



**YOUNG
CITY
READS**

Project Report 2015



COLLECTED WORKS CIC



In January 2015 it was announced that *Circus of Thieves* and *the Raffle of Doom* by William Sutcliffe had been chosen as the 'big read' for participants of Young City Reads 2015. This report is designed to document the project and detail any thoughts for development and improvement for future years.

Partners and Sponsors

Major Partner: Brighton Festival

In addition to commissioning YCR 2015, the project was supported throughout by Brighton Festival's Creative Learning and Marketing departments. Brighton Festival also hosted the final schools event with William Sutcliffe and David Tazzyman during Brighton Festival 2015 at Brighton's Theatre Royal.

Brighton & Hove City Libraries

As well as hosting three World Book Day workshops, Brighton & Hove City Libraries programmed free circus-themed film screenings every Sunday in May, organised themed library visits for several schools and gifted 90 copies of the book to participating schools on World Book Day.

Publishers: Simon & Schuster

The publishers of *Circus of Thieves* and *the Raffle of Doom* provided Collected Works with professionally branded marketing materials including: posters, stickers, bookmarks and pop-up banners. In addition they provided 200 free copies of the book, which were distributed to schools where need was greatest.

“ Thank you once again for all your dedication , enthusiasm and co-ordination of the wonderful Young City Reads Programme. It's been really encouraging and satisfying to see so many children being inspired to read CIRCUS OF THIEVES through your distribution of the book and the dedicated marketing of the programme itself. Support of local booksellers has been a real bonus and this is testament to the relationship you have with them. The culmination of all the activity at the Theatre Royal and the attendance of 700 children was a truly heart-warming sight to behold, promoting reading as fun, interactive and entertaining. This is an event that we, and most certainly they, will remember for a very long time! Thank you. ”

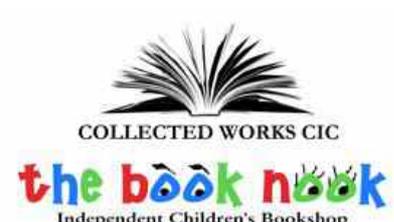
Richard Hawton, Simon & Schuster

Book Nook, Hove

Book Nook were the official bookseller at the final event at Brighton Festival and offered schools a 20% discount on class sets of the book (which included free delivery).

Boho Gelato and Pizza Face, Brighton

Local ice-cream vendor Seb Cole kindly created us our own fundraising flavour 'Big Top Banan(z)a' which raised nearly £500 for the project whilst on sale from March to June 2015. The ice cream was also sold by popular local pizzeria Pizza Face who also donated the profits from its sale back to the project. This money was spent on books and workshops for schools in more deprived parts of the city.



Background and Context

Award winning organisation Collected Works CIC (CW) has over 10 years experience in running shared reading projects in the community (both large and small scale). Its work has received acclaim from many high profile members of the local community including: Caroline Lucas MP, former Mayor of Brighton (Councillor Bill Randall), Lisa Rodrigues CEO of Sussex Partnership Foundation Trust and Louise Zahra (lead co-ordinator on Every Child a Reader at Brighton & Hove City Council).

In 2013 Collected Works CIC (CW) delivered the first ever 'big read' for children in Brighton & Hove called Young City Reads (YCR). This hugely successful pilot project ran during Brighton Festival and was led by guest artistic director and former children's laureate, Michael Rosen, who praised the scheme for its 'inventiveness and simplicity' in its approach to encouraging children and young people to read for pleasure.

In 2014 CW was commissioned by Brighton Festival to deliver a second Young City Reads project and also to take over management of the Festival's own Adopt an Author. scheme. Together, with the Festival's children's literature programme '26 Letters' these two initiatives made up Brighton Festival's impressive children's reading offer for 2014, which was then replicated for 2015.



48 classes signed up to take part in YCR 2015 (an increase of 16 from 2013 and 33 in 2014) from 28 schools across the city. This year's chosen book was *Circus of Thieves and the Raffle of Doom* by William Sutcliffe.

The project launched on World Book Day (5 March 2015) with two drama workshops at Jubilee library, led by local actor Tom Dussek and supported by library staff. These were delivered to targeted ECar* schools St Bartholomew's Primary and St Martin's Primary (both year 4 classes).

*ECaR (Every Child a Reader) is a literacy programme for the lowest achieving children. CW worked closely with Brighton & Hove's ECar Leader, Louise Zahra to identify schools that needed targeted support from the YCR team.

What is Young City Reads?

Young City Reads is a 'big read' for primary school children (Key Stage 2) in which one book, by one author is chosen to read together then: discuss, debate and creatively engage with. YCR supports primary school children across Brighton & Hove with their reading, offering special help and support for emergent readers and children from disadvantaged backgrounds. YCR produces free resources, drama workshops and fun events based around children's books to help young readers discover the joy of reading for pleasure. Its aim is to make reading a fun activity for all children regardless of ability.

“ [Young City Reads] is a brilliant initiative and one that children appear to have enthusiastically jumped on. The combination of organised activity in response to a book along with reading en masse is potent. It enlivens reading for those who may be slipping away from books; for enthusiastic readers it provides community fun, discussion and the sharing of a story. ”

Kingston University

Project Aims

Young City Reads aims to:

- foster a love of reading in primary aged children through shared exploration of a story
- enthuse and inspire reluctant readers by increasing accessibility to a text
- inspire young readers to explore a story's themes further and engage them beyond basic literacy
- increase confidence by supporting the development of skills
- help children discover the joy of 'reading for pleasure'

Author and Book for 2015

William Sutcliffe is a bestselling adult author, whose books include the international hit *Are You Experienced? The Wall*, his first YA novel was shortlisted for the Guardian Fiction Prize and Carnegie Medal. *Circus of Thieves* is the first in a series for younger children. William currently lives in Edinburgh.

Circus of Thieves and the Raffle of Doom tells the funny and heartwarming tale of Hannah, whose life is boring, boring, boring... UNTIL she meets: Billy Shank, his astonishing camel, Narcissus, and a host of other bizarrely brilliant members of the circus. But all is not as it seems; Armitage Shank, evil ringmaster and Billy's surrogate father, has a dastardly plan involving light-fingered thievery. Can Hannah and Billy stop his stinking scheme before it's too late...



2013

17 classes

1,500

total no. participating

2014

33 classes

We gifted

300

books to schools in areas of the city highest on the national deprivation index

2015

50 classes



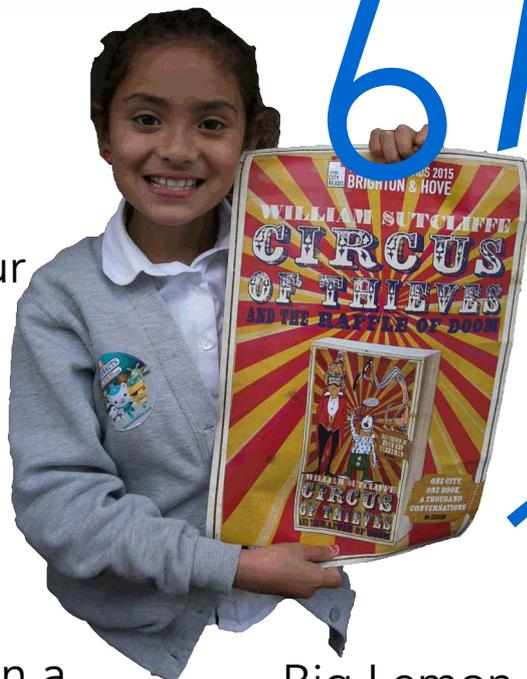
2015

AT A GLANCE



150

children entered our competition to win the book's sequel



670

children attended the final event at Brighton's Theatre Royal

120

children took part in a free drama workshop

109

children arrived by Big Lemon buses thanks to funding from Comic Relief

The Launch – World Book Day

On World Book Day (5 March 2015) partner organisation Brighton & Hove Libraries hosted free workshops for two local ECaR primary classes: Year 4 from St Bartholomew's Primary and Year 4 from St Martin's Primary.

Pupils met local actor Tom Dussek who led a drama workshop that introduced the story's themes and characters.

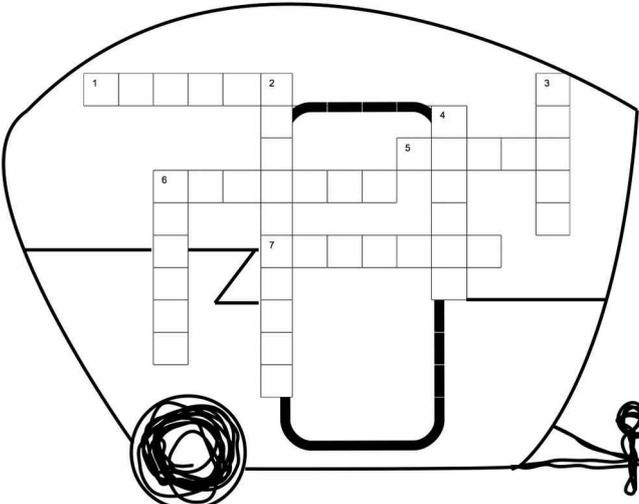


Following an initial 'Welcome' email which contained a fully comprehensive Circus of Thieves Reader's Guide (written by Collected Works and designed by the publisher) 10 free weekly bulletins 'Young City Reads Specials' were sent to participating classes (those that had registered and completed an opening evaluation) between the launch on World Book Day and the final schools event at Brighton's Theatre Royal on 20 May.

Each bulletin contained a free downloadable resource teachers could print out and share with their class as they read the book together.

Shank's Impossible Crossword

Solve the clues then fill in the grid with your answers!



ACROSS

1. Hannah's canine friend (6)
5. A mammal with long legs, a big-lipped snout and a humped back (5)
6. Another word for a robber (7)
7. Another word for a gymnast, clue: unscramble 'carboat' (7)

DOWN

2. The name for a person who directs a circus – often in a red jacket and a top hat! (10)
3. Boy in Circus of Thieves who rides a camel called Narcissus (5)
4. Name of the first human who heard the circus rumble into town? (6)
6. The name for the main tent at the circus (3,3)

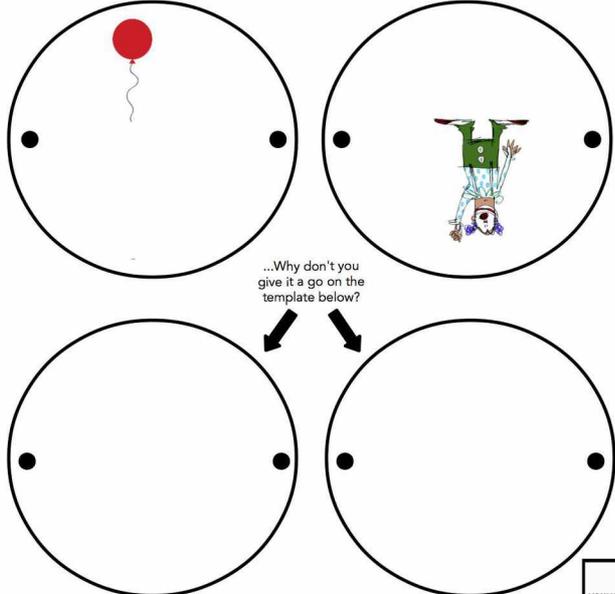


...It's a what?!

You will need:
1 x scissors
2 pieces of string / elastic bands
1 x pencil

What to do:

1. Cut around each disc and glue the two circles together (remember, Frank (or Hank!) needs to stay upside down!)
2. Punch a hole through the two dots on either side of the circle.
3. Secure a loop of string, or elastic through each hole- the loops should be long enough for you to have a good grip while its being stretched out.
4. Hold the string/elastic ends in each hand and 'wind' the Thaumatrope by flipping the disc, which will cause the string/elastic to twist once the loops are good and twisted, gently pull them, and the disc will spin putting the balloon in Hank (or Frank's) hand.



...Why don't you give it a go on the template below?



"I liked the one with the clown and the balloon that you had to make [the thaumatrope activity]"
Carden Primary Pupil

"We enjoyed the competition loads!" Queen's Park Primary Pupil

"We've done quite a lot of the activities, which they've enjoyed. The competition was good as it was a stand alone activity...it used their different skills... it helped that there was a prize!" Jason Lees, Class Teacher, Queen's Park Primary

The Event – 20 May, 1.30pm, Theatre Royal, Brighton

Our closing celebratory event was held at Brighton's Theatre Royal on Wednesday 20 May as part of Brighton Festival. 670 participating children and teachers were in attendance. The event lasted for 1 hour and consisted of an audience with William Sutcliffe and live drawing from Circus of Thieves illustrator David Tazzyman (of Mr. Gum fame).



[The event] got the children excited to read the second book. Many of our children had never been to the theatre before so was a great experience for them. **Jess Twining, Class Teacher, Carden Primary**

'Comments made by my class: They loved the live event and would definitely go again! They liked: the chance to see one of our children on stage, the involvement of the audience, that it was active, seeing the drawings appear live, seeing the author and illustrator "in the flesh", the prancing, the circus performers who introduced it, seeing all the other readers from Brighton.'

Kate Abel, Class Teacher, St Luke's Primary

'The children found it "very entertaining and fantastic"' **Neil Fulcher, Class Teacher, Mile Oak Primary**

Drama Workshops

With additional funding from The Pebble Trust we were able to offer four participating classes, from schools with high FSM stats, free drama workshops to compliment their exploration of the story. These workshops were led by professional drama tutor Simon Magnus. 120 children in total from four schools: Hertford Juniors, Carden Primary, Mile Oak Primary and Moulseccomb Primary benefitted from these workshops.

"I never enjoyed drama before but after doing this I would like to do more!" **Sophie**



'The workshop was great, the children really enjoyed it and the actors were great at getting the children into character.' **Becky Greatrex, Literacy Coordinator, Hertford Juniors**

“ I would just like to say another massive thank you for coming to Mile Oak and hosting such brilliant drama workshop. We all really enjoyed reading the book and the drama workshop was just the icing on the cake. I have never seen the whole class so absolutely absorbed in an activity before. The most disengaged in the class were absolutely hooked and the shyest members of class suddenly found a (rather loud) voice! It was such a fun and engaging afternoon, thank you so much for coming. ”

Class Teacher, Mile Oak Primary

"It was EPIC! I can't imagine a better drama lesson! " **Aiden**

"It was probably the most fun I've ever had in school!" **Katie**

"When I grow up, I want to be actors just like you!" **Jimmy**

Project Impact and Feedback

“ Thank you, we have really enjoyed taking part in city reads and the children are already asking if we can read the second book! ”

Becky Greatrex, Literacy Coordinator, Hertford Juniors

We had such fun last year so were very excited about the new book (which we loved!)

Mrs Carroll, Class Teacher, River Beach Primary

Good choice of text. Always a fun, good quality experience.

Andrew Bradstreet, Class Teacher, Moulsecomb Primary

[The event] got the children excited to read the second book. Many of our children had never been to the theatre before so was a great experience for them.

Jess Twining, Class Teacher, Carden Primary

“ It offers a unique chance to all be reading a whole chapter book together and develop their reading for pleasure. A free paperback chapter book for my children who are from families with very little money really helped. ”

Jane Joshi, Class Teacher, St Martin's Primary

The class was reluctant to read and needed a fun and exciting way to be engaged by reading. Afterwards, when asked if they would read the next book all of them said they would!

Jack Morris, Class Teacher, Carden Primary

Young City Reads promotes a love of books and enthuses the children to pick up a book and become immersed in the story and the characters.

Julie Forsyth, Literacy Coordinator, West Blatchington Primary

Great book choice- really useful for developing vocabulary, and a really good, well organised experience for the children that brings a particular focus on reading for pleasure. Meeting the author rounds the experience off really well.

Jess Twining, Class Teacher, Carden Primary

“ [Young City Reads] gives children a fantastic opportunity to really engage in a text as a reader, with a difference. ”

Miss Burford, Class Teacher, River Beach Primary

Fantastic opportunity and organisation - I can't wait for next year!

Emma Mills, Class Teacher, Saltdean Primary

Conclusion and lessons learned

The project works very well for Key Stage 2 but feedback indicates (particularly because of SATS) it is best suited for Years 4 & 5. This year's book being suitable for Years 2 and 3 if guided carefully by the class teacher may have aided the increase in reach.

The final event was popular with schools and the substantial EARLYBIRD discount we gave before the project launch really encouraged early booking and made tickets more affordable to pupils and schools in less privileged areas.

The addition of a teachers focus group to help pick the book, as suggested in last year's report, really worked well. Teachers were unanimous in their decision that Circus of Thieves should be the YCR 2015 read but they also identified other key factors about the project that work well and not so well, including input on the resources.

The drama workshops worked very well for reluctant or emergent readers and this year's workshops received particularly fantastic feedback. The shared process of creating the content for these (between Collected Works and the drama practitioner) worked really well.

Suggested additions for 2015

Host a closing party/celebration at the end for teachers and partners (get a sponsor on board who could support/facilitate this.)

Engage a PR person to maximise media coverage and aim to get some National coverage for the whole reading offer (this would need to be built into the costs.)

More information

To find out more about Young City Reads or Collected Works CIC please contact:

Sarah Hutchings (Artistic Director)
sarah@collectedworks.co.uk

Vicky Tremain (Project Manager)
vicky@cityreads.co.uk

Thankyou to all the funders who supported YCR 2015:



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