

THIS MONTH'S SPEAKER

Stu Duval was born April 1959 in the South Island of New Zealand, in the shadow of Christchurch's great Cathedral.

He won his first art contest at the age of 5 – the prize was a tawdry gold pen with his name engraved on it. The pen is long gone but the urge to paint is engraved still.

His career path has provided him with ample material for his current profession as storyteller. He has been a factory worker, minister, ranger, broadcaster, children's worker, graphic artist, charitable director, motivational speaker and mural painter! Yet art was always the thread.

His choice of subject is eclectic, often composed with the eye of a graphic designer, a link back to his years spent in advertising working three days a week as a Creative Director. The rest of his time he gave over to painting and writing. From this grew his first major exhibition and first published novel; the latter pointing him in a bold, new direction which in 2000 saw him embark on a journey as a full-time storyteller, combining his art with his own words. He is now considered one of New Zealand's master storytellers.

For the past decade, as an author and storyteller, his travels have taken him all over Aotearoa; back blocks, city blocks, corporate boardrooms and classrooms. This is the Land he loves. A land often lonely, isolated, and edgy, where the shadow of the bush always lurks. Yet it is a land of light as well. He would say spiritual light. For the landscape and the Light are irrevocably linked in his art and tales. This is the Land of his stories, the Land of his art.

Recently Stu teamed up with an old boyhood-friend, Ivan Clarke, to help create the book *Alveridgea; The Legend of the Lonely Dog*, the film rights of which have subsequently been sold to Warner Bros. Reviewers of it have said "spellbinding narrative ... destined for legendary status." "This novel quite simply is outstanding. If you miss it you will kick yourself."

Stu resides in Whangaparaoa, with his wife and two adventure-loving boys; the inspiration for many of his books and tales.

