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[Episode 87 - Bristol & Bath](#) - (07/11/2016)

Host: David Turner - **DT**

Guests: Clive Birnie - **CB**, Lucy English - **LE**, Rebecca Tantony – **RT**

Transcript edited by: Harriet Foyster (28/06/2017)

Introduction:

DT: Hello this is the Lunar Poetry Podcast, I'm David Turner. This episode was recorded in Bristol and is an exploration of the spoken word scene in and around Bristol and Bath in the southwest of England. It takes the form of a roundtable discussion hosted by me and I'm joined by local poet Rebecca Tantony, poet and lecturer at Bath Spa University Lucy English, and founder of the publisher [Burning Eye Books](#) Clive Birnie. Coming up there's lots of

interesting chat about how spoken word in Bristol and Bath compares to the rest of the UK as well as readings from my guests.

This episode was produced with the Arts Council England funding I received this summer so a big thank you to them for making it possible for us to travel down to Bristol and record this conversation. The conversation took place at a venue in central Bristol called [Paper Arts](#), and Paper Arts is a not for profit social enterprise committed to providing employment opportunities to young people to help them gain the skills, knowledge and experience to follow a career in the creative industries. And I really recommend you visit them if you're in Bristol.

They've got a great little shop and a cafe and a fantastic and reasonably priced room you can hire for workshops and/or podcast recordings. Finally as always you can follow everything we're up to at Lunar Poetry Podcast on [Soundcloud](#), [Facebook](#) and Tumblr or [Silent Tongue](#) on Twitter, and all of our content is available for free on iTunes and [Stitcher](#). If you like what we put out then please do tell people about us because word of mouth is definitely our most effective marketing tool. Enjoy the conversation.

Conversation:

DT: Hello. This is the Lunar Poetry Podcast, my name is David Turner and today I am in Bristol in the southwest of England. I am at a place called Paper Arts and I will plug it before anything else starts because it's wonderful. It's basically a community youth centre and they're not for profit. Everything that happens here, all the workshops that run, all the money is put back in to all the great stuff they do here. I didn't make any proper notes. I will tell you all about it another time. My guests are going to introduce themselves, we'll start over here.

LE: Hi I'm Lucy English. I'm Reader in Creative Writing at Bath Spa University. Nobody knows what a reader is. It's a sort of Senior Lecturer at Bath Spa University where I teach Spoken Word and Performance Poetry. I'm also a spoken word poet myself and started performing way back in the mid-nineties.

RT: Hello my name is Rebecca Tantony. I'm a writer based in Bristol, primarily a spoken word artist but I also write page poetry and flash non-fiction and I'm very happy to be here.

CB: I'm Clive Birnie. I run this little poetry press called Burning Eye which focuses on spoken word poetry. And honoured to say that I published both Lucy and Rebecca.

DT: This is always the way, when you get any number of poets... So I only met Lucy and Rebecca this morning, I met Clive at the [Poetry Book Fair](#) in London before but... You can choose any three poets in Britain and they'll be in some way connected, such as publishing them or mentoring them, which we'll come on to later. So I don't know Bristol that well, only socially. My sister used to live here and got married here but I don't know what happens with poetry, so I was going to start with my impression of the place, which is that it has got this long history and tradition of spoken word, most recently. Is that a fair

representation or a fair thought? And B: does it sort of undervalue what else is happening here?

CB: I think there is a more diverse poetry scene in Bristol than just spoken word. And I think it's more of a cross over as well. I think there are a lot of poets working in Bristol who step in and out, or on and off the stage. We've just had the [Bristol Poetry Festival](#) happening here and although one of the big events is always the poetry slam, actually there's half a dozen other really solidly attended events that aren't spoken word readings at all. And it's a long established and successful poetry festival so I think that speaks that there is a wider poetry community here in Bristol, although it has always had, I think since your first era back in the 90s Lucy, there has always been a very strong spoken word scene.

LE: I think what's really interesting about the Bristol spoken word scene is that it's constantly reinventing itself. I mean I was part of a very, very lively scene back in the sort of mid to late nineties and the spirit of that survives but not necessarily the people that were involved in it. I mean it seems to be a scene that's constantly picking up new voices and new representations. And I actually find that quite exciting rather than it's a scene that's crystallized and has been there, intact, since the nineties. It seems like there's new spoken word nights popping up every month really, you know with a different group of people that go there.

RT: Yeah and I feel like there's a lot of cross-collaboration with art forms in Bristol. I think there's a lot of merging of different types of literature with other types of art forms, with music and dance and film which I think is really exciting.

DT: Actually that was going to be my next question because my main idea of the creative scene in Bristol is linked to music from the mid to late 90s and onwards and the influence that that has had. But I'm just wondering how much that is the main influence and how much it comes down to the theatre tradition in the city as well?

RT: Yeah I think all of those art forms are really vibrant here in their own right and independently but as I said I think there is also a lot of crossover. So there's a lot of... We've just worked on a show together, Lucy and I, she's the producer and I'm the writer and performer, which merges theatre and spoken word together and we're working with a dance director as well, and a designer who comes from a very kind of art background and has exhibited her work at [MoMA](#) in America. So already with that example there's four different mediums there that are combining.

LE: I think that's a particular feature of Bristol that you can create collaborative projects that are very crossover, that may contain music, that may contain performance, may contain dance. And there's something about the spirit of Bristol that actually sort of welcomes those types of ventures. I think that's really exciting actually.

RT: And I think it's a lovely scene. I really remember an ex boyfriend of mine saying to me, he is an artist, and him saying "I can't believe how supportive all you poets are of each other". There's just constant, you know... If you get offered a job and you can't do it you instantly send it to a friend who's a poet and everyone kind of says each other's words,

when you're performing on stage you can see, like Sally always does it. I can see her mouth, [Sally Jenkinson](#), mouthing my poems back to me and there's just a really nice kind of supportive and great atmosphere I think that goes along with the world of poetry in Bristol.

CB: I think there's something about Bristol in that as well, there's the character of Bristol which is... We call it the People's Republic of Bristol and Bristol does have its own character even though you can tell from mine and Lucy's accents that we weren't necessarily born here. I don't know where you originate from Rebecca?

RT: I was born in Kent, in Margate.

CB: In Kent? Yeah. So we're all incomers really. Although I've been here for nearly 30 years. You've been here for over 20 years haven't you?

RT: I've been here for 20 something yeah.

LE: Thirty one years.

CB: Thirty one years there you go. Bristol does that to people, you come here and you fall in love with the place and stick to it. It just has a vibrant culture and as you say it's not just I think the poetry and spoken word scene that reinvents itself, just culturally I think Bristol is the kind of place that keeps reinventing itself. And in a good way, in a good way.

DT: I've often seen, I don't know whether this is relevant to anyone around the table, but when I visited Lyon in the southeast of France and it's got a similar feeling in that there are a lot of artists living there. They've made a decision not to live in the capital. And it's not because they've completely dismissed what's happening there but they've just found a place...

This links back to one of the reasons that I was first so attracted to reading regularly at spoken word nights because my background was in galleries and fine art and stuff, and people will step on your neck to get in front of you. And in general, it does exist a little bit with poets as well, but they just perhaps won't do it to your face. But in general the spoken word scene and the poetry scene, you're right, if someone turns down a job then they won't say no to a job, there'll be a list of names of people that they feel are capable of filling that gap and there is a real community.

LE: I think it's delightfully uncompetitive in Bristol that although there are various different spoken words nights they haven't got that fierce competition against each other, there is a feeling of collaboration that I've never felt anybody stepping on my neck in Bristol at all and I wouldn't even think of stepping on someone else's neck. And I think that's the thing about the older, you know the people who have been around doing spoken word for longer like me, I feel completely comfortable with saying to Rebecca "look here's a gig or workshop I can't do. Would you like to do it?" I don't feel I need to own everything. And I think that's actually quite a vital part of the Bristol scene, there is that handing down of skills.

RT: It's funny some... I think it was [Malaika](#) actually, a poet in Bristol said to me recently "oh yeah and you're the generation before us." And I kind of stopped in my tracks because I'm so used to being this kind of new generation of poets, me and Sally and Vanessa, and actually she was right. There is this kind of new wave of poets that are eighteen, nineteen, that have just come out of university or are just going into university, and similar to what you just said Lucy there is definitely a kind of... Yeah there's a handing down of work or a promoting of those new voices. And it kind of goes hand in hand with the job of being a poet I think, is being in support of those who are beginning and that feels good.

LE: But that's very much part of Bristol. You could go and see a band in Bristol and in the audience will be a 17 year old, a 47 year old and a 77 year old all enjoying the music. I mean I just wonder if there are many other cities in the UK where you would have that.

CB: Yeah I don't know I've been here so long now. But I'm conscious that I've gone from being, over my time in Bristol, one of the young people in the audience to one of the older people in the audience. When you suddenly wake up and realize it it's a bit of a cold shock. And you think 'I'm that old bloke in the Sonic Youth t shirt I used to see at gigs, oh no.'

LE: Yeah the one dancing!

CB: Yeah! You slide gently over to the bar and prop yourself up and think 'oh I'll shut up now.'

DT: I came to poetry in my early 30s so immediately felt like I was the guy at the back with the Newcastle Brown Ale. And it's quite strange because the people I would consider my peers, like people that were starting out at the same time, are often 15 years younger than me. But it's not... You don't recognise any of those things at a reading do you? Because it is much more, even in London which I would say is an ultra-competitive city in all art forms usually, even in that city it is quite uncompetitive. I was just wondering, because I strongly believe that as well, Lucy, that it's remarkably uncompetitive, but as we were talking before the recording about the new Nationwide adverts, which if anyone doesn't know they've chosen three, is it three in total, spoken word artists?

CB: I think so, I've seen three.

LE: They're doing more.

DT: They're going to do more aren't they yeah. But obviously there's going to be spoken word poetry shown in the middle of X Factor, it's going to raise the profile. I suppose my point is is there a danger that that lack of competitiveness will change and once... I'm just worried that ultimately if more money becomes available that's when...

LE: I think what's quite interesting about the Nationwide project, I'm only saying this because I was asked to write a poem for it which wasn't actually taken forward but was part of the ones that were considered, the brief was 'write very much what you want to write' not 'hey Nationwide's great!' You know? I thought that was quite an interesting way of using

spoken word, it was actually more about focussing on the poem rather than it as a sort of product placement.

And I thought well 'good on you Nationwide for actually choosing that route.' I don't know how successful it's going to be as sort of fostering Nationwide but certainly the poems I've seen connected with that particular advertisement I've thought 'well actually those poets have gone away and written sort of some damn fine poems.

DT: Actually yes we were talking last night with Lizzy, my girlfriend's, mum and she said she really likes the adverts but sort of forgets that they're for Nationwide. It's quite a nice thing because people take poetry away from it.

CB: It's been handled in that way though hasn't it? Where it's almost like 'here it is, this poem was brought to you by Nationwide, thank you very much.' And I think that kind of works. You know I think there have been other examples of where poetry has been used in advertising where it hasn't worked quite so well but I think they have been quite deftly handled and I think as [Hollie McNish](#) said about it as well was that she gets asked to do a lot, commercially, and she turns most of it down because she thinks carefully about what organizations and because it's a mutual... So slightly different in its corporate structure she felt more comfortable working with them. And I think giving exposure to other people like [Matt Abbott](#) who I think is probably not that well-known outside of his home territory up north...

DT: Actually since you mentioned his name I just wanted to plug. So he's got a record label called [Nymphs & Thugs](#) and you should definitely check them out. They recently, was it last week?... Released [Salena Godden](#)'s spoken word album. Definitely check out Nymphs & Thugs.

CB: They did indeed. I have to say though that Salena's album does come with a bit of a warning because I was laughing so hard listening to it in the car that I drifted across lanes on the motorway and nearly caused quite a serious incident, so be warned it is very, very funny.

DT: Poetry Will Cause Death.

CB: Yeah, yeah!

DT: But rather than questioning Nationwide's motives what I was really trying to get to is...

CB: When we start cutting each other's throats to get the gig?

DT: If poetry is seen as a way of getting on television, because that's perhaps the way the profile may change, it may seem to be a way of getting on to television.

RT: I think that will always boil down to the desire of the artists. For lots of poets, myself included, that isn't a motivation. So I think there is always a multitude of avenues to offer

poetry out. For example I'm going to come back to my show again. But in development of that particular show the idea that poetry has suddenly become so much more popular, it's being offered to mass audiences, and I was sort of questioning that intimacy of poetry when you go and see a performer live and there's not many people in a crowd, like is that going lost? So therefore we've developed a show that's delivered to one or two audience members at a time. I think there's always... There's a multitude of avenues as I said that artists can go down to make whatever's happening in the current climate suitable to them as artists. So I don't think we'll be cutting each other's throats.

CB: For me as well what you're doing with your show is a really great example of one of the things that I'm really interested in in how spoken word poetry is evolving and developing. So I mentioned earlier that I'd seen [Cecilia Knapp](#)'s show at the Cheltenham Festival. And so there are quite young writers like Cecilia and Rebecca working in a longer form. Now that doesn't lend itself to a 30 second TV ad, to me in many ways it's interesting that they've gone for spoken word poets for those ads, and I've got a couple of thoughts on that which I'll try not to take up too much time explaining. But one is that you could argue that more lyric, short form poetry, you know in the other half of the poetry world, competitions and submissions guidelines often say maximum 25 or 40 lines, so those short poems would lend themselves very well to 30 second TV ads.

But my other interesting thing about it I think, and this is where I sometimes argue that spoken word poetry is a movement, it's a literary movement and no one recognizes that yet and in 100 years time there will be this thing called... You know they'll have a name for it and I don't know what it will be but it'll be recognized as something. Because there are characteristics about it that are why they've come to it for TV ads in that it tends to be written about real life, ordinary stuff, the ebb and flow of human experience, there aren't many spoken word poets out there talking about the rugged moors and the chaffinch.

And I'm not saying those are bad things, you'll find my bookshelf at home is full of that sort of poetry and I love it for good reason. But what I love about the spoken word scene is it's people grappling with what's happening now. We were talking about the Bristol Poetry Slam, somebody did a poem about about Donald Trump and his misogyny, which was obviously exploding all over the news this week and somebody comes to a slam at the weekend with a poem about it.

LE: Yes, it's very topical.

CB: It's immediate and topical. But it's written also in plain language, in everyday English, in forms of words that people are familiar with.

RT: It's accessible and powerful.

CB: I think that's why it works. People like Hollie McNish, Matt Abbott and I can't think who the third one is, I'm sure I've seen the third advert and I can't think of it for the life of me, it's a young guy sat in a cafe and I don't know his name.

DT: I know the name of the cafe.

CB: Can somebody Google it while we we're talking?

RT: I kind of trust these poets. I trust their writing, I trust them as humans to kind of deliver something which is powerful and accessible regardless of who has asked them to do it, and I don't think it's a bad thing at all.

LE: I would hate to see a sort of X Factor version. I mean obviously the difficulty with television is that tends to favour the young and attractive and what I find, being an older person, what I find lovely about the spoken word scene is that it takes on a multitude of voices, that it isn't age restricted, that you've got spoken word poets who are you know in their fifties and sixties and possibly even older. That it hasn't just got that sort of cute face thing that sometimes happens with music.

DT: Actually I've just worked out how to say it without naming the person so I can bring it up now but another reason I had this slight worry is because in an e-mail exchange that I was having with an agent that I obviously wont name, they did ask me if I would be able to recommend any poets to audition for Britain's Got Talent. And actually it's important for me to differentiate between the point that I don't worry about the way the poets will behave, it's the way the machine works, and the media. And will people be swallowed up?

Because it's very easy for agents to tell, especially younger artists, that this is the way that the industry is going and if you're not on board you're going to miss out somehow. The dangerous thing about that is not so much... Well one, it's possible to take advantage of people, but another thing is that it does split the scene. You know what exists now and community that is around, with money these things are always possible to split open.

LE: I think spoken word is... That has happened with spoken word before. I mean years back there was [Murray Lachlan Young](#) who was given an awful lot of money and was promoted.

DT: And a TV show!

LE: And a TV show and everything. And I wont like to say he bombed spectacularly, but he certainly did not achieve what was expected of him. And I think the spoken word scene actually would be a very difficult thing to sort of wrap up, you know by the popular media, because I think it...

CB: I just think the popular media would go for the simplest thing they could find.

DT: But isn't that the danger?

CB: It would end up being a bit [Pam Ayres](#)-y. But I don't think that would harm the scene, because we've already got the few superstars, you know [Kate Tempest](#) is always held up as being the great example but Kate's a very distinct artist in her own right who does very much her own thing.

LE: She develops her art form in the way that she wants, she's not being fed.

CB: She does. Not at all. And she's not just the most famous version of a hundred artists who are doing the same thing. She's distinct, you know, and isn't necessarily representative of the wider spoken word scene in many ways. [Sugar J](#), by the way, the other poet. Sugar J Poet.

DT: There we go.

CB: Well it felt wrong to talk about it and not reference the guy. It's a good film worth checking out.

RT: I suppose as well within the mainstreams of anything you have always got your powerful voices that stand out. For example I think Beyonce's new album was phenomenal, I think Kendrick Lamar is a really interesting voice in the world of hip hop. And they stand out because of the language they're choosing to use, and therefore I think that would also be happening if spoken word became even more popular. I think it would be those voices who are speaking of politics, empowerment, equality, etcetera that would really stand out and represent the spoken word scene. I don't know if you're representing equality and empowerment how that could bring division, if that makes sense?

DT: I'm going to have to get a sound effect made for when I make these really professional segues. But talking of powerful voices let's have a reading. And we'll start with Clive.

CB: Okay well I'm going to read two poems from recent Burning Eye Books. The first one is from [James Bunting](#)'s book [Conkers](#) which is literally just out. And although James is no longer in Bristol his love of Bristol... He's from Bristol and I first met him here, and he was quite a useful collaborator in the early days of Burning Eye. He co-edited an anthology [Rhyming Thunder](#) which is book of young poets back in 2012, it was our second or third book, and features people who are now sort of familiar names like [Vanessa Kisuule](#) and [Harry Baker](#) and [Deanna Rodger](#) and [Bridget Minamore](#) and [Rob Auton](#), [Ray Antrobus](#), there are loads of people in there who have gone on. So they have good eyes these guys. It's a long poem, it's called Bones, so I'm only going to read the end bit of it because this is the poem that's always in my head when I think of James. I remember him reading it at so many nights around Bristol. But I'll carry on so this is from Bones by James Bunting.

Bones

And the night is already here now,
you can see it shot full of stars,
so I'll walk down to the beach alone
leave behind the sound of cars.
And the stars reflect in the water,
my father always told me they're the moon's sons

and the sun's daughters
and I don't burn as bright as them,
that's just not the way that I was born,
so, I'll flip a coin in the sand,
fix up how I'm torn between staying here or going
back to the city I love
where I can walk the familiar streets
with demons below and angels above.
And the fates can stand on every corner,
fixing me with a stare,
I'll just drop my eyes and walk on by,
cover my ears to the distant screams and the muffled prayers.

I don't have much for you,
but I can promise you one thing:
if you look for me on the beach, I'll show you the tide
bright and sparkling;
if we look up we'll see the clouds begin to turn;
and if we wait for long enough we'll see the horizon burn;
but when you get there,
if you should just find my skeleton,
picked clean as stones,
you'll find a map of Bristol etched upon my bones.
©James Bunting

CB: I'm sure you remember that as well Rebecca.

RT: I do yes.

CB: And then the second one is from [Hannah Teasdale](#) who is a poet from Bath, and I have to read the quote here because as [Liv Torc](#) said about her book, which is called [Laid Bare](#), "this book is a gift of emotion. It's knotty and heartbreaking and effortless. If Joni Mitchell had six kids, a bottle of Valium and a pizza in the oven, this is what she would have written." And this is the opening poem. It's called;

Best Intentions

Your explanation for the letter, the one
you wrote in those hazy days
so long ago when

believing you could write wrongs better –
it didn't matter, you didn't grasp
I was too young to understand
the 'deeper connection' that was on offer
and as you found pleasure
in my cold hands, we both learnt
that I was never meant to be
your lover.
I didn't want to be caressed
by a more mature 'gentle touch'
but to lie across your kitchen table
and suck your joint after
I'd been fucked.
I didn't want to hear you say you love me –
but preferred to watch you consume
my sugared lies in bitesize pieces.
You have no reason to say
you're sorry.
It wasn't me whose heart grew lonely.
It isn't me whose tears won't dry.

©Hannah M Teasdale

CB: I think that's kind of an emblematic Hannah poem really. She's frank and ballsy and I saw her first at a slam and tried to give her such high marks and every time... I was judging the writing, somebody else judged the performance, somebody else judged the audience reaction. I tried to give her such high marks for the writing that she won but she came second.

DT: And as [Adam Buxton](#) says on his really great podcast "please insert your own beeps, I'm not doing it." Next up Rebecca.

RT: Okay this is a poem called The Voice, The Sound, The Song and it was written in response to Nicky Morgan's rejection to make sex and relationship education compulsory in secondary schools. Yeah I was just shocked when I heard that I think. If I had had access to a little bit more education when it came to matters of sex I probably wouldn't have got myself in half the pickles that I did.

[The author has not given permission for this poem to be reproduced in this transcript.]

DT: Thank you very much. Now Lucy.

LE: Okay. This is the title poem from the 2014 collection [Prayer to Imperfection](#) published by Burning Eye.

PRAYER TO IMPERFECTION

May I never be perfect.
Because I love mistakes and flaws in things.

Like the gumboots with a hole in.
Like the cake that went soggy in the middle.
Like the birthmark on the shoulder.
Like the three days it rained on your Devon home.

The gumboots with a hole in:
I only noticed they had a hole when I was half way
wading across the stream
and I would never have crossed that stream
unless I was wearing gumboots.

The cake that went soggy:
Believe me it tasted better
with that uncooked cake, chocolate chip
and wooden spoon taste I hadn't tasted since I was eight.
I had forgotten it could taste so good.

The birthmark on the shoulder:
And how would I know you had a map of
Africa on your back until you took your shirt off?
And it didn't matter about the rain when we had
each other to explore.

Was it sorrow or was it joy?
We can talk right through the night.
Jam and bagels in the conservatory;
pink and red petunias and the spider's webs.
Does your loss feel as deep as mine?

May I never be perfect
because I love the jumps and turns.
The bust condom that was my youngest son.
The muddled up dates that were my middle one.
The what the hell I'm sure it's safe that was my eldest one.
The relationship that ended and then I met a kinder man.
The party I didn't go to. The interview I missed.
The dress I ripped. The shoes that broke. The luggage lost. The meal spoiled.
The exam I flunked. The ink ran out. The hair cut horror. The bad smell date.

The clingy friend. The holiday flop. The Downs syndrome child. My dad who died.

May I never be perfect.
May I understand the wrinkles, the blots the rips.
My rocky landscape.
So unchartered. So unplanned.

©Lucy English

DT: Thank you, all of you.

CB: Now ordinarily of course at spoken word events there would be a thunderous applause because we encourage noise. As Dan Cockerill would say if he was here we need some shakers to get a bit of mayhem going.

DT: But this event is organised by me and it will be punctuated with awkward silences okay?

CB: We can do that too.

DT: Yeah. Actually I sort of wonder because I haven't been doing this whole recording thing that long and in my preparation notes that I give to people I think I should include that everyone is welcome to applaud at the end. But I don't know, I think once you put the microphone on someone you suddenly become a bit worried about clapping. But like you can insert your own bleeps you can all insert your own applause at home.

CB: And woops and cheers.

DT: Yeah we'll start whooping.

CB: There's a finger clicking thing that happens now, have you heard that?

LE: That's from America!

CB: It's a bit New York isn't it?

RT: When I lived in the States they all did that.

LE: That's a slam thing, that's America's slam thing.

DT: I'm going to get a sample of Kriss Akabusi whooping and cheering because if anyone's going to woop and cheer then I want Kriss.

RT: You want Kriss.

DT: I was going to say I want Kriss Akabusi wooping at my funeral. Back to the chat right? I wanted to talk now specifically about Bristol, so if anyone was going to come for a visit here. And in this it's important to include Bath because it's so close and while I'm down this way we may as well talk about it as a region, without lumping the south west together too much. But they're close enough. Maybe we should just start with some tips on what to see, what's going on at the moment, any recommendations, Rebecca? And you can plug your own stuff and don't feel guilty about it that's absolutely fine.

RT: Okay. Poetry nights, Malaika does a great night called [Milk](#), I think that's happening tomorrow isn't it?

DT: It's happening tomorrow night yes. Don't you lot worry about when tomorrow night is.

RT: Yeah don't you worry about that.

CB: Also they've got a thing at the [Tobacco Factory](#). The Tobacco Factory is a theatre... I don't want to backtrack but the history of Bristol is that it had a massive tobacco industry at one point, and a lot of the big buildings and things around Bristol were funded by the wealth of the tobacco factory which of course links back in to Bristol's rather chequered history as a slave port of course. But the Tobacco Factory is an old tobacco factory, as the name gives away, that is converted into a theatre that does a lot of community stuff and puts on some great productions. Malaika works there sometimes and so every now and then they give her the main theatre to put on a bigger event and so she's got one of those coming this Thursday.

DT: Yes definitely check out Milk, I'm going to put a link on here anyway, because Malaika was due to be a guest today but she's unfortunately ill so couldn't join us. But yeah there will be a link to Facebook for Milk at least because they do put events on at different venues don't they?

LE: In Bath my students have been running a night called [Rhyme and Reason](#), they run it every month actually in the city of Bath and that's been drawing in a lot of the spoken word poets in Bath, and they also run a night on the campus. I think what they're trying to do this year is to link up with the nights in Bristol as well and do a sort of hosting, sort of Rhyme and Reason hosts Milk, or Milk hosts Rhyme and Reason.

CB: Ah what a great Idea.

LE: Yeah. A student called [Eliza Burmestre](#) has been their intern, the Rhyme and Reason intern for the year. It was set up by [Sam Boarer](#) actually, some years back, and now [Nick Compton](#) is running it. And he's very keen to bring the students forward and they can take it on as a sort of business venture really.

DT: I think it would be a really nice idea to have exchange programmes between spoken word nights or poetry nights around the country. It may be an idea for someone that's looking for an idea to nag the Arts Council about.

LE: I think it keeps the scene fresh as well because what can happen in the spoken word scene is that if you've got a night going it is always the same people that come along to that night. So it is really good to have guest poets.

CB: Well you say that actually Lucy but one of the best nights in Bristol, long established, is called [Blah Blah Blah](#) which is curated by [Anna Freeman](#), who many people listening to this have probably heard of or come across. It's usually at the [Bristol Old Vic](#) but at the minute they're doing some refurbishment work at the Old Vic so it's at [The Wardrobe Theatre](#) which is another interesting little community theatre out in a sort of more ragged corner of Bristol. And I went to the first one at The Wardrobe two or three weeks back now and Anna said "oh who here has not been to Blah Blah Blah before?" And about three quarters the audience hadn't been before. So it's really great, I thought, that by moving to a different theatre you got a different audience, it's fantastic.

LE: And also because they're supported by Bristol Old Vic they've got money to pay sort of touring... I mean the people on the bill are always a really high standard.

CB: They do, they bring people in.

LE: With quite a lot of spoken word nights the bulk of it is open mic plus a guest poet but they don't have any open mic at Blah Blah Blah. It's just booked poets.

CB: It's all curated, yeah.

LE: It's a really good night.

CB: So you've got people... I mean I think [Luke Wright](#) is coming in a couple of months to do his latest show which you know... For a lot of us in Bristol getting to London to see something sometimes is prohibitively expensive and the last train back is so early you have to leave halfway through. So if anybody listening to this runs a good London night and wants to put an outpost on in Bristol let us know, we'll try and help.

LE: Absolutely.

RT: There's also [Hammer and Tongue](#) which I've been running for a few years. I'm on a break at the moment because life got a little bit busy. Hannah Teasdale has taken my place, [Thommie Gillow](#) and [Tim Vosper](#) run it and it's the first Wednesday of every month. So it's a poetry competition and we have a guest artist who performs as well and a local artist, and it's a brilliant night.

DT: How many different versions of Hammer and Tongue are there now?

RT: I think there are six. So there's Brighton, Cambridge, Oxford, two in London, and Bristol. Is that six? Yeah so the guest artists will go on tour over a week period to all of those locations and it's a great night, it's lot of fun.

LE: It's really welcoming and it's really friendly and there is like a mini slam isn't there?

CB: Yeah There is yeah, it's a really great place to go and try your work out for the first time in front of an audience.

RT: It's a good one for first time poets or poets who are just starting out. I think slam poetry is a good way for people to get into the world of spoken word.

DT: I've still not been to Hammer and Tongue, either of the ones in London, I very rarely cross the river, and they're a bit too far away from me. What about opportunities for people to try longer stuff out as well, people looking to develop shows for festivals or even just scratching slightly longer ideas? What are the opportunities like there?

LE: I'm going say something here about what I've been involved in setting up at Bath Spa University and that's the Transnational Masters. It's called an MRes and it basically means that you get a masters qualification but you don't have to be in college, you can work from home. And there's a spoken word strand in that and people can actually develop a full length spoken word show as part of their studies and they'll get a masters qualification at the end of it and they get a lot of support in where to tour it and how to put it together. So that's something I'm going to plug here, is the [MRes in Transnational Writing](#) at Bath Spa University.

DT: Actually we could just chat about that for the moment. Do you think there needs to be more support in advising artists about the logistics of putting stuff together?

LE: Totally, totally. I'm mentor and producer to Rebecca's show. When she told me the idea for the show I said "yes I want to be the producer for that" and hopefully it's useful to have somebody who's actually done touring, who knows about the logistics of touring.

RT: Yes, 100%.

LE: Because I think if you are a poet going along to a local night and doing one or two poems you know absolutely nothing about how to put a show together, who to contact, how to apply for an Arts Council grant, all these things.

CB: There's the [Ferment programme](#).

RT: I was just thinking of Ferment.

CB: It's from Bristol Old Vic as well. I've seen, I think Vanessa did a scratch of a show, [Jonny Fluffypunk](#) did a scratch of a show, I think Sally Jenkinson and [Nuala Honan](#)... What was it called? The one they took to Australia.

RT: I know the one you mean.

CB: They developed it here. Nuala is Australian so she had a connection there and they took it to the [Adelaide Festival](#)? Something like that? And that was beautiful. [Folly](#). It's called

Folly. So the Bristol Old Vic are quite good and it's not just spoken word but across small theatre productions full stop. There's a program where you can apply and you get some help and some mentoring through that programme.

DT: I suppose if you're going to offer that kind of mentoring you need to involve established venues like that don't you? Because even if you run a successful spoken word night yourself it doesn't really teach you much often because quite often you're going to need to borrow a space so you won't learn about the cost of a space, you might work out the technical details yourself so you won't know about getting in qualified technicians or experienced technicians.

LE: [Apples and Snakes](#) as well offer advice, I mean you tend to think of them as a London based organization but they do have a branch in the southwest.

CB: I think people forget about it because it's in Plymouth, it's a bit remote for Bristol so we don't really hear too much of them in Bristol but they do good work around the country.

DT: Yeah Apples and Snakes are a very good resource. Actually I just wanted to give a shout out to [Harry Giles](#) who is a spoken word artist up in Edinburgh and they, for the festival last year, or this summer, published all of their accounts for the show.

CB: Did they really?

DT: And a complete break down of the costings of taking something to Edinburgh. Actually the last [feature length podcast](#) we put out was about transparency between artists, about the need for transparency in that the only way we're going to discover how much this is all costing us is if we tell each other.

CB: I think generally that's a good thing.

LE: I'm a real supporter of that. I mean I share my Arts Council applications, if people are doing an Arts Council [application] I'll say "do you want to see the successful ones I've done previously?" So that people can actually... You know sometimes the wording, the tone and all these things, you know you don't necessarily know how to do that. I think that transparency is really, really vital.

CB: I mean specifically with Edinburgh as well. I helped [Paul Eccentric](#) of [The Antipoet](#) publish his book about how, from a standing start, you go about getting a show to Edinburgh. It's called [The Edinburgh Fringe in a Nutshell](#). And that's a pretty good... It's sort of 50 percent anecdote, 50 percent memoir anecdote, plus help guide to how to go about taking your idea and then dragging it around Edinburgh.

DT: So does it run naturally that the sort of natural community base for artists... Does it lend itself well, or naturally, to mentoring as well?

LE: I would like to think so in spoken word because it's something that has been going on... You know there are spoken word artists that have been knocking around since the 70s

and 80s. They've got an absolute wealth of experience, people like [Joelle Taylor](#), she was a single performing poet way back, and Luke Wright. You know these people have been around a long time.

CB: And tend to be... And you know I think again maybe we talked about this with the spoken word community in Bristol but I think it's about the national spoken word scene really, is that people see it as a single entity that needs nurturing and helping along. And so people like Luke will promote younger people and help them with advice and stuff and I think that runs all the way through. Salena Godden is a good mentor to some young poets I know as well. And obviously you mop up everybody else Lucy, you've influenced so many people.

LE: I mean to me I see it as almost the opposite to what the world of published poetry can be like which can be quite closed shop. If you are a page poet you're trying to get a poem published. That's a very long, hard route. I mean you've done a lot in the world of poetry publishing, Clive, to actually put spoken word on the page. Because if you were a spoken word artist before and you were trying to get your work published, no poetry publishing house would go anywhere near you.

CB: Which as I was saying to you David, before we started the interview earlier, is that you know it just seemed weird to me that I can see Lucy English's book here and it says 'Lucy English, Prayer to Imperfection, 1996 - 2014.' Now how many books did you have published before that Lucy?

LE: No poetry at all.

CB: And the same issue with Salena Godden. We think of Salena Godden as almost a household name, you know, and yet she'd been turned down by everybody which is just ridiculous. Just ridiculous. I think the poetry publishing world had a blind spot about spoken word.

LE: You said the word 'performance' and it was just like 'no no no no we don't touch it.'

CB: But in their defence I will say that most poetry publishers work on a shoestring with a narrow focus and some of them will tell you that their small list is booked out four or five years in advance because there's just so little capacity. So I think there was just a genuine gap that somebody had to step into and prove that spoken word sells. It's not just me. If you look at [Don Paterson](#) at [Picador](#), he had the good sense to spot that Kate Tempest could sell books as well as sell out theatres, and obviously off the back of that...

DT: [Penned in the Margins](#) have got quite a nice crossover now.

CB: They're very interesting, very interesting in print and I think Tom does a very good job in that he looks for people who can put a show on the road to go with a book. But leans at the more experimental end of things, but he works with Luke Wright who's very much, I would say, a spoken word performance poet.

DT: I think it's also important to point out, since I've been applying for funding and stuff and seeing that side of literature, which was a complete mystery to me before, you touched on it just then Clive, that it's very important to remember how precarious the situation is for a lot of publishers.

LE: Full stop yeah.

DT: They are not going to take many risks. And if the publishers know nothing about a genre or an area of an art form it's going to be very hard to convince them. And it does take people like Clive to just... You can't bemoan the lack of something for too long before you try and do something about it yourself and if you are in a position to do it then, like with Matt at Nymphs & Thugs you know, he was really disappointed that you can't buy spoken word as an mp3 from a lot of artists. So he did a great thing, he got some money together and... It's not possible for everyone, but...

LE: I encourage my students to actually film themselves because that's where a lot of spoken word is shared these days, is through YouTube, and the people that do spoken word in my performance poetry class quite often the only spoken word that they've seen is via YouTube. They've not been to many live performances at all. They have only seen [Sarah Kay](#).

CB: Film is a really exciting area as well. I know you've done a lot of work on poetry film but I think that's something... And again it starts with short, single poems, but you know I could see you exploring film as a medium, giving you a longer frame to work in.

LE: And also it creates a legacy, I mean with all the journeys, which is very much about the experience of it, there is a case for actually having finally to give other audiences a chance to experience it.

CB: We're both talking to Rebecca when we're saying this so she probably should say something now.

[Laughter.]

RT: Yeah I mean there's a lot that's been said in the past five minutes. I think Lucy has had a great impact in terms of... I came through the educational route, my love of spoken word came through my love of hip hop as a teenager, and not a love of poetry at all. My love of poetry has grown from my love of hip hop. I came into the world of literature through studying at university and a big part of that was Lucy tutoring me on the performance poetry module.

Equally Clive has sort of paved the way in the world of spoken word being on the page. And I think, yeah like you said, there comes a point where you either just sit at home moaning about the lack of representation for a particular art form or whatever it is, or you do something about it. And I'm just very grateful at this point to be where I am and to be able to just about make a living from this because of people like these two.

DT: And just on the point that Lucy raised about YouTube, do you feel we should all collectively be doing a better job to document what's going on?

LE: Yes.

DT: Because as Clive was saying about putting a retrospective out of Lucy's work, you know if Clive hadn't done that then that work may not have completely disappeared but... The problem with spoken word nights is, I feel, like because everyone's in the moment, they sort of forget...

LE: I think that's a really interesting point because I'm actually talking to [Russell Thompson](#) at the moment from Apples and Snakes. He wants to put together the history of UK performance poetry because Apples and Snakes have got this archive, going back to the dark ages, you know the very early years of spoken word poetry which was like in the seventies and a lot of that, a lot of people that were stars then, have just completely disappeared. It's quite an interesting scene in that it's undocumented, that there were people who were big names in the 80s, 90s and early noughties...

CB: Even still. You go and try to buy a book by [Francesca Beard](#), it doesn't exist. It's ridiculous.

LE: Absolutely. And she's still doing stuff! Mr Social Control, [Jem Rolls](#), [Rob Gee](#), all these people.

CB: And that was an influence I have to say, that kind of thing was an influence on me. I remember saying with some of the people I was speaking to early on when I was going to start Burning Eye, I saw it in some sense as being an archivist and saying you know 'somebody needs to catalogue this stuff.' Because people do come in and out of the scene and there's good work that just disappears, gets performed and then it's gone.

LE: And it's influential and loads of people see it, and then those people stop doing spoken word and they go on and do other stuff and it disappears, and it's a real shame.

DT: Rebecca, in terms of your own writing practice how would you prefer your work to be documented? Is it wrong to think of the book as the default for documentation?

RT: No not at all. I think there is this sort of chasm between the world of performance and page poetry is really quite invisible. I think they are one of the same thing. I think there is a beauty in being able to dissect page poetry, take your time with it, take it anywhere, and I think actually there's something very magical about the moment and watching a live performance and it never existing again. You know obviously you perform the same poem in different venues over however many years but there's something very powerful about the moment. I think that has a lot of strength as well and that doesn't necessarily need to be... A legacy doesn't need to be left, I think.

DT: Actually I didn't want to sort of... It's important actually to say that my intention wasn't to make a divide between page or stage poetry in that way. Because I often think

even page poetry sometimes it's wrong that it's put into a book. I'm questioning whether a book is the right form in the digital world for poetry at all. And we talked briefly about poetry film...

CB: It is and I will argue it is for one very good reason, is that the very existence of the physical thing is a paywall. And I think it's important that artists get paid for the work they do and too often the problem with the digital arena is that you end up giving the work away, or you lose control of it, and so your work gets out there... I mean you see people copying, photographing, pages of somebody's book and circulating it on Instagram. Every time I see that I think "ah that poem is now out." I mean it's great, people can ...

RT: And it's just such a beautiful thing, a book. It's a beautiful thing.

LE: I think also what I love about seeing spoken word in print is being able to appreciate the crafting of it. Because you can go along to a spoken word night where somebody does a poem and it seems artless, it just seems like they're just talking to you. You don't appreciate the craft behind it.

CB: But when you take it home with you, you read it again, and you can still hear the poet's voice in your head, and you read it again and read it again. And you know that's what's great about it, and it works. But as I say it's hard to get paid, sometimes you get offered a lot of gigs where maybe you just about cover your travel expenses and somewhere to sleep. And then if you sell a few books or something you're now making a bit of money to feed yourself next week.

And so a lot of what I try and do with Burning Eye is to structure things in such a way to help people get paid for their art, to live as artists, and have the financial stability maybe, or a little bit more financial stability, to then be able to write more and start to become professional writers and I think that's important.

DT: Part of the reason that I directed the question towards Rebecca was because I wanted to talk about the show you were talking about briefly earlier. How does your view of documentation change then, when you're moving out of your regular... Moving from one stage to another perhaps is the best way to put it?

RT: Quickly side-tracking and then I really want to answer that... I work a lot with teenagers, in schools primarily, and they don't really want to know about the book. I'll bring my book in and there's some really nice illustrations by [Anna Higginson](#) and they'll look at those and they'll not really look at the writing. But you know I'll perform live or I'll show them YouTube videos of different performers and they're completely engaged. So I just wanted to say that I do think that we're lucky to be able to have access to both the page and online media and audio.

DT: Oh yeah I absolutely agree, I'm not sort of advocating for the dismantling of one area. It's just I sometimes worry that people have got too narrow a view of the default way of putting work out. But going back to the show...

RT: Yeah. So lots of people have said "oh do you think you could film the show? Is it something that we could put on camera and people could have access to it that way?" And I keep saying no. Because I just feel like it's something that is about intimacy. It's about connection with another individual, and that's kind of at the very heart of it. And therefore it isn't something that could be put through another medium. I'm publishing, well Clive is publishing should I say, my next collection which has the same title as the show, because the writing from the show is in the book, so therefore it is being offered as something live and physical and raw and in the moment, but it's also being offered as something on the page. It's a different experience, isn't it?

LE: I think because it's such an intimate experience...

CB: That's exactly the word I was going to use, intimate.

LE: It would be very difficult to film it but there may be a case for actually having some filmed versions of some of the poems, just because that's you know how work gets shared.

DT: This may be slightly more of an obsession for me and not relevant to other peoples' practices but do you think there's also perhaps a need at times to document the process of making work as well? So you know focussing on filming the final result that's one thing, and that sort of plays into building an audience, but in terms of giving back to other artists and this idea of mentoring and sharing ideas, how do we document the process of building a show like that? Or do you not feel that it's really interesting?

LE: We've tried to do that with Facebook haven't we?

RT: Yeah taking photos...

LE: We've been trying to take photos of the meetings, some of the rehearsals, and actually talking and documenting, through Facebook, the process of putting it together.

RT: Yeah interviewing people, doing you know bits and bobs of quotes from people, or bits and bobs from the show. And I think it's important.

LE: I mean social media, through Facebook and Twitter as well, is a great place to document.

DT: I think the reason it came up goes back to that idea of Harry Giles giving a breakdown of his costs of his Edinburgh show. As magical as some shows can be if you just turn up and you just see that thing and you don't know what's behind it, that's great, but it's sort of sometimes devalues the amount of work that goes in to putting a show together. And I think the process of documenting how work comes about raises the profile of the art form as well as the final piece.

LE: It's a delicate balance with this particular show because there's a lot of it... We don't want to reveal too much because a lot of it is in the actual immersive experience. But I certainly think as we get further down the tour we can be more transparent about that.

DT: But the process can be reversed can't it? The process of how the show grows doesn't have to be shared until afterwards, does it? You know you don't have to give away... Of course you don't want to give the show away. People won't come, it's another problem isn't it Clive? With sharing stuff online too much, people will just access bits and pieces rather than the whole.

CB: Yeah but I think you know... My previous negative comment about sometimes work being circulated and people not thinking about that they're circulating somebody's work without necessarily there being a payment structure involved... You know online is a great place to build a profile and curate an audience and there are lots of different ways of doing that. YouTube is great, using other forms of social media, Instagram is one that I'm particularly interested in and that I've written about and experimented with myself.

There's been a way of getting people's work out there and the fact that you can put little clips of films that you can play with, almost as promos, as teasers, that kind of thing works brilliantly. It would be good if there was more digital download stuff, I think that's another way. When I first started Burning Eye I had these crazy ambitions that it would be books, it would be digital download, there would be e-books, and actually I've narrowed in on the physical book in order to support as many writers as we can in that way. I could do half as much and spread it, or I can do lots of stuff in one way.

DT: Oh it's definitely worth pointing out that just because you can do something doesn't mean you should be doing it. There's a lot to be said for being an expert in something.

CB: But there's always one more exciting thing that you can do next year you know?

LE: The fuzzy felt version! I want to see that.

CB: Animated fuzzy felt poetry. Now we're talking.

DT: On that note, because I'm just aware of the time running on a bit now, so we're going to take some final readings. But before that are there any final tips for the area for people to check out?

LE: Check it out!

DT: Just the place, just come?

LE: Just come to Bristol, come to a spoken word night in Bristol, really absorb that collaborative, 'we can do it' sort of attitude that isn't driven by commercialism. We've got this very much sort of back to basics, grass roots...

CB: DIY.

LE: DIY! We're very DIY in Bristol. Get a room and make it happen.

DT: Whatever you do reserve a ticket on the train because they are rammed.

CB: Yeah I think the final thing I would say is if you're in Bristol I think that the poetry and spoken word scene is an important part of the local culture. We'd love to see more people and new people, we're always, always looking out for new voices. I worry sometimes that we're a bit short of real old Bristolian culture coming into it. There are some good poets around Bristol who have lived here all their lives, I'm thinking of someone probably like [Deborah Harvey](#), who's been quite high profile. She's a stunning poet, just beautiful, beautiful work.

And [Tangent Books](#) published [Ray Webber](#) recently who's about 93 years old. It's the first time his work's gone into print, although I suspect he might have been able to get stuff into print earlier in his career, and he's a really interesting character, a real old dyed in the wool Bristol radical. [High on Rust](#) is his book, that's worth checking out as well. Somebody slightly outside of the spoken word area of things, you know there's a vibrant poetry culture in Bristol that goes beyond spoken word.

DT: That's great. Now we'll take some final readings. We'll start with Lucy.

LE: Okay. I'm not somebody who actually likes talking a lot before a poem but a little background to this. I'm working on a poetry film project at the moment called [The Book of Hours](#). It's what I've been doing for my digital PhD, I'm creating forty eight poetry films. It's going to be a re-imagining of a medieval book of hours, so it's going to be following the seasons and the times of day throughout the year. I'm working with filmmakers and this is a poem from that collection. The film was made by an amazing filmmaker called [James Norton](#) and this is called Sheltering from the Rain in a Country Church. Obviously with a big reference to Larkin.

SHELTERING FROM THE RAIN IN A COUNTRY CHURCH

I run across the graveyard much too fast
and push open the weighty door.
It shuts behind me with a clunk and the noise
of rustling anorak and wind in my ears calms down.
Replaced with whitewashed stone and carved wood.
The smell of damp granite, wet floors and mould.

I am not religious. My footsteps plonk
up the nave and I look around.
Victorian glass. Barrel roof. Unrestored. I know about churches.
One family holiday it rained for two weeks non stop
and for entertainment we went to nearly every church in Suffolk.
Tiny Hopton. Grand Garboldisham. Forgotten Harling. Empty Blythborough,
where, my father told us in a solemn voice, Cromwell's men
shot at the painted angels to bring them down.

I was twelve and uninterested. I wanted to be on my own

and read Narnia books not admire clerestory windows.
This church has a rood screen. Thanks to Dad I know what a rood screen is.
It's fifteenth century, says the leaflet, a marvel. Pale oak. Carved with leaves.
Untouched by Cromwell's men because they didn't find this church
lost on a hill at the end of high banked lanes.

Sweet peas by the altar. Tapestry kneel rests. This church is used.
A box of books. Cope With Crisis. One Hundred Puddings. Donations please.
I read through selected Psalms by David, in the Order for Evensong.
Why art thou so full of heaviness, O my soul : and why art thou so
disquieted within me?

The rain has stopped. I like the feel of empty quiet. I have too often chosen
this instead of company. I wonder how much I have missed?

I go outside and goldfinches skim across a wildflower meadow

of blue campanulas and purple knapweed.

©Lucy English

RT: So I was going to read new stuff but I've completely changed my mind inspired by the last conversation about Bristol. I'm going to read a poem from [Talk you Around till Dusk](#) which is called This City is a Garden.

[The author has not given permission for this poem to be reproduced in this transcript.]

DT: Thank you very much. We'll finish off with Clive.

CB: Okay. I'm going to sneakily read two. The first one is by [Stef Mo](#). Stef Mo is the poetry version of the novelist Stefan Mohamed whose books [Bitter Sixteen](#) and [Ace of Spiders](#) are published by [Salt](#) and worth checking out. So this poem is called Small Talk and it's taken from Stef Mo's collection [Panic](#) which was out earlier this year by Burning Eye of course.

Small Talk

I wish things weren't so awkward.
We've faced apocalypses together, stood
shoulder to bleeding shoulder
backs to bloodied wall
facing down howling hordes, armed
with nothing

but bruised fists
shit-eating grins
and camaraderie
yet sit us together in the same living room
with an afternoon to kill
and it's like a first date between two people
who are only doing it
because they share some really pushy mutual friends.
I spend too much time fiddling
with tea and coffee-making paraphernalia
and you keep sort-of-but-not-really reading
an old Guardian Culture section
and small talk chokes and chugs
like an old machine
and I watch dying cells dive off my arm
like the last hurrah of some suicide cult
and I still can't remember if you take sugar.
So we end up just... sitting.
And if anyone asked, I know we'd both swear the silence
is companionable
although we both know it really, really isn't
and I don't think I've ever been more relieved
to see a grenade hurtling through an open window.
God
I think I was actually just about to ask you
something about football.
©Stef Mo

CB: And then to finish I think there's a poem I wrote about Bristol a very, very long time ago. I'll try and remember it, and then if I don't and I fumble it you can cut it.

DT: Absolutely. But we all have faith in you.

RT: Yeah we believe in you.

CB:

Free range eggs laid the day you left
are still fresh. It hasn't stopped raining.

Joggers knee deep on the downs and
the suspension bridge is sinking. Drivers
gone crazy with headless motor madness.
It's April, they're obsessed, it's like a water
festival out there but the nights are as hot
as high summer. The midget directing
corpses by the BRI has a fine new beard
but the palm trees look real sad, and that
slim young thing in the white bikini
borrowed Brunel's clothes, left him standing
bare with a traffic cone on his Union Flag pole.
You can coopy on down, get you hair off,
she's got it about her tonight and Jacob's
balloon is lost in the mist, I don't think he'll
ever come down but float on and on, and
think the city long gone, and then find himself
Tuesday morning, 5 am, with just the finest
view of a sunrise.

©Clive Birnie

DT: Thank you very much.

RT: That was lovely.

DT: I think we should do a round of applause.

End of transcript