

Edgelands is Best Book of Ideas

The 2012 Foyles/Bristol Festival of Ideas Best Book of Ideas was awarded to *Edgelands* by Paul Farley and Michael Symmons Roberts at a dinner at St George's Brandon Hill. After the announcement Paul and Michael joined the award judges Wendy Lerner and Dan Hind, and Julian Baggini for an on-stage discussion.

Jonathan Ruppin, Foyles web editor, said: 'An engrossing and witty exploration of the hinterland beyond urban glamour and rural tranquillity, *Edgelands* exposes the startling wonder and resonant history of the landscapes we usually traverse so unthinkingly.'

On the same evening, Bristol Festival of Ideas also announced the winners of the Bristol Genius Award – for the best Bristol idea. The first Bristol Genius Award was given

to Avon Longitudinal Study of Parents and Children (Children of the 90s): a long-term research project that is assisting scientists all over the world with research into a wide range of health problems.

Andrew Kelly, director of the festival, said: 'The Bristol Genius Awards highlight the huge strengths this city has in ideas and the brilliance of people here.'

The award was accepted by Lynn Molloy, ALSPAC's Executive Director. Before the award was announced there were presentations by five of the short-listed projects.

A third award – for the book of ideas that has made most impact over 50 years (first published in 1962) – was made to Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring*.

Bristol-Con in October

October sees the return off the South West's premier genre fiction convention, Bristol-Con. Aimed at readers and writers of science fiction and fantasy, the event attracts an impressive roster of published authors writing across a broad spectrum of themes. Bristol-Con takes place at the Ramada Hotel on October 20th. Confirmed authors include John Meaney, Gareth L Powell and Anne Sudworth. Membership of Bristol-Con is £20. For further details of the event, visit www.bristolcon.org.

Mike on the road to Matala

Bristol author Mike Manson and Tangent Books publisher Richard Jones travelled to southern Crete after Mike was invited to read from his book *Rules of the Road* at the Matala Festival.

And while they were in Crete, Tangent's Nicky Johns travelled to London to represent Mike at the awards ceremony for The People's Book Prize. *Rules of the Road* was one of the 12 finalists in the national competition and although it didn't win, publisher Richard Jones was delighted to have been nominated.

"*Rules of the Road* is an outstanding piece of fiction," he said. "It's very funny and has a compelling plot so I was delighted that the quality of Mike's writing was recognised by the book reaching the final of a national competition."

Back in Crete, Mike was the centre of attention at a gathering of old hippies on the eve of the festival. *Rules of the Road* is the story of two Bristol dropouts who travel across Europe in the early 70s to meet up with two girls. The meeting place is Matala in southern Crete where they plan to spend a summer of love living with the village's hippy commune in the ancient caves in the cliffs overlooking the beach.

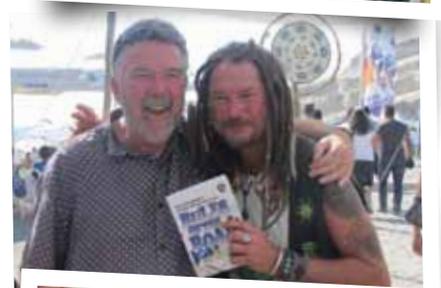
The first Matala Festival in 2011 was organised by the some of the former Matala hippies as a 40th anniversary reunion. It was so successful that it attracted 40,000 to the idyllic seaside village over the weekend and local Greek businesses decided to make it an annual event.

In the 70s there was one bar and about 20 homes on the cliffs opposite the caves. Now Matala is a much bigger (but unspoilt) resort, but older residents such as Anna who still cooks at the cliff-top Anna's Bar well remembers the hippy days. "I used to look down at the fires burning on the beach in the evenings all those years ago," she told Mike.

Although, there were many places in Greece where travellers slept on the beach or found shelter in caves, Matala became famous when *Life* magazine ran a cover feature in 1968 about two Californians living in a cave there. About the same time, Joni Mitchell visited Matala and the songs she wrote while she was there formed the basis of her *Blue* album.

Mike's reading on the beach was followed by a book signing at the Matala Book Centre.

■ *Rules of the Road* is available from www.tangentbooks.co.uk



Top: Mike with a customer at the Matala Book Centre. **Middle:** Two former residents of the Matala hippy community catch up at the festival. **Bottom:** Richard Jones and Mike Manson at the festival.