

Children and Libraries

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Figure 1. Winner of the cosplay competition at the April 2010 meeting at Central Milton Keynes library of the MK Manga Club.

EDITORIAL

‘What do we, as a nation, care about books?
How much do you think we spend altogether
on our libraries, public or private, as
compared with what we spend on our horses?’
(John Ruskin, *Sesame and Lilies*, 1865)

With a little updating, the implied reproach in Ruskin’s remark would seem to be just as valid today as in the nineteenth century. The object of comparison might be different – instead of horses, take your pick between alcohol, warfare, computing systems, health and safety regulations, gambling, entertainment, sport, food packaging, ..., the choice is endless. Libraries all over the country have been the victims of councils’ spending cuts, while complaints have been made that today the first impression they give is all too often sight of a range of computers rather than shelves of books. Of course those of us whose childhood memories include many happy hours spent in libraries should not forget how much more abundant are the leisure opportunities available to young people today than they were for most of us. We do of course admit that libraries need to keep up with the times, and that those of us whose lives have been full of books are not necessarily typical of the population at large.

Today the need to support both public and schools libraries is paramount. If for various reasons we ourselves don’t depend to the same extent for our own supply of reading matter on public or school libraries (obtaining it in the variety of different ways now open to us), we shouldn’t forget the importance they had for us when we were younger. In this issue of *IBBYLink* there are not only such recollections from several people about how important libraries were in

their youth, but also some interesting material from the internet about adults rediscovering the public libraries and learning about the services on offer today. This is reinforced by the positive comments some primary school children have made about their school libraries (thanks to Pam Dix for supplying the material for both those items). Nor are teenagers immune from these benefits: Anne Harding presents evidence about the inspiration given to them by libraries and librarians. We also have articles from people who are, or until recently have been, involved in the library service, revealing how important at all levels is the role of the professional librarian.

The situation we have today was forecast some time ago. Writer Jana Novotny Hunter has sent a report she wrote nearly 20 years ago when a distinguished panel of speakers, consisting of Shirley Hughes, Gillian Cross, Philip Pullman and Philippa Dickinson, spoke to the Children’s Writers and Illustrators Group about the threats then facing the Schools Library Service. They warned of the limitations of fiction reading being confined to classroom hand-outs, and noted the value to teachers of a specialised service. Philip Pullman even imagined a scenario in which the ‘Abolition of Reading Campaign’ stated that the demise of the library service had been the most effective measure in their success.

Those who believe that the reading of books is one of the supreme ways to uphold the values of civilisation need to be alert to the pressures that libraries of all types are subject to, and give them our support. I hope this current issue of *IBBYLink* will, in a small way, assist campaigning in favour of books, reading, and libraries.

Pat Pinsent

Attention!

Annual conference of IBBY UK/NCRCL MA, 12 November 2011

‘It Doesn’t Have to Rhyme: Children and Poetry’

See page 39 for details of how to reserve your place.

[Jennifer Harding]

Judith Philo

I was eight before I first visited a library. It was in Norbury where my grandparents lived; the library was in a small Victorian building on the High Street. We had returned to England from South Africa where my family had spent the war located in a holiday resort with other Forces' families who had also been evacuated from such countries as Singapore or Egypt where my father, a pilot in the RAF, was a flying instructor. It felt very special to have my own tickets for borrowing, two for fiction and two for non-fiction. I liked history and read about the lives of composers, also the Romans, and about the Saxons and Vikings. When we moved to Kent there was a similar library building in the High Street, and weekly visits to choose books continued to play a part in the pleasures of free time.

When my son was small, pre-playgroup (late 1970s), our local library was new. The children's library was housed in the basement and we spent afternoons rummaging through the boxes of picture books and reading together. Later there were storytelling sessions and live performances. Nowadays that library's facilities are combined on one floor, stocks are reduced and opening times restricted to four days a week; other libraries in the borough continue to provide a fuller service. From time to time I have made requests that needed the interlibrary loan service, and I have been grateful for the persistence and willingness of the librarians to pursue these submissions and their interest in them.

When I lived in rural Hertfordshire in the early 1960s the mobile library van came fortnightly. It was an adventure in itself exploring the crowded shelves in the narrow space of this vehicle. Whenever I go on holiday I am always interested to locate the library and discover its particular history. A holiday cottage we visit in Westleton, Suffolk, has a reading room attached to it. It was established in the early twentieth century for the use of the local country people and fishermen, but is now disused. The Reading Room for Fishermen in Southwold remains an open attraction to visitors.

To me libraries are part of the fabric of life, an essential service within the community. Books, CDs, and, nowadays, technological facilities are available to local residents. Playgroups and schools are free to visit. For many families libraries provide a vital space where small children can explore the world of books and play together freely in the presence of their parents or carers; for me that is their great value and is irreplaceable.

My Early Experiences of Public Libraries

John Newman

As a boy growing up on the Burdett Estate in Poplar (soon to become part of Tower Hamlets) in the early 1960s, I was very lucky to have had access to a mobile library service which was parked twice a week within walking distance of our council flat. This meant I did not have to rely on my parents to take me to our nearest branch library in Fairfoot Road or on the stock contained in the library at Stebon Primary School where I was library monitor. I read widely and the books on the mobile van seemed to be regularly changed.

What stands out from those times? Well, I remember the Antelope and Reindeer series published by Hamish Hamilton and I have fond memories of the Brock the Badger series written by 'BB' (D. Watkins Pritchard). I recall being drawn to the Charles Keeping covers of books by Rosemary Sutcliff and I devoured the works of Henry Treece, Ronald Welch, Geoffrey Trease, Barbara Willard and Alan Garner amongst many others.

As I grew older I had my first encounter with Tolkein's *The Lord of the Rings* and the work of John Wyndham. I also recall John Rowe Townsend's *The Intruder* making a very strong impression on me and of my being able really to identify with the main character. I must reread it at some point – although, as with many books of my childhood and youth, it is now sadly out of print.

While studying for my A levels I worked 16 hours a week as a part-time relief librarian for Tower Hamlets Libraries, working in every branch across the borough, as well as serving my time on the same mobile library service. I learned so much about books because I spent most of my time processing and shelving them when not actually reading them. Looking back, those evenings and Saturdays were some of the happiest times of my life – I was surrounded by books, and by people who loved books and reading, and gave of their time generously to share this with others.

Libraries in my Life

Pat Pinsent

As the only child of generous and book-loving parents, I was never short of books as a child, building up my own special collection which tended to have a strong leaning towards historical fiction. But my appetite for books could never have been satisfied without the opportunity to borrow large numbers from the public library, of which, to my good fortune, the Walmer branch was nearly opposite where I lived. This meant that I could pop across the road whenever I needed to change my book. Naturally I soon outgrew the children's section and remember the librarian preparing a list for me of authors from the adult section that I could be permitted to borrow. These were presumably selected so as not to be unsuitable for my tender years (I was probably about 12 at the time) – names I can remember featuring on the list were those of Rafael Sabatini, Baroness Orczy and Marjorie Bowen – as well of course as the classic nineteenth-century novelists, notably Sir Walter Scott. I also remember frequenting the main library in Deal, which was in a converted detached house, so that small local collections, for instance of the Kent Archaeological Society, were located in what had been the bedrooms.

With this combination of material and atmosphere, it is surprising that I didn't decide to be a historian – but instead I took a Maths degree. While libraries certainly provided my leisure reading, it was not until I began my correspondence course for an English degree in my late twenties that they again became indispensable. I was the sort of student who read every book on the reading list, and to buy them all would have been impossible in the impecunious early days of our marriage, when I had given up paid work to study while having three children. So I suppose I owe some part of the class of my degree to the book-funding policy concerning interlibrary loans at the Willesden General Library.

Since going to work at Roehampton University in 1967 my library needs have of course been fully satisfied by what were originally the four distinct libraries of the separate colleges and is now the University Library, not forgetting the highly expert and professional librarians such as Sue Mansfield (now the *IBBYLink* reviews editor) and Julie Mills. While not everyone has a university library at hand, my experience of public libraries as a child and as a distance-learning student is representative of their place in the lives of so many other people, and that in itself is the main reason for recounting it. And while I seldom now use a public library, I do profit from the service by being part of a book group, for which the Croydon libraries have available many sets of novels – though so far all the books we have discussed over about eighteen months have already been on my own bookshelves! But would I have had all the books which now are part of my own personal library if the local libraries had not given me the opportunity to devour so many books at such a formative age?

Children's Opinions about School Libraries

Pupils at Lewisham schools and Pam Dix

We are grateful to children, teachers and librarians in five Lewisham primary schools, and to Pam Dix who collected the responses which are collated here.

The Place

The children comment on their appreciation of the fact that the atmosphere of the school library is quiet and peaceful; it is a comfortable refuge: 'When it's cold you can come in'. The welcome received there is also important to them: 'I like my library because of the lovely ladies. If they weren't here I would be upset not seeing them'. The number and quality of the books are clearly important to the children, as well as their appearance. One child singles out joke books, but it would be difficult to beat the degree of emotion expressed by the child who says, 'I like the library so much that I will burst into tears'. A pragmatic note is struck by a teacher who observes that 'Prospective parents also look favourably on this resource when they look around the school'.

Library Sessions and Librarians

The children comment on their enjoyment of sessions in the library: 'It's really fun because you bring artefacts and pictures – you make it more exciting to be here'. The Teachers clearly value the opportunities the libraries give, not only to show the children that reading is fun and that favourite books can be shared, but also to research topics and draw on the 'vast knowledge bank' of the librarian. One comments, 'I want the children to learn that research is not the same as Google'. Other teachers also comment on the value of having a dedicated librarian, who organises space, and provides resources and guidance relevant to class topics. One notes that 'she [the librarian] has transformed the library into a stimulating learning environment'.

Reading

A teacher observes that the library and the librarian have 'contributed enormously to our whole school reading ethos. Children do not see reading as "work" but as something which they really do for pleasure. Children often choose to get out their library books to read in free time and playtimes'. But perhaps the final testimony should be that of the pupil who says, 'Reading is fun because it's like watching TV in your head'.

Testimony

This kind of testimony to the value of school libraries, from what is often seen as a 'deprived' London borough, provides convincing evidence of the essential nature of this resource.

(Re-)Discovering the Library

Pam Dix and Pat Pinsent

In June there was a lively discussion on Twitter, triggered by an article by James Brown, who was editor of *Loaded* magazine, entitled 'This place will lend you books for free'. He speaks of his addiction to buying books at stations, airports and car-boot sales, as well as online, and of the books he has received from friends, publishers and writers. All these appear to have led him to forget the advantages of joining a library. He remarks how libraries have changed since his childhood, and is pleasantly surprised by the lack of formality about joining, and the ease of renewal and of ordering books. He says: 'It just strikes me as something a nation can boast about – we lend people books for free', and he recommends that 'next time you're driving or walking past your local library may be break the habit and step inside'.

His readers comment on the difficult situation of libraries today and the need for people to use them in an age when books can be obtained cheaply in so many other ways. One

remarks: '[I] think it was Ray Bradbury who said "You don't have to burn books to destroy a culture. Just get people to stop reading them". Closing libraries will be one step in achieving this nihilistic aim'. He is alerted to www.voicesforthelibrary.org.uk for more information about public libraries and the need to support them. Several people extol the virtues of their own local library service, and point out how libraries will cooperate about delivering books to the nearest library to them, and also allow the downloading of Kindle ebooks and the like. A librarian asks: 'Where will you go when you are made redundant? Straight back to your local library for help with job finding information. Where will you go when you need study space for that course you plan to undertake to help get you back into employment? We're more than just books – we're a vital service and have been delivering both online and physically for the past 20 years!'. Another contributor quotes Carl Sagan: 'The library connects us with the insight and knowledge, painfully extracted from Nature, of the greatest minds that ever were, with the best teachers, drawn from the entire planet and from all our history, to instruct us without tiring, and to inspire us to make our own contribution to the collective knowledge of the human species. I think the health of our civilisation, the depth of our awareness about the underpinnings of our culture and our concern for the future can all be tested by how well we support our libraries'. Libraries are also described as 'the heart of the community', being centres for so many local activities. They could even be the future, given how little space for books many people have in their houses today – while if anyone has books in the attic that will never be read by anyone, they can be donated to the library.

A final thought is: 'Get a library card and you'll get a ticket to a whole new world'.

[Material for this article provided by Pam Dix and collated by Pat Pinsent.]

Litcham High School Library

Julie Lewins, School Librarian

Litcham High School is a small comprehensive school in rural Norfolk. Our school library is at the heart of the school and is a special part of school life. The library is well stocked and all items are catalogued on the computerised library system that can be accessed throughout school by all staff and students. Reading for enjoyment is a high priority of the library, alongside research and study.

The library has numerous reading groups, open to all readers. These reading groups shadow the Carnegie Medal every year, which the students really enjoy. They read the shortlisted books, contribute to the website, make posters to put up around the school and hold school assemblies to encourage voting. The students also visit local schools to discuss the books.

Each year the library reading groups participate in the Kids' Lit Quiz, an annual literature competition in which teams of four students, aged 10 to 13, work together to answer wide-ranging literary questions. The winning team from each region competes in the national final. The winner of the national final is then invited to the world final held annually in July or August. Last November our students won their regional final and were fortunate enough to travel to Oxford with lots of student supporters for the National Final, where they came third, just missing going to New Zealand for the world final – an amazing achievement for such a small school! Whilst there they were able to meet 30 authors, including Charlie Higson, Dianne Hofmeyr and Julia Golding. The school was buzzing with excitement afterwards.

Students appreciate the importance of picture books, and the library reading groups have therefore shadowed the Kate Greenaway Medal. Furthermore, this year, for the first time, they are reviewing the books shortlisted for the Royal Society Young People's Book Prize.

The school library has author visits, which are very important to all students. Our students are fortunate in that an author used to be a student at Litcham High School –

Jim Carrington. He has visited our school twice with his latest books and the students consider him ‘their school author’. His street cred has also been raised by the fact that he shares the same publisher as J.K. Rowling.

A popular activity run by the school library that everybody is encouraged to participate in is the Reading around the World activity. When staff and students break up for the school summer holiday, they are requested to send a postcard or photograph to the library showing where they went on holiday (even if they stayed in Norfolk) and which book they read. These are then displayed in the library and around the school for when they get back. It is an enjoyable exercise in increasing an awareness of books and their value to our lives.

Students and staff use the library throughout the day – before school starts, at break time, lunchtime, after school and for lessons. Years 7, 8 and 9 read, undertake research and take out books from the library as part of their English lessons. Year 10s do research in the library and Year 11s have revision skills taught to them there. Different subject teachers also use ‘book boxes’ from the library.

There are numerous resources to help everybody with their school day: books (often selected by the students), newspapers, magazines about books and other interests, computers, cameras, DVD recorder and photocopier/printer. It is evident that students prefer to carry out research using the internet. However, teachers guide them on how to use books for research as well as how to use the computer effectively for research. Therefore they appreciate the benefits of both methods. At present students are more likely to read a fiction book than an ebook, yet this may change in the future.

The school library is considered to be important to our students’ education and a significant part of school life.



Figure 2. Julie Lewins and the Lit Quiz team being presented with an award.

‘You’ve Changed my Life’: Teenagers, Reading and Libraries

Anne Harding

‘You’ve changed my life’, a teenager told a librarian. The cause of his claim? A summer holiday library reading campaign. This article explores the role of libraries in supporting the reading of young people, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds.

The context for this piece is to be found in a number of recent reports. *Broke, Not Broken: Tackling Youth Poverty and the Aspiration Gap*.¹ highlights the impact of poverty on young people's lives. Material poverty in young adulthood is strongly linked to poverty of expectations and life chances. The report also shows that one in three 16–24 year olds from poor backgrounds have rarely or never been read to by their parents; more than a quarter had few or no books in their homes. These things matter. National Literacy Trust research demonstrates a clear relationship between young people's access to books at home and their reading ability and attitudes to reading.² We know from analysis of PISA data that social mobility in England has a strong correlation with book ownership and reading enjoyment.³ The National Literacy Trust and the School Library Commission have proved clear links between public and school library use and reading attainment and positive attitudes to reading.^{4,5}

Libraries are helping daily to bridge the gap that exists between many teenagers and reading, making interventions that have a particularly profound effect on those teenagers who have been dealt a less than privileged hand: for example, looked-after teenagers, teenage mothers and teenage carers, teenagers with learning difficulties, excluded pupils, teenage refugees and asylum seekers, and young offenders. Libraries are reaching teenagers who in many cases have never before found any relevance in reading, let alone any enjoyment. Even relatively privileged teenagers experience barriers to reading. A new OFCOM report tells us that teenagers are less likely to read books if they own smartphones.⁶ Books often compete unsuccessfully with computers and computer games, television and young people's social lives. Schools can inadvertently themselves create barriers to reading. A teenage girl told a seminar I recently co-ran that she had so much school work that she had no time for reading, a view replicated in *2010 Kids and Family Reading Report: Turning the Page in the Digital Age*,⁷ an interesting American report. The barriers are much higher among those who are not committed readers.

That seminar I mentioned was entitled *Public Libraries and Social Justice*,⁸ and my session was on promoting reading to young people. We explored ways that libraries can impact on young people's reading and in turn their life chances. Four teenagers spoke eloquently about the catalysts for their reading, and the role that their local library service in the London Borough of Barnet had played. I especially liked both the name that Barnet's young people chose for their book groups: *Me Myshelf and I*, and the title *Mangas and Bash* that Barnet's Futureversity Mangatastic group gave to a collaborative comic book they published. This depicts a fantasy world of angels and vampires, illustrated in a manga style.⁹ Importantly, they also talked about their involvement in informing Barnet libraries' offer to young people, as members of a library advisory board, and as volunteers on reading promotions such as the Summer Reading Challenge.¹⁰ Good library services are excellent at engaging young people in decision processes, and that makes a huge difference to perceptions of both libraries and reading. Up and down the country, teenagers are helping libraries and librarians with resource selection, library design, library displays, reading promotions and more. Barnet Libraries' innovative range of activities for young people have produced significant increases in library membership, library use and library loans.

Freedom of choice is one of the most fundamental ways in which libraries support and encourage teenage reading. Teenagers hate being told what to read, although surveys show that they value help in choosing.^{11, 12} Nobody knows teenage books better than library staff. Providing appropriate reading materials, and making sure that young people can access them easily, is crucial. For libraries to appeal to teenagers they must reflect their reading interests and tastes. Teenagers' favourite reading is online and magazines.¹³ The best libraries are responding to this. Many consult with teenagers over which magazine titles to stock. Many libraries use the internet very creatively to promote reading. E-books are becoming an increasingly significant part of many libraries' collections. As one of the students at that recent seminar pointed out, there is a huge value to the anonymity that e-reading confers: for example, no one else needs to know that you are reading to discover your sexuality. E-reading is more accessible than the printed page to many teenagers with reading difficulties. They also need books with

a high interest level combined with a low reading age. Lots of teenagers like books they do not have to read cover to cover and lots like comic books, but there is also a big appetite for serious teenage fiction and non-fiction, and for adult reading. How important it is that library staff never make assumptions about teenagers' reading, and that they listen to what teenagers want. A librarian on a course I gave told everyone about a group of looked-after teenagers she was working with. When she asked what they wanted to read, her expectation was that they would request escapism. No, they requested books that would help them break out of the cycle of deprivation. A librarian told me about a project he was involved in with a local young offenders institution. He talked to the inmates about what they would like to read. Again the response was unexpected: love poetry. They wanted to send love poems to their girlfriends. (They did so, changing 'thou' to 'you'.) Both these examples also highlight the importance of library outreach in bringing the reading message to teenagers who have not yet discovered reading's value. The current cuts to library budgets threaten this valuable work, along with so much else that libraries are doing to change young people's attitudes to reading.¹⁴

For many teenagers, reading is too boring, too old-fashioned, too passive and too solitary. The best libraries and librarians are making reading interesting, fun, relevant, collaborative and active. They know the importance of peer recommendation for teenagers, and encourage the book lovers among them to spread the word about favourite books through blogs, Twitter, texts and, indeed, talk. They host great reading clubs for teenagers – groups that value all teenage reading, and do not disparage magazines and other reading materials that matter to them. I know of a library Discworld group, started and run by young people, that attracts teenagers who want earnest discussions about the intricacies of Pratchett's fantasy world, teenagers who want to explore his graphic novels together and teenagers who like painting miniature Discworld figures. Also I know of a number of thriving school and public library manga clubs.

Lots of libraries – school, college and public – promote teenage reading through creative activities: collaborative online book writing, drama, storyboarding and making computer animations of favourite books. Lots bring in storytellers, authors, poets and graphic novelists to run reading and writing workshops. I was delighted recently to hear crime writer Ann Cleeves talk about her workshops. She uses scene-of-crime tapes from a friend in the police force to mark out a mock murder site, whips up students' interest and then gets them writing their own crime stories. (Though some schools' approaches to creative writing appal her. One English teacher went from table to table criticising students' punctuation, and instructing them to write longer sentences. When Cleeves remonstrated, pointing out that crime writing needs to be pacy, so short sentences are absolutely appropriate, the teacher responded that students had to demonstrate the ability to write with linked clauses. Hardly the way to encourage either writing or reading!)

I attended a library Warhammer workshop not long ago and watched dozens of teenage boys, that demographic often perceived as the most resistant to reading, crowd into the library to create fantasy figures and to play elaborate war games.¹⁵ A huge amount of reading went on, as they consulted an array of sophisticated books and manuals.

Adversity and the recession need not spell the end of successful initiatives. Collaborative and creative activities do not have to be expensive. At the cheaper end of the spectrum, lots of libraries offer popular quizzes, competitions and games. Extreme ironing has become well known. I love it when school libraries run extreme reading challenges: students have pictures taken of themselves as they read in unlikely places – a great source of inspirational photos for the library. Teenagers need reading role models – what a great way to provide them!^{16, 17} And of course, crucially, library staff are themselves excellent role models and ambassadors for reading. They can indeed change teenagers' lives. I will end with the words of a teenage boy about the impact on him of an inspirational librarian I know:

I never used to pick up a book, only occasionally if I liked the cover, but I would hardly ever read it. Then the librarian gave me *Skellig* and I've not stopped reading

since. I'm seriously addicted now. If books were food, I would be seriously overweight.

Libraries: purveyors of an entirely benign form of obesity to teenagers!

[Anne Harding is an independent trainer who specialises in children's and young people's reading and in working effectively with children and young people in libraries and other cultural and heritage organisations. For more information see her website: www.anneharding.net.]

Notes

- 1 *Broke, not Broken: Tackling Youth Poverty and the Aspiration Gap*, Prince's Trust, 2011, www.princes-trust.org.uk/pdf/PovertyReport_170511.pdf.
- 2 Christina Clark and Jonathan Douglas, *Young People's Reading and Writing*, National Literacy Trust, 2011, www.literacytrust.org.uk/assets/0000/8266/Attitudes_towards_Reading_Writing_Final_2011.pdf.
- 3 J. Bradshaw, R. Ager, B. Burge and R. Wheeler, *PISA 2009: Achievement of 15 year olds*.
- 4 Christina Clark and Lucy Hawkins, *Public Libraries and Literacy*, National Literacy Trust, 2011, www.literacytrust.org.uk/assets/0000/7424/Public_libraries_literacy_2011.pdf.
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- 8 Public Libraries and Social Justice, a seminar for PhD and Masters students from the School of Information Science and Learning Technology at the University of Missouri, USA, held at the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals, 2 August 2011.
- 9 www.barnet.gov.uk/press_releases.htm?id=2339.
- 10 www.readingagency.org.uk/children/summer-reading-challenge.
- 11 Christina Clark and Caroline Phythian-Sence, *Interesting Choice: The (Relative) Importance of Choice and Interest in Reader Engagement*, National Literacy Trust, 2008, www.literacytrust.org.uk/assets/0000/0541/Interesting_choice_2008.pdf.
- 12 Sarah McNicol, *Teenagers' Reading and Censorship: Teenagers' Views on Censorship in Libraries*, UCE Birmingham Library Services, 2006, <http://www.ebase.bcu.ac.uk/docs/censorship-teenage-focus-groups-report.pdf>.
- 13 Christina Clark, Sarah Osborne and George Dugdale, *Reaching Out with Role Models: Role Models and Young People's Reading*, National Literacy Trust, 2009, http://www.literacytrust.org.uk/assets/0000/0403/Role_models_2009.pdf.
- 14 The All-Party Parliamentary Group for Education has recently voiced concern that lack of funding for school library books is having a detrimental effect impact on literacy levels. Report of the Inquiry into Overcoming the Barriers to Literacy, All-Party Parliamentary Group for Education, 2011, <http://www.educationappg.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2011/07/APPG-for-Education-Literacy-Inquiry-final-report.pdf>.
- 15 <http://www.gamesworkshop.com>.
- 16 Christina Clark, Sarah Osborne and George Dugdale, *Reaching Out with Role Models: Role Models and Young People's Reading*, see p.13.

17 For more ideas and information on how libraries support teenagers' reading see <http://yalibraryuk.org>, <http://teenlibrarian.co.uk> and www.readingagency.org.uk/young.

Changes in the Library Service

Clive Barnes

When I began my career as a librarian, I was part of a vision for a new age of public librarianship. I was one of a new breed of graduate professionals who would, it was assumed, raise the status of public libraries and of the profession itself. Nearly 40 years later, I realise that, contrary to those expectations, I have probably lived through the long and lingering death of my profession, at least within public libraries.

I have no statistics to hand, but, in the last two authorities I worked for, I have seen the number of professionals cut and cut again, particularly in the last ten years. And they were among the best authorities. There was a time in many local authorities when each large branch would have at least one professional librarian on its staff. I think it would be a rare authority now where that is still the case. This de-professionalisation (an ugly term for an ugly business) has now gone so far that if the campaign to stem library closures succeeds, as we hope it will, then most of the libraries that stay open will almost certainly not have the benefit of a professional librarian on site. And, if this is the case for all librarians, then it is certainly that for specialist children's librarians. When I worked for Hampshire before local government reorganisation, only 14 years ago, there were children's librarians in most large branches and six divisional children's librarians. Now, after two drastic staff restructures, there are none.

How and why has this happened? It isn't just the present severe budget constraints or the work of the coalition government. These are likely merely to complete a process that has been going on for years under all political parties. Perhaps it is the introduction of new technology or changes in society generally? Technology has had a tremendous impact on staff-intensive processes within library systems, such as cataloguing and, more recently, book issuing, with library counters being replaced by self-service terminals. In society at large, books have become more affordable, perhaps leading the library to assume less importance even for readers; at the same time, the rise of the internet and alternative reading formats, such as the Kindle, seem to cast the future of the book itself in doubt.

All of these developments have had an undeniable effect in both enabling and justifying the reduction of resources devoted to public libraries. Yet they don't seem to me to go to the heart of the matter. If the use of the public library is not so great as it was 30 years ago, it is still considerable, particularly among children and older people; however one reads, whether on a screen or the page, the ability to read is still important, and libraries have a role to play in that. New technology doesn't necessarily have to reduce staff. The earlier introduction of computer cataloguing freed staff to do more promotional work both within and outside library walls. For children's librarians, this meant story and rhyme times in libraries; working with schools, pre-schools and youth clubs; organising holiday activities; staging book festivals where children could meet authors and illustrators; producing lists to promote the best books; and much more.

Perhaps the lack of value placed on professional librarians reflects a failure to understand their role: to notice the work they do. When I came into the profession, the image of the librarian was a constant source of anxiety in the profession and so it has remained. For years, library conference have been full of injunctions to 'raise our profile' and the importance of 'advocacy'. But, despite the rise of our most eloquent advocates to positions of influence, the situation is actually worse than it was 30 years ago. The creation of the Reading Agency, with support from central government, and the support given to Bookstart (grudgingly reinstated in part by the coalition government), both of which work through public libraries, would seem to suggest that there is some political support for the idea that libraries have a role in supporting literacy

and literature, yet the irony is that these initiatives come at a time when libraries at a local level are least able to support them adequately. And this is in part because of the more general effect of central government policies towards local government.

What central government (under both main parties) has given with one hand, it has taken away with another. Libraries have been the major victims of the pressures on local government funds caused by the restriction of central government grants and the capping of council tax. Where, until the present cuts, education and social services were priorities for local politicians, libraries were not. So that, in many authorities, book fund and staffing were steadily reduced until we reach the point now that the only way to reduce costs is to close libraries (something that most politicians previously sought to avoid because of its unpopularity with voters) and introduce volunteers.

While central government has always been unwilling and is still unwilling to enforce the statutory obligation on local authorities to provide a 'comprehensive and efficient library service', it is true that the political consensus on library provision has completely changed during my career.

When I began as a librarian, not everything in the garden was rosy. Library provision, like local government provision in general, was patchy, but there was a general acceptance that libraries were a good thing and had a role to play in ensuring a sound democracy and economy as well as providing education and entertainment. Politicians could still be proud of a good library service, and some, from all parties, were willing to pay for it in staff and book funds. Few now are. It is interesting that, at the same time as the resources devoted to libraries have been reduced and the service has been de-professionalised, Early Years education, which was the sphere of the volunteer Playgroups Association at the beginning of my career, has been professionalised and attracted a large amount of funding. I am not suggesting that these developments are related. I am sure they are not. But this is an instance where, if there is a political will, there is a way.

What will be lost when all the children's librarians are gone? Story times, rhyme times and the Summer Reading Challenge will certainly continue, run by staff who will be paid less and yet, in most cases, will be as enthusiastic and competent. But the library service will be much more confined to library buildings than in the past. There will be no more time to go out in the community and link up with organisations working with children and parents. There will be no staff to run book festivals and bring in children who otherwise would never meet authors and illustrators, because their parents would not take them to Cheltenham or Oxford. There will still be books to borrow, but they will not have been looked at so closely by staff as in the past. In many cases they will have been selected by library suppliers, without staff seeing them before they arrive on the shelves. Overall, there may be less idea of what a library service will accomplish and little sense of moving forward, even when the present sense of deep demoralisation has gone.

What will this mean for society? Initially not a great deal perhaps. Any work with children and families implies a long-term investment and I believe that in the present high profile given to children's literacy and literature, we are reaping the benefit of the work of my own generation of children's librarians, and of those librarians who taught us, not so much the effect on the politicians or media, as on the children who at some time or another, directly or indirectly, came into contact with libraries or librarians in the past, and are now themselves parents, grandparents, teachers and Early Years workers. Perhaps in 30 years' time, when that generation has passed, someone will think that it might be a good idea once again to have a free service, accessible to all, staffed by a group of professionals who know and care about stories and children, and we shall be re-invented.

Manga Mania in Milton Keynes

Victoria Thornley (Library Assistant, Central Milton Keynes Library(CMK))

Manga (Japanese comics) and anime (Japanese animation) have been an interest of mine for many years, and after a manga themed event was organised at CMK library, it turned out it was an interest of many other people too. Therefore I was allowed to set up the MK Manga Club. The club has been meeting monthly on Friday evenings since June 2010. The average number of attendees is usually between 20 and 35 people. The age range varies – some of the younger ones are about 10 years old and some parents like to stay for the duration of the meetings (I don't like to ask their ages!), but the majority of the attendees are between 12 and 25 years old.

The first event that I organised was based around Free Comic Book Day; this is an international event on the first Saturday of May where comic bookshops give away free comics to try to interest more people in comics. Close Encounters, who have comic bookshops in Northampton and Bedford, came along to give away and sell comics, while I provided refreshments and organised a quiz based on popular manga and anime titles as well as hosting a cosplay (costume) competition. The regular club meetings are similar to this first event, but simpler. There are no refreshments and Close Encounters is no longer involved. I do, however, contact UK-based manga and anime distributors, such as Viz Media or MVM, to see if they are willing to send me any promotional items that I can use either as prizes for the quizzes that I run, or as freebies for the attendees. It is worth contacting these companies as I have already received bookmarks, posters and DVDs. The quizzes I make are usually a list of pictures from the internet, either of characters to be identified from manga, or of anime titles available at CMK library. The person who correctly identifies the most pictures gets a prize. The prizes I use are what I have been sent from the UK distributors. However Red Hot Buffet, a local restaurant, has also been involved and has provided vouchers for meals at the restaurant to be used as prizes.

I held a cosplay competition at the last October meeting to make it more like a Halloween party. I had contacted the local branch of Yo! Sushi, as sushi is a Japanese food, to see if they had any promotional materials I could use. Yo! Sushi kindly sent a staff member to the party with a plate of free sushi and to act as judge for the cosplay competition. Cosplay is a popular activity for manga and anime fans and as the club members provide their own costumes a competition is simple to organise. People are invited to attend in costume and there is either a judge to decide on the best costume, or a 'show of hands' from the members, to decide. The winner (or winners) can then collect their prize or certificate (depending on the budget!) to a round of applause.

Another very popular activity is drawing in manga style. I provide pens and paper at every meeting and put out books about drawing manga and comics. The drawing materials are always used and people like to chat about what they are drawing and to have it put on display. Every year in the autumn the Embassy of Japan holds the Manga Jiman competition with prizes that include a trip to Japan. The entry forms and rules can be printed off the website and given out to the aspiring manga artists at the meetings. Local artists have previously volunteered to come in to give workshops on drawing in manga style: Buckinghamshire illustrator Emily Brady of *Footloose Comics* has become our artist in residence at meetings. Most recently, Byron Shepherd, a local Martial Artist of Shinkendo (Japanese swordsmanship) volunteered to come in to give a talk and demonstration. It was well received and the question and answer session after the demonstration aroused a great deal of interest.

On the first year anniversary of the MK Manga Club there was a mascot competition. The club members each designed a new mascot for the club to be used on publicity, and the members voted for their favourite. The winner, Mai the Shinigami, is now promoting the MK Manga Club on all publicity materials.

There is no charge to attend the meetings. The paper provided is plain white A4 and the pens are marker pens that I was sent by Letraset when I enquired if they would be able

to send me any promotional materials for the club. Talks and activities have been kindly provided by volunteers interested in manga and anime. At the May club meeting, Vagabond Cinema came along and showed an anime film. For that meeting there was a charge of £5/£3 (concessions) because of the costs to Vagabond Cinema.

I advertise club meetings by creating A4 posters in Microsoft Word using a picture of the club mascot, basic information about the club and the when and where of the next meeting. The posters are then distributed to all the libraries in the Milton Keynes area, and I take one in to the local branch of Waterstones that stocks manga. The library Facebook and Twitter pages are also good places to keep people up to date about the next club meeting. The club meetings are held in the Children's Library of CMK library as there are plenty of tables and chairs at which people can sit and draw. I distribute paper, pens and quiz sheets amongst the tables and make sure that there are manga books and anime DVDs from library stock on show. It is a good idea to put newspaper or plastic sheets down on the tables as the marker pens can bleed through the paper onto them. When people start arriving they usually like to sit, draw and chat among themselves. The meetings starts at 6 p.m. and last until 7.45 p.m. as CMK library closes at 8 p.m. Halfway through the meeting I gather up and mark the quiz sheets. I call out the name of the winner and they collect their prize and get a round of applause. Mostly people simply enjoy chatting with each other about their shared manga and anime interests and drawing.

One year on and I still enjoy organising and running the club, as the people who attend are good natured; they are always excited to be there and show their latest drawing or tell me about the new manga series the library should have in stock. Though I would warn you that sometimes it is hard to get the club meetings to finish on time when people are enjoying themselves!

See the photograph on the cover of this issue.

Websites

Official MK Manga Club webpage: www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/library_services/DisplayArticle.asp?ID=67963.

MK Manga Club Facebook Group: <http://facebook.com/groups/mkmangaclub/>. [You will only be able to see this page if you are signed up to Facebook.]

CMK Library Facebook photo albums (includes photos from MK Manga Club meetings and Halloween Party): <http://www.facebook.com/media/albums/?id=337721190772>.

Laureate Poem

Report by John Dunne

Those who were not at the Children's Laureate ceremony on 7 June, 2011, (and also those who were!) may like to read the poem that Julia Donaldson wrote to celebrate being awarded the honour.

What's this we hear? Has there been some mistake?
The role first assumed by the august Quentin Blake,
The torch that was borne by the second-in-line,
The refreshingly bold and outspoken Anne Fine,
Then passed to the Libra-born Michael Morpurgo
Is going to be held by a Scotland-based Virgo?
Does she really assume that she's equal to tackling
The issues addressed by the illustrious Dame Jacqueline?
She says that she's planning to put lots of shows on,
But how could she rival the great Michael Rosen?
And how can they possibly hand her the crown

When she can't play the Shape Game like Anthony Browne?
Yes it's all very strange. It's extremely peculiar
The new Children's Laureate's this woman called Julia.

See the Laureate website for details of Laureate events and activities:
www.childrenslaureate.org.uk. Other interesting material, including a poem about
reading, 'I Opened a Book', is to be found on Julia Donaldson's own website,
www.juliadonaldson.co.uk, along with many other poems, and is reproduced below.

I opened a book and in I strode.
Now nobody can find me.
I've left my chair, my house, my road,
My town and my world behind me.
I'm wearing the cloak, I've slipped on the ring,
I've swallowed the magic potion.
I've fought with a dragon, dined with a king
And dived in a bottomless ocean.
I opened a book and made some friends.
I shared their tears and laughter
And followed their road with its bumps and bends
To the happily ever after.
I finished my book and out I came.
The cloak can no longer hide me.
My chair and my house are just the same,
But I have a book inside me.

(from *Crazy Mayonnaisy Mum*, Macmillan Children's Books, 2005)

Both poems are copyright © 2011 Julia Donaldson.

REVIEWS

Books about Children's Literature

History and the Construction of the Child in Early British Children's Literature

Jackie C. Horne, Farnham: Ashgate, 978 1 4094 0788 1, £55.00, 2011, 283pp.

Jackie Horne's laudable exploration of character construction in eighteenth and early nineteenth-century literature for children is a recent addition to Ashgate's excellent Studies in Childhood, 1700 to the Present series, and serves not only to re-evaluate the development of texts for young readers, but also to recover and analyse a breadth of clearly significant, yet sometimes under-examined, works for children.

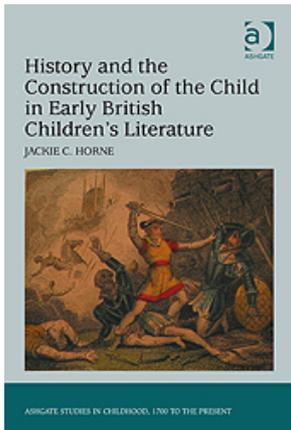
The foundations of Horne's discussion are rooted in the general concept that the figure of the moral exemplar, central to much early children's literature, was superseded by the 'emotionally evocative characterization' (p.22) evident in the nineteenth century. But Horne's work moves well beyond a mere tracking of literary developments to delve into the space between periods and, as a consequence, finds that 'instead of placing exemplarity and realism in binary opposition ... a more fruitful avenue may be to consider the contiguities between these apparently dissimilar types of juvenile character construction' (p.24). As Horne stresses, it is not that later writers dismiss the notion of exemplarity, but that constructions of both 'ideal' (perfectly good or bad) and 'ordinary' (psychologically nuanced, sympathetically flawed) children create a bond between reader and protagonist that fosters a desire for emulation (p.24). Thus didactic purpose is ever evident, albeit presented in different forms.

Horne's focus for this exploration is the adventure story, largely those published during the early part of the nineteenth century, and the way in which authors of such tales experimented with characterisation through what might have been perceived as a 'lesser' genre (at least in comparison to the domestic moral tale). It was within this space, away from domesticity, says Horne, that writers could safely posit new types of character; as she points out, it is in the 'unrealistic' genres of the robinsonade, fictionalised history and historical romance that the emergence of 'realistic' characters can be easily seen.

In the first of her four chapters, she explores the family robinsonade via close examination of Wyss's *Der schweizersche Robinson*, published in 1814 in English as *The Family Robinson Crusoe*, Malles de Beaulieu's *Le robinson de douze ans* (1825), and then focuses on Hofland's *The Young Crusoe* (1828) and Tytler's *Leila, or The Island* (1839), British narratives that are to some degree in dialogue with the earlier publications. Subsequent chapters offer highly perceptive re-readings of Marryat's *Masterman Ready* (1841–1842) and Taylor's *The Young Islanders* (1841) as 'deadly island robinsonades' (p.26) in which fusions of both the Romantic and the sinful child can be identified, while Chapter 3 is an exploration of fictionalised history for children and problems of identification in works by Taylor, Strickland and Martineau. Finally, Horne's study considers gender and, in particular, the notion of 'gender anachronism' as described by Miriam Burnstein, before moving on to a considered, thought-provoking Epilogue that invites speculation on the way in which future generations may be encouraged to identify with characters. As Horne asks, 'Will readers even need to identify with characters when they will soon be able to adopt an avatar and *become* a protagonist in a narrative?' (p.245).

Horne's publication is an accessible, yet highly scholarly, study that offers new perspectives on characterisation in children's literature and does so through rigorous examination of material that clearly invites intensive interrogation. And while her discussion is, in itself, fascinating and informative, it is likely to be Horne's choice of materials and depth of analysis that will be most enthusiastically noted. Horne, as she concludes in her Introduction, urges readers 'to move closer to these texts of the past'. By looking with sympathetic eyes, she asserts, it is possible to witness a genre in the process of becoming (p.28).

Elizabeth Thiel



Telling Children's Stories: Narrative Theory and Children's Literature

Mike Cadden (ed), Lincoln, NE, and London: University of Nebraska Press, pb. 978 0 8032 1568 9, £23.99, 2011, 316pp.

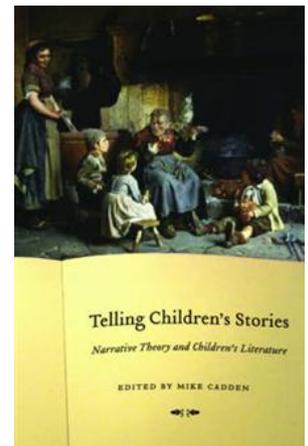
The picture on the cover of this book, which is published in the Frontiers of Narrative series, caught my eye first, and then the resonantly apt title. The imagery of the cover places the onlooker in the position of being the reader looking over the top of the book, complete with its title, and viewing a domestic scene from the past where an old woman, spindle under her arm, tells a story to a rapt young audience.

In his readable and comprehensive introduction to this collection of essays on narrative theory and children's literature, Mike Cadden makes a distinction between two areas for discussion. First he asks what role the peritext plays and what its relationship to the implied reader is (these issues are also discussed in several of the essays). The peritext includes the book cover, introduction and other factual publishing information. Cadden gives two examples of introductions by children's writers. A quote by A.A. Milne suggests that this is how books should begin, but trails off indecisively with 'er-h'r'm'. Laura Schiltz (a Newbery prize winner) states 'This is ... the part where the author tells why the book exists and why the reader might want to read it. And you can skip it if you are in a hurry.' I know children who do this and also those who do not. Who the peritext is for is a complex question that is further complicated when authors choose to be playful or ironic. Cadden's intent is to highlight the revealing part played by the intersection of narrative approaches and children's stories.

Secondly, his introduction focuses on 'the development of the study of children's literature as an academic field, the development of its literary theory, and the relatively recent embrace of narratology'. The evolution of these areas has also been complex. Different disciplines in different academic departments have established their own programmes of study with their particular focus of purpose. Over time these differences have raised questions such as whether the function of study is to teach literature to children or how to become critical adult readers of children's literature. Other issues relate to the status of children's literature studies within different academic departments, and also that of identity voiced in the question 'What is Children's Literature?'. Critics, such as Jacqueline Rose and Jack Zipes, suggest it does not exist because its audience includes adults. Cadden indicates that while consensus is not yet achieved, these questions and controversies encourage a refinement of the debate. This is furthered in the essays in this volume in the range of the contributors, and the depth and breadth of their studies.

The essays are divided into four interrelated sections: 'Genre Templates and Transformations', 'Approaches to the Picture Book', 'Narrators and Implied Readers' and 'Narrative Time'. Each section is preceded by a succinct summary highlighting themes and forms that will be further amplified. This is a helpful structure to the reader. Questions of metafiction, narrative ethics, focalisation and plotting are examined; and the focus is wide, covering picture books, novels, detective fiction, historical tales, time-shift stories, fairy stories adapted to contemporary times, classic stories, and traditional and modern narratives. Many of the essays are extremely enjoyable, not only in the vigorous way they examine texts but also in the way they bring them to life. I wanted to read those that I didn't already know.

It is difficult to do justice to the individual essays, all of which are stimulating, though some are more difficult to grasp than others. For me Maria Nikolajeva's essay 'The Identification Fallacy: Perspective and Subjectivity in Children's Literature' in the 'Narrators and Implied Readers' section was the most challenging, but it opened a new area of thought for my approach to future texts. I also want to question the way in which Magdalena Sikorska emphasises the dark side of the world of childhood in John Burningham's *Time to Get Out of the Bath, Shirley* and her rather sombre conclusion that it is implicitly an adult book. Her analysis is interesting, but I think that the tension that is depicted by John Burningham, on opposing pages, (the adult's outer world and the inner world of the child) is wryly humorous and ironic rather than hostile. The playful mischief of Shirley's fantasies suggest a spirit of resilience in the face of adult



disapproval rather than a retreat into escapism. Children and adults may well be confronted with a different experience in their reading and ‘beholding’ of this book and recognise the ambiguity that it subtly records – the separating out of adult time and child time at the end of the day. (In *John Patrick Norman McHennessy: The Boy who was always Late*, Burningham explores this theme of adult authority wielded over a child as a more extreme confrontation between the two individuals, and shows the inner world response as the child’s potential for empowerment).

Cadden wrote that ‘this volume is intended to be of use to a variety of audiences’. I would endorse this. The volume contains a wealth of references and suggested further reading. It will enrich and extend the study of children’s literature for those in the academic field, the educational field, and those whose interest lies in keeping in touch with writing for children of whatever age because its literary and innovative contributions are invaluable to an ever-changing world.

Judith Philo

Children’s Books

The Salt-Stained Book

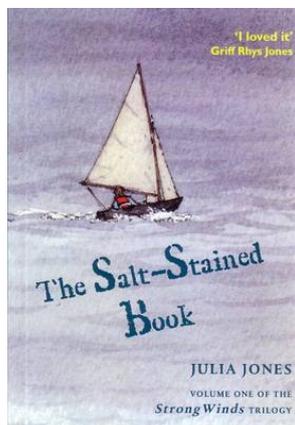
Julia Jones, illus. Claudia Myatt, Chelmsford: Golden Duck, pb. 978 1 8992 6204 5, £7.99, 2011, 272pp.

IBBY UK members may recall a recently emailed invitation to the launch of *The Salt-Stained Book*, which took place at St Katherine’s Dock in London in June. Unfortunately, I was unable to attend, but I’m sure it would have been a fascinating event, for a variety of reasons.

In writing this, the first volume of a nautically based trilogy *Strong Winds*, Julia Jones has the distinct advantage of owning the yacht *Peter Duck*, one of a number of yachts owned at one time or another by Arthur Ransome. The Ransome books connection extends beyond this, as her parents knew Ransome and bought the yacht after his death, then allowing their small daughter to read many of the *Swallows and Amazons* stories in the quarter-berth on board, which Ransome had originally used to store his typewriter. However, Jones points out that you don’t have to have read any of Ransome’s books before reading *The Salt-Stained Book*, any more than a knowledge of *Treasure Island* is essential to an understanding of *Swallows and Amazons* or *Peter Duck* (the book, not the boat). Nevertheless, if you are familiar with Ransome’s series it adds an additional piquancy to Jones’ novel, as it does if you acquaint yourself with Longfellow’s long narrative poem *Hiawatha*.

Jones begins with a chapter set in 1945, in which two brothers serving on board a British naval vessel die in the icy Barents Sea, one by accident, the other in an effort to save his brother. All that survives them is a slim blue book, *Sailing*, which, both for Jones and for her plot, holds great significance. As the novel proceeds we meet that salt-stained book again, and it is obvious that its significance will emerge later in the trilogy.

The story of 13-year-old Donny begins with the death of his grandmother, and the letter sent to her sister to notify her. Donny and his mother Skye, who is profoundly deaf and severely dyslexic, and therefore viewed by other adults as dysfunctional, set off to the Orwell Estuary on the Essex coast to meet his great aunt, who is travelling back from Shanghai with her boat *Strong Winds*. They are armed with a copy of *Swallows and Amazons*, which Skye indicates is important to their journey, both physical and psychological. Disaster strikes when their untaxed camper van breaks down. Social Services have Skye sectioned, and Donny is sent to a foster home with the unsympathetic female vicar of the appropriately named village of Erewhon Parva, and prevented from visiting his mother. Disorientated and deeply unhappy both in the foster home and at school, where he is bullied, Donny is determined that he will find his great aunt, and rescue his mother. He is befriended by a pair of African American girls, whose family passion is sailing, and he discovers that he is naturally gifted at sailing. Together



they act as a formidable opposition to what sometimes seem like overpoweringly malevolent adult intervention.

Overall Jones writes with skill, foregrounding the sea, boats and the magic of sailing, but always showing insight into the mind of this unhappy boy who finds escape from his distress in sailing. She also manages to produce a fast-paced thriller peppered with unpleasant adults, particularly officious social workers and suspicious policemen. As a result, *The Salt-Stained Book* is a multi-layered novel that sweeps readers along in an exciting adventure, but which addresses many far deeper issues. Donny's relationship with his mother has been as child and carer, their communication often in a secret world of their own, based on themes and characters from *Hiawatha*. As we read further it is clear that identity is a key to the plot, and to each of the characters. Nothing is quite as we expect, and by the end of the book we learn the connection between the brothers who drowned and the indomitable great aunt, his grandmother and his mother, whose relationships are all more complex than we might have imagined.

A map of the Orwell estuary, diagrams of the parts of a dinghy and of the British Fingerspelling Alphabet (which Donny uses, together with drawings, to communicate with his mother), notes on the setting and background, and evocative line drawings by a nautical artist, Claudia Myatt, add depth and atmosphere. The second volume, *A Ravelled Flag*, is due at the end of the year.

Bridget Carrington

Ramadan Moon

Na'ima B. Robert, illus. Shirin Adl, London: Frances Lincoln Children's Books, pb. 878 1 8478 0206 4, £6.99, 2009, 32pp.

Ramadan, the month of fasting,
Doesn't begin all at once.
It begins with a whisper
And a prayer
And a wish.

Muslims all over the world celebrate Ramadan and then the joyful days of Eid-ul-Fitr at the end of the month of fasting as the most special time of the year. This picture book views this annual event from the perspective of a young girl. Her age is not given so I can only guess from the illustrations that she is eight or ten (see the cover). The story follows the waxing of the moon from the first new crescent to full moon and waning until Eid is heralded by the first sighting of the second new moon. The book is written and illustrated by Muslims. The author of the text was born in Leeds, grew up in Zimbabwe and converted to Islam on her marriage to a Ghanaian convert. The illustrator was born in Harlow and grew up in Iran.

The first double spread shows the family on the left page (father, mother holding the baby, son and daughter, the children in age order). They are looking up into the sky: 'As the month of Ramadan approaches/ We search the sky for a sign.' The background of the spread is yellow and looks crinkled like a sort of wallpaper. The faces throughout the book are drawn minimally, slightly reminiscent of the Charlie and Lola books of Lauren Child. Traditional dress is depicted. The story is told in verse and all the illustrations are very attractive and show Iranian scenes and traditions.

The story is told by the young girl with happiness and joy. For example:

During the day we keep busy
With all sorts of good deed:
Our voices flow with the words of God
In unplanned harmonies. ...
Be kind and caring and polite,
Try hard not to get angry.



I feel that the story is very idealised. There are no scenes that are not happy and harmonious. For a child to fast all day – in 2009 Ramadan ran from 21 August to 19 September and even in Iran the daylight would be at least 12 hours – is not ideal. Most children in the UK do not fast completely and, as we all know, children get very bad tempered and irritable when hungry. I consider Randa Abdel-Fattah's *Does my Head Look Big in This* a more realistic book where a teenager describes her hunger pains and feeling light-headed at school, longing for the evening meal and then eats far too much. Her parents protested at her wish to 'fast like the grown-ups' when she was in Grade Four. When in Grade Six she went to a birthday party – 'It took half an hour and I caved. I wiped out the Mars bars, ...'.

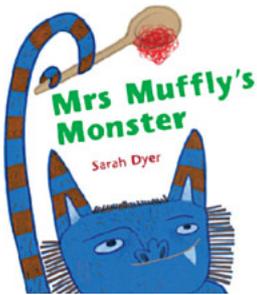
I should like to also describe my own experiences with my Iranian students when I was a lecturer. One particular year, Ramadan fell in summer and over exam time. It was a choice between losing sleep and getting up at 4 am to eat or getting a good night's sleep. They also had to wait until after 11 pm to eat before going to bed. Most of them chose a good night's sleep. We held a farewell party that fell on the first day of Eid but they could eat very little after such a long fast.

So although this is a lovely book from the point of view of the illustrations, the verse text and the depictions of Iran, should it not have described the difficulties involved in fasting and in eating after fasting and at inconvenient times? I leave you to judge.

Jennifer Harding

Mrs Muffly's Monster

Sarah Dyer, London: Frances Lincoln Children's Books, pb. 879 1 8478 0040 4, £6.99, [2008 hb.] 2011, 36pp.



On first picking up the book, I looked at the cover and assumed that Mrs Muffly is the cat depicted and that in her tail she is holding a wooden spoon with some mixture about to fall off it.

The first double spread shows Mrs Muffly's house that has a large M on the front door, a purple roof and khaki walls, and a small turret. Somehow the purple roof doesn't seem odd. The drive leading to it with trees either side snakes across the spread to the right, disappearing into the bottom right corner. Many of the objects such as the trees are stylised, with the outlines using straight-line segments. The colours are attractive and although the roof is purple and some of the tree trunks are red, the colours are not garish but seem muted. Next to a cloud on the right-hand page is the text:

Mrs Muffly lives in a house on top of a hill.
she has always been a bit strange, but lately
she has been acting very, very strangely indeed.
We think that's because she is keeping
a HUGE monster in her house.

But the font! Help! It has wobbly outlines and I assume is hand written as the letters are not the same – some slant more than others and some are darker. A parent or grandparent will go cross-eyed and learner readers will find it hard going. This is a real shame as the illustrations and text are ideal for a learner reader.

The next spread depicts Monday and shows Mrs Muffly on her motorcycle, striped scarf flying behind her as she speeds home with 'a great big pile of sugar'. Overleaf a scary monster is shown in a cage: 'We think that's because she needs lot of sugar to sweeten him up ...', with the right-hand page showing a sweet monster smelling a flower, 'and make him much less scary'. The story proceeds with her daily trips to buy enormous quantities of eggs, butter, etc., with a spread for each shopping trip followed by a spread 'We think that's because the monster ...'. I can't tell you the ending as that would spoil it for you.

Jennifer Harding

School for Princes: Stories from the Panchatantra

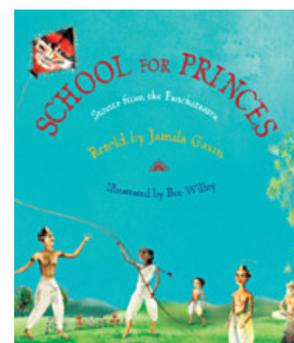
Retold by Jamila Gavin, illus. Bee Willey, London: Frances Lincoln, hb. 978 1 8450 7990 1, £14.99, 2011, 64pp.

Jamila Gavin's introduction to her book contextualises the Panchatantra as a collection of ancient traditional tales, generally attributed to Visnu Sarma, a teacher from India. There is a distinctive thematic structure to the tales – winning friends, losing friends, loss of gains, rash deeds and the art of duplicity.

Gavin uses these themes to create an overarching narrative to the book, centred around the burgeoning adulthood of three brother princes under the tutelage of Sarma himself. Within her narrative frame, the five themes of the Panchatantra are woven into the boys' lives, allowing both the characters and the reader to reflect on its messages and their significance in their personal development. Certainly, the themes are universal and continue to be relevant for modern twenty-first century readers.

This is quite a challenging read, due to the complex nature of some of the original stories. However, Gavin's masterly skill as a storyteller ensures that the material is accessible, largely by her use of the princes' journey through adolescence as a main narrative thread. Bee Willey's illustrations and the overall design and layout of the book contribute greatly to the atmosphere of these powerful stories, making this a beautiful book for older Key Stage 2 readers.

Sarah Stokes



Best-Loved Irish Legends

Eithne Massey, illus. Lisa Jackson, Dublin: O'Brien Press, hb, 978 1 8471 7237 2, £3.99, 2011, 63pp.

This book collects seven Irish legends. I have selected and describe below the three stories I found most appealing.

The famous warrior Cú Chulainn earned his name because he came for training as a boy to the court of King Conor. The king had a guard dog named Cú, so fierce that it had to be locked up when anyone was about. It was accidentally left untethered when the young boy arrived. When the dog attacked, the boy slammed a hurling ball down its throat and killed it. His name means 'the slayer of Cú'.

A boy named Donal becomes barber to his king. The job has a disadvantage. The king has donkey's ears and regularly has his barbers executed lest his secret become known. Donal cuts the king's hair and manages to stay alive, promising to keep the secret. Unable to restrain himself, he tells the secret to a willow tree. A musician makes a harp from the tree's wood and the harp sings the truth. Once the king's secret is public knowledge, he stops worrying about it. Donkey's ears? There are worse fates. The story is clearly related to Ovid's account of King Midas, who also had ass's ears. It may also resonate with attitudes towards disability, in some societies regarded as a shameful secret.

In the 'Salmon of Knowledge', a boy catches a huge fish. The aged wise man with whom he lives tell him this is the fish of all knowledge, and that he must prepare it for the old man to eat without himself eating any of it. In the preparation he accidentally burns his thumb on the fish. When he sucks his thumb all the knowledge in the world rushes into his brain and he can answer any question. Of course, thumb sucking is infantile behaviour. This story shows that an innocent child may have wisdom beyond the ancient sage.

The four other stories are 'The Children of Lir', 'Fionn and the Giant', 'The White Wolfhound' and 'The Story of Oisín'. Books of national legends, wherever they originate, need to find a language that is accessible to readers from all backgrounds yet at the same time true to the country of origin – by no means an easy balance to strike. The illustrations must also complement the text. Massey and Jackson meet both these criteria with outstanding success. This is a delightful book with vivid and memorable

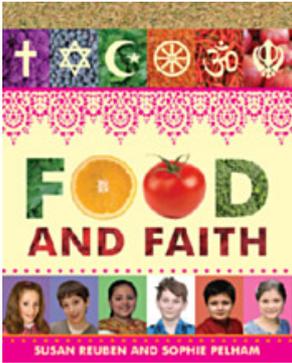


illustrations. For readers from different backgrounds it also most usefully includes pronunciation guides for Irish names. The result is a book young readers can enjoy by themselves, without much adult mediation. A graphic novel by this creative team would really be something to look forward to.

Rebecca R. Butler

Food and Faith

Susan Reuben and Sophie Pelham, London: Frances Lincoln, hb. 978 1 8450 7984 4, £12.99, 2011, 48pp.



In *Food and Faith*, six children aged between ten and eleven years give the reader a lively photographic account of the food they eat. They come from six different faith communities: Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist, Hindu and Sikh. The children introduce themselves in turn, providing a brief sketch of their interests and habits. One by one they tell their own stories, with the aid of a colourful photographic format, and easily read and understood accounts of the family's rituals and celebrations. Sometimes there is feasting and now and again fasting, depending on the calendar. What stands out in all accounts is that food is central to many faith activities. There are even rules about what may or may not be eaten according to custom on a daily basis. We read about Kosher food and Halal rules. We learn why Hindu families are vegetarian, how in the Sikh tradition food plays a part in every religious ceremony, and why Buddhist monks and nuns may not buy, grow or cook their own food, depending instead on the kindness and generosity of the laity for their daily meal.

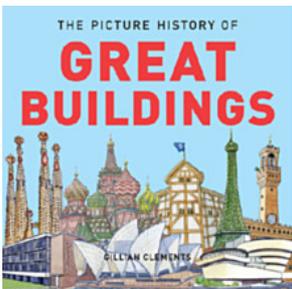
We also discover those foods that have a symbolic significance, such as oranges decorated with a lighted candle at the Christingle service, mince pies at Christmas, hot-cross buns at Easter and pancakes at the beginning of Lent. Recipes are provided both along the way and in a final supplement. The references to the Jewish custom of remembering significant events in their long history are explained, such as the Passover when they escaped from slavery in Egypt. Buddhists celebrate the birth, death and enlightenment of the Buddha and recall the important guidelines he gave as to how we should live our lives together. Hindus likewise celebrate events in the mythology of their gods and goddesses, such as Diwali, a festival of lights that marks the return home of Prince Rama and his wife Sita. Sikhs recall the birthday of the tenth Guru, Gobind Singh, who showed his followers how best to live good lives.

In this sound and enlightened book, which also includes a useful glossary of terms used, faith is sited firmly at the heart of the family and community where it truly belongs. Its celebrations are rooted in each tradition's common purposes and values, in justice, equality, love and compassion for others.

Joyce Holliday

A Picture History of Great Buildings

Gillian Clements, London: Frances Lincoln, pb. 978 1 84780 036 7, £8.99, 2011 (hb. 2007), 64pp.



This is an information-packed guide to architecture, for readers aged 9+. Gillian Clements studied illustration under Raymond Briggs. Her fascination with world history includes a passion for architecture, which makes this a masterful work suitable for a school reference library or indeed any individual who is interested in great and famous buildings and constructions the world over.

Clements starts her account far back in prehistory, where simple shelters against the weather were built of wood, stone, mud, reeds and animal skins. She moves the reader along a time line from the first cities, c. 5000 BCE to the postmodern structures of the mid-twentieth century. Beyond these, she pays attention to the contemporary research into ecologically sound dwellings and also ways in which we might plan our cities of the future with more care for the environment and the needs of the urban dweller.

The joy of this picture history is in its detailed and finely drafted illustrations and accompanying notes with additional sketches in the margin areas. The reader can enjoy learning about famous architects and the historical period in which their creativity flourished, such as the Romanesque, Gothic, and Renaissance periods in Europe. Great cathedrals, basilicas and temples alternate with famous civic buildings, fine bridges and viaducts. Some of the wonders of Victorian engineering in the glass and steel structures, which were the forerunners of our modern high-rise skyscraper are shown, along with more modern buildings such as Burj Dubai, the Freedom Tower designed to replace the World Trade Centre in New York, Tapei 101 and the Shanghai World Financial Centre. There is no mention, however, of those recent changes to the London's city skyline with which we are all now familiar, such as the Gherkin. Overseas gems include St Basil's cathedral in Moscow, Amiens cathedral, and even the Aztec pyramid-style temples in Central America, the great mosque in Cordoba, Spain, begun in 785 CE, Hagai Sophia in Istanbul, and the Roman Coliseum commissioned by Emperor Vespasian in 70 CE.

The excellent glossary and index make this both a riveting read and a superb reference book, a mine of information for both young and old and an encouragement to pursue the subject in the future.

Joyce Holliday

The Filth Licker (Takeshita Demons series)

Cristy Burne, illus. Siku, London: Frances Lincoln. pb. 978 1 8478 0136 4, £5.99, 2011, 208pp.

This book is the second in the Takeshita Demons series (see *IBBYLink* 29 for a review of the first), but it can be appreciated without a knowledge of the first volume. A first person narrative from a Japanese girl, Miku, at an English school, it is set on a school camp peopled not only by the school children but also by a large range of mostly malevolent demons from Japanese folklore. As a result of their behaviour, Miku's schoolmates, Cait, Oscar and Alex, all experience some alarming adventures, though the eponymous Filth Licker turns out to be relatively endearing, and, given its propensity to 'lick grimy bathrooms until they sparkle', could be a positive asset to many households! The narrative is lively with some suspense.

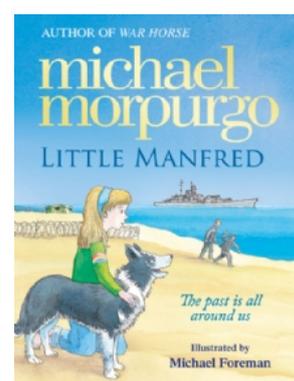
Pat Pinsent

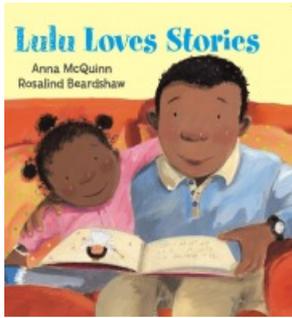
Little Manfred

Michael Morpurgo, illus. Michael Foreman, London: HarperCollins, hb. 978 0 0073 3966 2, £12.99, 2011, 173pp.

A broken toy dog and a chance encounter on a beach leads to the unfolding of a story about a returning prisoner of war who left a keepsake for a little girl on the farm where he worked. The little girl is now the mother of two children and the toy dog is still a treasured possession of the household. Her children are playing on a nearby beach when they come across two men talking about events that took place there in the Second World War. The children realise that there is a connection between one of the men and the toy. Set in 1966 with flashbacks to the war, this story explores friendships across time and countries, and the way in which the human spirit can survive the most difficult circumstances. A well-crafted story, with illustrations by Michael Foreman (who portrays war and peace with exactitude), make this a book that will be enjoyed by a wide range of children.

John Dunne





Lulu Loves Stories

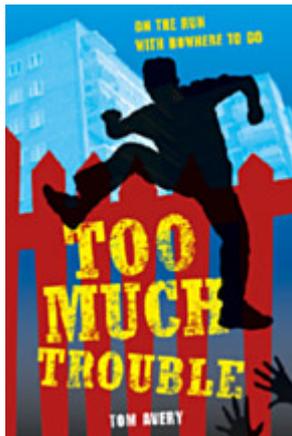
Anna McQuinn, illus. Rosalind Beardshaw, London: Alanna, pb. 978 1 9078 2501 9, £7.99, 2011, 32pp.

Anyone familiar with this team's *Lulu Loves Libraries* will know what to expect from this picture book for the under 5s. Anna McQuinn, a Sure Start community librarian, draws on her experience of working with culturally diverse families in London and her own love of stories and books in a simple text that highlights the relationship between stories and a child's imaginative play. As in their first book, Rosalind Beardshaw's warm illustrations take a close child's eye view of the way books can draw a child and carer or parent together. As with the paperback edition of *Lulu Loves Libraries*, an accompanying CD contains the story retold in 20 different languages, and there are hints on using it in different situations. For librarians and Early Years staff working with families from a variety of backgrounds, this will be a welcome innovation. For many years librarians have been aware that the provision of dual-language picture books has been a poor response to the needs of many families, since, as McQuinn's notes point out, 'at this young age, children can't read – so dual-language books are not such an effective way of validating their home language. In addition, some parents speak but do not read their first language. So listening to the story and looking at the pictures is much more fun'. A simple idea that should make a lot of difference.

Clive Barnes

Too Much Trouble

Tom Avery, London: Frances Lincoln Children's Books, pb. 978 1 8478 0234 7, £5.99, 2011, 173pp.



When 12-year-old Emmanuel is sent to the UK from Africa by his parents to avoid the trouble that is coming to their village his father gives him only one instruction: to look after his younger brother Prince. And Emmanuel tries, although the uncle they are sent to live with turns out to be involved in drug dealing. He makes the boys live alone in a house used to grow marijuana plants, where they are left to fend for themselves. Their uncle makes it clear that they must remain 'invisible' so that no trouble comes from school teachers or social workers, even when Emmanuel is beaten up by his uncle because Prince gets into trouble and draws attention to their situation. But when the two boys run away to London and are 'rescued' by Mr Green, who takes them in and makes them part of his street gang of children trained to steal for him, Emmanuel realises that he can no longer do all of the caring, that he too needs to be looked after and begins the search for help.

Avery's novel explores the plight of two young boys forced out of their homeland and separated from their parents by events beyond their control. The boys learn to live a secretive existence, avoiding the attention of the authorities, which leaves them exposed to criminals, first their uncle and later Mr Green. Although the story is action driven and moves quickly, the first person narrative of Emmanuel, an engaging and likable presence, ensures that the reader is drawn into his plight and elicits empathy for his predicament. Quiet moments, such as when the boys play together and Emmanuel's difficult decisions about how to spend their small sums of money on food, are portrayed poignantly and contrast well with the action of the narrative.

The novel raises important issues around homelessness and the experiences of children coming to the UK without family support. However, the fast-paced plot takes precedence in the novel, meaning that these issues are explored in a way that younger readers can relate to. Therefore complex and challenging themes never overwhelm the story, which ends with some resolution and optimism for the futures of the two boys.

Too Much Trouble is an enjoyable, well-written story from a first-time novelist and has been recognised as such by the Frances Lincoln Diverse Voices Award that Tom Avery received in 2010.

Michele Gill

When I Grow Up

Benjamin Zephaniah, photog. Prodeepta Das, London: Frances Lincoln Children's Books, hb. 978 1 8478 0059 6, £11.99, 2011, 28pp.

This book is aimed at 7–10 year olds. Children often dream about what they will be when they grow up. Benjamin Zephaniah wanted to be a fire-fighter when he was small, but ended up a poet; Prodeepta Das dreamed of being a pilot, but became a photographer.

This colourful work suggests a range of occupations to children well beyond those you might expect to find in this type of book. It does not so much set out to subvert stereotypes as to open up possibilities. You can be a rocket scientist, a clown, a lollipop man, a civil-rights lawyer or any of the nine other occupations featured in the book, or, by implication, lots more.

When I Grow Up follows a similar pattern to the authors' previous collaboration *We Are Britain!* (2003). Each occupation is illustrated by some of Das's colourful photographs and a poem by Zephaniah. The poems vary in style and metre and are great for reading aloud. A short piece of prose tells us something about the individuals whose jobs are featured, and why they came to choose them. Some of these people will be familiar, at least to adult readers (for example, the fashion designer Zandra Rhodes and the illustrator Anthony Browne), others will not.

Above all, like *We Are Britain!*, this book reflects the sheer diversity of life in Britain today, both in the jobs that need to be done and the people who do them. Children who pick up this attractive book in their public or school library will hopefully be inspired to dream more ambitiously about what to do when they grow up.

Sue Mansfield

Reviews by Pupils

These reviews have been written by members of Hurst Park Scribblers, a creative writing club for children at Hurst Park Primary School, West Molesey, Surrey.

Taff in the WAAF

Mick Manning and Brita Granström, London: Frances Lincoln, hb. 978 1 8478 0093 0, 2010, £11.99, 40pp.

Taff in the WAAF is a picture book that has a mix of fact and fiction. It is set during the Second World War and is about a young girl called Taff, who takes up the job of a WAAF girl.

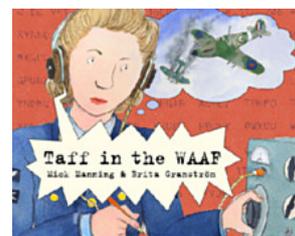
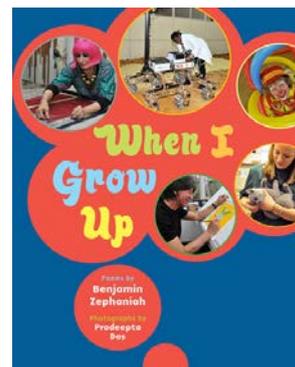
The pictures in this book are realistic and make me feel that I am part of Taff's story. Join the Welsh Taff as she dodges doodlebugs and decodes the Nazi's code! *Taff in the WAAF* is an inspiring story about bravery and dancing the night away. I would recommend this book for children 8+.

Sofia Hurtado (aged 11)

One Boy's War

Lynn Huggins-Cooper, illus. Ian Benfold Haywood, London: Frances Lincoln, pb. 978 1 8478 0126 5, £6.99, 2010, 32pp.

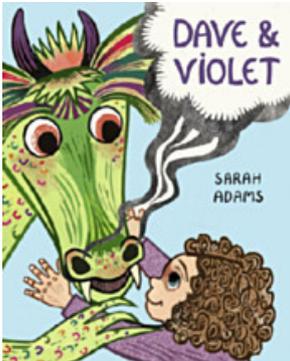
A truly tragic story about a boy named Sydney, set in the First World War. Sydney's father sets off in the night to enlist, leaving only his familiar scent of beer and cigarettes behind him. Despite knowing that his mother will be terrified, Sydney follows in his father's footsteps and lies about his age to enlist. BUT, when Sydney arrives at his destination, things don't go to plan ...



I thoroughly enjoyed this realistic and amazing picture book, which reproduces letters on some pages and has soft, glossy paper. It brings the war to life and tells the story of a real boy and many others like him who went to war in 1914.

I would recommend this story for children 8+.

Sofia Hurtado (aged 11)



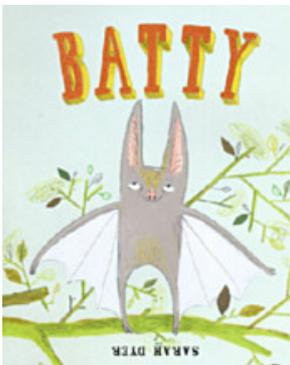
Dave and Violet

Sarah Adams, London: Frances Lincoln, hb, 978 1 8478 0052 7, £11.99, 32pp.

In this brilliant picture book, Violet is a little girl with a dragon for a best friend. The dragon is called Dave and he is VERY, VERY shy! When Violet introduces him to her friends he is extremely embarrassed, which leads to a dragon-sized disaster.

Read this colourful tale to discover what happens and to see whether Dave ever overcomes his shyness.

Anna Kodicek (aged 10)



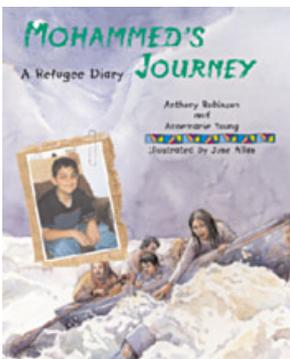
Batty

Sara Dyer, London; Frances Lincoln, hb. 978 1 8478 0084 8, £11.99, 2011, 32pp.

I think *Batty* is a wonderful picture book for young children. Full of sketchy and cute illustrations, it tells the tale of a sad little bat who longs to be as popular as the other animals at the zoo. However, it seems that he has everything the wrong way round and that nobody can see things as he does.

This brilliant book teaches you how to look at the world from a bat's point of view. Don't waste time hanging around – go out and read this book!

Gabrielle Carey (aged 10)



Mohammed's Journey (A Refugee Diary)

Anthony Robinson, Annemarie Young and June Allan, London: Frances Lincoln, pb. 978 1 8478 0209 5, £6.99, 2011 (hb. 2009), 32pp.

This is a heart-breaking tale that tells the true story of a boy called Mohammed. I was attracted to the book because of the photograph on the front cover.

I feel that I really know Mohammed and his family because of the snapshots spread throughout the book. It is full of beautiful watercolours and I like the real photos of Mohammed, his sister and mum.

I found this a sad story and couldn't help thinking about all the upsetting things that happened to Mohammed on his long journey from Kirkuk – like going without food for days. I was very relieved when he finally reached England, as this meant that there was some joy for his family in the end.

I will never forget that this is a true story and nor should you!

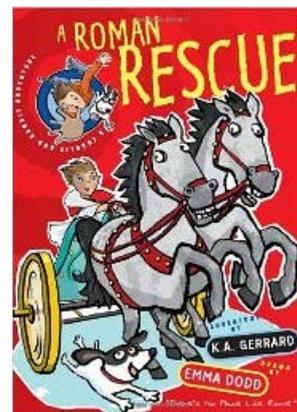
Emilia Lamkin (aged 10)

Charlie and Bandit: A Roman Rescue

Kelly Gerrard and Emma Dodd, London: Templar, pb. 978 1 8487 7191 8, £6.99, 2011, 88pp.

This graphic-novel adventure is brightly coloured and fast moving. It is based on the friendship of a young boy called Charlie from the twenty-first century and another boy called Cosmo. Cosmo is from Roman times, as you've probably guessed! Cosmo and Charlie have to work together to make sure that Cosmo wins the chariot race, but will they succeed? Join them on their adventures to find out! The graphic-novel format brings the Roman world to life and suits the fantastical parts of the story – you can really see Charlie and Bandit (his doggy friend) falling down the time tunnel as the words and pictures suck you into the story. I will certainly read another Charlie and Bandit adventure if I get the chance.

Emilia Lamkin (aged 10)



Books for Young Adults

Far From Home

Na'ima B. Robert, London: Frances Lincoln Children's Books, pb. 978 1 8478 0006 0, £6.99, 2011, 347pp.

Rhodesia 1964: 14-year-old Tariro lives with her extended family on their ancestral land, a time of happiness and plenty. Her mother – Amai – tells Tariro stories of her birth beneath the baobab tree that makes her feel at one with the land. Moving towards adulthood, Tariro dreams of marrying the handsome Nhamo and starting a family of her own. However, change is coming and it arrives suddenly and brutally in the form of Deputy District Commissioner Ian Watson who tells Tariro's people that they must leave their land that is being reallocated to white farmers. When Nhamo tries to protect Tariro from the attentions of Watson he is brutally beaten and imprisoned, left blinded by the attack. From this moment Tariro's life becomes a struggle to survive as she loses a loved one and is left pregnant following a violent rape by Watson. However the birth of her daughter and the love she feels for the child inspires her to search for a better future and she goes on to join the freedom fighters, determined to take back the country that is rightfully theirs.

Zimbabwe 2000: Katie attends an exclusive boarding school and loves her home, a farm with a baobab tree, where she lives with her parents and younger brother and sister. However, the seeds of change have already been sown: Robert Mugabe has become president and the black population are calling for justice, for the land to be returned to them. Katie's family resist the changes and her father is notorious for his treatment of the workers on their farm, a situation Katie finds difficult to reconcile with her image of a loving parent. Eventually the family are forced to flee to England, seeking asylum, which takes its toll on the marriage of Katie's parents. After her mother walks out and her father disappears leaving Katie to care for her younger siblings, she is forced to turn for help to her father's younger brother, shunned by the family because his wife is a black Zimbabwean. As Katie comes to know her aunt and meets one of her friends visiting from home, a woman called Tariro, Katie finally begins to understand the history of her country and of her own family as she meets the half-sister she never knew existed.

Robert's novel of family strife and upheaval is set against the backdrop of the tumultuous events that have engulfed Zimbabwe and continue to drag the country and its citizens into chaos and brutality. Throughout there is an unsettling atmosphere of menace, an uneasiness about the casual violence that stalks or is meted out by different characters, and while there is some personal resolution for both Tariro and Katie, the outlook overall remains gloomy. Robert has constructed a complex story that challenges readers, with no straightforward resolution; the character of Tariro is an interesting, well-developed portrayal and it is therefore somewhat disappointing when her story is disrupted and the time she spends as a freedom fighter passed over. While I understand Robert's decision to include Katie's narrative in order to provide some balance to the

more recent events in Zimbabwe, her family are portrayed as such unpleasant individuals that the reader cannot empathise with their plight, something which would have ultimately justified their inclusion. The link between the two narratives in the character of Ian Watson also feels rather contrived. In a novel that does not shy away from violence and its consequences, such a highly structured plot isn't necessary, as Robert's writing and subject matter alone will engage and challenge teenage readers. However, in spite of these reservations about the plot specifically, I did find this a strong novel that takes on a controversial and important subject and is therefore a timely addition to young adult fiction.

Michele Gill

About a Girl

Joanne Horniman, London: Allen & Unwin, pb. 978 1 7423 7144 3, £6.99, 2010, 190pp.

The novel *About a Girl* is actually about *two* girls: Anna, the protagonist, and Flynn, her first love and relationship. Written in three parts, Horniman unfolds each girl's story – and their story together – through flashbacks, reveals and gentle moments. While Anna's relationship with Flynn is central, the two girls' sexuality is not the focus of the novel. Instead, at the novel's core is the palpable intensity and pain of loving another person, and loving yourself.

Anna narrates part of their first night together: 'She was lovely. Soft and strong and tender and surprising. It was like meeting someone for the first time and knowing them instantly. It was like meeting myself' (p.34). But Flynn is often elusive and there is the impression that she is withholding part of her own story. The reader later receives more information about Anna's teenage years as she tells of her father's affair, her parents' subsequent divorce, her best friend Michael and her recent unrequited crushes. In the novel's final part, Horniman reveals reasons for Flynn's behaviour, but without making excuses for her or demanding she be any other way.

This novel gives you, the reader, the permission to love and forgive all your mistakes, whether you have loved once or a hundred times. With infatuation, lust, learning, tenderness, growth and humility, *About a Girl* has everything a first-love story should have.

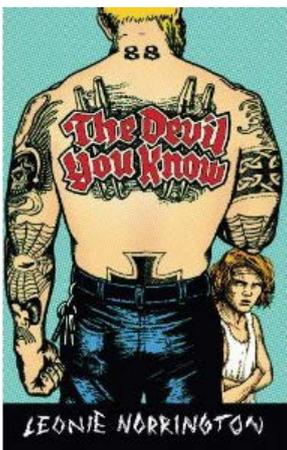
Erica Gillingham

The Devil You Know

Leonie Norrington, London: Allen & Unwin, pb. 978 1 7417 5866 5, £6.99, 2011, 218pp.

From the beginning, Damien is running, trying to save himself and his mum. The novel opens with Damien's fearful dream of being hunted down by his father, 88, and his gang, in both comic-style illustrations and a textual retelling. When Damien wakes up in class and is harassed by his teacher and classmates, the reader begins to understand that while Damien does have a wild imagination, his life is not all that easy or straightforward.

Set in the Northern Territory of Australia, *The Devil You Know* is a bildungsroman in which the fears and challenges Damien faces span from dangerous creatures to physical abuse to bullies to, ultimately, 88 – his abusive father who has recently been taken back by his mum. Norrington does not shy away from the dark realities of domestic violence and bullying, but renders the narrative in such a way as to include the humanity and love in each character. The novel also implicitly addresses other controversial topics such as drug dealing, alcoholism, racism, homophobia and paedophilia. Interspersed in the text are comic-style drawings that are meant to be Damien's, and these add to his depth as a character: the reader can literally see Damien's struggle in both hating and idolising his father.



Ultimately, Damien comes into his own power by breaking the cycle of domestic abuse, and takes a stand within his family and his friends to make a difference in the world. This is an excellent novel for any young adult who wants to know they are not alone.

Erica Gillingham

Vulture's Gate

Kirsty Murray, London: Allen & Unwin, pb. 9781741757101, £6.99, 2011, 243pp.

This is a very engaging adventure story set in a dystopian Australia where gangs of nomads compete for scarce resources and girls are generally thought to be extinct. In classic fashion Callum and Bo are forced to leave their families' homes and embark on a quest for survival; which in this case brings them into the path of vicious freak shows, predatory men, a gang of children who have been grown artificially and then discarded, and a gang of men dedicated to killing what remains of humanity so that the planet can regenerate.

Gender and generational politics inform the story, but it is at heart a tale about the power of friendship to cross boundaries.

Katie White



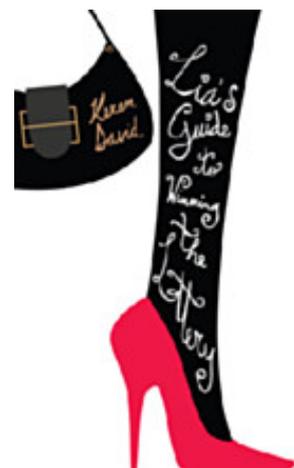
Lia's Guide to Winning the Lottery

Keren David, London: Frances Lincoln, pb. 978 1 8478 0191 3, £6.99, 2011, 339pp.

Having eight million pounds in her bank account plays havoc with sixteen-year-old Lia's relationships with her family, friends, neighbours and schoolmates in this believable and rather funny account of the aftermath of a huge lottery win. The tone of the book is light, but it provokes big questions about how we ascribe value to people and things, whether riches are corrosive and if having our fantasies come true is necessarily a good thing.

One of the book's running jokes is Lia's half-serious belief that a boy at her school, the pale and mysterious Raf, may be a *Twilight*-style vampire. His real story, like the book's frank treatment of teenage sex, social networking and parenting, is far more prosaic. Lia's account suggests that fairy tales, romantic or financial, don't operate quite as we expect them to, and that while happy endings are possible, they may be provisional.

Katie White



REPORTS

Launch of *When I Grow Up* by Benjamin Zephaniah and Prodeepta Das

Keats House, Hampstead, London. 4 August 2011.

At the launch of *When I Grow Up* (review in this issue of *IBBYLink*) by Benjamin Zephaniah and Prodeepta Das, published by Janetta Otter-Barry Books at Frances Lincoln, Benjamin Zephaniah talked about his own experience of being stereotyped and misjudged. His latest book is about breaking down stereotypes and aims to open up children's imaginations to the possibility that there are many more roles open to them than they may think. Zephaniah joked about his childhood and told how he was expected to be either a gangster or a painter and decorator. But he wanted to be a poet. After some time in different jobs he achieved his dream, fortunately for his many readers and fans. Several of the people featured in the latest book (including a woman rocket scientist and a woman mathematics clown) were also present. Zephaniah's other books for Frances Lincoln, *We Are Britain* and *J Is for Jamaica*, also illustrated by Prodeepta Das, were recalled.

The launch took place at Keats House, Hampstead, London, where Benjamin Zephaniah is currently poet in residence. Guests were given the freedom of the house and could also opt for a guided tour.

[Nicky Potter and Pat Pinsent]

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Children's Bookshow 2011

23 September to 7 December 2011.

The theme this year is 'Simply the Best'. Venues range from Bexhill to Hereford and Liverpool, and speakers include Judith Kerr and Tomi Ungerer (the Queen Elizabeth Hall, London, 3 October, and Oxford Playhouse, 5 October), Michael Rosen, Alexis Deacon, Mairi Hedderwick and other well-known writers and illustrators.

See the website www.thechildrensbookshow.com for more details, including information about seminars for teachers and librarians.

National Non-Fiction Day

3 November 2011.

National Non-Fiction Day is an annual celebration, initiated by the Federation of Children's Book Groups in partnership with Scholastic Children's Books. It aims to raise awareness of the genre and show that it is not just fiction that can be read and enjoyed for pleasure.

The first National Non-Fiction Day was celebrated in 2010 and will be annual thereafter on the first Thursday in November. It is organised by the Federation of Children's Book Groups.

See www.nnfd.org for more information.

John Burningham Exhibition and Events

London Transport Museum. Autumn 2011.

In the 1960s, artist John Burningham was commissioned by London Transport to create a number of poster artworks. An exhibition of this work will take place at the museum in autumn 2011. Burningham will also create a new poster artwork, entitled 'Children's London'.

The museum has launched a Flickr competition to celebrate this partnership with Burningham, inviting adults and children to take photographs on the theme 'Children's London' and submit them so that they can be displayed in the museum alongside Burningham's work later this year.

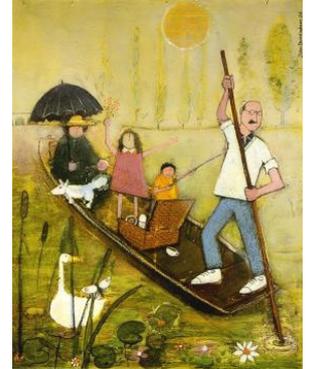
Families are also invited to the October half-term family fun events that take inspiration from Burningham's illustrations and stories. They can create their own puppets and enjoy action-packed storytelling sessions based on some of Burningham's tales.

For more information see www.ltmuseum.co.uk/getinvolved/activities.

John Burningham: An Illustrated Journey

The Fleming Collection, 13 Berkeley St, London W1J 8DU. 13 September to 22 December 2011, 10 a.m to 5.30 p.m.

This exhibition celebrates the rich and varied career of one of Britain's most distinguished and best-loved illustrators and includes Burningham's iconic London Transport posters and working drawings for his children's and adult books as well as those for *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang* by Ian Fleming.



A poster by John Burningham for London Transport.

2012 Child and the Book Conference

Cambridge-Homerton Research and Teaching Centre for Children's Literature.
31 March – 1 April 2012.

The conference title is 'Towards Common Ground: Philosophical Approaches to Children's Literature'. Proposals for papers by 3 January 2012 to Erin Spring: ees34@cam.ac.uk. For details see the conference pages on the centre's website: www.educ.cam.ac.uk/centres/childrensliterature/childandthebook/index.html.

Leverhulme International Network on 'Approaching War' Conference

Brock University, Ontario, Canada. 9–11 May 2012.

This is the second of three Leverhulme-supported conferences marking the approaching centenary of the First World War. Organised by the Osborne Collection of Early Children's Books, Brock University and Trinity College, University of Toronto, the title is 'From the Garden to the Trenches: Childhood, Culture and the First World War'. See www.fww-child.org for more details. Deadline for abstracts is 15 September 2011 with notification of outcome 30 September 2011. Abstracts should be submitted via email to Lisa Paul: lpaul@brocku.ca.

39th Annual Children's Literature Association

Simmons College, Boston, MA. 14–16 June 2012.

The International Committee of the Children's Literature Association is planning a special country focus panel on the Philippines, to be presented at the 39th Children's Literature Association Conference. The title of the conference is 'Literary Slipstreams'. The committee invites paper proposals that focus on any aspect of Philippine children's literature. Send a 500-word abstract accompanied by up to a 250-word biography to the International Committee, Children's Literature Association, PO Box 138, Battle Creek, MI 49016-0138, USA; fax +269-965-3568; or electronically to info@childlitassn.org. The deadline for submissions is 30 November 30, 2011. For further information email info@childlitassn.org.

2012 Biennial Conference of the Australasian Children's Literature Association for Research (ACLAR)

National Library of Australia, Canberra. 20–22 June 2012.

The conference is titled 'If We're Being Honest: The Facts and Fictions of Children's Literature'. It will explore the debates about notions of honesty, openness, innocence and agency in children's literature. Keynote speakers include Professor Clare Bradford, Professor Kerry Mallan and writer/illustrator Shaun Tan. For more details see www.aclar.org/index.php/callsforpapers/8-cfp/28-cfp-aclar-2012-conference.

The Grimm Brothers Today Conference

IELT – Instituto de Estudos de Literatura Tradicional, Lisbon, Portugal. 21–23 June 2012.

The title of the conference is 'The Grimm Brothers Today: *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* and its Legacy, 200 Years After'. Proposals for papers by 4 Sept 2011. See <http://www.ielt.org/pagina/actividades?id=785> www.ielt.org/pagina/actividades?id=785.

‘The Power of Caribbean Poetry: Word and Sound’ – Call for Papers

Homerton College, Cambridge. 20–22 September 2011.

The Caribbean Poetry Project is a pioneering collaboration between Cambridge University Faculty of Education, the Centre for Commonwealth Education, and the University of West Indies at Mona (Jamaica), St Augustine (Trinidad) and at Cave Hill (Barbados). Through a joint research and teaching programme, our three-year project will encourage engagement with Caribbean poetry, and improve the teaching and learning of poetry in both British and Caribbean schools.

A conference on Caribbean Poetry will be held at Homerton College and the Faculty of Education as part of the Caribbean Poetry Project. Speakers and performers include John Agard, Beverley Bryan, Kei Miller, Mervyn Morris, Grace Nichols, Velma Pollard, Olive Senior and Dorothea Smarrt.

Call for papers: <http://caribbeanpoetry.educ.cam.ac.uk/resources/CPpcallforpapers.pdf>. The call for papers includes details of the conference fees and accommodation. Abstracts (300 words approx.) should be sent to Bryony Horsley Heather (bsjh2@cam.ac.uk) by the end of January 2012.

More details from Morag Styles (ms104@cam.ac.uk) or Bryony Horsley Heather (bsjh2@cam.ac.uk) or see <http://caribbeanpoetry.educ.cam.ac.uk/>.

Fairy Tales, Myths and Modernity Conference

Universität Kassel, Germany. 17–20 December 2012.

The title of the conference is ‘Fairy tales, Myths and Modernity – 200 years of the Brother Grimm’s Children’s and Household tales’. Proposals for papers by 14 November 2011. See www.uni-kassel.de/projekte/en/brueder-grimm-kongress-2012/call-for-paper.html.

NEWS

CILIP Carnegie and Kate Greenaway Medals 2011

Both medals are awarded annually by CILIP, the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals. The 2011 winners were announced at a ceremony at BAFTA, Piccadilly, London, at 12 noon on Thursday 23 June 2011.

Jennie Bond, the TV personality, was the guest presenter of this year's medals. She mentioned in her introduction her own pleasure in reading as a child, as well as her constant use of her local library. The guests at the presentation included a wide range of people from the children's book world, as well as children from one of the schools that took part in the shadowing process. There were 90,000 children involved in the shadowing scheme this year from nearly 4,000 schools, and as part of a link with the RNIB (Royal National Institute for the Blind), blind children also take part using Braille copies of the Carnegie shortlisted books.

Sixty books were nominated for this year's Carnegie Medal and 50 for the Kate Greenaway Medal, with a shortlist of six and eight books respectively. A brief film of members of the judging panel talking about each book on the shortlists was shown and then the winner of each category was named. (See *IBBYLink* 31 for the shortlists.)

The Kate Greenaway Medal was awarded to *FATHER* [sic] (Templar), written and illustrated by Grahame Baker-Smith, which tells the story of a son who takes up his father's unfulfilled dreams of flying, and finally succeeds. The judges described the book as being 'a beautifully conceived picture book with a dream-like quality that captures the imagination of readers of all ages'.

The Carnegie Medal was awarded to *Monsters of Men* (Walker Books) the third in the Chaos Walking trilogy, written by Patrick Ness. The judges described the book as 'an enthralling read that is well-nigh impossible to put down'. Ness gave a passionate acceptance speech in which he spoke about the importance of children having access to books, especially through libraries, and of the importance of keeping libraries open at a time when concerns about reading are so high.

Ness's speech (for text, see www.guardian.co.uk/childrens-books-site/2011/jun/23/patrick-ness-carnegie-prize-libraries) was emphatic in condemning library cuts. In view of the subject of this issue of *IBBYLink*, it is worth summarising what he said.

Ness recalled the speech given a little while before, at the Laureate ceremony, by the Minister for Culture, Communications and Creative Industries, Ed Vaizey, who in his praise for the work of libraries seemed completely to ignore the library closures being carried out by the government. Ness spoke of how, as a child, he owed a debt for the breadth of his reading to his local public library where 'sat the world, waiting for me to look at it, to find out about it, to discover who I might be inside it,' and to the librarians in it. Later he himself worked in libraries for six years, both part-time and full-time. Thus he saw how librarians 'are tour-guides for all of knowledge'. He considers that education and libraries are 'far too important to be left in the hands of politicians'. Ness went on to praise the Carnegie Medal shadowing scheme, which enables thousands of young readers to argue about the shortlist, and to vote for their favourite book. He is convinced that children DO read, and that many of the books they read come from libraries and the school library service. He concluded that 'We must shout for libraries. Shout for the young readers who use them. ... They are worth fighting for.'

[John Dunne and Pat Pinsent]

2011 CLPE Poetry Award

The winner was announced at a ceremony at the Centre for Literacy in Primary Education (CLPE), Webber Street, London on Tuesday, 5 July 2011. The award was judged this year by Carol Ann Duffy, Andrew Lambirth and Fiona Waters, and honours excellence in poetry written for children. The 2011 award was sponsored by Travelling Books.

The award was made to Philip Gross for *Off Road to Everywhere*, illustrated by Jonathan Gross (2010). His book is the first collection to be published in Salt Publishing's new children's poetry list. He is Professor of Creative Writing at Glamorgan University, Wales. His collections of poetry for adults and children include *The Water Table*, which won the 2009 T.S. Eliot Prize and *The All-Nite Café*, which won the 1994 Signal Award.

The judges selected *If You Could See Laughter* by Mandy Coe (Salt Publishing, 2010) to be Highly Commended.

See *IBBYLink 31* for the shortlist.

[Jennifer Harding]

Jacqueline Wilson Scholarship

NCRCL has announced a new Jacqueline Wilson PhD scholarship, generously funded by Dame Jacqueline Wilson. Since her appointment as Professorial Fellow at Roehampton University two years ago, Jacqueline Wilson has taught a series of highly successful seminars on creative writing at MA level within the Department of English and Creative Writing. The Jacqueline Wilson scholarship will enable a student to join a thriving community of PhD scholars and to benefit from Roehampton University's expertise in children's literature and creative writing for children.

The scholarship was advertised alongside two other PhD scholarships within the Department of English and Creative Writing at Roehampton University, for which children's literature scholars were also eligible.

The first Jacqueline Wilson PhD scholarship has been awarded to Nick Campbell, who will be working on a study with the provisional title of his thesis 'Inherent in the Landscape: The Neo-Romantic in Post-War British Children's Literature'.

[Gillian Lathey]

Booktrust Best New Illustrators 2011

The top ten rising stars of picture-book illustration were unveiled at an exhibition in central London on Tuesday 22 March 2011. The judging panel for this year's award comprised Children's Laureate Anthony Browne; the Director of Literature Strategy at Arts Council England, Antonia Byatt; author/illustrator Lauren Child; founder of the Illustration Cupboard, John Huddy; and author/illustrator Ken Wilson-Max. The award was established to raise the profile of emerging picture-book illustration as part of the wider Big Picture Campaign. The chosen illustrators are:

Joe Berger
Claudia Boldt
Katie Cleminson
Chris Haughton
Alice Melvin
Sara Ogilvie
Levi Pinfold
Salvatore Rubbino
Viviane Schwarz
Kevin Waldron

One further illustrator – Susan Steggall – was highly commended by the judges.

Examples of their work can be seen at www.booktrustchildrensbooks.org.uk/Picture-Books/Illustrators%27-Gallery/Best-New-Illustrators%27-Gallery-2011.

An exhibition of prints by the winning illustrators will visit the following venues:

4 August – 16 October 2011: National Galleries of Scotland
The Mound, Edinburgh EH2 2EL

26 November 2011 – 11 March 2012: Gallery Oldham
Oldham Cultural Quarter, Greaves Street, Oldham OL1 1AL

Foyles will be promoting the Booktrust Best New Illustrators 2011 both in-store and on their website. Participating Waterstone's and independent bookshops will also be promoting work by the winning illustrators.

Sponsors are the Authors' Licensing and Collecting Society (ALCS), the Carnegie UK Trust (for the shadowing scheme), Renaissance Learning and Scholastic Book Clubs (as sole official book supplier).

[Jennifer Harding]

Branford Boase Award

This award, set up in memory of the writer Henrietta Branford and her editor at Walker Books, Wendy Boase, both of whom died tragically early from cancer, has come to be regarded as a good barometer of up and coming novelists, with many winners going on to write excellent novels and gain success in other awards. This year the shortlist was as strong as ever and at the award ceremony at Walker Books there was an air of excitement as to who would win. For the first time ever, one of the books on the shortlist had already won a prize, the Costa Award (formerly the Whitbread) which is one of the major prizes in the children's book world. Despite the strength of the other novels in contention, Josh Wallace won the award for *Out of Shadows* (Andersen Press), a story set in a changing Zimbabwe in the 1980s, and so added a second garland for his outstanding debut novel. See *IBBYLink* 31 for a review of this book, and *IBBYLink* 30 concerning its success in the Costa Award.

[John Dunne]

Journal of the Institute of Translation and Interpreting

The July/August 2011 issue of the *ITI Bulletin* (the journal of the Institute of Translation and Interpreting) features an article by Gillian Lathey, based on the research she did for her recent book *The Role of Translators in Children's Literature: Invisible Storytellers* (Routledge, 2010, see review in *IBBYLink* 31). The journal cover also relates to this article. The editor Rachel Malcolm observes that many people are unaware of the importance of translation in the evolution of children's literature.

[Pat Pinsent]

Roald Dahl Funny Prizes 2011

The shortlists were announced on Monday 12 September 2011 – the eve of Roald Dahl Day.

The winner of each category will receive £2,500, which will be presented at an awards ceremony at the Unicorn Theatre, London on 8 November 2011.

The judging panel consisted of author and Twitter queen Grace Dent; author, chair of judges and founder of the awards, Michael Rosen; Horrid Henry series illustrator and author duo Tony Ross and Francesca Simon; and *Yes Man* author and journalist Danny Wallace.

The awards were founded by Michael Rosen as part of his work as Children's Laureate 2007–2009 and are run by Booktrust.

The awards have the following aims:

To promote laughter and humour as a feel-good factor when reading, by encouraging families to read together and discover the pleasure of funny books. This in turn will reinforce the message that reading together promotes family well-being.

To draw attention to funny books as readable and enjoyable books. We hope that the prize will enable these books to gain a profile that makes them more accessible to children and young people. The prize will work to achieve this through a range of activities supported by libraries, teachers and parents.

To reward and encourage authors (and illustrators) who write and illustrate books using humour in their stories, poetry and fiction. By creating these awards we hope to promote a vibrant area of publishing often overlooked by other awards.

The Funniest Book for Children Aged Six and Under

Bedtime for Monsters by Ed Vere (Puffin)

Cats Ahoy! by Peter Bently, illus. Jim Field (Macmillan Children's Books)

First Week at Cow School by Andy Cutbill, illus. Russell Ayto (HarperCollins Children's Books)

Limelight Larry by Leigh Hodgkinson (Orchard)

Marshall Armstrong Is New to our School by David Mackintosh (HarperCollins Children's Books)

A Place to Call Home by Alexis Deacon, illus. Viviane Schwarz (Walker)

The Funniest Book for Children Aged Seven to Fourteen

Animal Tales by Terry Jones, illus. Michael Foreman (Pavilion Children's Books)

The Brilliant World of Tom Gates by Liz Pichon (Scholastic)

The Get Rich Quick Club by Rose Impey (Orchard)

Letters from an Alien Schoolboy by Ros Asquith (Piccadilly Press)

Penny Dreadful is a Magnet for Disaster by Joanna Nadin, illus. Jess Mikhail (Usborne)

The Wrong Pong by Steven Butler, illus. Chris Fisher (Puffin)

[Booktrust, Jennifer Harding]

IBBY NEWS

IBBY World Congress 2012

The 33rd IBBY World Congress will be held in at Imperial College, London, 23–26 August 2012, the first time it will have been in the UK since it took place in Cambridge in 1982. The title is ‘Crossing Boundaries: Translations and Migrations’, and the congress will be exploring these topics from a variety of angles and viewpoints. These will include translations between languages, and the migration of people and the stories they carry with them. It will also encompass translations and migrations across media, for example from book to film or play.

Programme

Speakers so far confirmed:

Patsy Aldana, a former president of IBBY, born and brought up in Guatemala. She is the publisher of Groundwood Books in Canada where she has published many translated and culturally diverse books. Founded in 1978, Groundwood is committed to publishing books that feature representations of marginalised voices and experiences that are not often heard. Patsy was recently appointed a member of the Order of Canada for her contributions to children’s publishing in Canada and around the world.

Aidan Chambers, winner of the Hans Christian Andersen Medal in 2002 for his books for children and young people, including the Carnegie Medal winner *Postcards from No Man’s Land* (1999). He has always championed the translation of literature into English, especially for children. He and his wife Nancy founded Thimble Press and the magazine *Signal* to promote children’s literature. Aidan’s publications *The Reading Environment* (new edn 2011) and *Tell Me* (new edn 2011) have been hugely influential with teachers internationally. His short-story collection *The Kissing Game* (2011) has been published recently.

Bart Moeyaert, Belgium’s nominee for the Hans Christian Andersen Author Award in 2012. Moeyaert’s novels have been translated into 19 languages. English translations of five of them, including *Bare Hands* (2004), are published in the USA by Front Street. He teaches Creative Writing at the Royal Art School in Antwerp, and has written screenplays and plays, as well as publishing Dutch translations of books from German, English and French. His latest book *De Melkweg (The Milky Way)* was published in May 2011.

Emer O’Sullivan, originally from Ireland, is Professor of English Literature at Leuphana University in Lüneberg, Germany. She has written and lectured extensively about children’s literature in translation, including *Kinderliterarische Komparatistik* (2000), which won the biennial International Research Society for Children’s Literature (IRSCL) Award in 2001 for outstanding research. The English-language version *Comparative Children’s Literature* (Routledge, 2005) won the Children’s Literature Association (ChLA) Book Award. She is currently co-writing a book on children’s literature in foreign-language teaching.

Shaun Tan, Australian picture-book creator, the author and illustrator of *The Arrival* (1974) and illustrator of *The Rabbits* (text by John Marsden, 1998), both of which deal with themes relating to migration. Several of his books, including *The Arrival* and *The Red Tree* (2001), have been adapted for the theatre. Recently he won an Oscar for the Best Short Animated Film for *The Lost Thing* (1999), and he is this year’s recipient of the Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award. His appearance at the congress is sponsored by Hodder Children’s Books.

In addition to individual plenary speakers, panels and ‘in conversation’ sessions on a range of relevant topics are being planned. It has just been announced that authors Beverley Naidoo and Jamila Gavin will take part in a discussion about the migration of stories. Beverley has recently published *Aesop’s Fables* (2011) with African settings and Jamila *School for Princes: Stories from the Panchatantra* (2011). There will be a ‘live translation’ session examining the fascinating linguistic and cultural issues involved in

translation between languages. The 20th anniversary of Bookstart will be celebrated with the participation of people who have developed similar projects around the world. Illustrators will talk about how styles of illustration travel across geographical and artistic boundaries. Storytellers will tell stories in their own language for all delegates to delight in their patterns and rhythms.

Further information about speakers will be posted on www.ibbycongress2012.org as it becomes available and people are invited to register for updates, and can also follow us on Twitter. There will be parallel sessions and the papers which will be presented in these are currently being selected from around 300 proposals submitted. There is still time to submit a proposal for a poster session.

Registration will open in October 2011 and it will be possible to pay in three instalments.

Further information

Shortly following the 2010 IBBY UK AGM, Nikki Gamble resigned as Congress Director and Ann Lazim and Kathy Lemaire took over as Co-directors. They are working with a congress organising committee, the IBBY UK committee, an advisory group and IBBY International's Executive Committee. The congress organising committee has a programme subcommittee and a translation subcommittee. Sue Mansfield has taken on the role of Treasurer. Thanks are due to Scholastic for hosting the advisory group and the Centre for Literacy in Primary Education (CLPE) and Battersea Library (Wandsworth) for allowing us space for other meetings.

How IBBY UK members can help with the congress

1 Publicity:

If you are attending a conference or event where it would be possible to distribute leaflets and posters, contact Ann Lazim annlazim@googlemail.com.

2 Fund raising:

- (a) Could you organise a fund-raising event, say a coffee morning, a reading group or, maybe, a concert?
- (b) Do you know of any companies that might be interested in our conference commercially as a marketing opportunity, or companies and charities that might be interested in supporting it, for instance by paying the fee for a delegate from a developing country? Could you let us have the name of the appropriate person to approach in that company?

Please contact Kathy Lemaire: kathy.lemaire@btinternet.com.

[Ann Lazim]

2011 IBBY UK/NCRCL MA conference

Froebel College, Roehampton University, 12 November 2011.

The 18th annual conference is titled 'It Doesn't Have to Rhyme: Children and Poetry' and will explore all aspects of the relationship between young people of all ages and poetry.

Presentations at plenary sessions and workshops will look both at verse written by children themselves and at poems explicitly addressed to them or that have been seen as part of their poetic heritage.

Keynote speakers include Morag Styles, author of a highly regarded history of poetry for children; Susan Bassnett, a judge of the 2011 *The Times* Stephen Spender Prizes for poetry translation that includes Under 14 and Under 18 awards; Philip Gross, winner of the 2011 CLPE Poetry Award; and two former children's laureates, Jacqueline Wilson (well-known for her down-to-earth children's books) and Michael Rosen (a poet very popular with the young).

There will also be a panel comprising those involved with the publishing of poetry for children, workshop sessions, exhibitions and book sales, together with the opportunity to meet others enthusiastic about the importance of poetry in children's lives. Workshop presenters have been chosen and a list is on the NCRCL website (www.roehampton.ac.uk/ibby/index.html) and the booking website, and you will be able to choose the workshop you prefer when booking your place (see below).

The cost of a sandwich lunch is included in the conference registration fee. Prices are: full delegates £75, IBBY UK members £65, concessions (non-Roehampton University students and unwaged) £50, Roehampton University staff and students, and IBBY UK committee members £45.

Further information, including details of speakers and workshop presenters, are on the NCRCL website. For any enquiries, contact Pat Pinsent: PatPinsent@aol.com.

Bookings can be made on the Roehampton University estore:
https://estore.roehampton.ac.uk/browse/extra_info.asp?compid=1&modid=2&prodid=70&deptid=164&catid=64; or contact Lucy Parsons or Caroline Matthews.

Lucy Parsons
Academic Conference Coordinator
PT (Tuesday/Wednesday/Friday)
Tel: 020 8392 3698
Email: l.parsons@roehampton.ac.uk

Caroline Matthews
Academic Conference Coordinator
PT (Monday/Thursday)
Tel: 020 8392 3698
Email: c.matthews@roehampton.ac.uk

When booking, you will be asked to choose a workshop by selecting a letter, e.g. A, B.

Programme of Workshops

Workshop A

Sandra A. Agard. It Doesn't Have to Rhyme.

David A. Whitley. Children's Poetry: Loose Canons and Loose Iambics.

Workshop B

Lucy Andrew. Riddles in the Dark: The Role of Poetry in Children's Fantasy Novels from Alice to Harry Potter.

Rebecca R. Butler. Imaginative Opportunities in Two Verse Novels.

Workshop C

Kimberly Black. Human Rights, Social Protest and Liberation Discourses in Urban Spoken-Word Poetry by Urban Youth.

Imogen Church. Authenticity of Voice in Poetry Written by Juvenile Offenders.

Workshop D

Julie Blake. Reclaiming the Oral Tradition: The Poetry Archive.

Mark Carthew. Slam Dunk: Performance as a Way of Bringing Children's Poetry to Life.

Workshop E

Fiona Collins and Alison Kelly. Poetry Journeys: From Child to Student Teacher.

Jenny Vernon. Ten Years of Children's Poetry: The Southwark Poetry Anthologies.

Workshop F

Pat Ebhohimen. Is Poetry Written by Children really Poetry?

Robert Hull. Can a Love of Poetry be Taught?

Workshop G

Emily Roach. Dealing with Death: Tough Topics in Poetry for Children.

Siwan M. Rosser. Negotiating Borders: Poetry and the Language of Children.

Workshop H

Georgie Horrell. Caribbean Children's Poetry in Multicultural Britain.

Aneesh Barai. Children and Cats in the Alley: T.S. Eliot's *Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats* and its French Translations.

Provisional Programme as of 21 September 2011

- 9:30 Registration and coffee
- 10:00 Welcome (Pat Pinsent)
- 10:10 Morag Styles (Cambridge University)
- 11:00 Publishing panel: Janetta Otter Barry (Frances Lincoln), Gaby Morgan (Macmillan) and Fiona Waters (anthologist; Troubadour), chaired by Nicholas Tucker
- 11:45 Comfort break
- 12:00 Michael Rosen (poet)
- 12:45 IBBY, NCRCL and 2012 World Congress news
- 1:00 Lunch
- 2:00 Parallel workshops
- 3:00 Susan Bassnett (*The Times* Stephen Spender 2010 prizes judge)
- 3:40 Tea
- 4:00 Philip Gross (poet and Glamorgan University)
- 4:30 Jacqueline Wilson (author and anthologist)
- 5:10 Joelle Taylor (Poetry Society) Poetry Slam
- 5:40 Finish

[Pat Pinsent, Sue Mansfield and Lucy Parsons]

2012 IBBY-Asahi Reading Promotion Award

IBBY UK has nominated Book Aid International (www.bookaid.org/). The jury will meet in Antwerp, Belgium, on 11 September 2011 and the winners will be announced at the Bologna Children's Book Fair during the IBBY press conference on Monday, 19 March 2012. The presentation of the award to the winning groups will be made during the 2012 IBBY International Congress in London in August 2012.

IBBY President's Letter, August 2011

Ahmad Redza Ahmad Khairuddin, who was elected as president of IBBY in September 2010. has written to members.

Praising his predecessor, Patricia Aldana, and her team on her Executive Committee (EC), he commits the current EC to the projects already in progress, together with some new initiatives. The IBBY-Yamada Fund is supporting projects throughout the world, promoting local authors, illustrators, storytellers and others working in children's literature. The IBBY Children in Crisis Fund has assisted children in disaster-stricken areas. For instance, in Pakistan, following the disastrous floods, a number of libraries have been set up. Donations have been received towards a fund supporting Japanese IBBY (JIBBY) in their efforts to help children in areas affected by the earthquake and tsunami. The IBBY Children in Crisis programme has supported projects in Chile, Haiti, Indonesia and Palestine.

He mentions the advantage of collaboration between national sections so that resources can be shared. He indicates how he would like to attend as many events as possible throughout the world, or to delegate colleagues in the EC to represent IBBY. Such meetings have been attended in France, Lisbon, Brussels, Stockholm, Puerto Rico, London, Dublin, Bangkok and Nami Island, South Korea, while there are plans to attend others in South Africa and Antwerp. IBBY's presence at the Bologna Book Fair in March 2011 was associated with a press conference and reception, together with EC and other meetings. His own trip to Japan was linked with a visit to the Asahi Shimbun newspaper company that has been supporting the IBBY-Asahi Reading Promotion Award for over 25 years, and another to the sponsor of the IBBY-Yamada Fund for training and workshops for the development of children literature.

The president expresses his gratitude to those who contributed to various appeals, and emphasises that funds are still needed for emergencies. He also points out the value of cooperation with other organisations with similar missions to IBBY: among these is CERLALC, the Latin America regional culture and book-promotion institution, while a formal collaborative relationship is also being pursued with PEN (poets, playwrights, essayists, editors and novelists), which seeks to promote cooperation among writers and emphasises the importance of literature in developing mutual understanding. Such cooperation can prevent pointless competition between organisations with similar objectives. Additionally, a new IBBY national section has been established in Cambodia and Portugal has now rejoined, while there are individual members from a number of other countries not yet represented fully.

He concludes with the words: 'The children of the world are our children. They have the right to be cared for, the right to be read to, the right to quality books and pictures and the right to become readers themselves.'

Honour Books 2012

IBBY UK has nominated the following.

For writing: *Revolver* by Marcus Sedgwick (Orion Children's Books, 2009).

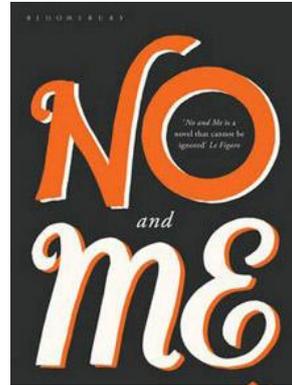
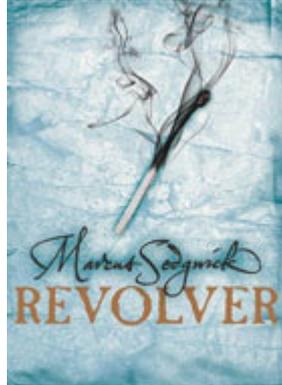
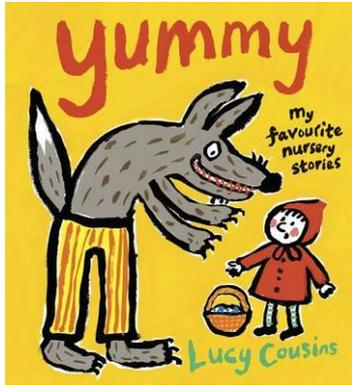
'A boy sits in a cold, bare shack somewhere north of the Arctic Circle, alone but for his father's body lying on a table, frozen both by rigor mortis and the manner of his death. The boy's older sister and stepmother have gone for help. And then there is a knock on the door: outside is a giant of a man asking for the boy's father. This is as stark a beginning as you can imagine. And it gets worse.' (*The Guardian*)

For illustration: *Yummy: My Favourite Nursery Stories* by Lucy Cousins (Walker Books, 2009).

'This collection of favourite tales, as retold by Maisy creator, is lively, bold and quite unforgettable! From The Three Little Pigs to Little Red Riding Hood, the stories take on new life as the vivid paint-box colours sing out from the page.'

For translation: *No and Me* by Delphine de Vigan, translated by George Miller (Bloomsbury Children's Books, 2010).

'Lou Bertignac has an IQ of 160 and a good friend called Lucas, who gets her through the school day. At home, her father cries in secret in the bathroom and her mother hasn't been out of the house for years. But Lou is about to change her life – and that of her parents – for good, all because of a school project she decides to do about the homeless. Through the project Lou meets No, a teenage girl living on the streets. ... A tense novel tackling the true meaning of home and homelessness.'



[Michele Gill]

IBBY/NCRCL MA Annual Conference 2011

Froebel College, Roehampton University, London. Saturday 12 November 2011.

The title of the conference is 'It Doesn't Have to Rhyme: Children and Poetry'.

For more information, see www.roehampton.ac.uk/ibby/index.html or contact Pat Pinsent: PatPinsent@aol.com.

The next issue of *IBBYLink* (Spring 2012, no. 33) (copydate 15 December 2011) will largely be devoted to short summaries of papers and presentations from the annual 2011 IBBY/NCRCL MA conference 'It Doesn't Have to Rhyme: Children and Poetry' to be held on 12 November 2011 at Roehampton University, London.

The Summer 2012 issue of *IBBYLink* (no. 34) will be devoted to the topic of sport as 2012 is the year of the London Olympics. The title will be 'Olympic Games and Sport'.

Articles on other subjects, reviews, reports, information about conferences and similar items are also welcomed for both issues. Contributions to PatPinsent@aol.com.

Titles for review

Publishers and others with books to be reviewed in *IBBYLink* should send them to Sue Mansfield at 37 Gartmoor Gardens, London SW19 6NX; mansfield37@btinternet.com.

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To sponsor a future issue of *IBBYLink*, contact PatPinsent@aol.com.

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