

TALKING ZEBRAS SPEAK OUT

In just 18 months, a group of devotees of the spoken word have gone from a small occasional session in an upstairs pub room to one of Yorkshire's premier and regular spoken word groups.

Little did the original co-hosts David Lindsay and Jim Saville realise when they discussed the idea, that the club would become such a strong presence with literary and art festival bookings, its own concert, successful school liaison and other events to the clubs credit.

The name has proved an interesting talking point in itself – particularly amongst its own members and peers: Some say that a Talking Zebra is a rare creature who enjoys the delights and variety of the spoken English language. Some say it is a fantastic creature and represents an equally wonderful group of like-minded people. You might have your own ideas, but there is no doubt that the herd is growing and can no longer be regarded as on the endangered species list.

Part of its success is the social element of the group, with people travelling from near and far to share their favourite pieces, meet friends and fellow enthusiasts. Furthermore, the club is not content to rest on its laurels, but is building on its positive start and spreading the word even further.

Following a successful poetry writing competition in the 2013 Autumn term, which saw over 150 entries from local Primary Schools, they are currently running a competition for Secondary Schools in the area. There are entries confirmed from Whitcliffe Mount Specialist Business and Enterprise College, Spen Valley Sports College and BBG Academy.

The competition for 11-16 year olds is on the theme of "Animals" and entries are also being taken at Cleckheaton Library and Matthew's Coffee House on Market Street in the town before 5pm on Friday 4th April.

The group is also planning a workshop aimed at helping to improve memory and aid poetry recitation. This will be held in mid-May as part of Kirklees Library's "Around the Word in 80 Days" Festival.

Individual club members are performing in local folk clubs, cafes and at other events, including at "Lend Us Your Ears" – a fundraising concert for Kirkwood Hospice held in Millbridge, Liversedge on Friday 20th June. This is the 3rd such annual event, which promises a strong mixture of local folk singers, musicians, poets and raconteurs giving their services to help a good cause.

For details of all these and more, why not check out the clubs website www.talkingzebras.co.uk or come along to The Commercial on Bradford Road Cleckheaton on the 1st, 3rd or 5th Saturday afternoon each month?

These are informal gatherings where people can come to listen or to read/perform their favourite pieces of literature. On a typical afternoon you'll hear poetry from well-known names, self-penned poems, local dialect readings, excerpts from plays and novels and other entertaining examples of the English language. All are welcome, and it's free (aside from the drinks, of course) but please be aware that we meet in an upstairs room and that under 18s need to be accompanied by an adult.

Contact Jim Saville (01274 410317) or David Lindsay (07900 695873).