Maryfield
Writers' Group

Maryfield Complex, 100 Belfast Road, Holywood, Co. Down,
BT18 9QY Tel: (028) 9039 3568 Email: info@nirpoa.org

aims
of the Maryfield Writers' Group

- Promote the study of the art of writing in all its forms
- Provide guidance for writers and prospective writers
- Advance the Education of the Police Family
- Writing as a medium to alleviate or remove psychological, emotional and behavioural difficulties associated with past or present police duties
- Make a positive contribution to the healing process

Background to the Group

Since the days of the Royal Irish Constabulary Police Officers have used the written medium to record evidence, keep records and to give pleasure to themselves, their families and colleagues not to mention the general public by their writing skills.

Some members chose prose others poetry to record the happenings of the day, give vent to frustrations about their duties, and in a humorous way, have a go at their authorities. The Police Gazette, the oldest police magazine in the UK, was an example of the use of the written word to inform, record and entertain thousands of police officers, many in small stations throughout rural Ireland. One of the most famous early poets was Constable Joe Latimer, RIC, Ballybay, Co. Monaghan who in 1896 wrote:-

To comrades all of every rank,
Wherever they may be,
In north or south in east or west,
Or far across the sea.
On Scotia's Hills, in England's plains,
In city, hamlet, town,
Who wear or ever wore the badge
Of Shamrock, Harp and Crown.

I dedicate this little book,
My wish that faults may be
Oerlooked, and if it merits praise,
It be accorded free
By comrades in the gallant force,
That ever won renown,
Who wear upon each loyal breast
The badge of Harp and Crown.
Joe Latimer

The pride that Joe Latimer had in his job is plain to be seen. Another police poet James Greer/James McBryde, who had been writing poetry from the early 1930's, wrote a poem about leaving the job, which was published in the Gazette in 1973. The last verse is rather sad - it goes as follows:-

When he had just a month or two to run
He bragged that soon he'd start to live again.
That day came; "How everything's as right as rain."
Some travelling school-kids thought it was great fun
To see a big man crying in the train.
James Greer

The Northern Ireland Retired Police Officers' Association (NIRPOA) publishes a quarterly magazine, 'Re-Union', to entertain and provide news and information on functions, events etc. Re-Union actively encourages writers to submit articles, humorous or historical, on aspects of police life and work in Northern Ireland, and in particular the Royal Ulster Constabulary.

To increase and enhance its list of writers NIRPOA consulted with the Police Rehabilitation and Retraining Trust (PRRT) to establish a Creative Writing Course. PRRT welcomed this initiative but, before proceeding with such a course, first sought to obtain the views of members by holding two seminars. The first was held on 22nd March 2007, which was facilitated by the University of Ulster; the second was held on 28th June 2007, facilitated by the Northern Ireland Creative Writers Network. The outcome was very surprising.

Among those who attended it was clear that there was not a strong desire to engage in a creative writing course but there was an identifiable need to obtain information on many aspects of writing and publication. It was decided that this could be effected best by setting up a Writers' Group.

The first meeting of the new group was held on 28th September 2007. Phil Nicholls of Voluntary Arts Ireland had prepared a draft constitution and this was discussed at length during the meeting. The next meeting was on 15th October 2007 and this took the form of an Annual General Meeting when the constitution was adopted and officers and a committee elected.

What we have achieved...

- The Group formed on a sound financial basis
- An Annual General Meeting has been held, a Constitution agreed and officers elected for the years 2008/09/10
- Two successful Short Story Competitions held in 2008/9
- A successful Poetry Competition held in 2009
- Another Poetry Competition planned for 2010
- A number of information Seminars held
- Potential authors assisted in their work
- Visits by a number of prominent guest speakers from the literary world
- Visits by a number of prominent guest speakers from the University of Ulster
- A reading by the Maryfield Writers Group in a local library
- Preparation for an Anthology to be published
- Closer liaison to be formed with the NIRPOA/RUC GC Association branches

How can I help?

Ask yourself the following questions:-

Do I agree with what the Group is trying to achieve?
Would I like to maintain some links with my former colleagues?
Would I like to attend social or other events occasionally?
Would I like to help my former colleagues who wish to write prose or poetry?

IF YOUR ANSWER IS YES TO ANY OF THE ABOVE - PLEASE COMPLETE THE APPLICATION FORM BELOW

Maryfield Writers Group
APPLICATION FORM

Please complete the application form below and return to:
NIRPOA, 100 Belfast Road, Holywood, Co Down, BT18 9QY or Telephone 9039 3568

Surname _____

Forenames _____

Address _____

_____

Postcode _____

Email _____

Tel. No _____