

Read with the Stars

2015



On 18th September 2015 children from across Oxfordshire came to the Kassam Stadium in Oxford to Read with the Stars.



The event was the brainchild of an ARCh volunteer who had been reading a Frankie's Magic Football book, written by footballer Frank Lampard, with one of the children she was supporting. This gave her the idea of holding a literary event with a difference, one that involved author role models who children could relate to, eg footballers, tv stars etc, with the aim of imparting the message that reading is for everyone.

The idea became reality thanks to an extremely generous financial donation. The Kassam Stadium was chosen as the venue as, being the home of Oxford United Football Club, it provided the link between football and reading.

We were delighted to sign up Sam Nixon and Mark Rhodes (BBC children's tv stars Sam and Mark) as our star presenters. The pair had recently published their first book, The Adventures of Long Arm.



Heart FM Radio presenter Matt Brown, author of the Compton Valance books, kindly agreed to present too and was joined by his fellow presenter Michelle.



Admission to the event was free, the aim being to attract children and parents who would not normally be able to access a literary festival.

We welcomed around 450 children, parents, carers, volunteers and teaching staff from primary schools across Oxfordshire along to join the fun. 18 schools attended including around 200 children and families from the Blackbird Leys Academy 3 schools.



Every child attending was given a Read with the Stars wristband, a certificate and a copy of The Adventures of Long Arm, signed by Sam and Mark.

We hope these will remind them of a wonderful afternoon spent "Reading with Stars" and that they will all now continue to "read with the stars" at bedtime every night.



We are so grateful to everyone who helped make the day so special – ARCh volunteers, Readathon volunteers, Scholastic Publishers, The Story Museum, Coles Bookshop, Library Service, Read Easy, Oxford United FC.



Children were able to attend a number of exciting workshops during the afternoon.

Adam & Charlotte Guillain brought puppet George and performed two books from their George's Amazing Adventures series www.georgesamazingadventures.co.uk Pizza for Pirates and Doughnuts for a Dragon (Egmont). There were quizzes on dragons and pizzas, lots of silly songs and dressing up and everyone sang the classic pirate sea shanty "What do we do with a soggy pizza?"

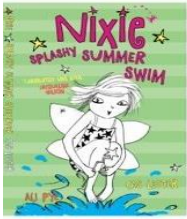


Matt Brown



Matt's session explained why he loves writing and time travel stories. There were readings from his books, some writing tips and a chance for those attending to complete basic training for the F.A.R.T. Academy (Future Agent Research and Training). There was also a big Q&A session at the end. Matt shared his Compton Valance books and here's a link to his website <http://mattbrownwriter.com/books/>

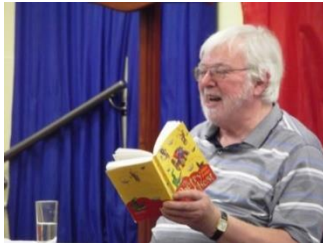
Cas Lester



Cas ran a fun and interactive session **WATCH OUT! NIXIE'S ABOUT!**

It was all about science and technology including: lots of ingenious inventions, fabulous flying contraptions, a quiz about famous inventors and inventions, a vote for the silliest invention and most importantly, getting the children to invent some things themselves. A very lively, educational workshop that was lots of fun. www.caslester.com www.hotkeybooks.com

John Foster



John read and performed poems from his books of poems, **The Poetry Chest** and **Here Come the Dinosaurs**. Including Ten Dancing Dinosaurs and The Dinosaur Rap. The performance also included some football poems, tongue-twisters, nonsense nursery rhymes, such as Twinkle, Twinkle Chocolate Bar and action rhymes such as When Susie's Eating Custard. There was an opportunity for questions, which, John told us, ranged from "How old was I?,(73)

Which football team did I support? (Carlisle United) to how many poems had I written (1,500) and where did I get my ideas from?"

<http://www.johnfosterchildrenspoet.co.uk/>

Teresa Heapy



Teresa Heapy read from her delightful books, and her session involved puppets and a sing-a-long! There was also be a chance to talk about different versions of traditional fairy tales, using The Very Little Woods, where lots of other Very Little characters live. What Very Little fairy tale would YOU tell? Children were asked - Can you design a dress for Very Little Cinderella - and how do you think she will get to the party?...

Very Little Red Riding Hood won Best Picture Book in the 2015

Oxfordshire Book Awards and the 2015 Coventry Inspiration Book

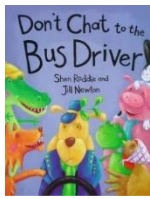
Awards. <http://www.teresaheapy.co.uk>

Tom Moorhouse



Tom talked about his "day job" as an ecologist and about his debut novel *The River Singers*, nominated for the Carnegie Medal, which follows the adventures of a family of water voles as they battle to escape a new and terrible enemy. Its sequel, *The Rising*, sees the voles facing their most dangerous enemy of all: the Great River herself. <http://tom-moorhouse.com/>

Shen Roddie



Shen Roddie is the author of over 30 picture books including *The Gossipy Parrot*, *Please Don't Chat to the Bus Driver* and *Colour Me Happy*. She ran a fun interactive workshop involving groups of Key Stage One children, reading from her books "Hatch Egg Hatch" and incorporating an egg quiz, and "The Gossipy Parrot" when she was joined by a noisy parrot puppet.



Sam and Mark

Sam and Mark told the children all about their book “The Adventures of Long Arm” and showed a hilarious film about how the book was made. They followed this up with a “Best Friends” quiz, involving some of the audience.

Every child attending went away with a signed copy of the book, thanks to support from publishers Scholastic and a generous donation from the Maggie Evans Fund.

We were also pleased to provide some of our volunteers with Sam and Mark’s books and delighted to hear recently from one volunteer working with a boy, reluctant to read anything until she offered The Adventures of Long Arm. She told us that the book hooked his interest, he read the whole book and asked her for the sequel (yet to be written). The book turned around his attitude to reading and he is now keen to read – a life changing moment!



We received tremendous feedback on the event itself:

"The children had a brilliant time. Thank you for organising the event"
Cutteslowe Primary, Oxford



"Our boys were delighted with everything that they saw and heard. They have gone away armed with books. They did not think a reading event would be so much fun. The venue was definite crowd pleaser too!" West Witney Primary

"Fantastic feedback from parents who said their kids were really enthused and loved meeting the stars." Orchard Meadow Primary, Blackbird Leys, Oxford

"Great to meet Adam Guillain talking about his books written with Charlotte. We really enjoyed hearing Matt Brown talk about his writing." Wood Farm Primary, Oxford



"Many congrats for an incredible event at the Kassam Stadium." Georgina Atwell

"Awesome event" Toppsta (Book Review site)

"Thank you for having us, it was a great event – ARCh should be very proud." Vikki Rose aka Winnie the Witch, Oxford University Press

"Thanks to you guys for making it such a fun event! Roll on 2016!" Matt Brown, author

"Many congratulations to you all on a really great event. There was a great buzz about the whole afternoon and I was delighted to be part of it and very much enjoyed it too." Elaine Eastgate, former ARCh reading helper volunteer

"I saw some examples of children and their parents really captivated by what was going on: from the parent who told me that John Foster made a poem come alive, boys who were excited by the footballers, finding a book in the library stall about Minecraft, asking parents for Matt Brown's book. One family I saw decided to stay until 5.30 to have a book signed by Tom Moorhouse although the father was on night shift that evening. I think it was job done. You had the right people, the right place, and something to touch everyone there." **Helen Walker, ARCh reading helper volunteer**



Enormous thanks to our funders who made the event possible

