

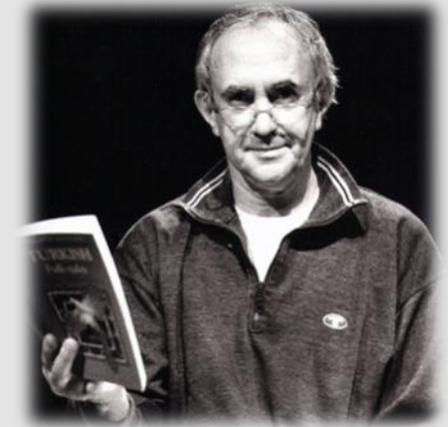
WONDERFUL BEAST

ANNUAL REPORT:
HIGHLIGHTS 2020

What a year! Looking back to the start, little did we know what was to come...

New website, old archives

At the start of the year we finished building a fantastic [new website](#). Along the way, we dug up some **classic archive material**, which we've been making available to hear on the website and as a podcast, [Stories from the Archives](#) - **great fun** for listeners of **all ages**. Have a listen by [clicking here](#) or visit the website for the full playlist - more to come!



The Wonderful Beast Singers

For the [Wonderful Beast Singers](#), last year workshops led by **Rob Gildon** and **Alys Kihl** culminated in singing to a packed audience at **FolkEast**, in a promotional performance for [The Last Woodwose](#), featuring actor **Hilary Greatorex** and musicians **Alfie Carpenter** and **Kimberley Moore**.

This year, the singers have had to learn a whole new way of working together, from **Zoom** singing to **ever more adventurous outdoor rehearsal locations**, surrounded by bats, cows and all manner of creatures. Most atmospheric!

Highlights from the WB Singers are now posted on our **new blog**, [Whispers](#), so look out for clips and announcements.

[Click here](#) for a taste of what they were singing this summer.

Then came Covid-19...



...and suddenly we were locked down.



At the end of April and first three weeks of May, we premiered our **first ever audio production**, [Lockdown Tales](#), in a daily slot on **BBC Radio Suffolk's Leslie Dolphin Afternoon Show**, broadcast to over 100,000 listeners.



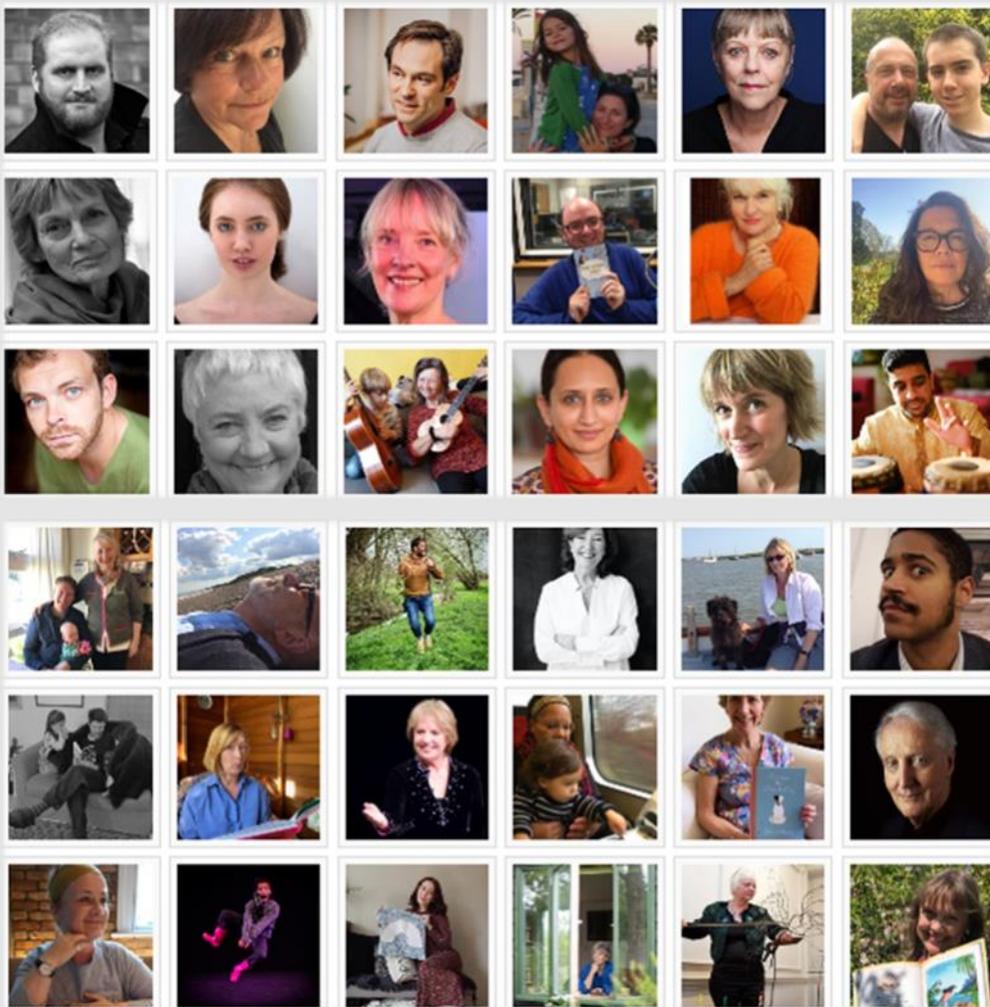
Thanks to support from the [Frank Jackson Foundation](#) and [Suffolk Community Foundation's Coronavirus Fund](#), as well as several generous **private donors** and the co-operation of **numerous brilliant publishers**, we were able to continue the project as a globally-available podcast with weekly episodes, through to childrens' return to schools in September.

We even ran a linked **Children's Art Competition**, inspired by Julia **Blackburn's** recital of the Edward Lear poem, '**The Quangle Wangle's Hat**', with first prize, *The Everyman Book of Nonsense Verse*, kindly donated by [The Aldeburgh Bookshop](#).



Since May, the [Lockdown Tales](#) podcast series has accumulated **more than 50 stories**, poems and accompanying activities for children, recorded by an **extraordinary array of performers** from local up-and-coming artists to such luminaries as **Dame Penelope Wilton**, **Gemma Jones** and **Hugh Fraser**, *Harry Potter* and *How to Get Away with Murder* star **Alfie Enoch**, and local writers including **Emma Chichester Clark**. So many talented actors, writers and poets **shared their time and skills**, not to mention battling with the challenges of home-recording. Their stories were listened to by children **as far afield as Hong Kong!** Between April and September, the [Lockdown Tales](#) podcast has attracted **13,000 listeners**, increasing daily. The [entire series remains available for free](#).

A few words of thanks



A heartfelt thank you goes out to all our **fabulous readers** for their generosity and enthusiasm in making [Lockdown Tales](#) possible. It was an **unexpected and truly lovely project**. We made some fantastic new connections that we hope will last long into the future of Wonderful Beast.

Another unreserved thank you to **our funders**, without whom we would not be here. We are especially thankful for those who gave interim corona funding and also to our generous **private donors**, to our **Friends**, and, importantly, to all our **regular Beast supporters**.

I am ever-grateful for the support of **my fellow trustees** and appreciate their wise words and time given during the year to Beast affairs.

Finally, a HUGE thank you to **Alys Kihl**, Wonderful Beast's founder and Artistic Director, whose creativity never ceases to amaze us. Her energy, enthusiasm and positivity is endless and together with my fellow trustees I thank her for all she does to make Wonderful Beast the unique charity it is today.

Looking ahead



We're delighted to announce that we have been granted some funding from [Arts Council England](#) and [Scarfe Charitable Trust](#) for our next project: **an outreach series for over 65s in our part of Suffolk**, with the aim of tackling **social isolation** and **loneliness**.



Since the advent of Covid-19, these issues become more prevalent than ever. **Building social confidence**, making **connections in communities** and **revealing hidden talents** is something the arts has a unique ability to achieve and so, in partnership with [Wardens Trust at Sizewell](#), Wonderful Beast is leading **creative workshops** (poetry, storytelling, music and movement), culminating in an event to showcase the artistic fruits of their sessions.

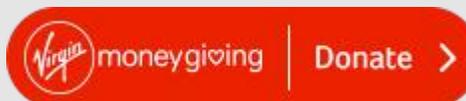


The series is planned for **Spring 2021**, when we hope to be able to bring groups together in person, but the project has been designed to run online too, so global pandemic or no global pandemic, we will reach those in need!

We're thrilled to be able to start putting this together in earnest but there is a long way to go, and as you all know, we can't deliver any of our work without **your support**. To find out more, email us or follow one of the links below.

Lucy Rowan-Robinson
Chair of the Wonderful Beast Board of Trustees

Contact us to find out about becoming a Friend of Wonderful Beast



Donate through Local Giving