

The Staffordshire Poetry Collection

Staffordshire is a beautiful and diverse county, and this diversity is part of its appeal. We have the engine of the potteries in the north, areas of natural beauty such as Cannock Chase and The Moorlands, provincial towns each with a rich history, and in between the county is criss-crossed with country roads, lanes and canals that link hundreds of villages and hamlets.

In 2016 Staffordshire County Council's Libraries & Arts Service took the decision to develop the Staffordshire Poetry Collection. Our aim has been to create a picture of the county in words, to capture its diversity and in so doing help to create a cultural identity and awareness for the county as a whole. We have of course a rich heritage of poetry going back centuries, but we wished to create a feeling of life in Staffordshire as it is today. The poems in the collection are therefore contemporary and as varied in form and tone and content as the county itself.

Our plan for the future is to make these poems as accessible to the public as possible and explore a number of ways in which to do so, including the possibility of a visual presence, to lift poems off the shelf and off the page.

This on-line version makes the poems available for download for people to read at their own leisure, which we hope will be both a useful resource and a source of pleasure available to a wider audience. If you live in the south of the county and are inspired to visit places further north (and vice-versa of course) then that in itself will be reward enough.

In 2015 Offa's Press published 'The Poetry of Staffordshire', which in some ways provided the initial impetus and the idea that here was something capable of further development by the County Council, but not necessarily in book form. We are grateful to Offa's press for allowing us to include in The Staffordshire Poetry Collection a number of poems from their own publication.

Bert Flitcroft

Staffordshire Poet Laureate, 2015-17