

## QUESTIONS FOR 'THE POETRY SHED'

### **1. Can you tell me a bit about The Interpreter's House and when it began?**

The Interpreter's House has been the purveyor of fine poetry and prose since the 1980s, when it was set up by Merryn Williams in the fair town of Bedford, which has connections to John Bunyan whose *Pilgrim's Progress* has, somewhere in there, an interpreter's house that, thusly, completes a virtuous circle. And we like those, do we not?

### **2. Who have the editors been in the past and what interested you in the post?**

As I say, the founding editor was Merryn Williams; with whom I am still in convivial contact. She then passed over the reins to Simon Curtis down in Plymouth. Simon continued the good work as editor for several years before sadly succumbing to cancer last year. When the job became too onerous for him due to his illness, the Poetry Society put out an appeal on their website, for a new editor to keep the magazine going. I had been published in TIH a few times, thought it a great and underestimated wee journal, so applied. I met Merryn in Oxford, went down to Plymouth to meet Simon and, thankfully we saw eye-to-eye so I got the gig. I don't think I beat off hordes of prospective editors, to be honest.....Hm, I've just re-read that last sentence...

### **3. Where do you see TIH in the market place?**

An old Trot like me has grown to detest that word "market". Look what it's done to the world and, worse, to people's weak souls. In the poetry *commonwealth*, then, I see TIH as being akin to a Norwich or Leicester City: not exactly Premier League but, you know, always in the hunt for promotion and entertaining when we get there. If you'll pardon my metaphor.

### **4. What kind of poetry most appeals to you?**

Poetry with a least a hint of the *essential* and a genuine stink of the poet's own fox.

### **5. What turns you off?**

Poems which smell too much of the workshop or writing exercise. Poems that merely employ the contemporary poetry tricks, no matter how deftly. These poems are often 'successful' and sometime astonishing but they have their sights set on something other than what I'm looking for, really. Someone else will take them and godspeed.

**6. What is your day job?**

I was a teacher for over twenty years. Right now, I'm lost in music, feel so alive/ I quit my nine-to-five. Thanks to the tremendous good fortune of a fully-funded PhD at Sheffield University which involves the writing of my third collection, *Ghosts of the Vortex*.

**7. What magazines do you submit to and why?**

All of them, really. With a view to getting published, my hypocritical sights on precisely those things alluded to in Answer 5.

**8. What advice would you give to people submitting to your magazine?**

Despite my tendency to sound glib, this is a serious journal and I a serious editor. So, send us your BEST stuff; send it during our submission windows; send it as a single Word doc in 11pt Times New Roman. *Use the website, FB and Twitter* to stay in touch. If appropriate, we'll find a good home for your work, if not, we'll let you down gently and maybe make one or two helpful suggestions. It's worth noting that I *do* like to publish at least one or two first-timers in each issue, if at all possible.

**9. Can you sum up TIH in ten words?**

Catholic, quirky, collectable. Cheap at twice the price. Waxy napp.

**10. Finally, sum yourself up in ten words.**

Hm, not as talented as I would like to think.