



News Release

12 May 2025

Weaver Words Literature Festival a great success

Weaver Words 2025, Frodsham's seventh literature festival, was hailed a 'great success', after delivering nine days of fantastic events, speakers, writing workshops and a Pop-up Poetry Wall at Frodsham Community Centre (Saturday 7 – Sunday 11 May).

Headline acts, poet Lemn Sissay, comedian Jenny Eclair, BBC presenter Louise Minchin and an Elizabeth Gaskell afternoon tea all proved immensely popular.

Actor Gerald Dickens, the great, great grandson of writer Charles Dickens, performed a witty, fast-paced one-man show of *Nicholas Nickleby* and the *Future of the Media* came under the spotlight in a fascinating debate with Chester Chronicle editor Michael Green, University of Central Lancashire academic Dr Francois Nel, social media executive Tom Conway, chaired by broadcaster Mick Ord.

A series of seminars explored a diverse range of topics, from Cheshire country diarist A.W.Boyd by Andy Jurgis, to the importance of punctuation by Bronte expert Sharon Wright and a tour to Lewis Carroll's birthplace in Daresbury with Lynn Pegler.

Promoting new writing was at the heart of the festival, with events featuring BBC police drama scriptwriter Tony Schumacher, Lynn's latest poetry collection *Around Cheshire in 100 Poems and Pictures*, crime novelists Martin Edwards and Kelly Mullen, poet Sarah-Clare Conlon and historical novelist David Bissenden. Four creative writing sessions included workshops on flash fiction (David Gaffney), journal writing (Julia McGuinness), children's picture books (Iryna Garkusha) and poetry aboard the Danny steamship (Jean Atkin).

Festival patron Calendar Girls writer Tim Firth entertained audiences with musical excerpts from his shows at the Gala Night and a fascinating insight into the professional theatre world at a Literary Dinner hosted by Main Street Kitchen in Frodsham. He also presented prizes for the festival's two writing competitions.

The **adult Frodsham Flash Fiction prize** was won by Matthew Bonnar, with second prize-winner Jo Kirrane and third-placed Tiffany Siougas sharing £500 prize money, sponsored by Helsby-based RSK group. Short-listed finalists were Niamh Bell, Margaret Croft, John Keogh, Denise Pope and Maureen Tottoh. Judges were David Gaffney and Prof Sue Zlosnik.

Nearly 500 entries were received for the **Great Weaver Words children's writing prize**, sponsored by Rotary in Frodsham and Helsby, and judged by Tim Firth. Winner of the junior category (7-11) was Matilda Walker (Alvanley), with second prize going to Elizabeth White (Norley) and third to Sadie Daniels (Hornsmill). Finalists were Willow Chappell (Hillside), Hornsmill pupils Sadie Mohring, Amelia Warren, Noah Mansfield Broom and Indie Bella Tutzelt, and Frodsham Primary Academy pupils Honor Anderson and Toby Wilson.

In the senior category (11-14), first was Lucy Buckthorpe, second was Rachel Horton and third Beth Metcalfe, with finalists Grace Salvi, Sophie Baker, Aaron Page, Oliver Pumford, Bethany Williams, Jess Worral and Alice Hardy (all Helsby High School).

Festival manager Lynn Pegler said: "Hundreds of people have enjoyed fabulous, thought-provoking and enjoyable speakers, plays and workshops. The festival featured more than 20 events, two popular writing competitions and has been a great success."

Many thanks to sponsors: RSK (Helsby), Encirc glass manufacturers, Main Street Kitchen, Rotary and Bill Holroyd.

For more information and to read the winning Frodsham Flash Fiction Prize stories go to www.weaverwords.org.uk.