

Skills for Life as Lives Lived

IABA 2010

- What can we learn about the lives of literacy teachers through the history of 'Skills for Life'?
- What can we learn about the history of 'Skills for Life' through the lives of literacy teachers?



The Isle of Thanet





1921 "The Wasteland"

'I made no comment. What should I resent?
On Margate Sands.
I can connect
Nothing with nothing.
The broken fingernails of dirty hands.
My people humble people who expect
Nothing.'

The Waste Land

T.S. Eliot



Billericay Dickie

"I'd rendezvous with Janet
quite near the Isle of Thanet
she looked more like a gannet
she wasn't half a prannet
her mother tried to ban it
her father helped me plan it"

Ian Drury and the Blockheads



How can I describe today in Thanet?



Queen Street, Margate



"Instant Muscle" Training Centre

- The composition of the stock of out of work benefit claimants by benefit type provides an indication of the nature of worklessness in an area, highlighting the extent to which worklessness is concentrated in the economically active population (claiming JSA) or those that are outside the labour market and likely to be harder to reach.

Thanet Council – Thanet Works

- My “self”
- The lives of literacy teachers
- Policy and the shaping of lives
- “Living your life as your own and as that of another” comment from a literacy teacher talking about conforming to what she called ‘the new regime’

Why auto/biography?

- Because it gets at a different type of truth.
- All the teachers interviewed are guided in their work with by ideas of literacy which are at odds with official definitions.
- All have ambiguous but oppositional views of 'management' (chasing funding)
- Affinities with their students

- Precariousness
- Skills for Life cannot be separated from parallel and related developments – managerialism and destruction of liberal education.
- (De)Professionalisation
- Resilience







**"Waste Man" Antony Gormley
2006**