



## Village trail (with readings)

**Please remember that except for the Museum itself, the buildings on this trail are neither owned by nor part of the Museum. Please do not lean on the buildings or peer into the windows.**

1. Start out by the Wonka gates in the courtyard of **The Roald Dahl Museum and Story Centre.**

### **Information about the Museum to share with the children:**

The Museum is a Grade II listed building. Before it was renovated this was a derelict site which badly needed restoration as part of the historic High Street. Previously the buildings have been used as a bank, hairdressers, a dance hall and a public inn. Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli is rumoured to have stayed here during his time in office. The Wonka gates were donated by Warner Brothers. They originally offered us the gates from the film but they were too large so they made us our very own set.



2. Walk down the High Street and stop in the courtyard outside **Great Missenden Library.**

### **Information about the library to share with the children:**

The library was built in 1970. Roald Dahl imagined Matilda visiting the library while her Mum went off to Aylesbury to play bingo.

### **Share this extract from *Matilda* with the children:**

'Nearly every weekday afternoon Matilda was left alone in the house. Her brother (five years older than her) went to school. Her father went to work and her mother went out playing bingo in a town eight miles away... Matilda set out all by herself to walk to the public library in the village. When she arrived, she introduced herself to the librarian, Mrs Phelps. She asked if she might sit a while and read a book. Mrs Phelps, slightly taken aback at the arrival of such a tiny girl unaccompanied by a parent, nevertheless told her she was very welcome. "Where are the children's books please?" Matilda asked.

"They're over there on those lower shelves," Mrs Phelps told her. "Would you like me to help you find a nice one with lots of pictures in it?"

"No thank you," Matilda said. "I'm sure I can manage."

From then on, every afternoon, as soon as her mother had left for bingo, Matilda would toddle down to the library. The walk took only ten minutes and this allowed her two glorious hours sitting quietly by herself in a cosy corner devouring one book after another.'



3. Remain in the courtyard outside the library and point to **the Post Office** across the road.

**Information about the Post Office to share with the children:**

The Post Office received hundreds of sacks of post every year from Roald Dahl fans all around the world. When Roald Dahl was alive, the postman would deliver up to 4,000 letters per week to his house. The letters for Roald Dahl continue to arrive but now we receive them by email as well as by post.



**Share this poem with the children. Roald Dahl sent it to a class of children in reply to their letters.**

'Dear children, far across the sea,  
How good of you to write to me.  
I love to read the things you say  
When you are miles and miles away.  
Young people and I think I'm right,  
Are nicer when they're out of sight.'



4. Walk back down the High Street towards the Museum and stop in the alleyway next to the Village Café to avoid blocking the pavement. Point out the **petrol pumps** across the road (**please do not touch the pumps**).

**Information to share with the children about the pumps:**

The petrol pumps inspired the description of the garage in *Danny the Champion of the World*. Roald Dahl worked for the Shell Petroleum Company after he left school. Following two years of training with Shell he was transferred to Dar-es-

Salaam, in Tanganyika (now Tanzania) to sell oil. He wrote about his experiences working for Shell and living in Africa in *Going Solo*.

**Share this extract from *Danny the Champion of the World* with the children:**

'We lived in an old gipsy caravan behind a filling-station. My father owned the filling-station and the caravan and a small field behind, but that was about all he owned in the world. It was a very small filling-station on a small country road surrounded by fields and woody hills.'

...'The filling-station itself had only two pumps. There was a wooden shed behind the pumps that served as an office. There was nothing in the office except an old table and a cash register to put the money into. It was one of those where you pressed a button and a bell rang and the drawer shot out with a terrific bang. I used to love that.'



5. Remain in the alley way next to the Village Café and point out **Crown House - 70 High Street.**

**Information about Crown House to share with the children:**

This house inspired Sophie's 'norphantage'. The clip from the animated film of the *The BFG* played in the Solo gallery shows the house very clearly as Sophie peers out of her bedroom window.

**Share this extract from *The BFG* with the children:**

'From across the street Sophie watched and held her breath.

She saw the Giant step back a pace and put the suitcase down on the pavement. He bent over and opened the suitcase. He took something out of it. It looked like a glass jar, one of those square ones with a screw top. He unscrewed the top of the jar and poured what was in it into the end of the long trumpet thing.'

Sophie watched, trembling.

She saw the Giant straighten up again and she saw him poke the trumpet in through the open upstairs window of the room where the Goochey children were sleeping. She saw the Giant take a deep breath and *whoof*, he blew through the trumpet.

No noise came out, but it was obvious to Sophie that whatever had been in the jar had now been blown through the trumpet into the Goochey children's bedroom.

What could it be?'





6. Walk along the High Street past the Museum and turn left down Church Street. Walk down this road a short way then take a right hand turn up a lane. The lane leads uphill and takes you on a bridge over the A413. You will then reach the **Church of St Peter and St Paul**.

If you would like to go inside the church, please call the parish office in advance on 01494 862352 (weekday mornings 9.30am to 12 noon) to see if this is possible.

**The Churchyard is still in use. Please brief the children on the need to behave respectfully, to avoid touching or disturbing graves and to speak in hushed tones. We ask that the significance of the site for other people is respected at all times.**

**Information about the Church to share with the children:**

There is evidence of a church on the site as early as 1133. Roald Dahl died on 23 November 1990 and is buried here. To locate the grave, follow the higher path in the new graveyard to the memorial bench under the tree. The bench carries the names of Roald Dahl's five children and three stepchildren. The poem carved into the stone slabs around the base of the bench is taken from *The Giraffe and the Pelly and Me*. From the memorial bench you can follow the BFG footprints to see Roald Dahl's grave.



**Share this extract from *The Giraffe and the Pelly and Me* with the children:**

'We have tears in our eyes  
As we wave our goodbyes  
We so loved being with you, we three.  
So please now and then  
Come and see us again,  
The Giraffe and the Pelly and me.'

All you do is to look  
At a page in this book  
Because that's where we always will be.  
No book ever ends  
When it's full of your friends  
The Giraffe and the Pelly and me.'

**Walk back to the Museum!**