

On Friday 8th June I was lucky enough to be at the BBC Radio 2 500 word final at Hampton Court Palace.

Now in its eighth year, the story-writing competition for children aged between 5 and 13 has seen another record year attracting a staggering 135,000 entries. In addition, 500 Words was supported by Oxford University Press in 2018 to reach over 20,000 schools.

Each and every one of this year's entries was read by a fantastic team of 5000 volunteer teachers and librarians from around the UK, before being whittled down to the Top 50 finalists by The Reading Agency. The 500 Words' panel of judges then had the gruelling task of selecting three winners in each of the two age categories (5-9 and 10-13 years) from this group of talented young writers.

The final, presented by Chris Evans, promised to be an extravaganza of live music and sensational story-telling, with the six winning wordsmiths announced on-air by celebrity narrators including David Walliams and Dara O'Briain. There was fantastic music from John Newman, Alexandra Burke and Bastille.

The 500 Words' panel of judges - Charlie Higson, Francesca Simon, Frank Cottrell Boyce, Malorie Blackman and Honorary Judge, Her Royal Highness The Duchess of Cornwall - were also present at this extra special edition of [The Chris Evans Breakfast Show](#).

The stories that particularly impressed me were from the 5 – 9 category, The Messenger was read by Jim Broadbent and The Poo Fairy read by David Walliams. Here is the link to both so that you can have a listen:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/articles/1X807bd666plfvBBbR6hDmd/500-words-2018-final-as-it-happened>

Be warned The Messenger is very emotional!

It was a fantastic morning with live performances from John Newman, Bastille and Alexandra Burke. Her Royal Highness The Duchess of Cornwall arrived in Chitty Chitty Bang Bang and then gave a wonderful speech.

Mrs Yeo



