welding steel accounts for 40% of this output, the quantity destined to find its way into welded structures could be calculated at approximately 9,000,000 tons.

In developed countries, however, welding steel generally accounts for 60%-70% of output; according to the general National Economic Development Objective for 2020, and in line with developing welding-industry trends in China, we may reasonably predict that China will aspire to be welding some 60% of output by, or during, the 'teen' years of this century, by which point the annual national steel output will have risen to between 250m and 300m tons.

This means the absolute welding quantity will potentially be doubled, stimulating a literally unprecedented demand for efficient welding services and a workforce fully capable to deliver them. Taking into consideration the sector's current dynamics of potential growth in production efficiency in China, the sheer demands of productivity, and labour force statistics as they presently stand, China's future specialist workforce requirement may be quite responsibly be estimated at, or rather over, one million

qualified individual technicians. There can hence be little scope for doubt but that the welding industry will necessarily maintain growth throughout the coming decade. [...]

Conclusion

China needs TWI, and TWI will enjoy a broad sphere of influence in China.

With help and support from TWI, on the one hand Luxi International School will further promote TWI training and its internationally recognised certification system, jointly promoting and furthering the development of practical welding skills, so as to contribute to the evolution of the welding industry as a whole and also to enhance the prospects and fulfilment of its individual practitioners. [...]

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Ian,

I'm truly amazed by your proposal is (*sic*) one of the best I've ever read and you've got my full attention. My feelings are that you have accurately assessed the situation in China and identified the huge potential.

I've been flying in and out of China for the last 4 years ... I'm very keen to meet you and discuss your proposal in more depth. Just as a point of interest, would you be involved in the negotiation process?

Regards

*Ernesto Maskini*

Regional Manager (SEA)

TWI Training and Certification (S.E. Asia) Snd Bhd, Selangor, Malaysia.

(Abridged e-mail of 12/08/10)

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Negotiations duly passed successfully into other hands, but Ian was flown out to China the following autumn for the ratification of a Memorandum of Understanding between TWI and the regional Labour HQ; probably as the only Westerner inside that Chinese government building at that time, or indeed for some while or distance around!

He subsequently decided to explore the Mandarin language more closely and after a 6-month programme of self-directed study, sat GCSE Mandarin in 2011, gaining within 2% of an A-Grade; in 2012, similarly, he achieved A* in Spanish.

Since then he has also done copy-editing and voiceovers (in English) for a Thai automotive market analysis company, and for online estate agency videos.

In March 2012 through PeoplePerHour, he was engaged to sharpen the wording on the website of Roger Jones, a business development consultant whose specialism is the promotion of storytelling. This narrative approach in itself struck a chord ~ yet Ian was able usefully to tighten and transform the text, even from this fellow-professional wordsmith.

A passage from the site is shown below along with its promoter's endorsement.

[...] I must confess I came down off the dais feeling a little smug, that I had done a pretty good job. I even gained a warm ripple of applause.

After a coffee break I saw the next speaker, the CEO of a large US firm: I confess I made an instant judgement, 'There is no way he's going to be as good as me'.

He didn't stand at the podium like I had, and spoke without prompt notes. From the front of the platform he told a series of stories, with just a few facts sprinkled in here and there. He told a change-management story about how, as wayward teenager, he had changed after talking to a policeman; when discussing sales growth, he didn't use graphs, but talked about his blossoming garden; when he spoke about leadership, he didn't revisit the timeworn roster of great historic generals & leaders for examples, but talked instead about the life lessons he learnt from a teacher.

He left the stage not to a ripple of applause, like me - he got a standing ovation.

My heart sank as I thought what a poor leadership job I had done in trying to inspire the audience with my logic.

That was the moment when I realised great leaders are invariably great storytellers.

It was then I recognised how storytelling solves the problem I had faced in the past: how to inspire action amongst the teams I had worked with.

I have since researched storytelling to see how it can be used most effectively by managers and leaders to make decisions and changes, and overcome their key business challenges. [...]

Apply **The Power of Authentic Leadership** programme to give your leaders and organisation an edge; create authentic leaders who are:

- More assured and self-confident
- Fully 'present' at work
- Able to express themselves freely

- Comfortable with ambiguity
- Resilient yet flexible in their leadership style
- Confident to make difficult decisions
- Robust in their reactions to adversity
- Happy to take on new ways of thinking, to make a non-linear step-change in your organisation's performance

Feedback:

Ian provided a highly professional proof reading and prompt service. He delivered more than was asked and this was greatly appreciated. I highly recommend his services and will use him again. R, 28 Mar 2012

(Ian has subsequently taken on regular copy-editing & proofing responsibilities for a 'mums-&-youngsters'-type blog-and-advice website, run by Roger's wife!)

Ceremonial and Cultural Commissions

Ian has been actively and creatively involved in devising and delivering words and music, in worship and other public performance contexts, for over 30 years. The influence of the *'King James' Bible* and *Book of Common Prayer*, along with Shakespeare and their many respective echoes, are etched into his cultural awareness.

In 1995 for the Millennium of St Helen's Church in Abingdon, he was commissioned by the town's Rector to write a *Travelling Biblical Mystery Pageant*, for performance in five sections around the town centre by various constituent groups within The Church-in-Abingdon. In those days he was teaching Religious Studies, running national training and a termly bulletin in that subject, and indeed had recently been actively involved in the drafting (and exhaustive proof-reading) of the *Independent Schools' 4-18 RE Syllabus* which was launched at the Palace of Westminster in 1994.

He picked what he regarded as the major Bible narratives for performance in the Pageant, and elected to cast these into 'heroic couplets' (some 1300+ lines in all). Here is a sample from the early story of the Fall, as the God roots-out and condemns the three guilty parties after the Eden episode:

VOICE OF GOD Where are the two I made for my delight?
Never before did you avoid my sight.

NARRATOR So the man Adam shuffled slowly clear:

ADAM All naked and afraid, Lord, I was here.

VOICE OF GOD How did you come this nakedness to see,
Unless by fruit from the forbidden tree?

ADAM The woman Eve, she went to eat it first
And gave me some to satisfy my thirst.

VOICE OF GOD And who told you to do what I said not?

EVE The serpent tricked me round and I forgot.

NARRATOR Towards the serpent God in anger turned
And righteous wrath within his bosom burned:

VOICE OF GOD Cursed be you now beyond all other beast
And crawl in dust, of animals the least!
Dust shall you eat until the day you die,
And bite the woman's heel as she goes by.
Woman, who by this creature was beguiled,
In pain henceforward shall you bring forth child;
Your husband's rule you shall forever crave
And thus go thrice afflicted to your grave.
Adam, accursed is the very soil
On which you stand and ever now must toil:
Your brow shall sweat o'er ev'ry fruit you earn;
Dust that you were, to dust you shall return.
My garden here no longer is your home;
Elsewhere for evermore you two must roam.

(cf. Genesis 3: 8-23, KJV)

This passage and its Nativity counterpart were also performed in the mediaeval chapel [1379] of New College, Oxford, by groups of Ian's students at the Choir School's Carol Service in 1996; his 'science-fiction thriller' play *The Happy Republic* was the school's main drama production the following year.

In autumn 2010 a symposium was held in St Helen's in memory of the town's late and tireless Dutch-born archivist, Mieneke Cox. She had herself been pivotal in staging previous (mainly historical) pageants in Abingdon, and, at the

end of a day of weighty but interesting papers on archaeology and other topics, Ian was invited to contribute the final paper on *Pageants and People*.

Here, from the church musician's perspective, he comments on a leading example of this British tradition:

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As we choirmasters begin contemplating Christmas repertoire, one venerable item stands out: the *Coventry Carol*. That city ~ through whose same streets Lady Godiva reputedly made her own distinctive contribution to the history of public entertainment; and which in the mid-C20th would become an eponym for destruction, resurrection and reconciliation ~ evolved its own medieval cycle comparable with those at York and elsewhere. Pageants then were presented on a procession of floats, each sponsored (as we'd now say) by a different local specialist guild, offering static spectators a sequence of scenes. Custom began to link certain Biblical tableaux with specific and relevant trade guilds; and Coventry allotted the baleful tale of the Massacre of the Innocents at Childermas to its Guild of Shearmen and Tailors.

The 'extras' playing as mothers of the newborn would cower over their infants and wail:

*Lullay, lulla, thou little tiny child ... / Herod the King in his raging,  
Charged he hath this day / His men of might in his own sight  
All young children to slay. / That woe is me, poor child, for thee ..*

Whereupon, and doubtless with great zeal, the men playing Herod's troops would come pouncing and snarling in, brandishing Coventry's very latest in bladed goods. Who says commercialism is a menace unique to our own age?

Reprinted in the Festschrift: *Celebrating Abingdon's History*  
(AAHS / St Helen Publishing 2011, p.76)

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Down the years Ian has produced numerous adaptations, parodies and 'topical variants' on texts, from Gilbert & Sullivan and other shows (eg for last-night parties with Abingdon Operatic Society, whose *de facto* principal *répétiteur* he was for 15 years) to formal work such as the *Pageant Scripture* paraphrase.

On seemingly innumerable occasions, in his capacity as a parish organist, he has been invited to play *Jerusalem* at weddings, which has always struck him as a perverse choice. To be sure, the tune is stirring, widely-known and hence reasonably likely to be joined in with by 'scratch' congregants; but its original

