

## *Community Poetry*

### **Southbourne BIG POEM**

Wind blows against the waving grass,  
whips up a sandstorm.  
Here on the southern tip of Bournemouth,  
on the edge of the UK,  
the last visual memory  
as the waves drift away,  
reaching high to snatch a glance,  
then crashing down, onwards to France.  
It's not boiling, it's not freezing,  
but it's warm. I like the sandy beach,  
especially if it's in our reach,  
lovely gardens, golden rugby,  
walking the dogs on Hengistbury Head.  
I like computers.  
I like playing football.  
I love numbers and words.  
Saint Katherine's is my school!  
It's very nice where schools are.  
All my closest friends live here.  
I like you and everyone.  
(I don't like writing poems!)  
I miss the shellhouse.

Southbourne's lost heritage: -  
Winter Gardens, pier, aerodrome,  
and Douglas House,  
Sir Gordon Selfridge's Castle  
and Doctor Compton.  
Winter Gardens at the Cross Roads  
to woodlands and cliff tops, so much history;  
from heathland to today's coffee shops,  
the grandest of avenues and cafes to stop, meet and talk.  
Yes, down Southbourne Grove we love to rove;  
some windows empty, but new shops aplenty.  
There are butchers - one, two three.  
If you should look closer, you'll find a greengrocer,  
friendly shopkeepers, kindly road sweepers;

a place to enjoy - don't be coy!-,  
knit and natter while having a platter;  
not plain but a silver pearl.

Cafe Riva is a lovely place,  
especially with a slice of cliff-cake. Yummy burgers.  
And Halloween's fun at fisherman's walk.  
Children on the green, twinkling lights  
and Christmas sparkle. The red tower  
that reaches for the sky, the sun touching  
glistening sea and sparkling sand;  
the bandstand underneath the pines,  
where squirrels scamp and walkers stop  
to pass the time of day - I've talked to the squirrels,  
and there's nowhere I'd rather be  
than to sit on the sand with a sandwich in hand  
on the beach at Southbourne on Sea.  
The sky is normally cloudy, the sound  
is very smooth - quirky, mega, volish.  
Hot chocolate at the beach hut.  
Big stripy beach chair. A bunny rabbit.  
It's a perfect view from the top.  
Indulge yourself.

*BIG POEMs was a community poetry initiative launched as part of Bournemouth Arts by the Sea Fringe festival. Poems were written collectively by residents - children and adults - who posted their lines online or added them to physical BIG POEMs at venues in Bournemouth Triangle, Southbourne and Boscombe. Special thanks to The Mad Cucumber Lounge, the Shelley Theatre and NumberWorks 'nWords, and to everyone who participated - thanks for joining me on this adventure, and congratulations on penning these real community poems! – James Manlow, Poet Laureate for Bournemouth*