

The James Dodding Poetry Awards 2026

Professor James Dodding was a founder member of Garstang Poetry Appreciation Society. He played a major role in arts and theatre education in the United Kingdom, the USA and Canada. Many of his students went on to become household names including David Bowie, Gary Oldman, Tom Baker, Malcolm Hebden and Benedict Cumberbatch. James died in 2018, aged 87. These awards are in his honour to encourage creative talent among local young people.

Rules and Entry Form

Entries are invited from young people who live in or attend schools in the greater Garstang area. There are two age categories:

Senior – Ages 12 to 16 (on 26th June 2026) **Junior** – Ages 9 to 11 (on 26th June 2026)

The prizes are:

Senior: First Prize £50, Shield and Poetry book
 Second Prize £25 and Poetry book Third Prize £15 and Poetry book

Junior: First Prize £50, Shield and Poetry book
 Second Prize £25 and Poetry book Third Prize £15 and Poetry book

The judges may also award 'Commended' and £10 to other entries deemed of special merit.

The theme/topic for this year's award is open ie it can be on any topic of the writer's choice. There is no maximum or minimum length of poem but it **must** fit on one side of A4 paper. The poem **must** have a title. It can be in rhyme or free form and it can be funny or serious. It can be typed or handwritten.

Only **one** poem per entrant. This must not have previously been entered for any other award and it must not have been published elsewhere. Entrants can apply **independently** or **via their school**. Previous winners and entrants are welcome to enter again.

The name of the First Prize winner (Senior) will be engraved on a shield which will be on permanent display in Garstang Arts Centre. Closing date and time for entries is Friday **26th June 2026** at noon. Judging will take place during the summer of 2026 and the winners will be announced in mid to late August 2026. The presentation of prizes will be held in Garstang Arts Centre on **Saturday, 12th September 2026 at 10.30am**. Photos of the winning entrants will appear in the local print and social media.

Please feel free to photocopy this letter/entry form. Copies are also available from **Garstang Arts Centre**, Croston Road, Garstang, PR3 1HQ or from **The Velvet Carrot coffee shop**, 5 Thomas's Weind, Garstang, PR3 1LL.

Entries should be submitted in envelopes marked 'James Dodding Poetry Award 2026' by noon on Friday 26th June 2026, and left at **Garstang Arts Centre** or **The Velvet Carrot coffee shop**, 5 Thomas's Weind, Garstang.

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Entry Form (Please clip or staple the completed form to your entry)

I am entering the Junior* / Senior* category [*Delete as appropriate]

Name _____

Address _____

Age on 26th June 2026 _____

School _____

Contact name and phone number of parent/guardian or teacher _____

Note: If there are any queries, please ask your parent/guardian (or teacher if entering via your school) to email the organiser at ant.garstang@gmail.com