

Title: The Traveller Stalls  
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In medieval Gaelic and British culture bards were hired by monarchs and noblemen to commemorate their achievements and the achievements of their people and places. Great epic poems were written chronicling that which was worth remembering.

It is back to this great tradition that the Nuneaton and Bedworth town centres manager, Alan Ottey, looked when his town centre made history by winning the 2009 UK Best Street Market prize from the National Association of British Market Authorities and then, by being the first town ever to win for two consecutive years when Nuneaton took the 2010 prize for the UK Best Market attraction.

Engaging the services of local poet and photographer, Barry Evans, Alan and the Nuneaton Friends of the Market group asked for a book to commemorate these events.

As Barry explains in the foreword "...it was immediately clear to me that they wanted something to commemorate their pride in the achievements of the market in Nuneaton town centre..." he goes on as he explains why he wrote the book he did "...I began to think about the idea then, that these traders were bringing the world to the town, as I watched the colour and life these stalls bring into the centre every Wednesday and Saturday. It began to feel to me as if the market in some way existed outside time, and that the world was converging here..."

The resulting book in the form of a narrative poem follows a mythical traveller who arrives in Nuneaton and is captivated by the life and joy of the market town. The stories of the traveller and the market intertwine for a day and during this one day Winter turns into Spring.

The traveller has walked all the pathways of the world searching for the unusual and the exotic. On this day he or she (we never find out) travels into Nuneaton along the canal and watches the market assemble and then play out. Much to the traveller's delight and amusement the traders bring with them into the town the exotic splendour that the traveller has travelled the world to find.

Using the form of a narrative poem supported by images of the market taken over six months this book can be experienced as a breathtaking journey into the meaning of community. It is certainly a celebration of collaboration and a recognition of where true value lies in life.