

HAY FESTIVAL

*the* Scribblers  
*tour*



External Report  
2013

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## I Statement

In its second year the Scribblers Tour has repeated the successes of the inaugural year and built on a year's experience to deliver another exciting programme of literature and creative writing events to secondary school children across Wales. Spread over three months in the spring, the tour has strengthened ties between the Hay Festival, universities and schools in Wales. It has inspired thousands of school children by bringing them into higher education environments to work with exceptional young people's writers and has taken the essence of this interaction into the classroom through a series of specially produced online teaching resources.

The Scribblers Tour is free for schools and has become a fixture in the calendar for our partner universities and the schools that we have worked with.



*"Today I learned that you don't  
have to be amazing at English  
to write your own books."  
Year 8 student, Aberystwyth*

## II Project Description

### Overview

The Scribblers Tour is a series of live literature and creative writing events for school children that take place in universities across Wales. We work with six university partners and the best young people's writers to deliver a free programme of stimulating, interactive and cross-curricular events aimed at raising students' formal and informal attainment, developing creative writing skills and increasing motivation.



Our partnerships with Welsh universities are crucial and we rely on their links with schools in their catchment areas to ensure the widest possible reach across Wales. They also provide the backbone of the Tour, as the events take place in university venues and the presence of student ambassadors ensures the smooth running of each Tour day. The students are on hand to help steward the events and to answer any questions about life as an undergraduate. This direct contact with university students is intended to help normalize the higher education environment for young Welsh pupils rising up through the secondary system and encourage them to consider higher education as achievable and desirable.

Scribblers Tour events are aimed at Key Stage 3 and early Key Stage 4 students; these are important points in the school career representing entry into the secondary system and the start of GCSEs. There is no better time to open students' eyes to the immense possibilities within their everyday subjects and encourage them to step beyond the curriculum to see the links between subjects. The Scribblers Tour supports the national curriculum, aiming to increase attainment in both English Language and English Literature as well as offering students something more than they will find in the classroom. We aim to raise aspirations, broaden horizons and inspire students to write.



## **The Scribblers Tour 2013**

Our objectives for the second edition of the Scribblers Tour were to consolidate the successes of year one and build on a year's experience, developing our online content to ensure continued open access and wider reach.

The first consideration was to choose the best time of year for the three parties involved – schools, universities and the Hay Festival. Timing was essential to a successful event as university venues can't be guaranteed before autumn, the run up to Christmas is too busy for schools and summer exams rule out any school trips after the end of April. In September 2012 dates were chosen across February, March and April 2013 at each university and at the beginning of October universities sent programme information out to schools in their area, inviting them to take part and book their places on the second edition of the tour.

Once places were booked, participating schools received information about the authors they were going to see, a copy of their books for the library and some suggestions for how to prepare for the event. The following programme of events was put together for schools to take part in:

### **7 & 8 February at Swansea Metropolitan University**

Saci Lloyd, Cathy Brett, workshops with current students

### **8 & 9 March at Cardiff University**

Phil Earle, Amy McCulloch, Ellie Irving, Damian Dibben, Cardiff School of Journalism

### **11 & 12 March at Aberystwyth University**

Damian Dibben, Laura Dockrill, Dave Cousins & poetry workshop

### **19 & 20 March at University of Wales, Newport**

Laura Dockrill, Phil Earle & Tin Shed Theatre

### **9 April at Bangor University**

Saci Lloyd, Ellie Irving & Eurig Salisbury

### **29 & 30 April at University of Wales, Trinity St David**

Marcus Alexander, KJ Wignall, Tanya Byrne & Jon Gower

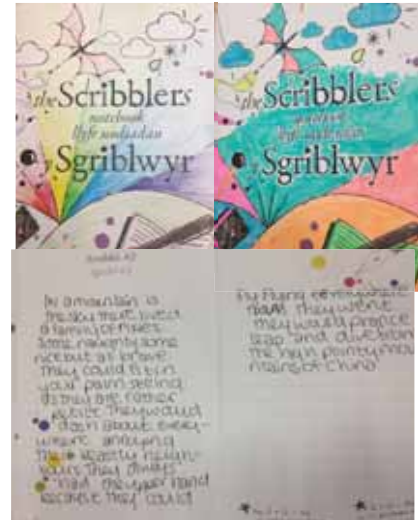


“One of the highlights of a writing year is #scribblersstour with Hay Festival. A serious joy. Cardiff tday and Newport in 2 weeks. Bring it on.”

*Phil Earle, author (via Twitter)*

### **The Scribblers notebook**

On arrival at a Scribblers Tour event, each student is given a specially produced Scribblers notebook to use throughout the day and beyond. The notebook is bilingual and contains activities to complete independently as well as space for writing activities led by the authors. By the end of a Scribblers day the notebook is packed with stories, pictures and ideas: it's a lovely memento of the day and something the students can take home to parents. This year the notebook has been amended so that it can be used in children's events across other Hay Festivals.



### **Bookshop**

We run a bookshop at every Scribblers Tour event selling books written by the performing authors. Students have the opportunity to meet the authors one-to-one and have their books signed. The bookshop and signing times are an important part of the day, helping to break down the barrier between performer and audience, writer and reader. Signing times regularly feature as highlights in our feedback.

We offer schools the opportunity to order their books from us before the event at a 20% discount and on the day we sell them with a £1 discount.

### **University sessions**

As part of our partnership with universities we offer them the opportunity to contribute to the content of the Scribblers Tour days and run one of the three daily sessions themselves. This year the sessions arranged by universities included journalism and magazine workshops, drama and poetry workshops run by current university students, theatre performances of curriculum texts by former university students, and 'what university life is like' sessions.

“Thank you so much for the great day we had today. The speakers were vibrant, engaging and a real inspiration to our pupils. I watched them concentrating intently, at times laughing and feeling really pleased with their books and autographs! Thank you for helping writing come alive for many of our pupils.”

*Claire Northwood, teacher*

## **Online teaching resources**

To ensure open access to Scribblers Tour content we have worked with our authors to create a series of online teaching resources, available for teachers to download for free and use in class or extra curricular creative writing groups.

Each resource consists of a 10-minute video, a lesson plan and a worksheet. In the video a Scribblers author outlines a creative writing task that they have devised and the lesson plan is the execution of the task in real time, with supplementary lesson ideas.

The content of the resources is inspired by the live Scribblers events and we consulted teachers from different schools in Wales when creating the lesson plans. It was important that the resources should be as easy to use as possible and we were advised across the board to provide complete lesson plans.

The following teaching resources will be available online from September 2013:

*The first line of your story* – Damien Dibben (KS3)

*Character development* – Ellie Irving (KS3)

*How to write a thriller* – Saci Lloyd (KS3/4)

*Using setting to inspire character* – Amy McCulloch (KS3/4)

*How to introduce tension* – Dave Cousins (KS3/4)

*Character development* – Phil Earle (KS4)

## **Equal Opportunities**

The Scribblers Tour is open to any school in Wales who would like to be involved. The majority of schools we work with on the Scribblers Tour are in Communities First areas and our partner universities make it a priority to target the schools most in need, though no school is excluded.

It is completely free for schools to come to Scribblers Tour events. Funding is used to pay for their transport to and from events to ensure that cost is not a barrier to attendance. This year we were also able to cover the cost of supply teachers in some cases where last minute staff shortages threatened a school's attendance.

The number of people who can attend live Scribblers events is necessarily limited but to make sure that no one misses out, we have created online teaching resources with Scribblers authors which all schools can access and download for free via the Hay Festival website. We have taken the creative writing activities that Scribblers authors devised for their live events and created easy-to-use lesson plans around them, bringing the Scribblers Tour straight into the classroom.

## Press

Our press release was sent to the full Hay Festival mailing list of 100,000 people, including local, regional and national press. Each of our partner universities issued their own statement, advertising the tour on their websites and through their newsletters.

Article in the *South Wales Evening Post* and *This Is South Wales*.

## The Hay Festival Scribblers Tour comes to Swansea Met

### The Scribblers Tour



### Book signing at the Scribblers Tour Swansea Met

SCRIBBLERS, the travelling literature roadshow that aims to educate while expanding the minds of budding young creative writers, returned to Swansea this week to get children fired-up about books. And judging from the reaction of the youngsters, we don't have to worry too much — they love their stories.

The brainchild of the Hay Festival organisers, with input from the Met, this

year the pupils were treated to some top tips and advice from authors Saci Lloyd, Cathy Brett and Tanya Byrne.

Saci, at one point, threw out the question 'name me a weapon that could be used to kill somebody?' An imaginative answer came flying back from the floor: 'a KitKat.'

Saci and the children then worked up their plot, whodunit style, positing that if the unlikely weapon were poisoned, or perhaps dropped from the Eiffel Tower, it could in fact prove fatal.

All in all this was an entertaining event which got the creative juices flowing and showed that though they might be the Xbox and Twitter generation, children can still call upon, and be excited by, an active imagination. Mark Rees

Read more: <http://www.thisissouthwales.co.uk/Hay-Festival-Scribblers-Tour-comes-Swansea-Met/story-18116670-detail/story.html?20640448=27664713#ixzz2X9U31r95>



### III Looking Forward

A total of 57 schools booked in to take part in the Scribblers Tour 2013 live events and we welcomed 5,200 children into universities across Wales over the course of the tour. Online content has extended our reach and allowed us to take the magic of the tour directly into classrooms for thousands more children across Wales. In its second year, the tour has succeeded in repeating the achievements of year one and building on a year's experience to improve the project we deliver. Looking forwards, there are three key areas we will develop for 2014.

#### **Online activity**

We maintained a good presence on Twitter through the tour, with tweeting from each event and audiences linked up with authors online for follow-up exchanges after events. We are creating a dedicated Scribblers Tour Twitter account to build up a year-round following and create a sense of community between people who attend events in different parts of Wales. We are also creating a Facebook page for the Scribblers Tour for information, news, photos and to complement the Twitter account.

#### **Partners**

Universities in Wales are undergoing significant structural changes this year. Institutions are merging to create fewer, larger universities across the country. For example University of Wales, Newport has merged with University of Glamorgan to become The University of South Wales. The changes will have some effects on the Scribblers Tour but we anticipate these will be nominal. Having discussed it with our partners, we will maintain the same number of events and reach out to schools in the same catchment areas as previously. We will in effect be delivering more events in each university.

We also hope to partner with Swansea University, Glyndwr University and the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama in 2014. We will then be working with every major higher education institution in Wales.

#### **Writing competition**

In 2014 we will complement the tour of live events and the online teaching resources with a creative writing competition for young people in Wales. This will run throughout the tour and winners will be announced at the end of the tour. The competition will be judged by a panel of Scribblers Tour authors, and shortlisted students will have the opportunity to read their stories out at Hay Festival 2014 and win books for their school library.

“The best bit was meeting the authors and getting my book signed. I’ve always wanted to be a writer and I learned about how a book gets published. It was a better day than I expected and I wouldn’t change anything other than it lasting longer. Amazing experience.”

*Year 9 student, Cardiff*

“I am already writing and Phil [Earle] has given me the confidence to carry on.”

*Year 10 student, Newport*

“The best bit was actually meeting Ellie Irving. After I spoke to Ellie I got inspired to write. I learned that you have to just write and go with the flow.”

*Year 7 student, Bangor*

“Thoroughly enjoyed the talks and meeting the authors. Learned a lot about what life is like being an author. Good timing – before GCSEs.”

*Year 10 student, Swansea*

