

# Spoken Word Reviews Buxton Fringe 2015

## GRINLOW POETRY TRAIL - *Stone and Water*



The poetry trail was an enormous success. It was well attended with people taking a great interest in the poems as well as the art and the storytelling. It was enhanced greatly by the piano accordion player walking around and other musicians playing in the woods, which at first I heard from a distance. There was also a surprise performance of a choir at 1.30 pm singing four well known songs.

The art and poetry lived happily side by side. In one area there was a row of paintings showing mainly urban scenes each with a corresponding poem on the same subject. There was also a mushroom area with many poems about fairies not far away.

There was a great range of contributors, from people who wrote the occasional poem, to poets with more than a local reputation, through to the immortals like Shakespeare and Virgil.

The subjects included descriptions and feelings provoked by Grinlow Woods, works about the beauty and magic of woodlands, invitations to visit places nearby and poems about tragedies caused by drug-taking. Not all viewed nature as a source of joy. Some dwelt on less pleasant elements related to woodlands and nature such as trees fighting against the elements for survival.

One of my favourite sets of poems was written on large banners which were very eye-catching. The poems are about nature being in a constant state of flux and the poet's thoughts became absorbed with the process. The poet tries to guess where the raindrops will fly and where they will rebound.

Another of my favourite poems dealt with a human relationship, making analogies with the progression of the seasons.

It all took place in a very beautiful environment with good weather which brought about much social interaction between the viewers.

Roger Horvath

## NEW THOUGHTS - OLD WAR - Buxton Parish Churches



St John's Church, 18 July

This event was described as "an evening of creative writing about World War One by young people in Buxton with musical interludes by local musicians." This rather bald statement hardly tells the whole story.

Over the last month or so around 20 students in years 7-9 (aged 12-14) from Buxton Community School and St Thomas Moore School have volunteered to be part of a creative writing project. Three workshops - led by experienced writers Rob Stevens, F Philip Holland and Helen Stewart - supported the young authors in their work.

So in a very short period of time they have put together their thoughts and responses to what they know and understand about the events of the First World War. Given the fact that many voices are heard - and different groups of writers did not collaborate on the project - it was right and proper that what we heard reflected the range of experiences of those involved directly or otherwise in the War. This was not meant to be a tidy history.

St John's Church had been decorated with a hedgerow bearing red poppies. The groups of writers and readers stood in a line in front of it. They used microphones and read simply and directly to us. There had been minimal rehearsal time but the performance flowed well, the voices were clear and the fact that they were reading their own words meant, perhaps, that they read with more certainty and conviction.

For the most part, of course, they were representing the experiences of people older than themselves - soldiers, widows, factory workers - but the language rang true. Trying to pick out particular parts of such a big event on the basis of a single hearing is possibly unwise and it may be better to wait and examine the text more closely when it is published. Certainly there were some very measured and poignant poems read - reflecting simply but passionately on the loss of close family and comrades.

The young writers had the practical and moral support of the adult choir from St Mary's Church which led the performers in. The choir - and three local musicians - provided interludes with some familiar songs and hymns associated with the War.

This was an important event for many reasons. It was supported by High Peak Borough Council - both financially and through the attendance of the Mayor - and it introduced us to a new generation of performers who we look forward to seeing more of in the years to come.

Keith Savage

## **CELEBRATING COMMUNITY WRITING AND PUBLISHING - TheFED**



Set in the informal setting of the Buxton Tap House, the poetry events provide a drop-in/drop-out opportunity to perform or hear poetry. Anything goes, and there were poems on a wide range of subjects, from pet dogs to regional accents to jogging to dementia. There were witty and funny poems, and more brooding, poignant poems. There were such different voices on display, drawing on a variety of experiences, and it created a strong community feel.

You are not expected to perform, and it is nice to draw up a chair and have a drink whilst listening to others' words. If you do have work that you would like to perform, however, you are encouraged to take the microphone before the least daunting audience imaginable. It is a very pleasant occasion, and everyone is very supportive and enthusiastic.

Even if you only drop in for five minutes, you might well hear something that you really enjoy.

Rufus McAlister

## OCEAN GOING IDIOT - Rob Coleman



Stand-up comedy is the art of performing material on stage to elicit laughs from the audience. Someone who does not necessarily aim to elicit laughs is called a spoken word artist. Their intention is not to get laughs, it is more like a speech or lecture. This performance is correctly listed in the Spoken Word category. Rob tells his tale with gentle humour to make you smile, engages with his audience and recommends oil for constipation.

Believe it or not this is fringe on the edge. What would induce a fair-skinned five foot something eleven stone stripling to attempt to cross the Atlantic with an incompatible companion and three buckets? Only a naive impulsive idiot thinking he'd make a name for himself. Enter his world of fantasy, hallucinations and humiliation and follow his tale of adventure. So if you want a break from the fast and furious pace of the comedians or are just curious and fancy some quiet British humour, this is for you.

Carolyn Page