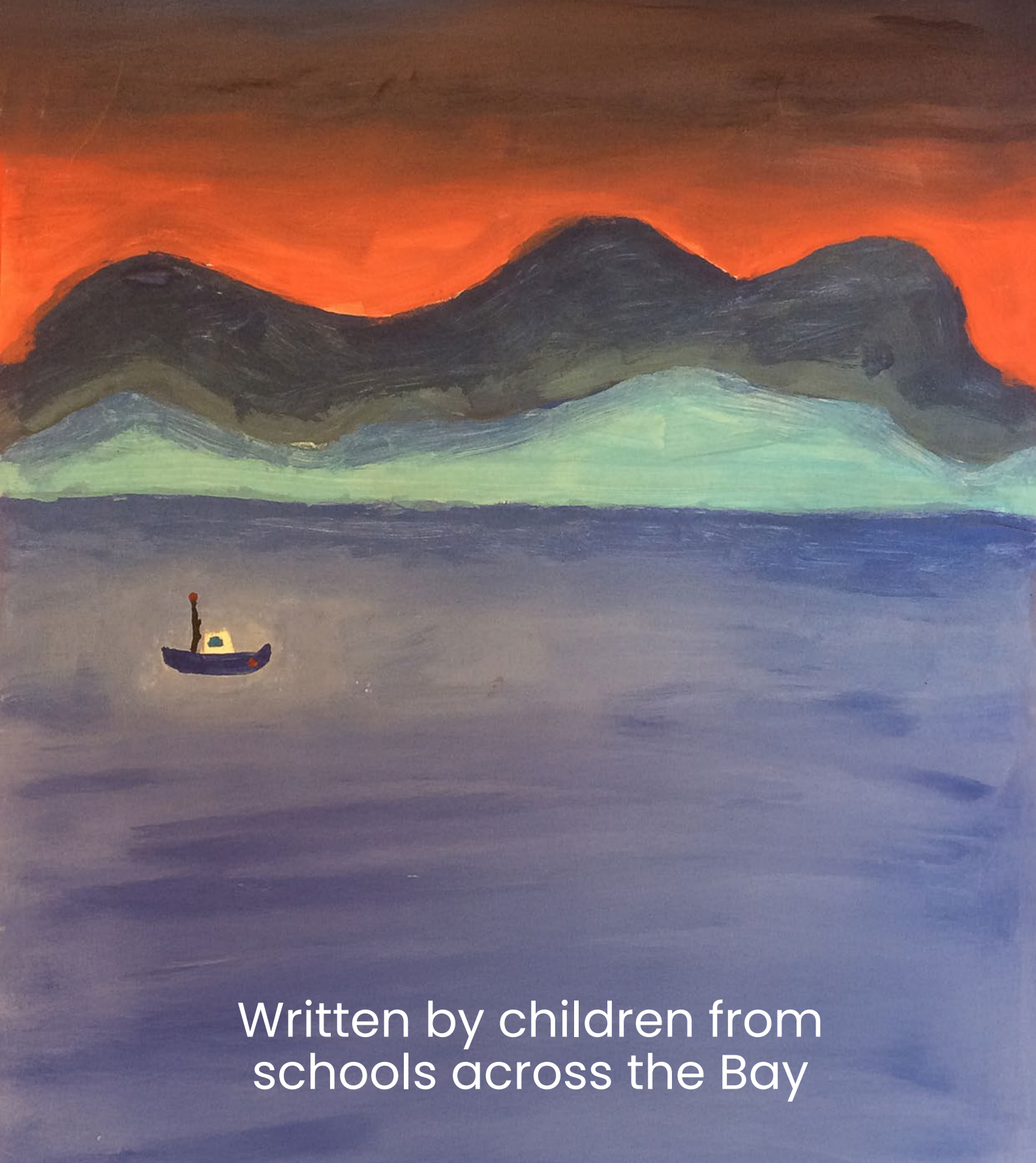
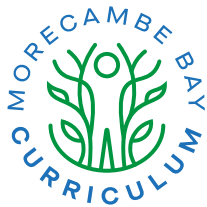


Local Legends

A Morecambe Bay Anthology



Written by children from
schools across the Bay



Lancaster
University



The Morecambe Bay Curriculum Storytelling and Writing Pilot Project

Pupils Creating Local Myths, Legends and Historical Stories

The MBC Storytelling and Writing Pilot Project, part of the Morecambe Bay Curriculum Project (www.lancaster.ac.uk/morecambe-bay-curriculum/), was designed to engage primary school children and teachers in the Morecambe Bay area in researching, writing and presenting a story rooted in their school's local environment.

The project was implemented from December 2024 to July 2025. Seven schools took part, six primary schools and a specialist school. In each school, one class, or group, led on the story. Their task was to produce a story rooted in their school's local area, based on geographical and historical facts and myths. Together with their teachers, the children researched local histories and explored some of the locations where their stories are set.

The aim of the project was to help the children create place-based stories through the development of oral storytelling skills prior to writing. Underpinning the project was the belief that rooting the story in the children's own localities, and with their local community, not only aligned the project with the principles of the Morecambe Bay Curriculum, but would also be engaging, motivating and provide opportunities for deeper learning.

To support schools with the above, a teacher and a group of children were invited to participate in two full-day workshops at Lancaster University. The first workshop was led by Emily Hennessey, a local Cumbrian storyteller. Her creation myth about Morecambe Bay, 'Made by the Moon', had been enjoyed and used as a stimulus for cross-curricular learning in a previous project, so many of the children were familiar with this.

Emily's workshop focused on the skills of creating a story from historical and geographical facts and local myths, legends and stories. Within this workshop, the children also had the opportunity to experience high quality oral storytelling from Emily herself.

The second workshop focused on helping children to 'find their voice' as oral storytellers and to consider the skills of oral storytelling, which they could then take back to school and teach their peers. It also focused on further development of the stories the children had started to create. The first part of the session was led by Anne O'Connor, an independent Early Years Consultant, the second part by Steph Johnson, a Teaching and Learning Consultant for Lancashire LPDS.

Through both sessions, the children learned how to develop plots and characters, how to create dialogue, how to consider the language appropriate for their chosen historical context and how to play with vocabulary, images and rhymes.

In addition to the above, the participating teachers were able to benefit from two CPD sessions. The first focused on how to research local history and geography and how to gather stories and information from the local community. This was led by Michelle Cooper from the Morecambe Bay Partnership. The second focused on how to develop coherence in writing with a focus on historical stories. This was led by Steph Johnson (as above). There were also opportunities for 'check in' sessions where the teachers could meet on TEAMS to discuss the stories their children were working on, share ideas and be part of a supportive network. These were led by Jo Easthope, Headteacher of Overton St. Helen's Primary School.

All of the above was supported by colleagues from Lancaster University: Uta Papen and Beth Garrett (School of Social Sciences); Carys Nelkon and Irene Wise (Morecambe Bay Curriculum) and Courtney Broomhall, Undergraduate Research Student (Linguistics and English Language).

This publication celebrates the written stories of the children and schools who participated and includes illustrations from each school. It includes seven stories; each placed in the school's immediate environment. The stories are as they were submitted and have not been further edited.

Courtney Broomhall and Uta Papen have explored the project's impact and future potential to develop place-based curricula and how the development of oracy and oral storytelling can engage and motivate children to write. They have visited some of the schools, observed the children while working on their stories and talked to them about the project. They have discussed with them, and their teachers, how oral rehearsal impacts on written outcomes.

We are very grateful to the Faculty of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences at Lancaster University who provided financial support for the programme, as well as to the Morecambe Bay Partnership and the seven participating schools for all their support and commitment to the project. Most importantly, we want to thank the children who spent many hours, diligently and enthusiastically researching topics, considering story lines, creating story boards, trying out dialogue, discussing and negotiating which words to use and, last but not least, creating beautiful illustrations to accompany their stories.

With thanks to:

Y5 – Carter's Charity Primary School and Leana Spence

Y3 – The Cathedral Catholic Primary School and Fiona Lowe

Y5 – Heysham St. Peter's CE Primary School and Hannah Owens

Class M2 – Morecambe Road School and Kristian Davies

Y5/6 – Overton St. Helen's CE Primary School and Emma Ingham

Y3/4 – Quernmore CE Primary School and Rachel Stevenson

Y6 – Ryelands Community Primary School and Sophie Sanders
and Linda Pye

The Legend of the Sea Wall and the Sleeping Fells

Story developed by Year 5 at Carter's Charity Primary School

Final story written by Madison Rose

Story edited and illustrated by Madison Rose and Amber Allen

Once upon a time, there was a small village called Preesall set in the quiet countryside. And next to Preesall was the fishing village of Knott-End, right next to the sea and across the river from Fleetwood. There were many thriving local shops, and a Fish and Chip shop that was busy all day long! Everyone was happy and cheerful. Farmers grew their crops, the fishermen caught lots of fish. And most importantly, everyone got along!





Each day, the ferry came in and out across Morecambe Bay carrying the happy citizens back and forth to the busy ports of Fleetwood and Heysham. Many people played along the beach with their bright kites but be careful of the dozens of seagulls! Little did they know they wouldn't be seeing the beach much longer...

One gloomy morning, villagers woke up to a little bit of water beneath their feet. To start with, they thought nothing of it. But slowly over time, the water started gradually rising. The people of Knott-End realised that they were in a desperate situation when they couldn't go to the shops or visit their friends anymore. Where was all this water coming from?

Quickly, it became more serious. The fishermen tried to take their boats out to sea, but the water was so rough it forced them back. It was getting to the point where all their front doors were jammed shut, when they realised it wasn't heavy rain- it was coming from the ocean! Scared and confused, they all retreated indoors. But gradually, their houses started to disappear into the rising floodwater.



In a dark cave, across the bay in the Lake District, two ancient giants, both the size of a mountain, awoke from a long slumber. Slowly, the water rose into the crevices of their arms and legs, leaving them cold and unhappy. Both were confused, as they crawled out of their gloomy cave to see the ground covered in water. The rocky giants could hear faint screams coming from across the sea which made them displeased. Who had disturbed them from their sleep?

Angrily, they turned on each other, grabbing nearby boulders and loading themselves up ready to aim at one another. Like a loaded cannon, they launched boulders at each other, casting rocks across the dark, stormy sky. One giant dodged the other and as he staggered backwards into the water, the heavy boulders started to form a pile of rocks far behind him. This made the other giant even more frustrated and he kept on firing more boulders. Soon enough the pile that was once small was now vast and wide.

Eventually tiring of their battle, the pair of giants growled at one another and stumbled off in their own directions, back to the other sleeping fells.

Little did they know that the pile of huge rocks had landed right at the edge of the flooded village of Knott-End. The noise of the falling rocks sounded like the crashing of thunder and had frightened the already petrified people. But, this solid wall of rock became a protective barrier and started to push the seawater back. After a few days, the once neck-deep water began to drain away. The villagers started to realise that the giant fells had saved them from the angry ocean. At last, they could finally leave their houses and walk down the streets again. The fishermen could fish and the Fish and Chip shop was busy once more.

Knott-End and Preesall were saved and had a sea wall to protect them in the future. The people promised to always look after the beautiful area of Morecambe Bay and the Ocean was happy once more.

Amber and I are proud to represent our work to everyone who reads it. Thank you so much for giving us this amazing opportunity to show you our true creativity and ideas! We worked ever so hard on this story and can't wait to do more. Maddie

We took our time with this project, and we hope you enjoy reading our hard work. Every word means a lot, and we hope you think the same. Amber



A Day in the Life of Lancaster Canal 1859

Story developed by Year 3 at Cathedral Catholic Primary School

Prologue

Are you ready for a magical adventure? Let us take you back to Lancaster canal in the year 1859. The cotton trade is booming, and Lancaster Cathedral is nearly finished. George the horse and his friend Scat the cat are busy collecting coal from Kendal for the mills and picking up cotton to sell in Preston.





The sky was grey and miserable. The rain was falling heavily and George the horse was fed up.

"Here I am, plodding along, carrying coal, collecting cotton."

"Here I am, plodding along, carrying coal, collecting cotton."

"Oh come on George, it's not that bad!" encouraged Scat the cat.

"You don't have to pull this huge, heavy barge all the way from Kendal to Preston!" moaned George gloomily.

"No, I get boots thrown at me by the boatmen instead!"

"That's because you are not supposed to be here," chuckled George.

Suddenly Scat's whiskers began to twitch and he started to sniff the grey, smoky air.

"I think we are nearly at Moor Lane North Mill," Scat cried excitedly.

"Why do you think that?" asked George.

"Remember, I have amazing hearing and sense of smell. I can hear the machines and smell the smoke," coughed Scat.

"The smoke makes me cough too," said George.

All went well at Moor Lane North Mill, they carried in the coal and collected the cotton then headed off to Moor Lane South Mill.



As the barge approached Moor Lane South Mill, the sound of shouting could be heard echoing across the water. The boatmen all stopped their work and looked towards the mill, where a small boy was struggling, shouting and crying while the foreman held him firmly by the collar of his shirt.

“How dare you try to run away! You will go back in there and get under that machine to retie the cotton, whether you want to or not!” boomed the foreman.

The foreman dragged the boy back towards the mill, and the other workers started coming out to carry in the coal, while the boatmen collected the cotton to sell in Preston.

“That boy looked very unhappy,” said George.

“I’m not surprised,” said Scat. “I have sneaked into that mill before to hunt for mice. It is so noisy I couldn’t hear a thing and all the fibres from the cotton in the air make it look like it is snowing.”

“I don’t like snow,” complained George. “It is cold and wet!”

“Cotton fibres are worse than snow,” said Scat.

“They make you cough.”

“The boy looked very thin too,” said George.

“I think I get fed more than he does.”

George and Scat both agreed that neither of them would want to work in a cotton mill.



Because of the trouble at Moor Lane South Mill, the barge was running late for its next stop at White Cross Mill. The bargemen tried to persuade George to walk faster by offering him extra food, but George just grumbled to himself and kept on plodding along.

It wasn't far to White Cross Mill, but before they got there, they had to pass Lancaster Cathedral, that was being built next to the canal. As they approached the Cathedral, the boatmen realised that the canal in front of them was blocked by workers lifting building materials from another canal barge, up the canal wall to the building site.

"Well this is going to slow things down," groaned George.

"You will get a rest then," chuckled Scat.

Just as the two friends were watching the wooden cranes lifting the huge stones up to the building site, there was a cry from one of the boatmen.

"RATS! RATS! They are trying to steal the cotton."

The rats were scuttling up the sides of the barge and there were hundreds of them.

Scat jumped onto the stacked cotton and started to attack the rats. He picked up rat after rat, shook them and threw them off the barge until there were none left.

The boatmen were so pleased with Scat, that they gave him a tin of sardines to eat and promised never to throw boots at him or shout 'SCAT!' at him ever again.

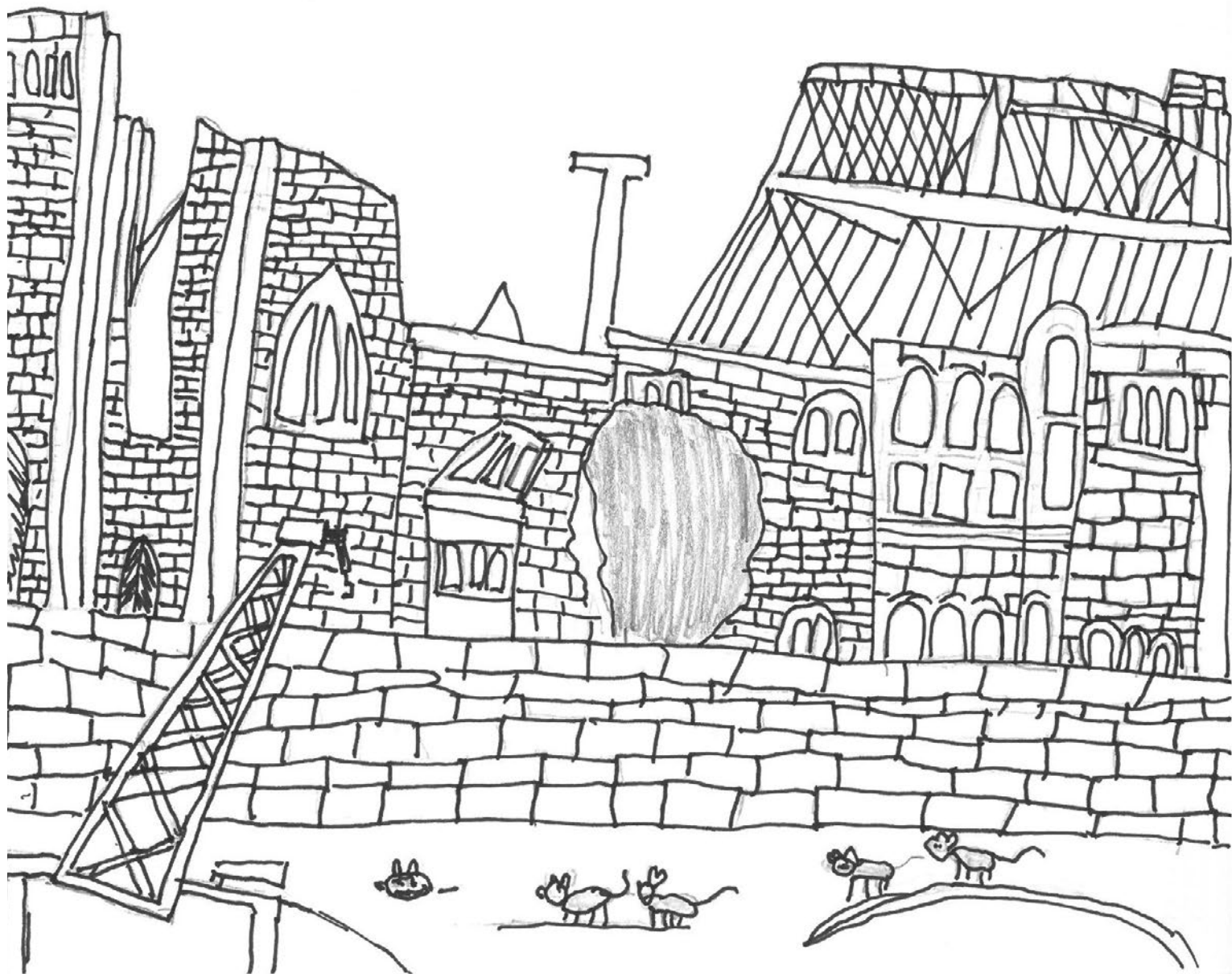
"Well what a day!" exclaimed George.

"I think it was quite fun," laughed Scat.

As the two friends headed off to White Cross Mill, they thought about what the canal would look like in the future.

"I hope it is cleaner, and full of fish," said Scat.

"I hope nobody has to work in the mills anymore," said George.



So if you are walking down the canal near the Cathedral, and you concentrate very hard, perhaps you could picture what it was like back in 1859. And if you listen very carefully, maybe you will hear an echo of two friends, plodding along, carrying coal and collecting cotton. Chatting as they go.

The Legend of the Lion of Heysham

Story developed by Year 5 at Heysham St. Peter's Primary School



Long ago, before Heysham was the peaceful village we know today, it was a Viking settlement by the sea. The waves crashed against the rocky cliffs, and the wind howled through the stone graves at the edge of the land. The people of Heysham were strong, brave, and close to the old Norse gods. They lived simple lives, fishing, farming, and telling tales by the fire.

But one spring, something terrible came out of the sea mist.

It was a dragon. A real one. A beast of fire and smoke. It had huge black wings that blocked out the sun and scales as sharp as axe blades. The villagers called it Dreki, which means dragon in the old tongue. Some said it had been sleeping deep beneath the waves for a thousand years, cursed by the gods. Others believed it had come from the edge of the world, angry and hungry.

Whatever the truth was, one thing was certain: Dreki had come to destroy.

It swept through the village, burning crops and frightening animals. No one could fight it. Even the strongest Viking warriors were no match for its fiery breath. The villagers cried out to the gods for help. Then, one night, the village seer spoke.

"There is one who can protect us," she whispered. "He sleeps in the stone. He is the lion of the land, given to us by Freyja, goddess of love and war. When the time is right, he will rise."

The villagers gathered at the cliffside, where the old rocks formed strange shapes. There, in the stone, they saw it—part of a lion's face, hidden in the rock for generations. It had always been there, but no one had believed the old legends. Until now.



As the dragon returned, roaring through the skies, the ground began to shake. The cliffs trembled. And with a mighty roar, the lion stepped out of the stone.

It was huge—twice the size of any man. Its golden mane shimmered like the morning sun, and its eyes burned with courage. The lion faced Dreki without fear.

The battle shook the earth.

Claws against fire. Roars against screams. The sky lit up with lightning as the lion leapt at the dragon. Waves crashed against the cliffs as the dragon tried to fly, but the lion was faster. With one final strike, the lion sent the beast crashing into the sea. Dreki vanished beneath the waves, never to return.





But the victory came at a cost.

The lion, wounded and weary, turned back toward the cliffs. It gave one last roar and then returned to stone. Today, if you look carefully, you can still see the lion's face in the rock of Heysham. Some say he watches over the village, guarding it from harm.

And when the wind blows just right, you might hear his roar in the sea breeze.

The people of Heysham will never forget.

The Road to Happiness

Story developed by Class M2 at Morecambe Road School

Are you ready for a magical adventure?

Let us take you back to Lancaster canal in the year 1859. A long time ago some engineers in Lancaster called Atkinson's and Sons built a car that ran on beer. They built it out of wood and metal and stuck it together with glue. The engineers borrowed some bike wheels, a settee and some train lights and got to work. People on the streets of Lancaster would say,

'Wow, nice stagecoach, but where is the horse?'

It was called the John 'o' Gaunt car, named after a Duke of Lancaster who lived 600 years ago. He would have been proud of it.





It took five clever engineers 18 days to build each car. They had to measure the length and width of the pieces of the car before putting it together. At the time, local people used a horse and cart to travel around to get to places.

So, when the John 'o' Gaunt car was made, the engineers said,
"our creation is done!"

People who bought it from their showroom on North Road said,
"what a great idea!"

and clicked their fingers before buying one. They also received some free beer, so they could drive it straight away.

Atkinson and Son's sold lots of cars, so the council needed to build more roads for them to drive on. Some soldiers came back from the war and they said,

"I'm happy to be home,"

as they didn't need to use their guns again. They didn't have any jobs and were bored, so in 1922 the council asked them to build a new road from Lancaster to Morecambe. They had to drill the old stone road and replace it with a new tarmac road. The new road was finished at the end of 1922 and was flat and smooth.





The soldiers wanted more work so they could buy plenty of chicken to eat and beer for their car. The second part of Morecambe Road was finished in 1923, it was called Broadway because it was very wide. It meant people could drive their car from Lancaster to Morecambe to see the sea. When they arrived they would say,

“it looks amazing let’s jump in!”

The soldiers built a bench at the start of Broadway to remember the building of Morecambe Road and so they could have a rest.

Later in 1961 the council bought Sunnyfield Farm on Morecambe Road from the farmer to build a school which would be a new chapter for the future. The school they built was called Sunnyfield School.

It was opened on 28th June. It was to provide special children with 'human happiness,' so they could learn lots of different subjects to be more independent. The first pupils enjoyed the school because they got more help with their education, they said,

"they are going to be the best days of our lives!"



Because of the car, the road was built, because of the road, Sunnyfield School was built. It was later called Morecambe Road School and welcomed more children to learn lots of things and make friends. Pupils also helped out in the community, raising money for charity and hosting visitors from other countries. The school was so full of happiness that children came from places all over the world such as Ohio in the USA, Belfast, Khartoum in Sudan, Barrow, Preston and many other places close by.

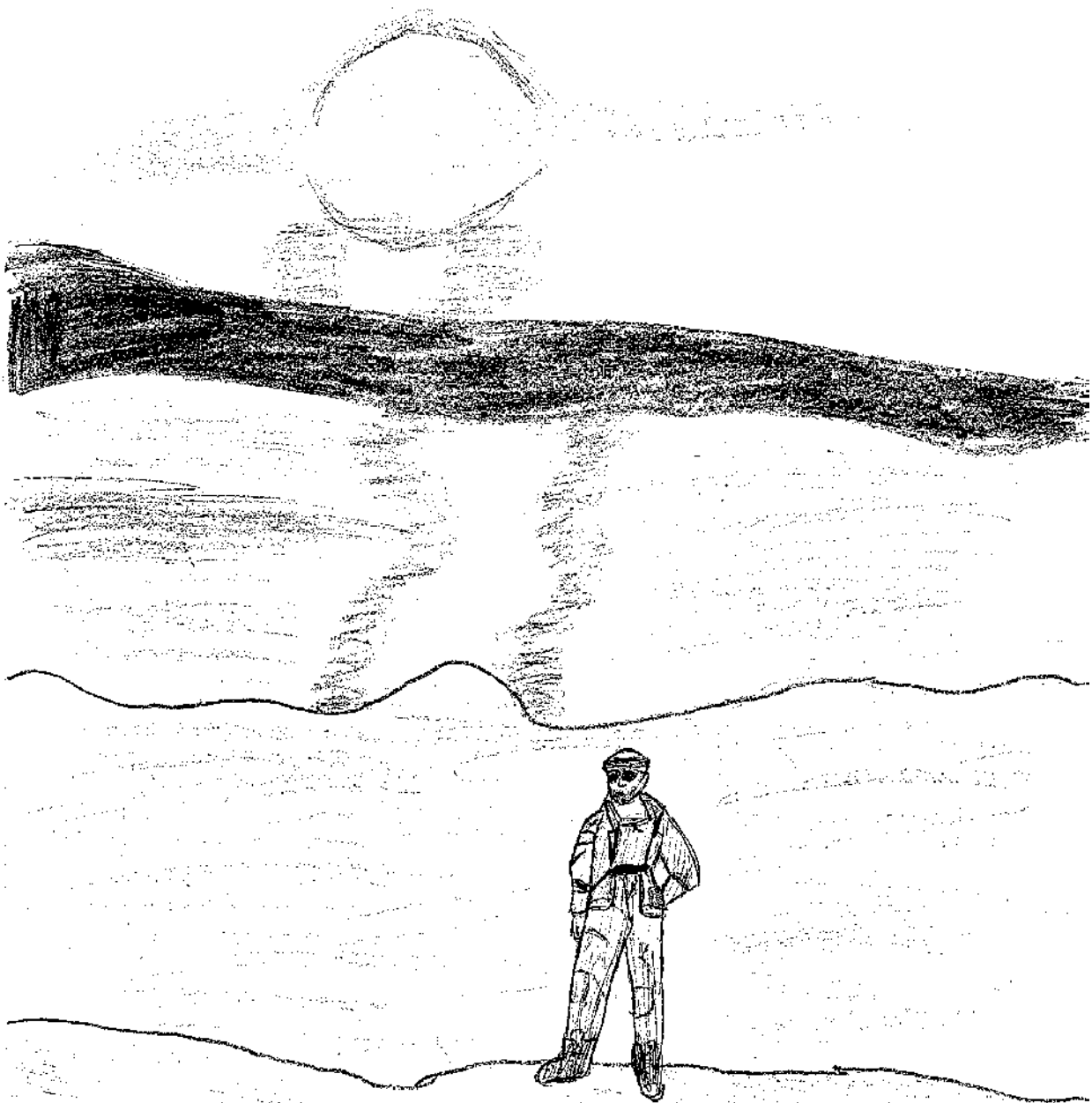


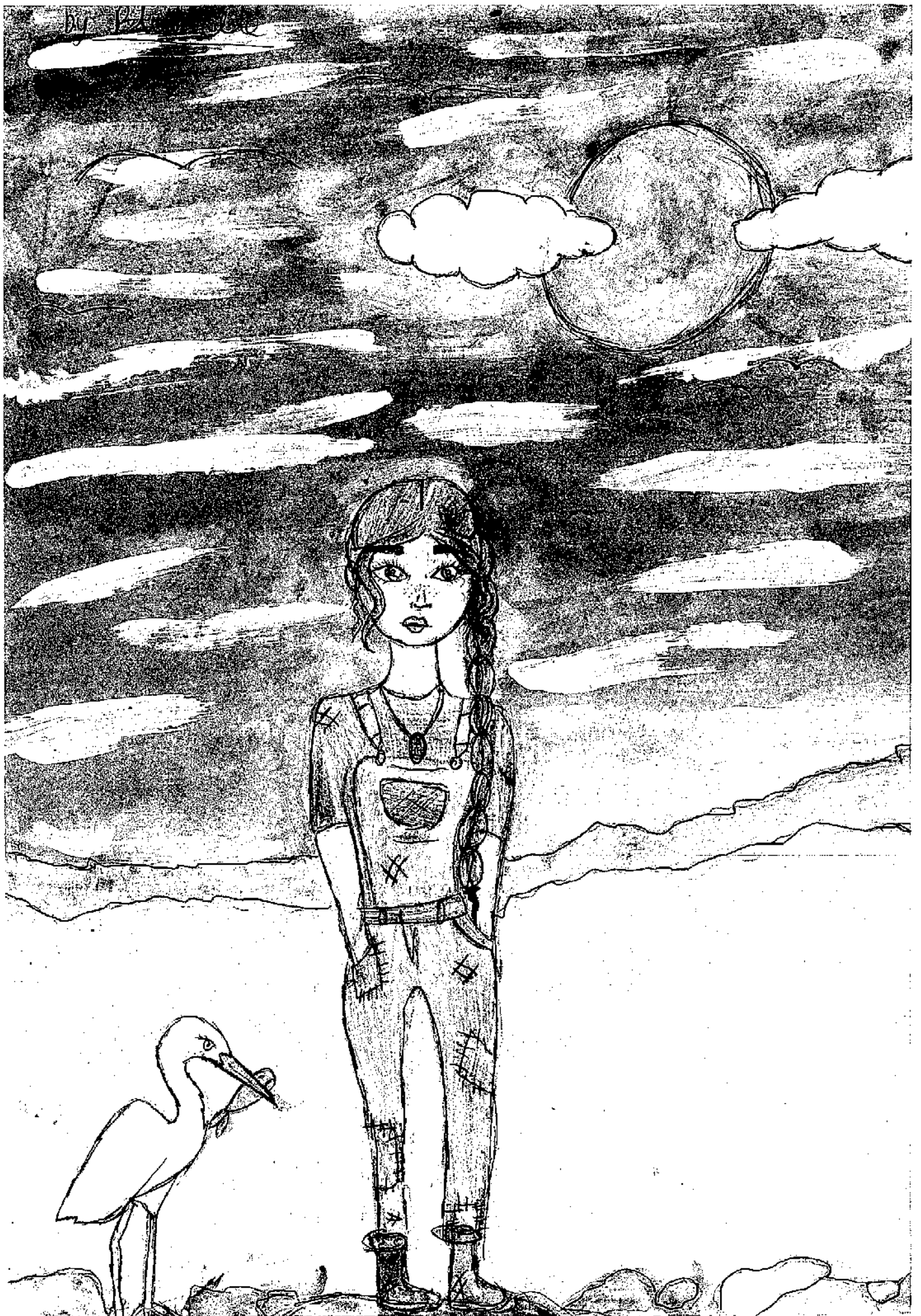
The Women of the Bay

Story developed by Oak Class at Overton St. Helen's C.E. Primary School

A long time ago; before there were cars on the road and children in the park; before Sunderland was a bustling port but not long after St. Helen's church was built, women were not allowed to fish.

However, there was one girl, Ivy, who didn't think this rule was fair. Her father, Randel, was a fisherman – the best of the best – but even he was struggling to catch enough shrimp to feed the whole community.





The people of Overton were malnourished and the grumbling of their stomachs was louder than their grumbling over the meagre shrimps they caught.

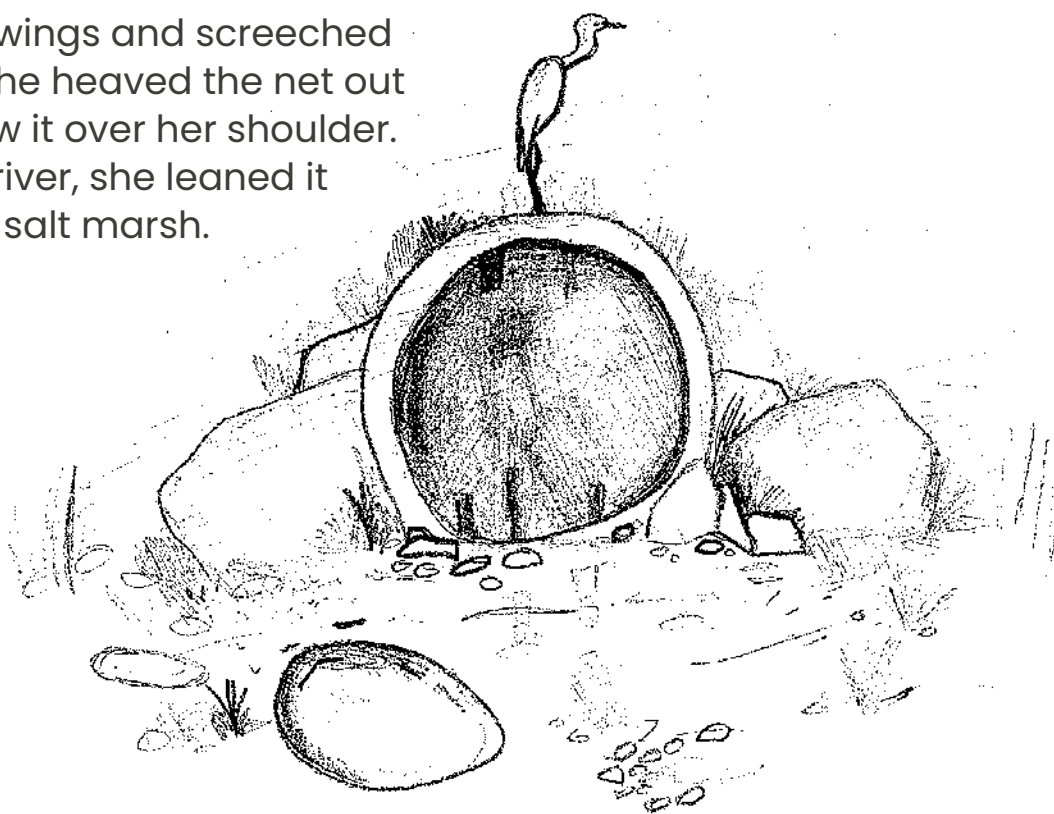
Anger, disappointment and fear lead to suspicion and mistrust between the two communities of Sunderland and Overton, who used to be friends. While the leaders and fishing folk fought night after night, Ivy would sneak away to St. Helen's Church.

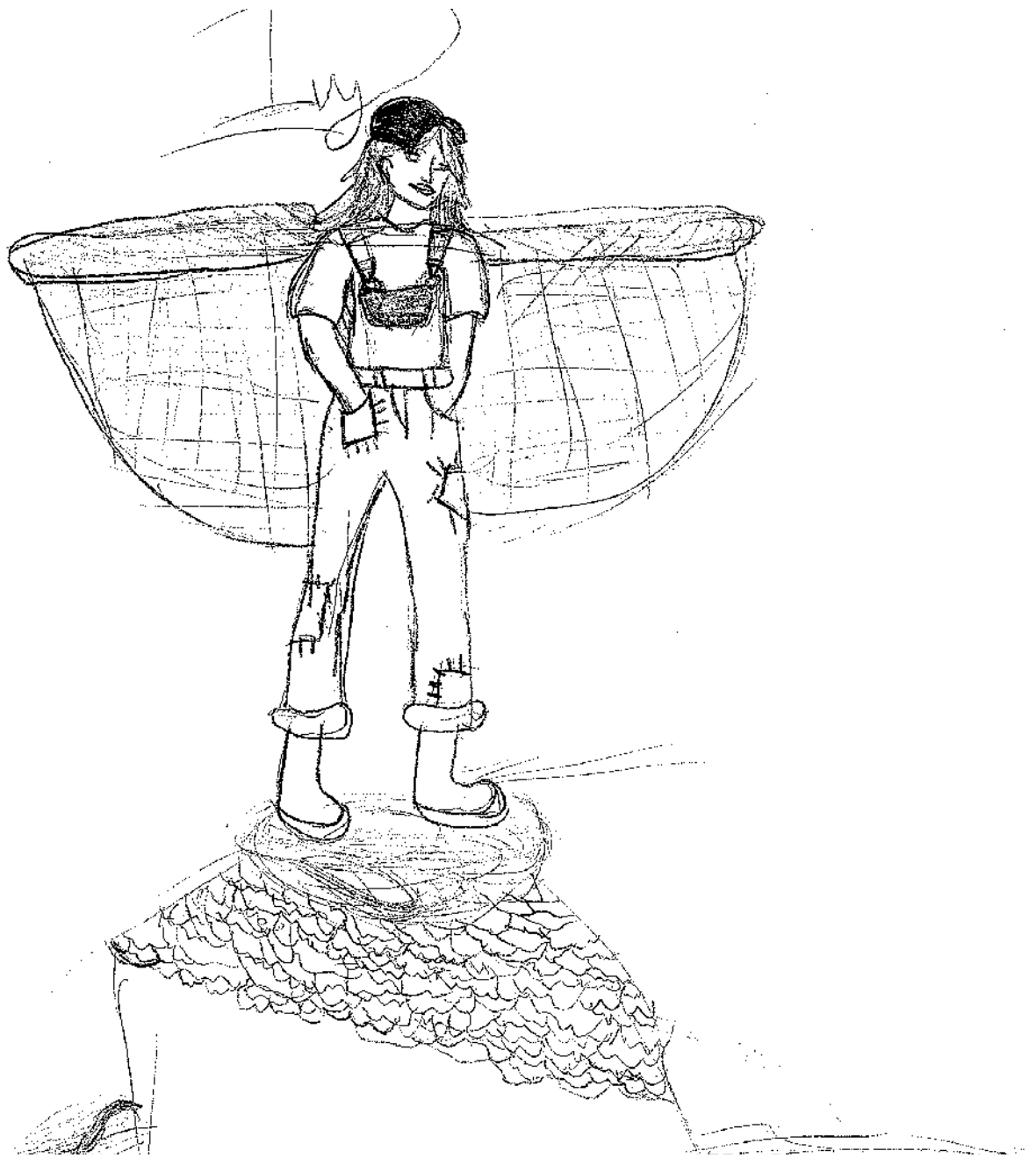
Now you may be thinking that she was praying for the fighting to be over or for enough food to feed the people of Overton but this was not the case. Let me tell you her story...

Ivy levered the net out of the ground and brushed off the sand. She cast the net into the river, a mere splash as it made contact with the surface of the water. She glanced over her shoulder at the egret, feasting on the fish he had recently caught. "Let's hope this works," Ivy said to the egret. The bird lifted its head, pausing from his meal. Sadly, she had no luck and only caught a couple of small fish.

It was early evening and she was tired but she didn't give up. The cold water ran along her legs as she stepped deeper into the current, casting her net where she thought fish swam in larger groups, shivering at the numbing temperature of the water. She was rewarded as a wave of fish crashed into her net, nearly ripping the fabric weaved into the wooden frame.

The egret flapped its wings and screeched hungrily like a siren. She heaved the net out of the water and threw it over her shoulder. Carrying it out of the river, she leaned it against a rock on the salt marsh.





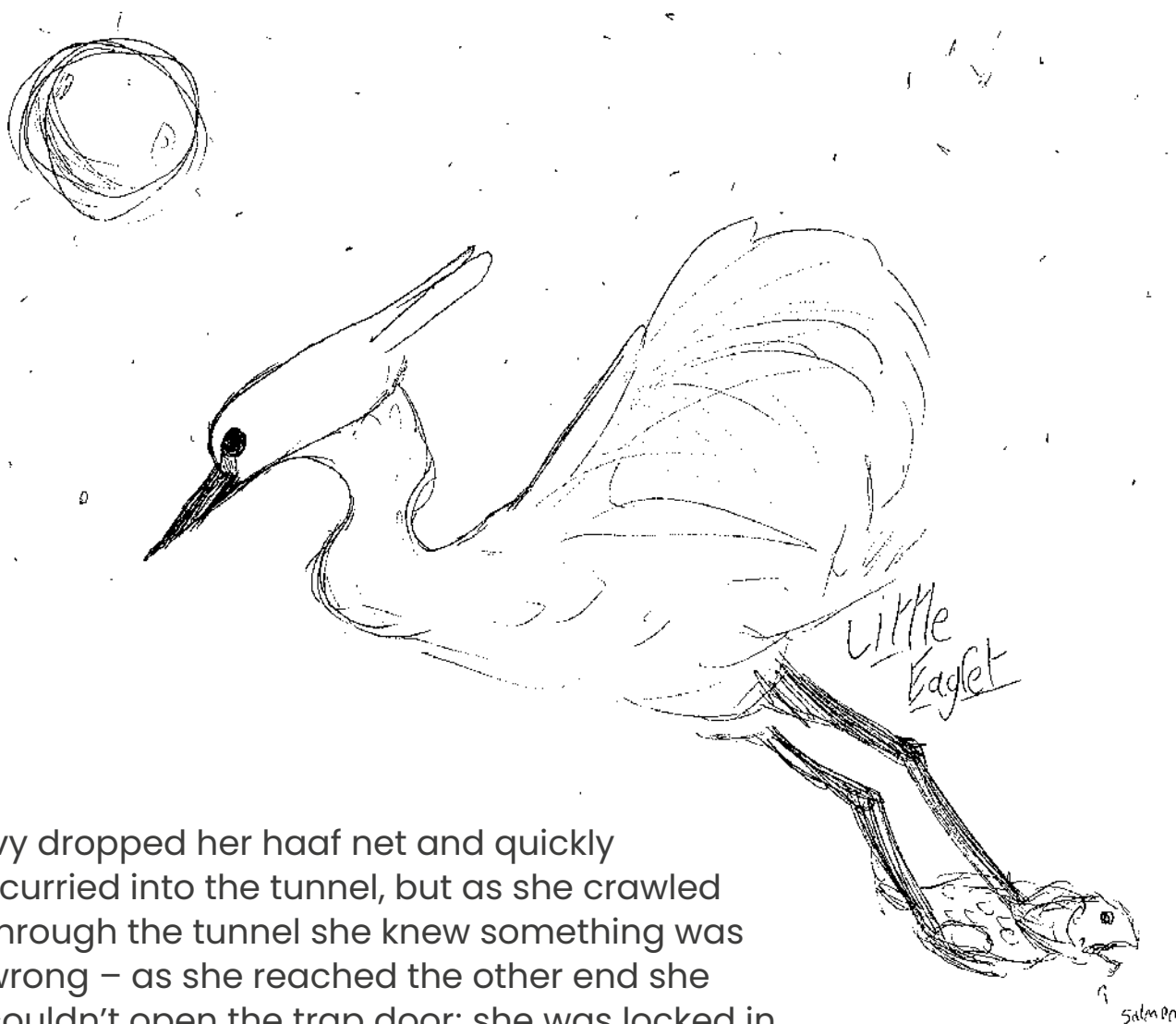
Every day, Ivy continued to gather the salmon and sea trout in her bucket and crawled through the tunnel from the riverside up to the church to leave a few fish on the doorstep of the citizens of Overton. They didn't know where they came from and they didn't care.

The reason she nourished people in secret was because women were not allowed to fish, and Ivy didn't think that was fair. She fished every day, every night, sneaking down to the river bank in the dark.

It was easy at first not to get caught. Repeating the same process each day, Ivy went through the tunnel from the church to the shore and cast her half net. She waited and waited before drawing the net back in. Ivy always had the same joy when she saw all the fish, knowing she was helping her community. Praying on her mind however was the ongoing battle but she didn't know how to stop that.

One very late night, or very early morning depending on how you look at it, Ivy walked out of the water and noticed something; a glowing green and blue light. Ivy lifted her foot again and her whole body shone with the coloured light from the water.

The shriek of the egret made Ivy lift her head; she caught a glimpse of the fishermen from Overton and she knew they must have noticed her in the phosphorescence's light.



Ivy dropped her haaf net and quickly scurried into the tunnel, but as she crawled through the tunnel she knew something was wrong – as she reached the other end she couldn't open the trap door; she was locked in and the sanctuary of the church was lost.

Ivy quietly moved back through the tunnel to the shore, hoping that she hadn't been followed. There was no light and Ivy was dismayed to realise she hadn't been followed but had been trapped like the salmon in her net.

On the other side of the boulder she could hear the fishing folk laughing as they left the shore, not caring about Ivy or if she would survive. She shouted for help, struggling with fear over the rising tide and knowing that a spring tide was expected, leaving her with little hope of survival. After what seemed like forever, hope arrived. She heard splashing over the lapping of the waves. As the boulder was lifted, light filled the small, dank tunnel once again.

To Ivy's surprise it was a lady named Matty, who was the Sunderland leader. Matty's father had been the Sunderland leader before her, and the responsibility had been passed down to her when he had died. It was a challenge for her to lead her community when she wasn't allowed to fish and help feed her people.



Matty had been quietly watching and admiring Ivy over the days and weeks when Ivy thought she had been alone.

She had also been watching when Ivy was blocked in the tunnel. Matty helped her out and allowed her to return to the village but not before she struck a bargain with her as she knew all this fighting should come to an end and Ivy was the answer to that problem.

Saturnalia and the Spellbound Pot

Story developed by Years 3 and 4 at Quernmore Primary School

A long, long time ago when the Romans had just arrived in Britain, Tritus the Potter lived a simple life in Quernmore with his two children Marcus and Sylvia. One night he decided to take his children on an adventure up Clougha to see the Northern Lights.



It was cold, very cold and snowflakes silently fluttered to the ground. Flashes of emerald green, ruby red, sapphire blue and rose pink filled the sky. Sylvia and Marcus stood speechless as they gazed at this awesome sight. It was like nothing they had even seen before!

Tritus knew they had a busy day of pot making ahead of them so he wanted to get his children back down to their roundhouse for a good nights sleep, Unfortunately, that night Tritus barely got any sleep because he was so worried about Saturnalia. He was afraid there would not be enough food to make the celebrations special for his children. As he lay awake worrying he could smell the ashes from the fire, hear the call of an owl and the gentle snoring of his children.

“Oh what will I do?” he whispered into the darkness of the night.



The rising sun flooded through the entrance to their roundhouse, slowly waking the family. There were always so many jobs to do in the morning. Tritus got on with feeding the animals and collecting wood whilst Marcus and Sylvia took their white pony Fiona across the moors to collect clay from the river Conder. They needed plenty of clay as the Romans in Lancaster were always willing to pay for more pots and they knew that their father worried about money.

Galloping back through the bracken and heather Marcus and Sylvia chatted excitedly about getting ready for Saturnalia and decorating their home. Back at the roundhouse Tritus had just lit and loaded up the kiln with a batch of pots which he made the day before. While the pots were firing the whole family decided to go out foraging for berries, ivy and holly to decorate their home ready for the celebrations.

After returning home from foraging Tritus decided to take the pots out of the kiln. Very carefully Tritus lifted out a pot and held it up.

“Perfect” he said. He lifted out another pot and held it up.

“Perfect” he said.

Once again Tritus lifted out a pot and held it up for inspection.

“Hmm” he murmured.

There was something different about this pot. What was it? He just couldn’t quite put his finger on what it was. Then Tritus rubbed the side of the pot with his sleeve and some words magically appeared. COOK, LITTLE POT, COOK.

Tritus had heard rumours about magic pots that just kept on producing food but had never believed them. Surely it was all nonsense? However, something made Tritus think again and in a loud, clear voice Tritus called out,

“Cook, little pot, cook.”

Immediately Celtic Potage begin bubbling away in the pot. Tritus couldn’t believe his eyes! Carrots and oats simmered away before his very eyes and the smell was mouth watering. Could this be the solution to all his worries about Saturnalia?

Tritus called for his children to come quickly. Running into the roundhouse Marcus and Sylvia stopped suddenly in their tracks to take in this incredible sight before them. They also had heard about the magic potage pot but didn’t dare to believe it could be true.

However, before they could even taste the potage or celebrate their luck the tasty stew bubbled up and over the edge of the pot and quickly began covering the floor of their roundhouse. But it didn’t stop there! It flowed right out of their roundhouse, and flowed down the path towards their neighbours. The potage just kept on coming. It was like a river of carrots, grains and gravy.

Panic set in!

“How do we stop it?” screamed Marcus.

“Do something father!” yelled Sylvia.

The magic pot was out of control and showed no signs of stopping. Tritus has no idea what to do.

At that moment a Roman soldier came walking by.

"I thought I could smell potage" he said.

"We can't make it stop!" shouted Tritus.

"Ahhh, well it seems you have the legendary Magic Potage Pot."

In his most commanding voice the soldier shouted...

"Stop, little pot, stop!"

Instantly the pot stopped and so did the river of potage. It was all under control again.



Tritus was so grateful to the Roman soldier for his help that he invited him to join them for their Saturnalia celebrations. The soldier happily accepted. Even Fiona their loyal pony joined them for a bowl of potage. They all agreed it was the finest potage any of them had ever tasted. From then on Tritus didn't need to worry about food for Saturnalia as he had the Magic Potage Pot and the magic words. Let's just hope he doesn't forget them.....!!

The Quest of Time

A story developed by Year 6 at
Ryelands Community Primary School

"What is that?" asked Esme curiously.

"I-I don't know. But maybe we should back away from it."
whimpered Teddy.

"Agreed." stated Dexter "There might be bugs there."

"Oh, come on! Don't be such scaredy cats!" exclaimed Esme,

"You guys never go out! We're going in and I don't care what you
say!"

"But-but..." muttered Dexter.

Suddenly the daylight around them disappeared. They were all
mesmerised by a radiant beam of light illuminating the black sea of
darkness that was once Ryelands Park. The house, that long ago had
belonged to Lord Ashton himself, shone like a beacon, drawing the
children towards it.



Esme pulled Teddy and Dexter towards the mysterious light of Ryelands House.

"This building is scary. It's giving me a bad vibe." Said Teddy.

"Yeah, it feels run-down and isolated. Let's just go home, Esme." Replied Dexter.

"NO! You guys need to go out and have fun. No wonder why you have no friends." Shouted Esme.

"HEY! I have friends!"

"Yeah, me too!"

A strong force coming from the doorway of the house began to pull them inside. Seconds stretched into minutes but when they managed to regain control, they found themselves somewhere different, somewhere almost recognisable. They were greeted by a path of lively, vibrant, pink blossom trees. At the end of the path, they could see a building and a sign with the words 'Skerton Community High School'. The trio continued walking towards the building; its six large windows loomed above the trees and bushes, making the children feel nervous about what was ahead of them.

"How is this possible? Didn't this place close in 2014?" said Esme.

Dexter, Teddy and Esme found themselves inside the school itself, exploring the hallways and classrooms; looking for any way to return to the park. Long corridors were bustling with people who didn't seem to notice the three strangers wandering alongside them. Dexter noticed a door ajar to a room on his right. He peered inside. At the front of the room, the date was clearly marked onto a whiteboard, 'Wednesday 5th May 1999'. Dexter stayed silent, wondering what was happening, observing his surroundings.

"What was that?" shouted Teddy as a voice echoed around them.

"To return to the present day, you must complete a task in each location. Your first task will be explained to you in the hall. You must head there now."

The children entered the school hall with several other students. A strict looking teacher stood at the front of the hall, eyes darting towards the students as they filed into the room. Suddenly, everyone in the room froze, except for Teddy, Dexter and Esme. The stranger's voice returned once more, reverberating off the walls in the large room.

"You now need to audition for a role in the school play of Romeo and Juliet. Do this successfully and you'll be rewarded with a key to the next room."

"The auditions are today at 4pm. We've got three hours until then and we have to perfect our lines. It's not a lot of time so we might as well get on with it." projected Esme. Dexter and Teddy had no choice but to carry on with what Esme had declared. They were going to have to audition; they had no say in it.

"Time is up!" said one of the teachers. "Audition time!"

Their moment had come and Esme, Teddy and Dexter were ready to perfectly execute their lines in front of the huge audience.

The hall was packed with students and teachers; all filled with nervous tension. The atmosphere in the room was thick with anxiety. Dexter was shaking and Teddy was quiet: they were on next. Esme was first up. She sung a sweet song made in the 1900s. Next up was Teddy – he pretended to express his love for Juliet. Finally, it was Dexter's turn, who had to shout about how awful the Montagues were.



They sat and waited patiently while the other children completed their skits. The teachers were deep in discussion. The children could only sit and wait; hoping that they would be successful and be able to find a way back to the present day and to Ryelands Park. One of the teachers stood up and cleared their throat...

"The roles of Romeo, Juliet and Tybalt will go to....Teddy, Esme and Dexter!"

At that precise moment Teddy noticed something glowing on the floor by his feet... a key! He alerted the others and Esme picked it up without a second's thought. They ran towards the door next to the stage in the hall, which also had started to glow, a faint luminescence guiding them to their exit. Esme put the key into the door, turned the handle and stepped through...

Hope drained from them as they realised they were in a very strange place. They were once again trapped in a completely different dimension. A half-built structure with an astonishing stone wall and a glimmering copper top was in front of them. Next to them, a pale woman, with a ruffled dress and a grand hat that had a glorious peacock feather on top of it, sat on the steps of the unfinished Ashton Memorial waiting for them to approach her.

As they approached the old-fashioned lady, she asked them something.

"Could you please help me finish this memorial for my husband?" said Lady Ashton, Lord Ashton's second wife. "This was supposed to be a tribute to his late wife."

"We would love to help you, but we are trying to get out of here. Could you possibly help us?" replied Esme.

"Right of course I will do my best." whispered the lady.

"Follow me," said Lady Ashton. "I'll take you to the puzzle. It's quite far away but it's worth the walk."

"This isn't a normal construction site." replied Teddy.

The sky blushed with shades of pink and purple, as if embarrassed the day was to end. They completed the walk to the puzzle as the sun was setting on the horizon, and the wind was blowing against the trees. Teddy and Dexter were starting to get tired and the pair of them could not stand it anymore, but they had to start the puzzle even though they were about to fall asleep.

“Whoa. What just happened? As soon as I put the puzzle piece in the right place, a part of the Ashton Memorial was completed.”

Exclaimed Esme. The grand structure in front of them grew in size as another section was finished.

“Oh, this is a special jigsaw puzzle. Whenever you place a piece, a brick follows it. I’m sorry, I thought I told you.” replied Lady Ashton.

They had nearly finished the puzzling jigsaw, but a disappointing realisation flooded over them: there was a puzzle piece missing! They set off to search for the piece around the incomplete construction site, for without it they had no hope of ever returning to Ryelands Park.

“I found it ... I found the missing puzzle piece!” Esme screeched loudly.

Behind the puzzle there was a date that said: Made in 1909.

Their faces lit up as they put the final puzzle piece in its rightful place. After two long years, the Ashton Memorial was finished. The 150-foot-tall building was finally in place; the copper shone from the very top of it as the diggers were leaving and everyone was cleaning up the dirt that had dropped on the floor whilst it was in progress.

“Jessy would be very grateful for this astonishing memorial. Thank you for helping me complete it; my husband will be able to see the memorial from our house in Ryelands and will be very satisfied!”

Lady Ashton answered.

A twinkling key appeared out of nowhere: they could finally return to the present... at least that’s what they thought.

All three of the children scurried through a wooden door and it took them to a wet, slippery cobbled road that stretched along the St George’s Quay. Teddy was the first to step out, his feet wet and hair silky from the heavy rain – which had affected the place where they stood.

“Come out! There’s only a smidge of rain!” Teddy said in a sarcastic tone.

“You sure?” asked Esme.

“Yeah, it looks a little cold,” said Dexter.

“Oh, don’t be such a baby, it’s only rain. It can’t kill you!”

Teddy grabbed the pair by the cuff of their shirts and pulled them towards the rainy quay. Soon after, a man in, a navy-blue jacket, brown leather trousers along with matching boots and a hat – which was the same colour as his shoes– darted towards the trio.

“Are you the builders?!” asked the strange man. The children didn’t reply, they only gave the man a confused stare.

“Listen, I do not really care if you are not, I just need you to build a small shelter over my crates. If they do not get covered, I will get blamed for the waste of substance as I am the captain of the ship. I will pay you a pound of sugar?”

Esme whispered to the boys, “I think this may be the next task so just go along with it and say we will.”

“Sure, we will do it. Where are our materials?” asked Dexter.

“Urm.. oh yes my log is in my Captain’s Quarters. Go into the ship, up the stairs and it’s the first door on your right. It should be on my desk.”

Teddy led the way, then Esme and finally Dexter. The ship’s doorway was a tight squeeze, but they managed to push through. The ship had tall, rustic brown walls which seemed to go on forever and a diamond, patterned carpet only for the sailor in command.



As they went up the stairs, a huge wave crashed into the hull of the beastly ship, shaking the trio against the railing of the stairs. When they arrived at the top of the ship, they could see the Captain's Quarters on their right. Inside the Captain's Quarters was a bookshelf full of maps and books.

"Woah, well that's... interesting." said Teddy.

Esme replied, "Yeah, well anyway we need the log."

Dexter darted towards the captain's desk and picked up the dusty, flimsy log. He opened it with care, knowing it may hold important information. Inside, the date was written in bold writing. Wednesday, 5th of May, 1756. It read 'Locations of the building materials' at the top of the page.

Location 1: Harbour.

Location 2: Decking.

Location 3 & 4: Balcony.

With the location of the materials, Esme, Teddy and Dexter ran to the harbour and when they arrived, they saw two small slaves searching for scraps.

"Is everything okay?" Dexter asked the small children. They didn't reply, they just hid behind a large crate of sugar.

"Listen, we don't want to hurt you. We only want to help." said Dexter.

The small children came from behind the large crate with a hint of fear in their eyes. Dexter then pulled out a sandwich from his backpack and split it for the children to share. The children ate it without a second to waste and stood up, with their backs slouched over.

"All we need is your help."

"Okay, we will help as you helped us." replied the cold, shivering children.

The trio listened to the children's story as they explained how they'd been taken from their country in Africa and used to import goods to England. Teddy, Dexter and Esme couldn't believe their ears as the horrors the children had experienced were explained.

As tears stung their eyes, they knew then that they had to not only complete the Captain's challenge, but they also had to give these children their freedom.

Dexter then explained the task in detail and after 30 hard-working minutes of gathering materials, the group began to begin to build their structure of the shelter. The children built the roof as Teddy, Dexter and Esme did the walls and door. The last piece was placed and all was complete.

"Phew. That was hard work. We couldn't have done it without you guys so thank you." Esme exclaimed to the slaves.

"You're welcome. It's nice to help people that are kind to us. Want to know a secret?" said one of the slaves.

"What is it?" asked Dexter.

"We're going to build a small bridge off of the ship to finally be set free."

"Good for you. You guys deserve freedom."



Soon after, the slaves were on their way out and the task had been completed. The captain then hurried over and gave the children his appreciation with a key to proceed onto the next room. Dexter let him keep the sugar as it didn't have any value to them and hurried to the door. As they took a step through the exit, they were mesmerised...

The group of three entered a gorgeous, unique garden. As they found themselves enthralled in the majestic, divine grounds, a strong fragrance of blossoms blew through the wind. When they were released from the hypnotism of the beauty of the garden, they noticed Lady Ashton sat down on stone steps weeping quietly in front of her fully glass conservatory.

"I can see Lady Ashton crying. We should go comfort her," explained Dexter. He sounded quite concerned.

He had taken the lead and wandered over to Lady Ashton to see what had happened.

"W-Wait for me!" requested Teddy while stumbling over to Dexter. Esme scoffed then rolled her eyes and followed behind.

Dexter spoke up,

"What's wrong? Are you okay?"

Dexter softly gripped onto Lady Ashton's hands and looked into her eyes, locking eye contact.

"Oh, you're such a dear child. Well, to put it short, my husband has died," Lady Ashton explained.

Dexter's eyes widened at the sudden news.

"Oh, can we do anything for you to help you feel better?" Dexter replied, with genuine pity. As Lady Ashton asked them if they could pick flowers for her, Teddy and Esme watched the whole thing awkwardly. Dexter nodded and looked at the others.

Dexter demanded,

"Come on. We ARE going to pick the flowers for her."

Esme sighed but agreed since Lady Ashton then ordered politely. Teddy followed on as he felt sorry for Lady Ashton.

The trio walked around the gardens of Ryelands House, viewing all the scattered flowers. They collected flowers such as white lilies, roses, tulips, sunflowers and lavenders. Teddy, who was near the lilies, harvested some along with Esme. Teddy sighed,

“This is gonna be so hard to carry.” he continued speaking,

“Hey! Dexter, let’s put them in your bag.”

Dexter looked at Teddy and nodded.

“That’s a good idea.” Dexter said.

Teddy then put the lilies in Dexter’s royal blue backpack and wrapped them in the paper, which wasn’t the safest place to put them.

Esme was picking up luscious, violet lavenders reluctantly, as she exhaustedly sighed: she was clearly bored. She just wanted to be at home. After all the flowers were picked, they all gathered around a bench and poured the flowers out of Dexter’s bag.

Dexter grouped the flowers and made a bouquet of each flower they had found, then went over to Lady Ashton, showing her the bouquet.

When they reached Lady Ashton, they gave her an exquisite, ethereal bouquet of greenery filled with many different sparkling colours.

“Aw, this is so gorgeous. My husband would have loved these! He was such an honourable and trustworthy man, husband and father. Come with me, let’s put these by his grave together!” Lady Ashton stated.

Dexter responded,

“Sure, come on guys!”

Lady Ashton led the way to Lord Ashton’s grave. The group followed a pathway through the graveyard then stood in front of his resting place, the name read, ‘James Williamson, Baron Ashton, 1842-1930’. Lady Ashton knelt near the grave and laid the bouquet next to his headstone on the soil. Lady Ashton looked at Dexter and gave a sweet smile, tears running down her face.

“You ought to go back now, the exit to the graveyard is down there, you must then go back to Ryelands House.” Lady Ashton requested.

Dexter nodded and told the others to come with him. The group walked to the entrance of the graveyard and left.

They walked back to Ryelands House and when they got there, a sign had been put up with the word 'Public' being written on it. As a way to remember Lord Ashton and his successful achievements: making linoleum, inheriting his father's oilcloth business and to thank the children for their help, the house and park had been gifted to the public. It was only then, they realised they had been transported back to the present day.

"Woah, we did it! We are back!" Esme yelled cheerfully.

"O-oh, wow. We actually did it." Teddy whispered with a hint of surprise in his tone.

Dexter spoke up,

"Well done! This was a team effort. I couldn't have done it without you guys. Let's go home now, it's been a long day."

They then walked into the shadows of Ryelands Park, forever a place for all to enjoy, and left.



Story locations

Carter School's story is located in and near the villages of Knott End-on-Sea and Preesall, in the southern part of Morecambe Bay.

Cathedral School's story takes us right into the area of Lancaster closest to the school, St Peter's Cathedral and the former mills along Lancaster canal.

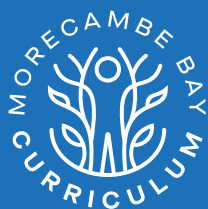
Heysham St Peter's School's story is situated in and around the village of Heysham and along the coast next to the village, specifically the cliff area called Heysham Head.

Morecambe Road School's story takes its readers to several locations: the first purpose-built motorcar showrooms (1904) on North Street (Morecambe) and now a pub called Greens; a boarder stone of Morecambe Road (1st phase of its construction) behind the bus stop outside Lancaster and Morecambe College and a stone bench/ memorial stone of the completion of Morecambe Road at the entrance to Broadway near The Shrimp roundabout.

Overton St Helen's School's story includes the communities of Overton and Sunderland, south of Morecambe and close to the estuary of the River Lune.

Quernmore School's story is set in and around the village of Quernmore, located to the east of Lancaster, near the Trough of Bowland.

The characters in Ryelands School's story travel through several locations in Lancaster, including Ryelands House, the Ashton Memorial in Williamson's Park, St George's Quai and Ryelands Garden (nowadays Ryelands Park).



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