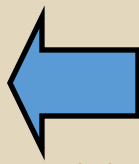


# REVIEWS - INDEX

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## 1. Cheval 5 Review by New Welsh Review Magazine NWR Issue

### Cheval - The Terry Hetherington Award Anthology 2012

by Aida Birch, Alan Perry (eds)

See the 'New Welsh Review Magazine'

Your comments are welcome.

### Further Reviews

There is a review by Joe Cushnam on his [droppedthemoon](#) online site:

*(extract) '...an impressive display of exciting, exhilarating and entertaining creative work. The selection proves that inventiveness, intelligent thinking, vibrancy, emotion, courage and humour are ripe for experimentation by enthusiastic and immensely talented young writers. The results here are quite extraordinary... It is a fine collection indeed...I was mesmerized by Lowri Llewelyn Astley's 'Spider', a blunt tale with dark humour and a tragic outcome. It is well worth buying the book just for this...there is so much here to applaud. If you are interested in fresh, new poetry and prose by a group of exciting writers, invest a little money and some time and be amazed, nay delighted that 'Cheval' is now available. Bravo!'*

also a 'Roundyhouse' magazine quote by Ann Sage:

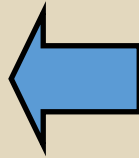
*'I'm not a lover of short stories but 'Spider' by the prize-winner, Lowri Llewelyn-Astley, was haunting.'*

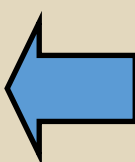
Quotes from the [NWR review](#) by Kat Dawes:

*'One of the stories that resonated most with me was João Morais's 'The Tea Party'...Dialect writing is done well here, as are the gradual revelation of character and the moving description of a common life experience'...M.A. Oliver-Semenov's four pieces explore Russia and a sense of inertia, the difficulty of changing things. The final poem 'Anthropogenic' is especially haunting...the collection as a whole is well worth exploring.'*

Quotes from the [Gwales](#) (Welsh Books Council) review by Caroline Clark:

*'The strongest pieces are the prose, short stories and memoirs, particularly Carys Shannon's 'Threads' ...and the vividly imagined 'Lyrebird Lament' by Georgia Williams...but the anthology does also contain some fine and memorable poems such as Rebecca John's 'Life in a Jar', Katherine Stansfield's 'Paragliders off Pen Dinas' and Emily Blewitt's three delicate pieces. Lowri Llewelyn-Astley's prize-winning story 'Spider' explores a murder in Antrim during the Irish Troubles... the characters have strong individual voices but the story also suggests the plight of the innocent Irish damned by association with the extremists... Among the poems and stories in the appendix, Jonathan Edwards' poems show a good ear and a sense of humour. Tyler Keevil's short story 'Wake Up' is subtly nuanced and Rose Widlake captures with great clarity the sensations and point of view of a young child in 'My Irish Grandparents'. Jemma King's horrific poem 'Viktor's Trap' is perhaps the most striking of the whole collection.'*





## 2. Cheval 6 Review by Roundyhouse

### Cheval 6 Review by Roundyhouse

Cheval 6 • Editors: Jonathan Edwards and Alan Perry • Parthian • 173pp • £7.99  
ISBN: 978-1-908946-45-4

This anthology is a thoroughly worthwhile one, in that it celebrates and recalls the life and work of the late Terry Hetherington and in that it gives a platform to young Welsh writers by publishing a selection of the best work from the annual competition for the Terry Hetherington Award. And what gives it

a real lift is the extraordinarily fine quality of so much of the writing which it publishes.

The guest editor is Jonathan Edwards, a past winner of the Competition and a poet whose first collection is due from Seren in 2014. I would agree absolutely with his and Alan Perry's choice of writers who comprise

their first three, although I would have found myself desperately hard pressed to choose an absolute winner from the three.

A thoroughly deserving First Prize winner for all that is Joao Owain Morais, whose powerful story about working-class Cardiff kept reminding me of many of the stories of the late Leonora Brito. His hero is the teenage Jordan whose recent loss of his father is making it profoundly difficult for him to relate to his mother and whose redeeming angel is the hard-man neighbour Big Steve. For all its toughness, the story could in fact have become mawkish but Morais' fictional control is such that we are left finally with a draught of very strong feeling and empathy.

Sharing the Second Prize are Sion Tomos Owen and Natalie Holborow, whose poem *Graig y Nos* is a strong piece of personal documentary, but it was her second poem, *Gwyliau'r Haf*, which really struck me. Compressed, oblique but, to my mind, deeply romantic, it tells of a relationship whose characters move between Swansea, Oxford and (I think) Bath. The complexity of its detail and its surges of lyricism do every justice to both places and persons. I read perhaps two or three poetry magazines a month and have read few poems this year which have lingered with me so touchingly.

The opening of Sion Tomos Owen's *Running into the Ground* reminded me strikingly of Alan Sillitoe's novella *The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner*, since, as the story starts, Owen's hero too is running, running, running. The comparison may not be altogether superficial, since Owen's hero has much to run from and the running is in part a search for freedom. Like Morais' Jordan he has a bereavement to cope with, but at his back also

is the whole screwed-up complex of emotion which the mining valleys have carried through from the Thatcher era. Owen sedulously avoids both sentiment and stridency in this deeply moving story.

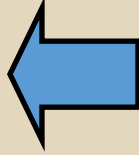
The three Highly Commended entries are also very fine. Thomas Morris' story *Too Many TVs* begins in a manner of mild farce but moves skilfully and movingly into a deepening comic pathos. Lowri Llewelyn-Astley's story *Blue Smarties* is successfully lurid and, again, concludes with real compassion. I very much enjoyed the two poems by Grace Gay, who is not afraid to commit herself to rich texture and whose two poems of autumn are infused by the warmth of the relationships whose presence, felt between the lines, is so well captured.

The three Commended entries include an extremely ambitious piece by Sophie Brown, whose *How to Float* presents a mental disorder through surrealism and meshes the two successfully. Eve Elizabeth Moriarty's poem *Berlin* offers a convincing picture through its strong mass of detail and texture. I particularly enjoyed the two compact and witty poems by Carl Griffin.

This batch of writing is complemented by fifteen other pieces from twelve other very promising writers. Among them I particularly enjoyed Liz Wride's story *The Right Side a' Town*, which maybe suffers a little because of the plethora of plot-twists on its last page, but is still both splendidly energetic and warmly compassionate.

Finally, to round off a stimulating mix, we get contributions by six past winners, including Tyler Keevil and Anna Lewis, who have already proceeded to publishing success.

*Robert Nisbet*



### 3. Cheval 7 Review by Aida Birch

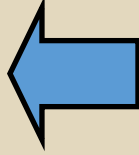
2014, pb, ISBN 978-1-909844-89-6, £7.99, 206 pages

Parthian Books, The Old Surgery, Napier Street, Cardigan, Wales, SA43 1ED, UK

This collection of writing collects the winners and other best entries submitted to the Terry Hetherington Young Writers' Award, along with new work from previous winners and commended entrants (a rather nice idea to help popularise successful writers' work), showcasing the best young Welsh talents.

There is a good variety of work in this anthology, including two poems by the late Terry Hetherington, and all of the pieces are excellent. My favourite poems had to be Resolution by Emily Blewitt (in which she resolves to "make myself like Morticia Adams" and to "hang gilded mirrors, watch myself / pass without reflection"), Buttons by Grace Gay ("The photograph curls on a shelf / in the back room / of his mother's house"), Fireplace by Evan L. John ("My night is kindled in jitters of flame / that stay unevenly angry / and fluidly calm") and The Audacity of Water by Whyt Pugh ("The cold cause the pipes / to crack. It tore the iron").

Although I enjoyed the poems more the prose was also good. In particular, I enjoyed short but amusing Unofficial Rules of Engagement on the Siberian Bus System by Marc Oliver-Semenov. Overall, Cheval is a successful showcase for some very talented young writers and well worth reading. Recommended.



## 4. Cheval 7 Review by Eadaoin Lynch

[Cheval](#), the publication for winning entrants to the Terry Hetherington Young Writers' Award, produced its seventh anthology last year. Its aim, 'to provide a platform for young people to express themselves through the medium of poetry and prose', lives on as a dedication to the late Terry Hetherington, whose ethos was of encouragement and support. Hetherington was a creative writing teacher and significant source of comfort and assistance for young Welsh writers. See [Terry Hetherington's portfolio](#)

Entries are arranged alphabetically according to the author's surname, with the exception of the dedicatory poem to Terry Hetherington, Nigel Jenkins' 'Some Lines to Request Poteen', and four poems by Hetherington himself which bookend the anthology. Welsh references abound in each piece within the collection, particularly the three winning entries, Robin Ganderton's 'And So We Beat On', Siôn Tomos Owen's 'Every Cloud', and Georgia Carys Williams' 'Turnstones'.

Ganderton's short story took first prize for the award, having deftly utilised the difficult form of vignettes, and in less than ten pages offers a tender insight into his characters, such as 'We cannot believe, we will not believe, and we do not believe until one pale yellow day in early April, with sunbeams raking the carpet, when he picks up his Tanglewood and slowly, hesitatingly, begins to pick out a tune.'

The first poem of the collection, Maria Apichella's 'Fire', displays a thorough understanding of the intensity of the lyric form, with its powerful last line, 'My prayer will burn for days.' Emily Blewett's 'Noir', a poem that was highly commended for the award, illustrates a progressive use of mythology mixed in with modern life:

*"I have wanted the killer-blow: / my femme fatale, her smile glowing... / Thin, expensive cigarettes / lit by someone, somewhere else."*

Tom Gatehouse's short story, 'Portugese Lesson: O Acidente', fuses English and Portuguese seamlessly. His accompanying poem, a villanelle, demonstrates his dexterity and confidence. Similarly, Natalie Ann Holobrow's 'London' is an astonishingly vivid poem, capturing the essence of the British capital, with 'cindered veins', 'Primrose Hill, rolled wide by the fog', and 'slack-jawed Highgate'. In addition, Luke Smith's story 'From Cambridge to King's Cross', illustrates a self-consciousness that conceals the youth of its author. The internal monologue form interspersed with the main character's own prose writing within the story represents the high standard of writing and willingness to experiment that can be seen throughout [Cheval 7](#).

The last seventy pages are devoted to commended entrants and previous winners' new work, notably Glyn Edwards' 'The Grave of a Ground', which requires the reader to fold out the page and read the literally, and significantly, cross-shaped poem and its powerful use of language:

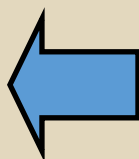
*"Outside the club is an ashen mound. A handful / of black sawdust, weightless and portentous. / A coffin is not as heavy as a death."*

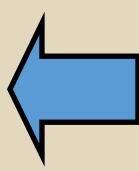
The experimentations with form in both prose and poetry highlight the considerable abilities of the Welsh writers published here. As Aida Birch outlines in the Foreword, 'The 2014 Terry Hetherington Young Writers' Award brought the judges of the

competition a very hard task indeed. The submissions have all been particularly praiseworthy.' Many of the works published here read as though written by established authors, displaying a confidence in tone, content and form that belies their experience.

As represented on [Cheval 7](#)'s striking front cover, 2014 had a special significance as the centenary of Dylan Thomas' birth and the beginning of World War One. As such, Jonathan Edwards outlines in the preface, '2014 is the year of looking backwards.'" But [Cheval 7](#) is 'a book... that looks relentlessly forward.' The talent of its writers promises a great deal in the future.

**[Éadaoin Lynch is a contributor to New Welsh Review online](#)**





## 5. Cheval 8 Review by Carillon Issue 43 Autumn/Winter 2015

*The Terry Hetherington Award anthology 2015*

<https://chevalwriters.org.uk>

*Published by Parthian Books, Cardigan, Wales*

<https://parthianbooks.com>

*240-page paperback. Price £7.99*

The Terry Hetherington Award is open to young people, 18 - 30, living, studying or on contract in Wales, or whose main home is in Wales but are studying or on contract elsewhere. Entries must be received by 31st January of the application year. First prize is £1000.00. There are two sections: poetry and short fiction.

Cheval 8, is of course, the eighth Award anthology. Top and tailed by four Terry Hetherington poems, it contains the winners and other exemplary entries plus new poems and stories from previous winners and commended entrants. This makes for an excellent read and for the £7.99 price an absolute bargain.

The winner is the poem, *Blood Sugar*, by Natalie Ann Holborow. An uneasy read about experiencing Type 1 diabetes: *bony and awkward on a starched white bed/and learned phlebotomy was a bloody word*. Second prize went to Richard Lewis for his poem, *Work in Progress*, which begins: *You stand in my doorway/wrapped up like an apology*. Third prize went to a story - *Rossiya*, by Eluned Gramich - two young female tourists on a train in Russia.

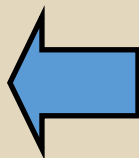
Highly Commended were: Aimee Bray (*Persephone's Underworld* [story]); Claire Houguez (*Within the Yellow Plumage* [story]); Lowri Llewelyn-Astley (*Melon* [story]); Commended were: Lucy Ann Jones (*Table Set for Two* [poem]); Nicole Payan (*Sweet Peas* [story]); Liz Wride (*Welsh Dragons* [story]).

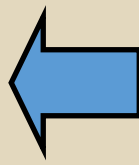


Interesting that stories take most of the lower rankings, and there seems to be a heavier weighting amongst the 'Previous' section. A couple of first lines took my fancy: *It was Jack's sixth Sunday of being a saint* (Vinegar - Natalie Ann Holborow); *My complete lack of a corpse was rather inconvenient* (The Big Send Off - Whyt Pugh).

Themes and topics are, as you'd expect, varied. For example, amongst the poems we can find a lady known best to pigeons - but the pigeons join her coos/as she continues her search for George; and A Birmingham Underpass, where - *The walls grow darker,/lined by fumes*. In the stories there's one about a man too mean to waste a good bullet on a dog. and a shop girl's unexpected encounter with her boss.

It is difficult to give more than the tiniest flavour of such a wide-ranging book. As said earlier, it is an excellent read. Indeed, on this evidence the future of Welsh writing is secure for decades to come and this new generation promises to be at least equal to its forebears. My recommendation: poet or story writer - buy the book. And if you are Welsh and young - enter!





## 6. Cheval 8 Review by DJ Tyrer, The Supplement Sept 2016

Cheval 8 edited by Alan Perry & Jonathan Edwards

£7.99, 227pp, ISBN 978-1-910901-03-88

<https://parthianbooks.com> Parthian, Cardigan, SA43

1ED, UK Available from Amazon at

[https://www.amazon.co.uk/Cheval- Jonathan-Edwards/dp/1910901032/](https://www.amazon.co.uk/Cheval-Jonathan-Edwards/dp/1910901032/) and

[https://www.amazon.com/Cheval- Jonathan-Edwards/dp/1910901032/](https://www.amazon.com/Cheval-Jonathan-Edwards/dp/1910901032/)

Cheval is a high-quality paperback annual of poetry and fiction submitted to The Terry Hetherington Young Writers' Award, along with new work by previous winners and commended entrants, and the profits from sale serve to fund the next year's award.

The volume opens with two poems by Terry Hetherington, including the wonderful The Gift ("You of the earth, of the colour in sound, / and the night's eye poised above me"). Of the many excellent pieces, I especially liked the story Persephone's Underworld by Aimee Bray ("The following morning, I felt like I was armouring myself for war" is a brilliant line), Jenni Derrick's poem The Happy Man ("They didn't even realise they were sad. / Lost in the tunnel for so long, / they had forgotten there was light outside."), Natalie Ann Holborow's first- prize-winning poem Blood Sugar ("A spoonful of sugar with the medicine / and I'm sicker than before"), Claire Hougez's wonderfully-written story Within the Yellow Plumage (in which we see "Within the yellow plumage is a harvest moon of a face, a purple

bobbed wig, lavish red lips.”) and David Schonthal’s thoughtful story Cairn.

An excellent collection guaranteed to enthrall, it and the previous seven volumes are well worth reading. Highly recommended.

