

Grant Report:

January – August 2015

The Barbara and Philip Denny Charitable Trust

Arvon is extremely grateful to the Trustees of The Barbara and Philip Denny Charitable Trust for their continued support of our Grant Scheme. We value the Trust's generous support over the last four years, enabling a diverse range of writers from across the UK, who could otherwise not afford to participate in an Arvon course.

"Without the grant I could not have come to the course. The grant system also makes the course more eclectic. Not everyone who is a gifted writer has been successful enough in the real world to afford the fee, so the grants bring greater variety and a bigger range of experience to the group." – Grant recipient 2015"

Your ongoing commitment has been vital in ensuring that Arvon courses remain open to everyone – regardless of age, background, income, or ability. The continued support of a handful of Trusts, including The Barbara and Philip Denny Charitable Trust has enabled Arvon to grow our grant fund in 2015 to £54,000. Despite the increase of the fund, demand for financial assistance has remained high. Arvon will continue to identify ways in which we can grow this pot to meet demand over the next few years.

Impact on grant beneficiaries

Arvon plays an important role in supporting the development of emerging writers. This year, Arvon delivered over 80 courses across our three rural centres developing writers' skills in a variety of forms, ranging from Fiction to Poetry, Playwriting to TV Screenwriting. Below is a selection of quotes from individuals who have benefited from your generous support this year:

"If I had not received the grant, I would have struggled to afford the course fees and probably wouldn't have been able to attend at all... I don't think I've ever learnt so much in such a short period of time."

"I gained so much from my experience at The Hurst – as a writer and as an English teacher. I learnt so many strategies and teaching methods that will be invaluable when planning/ delivering my own lessons for students...I will even be stealing some of the tasks they gave us... I'm looking forward to trying them out in the classroom."

"It goes without saying that this grant was undoubtedly a lifeline."

"There is no doubt, that this week has allowed me to have a greater understanding of creative writing, per se, as well as writing for young adult fiction. I found The Hurst to be the most open and peaceful place to nurture my writing talent."

"For a few days, I was much more than a parent and a carer: I was truly myself again... In that sense, it's been life-changing."

"It may sound dramatic but this [grant] changed my life. I am now 65, living alone on a low income, but since the Arvon week I am now a writer. Having professional writers tell me my work was good/showed promise was worth more than I can express in words."

Achievements of grant recipients

Grant recipients show great promise and many of them go on to publish or produce their work, achieving recognition for their writing. Here are a brief selection of recent achievements:

SN from Lambeth, London was recently announced as the new Young Poet Laureate for London, a position awarded annually to a poet aged between 18 -25 living in London. Earlier this year, Selina's debut poetry collection 'The Secrets I Let Slip' was published. Selina received a grant in 2013 to attend a poetry course at The Hurst. "I was so grateful to receive the grant and be on the course... I certainly could not have done this course without it but feel so much more refreshed as a writer for having had this experience." Selina credits the support she received from tutors as crucial in enhancing her writing, "I think the one to one tutorials were brilliant and for me they were a key feature in the success of the week. As a writer, this level of personal feedback is what I am missing in my everyday artistic life and so I was massively grateful to get this time, to hear constructive feedback and masses of encouragement.... I definitely feel my writing improved during the week...It made me take myself and my capabilities as a writer more seriously." The tutors provided Selina with invaluable advice on how to get her work published. "I have wanted to put together a collection for some time but have had no real clue about how to go about it. To gain the insights of Ian & Caroline [tutors], who know the industry and were willing to share this information was really helpful. I came away from the week with a better sense of different publishers to approach and that I should give myself the chance in approaching different publishers and believe that I am good enough to be published by them."

TP from Birmingham received a grant to attend Playwriting: Honing Your Craft, Making Your Drama Sing in April. The piece that Trevor was working on throughout the week has recently been commissioned by mac Birmingham and will have its first performance in March 2016.

EF, aged 24 from Deptford, London, received a grant to attend Poetry: Going the distance course in April. Ella was awarded a commission by Tate Britain based on work she produced on the Arvon week. Ella presented her work as part of the "Late at Tate" event in June.

Additional support for grant recipients

We are delighted to continue our partnership with The Literary Consultancy (TLC) and in October offered up to 15 grant recipients the invaluable opportunity to receive free professional manuscript assessment as part of TLC's Free Read Scheme. All grant also recipients received tips and advice on digital publishing.

Reaching a diverse audience for Arvon's Grant Scheme

Arvon has a targeted strategy to communicate the availability of grants to reach a wide range of writers from across the UK. This message is included in all marketing communications, in our annual brochure (reaching 14,000 people) on Arvon's website (80,000 unique views a year) and e-newsletter (17,000 recipients).

The ongoing support of The Barbara and Philip Denny Charitable Trust has made a substantial contribution to our Grant Scheme; providing many writers from disadvantaged backgrounds the opportunity to develop their writing and potential. We are incredibly grateful for your continued support which has been crucial in enabling Arvon to grow our grant fund, benefitting nearly 800 disadvantaged writers since 2011.