

Bright Stars Competition 2017

Having gathered in the stories and poems from the children, I had the remarkably difficult job of selecting work for publication in our collection of poetry and prose.

The Racecourse generously offered to sponsor the printing of the collection, which you can see here in PDF format.

The Bright Stars Leadership Team worked extremely hard to plan and manage the event. Emily-Kate called into the local shops and businesses to collect the raffle prizes so generously donated. The along with Euan and Rhiannon, we returned to the vintage shop, complete with drawings of things we needed for the set. We gathered hats, scarves, a handbag, walking cane, rug, teapot, tea tray, cushion, mohair throw and walked back through the village carrying everything! My office looked like an antique shop for a few days!

We borrowed a hat stand from a parent, a standard lamp from our Office Administrator, I brought in tables and a fire and with help from a willing parent with a van; we picked up the storytelling chair from the vintage shop! After a few car loads back and forth to the racecourse, everything was deposited, ready for the Leadership Team to set up.

In the afternoon of 8th March, the Leadership Team came down to The Grandstand to set up. We discussed the introductions for the evening and the children rehearsed their lines. We then set the 'scene', a grandma's front living room, with all the furniture and props we had gathered. We thought about the focus for the evening (the chair) and where the best place on the 'stage' was; slightly off centre to the left (your eye is drawn naturally there, as if reading a book – left to right). We then positioned the other furniture around this, continuously stepping back to the 'audience' to examine it. We moved things around, had countless discussions and finally settled and agreed on it! Then we took to set dressing; adding finishing touches, such as hats, teacups, biscuits (!), books and daffodils! We hope you agree that the finished set looked very homely!

On the night, we were totally overwhelmed by the turnout! We had sold 45 tickets prior to the evening and so had put 60 chairs out. People just kept arriving...and then some more...and then even more! It was wonderful. There were parents, grandparents, Governors, staff, members of the wider community and friends from church. We had to get more and more chairs out, until the room was packed!

Now, this could have proved daunting to the young people, about to individually read their creations to the crowd. Yet, each child got up, sat in the chair and read with such confidence and expression. It was incredible to witness the support and trust in the room. All fell silent each time someone sat in the chair and clapped madly as they finished. There was poignancy, humour and much to celebrate about our wonderful little village of Cartmel. We lost count of the number of times Unsworth's Yard Brewery or The Red Pepper were mentioned. The famous Sticky Toffee Pudding also took a starring role, as did the magnificent 12th century Priory.

The poem given to us by the niece of Trish Johnson (our volunteer who sadly lost her life last month and in whose memory the evening was for) ended the evening beautifully and we hope we did her proud. The charity we are donating to from the Bright Stars Project is St. Mary's Hospice in Ulverston, who cared for Trish towards the end of her life.

The emails from audience members that evening are testament in themselves. We were so fortunate to have such support. We raised around £550 on the evening, from tickets, our collection of poetry and the raffle, with money still coming in from selling the poetry! A huge well done to everyone for their creative writing, courageous performances and entrepreneurial skills.

Rachel Battersby

Headteacher