

A HISTORIC LANDMARK IN EAST BELFAST ACTS AS THE INSPIRATION BEHIND HERBERT SMITH FREEHILLS' INAUGURAL CREATIVE WRITING COMPETITION

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News

Herbert Smith Freehills is delighted to announce the winners of its *Towering Tales* creative writing competition:

- Adults' category - "Untitled story" by Peter Keilty
- Children's category - "Belmont Tower Terror" by Mick McGuinness

Developed by a dedicated Herbert Smith Freehills team, and launched in association with the National Trust, Young at Art and Arts & Business Northern Ireland, this Belfast-based competition was open to writers of all age groups, with or without writing experience. Entrants were asked to submit a short story or poem, of no more than 1,000 words, in a style of their choosing - with the one proviso being that they used Belmont Tower as their muse.

Formerly a primary school, Belmont Tower is over 100 years old and has belonged to the National Trust since 2013. Its open, belfried tower is a prominent landmark in East Belfast and the building itself has become a creative hub treasured by the local community. Housing classes, conference facilities, a coffee shop and a CS Lewis exhibition, the Tower is used for all sorts of purposes, from away days to product launches to staff assessments. It is a versatile and welcoming environment that repays repeated visits.

The competition winners were announced at a Gala held at Belmont Tower itself. A fun-filled evening, compered by the actor & journalist Ivan Little, saw the shortlisted entries showcased by rehearsed readings and accompanied by live illustrations by the acclaimed local artist Patrick Sanders. Belfast Community Gospel Choir also performed, adding to the sense of occasion.

At the Gala, the award-winning author & journalist Linda Grant, who acted as judge at the final stage of the competition, expressed her appreciation of the high standard of the entries. She commented, "It was a pleasure reading the diversity of these entries for the writing competition, which showed that the imagination as well as a love of language is alive and well."

The winning entries will be reproduced on National Trust postcards illustrated by Patrick Sanders.

About Herbert Smith Freehills

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