

Glaven Valley Arts Society Young Arts Project 2018

To mark the 50th Anniversary year of The Arts Society, the Glaven Valley Society agreed to help fund The Falcon Poetry Slam and donated £2000 towards the final cost of the project.

The project involved children from five local primary schools taking part in an inter-schools poetry competition. Each school had two whole days of an in-school workshop with Molly Naylor, who was the lead poet, during which time the children wrote, developed and performed their poems in front of the whole school. The best poems were then selected and included in a final Grand Slam competition at the Little Theatre Sheringham. This venue was generously donated by Debbie Taylor the theatre's resident director. The five schools met on 10 July to compete for prizes for the best poems. Each school performed two poems. There was a special performance of the winning poems for parents, donors and members of the Art Society.

Falcon exists to provide opportunities to engage in creativity in all forms. Its goal is to make a valid contribution to the creative and learning environment of all children in Norfolk who would otherwise have limited access to these influences and opportunities.

Falcon was extremely fortunate to engage the services of Molly Naylor, an acclaimed performance poet, to run the in-school workshops and MC the Grand Slam itself. The aim of the slam is not just about competition but also to encourage cooperation and pride along with a sense of enjoyment and celebration.

Time table of Events Leading up to the Grand Slam

On the 23rd May I attended an In-Service introductory training session for the teachers and members of staff of the five schools selected to take part. These teachers would be involved in taking forward the project, introducing their pupils to poetry and preparing them for the first visit of Molly Naylor. Molly would visit each school in turn for two whole days to work with the children and guide and inspire them in their development of ideas and preparation.

On the 20th June I visited Langham Primary School and I was able to observe Molly and the teachers at work and saw the progress the children had made under their supervision, The pupils had been split into five groups and each group had written an imaginative poem on the subject of their choice. The scope of the poems was wide, imaginative and personal to their particular group. the titles were as follows;

1. **Courgettes**
2. **Pollution**
3. **Haunted Sleepover**
4. **Reverse Psychology**
5. **What People Do (a poem about racism)**

The five groups performed these poems before the whole school and two were selected by external examiners to go forward to the Grand Slam Final. At Langham the poems chosen were **Pollution** and **The Haunted Sleepover**.

The whole school had lovely time and enjoyed the poems and performance.

Molly then visited the four other schools over two whole days and repeated the same process. I have since visited some of the other schools that competed and I am happy to say that all went well under the auspices Of Molly Naylor and Phil Barrett. the pupils at all the schools definitely rose to the challenge and produced vivid, imaginative, and exciting performance poetry.

10th July. The Inter Schools Poetry Slam , Little Theatre , Sheringham

I was honoured to be asked to be one of the four judges. I have to say this proved a very difficult task because the poetry was of such a high standard and the performances by the pupils were brilliant. It was really successful event for both the children and their parents.

In conclusion I am very glad that we found Falcon and the poetry slam and that the Glaven Vally Arts Society was affiliated to the project. All the members of the Committee who attended were very impressed with the performances.

I am pleased that our donation of £2000 enabled the poetry slam to reach a large number of of children and I hope it was a memorable experience for them. I also hope that it has raised their aspirations a little about what is possible and given them greater confidence all round in accessing the arts and arts venues.

Congratulations must go to Molly Naylor and Phil Barrett for a grand, successful and very enjoyable event.

Liz Pierce-Roberts
Young Arts Coordinator