

# Kingsley & Co



2021-2022







Kingsley & Co is a Literacy Project disguised as a Story and Explorers Emporium based in a shop unit at The Strand Shopping Centre in Bootle. This magical Steam Punk style bookshop is a project of Ykids, a local Bootle based children and young people's charity.

Ykids has been working in Bootle for over two decades with an aim to equip children and young people to become world changers. The Kingsley & Co Literacy Project was born out of a recognition that poor literacy skills can hold children and young people back from achieving their potential. With Bootle children's literacy measured in the bottom 6% in the UK, Ykids felt a need to respond.

Respecting and honouring what the local schools are doing, Ykids developed a project to sit alongside their great work by promoting engagement with stories, exploring the imagined and real world we live in, as well as being able to understand and express their own thoughts, dreams, and feelings. Most of all, Kingsley plants and grows a love of stories and a motivation to develop literacy skills.

Kingsley & Co is named after the Victorian explorer Mary Kingsley who, despite a difficult and unhappy childhood where educating girls was not considered important, triumphed as an explorer and author, writing books about her exploits in Africa and breaking social norms of the time.

Mary is a good role model for the young people of Bootle, as despite a difficult start and many barriers set before her, she did not let others label her or tell her that she could not achieve. She went on to become the explorer and adventurer she had always wanted to be, changing people's perceptions and challenging norms. This is what Ykids wants for the children and young people of Bootle: the ability to overcome any barriers in life to achieve their dreams and make a positive contribution to the world.







## Overview of the year Kingsley & Co headline figures

The number of child engagements over the year is

**10,827**

Kingsley & Co had over **19,328** visitors  
**8,804** pre-loved books found new homes  
**26** volunteers gave over **1,876** hours of their  
time to support Kingsley & Co

The **74** workshops delivered over the year had  
an average attendance of **19** Children and **7**  
adults with a total of **1,405** child attendances  
and **484** adult attendances

The Bootle Children's Literary Festival  
engaged a total of **16,493** people with **7,246**  
children participating through the **35** schools  
involved

The pirate festival had **1,728** young pirates  
attending, with **17%** coming more than once

# Welcome to the magical world of Kingsley & Co.

Kingsley & Co is a place that defies description in a short paragraph. We would encourage everyone to visit this magical space to really understand and feel its power.

The transformation of an empty, dilapidated, and flooded shop unit into a magical space for adults and children alike, took time and resources. The space is now often full of children quietly sat in the reading area transported away in their imagination as they read a story, while other children are dressing-up as their favourite character and playing out the role in the safety of the shop space. Parents sit watching on in the café area with tea and cake as children excitedly open our story doors. Piles of pre-loved books rest on the counter purchased for just one pound by happy children keen to take them home. Behind a secret door lies a discovery room full of things to push, pull, smell, and look at. Through a worn wardrobe full of fur coats lies a classroom space to bring stories to life and deliver workshops in. A large touch screen in a gold Victorian Frame sits over the fire place with a large story chair by the fire. On the highly decorated walls, moving portraits catch you unawares. Amongst the shelves full of books there are many artefacts of interest to spark imagination, secret doorways, and fun things to buy.

Regularly space is given over to promote local authors' books, including our patrons, Frank Cottrell-Boyce, explorer Alice Hunter Morrison, and our author in residence Daniel Riding . These among many others regularly run workshops at Kingsley alongside our Story Keeper.

Kingsley & Co also often spills out into the shopping centre transforming the walkway with its magic into a space for festivals, workshops, and fun.



From this to this

From this to this





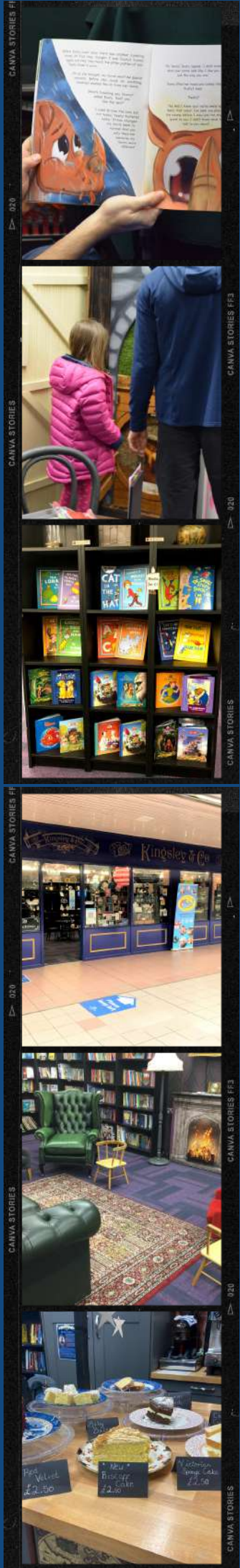
# Every corner of Kingsley & Co has something interesting to engage with.

It is with thanks to Sefton Council, our supporting funders and authors that we have managed to keep Kingsley & Co open after the impact of the Covid pandemic. This year has been our first full year open and although we have had some challenges it has been a successful year, helping us to prove that the concept is worth developing and continuing. The ability of Kingsley to drive footfall to the shopping centre and revitalise a long-term empty shopping unit has been observed, and we have been contacted by other shopping centre managers with the offer of space to open a Kingsley & Co in their centre. Kingsley & Co offers:

- A discovery centre
- A reading area
- A set of story doors
- A classroom
- A secret door
- A café (parent crèche)
- A selection of new books
- Thousands of second-hand books
- Quirky products
- Unusual and historic artefacts
- Display windows
- A storytellers chair
- Dressing up clothes

Kingsley & Co with its quirky character, shelves full of books and child focused staff, has welcomed thousands of visitors into the store through its regular programme, schools offer and events. The café (or parent creche) has served 1,561 cups of tea, 2,201 cups of coffee and 1,920 pieces of cake.

8,804 pre-loved books have been given a new life for new children to read with another 300 books given away in activity packs, prizes and workshops. 3,000 new books have been given away with our Golden Ticket programme.





# Meet the Team



My name is Liz and I am Kingsley & Co Literacy Project Manager.

Each and every day at Kingsley & Co is varied, exciting and worthwhile. I thoroughly enjoy meeting children and their families and building up relationships with them in order to support their reading, imagination, creative and exploratory journeys.

I love nothing more than a good challenge and when invited to do so, I try my hardest to find certain books children would like or alternatives for children to try—usually successfully!

Getting books into children's hands and encouraging children to develop a love of stories is an absolute privilege and honour. We know what a massive impact this can have on their futures.

Hi, I am Jake, I have the post of Story Keeper at Kingsley & Co. But what does this mean?

I bring energy and story character to life for the children and young people at Kingsley & Co. Running energetic workshops, programme planning for all the mad events we have, hosting school visits and whatever else there is to do, I do it!

As a graduate of LIPA, I enjoy bringing a rich interactive and generative pedagogy to workshops and events, based around Kingsley's participants' and students' unique experiences. I look forward to exploring partnerships with organisations, authors, and local schools.

My mission statement is 'little changes makes a world of difference and we are here to change the world.'



Hi, my name is Elicia,

I've been at Kingsley & Co for only a few months but so far, I am absolutely loving my time here. Every day brings new and exciting challenges, from helping prepare for workshops, supporting children in picking books which will engage, to making coffees for parents.

Working in Kingsley never feels like work as it is so enjoyable and rewarding, with every day doing activities that make me genuinely happy. Helping support the community I grew up in is so deeply rewarding.





# Story and Rhyme

The Story and Rhyme parent and toddler group has run for 18 weeks. With 244 adults and 232 toddler attendances enjoying stories and singing along to nursery rhymes together.



# Author in Residence

Daniel Riding is a local author that believes in investing in young people and the community.

He has been commissioned as Kingsley & Co's author in residence.

Encouraging all to write and engage with stories, delivering workshops, engaging with schools and the local community.





# Volunteers

Over the year our staff team have worked alongside our amazing and dedicated volunteers. 26 volunteers have given 1,876.5 hours of support.

If we paid min wage plus on costs (£11 per hour) for their time it would be equivalent to £20,651.50 or £793.90 each.

Kingsley & Co has provided four young people 90 hours of work experience, 2 young people 140 hrs in a work placement and supported a jobseeker through the Kickstarter programme. We then continued to support their development with a 'Time to Shine' Rank placement for them.



# School Visits

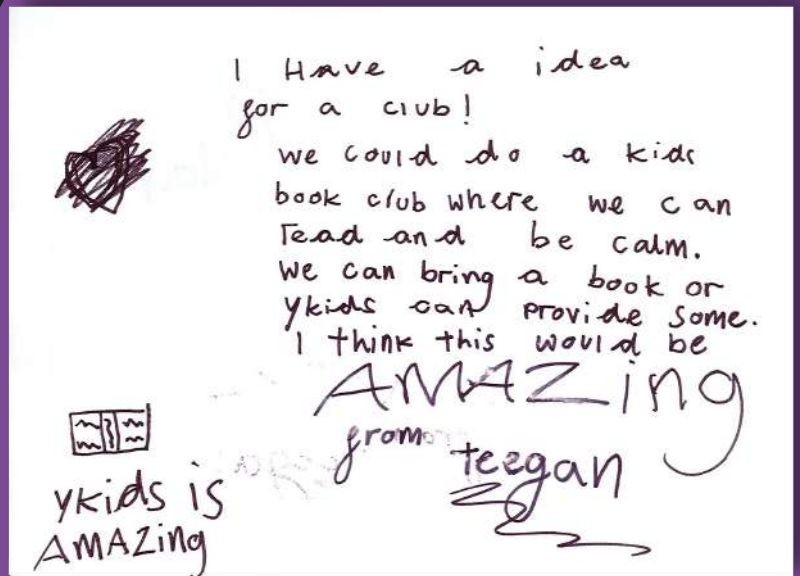
On top of the 35 schools that engaged with the Literacy Festival 16 Schools visited Kingsley & Co and attended workshops.

With approximately 448 children accompanied by their teaching staff enjoying stories, workshops, hot chocolate and cake.



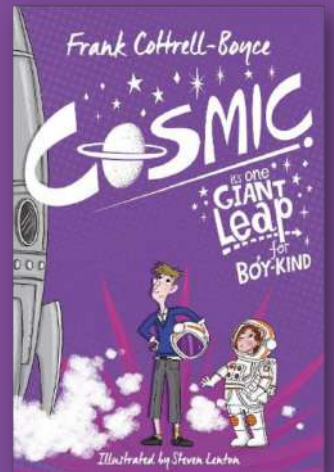


# Children's Book Club



We had a request from Teegan (a Ykids regular) to start a book club, so we did!

9 children attended our 10-week book club reading Cosmic by Frank Cottrell-Boyce.



Frank, one of our patrons agreed to attend a session so the children could ask him any questions.

It is not often a book club has such a renowned author attend for a question-and-answer session.



# LOVE THE RAINFOREST

with Kingsley & Co

February Half Term

Over 600 people attended

Workshops

Crafts

Mobile Zoo

Bush Tucker

Fun for all

Meet an Author  
Q&A with Emma Sandford

Story workshop  
Craft activity  
Book signing



Every book sold supports  
Rainforest Trust UK



Free Training

Jungle Explorer  
Training

\*Book online



Full programme online  
[kingsleyandco.org](http://kingsleyandco.org)



Kingsley & Co is a project of Ykids Charity.  
Charity no: 1141530 Co Ltd 7150747 [ykids.co.uk](http://ykids.co.uk)





# ♥ The Rainforest

## Attendance

Over 600 people attended the event

## Crafts

## Mobile Zoo

## Bush Tucker



## Workshops

**191 people attended a workshop**  
**89 Adults**  
**102 Children**











# PIRATE FEST



OVER TWO WEEKS  
1,728 CHILDREN  
ATTENDED THE  
FESTIVAL

297 CHILDREN  
AND 275 ADULTS  
ATTENDED PIRATE  
WORKSHOPS



Use this QR code to watch a  
video of the Pirate Fest.











# Kingsley & Co







X "Absolutely brilliantly organised and delivered sessions for the children - even better that it is completely free! Thank you so much. Bodi loved the VR, digging for treasure and making crafts!"

X "We absolutely love Kingsley! We regularly come for a cuppa & cake and books for the kids. My kids love books and like to read them and get excited when we can donate them back."

X "We love Kingsley and the Pirate Fest has just been fantastic. All the staff are friendly, helping us "land lobbers" to adjust to a life at sea. A great place to come even if it does cost me a fortune in gold coins to keep Ruby in brownies!"

X "It was amazing", said my 7 year old. There was such a variety of things to do and everyone was so friendly. Thank you very much for a really enjoyable and engaging day."

X "What a brilliant and magical idea, we were just walking past and as soon as the kids saw it their eyes lit up with excitement!! The kids loved all there was offered and the staff were amazing, adding to the magic of the event! Amazing!! Thank you!"

X "I am 73 years old but enjoyed it as much as my 5 year old grandson & 2 year old granddaughter. Thought it was all very well organised and it helped a lot of families out to treat their children to have a lovely day out. The cake and tea was an added bonus. Delicious!"

X "My girls and I had a fabulous day out with our friends at Pirate Fest. Lots of fun was had by all. The time flew by, they really enjoyed the digging for treasure, taking part in the treasure hunt + story time. The crafts were excellent, the shop itself was incredible with all the hidden activities. We will definitely be back, thank you!"

X "We came on Monday and spent 4 hours at Pirate Fest! My son loved it, he doesn't usually read but we left with a Secret Seven book and he is loving every minute. We came back today because Jacob wanted to tell the staff about the book he started and to spend more time in his new favourite place. The magical book store. Thanks for giving him great memories."

X "My 3 children enjoyed the whole day and all of the events. My 5 year old is in a wheelchair and it was very inclusive and accessible for him. Thank you!"

X "Thoroughly enjoyed digging for treasure. Captain Redbeard worked really hard with the treasure hunt and the How to be a Pirate workshop. Fantastic patience with children who at times were very disruptive. Captain Redbeard remained in character at all times. Well done to the whole team."



A graphic for 'PIRATE FEST SUMMARY' on a yellow parchment background. It features a skull with a red bandana and a red eye patch, crossed swords, and a wooden ship's wheel. The text 'PIRATE FEST' is at the top and 'SUMMARY' is in large letters at the bottom.

# PIRATE FEST SUMMARY

For two weeks this summer Kingsley & Co was taken over by pirates. Captain Redbeard had lost his treasure and needed the children's help to find it.

1,728 children dug in the sandpit for treasure and were rewarded for their efforts with a gold coin.

Pirates could attend any of the 3 daily workshops learning about pirates, pirate flags and how to be a pirate. Young pirates went on a daily treasure hunt and were chased by a Kraken. Over 297 children and 275 adults attended pirate workshops over the two weeks.

Some scallywags needed to walk the plank. Parents and children alike felt fear and fun as they experienced walking the plank in virtual reality. The experience of walking out of a lift high onto a plank over a city gave many wobbly knees and butterflies in their stomach.

In the craft area many pirate hats, parrots, pirate braids, treasure boxes and other pirate related crafts were created and enjoyed.

The pirate event was set up to offer families with low incomes a chance to have a day out. This funded event, provided free to attendees, had many families stay for the day, with many returning on multiple occasions.

Much of the feedback from the event commented on positive experience of the volunteer and staff engagement. Especially those families bringing along children with additional needs.







# Bootle Children's Literary Festival



Use this QR code to watch a video of the Literary Festival.





# DELIVERY

Thanks to the generous funding we received we were able to deliver an ambitious event with multiple strands and reaching many thousands of people. Our theme 'The Time Machine' enabled us to explore the past, present and future.

## PRE-FESTIVAL

A large amount of preparation took place before the festival began. This included:

- Engaging schools through an expression of interest pack
- Engaging artists and authors to take part in the event
- Engaging and co ordinating with partners in order to expand the offer
- Additional fund raising
- Logistical and venue planning
- Risk assessments and contingency plans
- Writing of staff and contributor handbooks
- The commissioning of an interactive 'Time Machine' and a series of children's cartoons about Mary Kingsley and her associates who escaped the boredom lockdown by moving through time
- An illustration competition offered to schools to design a magazine cover for 5 Famous magazines in 2121 including 'What Car', 'Good Food Magazine', 'Home and Garden', 'Gadget Magazine' and 'Vogue'. 5 x £50 amazon vouchers were offered for winners with an additional £50 in new books for each winners' school
- Creation of a series of life size 2D paper doll clothes with a story book theme made by teens for an exhibition exploring the history of paper dolls and towards gaining an Arts Award
- Refurbishment of a shop adjacent to our current shop to extend our offer and create a new larger classroom with toilets
- Transforming our Captain Nemo's Nautilus themed classroom into a discovery room with original interactive art pieces, hands on discovery activities and an invitation to explore through infinity mirrors, optical illusions, giant wooden puzzles, a working periscope, magic flying keys, create your own picture from dice and a cabinet of curiosities

The pre festival planning began in Spring 2020 but was obviously delayed due to Covid. Tentative plans resumed in April 21 with expressions of interest and stepped up considerably as restrictions were relaxed and once funding was secured in September.







# THE FESTIVAL

## SCHOOL OFFER:

### Exhibition of Giant paper doll clothes

The dolls clothes were created by a Ykids group of teens who also explored the history of fashion. The exhibition was the culmination of a 10-week programme with a story theme and were exhibited in an empty shop unit.

### Golden ticket scheme

Thanks to the Siobhan Dowd trust we were able to purchase 3000 new books to gift to children. We did this by creating a golden ticket scheme where schools were each given 100 tickets to distribute to children who may not otherwise get the opportunity to have a free book. A special bookcase was set up from which children could come and claim their free book and have their golden ticket punched. Free bookmarks were also donated by 'The Works'.

### Horrid History Map of Bootle

During the pandemic we successfully gained funding from the Heritage lottery to create an interactive Horrid History map of Bootle. The map featured a key and QR codes which took users to hidden web pages which offered fun facts, photos, artwork and short historical films made by children. Each school was given 100 maps and the map was launched at the first family fun day.

### Time Machine

During lockdown we had also been successful in gaining funding from the Arts council to run an online competition for children to write their own stories. Entries had to tell a tale about our main characters, Mary Kingsley and Professor Cyril and how they escaped the restrictions of lockdown in a time machine by going to the past, present or future where there was no Covid. 6 winners received Amazon vouchers and we commissioned the stories to be made into cartoons illustrated by Baz Sellers and produced by Simon Parry. We also commissioned the building of a Time Machine by artist Mike Walker for children to sit in and watch the cartoons. The Time Machine then became the centre piece of the festival and post event is situated in our new discovery room.



### Exhibition of Dan Dare comics and memorabilia provided by the Atkinson Museum

This was exhibited in one of our shop windows during the Festival and featured comics, annuals, games, toys and a large bronze bust of Dan Dare. This was a wonderful way of including older members of our community in our festival.

### 2 family fun days in the shopping centre

In keeping with our event theme 'The Time Machine', the first community event was themed in the past and included volunteers from the steam punk community; a Chitty Chitty Bang Bang Trike; a Steampunk rocket car; a sit in Dalek and of course our Time Machine. We had performances from Professor Elemental—a steam punk rap artist; tea duelling; craft workshops; story workshops and interviews with authors including Frank Cottrell-Boyce. There was also an interview with Sophia Cole a 13-year-old author who signed her books alongside Frank Cottrell Boyce. Unfortunately, explorer Alice Hunter Morrison was unable to attend in person due to Morocco closing its borders, however was still able to attend via zoom and delivered family workshops about her adventures.

The second family fun day had a future theme and included a planetarium dome; a VR experience; robot dress up competition; poetry and illustration workshops; craft workshops and performances from Titan the Robot.







## PARTNER OFFER

During the festival our partners also offered a variety of activities or supported the event including

- Family story time at Bootle Library
- A performance from the Sound Agents entitled 'The Claw'
- 'The Leonards' community shop put on an exhibition of photographs of Bootle Past
- Bootle Tool Shed made one of our giant wooden puzzles for the Discovery Room.
- Artist Mike Walker created not only the time machine but other art works such as our, 'Doorbell Soundboard' feature and steampunk treasure chest

*"Fantastic day. The kids loved everything! Especially the hidden passage! They loved picking out a book to bring home and we will definitely be back!" - Teacher*



## CONTRIBUTERS

Contributors were given free reign with their content but were also given our theme – 'The Time Machine' and many tried to include this in the workshops they delivered.

Workshops used different artforms including:

- Drama – with Altru Theatre Company
- Spoken word with Levi Tafari
- Story Writing with Daniel Riding
- Writing raps with Professor Elemental and Jamie Broad
- Liverpool History with Arts Groupie and meeting Kitty Wilkinson
- Poetry and art with Ali Harwood
- Meet an explorer with Alice Hunter Morrison
- Multimedia with Curtis Jobling

## POST FESTIVAL ACTIVITIES INCLUDED:

- Multiple Story themed workshops delivered every Saturday up to Christmas including additional visits from authors
- The Gingerbread man – workshop story and gingerbread decoration
- Robins First Christmas – workshop and craft from its author Suzanne Schroder
- Scrooge- with Altru Theatre co, a 4-hr workshop including a short performance by children at the end
- Stories with Santa – including letters to Santa, singing carols, games, a selection box and free book and meeting the Big Man himself
- Stories with The Grinch – story and drama performance
- Additional author visits for schools who were too late signing up to the festival original programme
- Additional school visits to Kingsley & Co from classes who 'missed out' and wished to visit the shop
- Additional visits from schools bringing their children to 'spend' their golden tickets
- Assemblies to present winning schools with books and celebrate illustration competition winners
- Children's drama workshop followed by a performance of Scrooge with Altru Theatre Company
- 3 days of storytelling and craft workshops for Sefton Council in their new Bootle Canalside open air venue
- Live music performance from a 14 yr old harpist and member of the Royal Northern College of Music





## CONTRIBUTORS INCLUDED:

- Frank Cottrell-Boyce – multiple award-winning author, script writer, film maker
- Alan Gibbons – award winning author including Smarties' book prize for 'Shadow of the Minotaur'
- Curtis Jobling – creator of Bob the Builder and new series Wereworld
- Levi Tafari – internationally renowned Liverpool poet
- Alice Hunter Morrison – explorer, author, BBC presenter, world record breaker and female Indiana Jones!
- Altru – educational theatre company
- Charles Lea – Read Now, Write Now
- Ali Harwood – poet, author, artist, tutor and leader of Liverbards
- Rebecca Fan-Blinston – author of children's books promoting mental health
- Jude Lennon – Team author and ambassador for Liverpool Writes
- Natalie Reeves Billing – author
- Daniel Riding – author of best-selling Amazon series Naughty Cat
- Jamie Broad – local 'Scouse' rap artist
- Professor Elemental – steampunk rap artist, entertainer and former teacher
- Sophia Cole – 13 yr old new author
- Suzanne T Schroder – author
- Baz Sellers – illustrator
- Mike Walker – artist
- Patafea – poet
- The Sound Agents – The Claw performance
- In Another Place – escape room
- Tish Toglet and friends from the Steam Punk Community



## PUBLICITY

Publicity about the Festival and subsequent activities and workshops ran across all our social media platforms including twitter, Facebook and Instagram. We also had opportunity to speak about the event on BBC radio Merseyside and we had 4 articles in the Liverpool Echo which is distributed across the region.

Articles were also published by a number of other groups including:

- Liverpool Echo
- Birkenhead News
- Steve Morgan Foundation
- Bootle Champion
- The New Sheridan Club
- Newfield School

We printed 15,000 flyers which were distributed in schools, shops and public places.

Our CEO spoke at the launch of the 2022 Liverpool City Region Cultural Awards (being a previous winner) and was able to promote the event.

## Audience and reach

Our aim was to reach children and young people from Bootle and its surrounding communities by targeting local schools and local families, but our reach extended beyond this. During the two weeks of the festival all our social media platforms received a lot of traffic seeing our statistics increase rapidly.

Kingsley&Co.org - From mid-October to mid November (after the BCLF) 231% more people are visiting the Kingsley&Co website, a total of 1243 people visited the site which is an extra 868 compared to September.

## Google Business Pages

Google brings in the most traffic to our websites. Here are the Google Business page statistics (recorded after the Literary Festival):

- Kingsley&Co business page was viewed 3000 times in 30 days
- Ykids was viewed 10,809 times in 30 days





# FEEDBACK

To ensure we gathered enough feedback and evidence to properly evaluate the project, we gathered data in a number of ways.

## School/ workshop evaluation forms

Every author artist was accompanied by a member of Ykids staff so that they could be supported, and they gave a workshop evaluation form to every teacher. The evaluation forms gathered important information such as class numbers, how many pupils were SEN, teacher evaluation and comments from children. This information was then collated, and copies sent to authors and artists. There were no negative reviews and all schools seemed satisfied with the workshops they had received.

## Feedback cards from the two Community events

During the two family events we distributed evaluation cards for people to comment on the event and what they had been involved in. Questions included what they had attended and whether the event made a difference.

As both events were much busier than expected, there were less staff available to hand out evaluation cards so not as many as we had hoped were completed and of those not everyone completed all the questions.

*"Fantastic afternoon session! Both members of staff leading the workshop worked brilliantly with the children. I could see the children were well engaged and enjoyed the session. The staff were patient and helped support the children throughout." - Teacher*



Postcode \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Sign up to Kingsley & Co / Ykids mailing list - be first to hear about our upcoming events!

Which activities did you participate in?

<input type="checkbox"/> Workshops	<input type="checkbox"/> The Time Machine
<input type="checkbox"/> Tea Duelling/VR Experience	<input type="checkbox"/> Horrid History Map of Bootle
<input type="checkbox"/> Performances	<input type="checkbox"/> Met an Author/Performer
<input type="checkbox"/> Crafts	<input type="checkbox"/> Robot Dress-up/ Illustration Competition

What did you enjoy most about the event?

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Tick (x) the box if the statement applies to you:

<input type="checkbox"/> After the event I/my child feel more excited about reading and writing my own stories!
<input type="checkbox"/> I/my child have enjoyed the opportunity for FREE cultural activities
<input type="checkbox"/> My child is eligible for free school dinners

"I don't feel more excited to read"

"I am more excited to read"

"I am more excited to read"

"Yes, I am really excited to read and write!"

"Yes, I am really excited to read and write!"

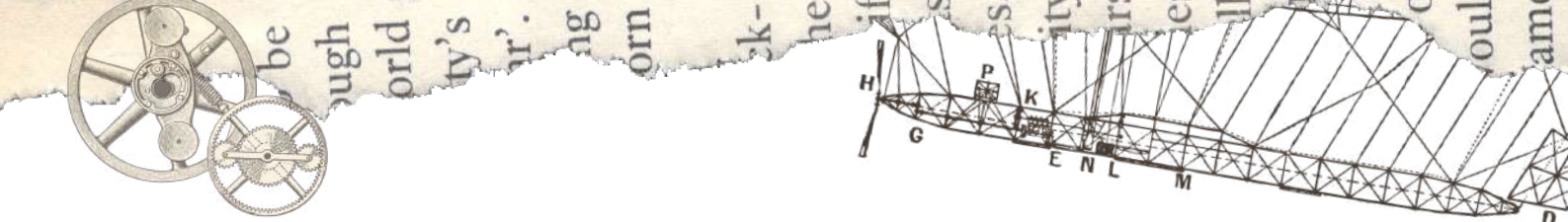
## In all 59 responses were received:

- 44% said they had had a go on the time machine
- 36% said they were engaged with a performance
- 39% said they attended a workshop (at the events)
- 30% met an author
- 15% had engaged with either our VR experience or Tea Duelling (different days)
- 44% engaged with craft activities
- 12% engaged with our Horrid History Map of Bootle
- 7% said they were on free school meals – this is not a good indicator however as this was only 7% of those who responded. Of the schools we targeted the figures would have been nearer to 40%
- 19% said they were more excited about reading and writing

## Participants told us they enjoyed:

- Seeing Professor Elemental
- Meeting Frank Cottrell Boyce
- Seeing Morocco
- Zoom meeting with Alice (explorer)
- The lovely attitude of staff
- The Time Machine
- All of it
- Meeting other people
- Art & Crafts
- Finding out what dinosaur the footprint belonged to (Alice in Morocco)
- Kids enjoying themselves
- Meet the author/workshops
- The fun
- Everything
- Being able to talk to real authors and illustrators
- The bustle (busyness in the Strand)
- Daniel Riding workshop
- All the different things
- Daniel Riding
- Seeing Titan & secret room
- The whole experience, amazing








### External Evaluation

We have appointed an external evaluator, Sue Potts from the Rule of 3's, to draw up an unbiased report and have forwarded all our evidence to her. She will be interviewing schools and participants to understand impact. This report will be published in February 2022.

### Social Media




The feedback from the festival was far beyond anything we expected with schools, teachers, parents and the general public taking to social media to express their joy, excitement and thanks.

#### Kingsley&Co Engagement Reach Following

	Engagement	Reach	Following
 Facebook	3,277 ^655%	15,009 ^390%	^93
 Instagram	144 ^14%	958 ^47.3%	^91
 Twitter	13,3195 ^250%	71,100 ^196%	^69



#### Ykids Engagement Reach Following

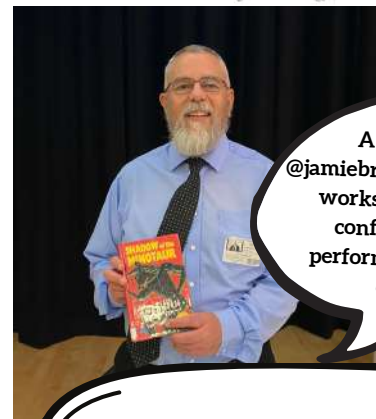
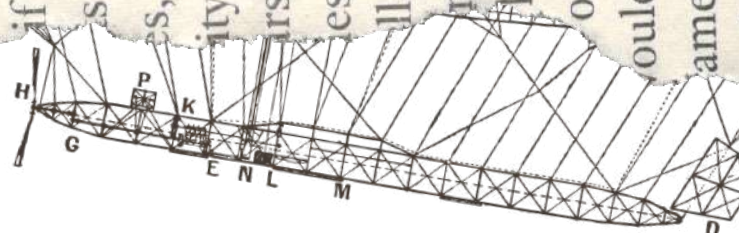
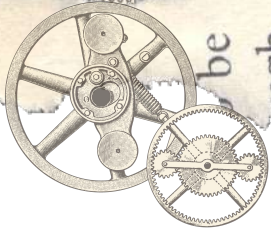
	Engagement	Reach	Following
 Facebook	2,193 ^655%	9,689 ^66%	^29
 Instagram	167 ^34%	2,511 ^265%	^91
 Twitter	3,640 ^232%	15,200 ^47.7%	^29



## SOCIAL MEDIA FEEDBACK







A great visit by @jamiebrodmusic a fantastic workshop to build self-confidence through performance and inspire creativity.

"Congratulations on such a fantastic festival. Our school children loved the workshop by @altrudrama and were so excited to explore the bookshop and discovery room. They were delighted to receive a free book each too, thank you so much!" #BCLF21 @sdowdtrust

"So proud to be part of this amazing festival. @Ykids\_Charity & @KingsleyandCo\_ are doing incredible things for the community." Altru Drama

So much positive feedback from these events. Thanks @KingsleyandCo\_ for sparking our imaginations and helping us champion the joy of reading" - Springwell Park Primary School

"Just wanted to say a massive thankyou to @KingsleyandCo\_ for the amazing event put on for our community these last 2 weeks. I know our boys have absolutely loved every minute of it and has got them really excited about exploring new books and ideas and just reading-fantastic!!!"

### Anecdotal Evidence

We also gathered anecdotal evidence and feedback from partners, shops, participants etc. This included:

*'We sold 300 sausage rolls on Saturday because of your event.'* Pound Bakery staff  
*'One of our new start-ups had their best day ever' (during the festival)* Manager of the Big Onion

*'We opened on the Saturdays especially as the festival was on and we had lots of people come through the exhibition of old Bootle'* – The Leonards who had set up a Local History display

*'There were more people in the downstairs mall than the rest of the Strand put together.'* Visitor comment

*'Strand footfall increased during the two weeks of the festival.'* The Shopping Centre Marketing Manager



## PROMOTE LOCAL AUTHORS

# IMPACT

The festival had multiple aims:

- To engage children in the joy of story
- To promote local authors and artists
- To get books into the hands of children
- To promote the ongoing work of Kingsley&Co
- To offer free cultural experiences for children and families in Bootle
- To promote community pride and positive publicity for Bootle

*"It was interactive and lots of fun for the children. It was creative and allowed the children to explore new ideas"*



## ENGAGE CHILDREN

We wanted firstly and most importantly to impact children's lives by encouraging them to get excited about the joy of story and encourage them to read and write their own. Feedback from schools and parents was that children had indeed engaged, and many were inspired to write their own stories at home or read books independently for the first time.

*"What a fantastic day we have had. Enjoyed all. Wish there was more things like today that we could attend."*

All the authors we used were local to Merseyside. Some were well known such as Curtis Jobling, Alan Gibbons, Frank Cottrell-Boyce and Levi Tafari. Others were earlier on in their career, had only published one book or even though they had great 'sales' were not yet recognised as household names. The festival gave an equal platform and for some, being on the same programme as greats such as Frank Cottrell-Boyce would help them in their career.

Sophia Cole, a 13 year old author who had just published her first book shared a stage with Frank during one of our events as we interviewed a 'seasoned' author alongside a new one in order to inspire children to see that they too could write stories and books.



One of the ways in which we supported local authors was to buy a quantity of their books to put in our Golden Ticket scheme. New books can often be too expensive for our community, however by purchasing books from local authors, not only were authors being supported and had guaranteed sales, but also children were getting the books they wanted after meeting the authors, but otherwise would have been unable to afford. 70 copies of Curtis Jobling's 'Wereworld' flew off the shelves after his 4 school visits, as did Daniel Riding's 100 copies of the Naughty Cat series.

*"I'm gonna come back with my family and buy more books!"*

With the exception of Professor Elemental and Titan the Robot, we also hired local artists and performers including Altru drama company and Arts Groupie. Mike Walker a local artist was also engaged to create a number of installations for Kingsley&Co including our Time Machine.

After the event every participating school was sent a contact list of all the participating authors and artists should they wish to book further visits or workshops in the future.



## TO GET BOOKS INTO THE HANDS OF CHILDREN

As part of our offer to schools every child who attended a workshop at Kingsley&Co got the opportunity to choose a free pre-loved book. Pre-loved books are carefully sorted and cleaned and only good quality books reach our shelves.

Thanks to the Siobhan Dowd Trust we also operated a 'Golden Ticket scheme' distributing 3,000 golden tickets to schools which each equated to a brand-new book to be claimed at Kingsley&Co. A designated wall of bookcases was allocated to the Golden Ticket books and a wide variety of reading books for all ages, including classics, popular, current and highly recommended good reads.

We also included books that were recommended for children who struggled with reading e.g. due to dyslexia, books that would appeal to early readers, children who did not generally enjoy reading and more challenging books for strong readers. Generally, we avoided 'supermarket' books that are readily available for a low price to children. Adding books from our participating authors benefited both children and authors.

"It's mine? For Free? And I don't have to bring it back?"  
By the end of December 2021, we expected to have distributed over 4,200 free books to children.



*"Amazing Levi again! The children loved his poems and his stories. I thought that explaining where his poems came from was really useful to the children."*

## TO PROMOTE THE ONGOING WORK OF KINGSLEY&CO

By holding the BCLF21 we also hoped to raise awareness of Kingsley&Co both to schools and the general public so that we can promote the ongoing work of the project. The publicity, events and activities have indeed raised our profile and most of our Saturday workshops have been sold out since November and sales and footfall have increased.

One of the significant impacts is the engagement with schools. 8 classes have been down to Kingsley&Co for a visit post festival, many to claim their golden tickets or simply experience all that we have to offer. We encourage schools to let us know they are coming to ensure there are enough staff in place to enable them to visit the discovery room, but some have turned up unexpectedly.

One special school has been systematically bringing every class for a visit so they can chose/buy a book, take part in the literary treasure hunt, visit the discovery room and have a hot chocolate. Schools are also enquiring about how we can work together in the future, and we look forward to building on this moving forward.





## TO OFFER FREE CULTURAL EXPERIENCES FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES IN BOOTLE

Bootle is an area characterised by poverty. Many of our families simply cannot afford to give children many cultural experiences such as the theatre, trips to museums or places of interest. By bringing cultural experiences to them we are enhancing their lives, imagination and opportunities. As a result of this project children were able to meet explorers, authors and artists, take part in performances, write their own stories, experience art, make costumes, enter illustration competitions, participate in virtual reality and have lots of family fun. Our feedback and response to the event on social media evidenced that the event was welcomed. The fact that it was free gave freedom for everyone to attend. Targeting local schools ensured the majority of our audience was from the local demographic for whom the event was created.

## TO PROMOTE COMMUNITY PRIDE AND POSITIVE PUBLICITY FOR BOOTLE

Bootle has for many years suffered as a result of poor publicity and media coverage which emphasises crime and poverty. So much so that during the festival a number of negative articles were written in the local press about the shopping centre and which both we and the centre management challenged resulting in some very positive follow up articles when reporters came to see for themselves what was happening.

The area had a poverty mindset which is seen right across our community, and it is easy to see it seep into the mindset of children. Events such as the BCLF promote the town positively and give a sense of community pride. This in turn builds self esteem and pride in our children which is so needed.

# CHALLENGES

The event was not without its challenges and while some were beyond our control, others we have learned from and will take the learning into any future events we deliver.

### **Challenges included:**

- Authors pulling out - Unfortunately, two of our authors had to pull out at last minute due to illness. This was beyond our control, but we were fortunate that other authors already involved were able to step up and fill their workshops.
- Morocco closing its borders - One of our authors - explorer Alice Morrison lives in Morocco and was set to travel to take part in the festival when just days before the event the borders were closed due to Covid 19. We arranged instead to deliver all her workshops by Zoom, live from the Atlas Mountains. This was an unexpected success with children, schools and families really appreciating being able to see the mountains, her rescued kitten, the fossils and artefacts she discovered on her journeys and ask her direct questions. This is something we will definitely do again.
- New staff - Our key worker for the event had been employed in Sept 2020 but shortly thereafter became pregnant and left on maternity in Sept 2021. This was a huge challenge as maternity cover staff did not have knowledge of the schools or the organisation and took time to orientate. This was beyond our control and not the ideal as we had to therefore add more staff to the administration of the project, and this put strain on the organisation elsewhere.



- Schools – Working with schools is always challenging as they frequently find it difficult to effectively communicate with outside organisations. We had 8 schools signed up before September, but our final count of schools involved was 35. Many of those schools came on board during October which created an administrative challenge. Many also wanted to make changes to the programme, did not respect the authors time, e.g. requesting 6 half hour lessons in 3 hours with no breaks, or failed to communicate properly with their staff. This resulted in 3 schools turning up for workshops on two occasions when we only had capacity for 2 because they had failed to read their emails/letters and not had our telephone conversations passed on to them. This was frustrating but sadly also expected as we have extensive experience with schools work and this is typical with some schools. We are considering some sort of online booking system next time to allow schools to book their own slots and have automatic updates.
- Racism/rudeness – We had one incident in a school where a secretary was rude to an author, and which was perceived as a subtle form of racism. We had a complaint from the artist and are escalating this issue with the school.
- Too much pressure on staff – As we continued to deliver our usual programme of activities and the Literary Festival grew to twice what had been expected this put more pressure on staff than expected. We also saw event numbers much higher than expected and our bookshop and coffee shop were overwhelmed. We also had a key member of staff off sick which again put additional pressure on the wider team.

The learning we take away from this is that we need to do less during such a large event in our day-to-day activities or take on additional staff. We are now looking at developing a bank of sessional staff to alleviate pressure points during the year. We are also looking at how we can build the resilience of the team at Kingsley&Co and manage larger events with new systems so that they do not get as overwhelmed and are more able to process large numbers of people quickly through the café/till area.

- Working with partners – We were disappointed that a number of our partners pulled out at last minute including Spellow Library – again due to circumstances beyond their control; and the escape rooms by 'In Another Place' which were ready, but unable to open due to a security issue which they were waiting to be fixed by outside contractors.

We also had a few issues with communication with the shopping centre, e.g. we had been told there was adequate access to bring the Chitty Chitty Bang Bang bike into the centre but on the day discovered that the doors which could fold out had been riveted shut and there were no maintenance staff on duty to be able to open them.

In addition, bailiffs arrived to turn off the electricity of the new unit we were using as a classroom during a workshop because a previous tenant had an outstanding £5,000 bill. While we had been in contact with the electricity company when we had taken on the unit, the council had still not sent us a lease and we were therefore unable to take on the new electricity contract as they required it. We have been waiting for 6 months.

- Builders unable to complete refurbishment on time – In order to carry out the festival effectively we needed additional classroom space. We took on the vacant unit next to our current shop but the builders, while engaged in August, were unable to start work until the week before the event. As a result, much of the work was not able to be completed and we had to hide and set dress the shop. The builders will return in January, and we expect work to be completed by February half term when we will be offering other events and workshops.
- Timeframe – The time frame we set ourselves was too short and despite having much in place in case funding were agreed, it would have been better had we had a longer lead into the event. This was particularly evident with partnerships and moving forward we would like to build more on these, as many partners who had expressed an interest in becoming involved e.g. Liverpool University could not meet our timeframe.



# SUMMARY

The Bootle Children's Literary Festival 2021 was a huge success involving 35 local schools, over 20 authors and artists and promoting literacy and emotional wellbeing through story and the arts.

The positive short-term impact on children and families has been evidenced through our feedback, social media engagement and positive outcomes, and we hope that this will in time have a long-term impact that will see improvements in children's attainment, engagement with their education and lifelong emotional and academic wellbeing.

Schools and the wider community had the opportunity to engage in an exciting positive cultural programme. Bootle as a town, Kingsley&Co as a project, The Strand shopping centre and its businesses have all benefited by increased footfall and positive publicity. Local authors have had their profile raised by being part of the festival and their contacts circulated for future bookings.

Children were able to participate at every level from audience to stage, through art, poetry, illustration, drama, storytelling, story writing, book signing, making crafts and sharing their own ideas.

Children were inspired to create and engage independently of the festival, writing their own stories, poems and creating artwork.

Over 4,200 free books were distributed to children.

Children and the wider community had fun, felt welcomed, engaged, inspired and had a positive experience of literacy through story and the arts. The event was not without its challenges, but these will serve as valuable lessons for planning and delivering future events.







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