



Garden Suburb Infant School



Henrietta Barnett School



North Western Reform Synagogue Religious School

# Hampstead Garden Suburb Centenary Storytelling Festival a huge success



The storytelling festival brought together over 150 children and adolescents, aged between 5 and 18, from 10 local schools and youth organisations to share stories from our culturally diverse Suburb community.

The festival, hosted by The Henrietta Barnett School, proved to be a huge success drawing a total audience of over 700 adults and children.

There were three separate performances held over the afternoon. The first featured the youngest participants. Children from Annemount School delivered a dramatic account of the *American Thanksgiving* story. As the children delivered their lines, they ingeniously moved together to create the outline of The Mayflower, the famous ship in which the first pilgrims sailed to America. Brookland Infant School told an African story called *Handa's Surprise* using colourful props, animal masks, costumes, percussion and singing. Garden Suburb Infant School created a charming version of the classic story *The Ugly Duckling*. Another colourful and dynamic retelling from North Western

Reform Synagogue (Alyth) Religion School – who chose the Passover Story: from Slavery to Freedom – completed the group's performances. Although most children in this group were infants, they were not in the least intimidated by the large audience or the unfamiliar surroundings, and gave confident performances. They clearly enjoyed both taking part and listening to the other stories.

Dressed in very colourful costumes, the children from Brookland Junior School, leading the second group, told the complex story of Rama and Sita from the Indian epic *The Mahabharata* using choral speaking and classic storytelling techniques. The entire Year 5 from Kerem School created a stunning ensemble performance of the Jewish folk tale, *A Journey from Chelm* which featured traditional Jewish music and dance. Excellent ensemble acting, witty performances from the lead actors and great costumes helped to create the atmosphere of a Polish village. St. Jude's Junior Church leaders successfully directed children from a wide age range to produce a seamless performance. They gave a lively version of the parable *The Prodigal Son* with the help of lovely props and masks.

The final group performance began with an Edwardian melodrama from Year 6 at The King Alfred School. The comic tale, entitled *A Tall, Tall Tower*, was set in Hampstead Garden

Suburb and featured the archetypal hero, heroine, possessive father and arch villain. This fast-paced comedy was contrasted by a beautiful Iranian tale, Sam and Zaal from *Shameneb* (an Iranian classic) told by children from The Rustam Iranian School, a Saturday school based at Christ's College. The children wore the most exquisite jewel coloured costumes and the performance included traditional Iranian drumming and dancing.

Finally, girls from The Henrietta Barnett School gave a performance of *Pyramus and*

*Thisbe*, the comic tale from Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. This was brought to life with costumes and props, and which they ended with Elizabethan dancing.

Most children had not had the opportunity to see the other schools and youth groups perform before the festival. As the children in each group sat on stage together, they were able to enjoy some of the stories for the first time. Part of the pleasure for the audience was the joy of watching their faces as each tale unfolded.



Brookland Infant School



Rustan Iranian School



Jane Pendry



St Jude's Sunday School



Garden Suburb Infant School



Kerem School



The King Alfred School



Annemount School



Brookland Junior School

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