

Hartshill Academy Library News



Warwickshire Schools Book Awards Ceremony



On Thursday, Hartshill Academy's Library Book Club had a reward for all their hard work over the last three years, when they finally got to attend the awards ceremony for the Warwickshire Schools Book Award. They had missed out in 2020, as the world went

into lockdown, and the 2021 ceremony, although great, was completely virtual. It was so wonderful to actually be able to take them out of school for a few hours to attend the event in person!

This awards process is run by the Schools Library Service, with book packs being supplied by the independent bookshop, Warwick Books. Our Book Club, along with many other groups across Warwickshire, have spent the last few months reading the six shortlisted books. Last week they voted for their favourite and then were able to attend the awards ceremony on the day to hear the authors speak, and to watch the winner receive their award. Normally the SLS are able to organise at least two of the six authors to attend, but this year they were able to arrange for all six to attend – three in person and three online!

Each of the authors spoke about their book, and about their writing in general, and it was fascinating to hear all of the different perspectives; from Brian Conaghan's surprising revelation that the verbal abuse suffered by his character Lennie in the book was in fact a reality for one of his best friends in school; to Alex Wheatle's reasoning for writing such a comic book about the litany of disasters that befell his teenage protagonist; to Liz Kessler speaking with feeling about her heart-wrenching novel (and our Book Club's favourite) *When the World Was Ours*, inspired by the very real things that happened to her father during the Holocaust. Geraldine McCaughrean shared with us where she come up with ideas (in the shower), Kate Malinder shared her best writing snacks (Turkish Delight) and Padraig Kenny shared with us his similarities to the (mostly nice) monsters in his beautifully illustrated fantasy book, *The Monsters of Rookhaven*.

Students had previously submitted questions to the SLS for the authors, and our Book Club had more of their questions read out than any other school there, with five questions coming from Charlie, Shannon, Zoe, Katrina and Anna.

Students were also able to submit entries to any of three competitions as part of the award, where they could either draw something from or about the book or create a written piece such as a follow-on or an alternate ending. We are very proud to announce that two of the four winners were from Hartshill, with Leah winning with her poem inspired by *When the World Was Ours*, and Darcie winning with her alternate ending to the same novel. Both students received a certificate and a bag full of goodies - including a copy of the winning novel!



After Liz Kessler's novel was, unsurprisingly, announced as the winner, the students were able to queue up to meet their choice of authors. They had their books signed, or their reading journals, got to chat with the writers, and even take selfies!

As a group, we were lucky enough to be able to take photos with all three of the authors in attendance, and the students really enjoyed speaking with them - and picking up freebies such as signed postcards and beautiful bookmarks! In all, it was well-deserved reward for such hard working students who have dedicated their own time to an extracurricular club.



Book Club runs every Tuesday after school, for an hour, and is a wonderful space to discuss ideas, read a range of challenging and inspirational novels and participate in awards processes and national competitions. If you/your child are interested in joining, please pop in to the library, or email, for more information.

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