

It Doesn't Have to Rhyme: Children and Poetry

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EDITORIAL

This issue of *IBBYLink* is largely devoted to the very successful 2011 conference at Roehampton University on poetry for children. We have synopses of the talks of all the workshop speakers, and, in most cases, fuller versions will be appearing in the book of conference proceedings to be published later in 2012.

It seemed to be fairly generally agreed that this was one of the most successful IBBY UK/NCRCL MA conferences. The presentations, both in the plenary sessions and in the workshops, were not only of high quality but also very much to the point in addressing the issues facing those who seek to kindle enthusiasm for poetry, probably the oldest and most prestigious of the literary genres, but one that has faced obstacles from the reluctance of publishers, parents and teachers to recognise that children have a natural enjoyment of poetry that is all too often stifled by the way in which they encounter it in school.

Our first speaker, Morag Styles, the first Professor of Children's Poetry at Cambridge University, got the conference off to a splendid start by reminding her audience that children can respond to poetry even when they don't fully understand it, an effect notable with the work of poets such as W.B. Yeats and William Blake. She suggested that early encounters with poetry in the home were in the context of love, and also noted the role of playground rhymes, which reveal how important is the element of play. She spoke of the revitalising effect that Caribbean poetry has had in British schools, and rejoiced in the fact that the current poet laureate, Carol Ann Duffy, has written a considerable amount of poetry for children. Despite all the positive features, however, she still fears that publishers have a reluctance to publish poetry by unfamiliar writers, while there remains a need to counter what can be a stifling effect on poetry teaching of the National Curriculum.

Morag Style's talk was followed by a panel discussion, which is reported later in this issue of *IBBYLink*, and a brief video clip reflecting the poetry slam initiative, involving young people's poetry in performance. Then we had a scintillating talk from Michael Rosen who in rather longer than the three quarters of an hour allocated (but no one wanted him to stop!) attempted to answer the question, 'Why write poetry for children?' He reminded us of the attractions of poetry: its linking of sounds; the juxtaposition of the like and the unlike that

succeeds in defamiliarising what could be taken for granted; the way it creates the impression that in reading it we are in the middle of a story; its tendency to suggest rather than to state; its 'writerly' quality of drawing attention to its own language; the way in which this language is often, but far from always, compressed; and, perhaps, most important of all, the way in which, whether implicitly or explicitly, it carries the culture from which it springs. Poetry for children involves all these attributes, though perhaps in a different way from that for adults. It is mediated by adults, while the children who experience it are growing towards adulthood having internalised the poetry they have heard. He emphasised the need to make the whole school environment poetry friendly, to 'publish' children's poems, and to use all the resources of modern technology to introduce children to the richness of poetry.

The afternoon session began with a wide range of workshops, followed by talks by Susan Bassnett and Philip Gross which are summarised later in this issue. The final session (artfully timed to ensure that everyone had an inducement to stay on after tea!) was Jacqueline Wilson's account of how she had assembled her new anthology, *Green Glass Beads*, newly published by Macmillan. She recalled how her own familiarity with poetry developed during childhood – how she progressed from nursery rhymes to being intrigued by Harold Monro's 'Overheard on a Saltmarsh' in which the opening question, 'Nymph, nymph, what are your beads?' is answered by the words, 'Green glass, goblin' – which reply provided the title of her collection aimed to make girls, in particular, appreciate the whole world of poetry. She talked of how she has included in it both the familiar and the new, including some poems by children, and grouped them for 'girl appeal' with such sections as 'Friends and Family', 'Clothes', 'Birth and Death', 'Love of Places' – starting with the relational focus of 'Me and You'. She certainly left her audience keen to get a copy of this exciting new anthology, which, I suspect, figured among the presents of many girls this Christmas.

As ever at these conferences, the delegates left with a feeling that they had experienced a day packed with 'treasures' that they would recall, and, no doubt, cite to convince any sceptics that poetry really is a delight for children, and, indeed, for those adults who have not been frightened away from it!

Pat Pinsent

Anne Harding

Saturday's IBBY conference was fantastic. Wonderful sessions by great poets and academics on how poetry works and why it matters.

Morag Styles was inspiring, demonstrating how poetry 'gets to the parts other literature doesn't reach'. Like many of the speakers, she lamented current literacy teaching (especially the 'eat up your greens' approach to poetry teaching), and public sector budget cuts, and their impact on children's access to poetry. But she also celebrated the fact that children's poetry still thrives, in schools and out – lovely to hear about poems on Wimpy napkins.

And just to prove her words, we saw a fantastic video of poetry-slam winner Sarah Olowofoyeku performing 'Please Mind the Gap', and heard about contemporary poetry publishing from an expert panel.

Michael Rosen's lecture on how poetry 'does its stuff' was brilliant: erudite, insightful and very funny. Who else would think to use 'It's raining, it's pouring' as their main text? He had loads of practical ideas for making schools poetry friendly. Instead of adjective-spotting exercises, the emphasis should be on performance and on open discussion that delves into meaning and children's responses.

I felt very lucky to attend a workshop by Kimberly Black and Imogen Church. Kimberly Black was fascinating about the prevalence and value of young people's spoken-word poetry in the USA, showing us how participatory poetry is a form of democratic engagement. Imogen Church was very interesting on poetry written by juvenile offenders. Writers working with young offenders know never to ask them to write poems; suggesting 'spitting bars' is a whole lot more acceptable.

Philip Gross gave us yet more proof of the power of poetry with fabulous renditions of poems from his newest book, *Off Road to Everywhere*. The conference ended with a fascinating talk by the amazing Jacqueline Wilson on the processes of putting together her new anthology of poems for girls, *Green Glass Beads*.

[Posted by Anne Harding at 9:49 on Tuesday 15 November 2011 at www.annehardingtraining.blogspot.com/2011/11/it-doesnt-have-to-rhyme-children-and.html. Reproduced with permission.]

Panel of those Concerned with Publishing Poetry for Children

Nicholas Tucker (chair), Fiona Waters, Janetta Otter-Barry and Gaby Morgan

After introducing panel members, **Nick Tucker** recalled a recent event at a family gathering including a number of children. He offered a small prize to those who could recite a piece of poetry, word perfectly – nursery rhymes and obscene words not allowed – a challenge that was very popular and hotly contested.

Janetta Otter-Barry from Frances Lincoln Children's Books spoke of her enthusiasm to promote single-poet collections, which has resulted in a new venture of four publications a year, including one newly published poet, mainly for primary-school age. The series is under the imprint Janetta Otter-Barry Books. The books have a small print run, and carry illustrations; they are intended to be fun and not too literary. Volumes published so far are Tony Mitton's *Come into this Poem*, James Carter's *Hey, Little Bug*, Roger McGough's *An Imaginary Menagerie* (first published in 1988, reissued with illustrations by the author) and Rachel Rooney's *The Language of Cat* (her debut). There remain difficulties to overcome: large bookstores are reluctant to take on poetry, and financial cuts have hit library services and schools. (See reviews elsewhere in this issue of *IBBYLink*.)

Gaby Morgan said that despite the perception that poetry doesn't make money, Macmillan have been publishing poetry for children for many years. Their aim to get poetry into children's hands is supported by attractive covers and by events designed to break down the prejudice of parents, teachers and booksellers – children themselves love poetry. This year a popular publication is *Green Glass Beads*, an anthology for girls selected by Jacqueline Wilson. There is also new poetry for 5–7 year olds and, of the nine editions due out in 2012, three are single-poet selections.

Nick Tucker asked Rachel Rooney, who was in the audience, if she had children in mind when she wrote *The Language of Cat*. She responded that she was writing 'only as a 40-year old divorced woman, [for] the child in herself, and wanting to widen the range of "childhood"'.

It was generally felt that there was not enough poetry for children, but that prospects were hopeful, especially since the new Children's Laureate, Julia Donaldson, encourages performance. There are also new technology promotions with iPods, apps and audios.

Fiona Waters message was that poetry is alive and well in our schools, as she describes below.

Troubadour – The Travelling Book Company – is the largest independent book-fair company in the UK, and also supplies books for schools. Poetry is an integral part of our selections, and is particularly popular with children. To sell it we need good covers and also great titles – *My Cat is in Love with the Goldfish*, for example, works better than *The Collected Poems of Basil Bloggs*. Troubadour sponsors the annual CLPE Poetry Prize and we are delighted that this has produced so many winners of exceptionally high calibre, such as Carol Ann Duffy's *New and Collected Poems for Children* (Faber, 2010) last year and Philip Gross this year with *Off Road to Everywhere* (Salt Publishing, 2010).

My other hat is that of an anthologist. In the past, poetry was often approached with reverence, but treated as little more than a memory test. While it is true that in the past poetry, recited aloud by wandering entertainers, was the means of passing traditions from generation to generation, too often in schools the poems to be committed to memory were unmemorable and rarely written after 1900, something which all too often led to a deep dislike of poetry and a resolve never to open a poetry book again. But I was fortunate: I heard Gabriel Woolf on the radio reading Tennyson's 'The Lady of Shalott' and was hooked for life. In the last 20 years the whole approach to poetry, particularly in schools, has changed and as a result much wonderful creative writing has emerged.

So, what is the role of an anthologist? To be a skilful anthologist involves endless wide reading, a very good memory, or at least an efficient filing system, and access to both the best of bookshops and the internet. The seemingly random is perhaps the greatest skill required – the right poem in the right place, the new mingling with the familiar, and the forgotten, the unfamiliar and unexpected providing a fresh and illuminating setting for old chestnuts. As poet Nick Toczek said, 'With great anthologies, you ... feel that each poem has been selected from a wealth of possibilities. You sense that behind the selection lie poetic knowledge, taste, erudition and sensitivity.'

The Roald Dahl Funny Prize competitions reveal that children are capable of producing heart-stoppingly good poetry, and are not afraid of subjects such as death, drugs and war. If we don't encourage the reading and enjoyment, the magic, of real poetry, all we will be left with is a generation which knows nothing but advertising jingles and pop-song lyrics. The crucial word is 'real'. Charles Causley says, 'A children's poem is simply one which a child can comprehend as well as an adult. It has to be a poem, not a jingle, not a silly collection of rhymes – a real poem.' Of course we need humour, of course we need nonsense, but it must be intelligent. And put poems like 'The Lady of Shalott' next to the modern and the accessible and they will assume their rightful place as part of this wonderful treasure chest, but without proscription or the dreaded word 'ought'.

The anthology I most enjoyed putting together was *Poems Then and Now* (Evans Brothers, 2001) which put a very traditional poem like ‘On His Blindness’ by John Milton alongside a modern one like ‘Second Opinion’ by Douglas Dunn, thus saying ‘Look! These poets are singing from the same hymn sheet.’

In 1975 Ian Serrailier suggested that children’s poetry may need to ‘come closer to its origins – in song and dance and the spoken word. The poet writes to be listened to, not to be read.’ We must remember that poetry is written to be heard and children love the sound of words: they should be empowered to use and enjoy words for their own sake, to play with words.

The Chairman

Nicholas Tucker is honorary Senior Lecturer in Cultural Studies at the University of Sussex. A former teacher and then an educational psychologist, he is the author of nine books about children, childhood and reading. He has also written six books for children, broadcasts frequently and writes reviews in *The Independent*.

Judging Translations

Susan Bassnett

The *Times Stephen Spender* prize for the best poem translated into English by a young poet was inaugurated in 2004. Funded by the Arts Council and administered by the Stephen Spender Trust, it resulted from a discussion between members of the Stephen Spender Trust who hoped, in some way, to counter the downgrading of foreign-language learning in English schools, at a time when the world is becoming increasingly multilingual. The prize was set up with two age groups, focusing on pupils in schools and students in higher education. In that first year we received over 130 entries, with translations from ancient and modern languages, and European and non-European. Some entrants had been encouraged by their teachers and submitted poems they had been set in class, while others were individual entries. That year, the winning entries were for translations from Latin, Anglo-Saxon, Russian, Romanian and French, and of a Romanesco poem translated into Yorkshire dialect. Poems from several other languages were highly commended. Every year since then the range of languages, ancient and modern, has increased.

Judging poems in translation involves debate around questions of ‘faithfulness’ and ‘unfaithfulness’. Although some distinguished writers have seen translation as betrayal of the original, translation has always been a vital source of innovation for poets, as can be seen in forms as various as the sonnet and the haiku. The translator has to be both a skilled reader and a skilled writer, and the ultimate goal of translation is to liberate a poem from its original language in order to recreate it in another.

The young translators have been so skilful that now there is also a special prize for under-14s, while the older category has been broadened to include all ages.

Commentaries provided by entrants sometimes reveal their interest in the element of play, especially wordplay, as well as their appreciation of the difficulties of finding the right word. Another interesting fact is the superior grammatical knowledge, sometimes used very creatively, of translators of ancient texts.

Ezra Pound suggested that there are essentially three kinds of poetry that may be found in any literature: poetry that relies on the musical properties of the words themselves, which can very seldom be translated effectively; poetry that represents ‘the dance of the intellect among words’, which he deemed untranslatable as such; and poetry which involves the creation of images in language, which may, with a good deal of creative thinking, travel across cultures. The young translators often seem intuitively to correspond to Pound’s tripartite distinction and express this in their commentaries and in the poems they produce.

There have been some criticisms of the judges for awarding prizes to poems deemed too creative. Though not everybody sees translation as a creative art, anyone who has even begun to learn another language can see that language shapes our world, and that what you can say and do in one language is never exactly the same as what you may say and do in another. Sameness across languages is impossible; translating poetry highlights difference and, far from what gets lost in translation, poetry is what comes across in wonderful new ways.

See www.stephen-spender.org for details of the prizes and the 2011 winning entries.

The Presenter

Susan Bassnett is a writer and academic. She served as Pro Vice Chancellor at the University of Warwick until 2009, and is the author of over 20 books on aspects of comparative literature and translation. Her internationally best-selling book, *Translation Studies*, will appear in its 4th edition in 2012. Recent books include a study of the poetry of Ted Hughes (2009), a coedited volume on the translator as writer (2006) and a collection of short essays, *Reflections on Translation* (Multilingual Matters, 2011). She also writes poetry and translates from several languages.

Our Place: *Off Road to Everywhere* as Poetry with Children

Philip Gross

The little question, ‘What is poetry?’, immediately draws us into the whole complex area of metaphor. Poems can start from the tiny unobserved details that are all around us, suddenly coming to notice, details that come to stand for unrecognised aspects of reality. The great thing about the poetry space is that it is paradoxical. The creative writing principles of observation/objectivity, and introspection/self-expression, do and don’t conflict. In the state of poetry opposites apply, not in contradiction of each other but in complementarity. You take on the game, and the discipline, of looking outside yourself, to speak for something else ... and thanks to the creative paradox what you tend to get back is both a fresh glimpse of the world and, hey presto, an unsuspected angle on yourself.

As for poetry itself, ask any group, of any age, the question ‘If poetry was a building, what kind of building would it be?’ The answers can range from the rampantly extravert, the party in the boarded-up squat, to the absolute introversion of the deep cave. As I said, poetry: not a thing but a place.

My own poetry doesn’t bend over backwards to amuse its audience, though it certainly hopes to address them, though the word ‘address’ sounds too much like a lecture: perhaps conversation is a better word.

We, and people under 30 especially, live in extravert times. Remembering myself and my friends at the age of 14, it’s a marvel to see the ease with which many kids perform for each other on camera, on YouTube, every time the only apparently inarticulate phrase ‘So I was, like ...’ leads into an instantaneous expressive mime. These are skills, and I applaud them. These are *performative* times ... with the gains and losses that implies. When performance is a natural way of being, looking to an audience to remember who you are, might some other point of reference be neglected? I have heard more than one experienced writer in schools report that the casual instruction ‘Close your eyes – look inside yourself’ needs explaining, more and more. When ‘introvert’ begins to be translated automatically as ‘sad’ (in the contemporary sense, which is nothing like sympathy), then there’s a precious human resource, one that poetry has nurtured in the past, that I’d like to reassert.

I have already said a little about ‘me’. In most circumstances the ‘me’ of self-expression is not the ultimate goal (for me) in writing. Of course there are ages and stages in a developing young writer’s life, and in a developing life full stop, when finding a voice for yourself and daring to use it is essential. You have to know you can do this before

moving on to the wider world of not just me, or discovering how many shades and facets of ‘me’ we can be.

Arguably, the modern phase of children’s poetry began when poetry came down from its high horse of wanting to educate children, morally or factually, and got down with them, hoping to be one of them, to entertain. But let’s not apologise for ‘education’. Going back to the roots of the word, who wouldn’t want to lead on out? What sort of poet doesn’t want to lay the world, or even the universe, at children’s feet? Or better, at their fingertips?

Educate, entertain ... and let’s not leave out a third ‘e’ of ‘enchantment’ – not a one-sided spell casting, but being part of a shared enchantment by the sensual force of language. Each of the three ‘e’s is a principle that has been prioritised in one phase of children’s poetry. Better, maybe, to see them as the three dimensions, forming a 3-D grid in space (add historical time as a fourth) in which all the poems we write for and with and round young people live and have their being. Each of us has a priority of our own. Mine, I think, is to lay out the richest and best materials available, just as an art or craft class with children should be well resourced, not give the message that scrap paper and blunt felt pens will do. Given good materials, granted that respect, children tend to respect their materials in return. Why would we do any less, with language?

The Presenter

Philip Gross is Professor of Creative Writing at Glamorgan University. He has been visiting and leading writing workshops in schools and for all ages for over 30 years. His new children’s collection, *Off Road to Everywhere* (Salt Publishing, 2010), grows directly from this work. It is a Children’s Poetry Bookshelf choice and won the CLPE Poetry Award this year (2011). His adult collection *The Water Table* (Bloodaxe, 2009) won the 2010 T.S. Eliot Prize, and a new collection, *Deep Field*, dealing with his father’s loss of language to aphasia, was published in November 2011, also by Bloodaxe. His talk at the conference, of which this is a shortened version, was illustrated by poems from *Off Road to Everywhere*.

It Doesn’t Have to Rhyme

Sandra A. Agard

More times than I can count I have been asked the question, ‘Does it have to rhyme?’ My answer to this frequently asked question is simply – that poetry does not have to rhyme, one should never force it. Children’s preoccupation with rhyme is the stuff that legends are made of, yet they are visibly relieved that they can now write a poem without the yoke of rhyme clinging to them. They feel comfortable with rhyme for, as Morag Styles says: ‘Children are hard-wired to musical language – taking pleasure in the rhythm, rhyme, repetition and other patterning of language that are a marked feature of childhood’ (www.cam.ac.uk/research/discussion/the-case-for-children’s-poetry/).

They want to rhyme because it is ‘user friendly’ and makes them laugh. And it is this permission to laugh with and at various language styles and patterns that children are free to experiment and utilise – a process that begins from the womb. So to move away from this style can be very challenging; indeed when you pronounce to a class that it is alright not to use rhyme – panic breaks out. Once order is restored, children are soon writing, sharing and laughing poetry.

In a recent library’s Chatterbooks session two participants aged eight and 13 wrote the following acrostic:

Slippery
Never ending
Over I go
Wet, slippery snow

This followed a session where the pair built up word banks for writing poems on snow. They wrote down as many words about the snow as they could think of – using their five senses as their template. At the beginning of the session they were extremely reluctant to participate and it is easy to imagine how pleased they were to accomplish this piece and share it with the others.

Once reassured, children begin to experiment with words and patterns. This is accomplished by reading poetry and playing a number of word games that help them to shape their ideas.

Why *are* children so keen to rhyme everything? There is something comforting in rhyme – it is song like, familiar and fun. It recalls memories of early nursery rhymes – full of repetition and rhythm. The songs represent tales of childhood. It is a comforting element offering a safe harbour.

When it is demonstrated that poetry doesn't have to rhyme, children are free to 'play' with words, language and literary forms. They have 'permission' to create poetry that is not constrained by rhyming patterns, so they create poems that can be exciting, imaginative, challenging – all colours of the rainbow. They speak and write poetry constantly. Only a child could write:

A poem feels smooth with a few bumps.

When you hold the sun it feels like a lion and flame burning in your hand.

Not a rhyme in sight, but a thought-provoking piece of writing by an eight-year-old poet. Children need to know this way of writing and speaking is fine, that they are allowed to feel comfortable to look, read, write and, above all, enjoy the world of poetry, and, indeed, that poetry does not have to rhyme.

The Presenter

Sandra A. Agard is Literature Development Officer for Southwark and Lewisham Libraries, and a writer and storyteller.

Children's Poetry: Loose Canons and Loose Iambics

David A. Whitley

This session explored the changing functions of rhythm in children's poetry from two perspectives. I asked, first, whether Robert Frost's observation that modern poets really choose simply between the alternative rhythmic patterns of loose or strict iambic has any relevance for children's poetry. Implicit within this is a question as to whether loosening up metrical patterns is a necessary part of loosening the grip of the traditional canon, so that children's writers can embrace wider possibilities. The second area on which I focused was how we understand and teach the rhythmic aspects of poetry to children. The research I am currently undertaking, on poetry teaching from primary school through to university, suggests that very few teachers now have anything more than a rudimentary understanding of traditional theories of scansion and prosody. This raises the question as to whether we now need to develop a different kind of language to communicate the perception, experience and pleasure of poetic rhythm to children and young adults.

The Presenter

David A. Whitley is at the Faculty of Education, University of Cambridge.

Social Protest in Urban Youth Spoken-Word Poetry

Kimberly Black

In his essay '(Yet Another) Letter to a Young Poet' in the anthology *Total Chaos* (2006), Marc Bamuthi Joseph critiques the way that literature and literacy are taught:

The traditional methodology ... is to have students read a canonical text and then create responses to the author's writing in the form of an expository essay. This sequence presents texts as separate and more relevant (worthy of study) than the realities of the students. It perpetuates a complacent literacy where literature is taught not to inspire original thought and action on the student's part, but to confirm that which is already legitimated as Culture. (p.14)

Traditional pedagogy and literacy practice separate academic knowledge from experiential knowledge and presents language as a passive skill to be mastered rather than an active and transformative force in the lives of young people. The popularity of the spoken-word expressive form of poetry among urban youth has begun to problematise both the approaches to teaching and understanding literature, and the popular understanding of how we conceptualise the role of youth in contemporary society.

Spoken-word art, though difficult to define, can be understood in the context of poetic expression as a type of word-based performance poetry, often (though not exclusively) in free verse and at times confessional and personal in nature. Much contemporary spoken word finds its genesis in the concept of 'nommo' – a Bantu word that describes the force of power of uttered words to animate or enact change. In many cities, spoken-word poetry performances have been formalised into a competitive practice known as a 'poetry slam' (or as a type of competitive poetry referred to as 'slam poetry'). Though spoken-word forms are ancient, the poetry slam is a modern invention. Marc Smith, a Chicago construction worker, conceived of creating a competition for spoken-word performance poetry as an alternative to traditional poetry recitals. Slam is a participatory form where both the poet and the audience contribute to the collective experience of poetry. Five judges are selected from the audience and rate each performance on a ten-point scale. Each slam poet is given three minutes to perform a work and the audience is encouraged to respond audibly during the performance, or, as Poetry Slam Incorporated states: 'slam is designed for the audience to react vocally and openly to all aspects of the show, including the poet's performance, the judges' scores, and the host's banter' (www.poetryslam.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=10:general-faq&catid=7:frequently-asked-questions&Itemid=25).

Spoken word and poetry slamming was quickly adopted by urban youth. Organisations such as Urban Word New York City (www.urbanwordnyc.org/uwnyc/) and Youth Speaks (<http://youthspeaks.org/voice/>) began to encourage youth in urban settings to express themselves through spoken-word poetry at open-mic events and to collaborate and compete through slams. Each year, Youth Speaks organises and hosts the Brave New Voices International Youth Poetry Slam Festival (www.bravenewvoices.org/). Over the past few years, the final rounds of the Brave New Voices competitions have been filmed and aired by HBO (Home Box Office, a premium cable television channel owned by Time Warner) as the television series *Russell Simmons Presents Brave New Voices* (www.hbo.com/russell-simmons-presents-brave-new-voices/index.html).

An examination of the themes in works performed by youth poets in the 2010 Brave New Voices reveals how young people are using poetry not only to express themselves, but also to locate themselves within existing society, to redefine society by forcefully speaking dissent against oppression, and to assert a self-defined, self-sustained and self-actualised presence in the world. An important theme present in the works is assertion of the power inherent in the nexus of language, culture and the politics of being. 'Mien' describes poet Bryant Phan's family's painful journey as refugees from Laos after the Vietnam War and asserts the critical role between language, culture and identity. Another important theme is economic justice and commodification. Jose Guerro and Eli

Lynch's 'Little Hands' describes, from a child's perspective, the impact of parents working in sweatshops to produce designer shoes, while Justin Long-Moton and Sean Baucom's 'Foster Bears' likens the foster-child experience to being on display in a toyshop. Many poems present children as a marginalised and oppressed social group who are being failed by important social institutions (the family or schools) such as Jay Davis's 'Favorite Color' and Jasmine Williams' 'Miles Apart'. Collectively, these and other works by youth realise what Eli Lynch, Elizabeth Cheever and Libby Howard say in 'Scores': 'Poetry at its best changes things – changes people, changes laws, changes minds.'

Works Cited

Marc Bamuthi Joseph (2006) (Yet Another) Letter to a Young Poet. In Jeff Chang (ed) *Total Chaos: The Art and Aesthetics of Hip Hop*. New York: Basic Books (pp.11–17).

The poems mentioned can be read at www.hbo.com/russell-simmons-presents-brave-new-voices/index.html (select 'Read the full poems at NYC').

The Presenter

Kimberly Black is an Assistant Professor in the School of Information Sciences at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, USA. She is the author of *What Books by African American Women Were Acquired by American Academic Libraries?: A Study of Institutional Legitimation, Exclusion, and Implicit Censorship* (Edwin Mellen Press, 2009). She serves on the Integrated Reading Curriculum Advisory Committee of the Children Defense Fund's Freedom Schools Program and on the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) Science and Human Rights Coalition. She teaches courses in collection management, knowledge management and multicultural children's literature.

SLAMBassadors UK: A Brave New Word

Joelle Taylor

SLAMBassadors UK (aka the Rise Slam, aka the Respect Slam) began as a London-based anti-racist initiative in 2002. The idea was simple: to create a spoken-word championship that targets young people, and encourages them to raise their voices in defence and celebration. As such, it is the oldest youth slam in the country, and the first to veer away from rigid American rules where points matter more than poems. For those unfamiliar with the word, 'slam' is the competitive art of performance poetry, rapping and emceeing with 'beatbox', that is performed before a very loud and lively audience. It is the ultimate in interactive art, where the audience is as vital as the poet on stage.

Two things have made SLAMBassadors different from other slams:

- 1 The emphasis on the live performance, 'the gig'. For many of the young people who have crossed our stage, it has been their first public performance of an original piece of their own work. It is this opportunity that continues to entice teenagers from their bedrooms and home computers and into the public arena.
- 2 The politics – with the same small 'p' as that used in 'poetry'. It is fundamentally about free speech, the right to an opinion and the provision of a space in which to express it.

SLAMBassadors UK became the national youth slam championship in 2008, with help from the BBC. In order both to facilitate this and to enable us to develop an on-going archive of material, we pioneered the use of filmed poetry for each entry. Whilst it was still open to everyone (whether in education or not), we also devised a two-day workshop plan. The first day focuses on a performance from the poet, writing exercises, stimulus, technique and the creation of each student's poem or rap around the theme of 'identity'. The second day is concerned with the development of performance practice, rehearsals and filming. These workshops received an 'outstanding' from Ofsted earlier

this year (2011). Each of the films is uploaded to the Poetry Society's YouTube channel, from which a panel of judges selects six winners from across the UK to participate in an intensive weekend master class. Previous judges have included Benjamin Zephaniah (who remains our patron), Scroobius Pip, Adisa, Linton Kwesi Johnston and myself. During the master class, the winners are mentored in creating their debut spoken-word show that they premier alongside the judges at a London West End venue. More than this, they are awarded lifetime support and active mentoring from the Poetry Society – including tutoring in leading workshops themselves. Many of the early winning artists are now the poets who deliver the project across the country. The success stories are easy to list. Some have found real fame, more still have found real art. Some have published books, many more are established voices on the spoken-word scene. Others present regular television and radio shows. They all engage with their art and help to promote the form to the rest of the country.

But the real success perhaps, the subtext to the slam, is that broken voices have been slowly pieced back together, sometimes simply for one poem. Often they call the poem 'My Life' or 'My Story'. These poems may lack technique and structure, but they contain the most powerful literacy tool of all: the truth. Currently, the courts are using one film to prosecute a violently abusive father (the films have become, for some, a kind of visual confessional box). Another father responded to a film of his estranged daughter's poetry by contacting and re-establishing his place in the family. We have entries detailing the life of a traveller child; opinions and experiences of the UK riots; pieces celebrating motherlands; remembering journeys that brought the child to England; and stories of survival and celebrations in the darkest places. Each film is a barometer that maps the ideology of our young. The sound of free speech has never been more beautiful.

Videos

At the conference a video was shown of a young high-school girl performer, a finalist of the 2009 Kent regional SLAMBassadors competition. This video can be viewed at www.bbc.co.uk/blast/writing/please_mind_the_gap/156460. Here are the words.

Please Mind the Gap

Please mind the gap.

Yes please mind the gap between you and me.

The gap caused solely by ethnicity

And the hue of the skin that covers me

200 years after the abolition of slavery

So please mind the gap.

Your skin protects you

And my skin does what?

My skin betrays me cos it's not what they want.

They being you, members of this 'multicultural' society,

Where skin tone nor background is not what we see.

May I disagree, or would that be seen as aggression because it's coming from me?

So please mind the gap.

Content of character is only looked at after the fact that I'm from Africa.

Stacked up on that slave boat like a box of cargo,

Not knowing for how long they were stuck or where they were gonna go.

Harriet Tubman and Martin Luther King cried so freedom songs we could sing.

And here we are, back on platform one,

Wishing a freer future for our sons.

So please mind the gap.

Please mind the gap between you and me.

The gap that doesn't need to be.

The Lord said come as you are: gentile, Jew, slave or free,

Black, white or Indian Cherokee.

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Other videos of young performers suggested by Joelle Taylor as good examples of finalists' work are at www.youtube.com/watch?v=0_ns6YuhHgU (a 2010 national finalist, with 'Cereal') and a young male performer (a 2003 joint winner with 'Apples and Snakes') at www.youtube.com/watch?v=c2wdALCuePo.

The Presenter

Joelle Taylor is a spoken-word artist and works across the UK with groups of young people. She runs SLAMBassadors UK, the Poetry Society's slam championship for 12–18 year olds, which is in its tenth year of operation. The aim is to involve as many young people as possible in reading, writing and performing poetry. The 2012 theme for the championship is 'identity'.

Authenticity of Voice in Poetry by Juvenile Offenders

Imogen Church

I have spent some time exploring a very private world of writing: poetry written by juvenile offenders. Having been fortunate enough to read some of their work and interview several individuals who mentor these young people, I was able to give a short workshop talk on my findings at the IBBY UK/NCRCCL MA annual conference in November 2011. Choosing to look specifically at the notion of authenticity of voice was somewhat reckless, as the intangible nature of the concept can philosophically overwhelm the work. However, establishing that the important thing when looking at authenticity of voice is not tangible proof of experience on behalf of the writer, but rather the authentic way in which the poems inflow to the reader, enabled me to make close readings of the poems, with their idiomatic vocabulary, style and subject matter. We looked at the influence of the popular cultures of rap, hip-hop and spoken word, and whether emulating a well-known artist eats away at authenticity, or rather facilitates an introduction to writing poetry. We also looked at the role that both structured stylised, poetry and its freer forms can play in aiding authentic writing. We examined the recurring themes of violence, social and personal awareness, and brutality of emotion within the samples of work. There was room for a brief look at the theme of hope before time ran out. Although it was only a brief glimpse through a small, hidden window, I hope it was enough to inspire those attending to seek out more work by offenders. Raw, unique and remarkably powerful, many of the poems not only provide a fascinating glimpse into the minds of young people in extreme circumstances, but they are also valid and valuable pieces of literature.

The Presenter

Imogen Church is a professional actress and writer with over ten years' experience in theatre, film, radio and performance poetry. Her first screenplay won the award for Best Feature Film Script at the Reel Women Film Festival in Los Angeles in 2009. She is currently studying for her MA in Children's Literature through Roehampton University, in tandem with writing both a children's book (*The Pig who Found Things up his Nose*) and a children's feature film (*Gertrude and the Bees*).

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

Lucy Andrew

This workshop paper mapped changing attitudes towards children's poetry over the past 150 years by examining the implementation and representation of poetry in children's fantasy novels from the 1860s to the present day. It evaluated how poetry has been used in three of the most popular and influential sets of fantasy novels written for children: Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865) and *Through the Looking*

Glass and What Alice Found There (1871); J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Hobbit* (1937) and *The Lord of the Rings* (1954–1955); and J.K. Rowling's Harry Potter series (1997–2007). By investigating the ways in which poetry operates in these books, I considered if and how the texts interact with wider traditions in children's poetry and questioned whether the verse in these fantasy fiction contributes to the diversification of the functions that poetry for the young is encouraged to fulfil.

Beginning with the Alice texts, I explored how Carroll's nonsense verse departs from the moralising tradition of children's literature still prevalent in the mid-nineteenth century, particularly in didactic songs and poems written for children by the likes of Isaac Watts, Robert Southey and Mary Howitt. By offering parodies of well-known verses by these poets and others, the Alice texts react against overt didacticism and rote learning. Instead, Carroll's verses create an imaginative space for children in which they can enjoy 'sound over sense', and seek refuge from the dull moralising and endless quest for meaning advocated by uninspired adult educators. Carroll's verses make a significant contribution to a movement towards entertainment over instruction as the focal point of fiction for the young.

Though most of Tolkien's texts do not specifically address children, nor obviously interact with children's poetry traditions, a focus on the songs and poems of the hobbit race reveals links between them and developments within children's poetry. The riddles in particular display functions for children's poetry that move beyond the mere desire to entertain, towards the kind of shift from 'the garden to the street' that began in the 1970s. First, I explored the hobbits' use of poetry to seek refuge in the familiar, which prefigures the move towards realism in children's poetry and the desire to construct poetic environments and scenarios that, obviously, relate to young readers' own lives and experiences. Secondly, I identified how the hobbits' use of poetry to celebrate and preserve their childhood culture constructs their identities, reconnects with their roots, forges links with other members of their shared culture, and foreshadows the growing diversity of voices and cultures in children's poetry from the 1970s.

The final section of the paper examined how the Harry Potter series, in contrast to the earlier texts, uses poetry not to create an authentic fantasy world but to authenticate the texts' fantasy elements by forging links with the real world. Poetry at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, therefore, appears in the form of sports' chants and advertising slogans, pop songs and valentines. While Rowling's verses draw upon both archaic ballad-type poetry and the modern urchin verse popularised by Michael Rosen, I surmised that it fails to develop these forms to their full potential, drawing superficially on their style without achieving any of their substance. Such a superficial rendering of poetic form within the seminal Harry Potter series perhaps suggests a decline in the apparent status and relevance of children's poetry in the twenty-first century. The paper concluded, however, by suggesting that the problem lies not with children's poetry itself but with its use within a particular type of contemporary children's fantasy fiction. With its feet planted firmly in the real world, children's poetry is now ready to stand alone.

The Presenter

Lucy Andrew is studying for a PhD in Children's Literature at Cardiff University. She gained a BA in English Literature at Cardiff before moving to Newcastle University to complete her MLitt in Children's Literature, which focused on the representation of child criminals in contemporary fiction for children. Continuing her studies into children's crime fiction, her PhD thesis tracks the rise of the juvenile detective in children's popular fiction in Britain from the 1860s to the 1930s. In addition to children's crime fiction, her research interests include adult crime fiction and children's literature from the Victorian period to the present day.

Imaginative Opportunities in Two Verse Novels

Rebecca R. Butler

The hypothesis for my paper was that compositions in verse escape the restrictive narrative conventions that govern traditional prose. The result of this distinction is that verse texts offer more frequent and more profound opportunities for reader interpretation: they offer more of those lacunae that Wolfgang Iser called 'discontinuities'. My further hypothesis was that when such discontinuities arise in verse, as opposed to prose, the reader is encouraged to become more active, to play a more significant role in the joint act of author–reader creation.

I tested this hypothesis in relation to two verse novels for young readers, namely *Pearl Verses the World* (UK edition published as *Pearl* in August 2011) by Sally Murphy and *Hugging the Rock* (2006) by Susan Taylor Brown.

The opportunities presented in these books for reader engagement in the creative process are enhanced by virtue of both books dealing with bereavement and loss.

The paper seemed to be well received by the workshop members. They had the opportunity to learn something of two authors not yet thoroughly familiar to them. I had a very interesting conversation with the UK editor for Murphy's work, including how Australian work needs to be adapted for the UK market. I expressed some dissatisfaction with the way these changes are currently made.

Works Cited

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Brown, Susan Taylor (2006) *Hugging the Rock*. London: Frances Lincoln Children's Books.

The Presenter

Rebecca R. Butler holds a BA in English Literature and an MA in Children's Literature, both from Roehampton University. She is currently reading for a doctorate in education on a course offered jointly by Kingston and Roehampton universities.

Reclaiming the Oral Tradition

Julie Blake

In spite of children's encounters with poetry often being dominated by the written word, the oral tradition of literature is deep rooted. In school, young children learn that reading without moving your lips is prized; in the later years, teachers are constrained by assessment objectives that focus attention on written language. Yet this is out of kilter with the surge in popularity of spoken-word performance, including slam poetry, with digital technology that makes recordings of poetry easy and cheap to access, and with theoretical developments in multimodality that suggest focusing on written language is a parsimonious way of understanding human expression.

This workshop invited participants to explore the changes that occur when the human voice is present in children's encounters with poetry. It started with some consideration about what poetry written down is doing on a page: why it is there; what its purpose may be; and how it connects to the oral tradition of poetry. We read some poetry aloud and explored what came into our minds as we did so. Then, using recordings from the Children's Archive (www.poetryarchive.org/childrensarchive/home.do), part of the Poetry Archive's online collection of recordings of poets reading their own work, we thought about the differences that hearing the poet's own voice made.

The Presenter

Julie Blake is Education Manager at the Poetry Archive, the world's premier online collection of recordings of poets reading their own work.

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

Mark Carthew

In this workshop we explored the *resonance* of children's poetry and some of its forms in children's rhymes, illustrated verse, songs and play scripts, via their poetic, musical, performative, interactive, kinaesthetic and humorous qualities. The connection between movement and communication or 'bodily kinaesthetic intelligence' was also encountered as part of the intersection between the poetic and the performative. Examples of traditional action rhymes incorporating hand, body movement and wordplay included 'Skinnamarink', 'There was a Little Turtle' – and 'The Grand Old Duke of York' with contemporary partner poem 'Ten Thousand Men' (Carthew, 2008). These rhymes and the fun action song 'Go In, Go Out', adapted from a dance/partner song by Richard Gill acted as conduit for this exploration, especially in regard to the rhythmic and performative areas in the oral tradition.

Onomatopoeia and visual narrative were also discussed in the context of the picture books *The Gobbling Tree* (Carthew and Boyer, 2008) and *Five Little Owls* (Carthew and Goss, 2007) as examples of illustrated verse utilising strong metre, rhythm and rhyme as well as onomatopoeic and repetitive vocal and rhythmic cues such as 'swish, crick, crack' and 'tu-whit, tu-whooh, hoo-hoo, hoo-hoo'.



Figure 1. Performance of 'Skinnamarink' (trad. in Carthew, 2008) at the All Saints Storylines Festival, Bull's Creek, Western Australia.

The role of humour in rhythmic wordplay and song is equally worth investigating, and forms the basis for further exploration. Humour, visual narrative, jokes and the poetic in *Wicked Wizards and Leaping Lizards* (Carthew and Spoor, 2006), the performed play-script examples of 'Waiter! Waiter!' (Carthew, 2005), and adaptations of Michael Rosen's poems 'Invisible Ink', 'Two Pilots' (Carthew, 2005) and 'The Skyfoogle' (Carthew, 2007) were enjoyed by all.

Page samples and music tracks of 'Skinnamarink' and other songs and rhymes from *Can you Keep a Secret? Timeless Rhymes to Share and Treasure* (Carthew, 2008) can be found for free download at <http://markcarthew.com.au/books/cykas.html>.

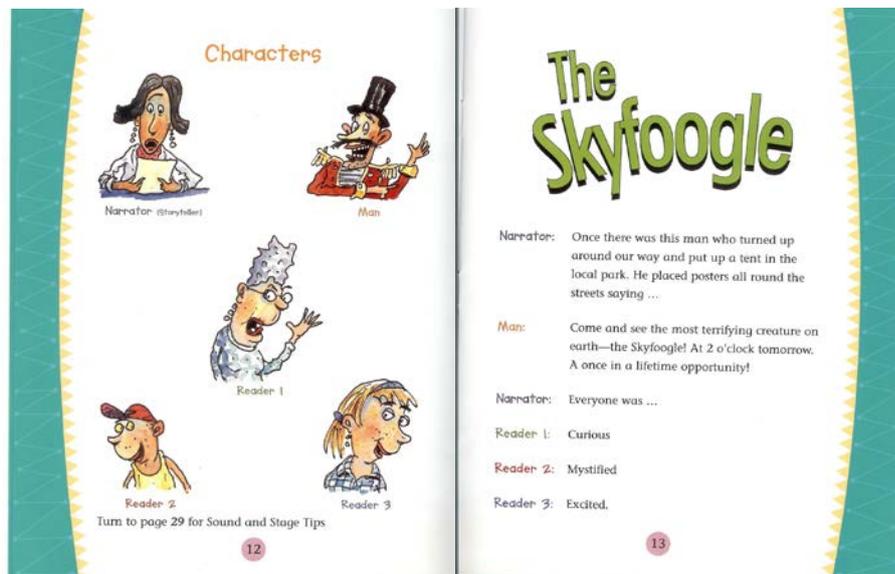


Figure 2. Images from ‘The Skyfoogle’. A reader’s theatre play from *Kaleidoscope: Three plays based on poems by Michael Rosen Adapted by Mark Carthew* (Carthew, 2007: 12–13). Illustrations by Terry Denton.

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The Presenter

Mark Carthew is an Australian author and educator. His books and series explore wordplay, music, movement, drama and humour. He is editor of the Chatterbox series (Pearson Education Australia). He is currently a lecturer at Swinburne University, Australia, where he has also recently completed his PhD in creative writing.

Poetry Journeys: From Child to Student Teacher

Fiona Collins and Alison Kelly

Children’s poets often reflect on the impact of their childhood on their subsequent development as poets. Grace Nichols looks back at the influences from her childhood in the countryside of Guyana, while Gillian Clarke has early memories of enjoying playing with language. However, it is not just poets who are affected by experiences of poetry and playing with language during their childhood: all children are. This workshop reported on findings from a research project that explored the childhood poetry journeys of undergraduate student teachers.

In 2006 we initiated A Poem a Day project with our BA Primary Education and postgraduate certificate in education (PGCE) primary-school student teachers. The intention of the project was to raise the profile of poetry with our students by sharing a poem at the beginning of every taught session on all English courses and by modelling active strategies that could be used with the poem. As the project developed, we noted that many students were working from a limited poetic palette and were unconfident about teaching poetry. Informed by research findings (e.g. Cremin et al, 2008; Ray, 1999) and to explore our impressions, we developed an initial small-scale research pilot with our PGCE students about the impact of A Poem a Day. Moving on from this study, the research presented at the conference built on these findings, but was broader in scope as we considered the poetry journeys that our undergraduate student teachers make from home, through primary and secondary school to their initial teacher education. Case-study material was particularly significant in exploring the interface between university and school-based training.

Particular issues that arose included the need to take into account the shifting sites of learning and identity (Erstad et al, 2009; Day et al, 2006) that configure the student teacher's experience, and the potent force of national initiatives that both prioritise and marginalise areas of the English curriculum.

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The Presenters

Fiona Collins is a Principal Lecturer in English Education at Roehampton University. She is the MA Convener for English Education and co-ordinates the suite of MA programmes in the Department of Education. She is a member of the Teachers as Readers research team and has contributed to a variety of publications on children's literature.

Alison Kelly is a Principal Lecturer in English Education at Roehampton University. She coordinates the English Education team. She is co-editor (with Judith Graham) of *Reading under Control* (David Fulton Publishers, 2000) and *Writing under Control* (David Fulton Publishers, 2003) and has recently contributed a chapter on working with classic poetry in the primary school to the third edition of *The Literate Classroom* (ed. Prue Goodwin; David Fulton Publishers, [1999] 2005).

Ten Years of Children's Poetry: The Southwark Poetry Anthologies

Jenny Vernon

The workshop considered the impact of giving children an opportunity to say important things in a memorable way. Over the last decade, the Centre for Literacy in Education (CLPE) has published an annual anthology of Southwark children's poetry as part of an Education Action Zone initiative. Young poets have explored a range of personally relevant topics and responded to characters and events introduced through powerful

literature or inspired by world events. They have been encouraged to look more keenly at the world and people around them and to consider their own and others' perspectives. The project has been supported by arts partner input from an animator, poets and visual artists, and a series of poetry workshops for teachers. The process involved is that at the beginning of the summer term schools are invited to submit a selection of poems from across the whole age range. The poems are read by an editorial group composed of teachers and CLPE staff who make a final selection for publication. The poems chosen tend to be those that speak truthfully to the reader and communicate a sense of individual voice. They come in a range of forms and reflect the age and experience of the young writers. As James Berry said in the Foreword of the first anthology, *This is Just to Say*, in 2001, 'Poetry explores our understandings of life, and sets these understandings to a music of words', and these anthologies have enabled many children to communicate such understandings to a wider range of readers.

The Presenter

Jenny Vernon is a Leading Advisory Teacher at the Centre for Literacy in Primary Education (CLPE), London.

Is Poetry Written by Children really Poetry?

Pat Ebhohimen

Having learned of the conference, I discussed the questions posed in the Call for Papers with members of the two student poetry groups for children aged 11 to 15 that I run at my school. The question that elicited the most vociferous and indignant response was 'Is poetry written by children really poetry?' My middle-school poets feel very strongly that the answer is yes.

I told them that on their behalf I would submit a proposal to the conference and with their permission I would take along some of their poems to include in my presentation.

In the workshop, participants read and commented on examples of my students' writing to ascertain whether their work is poetry.

When I returned to school I was able to report back to my students the favourable impressions of the workshop participants. Submitting their poems to the conference and the positive feedback that I was able to provide has ensured that my young poets are now inspired to write even more poetry.

The presenter

Pat Ebhohimen is a British citizen who has worked as a librarian with young people in state and international schools as well as university and public libraries in the UK, USA and Luxembourg. She is currently the Upper School Librarian at the International School of Luxembourg where, for the past 10 years, she has run two poetry groups for middle-school students, one of which is entitled 'It doesn't have to rhyme'.

Can a Love of Poetry Be Taught?

Robert Hull

Towards a Love of Poetry

Not only can a love of poetry be 'taught' – no other ambition ultimately legitimates its presence in the classroom. But consideration of how poetry is brought there with 'the love of poetry' in mind depends, as the speech marks round 'taught' suggest, on what is meant here by 'teach'.

To 'teach' in this context does not mean to do so didactically. A 'love' of anything doesn't come by instruction, love being an active, unforced experience. A love of

mountains isn't going to take you over passively at a desk, but amongst them. The kind of pedagogic assumptions deployable in teaching, say, geography, don't obtain here: the basic aim is different. And though cognitive knowledge – as for instance, the item: 'a sonnet is usually 14 lines long' – may accrue to a student through the teaching of poetry, that isn't what such teaching is primarily about.

The close analogy is with music. Shakespeare's 'man that hath no music in himself' is not someone who doesn't know certain facts, but someone who doesn't have certain experiences. To teach a love of music – as my music teacher long ago could – is somehow to contrive that when children perform or listen in the classroom they experience that deep, almost physical thrill that will stay with them for perhaps the rest of their lives. Similarly with the poem. The teacher who successfully teaches a love of the poem has contrived to reach children through the contagion of an enthusiasm for the poem, and through successfully bringing the poem to enthralling performance on the voice. The poem then is 'in' – to repeat Shakespeare's location metaphor – the child him/herself, in the same pleasurable way that a remembered tune is.

A pedagogy that aspires to teach 'love of' rather than 'knowledge of' the poem needs to be founded on the common-sense observation that the poem is a performance. To teach a love of poetry is to return continuously to performance. Poetry lives essentially as voice that's pleasurable to hear, and the more it is enacted and heard on the voice in the classroom, read aloud and sung and chanted, the more readily will children experience delight in the poem. Eventually they will reach to that other successful performance of the poem where the silent reading of it means that the words and their rhythms travel the listening mind in full musical significance.

Clearly, whatever pedagogy works to enable this is a pedagogy that, in staying continuously close to performance, leaves matters of 'knowledge' to accrue as a benign by-product. Which is not to say that such knowledge doesn't matter, only that it is – literally – by the way, and gathered there.

Implications

This, perhaps daunting, prescription for an undidactic pedagogy implies a number of things that a routine transmission pedagogy for the poem, and much current practice, do not.

The first is that a love of poetry cannot be taught by those who don't love poetry themselves. If you're a fan of, say Robert Frost's 'Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening', and read it aloud in a way that grips your classroom audience, then you are successfully 'teaching' that poem. It has lived for them; it's been successfully performed.

The second implication points towards the necessary breadth of the teacher's acquaintance with the poem. A sparse corpus of poems that 'work' won't do. The teacher needs to be acquainted with poetry from various eras and different parts of the world: poetry from these islands, but also from China, Japan, Africa and the Americas. (Children's poetry of the USA is sadly neglected.) The teacher needs to know poetry written for children, but also poetry that youngsters can embrace that is not written 'for' them, and poetry that children themselves have written.

It follows, thirdly, that the classroom needs a substantial poetry library of real richness and variety. Online poetry resources, helpful here and there, are ancillary to the work of handleable books that children can browse in at their leisure.

This, in turn, implies, fourthly, the active collaboration of children in the choice of many of the things they read and perform. And that further implies – fifthly – a 'slow' handling of time that will undercut the urgent temporal styles of the dominant pedagogies.

It seems clear that a pedagogy for 'love of' the poem will conflict with current classroom practice insofar as that takes place within existing curricula.

The Presenter

Robert Hull is a teacher with many years' experience of working with children, in his own classrooms and as a visiting writer. His 40 or so titles include three collections of his poetry for children: (*High Tide* (2010), *Everest and Chips* (2002), shortlisted for the 2003 CLPE award, and *Stargazer* (1997), shortlisted for the 1998 Signal Prize). Other publications include the *Wayland Tales from Around the World* series (1993–1994), and a number of poetry anthologies for children, including *Science Poetry*, *Green Poetry* and *Christmas Poetry*, in the *Wayland Thematic Poetry* series (1991), as well as *Breaking Free* (1994), a human-rights collection. He has published three books on teaching and poetry: *Poetry – From Reading to Writing: A Classroom Guide for Ages 7–11* (2009), *Behind the Poem* (1988) and *The Language Gap* (1985). Articles and reviews have appeared in *Books for Keeps* and *Writing in Education*.

The Hidden Child

Debbie Pullinger

When is a poem a children's poem?

Many of the generally accepted traits of children's literature are features of narrative texts, and so not as prominent in children's poetry. Children's poems often lack, for example, the child protagonist or even the child's perspective, so ubiquitous in children's fiction. Children's literature also typically features what Barbara Wall identified as dual address, so that the adult author interacts with both an implied child reader and an implied adult audience: Perry Nodelman's 'hidden adult'.

Poetry, on the other hand, is bound up with notions of truth telling, authenticity, the dialogue of the mind, voicing consciousness. The reader, too, has to take a more active role in creating meaning, not least through participating in the poem's physicality. Both author and reader are more fully implicated in the text.

So how, then, is the adult poet able to speak to the child? What is the implied audience of the adult poet and how is it manifest in the text? And does this tell us anything about the conflicted category of children's poetry? At the workshop I outlined a theoretical approach to the personae of children's poetry and explored the ideas through selected poems by Philip Gross.

The Presenter

Debbie Pullinger is a PhD student at the University of Cambridge, in the second year of her ESRC-funded research on children's poetry. After working for many years in teaching, educational publishing and writing, she returned to academia in 2008 to do a Master's degree in Children's Literature followed by a Master's course in Educational Research, both at Cambridge. Her work on constructions of childhood in the poetry of Charles Causley was published in 2010 in M. Styles, L. Joy and D. Whitley (ed) *Poetry and Childhood*, Stoke on Trent: Trentham. Alongside her doctoral research, she is working with David Whitley on a local study of the progression in poetry teaching from early years to higher education.

Dealing with Death: Tough Topics in Poetry for Children

Emily Roach

The aim of this presentation was to explore how death is dealt with both in poetry written specifically for children and in poetry typically included in adult anthologies to which children are frequently exposed as part of a secondary-school teaching or examination syllabus. Initial consideration was given to the question of how the death of a parent is dealt with in poetry, with reference to the differing approaches of Brendan Kennelly's 'I See You Dancing, Father' (1990) and Dylan Thomas's 'Do not Go Gentle

into that Good Night' (1952). Kennelly talks of going 'back beyond the old man ... to find the unbroken man', cultivating memories of his father in more youthful times, while Thomas focuses on the frailty of old age and desperately urges against the 'dying of the light'. It is possible that since Kennelly's poem has a youthful implied audience, it may be more accessible to a child grieving the death of a parent, in contrast to Thomas's poem, associated with an adult audience, although often studied at school.

I went on to touch on a child's perspective of a funeral, contrasting Seamus Heaney's 'Mid-Term Break' (1966) with Wes Magee's 'Until Gran Died' (1989). Whereas Heaney's poem focuses on the reactions of the adults to the death of a child, Magee's is centred on the response of a child to the death of an adult.

The final part of the presentation was devoted to exploring how a poem dealing with death might teach a child important lessons about life, with particular reference to Brian Patten's 'Geography Lesson' (2000). This was contrasted with the messages imparted by the father to the child in Roger McGough's 'The Way Things Are' (1999), which is crafted out of the realities and harshness of life ('no guarantee my last goodbye is au revoir'), whereas Patten's poem focuses on the futility of death, with the aim of leading towards a more fulfilled life.

Poems Mentioned

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Brian Patten (2000) 'Geography Lesson'. In *Juggling with Gerbils*. London: Penguin Books.

Roger McGough (1999) 'The Way Things Are'. In *The Way Things Are*. London: Viking Books.

The Presenter

Emily Roach is currently studying on the MA distance learning course in Children's Literature at Roehampton University and in this academic year she will begin her dissertation and final year of the course. She has just completed her poetry module.

Negotiating Borders: Poetry and the Language of Children

Siwan M. Rosser

Some readers thrive on the slippery, elusive nature of poetry; others struggle to comprehend its twists and turns. To navigate the strangeness of poetry and make it accessible and relevant to its young audience, contemporary children's poetry often manipulates language and form, experimenting with vernacular voices and playful comedy. In an attempt to articulate a distinct poetic voice that resonates with children, some poets use dialect and slang. By playing with conventional grammar and vocabulary, the poets are negotiating the borders between language registers, and are raising interesting issues regarding how children's language is perceived and what constitutes the voice of the child within poetry. My research into Welsh-language children's poetry explores how these issues are addressed in the context of a minority language.

Because of the relative marginalisation of the Welsh language, its children's literature is often ascribed a linguistic and cultural function. All schoolchildren attending Welsh-medium education in Wales speak both Welsh and English, and an increasing number

are from non-Welsh speaking families. Literature, therefore, is considered a means to attract young readers to appreciate the merits of the Welsh language and its culture, which could so easily be dismissed as inferior to the global allure of Anglo-American culture. Welsh literature is also considered to be a linguistic tool to affirm and enhance language skills, especially of second-language speakers, and this is particularly true of Welsh poetry. As a result, most Welsh children's poetry adopts a literary style that reflects the flexibility of spoken Welsh, but retains many features of traditional poetic discourse. However, in order to express the bilingual reality of children's lives, some poets use English slang and syntax to reflect children's voices and experiences. This code switching between Welsh and English challenges the traditional function of Welsh poetry and compels us to acknowledge and face the role of bilingualism in children's lives. Rather than portraying the English language as a threat to the future of the Welsh language, here we are offered a glimpse of the creative and often sophisticated way in which bilinguals use both languages to communicate. However, these poems also remind us of the unequal power relationship between English and Welsh, and of the constant need to support and promote the Welsh language as a living language that exists beyond the school walls. It is in the context of language revitalisation, therefore, that my workshop explored how children's voices and experiences of bilingualism are expressed and perceived in contemporary Welsh-language poetry.

The Presenter

Siwan M. Rosser is a lecturer in Welsh literature at the School of Welsh, Cardiff University, specialising in popular poetry and children's literature. Her first language is Welsh and she is bilingual in Welsh and English.

Singing Voices: Caribbean Children's Poetry in Multicultural Britain

Georgie A. Horrell

As Beverley Naidoo demonstrated in her research described in *Through Whose Eyes? Exploring Racism: Reader, Text and Context* (London: Trentham Books, 1992:16):

Literature has the tremendous quality of allowing us to engage imaginatively in the lives of others. It enables us to move beyond ourselves and our own experiences. If we allow ourselves to respond to it fully, it can be a great educator. For those of us brought up monoculturally, literature which springs from outside our own boundaries can be a life-line.

The multicultural nature of contemporary Britain renders the need for intercultural communication and understanding absolutely vital. The paper given at the conference argued that Caribbean children's poetry has a vibrant and effective role to play in this regard. Focusing on the collection edited by John Agard and Grace Nichols, *Under the Moon Over the Sea* (London: Walker Books, 2002) reveals not only the provocative and imaginative cultural content, but also the powerful use of 'nation language' in the poetry. I suggest that it is precisely the sound – the *music* – of the poetry that evokes difference and communicates identity.

The Presenter

Georgie A. Horrell is a lecturer in the Faculty of Education, University of Cambridge and a Bye Fellow at Homerton College. She is a member of the Teaching Caribbean Poetry Project led by Morag Styles. Her research interests are in postcolonial literature and she has published within this field – and, more recently, in postcolonial children's literature.

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

Aneesh Barai

Old Possum’s Book of Practical Cats (1939) poses many challenges to a translator, with its dense allusiveness, experimentation with rhythm and metre, and representation of the city. It has been translated into French twice, by Jacques Charpentreau as *Chats!* (1983) and Jean-François Ménard as *Le Guide des Chats du Vieil Opossum* (2010). These two translations of Eliot’s complex text put forth contrasting approaches to such language-specific features as names, places and poetic forms: Charpentreau domesticates names and places but works to replicate Eliot’s rhythms, and Ménard standardises rhythms and rhymes to French norms, but keeps Eliot’s names or close French equivalents.

This is Eliot’s only widely published children’s book, but he wrote a number of other poems for individual children in letters, such as ‘A Practical Possum’. Further, Eliot’s interest in and support of children’s literature can be seen in his poem to Walter de la Mare, and his publishing de la Mare’s poetry.

This workshop presentation first summarised key theoretical issues in the translation of children’s literature – domestication and foreignisation, the low position of children’s literature in the literary polysystem and read-aloud ability – and contrasted the translation of works for adults with those for children by looking at French translations of Eliot’s *Four Quartets* (first published 1935–1941). My presentation then considered the metrical forms of ‘Skimbleshanks’ and ‘The Old Gumbie Cat’ in all three texts, followed by the names of the cats in translation, focusing on domestication for rhyme, wordplay and allusion, and finally at the role of the city in these texts.

As an urban project, *Cats* can be seen as completing for Eliot something that he feels *The Waste Land* (1922) failed to achieve. Moreover, where ‘childhood’ and ‘the city’ are often seen as mutually exclusive terms in following the Rousseauvian notion of the ‘natural’ and ‘rural’ child, children’s theorists such as Jenny Bavidge and Bruno Bettelheim strongly assert the importance of urban writing for children. Indeed, Baudelaire, one of the first poets of modern urbanity, and also a writer of cat poems, often included children in his urban writing. Eliot follows Baudelaire and brings cats, children and the city together in an early Baudelairian poem for adults entitled ‘Spleen’ after Baudelaire’s collection of urban prose poems *Le Spleen de Paris*. In it, Eliot writes of ‘Children and cats in the alley’.

The importance of London to *Cats* is reworked by Charpentreau, aiming to introduce his child readers to Paris instead. It is precisely through such reworking that Charpentreau and Ménard successfully translate Eliot’s poetry in a manner relevant to their audiences. Where the low place of children’s literature in the literary polysystem is often problematic, here the greater liberties allowed in domestication and adaptation open up to these translators the opportunity to translate poetry poetically.

The Presenter

Aneesh Barai is a PhD student at Queen Mary, University of London, working on English modernist children’s literature and its French translations. He has spoken at four conferences on children’s literature, including talks on the French translations of James Joyce’s and T.S. Eliot’s children’s books. He recently gave a paper at the International Research Society for Children’s Literature (IRSCL) biennial conference in Brisbane.

The Times Stephen Spender Prizes 2011

Robina Pelham Burn

When this translation award was launched in 2004, the aim was to bring foreign poetry back into the classroom and encourage a new generation of literary translators. Initially we had two categories, 18-and-under and 19–30, which elicited plaintive postcards from would-be entrants of a certain age! The following year we removed the upper age limit and were delighted to be deluged with entries from translators ranging from nine to 90. At that point we realised that a child in the early years of secondary school or still in primary school could not begin to compete with an A-level student, so in our third year we introduced a third category: 14-and-under.

This year the judges decided to share the 14-and-under prize between two Year 8 boys who had translated quite different poems. Giles Robinson chose Jacques Prévert's 'Déjeuner du Matin' because, as he said in his accompanying commentary, he had seen someone in a café showing these emotions, so the poem rang true to him. The poem's first few lines set the scene:

He put the nescafé in the cup
 He put the cravendale in the cup
 He put the sugar daddie in the cup
 He put the small spoon next to the creamy hot cup
 He turned and gulped his cup of coffee
 He placed his cup of coffee on the table
 Without a word
 He lit his cigarette
 And blew a smoke ring around another girl, I knew then
 It was over

Anamay Viswanathan elected to translate a quite testing Spanish poem, 'Hijos del sol y del viento', by a poet unfamiliar to the judges, Mohammed Ebnu. Beginning

We still live
 On the edge of insignificance
 Between the north and south of the seasons

Anamay picked his way surefootedly through the imagery of the original, despite his concern, voiced in his commentary, that he had failed to capture the elegance and fluidity of the Spanish.

The commentary has been a feature of the competition since the beginning, one that A.S. Byatt described as 'splendidly intelligent'. It gives a voice to the translators, who for once have the chance to explain and justify their decisions; sometimes startlingly personal, they also make interesting reading. Entrants are asked to say why they have chosen the particular poem, mention any problems they have encountered on account of the original language or the poem itself, and explain their approach to the task; for instance, whether they have chosen to retain the metre or rhyme scheme of the original poem.

Andrew Wynn Owen (first prize in the 18-and-uder), who taught himself Anglo-Saxon in his last year at school and submitted 'The Whale' from the *Exeter Book*, won over the judges with his powerful beginning:

I sing of a fish, with all my wiles
 in woven words, of the wondrous whale.

He wrote of his attempt to imitate the alliteration of the original, while not letting it become overbearing.

Joel Farrance (joint second in the 18-and-under), who hopes to study medicine and took French AS level alongside three sciences, delighted in reproducing the clever wordplay of Robert Desnos's 'Comme':

Come, says the Englishman
And the Englishman comes.
Como! says the porter
And the traveller, suitcase in hand
Leaves the train.
Come, says the Spaniard
And the other one eats...

Attempting to replicate what she described as Prévert's 'highly charged flickers of energy in this moment of passion captured by the poet', Phoebe Power (joint second prize winner in the 18-and-under, wrote:

Your dress dropping on to the polished parquet
made no more sound
than an orange peel dropping on carpet
But under our feet
its little pearl buttons crackled like pips.

William Kennaway (joint second prize winner in the 18-and-under) translated 'In the Jaws of Luxury ...' by Petronius (Latin). His last lines read:

Why the green emerald, the precious glass?
Why do you need the fires of Carthaginian stones –
unless for honesty to sparkle out of the rubies?
Should the bride clothe herself in woven breeze,
or should she flaunt her nudity in a linen mist?

All the winning translations from this and previous years can be read at www.stephenspender.org or free booklets can be obtained by emailing info@stephenspender.org. The closing date for entries for the 2012 prizes is Friday 1 June 2012.

The Author

Robina Pelham Burn is Director of the Stephen Spender Trust.

The Future of Libraries

Kay Waddilove

As an ex-public (and, presently, school) librarian, I was pleased to see *IBBYLink 32* dedicated to the value of libraries. I currently work in Brent, whose council recently won an appeal in the High Court, enabling it to close 50% of its libraries. I subscribe professionally to the valuable service offered by Hertfordshire Schools Library Service, whose council have decided – without any consultation and at the very end of term – to close the service in March 2012. Harrow, where I live, has made half the public library staff redundant in order to balance its budget. These are dire economic times and it is inevitably difficult for libraries, whose worth cannot easily be measured in crude monetary terms, to assert their value in creating and maintaining a literate and civilised society.

One of the most stalwart advocates in the current fight to maintain a viable library service has been the author Alan Gibbons, whose indefatigable work in establishing the Campaign for the Book (CftB) has succeeded in reversing or forcing reassessment of some of the more absurd political decisions of recent months concerning library closures; I was sorry to see that *IBBYLink 32* did not mention this important work. Himself a prolific and popular children's writer, Alan Gibbons launched CftB in 2008

and has worked assiduously ever since to rally support for both school and public-library services under threat. He has mobilised support from hundreds of writers, illustrators, teachers, publishers and professionals determined to challenge the ‘grinding, unremitting marginalisation of the book and deep on-going cuts in library services’. The recent CftB open letter (25 November 2011) to Michael Gove, Secretary of State for Education, makes a compelling case for the government’s abdication of responsibility towards the ‘great national institution [of libraries, which are] responsible for the transmission of a passion for reading and literature’. The CftB is submitting to parliament’s Select Committee on Libraries, and Alan Gibbons, Julia Donaldson and other colleagues are meeting with Ed Vaizey, Minister for Culture, Media and Sport in February 2012.

IBBY members, who are naturally concerned with the importance of books for young people, as well as the international issues, will be interested in Philip Pullman’s comments at a recent conference:

One of the things which bothers me most of all is the effect on children if libraries are closed. There was a study recently showing British children read for enjoyment far less than children in Kazakhstan or Albania. Another study, quite different and separate, demonstrated that children in the UK were far less happy than any other country. I think these two are probably connected. We must be careful what we do to our children. We must look after them better than we are doing, and that includes preserving libraries.

(Library Campaign and Voices for the Library conference, 22 October 2011)

Interested *IBBYLink* readers who would like to support this worthwhile campaign may wish to check out Alan’s blog at <http://alangibbons.net/campaign-against-the-book-latest/>. And the first National Libraries Day will take place on 4 February 2012 – a chance for us all to show how much we care about libraries. As Alan Gibbons declared in a recent CftB newsletter, ‘We will not go gentle into that good night. We will resist. ... The fight for our libraries is only just beginning.’

The Author

Kay Waddilove is Head of Learning Resources at a large north London comprehensive school, and obtained a Masters degree in Children’s Literature from the University of Roehampton in 2008. She has spent 20 years working for different public library services in London, before moving into school librarianship, first in Hertfordshire, then in Brent. She is currently researching for a PhD in Children’s Literature.

REVIEWS

Books about Children's Literature

Contemporary Children's Literature and Film: Engaging with Theory

Kerry Mallan and Clare Bradford (ed), Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, pb. 978 0 2302 3150 4, 2011, £16.99, 200pp.

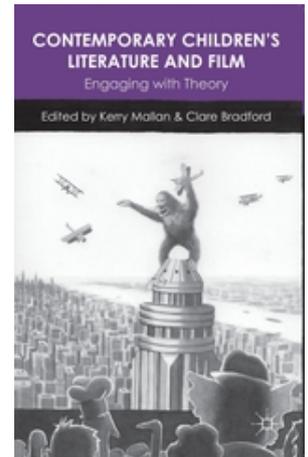
The contributors to this aptly subtitled volume (I will say more about the main title itself) represent an impressive bevy of distinguished international theorists about children's literature. In addition to their introduction, the two editors have been involved with another four substantial pieces of writing in this volume, either singly or in collaboration.

The first name to greet the reader after those of the editors is that of John Stephens, whose chapter 'Schema and Scripts: Cognitive Instruments and the Representation of Cultural Diversity in Children's Literature' distinguishes between schemata ('knowledge structures which provide the framework for understanding', networks of constituent parts consisting of aspects such as objects, situations, genres and cultural forms, and static elements are evoked as we experience a stimulus, whether from life experience or from reading) and scripts (dynamic elements that express 'how a sequence of events or actions is expected to unfold') (pp.13–14). Stephens uses this theoretical framework to discuss several texts that assume or question cultural ideas.

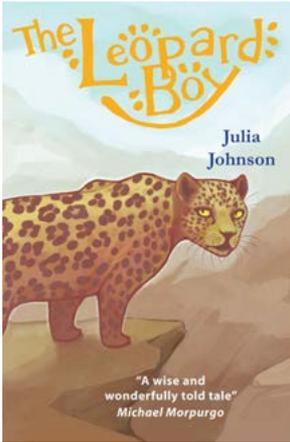
The other chapters continue to challenge readers' assumptions. For instance, Clare Bradford and Raffealla Baccolini's 'Journeying Subjects: Spatiality and Identity in Children's Texts' draws on a range of theories from other academic areas in order to interrogate a range of texts including Maurice Sendak's *The Wild Things*. Other topics scrutinised include Gothic misogyny (Maria Takolander), transgender writing (Christine Wilkie-Stubbs) and Ecocriticism (Geraldine Massey and Clare Bradford). An area, however, that, from the title of the book, I was expecting to be the focus of the majority of the chapters – that of the interaction between film and children's literature – receives relatively little attention. The question of adaptation is, indeed, central to David Buchbinder's chapter 'From "Wizard" to "Wicked": Adaptation Theory and Young Adult Fiction', in which he looks at a variety of texts, including the film versions of Ursula Le Guin's Earthsea novels, but is not pursued to any significant extent in other chapters.

While welcoming the book as a collection of important perspectives on theory associated with children's literature, I would therefore query whether the title creates expectations in the reader that it does not fulfil. If perhaps it had been entitled 'Contemporary Children's Texts' this would not have generated such expectations, but would, at the same time, have allowed discussion of additional varieties of children's 'texts', notably those in the form of computer games, interactive video and even toys. While it would be unreasonable to expect that much of the book should have been devoted to areas that may seem marginal but could in some cases be part of the future of children's 'literature' in a broader sense, there is an argument to be made that they have as much relevance to the subject as does film. As it stands, the book is certainly to be recommended for the reader looking for contemporary theoretical perspectives on children's books, but could be disappointing for those seeking elucidation on the interaction between the written text and film.

Pat Pinsent



Story Books



The Leopard Boy

Julia Johnson, illus. Marisa Lewis. Frances Lincoln Children's Books, pb, 978 1 8478 0213 2, £5.99, 2011, 96pp.

It was a pleasure to read this book that can be enjoyed on many different levels.

From the start, the setting makes it a special read. It reflects a culture different from our own in Britain and from the experience of the majority of British children. The story of Khalid, the small goat boy and his challenge to save the mountain leopard gives us all food for thought in this modern world. It is a story that has pace, where good and evil face the eternal challenge. Happily for Khalid and the reader, good prevails. Julia Johnson has written a gentle story that will provoke much discussion and reflection. The illustrations of Marisa Lewis add to the quality of the story.

Wendy Veazey

Marco Moves In

Gerry Boland, illus. Áine McGuinness, Dublin: O'Brien Press, hb. 978 1 8471 7229 7, £6.99, 2011, 64pp.

When Patrick answers the door to a big grizzly bear who wants a nice cup of tea he takes it all in his stride. In fact Patrick seems to take most things in his stride, however extraordinary they may be. Patrick is a very down-to-earth boy and is used to his mother's strange behaviour as well as the neighbours checking up on his welfare every night.

Marco the grizzly bear escapes from the zoo and turns up on Patrick's doorstep wearing a big black duffle coat with a large hood. Patrick is far from surprised. He distracts his mother by sending her to make a pot of tea while he invites Marco into the sitting room. While Mum is easily dealt with, four more visitors require him to do some quick thinking to disguise Marco. Patrick deals with the interruptions in a matter-of-fact manner before offering Marco a new home.

This is an amusing and gentle story told in simple prose reflecting its Irish roots. There is a lot of humour, especially when Marco has to disguise himself, and Patrick talks to the numerous visitors. However, there is a hint of sadness to the story as Patrick is lonely and left to his own devices much of the time. Not only does Marco find a new home, but Patrick finds a much needed friend.

The black-and-white illustrations by Áine McGuinness convey action wonderfully and contribute to the narrative with speech bubbles adding more humour.

Nicola Collins

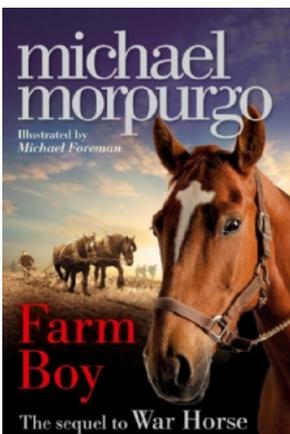
Farm Boy

Michael Morpurgo, illus. Michael Foreman, London: HarperCollins Children's Books, pb. 978 0 0074 5065 7, £5.99, [1997] 2011, 128pp.

Shadow

Michael Morpurgo, illus. Christian Birmingham, London: HarperCollins Children's Books, pb. 978 0 0073 3961 7, £6.99, [2010] 2011, 288pp.

Michael Morpurgo's books must be valuable properties at the moment, as *War Horse*, already a hit in the theatre, takes to the screen. The reissue of *Farm Boy*, described on the cover as the sequel to the better-known book, is clearly timed to take advantage of this situation. As in so many of Morpurgo's books, the description of the central event is framed by the first-person narrative of a young boy. He prompts his grandfather to tell him about his childhood and gives the grandfather the tool of literacy so that he can write the account of a ploughing match when a tractor is beaten by the 'war horse' Joey



and his mate Zooey. The story is enhanced by both the simple quasi-oral voices of the boy and the grandfather, and the characteristic pictures by Michael Foreman.

Shadow is a more complex text, with three narrators: Matt, his Grandpa and Aman, a boy who is on the point of being transported back to Afghanistan as an illegal immigrant. As well as describing the journey to England of Aman and his mother, accompanied part of the way by the eponymous Shadow, a dog trained to sniff out explosives for the British army, Morpurgo reveals the horrors of the notorious Yarl's Wood Detention Centre. Basing his plot on true incidents involving sniffer dogs, Morpurgo creates a link between Aman and an army dog handler and this is key to the happy ending, which is not however reached without a cunning twist at the end.

Underlying the plot is the way in which Morpurgo creates bonds of affection both between Aman and his schoolmates, especially Matt, and between all the characters and the dog. The active role taken by the grandfather, both in visiting Aman and his mother and in bringing the case to the attention of the press, is crucial to the successful outcome, but that does not reduce the centrality of the dog to Morpurgo's exposure of the evils of the detention system to his young readers. As Aman tells the grandfather about how he befriended Shadow, he makes a remark that is key to the author's message: 'Some people here [i.e. in England] like dogs better than they like children. Actually I think if I was a dog, they would not shut me up in here like this' (p.71).

The political agenda does not, however, dominate to the extent of detracting from a suspense-filled story, and I could imagine this book also making an effective, and tear-jerking, film or TV drama.

Pat Pinsent

Zero to Hero

Rob Childs, illus. John Williams, London: Frances Lincoln Children's Books, pb. 978 1 8478 0223 1, £5.99, 2011, 128pp.

Rob Childs has written several successful series of story books for children, mostly centred on school football-team players. He bases much of the content of his stories on his own personal experience, first as a schoolboy who played football, albeit rather reluctantly, and secondly as a teacher who coached teams of children in a wide range of sports, including football.

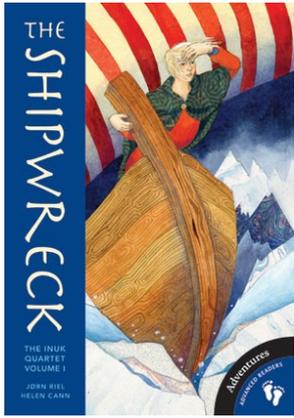
Zero to Hero has, as its main character, Simon, who is one of a family of three boys, all keen footballers except him. Simon would rather be bird watching than taking part in a game. However, because of a series of unfortunate events, he is drawn into being part of the school team during an important tournament, where his school is struggling to stay out of the relegation zone. His role as goalkeeper leads to some amusing incidents, but, as Simon is keen to emphasise, he is better with his hands than his feet, and it turns out to be the perfect position for him.

There are issues that arise which will be familiar to readers of other stories that focus on school life. There are bullies who predictably enjoy making life difficult for those less fortunate than they are. There are the talented girls who join the team with unexpected results. A new boy who arrives at the school has difficulties that are successfully resolved with the help of some of the team, providing him with a happy school experience for the first time in his life. Simon's devoted dog Tilly also has an important part to play, particularly as a retriever of any ball that leaves the pitch during games.

The issues within this book are sensitively dealt with and will be familiar to quite a few readers. There is enough of a focus on football to engage fans of the sport, and the rise of Simon from 'zero to hero' will appeal to those children who enjoy seeing the underdog come out ahead.

Jackie Davenport





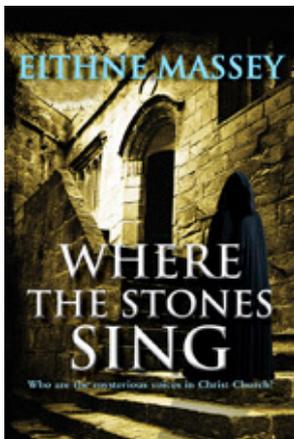
The Shipwreck (The Inuk Quartet Volume 1)

Jorn Riel, illus. Helen Cann, Oxford: Barefoot Books, pb. 978 1 8466 334 9, £7.99, [1979] 2011, 111pp.

Part of the Advanced Reader series, this illustrated narrative is packed with Icelandic factual detail and action, deliberately developing the reader's vocabulary. The plot echoes that of *Beowulf* with the young hero Leiv Steinursson's quest and revenge for the sudden killing of his father by Thorstein Gunnarsson. The elders punish Thorstein by exiling him from Iceland for three years, so he sets sail for Greenland, little knowing that Leiv is concealed onboard the ship. The youth is no match for adult Thorstein, but Leiv learns that Thorstein's brother was killed by his own father and the two agree to wait to settle the score 'when Leiv's arms have grown as long as Thorstein's.'

Rather suddenly the focus shifts to an Inuit sister and brother, Narua, eleven, and Apuluk, twelve. Inuit literally means 'human' and the Danish author, who has considerable knowledge of the Arctic region after living for 16 years there, shares the Inuit peripatetic way of life with us. The Inuit greatly fear strangers from over the seas. It is not surprising that, following a sudden summer storm which shipwrecks Leiv, when he is spotted clinging to a pole by Apuluk and Narua and rescued, they decide to conceal him in a cave until he can speak their language and prove he is not hostile. Their friendship develops and Leiv becomes skilful with harpoon and spears, learning the language and Inuit beliefs and values. In particular we learn that the Inuit live close to nature without need for clocks, gold, silver or jewels and never go to war. Adventures illustrate the bravery of both boys, and by the time they discover that Thorstein has survived, there seems no point in fighting and killing. Thorstein too realises his gift of a sword is useless: far better a knife for hunting and needles for sewing. We applaud Leiv's decision to remain in Greenland, no longer desirous of what he sees as his senseless past. The reader has also learnt to value nature and respect another culture along the way.

Susan Bailes



Where the Stones Sing

Eithne Massey, Dublin: O'Brien Press, pb. 978 1 8471 7277 8, £6.99, 2011, 208pp.

Medieval Dublin seen from a gull's eye view begins this Key Stage 2 historical narrative centring on the lives of a few chosen choristers in Christ Church Cathedral and the community of Brothers. The photographs aptly complement the text and although the historical background may be familiar with the rat's eye view, prior to an outbreak of the plague, and the cat's eye view, prior to a witch hunt, the tale is compelling and we quickly want to read on and find out about two street urchins, Kai, disguised as a boy, and her brother Edward, an apprentice stonemason. The daily lives of the monks are carefully described and the echoes of children's voices from the past come alive as we turn the pages. The generous benefactress, Dame Maria, mourning the sudden death of her only son Philip, allows Kai to become part of the cathedral world and we share her experiences, friendships and concerns. When she is finally wrongfully accused of witchery and about to be burnt, it shows just how dangerous jealousy and fear can be – but the stones that sing bring about her release and the poetic use of language throughout is uplifting.

Susan Bailes

Barrington Stoke Books for Reluctant Readers

These books are additions to Barrington Stoke's publications designed to attract reluctant readers, or those who have reading ages below the chronological standard.

I take it that these two books may be aimed at a slightly older readership than some others in the series, since, unusually, the books are not illustrated. They both bear a

sticker announcing them as ‘dyslexia friendly’, which seems an unwelcome way of narrowing the varied audiences they are intended to help. I know from my own experience as a tutor that different groups of young readers with different underlying causes of difficulty can respond well to the Barrington Stoke series. I see no reason to restrict their appeal to a single group.

Tudor Rose

Anne Perry, Edinburgh: Barrington Stoke, pb. 978 1 8429 9317 0, £6.99, 2011, 69pp.

Rosie is a contemporary teenager who is unhappy at school because her reading skill is not up with that of her cohort. Anne Perry demonstrates a very convincing grasp of the emotional impact reading difficulties can have on a young person. Rosie visits an antique shop and there chances on a watch. While all the other watches in the shop are cold, this one is warm. It turns out to be a time-slip device that will carry Rosie back into Elizabethan England.

Queen Elizabeth I chats confidentially with Rosie and explains that despite her outward show of confidence at the time of the Spanish Armada, inside she was quaking. She also explains that some of her courtiers are poor readers, but that doesn’t mean they are stupid.

Rose of No Man’s Land

Anne Perry, Edinburgh: Barrington Stoke, pb. 978 1 8429 9487 0, £6.99, 2011, 73pp.

In this second book in the series, Rosie is again transported back in time – to the First World War. During the war Rosie ends up in the hospital of Nurse Edith Cavell, the patients being prisoners of war under German supervision. One of the nurses explains to Rosie that Cavell helps wounded patients to escape from the hospital and return to the Allied lines. During the course of this book, Cavell is arrested. Because of her closeness to Cavell, Rosie is interrogated by a German officer, whom she finds surprisingly human.

Rosie returns to her own time and place. In her school history examinations she is able to give brilliantly detailed accounts of two historical periods, without having been able to study the texts as easily as her classmates.

These books are a positive and motivating example of how people with learning difficulties can learn through other means. Not everyone can have a time-slip device, but everyone can learn from DVDs, films and conversations. The books also serve to lay bare a myth that is frequently propagated, that modern teaching methods in today’s schools cope perfectly adequately with reading difficulties: they don’t.

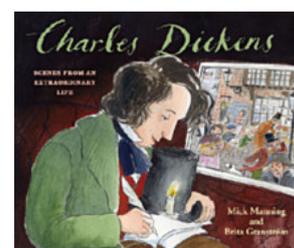
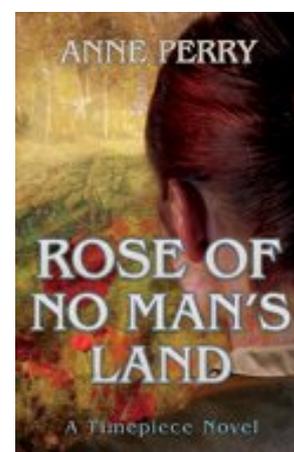
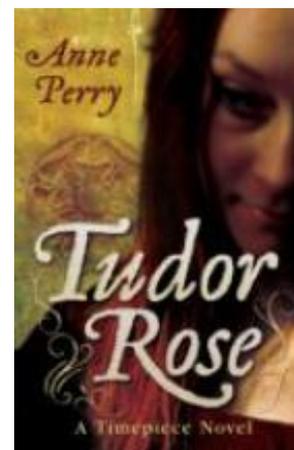
Rebecca R .Butler

Non-Fiction

Charles Dickens: Scenes from an Extraordinary Life

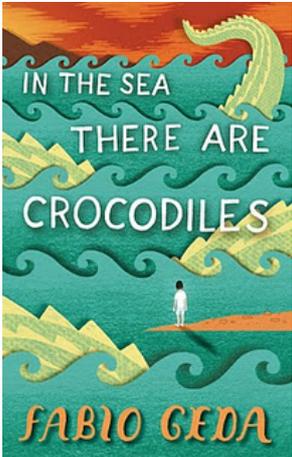
Mick Manning and Brita Granström, London: Frances Lincoln Children’s Books, hb. 978 1 8478 0187 6, 12.99, 2011, 48pp.

This book celebrates the extraordinary life and genius of Charles Dickens, the best-selling author of his day. Told partly in the first person, the book borrows from Dickens’ own words, including conversations, letters, quotes and writings, as well as the memories of his own children. As such, more experienced readers will get a sense of the language used in Dickens’ time; there is also a useful glossary of terms at the back of the book. These extracts are complemented by fact boxes that set the scene further from a third-person point of view. The illustrations are entertaining and contain speech bubbles from various characters in Dickens’ life, providing an appealing comic-like quality and vividly conveying drama and excitement. The book shows how London was the inspiration for many of his stories: children could study a modern map of London



and compare it with the streets and locations mentioned in the book and on the map in the endpapers. This biography would be an excellent companion text for children who are reading any work by Dickens, as it gives an interesting and valuable insight into the life of this much-celebrated author.

Kerenza Ghosh



In the Sea there Are Crocodiles – The Story of Enaiatollah Akbari

Fabio Geda, trans. Howard Curtis. Oxford: David Fickling, hb, 978 0 8575 6008 7, £10.99, 2011, 211pp.

When Enaiat's mother takes him from Afghanistan to Pakistan and makes him promise not to use drugs, not to use weapons and not to cheat or steal, he does not realise that she is going to leave him during the night and not return. So begins this fictional account of a true story of a nine-year-old boy during which he becomes a refugee in a number of countries where he is in turn abused, befriended, employed and unemployed, but in every case finds a group of young Afghan refugees who stick together and look out for each other. Over a period of eight years he makes his way through Iran, Turkey, Greece and then Italy, where he eventually meets the author at a book launch and asks him to tell his story.

The author's background is working with children in difficulties, and the collaboration between the two is underlined by the use of linking questions in parts of the text. What they have produced is a marvellous account of the life of a young refugee who, by sheer will, intelligence and determination, survives and eventually makes something of himself in the world.

John Dunne

Poetry

[See also *Let's Celebrate!* under 'Picture Books'.]

Hey, Little Bug! Poems for Little Creatures

James Carter, illus. Mique Moriuchi, London, Janetta Otter-Barry Books/Frances Lincoln Children's Books, pb. 978 1 8478 0168 5, £5.99, 2011, 91pp.

This volume of poems for very young children by James Carter belongs to a new publishing venture by Janetta Otter-Barry to print four, single-author, paperback volumes annually of contemporary poetry for children. James Carter's two young daughters provided the inspiration as he discovered the world anew. A bright yellow cover with its lively multi-coloured title, along with a scattering of bugs in various stages of development, encourages curiosity.

Inside, the freshness and fun of exploring the world and translating it through poetry opens up. A variety of creatures of all shapes and sizes, curious little 'bugs', bigger creatures like bears and hard to imagine ones like dinosaurs come alive. 'Bug Hug', a bug shaped poem, asks how you get close to an uncuddly creature, while six sticking-out legs all spell 'gimme a hug'. 'A Sticky Riddle' is printed as the squiggle of a snail trail (shades of Lewis Carroll), while in 'Naughty Step' the words resemble a flight of stairs. The phrase 'The bear came down the mountain' appears on the page as single steps descending, but, following a meal of honey, the words are printed in reverse to indicate ascent, which adds an element of excitement and unpredictability to the narrative.

Other poems consider questions such as, What is the wind?, Can you touch the moon? Puddles provide physical fun, travelling is exciting, and playgroup experience is translated into a lively alphabet of names and events. There is also the pleasure of making memories, the marvels of whispering sea shells, and the strangeness and wonder of dreams.

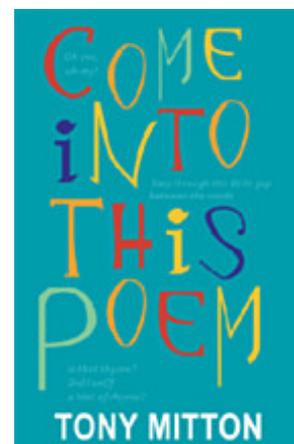
Read aloud, the poems spring to life and invite interaction and participation. Exploring them visually is also rewarding as the texts are clearly set out and easy to follow. Mique Moriuchi's simple illustrations, in shades of grey, provide a playful, visual complement to the poems, capturing their essence and are integral to the whole.

Judith Philo

Come into this Poem

Tony Mitton, illus. Caroline Holder, London, Janetta Otter-Barry Books/Frances Lincoln Children's Books, pb. 978 1 8478 0169 2, £5.99, 2011, 92pp.

Tony Mitton's first volume of poetry for children was entitled *Plum*. This volume of his poems belongs to the new series published by Janetta Otter-Barry Books/Frances Lincoln Children's Books for young children. Its range of subject matter is wide and there is a great variety of poetic style. The cover presentation gives a sense of this. The bold multi-coloured letters of the title, shining out from a kingfisher blue background announce an invitation to the reader. Three short, separate sentences in a paler, smaller text plus a doodle or two encourage engagement.



This comes with the first line of the first poem 'Garden': 'The door is open'. A child who has studied the book's cover will have a moment of recognition, it is one of the little sentences quoted there. The poem is short and appears simple, but in a few lovely words and phrases, 'where sunlight pulls green magic from brown earth' and 'insects spin their chances in the air', a mood and space is created to awaken an imaginative response (something akin to Robert Louis Stevenson's *A Child's Garden of Verse*, a space where imaginative freedom may flourish). 'Big Red Boots', a more conventional action-rhyming celebration of messing about in mud, follows, to ground the reader before further imaginative themes are introduced. The opening lines of the third poem, 'Entrance', will stir another moment of recognition from words quoted on the cover:

Come into this poem.
Step through this little gap
between the words,

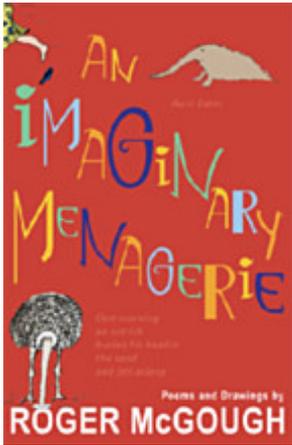
And continues:

and who knows what you'll find?
Some secret passage
tucked inside your mind?

We return to imagined realms.

Tony Mitton is a poet who conjures magic and reality; 'spins his chances in the air' to adapt his own words. This volume of his poetry is filled with an infinite variety of subject and form; there is playful humour, legends from many cultures (scholarly notes of explanation added), mystery, suspense, terror, an up-to-the-minute 'txt pom', a tutorial on structure in 'Shell Villanelle', and, in 'The Tea Song', a tribute to Charles Causley. This immersion in poetic experience will cause delight to its readers and establish a taste for more. Caroline Holder's responses to the poems that she illustrates are sensitive, evocative and subtle. Just as Tony Mitton creates effect with words so does she with line and shade. To mention her contribution at the end of the review is not to minimise its part in the creative spark offered to the reader.

Judith Philo



Imaginary Menagerie

Roger McGough, London: Janetta Barry-Otter Books/Frances Lincoln Children's Books, pb, 978 1 8478 0166 [1988]1, £5.99, 2011, 96pp.

This attractive collection has been reissued with illustrations by the poet himself, which certainly increase the appeal of the strange monsters inhabiting the verse. A clue to their behaviour is often given by their names, which reveal McGough's delight in wordplay: 'Allivator', 'Aunt-Eater' and 'Badgers and Goodgers' are just three of the many affording him this opportunity – while the puns such as 'Grey Starling' (say it aloud to get the link with the lighthouse heroine) and 'Hamsters' who build dams in Holland, are such as to lead to the inevitable groan and 'Oh no!' While this kind of humour is sometimes thought of as the province of prepubescent boys, the cleverness with which McGough invests it means that this collection has a wider appeal and could also provide powerful inspiration towards imitation by young readers.

Pat Pinsent



Goldilocks on CCTV

John Agard, illus. Satoshi Kitamura, London: Frances Lincoln Children's Books, hb. 978 1 8478 0183 8, £12.99, 64pp.

This collaboration between a highly original poet enjoyed by readers (and listeners) and a brilliant illustrator working on a range of traditional fairy tales has resulted in a very attractive book, probably most appealing to those of secondary-school age and adult readers. I suspect that the range of allusions, both to literature and to the contemporary scene may render it challenging to most younger children. While familiarity with traditional tales is essential to the appeal of such pieces as 'Puss-in-Trainers' or 'Rapunzel, Let Down', Agard goes beyond fairy tale in his comments on contemporary mores. The title figure of 'A Giant and a Mobile Phone' complains that his fingers are too big for 'titchy fiddly digits' so he decides he will have to 'bellow my blog/ and thunder my text'. The humour is sometimes racy: 'A Tattoo by Royal Command' has the king and queen, inspired by the teenage princess, instructing the royal tattooist 'to inscribe the royal coat of arms/ on their unmentionable bits'. The dark side is not neglected: 'Dwarf Rap' reminds us of the sinister role in 'caves and mines' of these 'superhuman bonsai beings'. New and sometimes disturbing perspectives on traditional tales are supplied in verses such as 'Stepmother' and 'Iron Jack', while the skilful use of cliché could revolutionise our reading of many tales:

So tell me the old familiar one
 about a woodcutter's son
 how I've got a chip on my shoulder
 how I've got an axe to grind ...
 how I'm as thick as two planks
 how I can't tell the wood from the trees.
 Have you finished talking down
 to us common folk?
 Well, you can talk from your high horse
 till your blue blood runs dry
 Remember you're not yet out of the woods

Remember you're not yet out of the woods. (From 'A Woodcutter's Son', p.51)

All 29, very varied, poems in this collection really demand to be quoted, while the illustrations, often with complex allusions to other art, complement the verse in a unique manner. A collection to reread and ponder over!

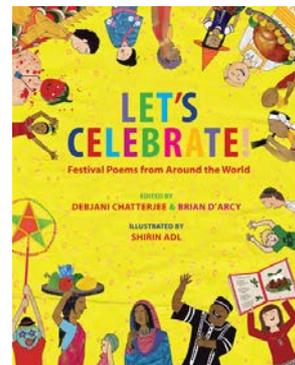
Pat Pinsent

Picture Books

Let's Celebrate! Festival Poems from around the World

Debjani Chatterjee and Brian D'Arcy (ed), illus. Shirin Adl, London: Frances Lincoln Children's Books, hb, 978 1 8478 0087 9, £12.99, 2011, 56pp.

This colourful and engaging anthology of poems, contributed by poets from across the globe, celebrates festivals from all around the world. Each poem is accompanied by a cheerful and eye-catching illustration, which reflects the excitement and sense of occasion that surrounds these festivals. As the poems are about celebrations that occur at different times, this collection is an excellent one to revisit throughout the year. Some poems are about culture, such as *The Chinese Dragon* and *Carnival*; others are about religion, such as *Easter Lily* and *Diwali*. A wide range of celebrations are represented, including those that are perhaps lesser known, such as the Cherry Blossom Festival in Japan and La Tomatina in Spain. Therefore, the collection offers an ideal introduction to the significance of celebrations for everybody, and reflects something of the world's diversity. The poems take a variety of forms, including acrostic, haiku, rhyming and free verse, and lend themselves well to reading aloud and performance. The last few pages of the book provide information about each festival, and children could be encouraged to do further research about celebrations around the world. The poems could also be used as inspiration for poetry writing about other special occasions.



Kerenza Ghosh

Fox

Margaret Wild, illus. Ron Brooks. London: Allen & Unwin, hb. 978 1 7423 7319 5, £11.99, 2011, 32pp.

Author Margaret Wild and illustrator Ron Brooks are two of Australia's best-known names in children's books. This fine picture book is a special 10th anniversary edition of their modern classic.

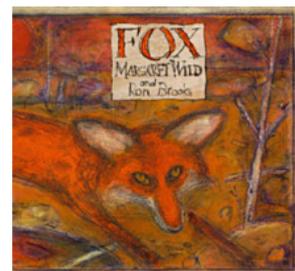
Fox is a compelling story of an unusual friendship between Dog and Magpie, who are both damaged. Dog is blind in one eye and Magpie has a burnt wing, but their friendship transcends their own grief, and when Dog runs through the scrub carrying Magpie clinging to his back, they are exultant: 'I will be your missing eye, and you will be my wings' rejoices Magpie. And the two friends become inseparable.

Then Fox arrives 'with his haunted eyes and rich red coat' and jealously conspires to part the two friends. At first Magpie resists, then, at the third asking, she agrees: 'I am ready'. Triumphant, Fox, just like Dog, carries Magpie on his back and streaks onwards to the dusty plains and the hot, red desert. Then 'he shakes her off his back as he would a flea' and he is gone. Abandoned and burning in the desert, the flightless Magpie feels remorse, she longs for her good friend Dog and 'begins the long journey home, slowly ...'.

Brooks' drawings grow out of Wild's spare and sometimes biblical language. The paint palate is of rich dark earth colours, reds, ochres, sienna and burnt amber, scratched through with black lines as if gouged by the characters' own claws. The scorching colours catch the metaphors in Wild's haunting text, the burning hot red desert, and powerful sense of place. The paper's surface is textured with collage, the paint is pushed around and manipulated by fingers, brush and sticks – giving an illusion of fresco or cave painting. The finely drawn animals are deeply etched into this painted ancient landscape, and move through the pages of the book as if in a dream.

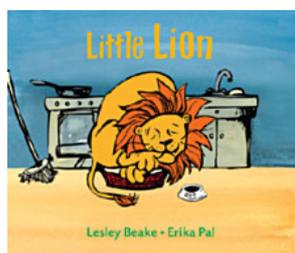
Brooks has used, perfectly, his own handwritten scratchy font for this book, and, in turn, the pages are held between a cover of rich, marvellous artwork, with its linen spine etched with copper text.

This is a memorable example of the picture-book form. Ground-breaking and courageous, it has been translated into many languages. Although it is not a 'fun' read,



both children and adults will be drawn into this compelling tale of friendship, loyalty, risk and betrayal.

Carol Thompson



Little Lion

Lesley Beake, illus. Erika Pal. London: Frances Lincoln Children's Books, hb. 978 1 8478 0189 0, £11.99, 2011, 32pp.

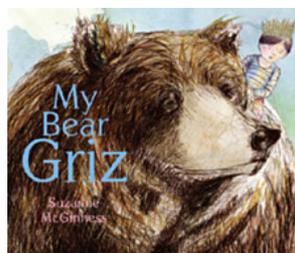
Based on a South African folk tale, this is a delightfully surreal story about a man who brings home a pet lion to his family, insisting it is a dog that will live with them in their home. There is a real sense of fun as children reading this book will cotton on to the joke, unlike the grown-ups in the story, who do not acknowledge that the lion is in fact a lion.

The theme of positive sibling relationships is also addressed: the twin boys are frequently picked on by the school bully and end up making good use of their unusual pet to deal with this situation.

A note at the end of the book tells that the story originated from the |Xam San (Bushmen) of the Northern Cape in South Africa, whose tales were written down by Wilhelm Bleek in the 1870s. This information could be shared with children, to consider the importance of keeping traditional tales alive. In |Xam San, the symbol | represents a 'click' sound, so children could be told about the |Xam culture and language.

Bright and appealing illustrations reflect the story's bizarre qualities and will engage the attention and imagination of young readers. The front and back endpapers are different, and could be used as a discussion point before and after reading the book, to make predictions at the beginning and evaluate the story at the end.

Kerenza Ghosh



My Bear Griz

Susan McGinness, London: Frances Lincoln Children's Books, 2011, hb. 978 1 8478 0113 5, £11.99, 2011, 32pp.

Billy is a small boy who has a very large bear called Griz – they are best friends and they do everything together.

This large-format picture book is a first published book by artist and author Susan McGinness. The size is perfect for the large-scale paintings depicting the adventures that these best friends share. They love to explore, play hide and seek, watch the stars and take naps together.

The spare illustrations fill the pages with dramatic effect: large tactile close-ups of the gentle Griz, juxtaposed with small Billy sitting on one of Griz's large paws or curled up under his hairy chin. Griz is depicted with expressive line pen-and-ink drawing, overlaid with loose brushed watercolour, while wellie-wearing Billy wears a collage crown. The scratchy background art of wax crayon or coloured pencil cleverly reflect a bear's claw marks and could have been drawn by Griz himself.

The large clear font of the printed narrative is effectively underpinned with loose hand-lettered dialogue, and is perfectly in tune with the pictures, working carefully together throughout the book.

This deceptively simple text is a tale of friendship, and McGinness shows an intuitive grasp of the child's world. Griz and Billy are empathetic characters in an imagined world in which the child can readily engage. They share both jokes and fears. The final spread reveals an irresistible twist and leaves much to laugh and think about.

Carol Thompson

Lola's Fandango

Anna Witte, illus. Micha Archer, Oxford: Barefoot Books, hb. 978 1 8468 6173 4, £10.99, 2011, 32pp.

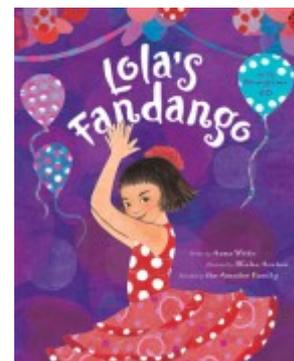
Lola lives in a city apartment with her parents and older sister. Lola is jealous of her sister Clementina, who, she thinks, has a better name, nicer hair and is a more talented painter. When Lola finds a pair of polka-dot shoes in her mother's cupboard, she becomes interested in flamenco dancing. After her father shows her a photo of her mother flamenco dancing, Lola begs him to teach her in secret. He teaches her not only to dance, but that she needs 'duende', or 'spirit, attitude'. After months of practice, Lola plans to dance at her mother's surprise party. When she is overcome with fear of dancing in front of an audience, Lola's father reminds her of her duende. It is then Lola's turn to receive a surprise before her performance.

Lola's Fandango is a wonderful introduction to Spanish culture, and features several Spanish words, which are explained in a glossary at the end. There is a beautiful rhythm to the story, especially when Lola is practising her dancing. There are also great sounds for reading aloud, such as honking traffic and the 'toca toca tica' noise of Lola dancing. The only disappointment was that the passing of the seasons was not more clearly identified to highlight Lola's dedication.

Micha Archer's collage illustrations are full of vibrant colours to match the vibrant dancing. There is much warmth and light to them as they tell Lola's story. A myriad of patterns lift the illustrations off the page and the double opening where Lola is practising in the apartment shows great humour.

The book is accompanied by a CD by the Amador Family, from singing ensemble Sol y Canto, narrating the story.

Marianne Bradnock



Red Car, Red Bus

Susan Steggall, London: Frances Lincoln Children's Books, hb. 978 1 8478 0184 5, £11.99, 2011, 32pp.

The fourth by an accomplished award-winning author/illustrator, this simple and colourful picture book is sure to be a big hit with the very young.

The vivid full-spread pictures, with their extensive use of torn paper collage and bright primary colours, take the reader on a journey with the number 27A bus and the many vehicles that follow it from the country into town and out again.

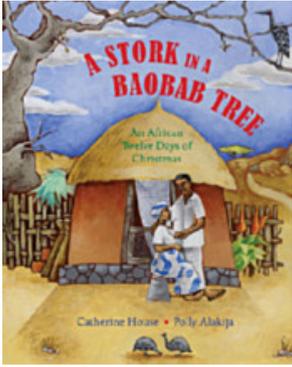
The text describes each car, bus, bike, truck and van simply, in terms of its name and colour, but uses a repetition and rhythm that builds up as the road becomes busier.

The pictures provide a wealth of additional detail for the attentive reader, with a rich cast of characters waiting for buses, going shopping or just walking along the side of the road. Small stories are told, such as the teddy bear dropped by a boy running for the bus, picked up by a passer-by and, several pages later, returned to its owner.

There is much opportunity for observation and discussion, with more to be discovered on each subsequent reading.

Marianne Bradnock



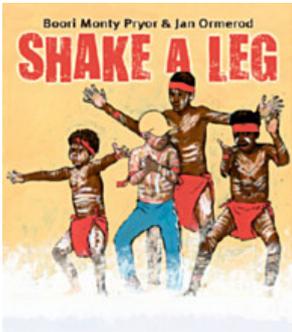


A Stork in a Baobab Tree: An African Twelve Days of Christmas

Catherine House, illus. Polly Alakija, London: Frances Lincoln Children's Books, hb. 978 1 8478 0116 6, £11.99, 2011, 32pp.

This is a delightful retelling of the traditional 'Twelve Days of Christmas' in an African setting. The vivid illustrations convey a very real sense of what village life is like in 12 different countries: the people, the animals, the houses and, in particular, the way in which Christmas is celebrated. The main text is a very distinctive version of the verse, while supplementary information on each page tells us more about particular aspects of daily life, from the traditional clothing to the kinds of toy enjoyed by African children. On the sixth day of Christmas, for instance, the gift is 'six women pounding', and there is a clear and straightforward explanation of how maize is ground in such countries as Mali. The striking compositions, with a strong sense of movement and warm palette of colours, combine with the words to convey a sense of tradition, joyfulness and community. The book can be enjoyed as a song with absorbing pictures by the very young, but contains much additional visual and written detail about life in Africa for the older child.

Marianne Bradnock

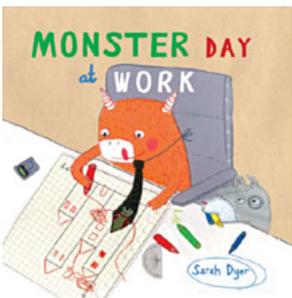


Shake a Leg

Boori Monty Pryor and Jan Ormerod, Crows Nest, NSW: Allen & Unwin, hb. 978 1 7417 5890 0, £11.99, 2011, 36 pp.

This book, written by the newly installed joint children's laureate for Australia, Boori Monty Pryor, was the winner of the 2011 Australian Prime Minister's Literary Award for children's fiction. It's a clever piece of storytelling, accompanied by stunning illustrations by Jan Ormerod, which showcases traditional Aboriginal culture, particularly three dances that themselves tell stories. The storyteller within the book is an Aboriginal pizza parlour owner in North Queensland, whose own chosen profession and those of his children illustrate the way in which cultures blend and mutate in the modern world, and he uses the pizza analogy to draw three hungry white Australian boys into an understanding of traditional Aboriginal culture: first by feeding them a crocodile-shaped pizza, complementing a story about a boy who was eaten by a crocodile while hunting for fish; and then accompanying their milk shakes with a story about boys attacked by bees while hunting for honey. Both these stories are told in dances, whose moves are realised in Ormerod's illustrations. Finally, with help from some friends, the pizza parlour owner draws the boys into the Shake a Leg dance that celebrates Aboriginal tribal identity, the relationship with the land and its animals and with the ancestors that have gone before, and where their bodies are decorated with the basic pizza ingredients, flour and tomato sauce. The book will not have as much resonance here as in Australia, but it is a triumph of story, illustration and design, in which Ormerod's evocation of the movement, ancient mystery and vitality of the dances is remarkable.

Clive Barnes



Monster Day at Work

Sarah Dyer, London: Frances Lincoln Children's Books, pb. 978 1 8478 0229 3, £6.99, 2011, 32pp.

When (smaller) Monster accompanies his dad to work, he enjoys the full experience: including the rush hour, although everyone's on push-along scooters here. A meeting with biscuits, and a visit to the gym to finish the day off. His colleagues at work are monsters who bear some resemblance to animal soft toys (with the addition of horns and some extra limbs), and life at the office is seen through a young child's imagination. So Monster has a nap mid-afternoon like any toddler, the high-street bank is a large pink pig and the gym offers an outsize playground slide as well as the more expected treadmills. Sarah Dyer's illustrations are bold, colourful and slyly humorous. They will

intrigue and amuse any child who has wondered what their parents get up to at work. Those of you who worry about the gender messages in picture books, may have some cause for concern in the conclusion, which shows mum doing the housework as a contrast to dad going out to work. The implication of this last double-page spread is perhaps that being at home is more demanding than going out to work, nevertheless the division of labour pictured here is resolutely traditional.

Clive Barnes

Lulu Reads to Zeki

Anna McQuinn, illus. Rosalind Beardshaw, Slough: Alanna Books, hb. 978 1 9078 2504 0, £11.99, 2011, 32pp.

This is the third in the series featuring Lulu, and celebrating the value and pleasure of reading with small children (the other titles are *Lulu Loves Stories* (2009) and *Lulu Loves the Library* (2009)). This time Lulu, primed by her parents through her story books, welcomes a new brother. He cries a lot but Lulu always has an answer, reading to him and telling him stories. She has a book for every occasion: for example when Zeki 'needs a new nappy, Lulu reads him her best potty book'. When baby is asleep, there is still time for Lulu's own books.

Lulu and her family are unashamedly open and positive role models, and this book will be seized upon by parents of young children and in libraries. The bright, colourful illustrations help to keep the mood upbeat.

All the Lulu titles are also available in paperback with a free CD, retelling the story in 20 languages.

Sue Mansfield

Woolly Mammoth

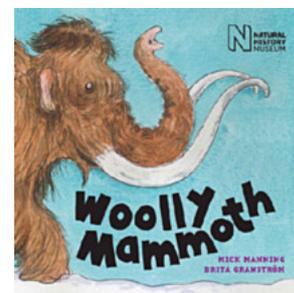
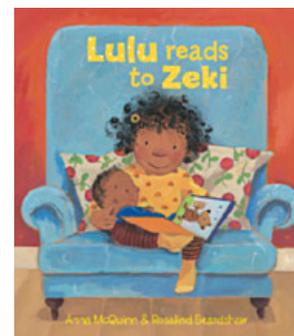
Mick Manning and Brita Granström, London: Frances Lincoln Children's Books, pb. 978 1 8478 0210 1, £6.99, 2011, 32pp.

Mick Manning and Brita Granström share both the writing and the illustration of this non-fiction picture book, which provides a fascinating insight into the lives of these unique creatures. There is a very useful timeline and glossary at the back of the book that is a helpful point of reference. The text takes two forms: that of a series of illustrated facts, arranged down the left-hand side of each double-page spread and that of a lyrical poem narrated by the mammoth. The factual information includes interesting scientific research that has been carried out following discoveries of mammoth parts in various countries. It also includes biological facts and some of the dangers faced by mammoths at the time of their existence. The poem is quite emotional in places, particularly when the mammoth is voicing his observations of human behaviour. It tells of daily events such as hunting, facing predators and the effects of the frequent inhospitable weather. Mammoth babies are depicted as being very appealing and it is easy to make comparisons with modern human babies. The rhyme is entirely appropriate and the gentle humour provides an interesting slant on the story.

Charlie, a nine-year-old boy who read this story, made the following comments:

I really liked this book. The style was interesting. I enjoyed the two different types of writing going side by side. It gave me lots of information about mammoths that I didn't know before. The poem was good because the mammoth was telling its story and it draws you in. I liked the humour and the rhyming of the poem. The pictures were excellent. I liked the way the cover picture took up both pages and you could open it out.

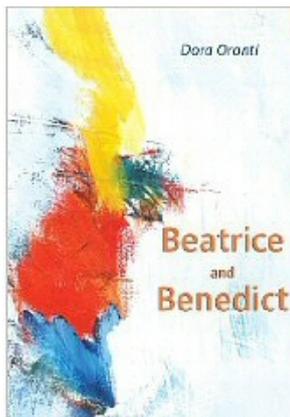
Jackie Davenport



Books for Young Adults

Beatrice and Benedict

Dora Oronti, Limassol (Cyprus): Georgiou, 978 9 9636 8613 1, 2010. Available in the UK as a Kindle ebook ASIN: B006MZMW4O, 2011, £4.99.



The very colourful word pictures reveal that this book is clearly the work of an artist. There are also many mysterious and magical events, but it is really a story about how a young girl, whose confidence has been destroyed by an accident and who is being bullied, regains her belief in herself and what she can achieve. We are first shown Beatrice in the forest, reading poetry to her pet turtle Greda, a scene that incidentally gives a good deal of background about how she had been injured and is now bullied, and her affection for Greda. The subsequent action is set within a context of fairy-tale elements: a mysterious forest, magical potions, flying carpets and danger from fire. These timeless features are interspersed with modern aspects, such as mobile phones and computer games, so that there is an interesting combination of the traditional and the up to date. The book also reveals some touching instances of boys' loyalty to each other, and the ability, even of those who seem malevolent, to change for the better. It leaves the readers with questions that will continue to occupy their minds after the book has been finished, especially that of what will happen after the end of the narrative. Through her flight on the carpet, Beatrice regains her confidence, so the ultimate message of the book, to be taken symbolically rather than literally, seems to be: make sure you have a magic carpet!

(The book had its launch at the Society of Authors, London, 11 November, 2011.)

Pat Pinsent

Lord of the Lightning

David Butler, Brighton: Book Guild, pb.978 1 8462 4634 0, £17.99, 2011, 304pp.

This book, by the father of one of our most regular contributors, Rebecca Butler, is a strikingly original amalgam between science fiction and the classics, with an evil business corporation thrown in to provide a comment on contemporary society.

What if the Olympic gods as presented by Greek religion were actually visitors from another universe, marooned here until earthly technology caught up with what they needed to repair their vehicle?

The plot, which derives from this hypothesis, takes its heroine, Penelope, and her devoted band of helpers to various key incidents in human history, ranging from ancient Rome to Nazi Germany, where they prevent interventions by some of the Olympic gods which would have changed the course of human history. Probably the most endearing character, however, is a grey seal-point Siamese cat named Leonardo, but nicknamed Captain Greycoat, who is responsible for many of the audacious schemes by which Penelope and company outwit the machinations of certain evil Olympians. The goddess Athene, however, accompanied by her owl Strix, which befriends Leo, is a force to be reckoned with on the side of good.

The events are cunningly interwoven to the extent that to give more detail would take away from the reader's enjoyment of the complex but logically sustainable plot. It is a substantial text, at nearly 300 pages, but the writing is clear and holds suspense, and should hold the interest of young adult readers, especially those who already know something about classical mythology.

Pat Pinsent



India Dark

Kirsty Murray, Dorking: Templar, pb, 978 1 8487 7210 6, £6.99, 2012, 326pp.

It is April 1910 in a Madras high court, and a young girl, Daisy, tells lies in the witness stand, whilst Poesy Swift, 13, one of the two heroines, covers her ears and rushes away from the scene closely pursued by Tilly, the other heroine. This narrative leads to a flashback and shifts, somewhat confusingly, between the two girls' accounts.

This gripping tale is based on an actual travelling troupe of 29 children called Pollard's Lilliputian Opera Company, renamed in the book as Percival's Lilliputian Opera Company, and the author has succeeded in bringing to life the drama, emotions and relationships amongst the company on their long tour starting from Port Melbourne, Australia. The villain of the piece, Mr Arthur Percival, the exploitative tour manager, gets his comeuppance, but there is much suffering along the way and several dead bodies, including victims of cholera. The tour ends in scandal when the children walk out on him at the end of their tour of India. Innocent Poesy grows up, experiencing romance and disappointments, discovering the dangers of stage-door johnnies and that her close friend Lizzie is, in fact, Mr Arthur's mistress.

The musical acts and treatment backstage of the young performers are reminiscent of ballet-school accounts and there is a warning for the adolescent reader not to embark on such a career, which is less glamorous than it may at first appear. Understandably, poor Poesy is easily persuaded by Tilly to choose to be a Lilliputian and escape from the alternative prospect of working in a match factory, which her mother plans for her.

The short chapters work well. The background is evocative and informative with magical fakirs and politics. For example, poor audience attendance in India is because two British women have been killed during what the imperialists called the 'Mutiny' and the insurgents called the 'Uprising'. I liked the programme touch at the start and was fascinated by the author's note, glossary and acknowledgements, showing how she had been inspired to write the book.

Susan Bailes

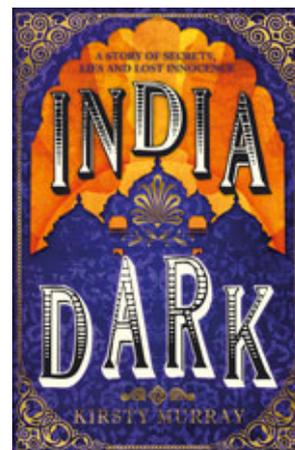
Sea of Tears

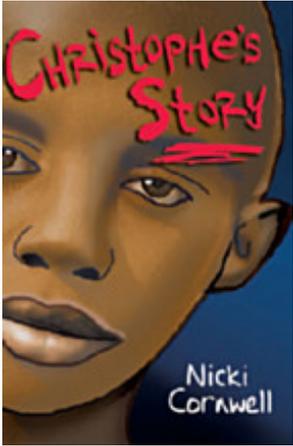
Floella Benjamin, London: Frances Lincoln Children's Books, pb. 978 1 8478 0058 9, £6.99, 2011, 288pp.

In her first novel for teenagers, writer and actress Floella Benjamin draws heavily on her own experiences. *Sea of Tears* is a story about roots: the West Indian heritage of Jasmine, who has never known anything other than the south London suburb where she has spent her first 12 years. Her parents, increasingly concerned about the violent society in which Jasmine is growing up, announce one day that they are all moving back to Barbados, to the paternal home. Jasmine is distraught at the prospect of leaving her friends and the life she knows, and seems prepared go to any lengths to remain in England. The idyllic island way of life and the bond she quickly develops with her grandmother prove little compensation for the isolation and bullying she experiences in her new school. The difficulty of adjusting and making friends will strike a chord with any young person who has had to move to a new place, and in her bold attempts to get back to England Jasmine acts out many a fantasy of teenage rebellion.

Benjamin's sense of place is vivid and detailed, though London and Barbados tend to be described rather than evoked. The story is told in the third person, and events are seen largely through Jasmine's typically teenage eyes; the authorial perspective on her parents' motives and feelings is not always wholly convincing. Despite Jasmine's somewhat improbable escapades, *Sea of Tears* addresses important questions about friendship and belonging, and the pace of the story will carry readers towards a satisfying and hopeful end.

Marianne Bradnock





Christophe's Story

Nicki Cornwell, illus. Karin Littlewood, London: Frances Lincoln Children's Books, pb. 978 1 8478 0250 7, £5.99, 2011, 74pp.

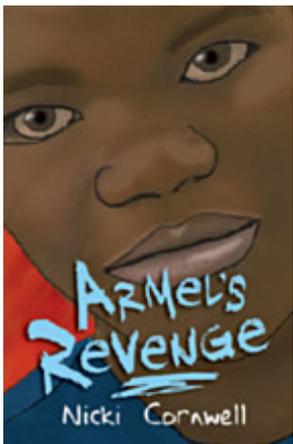
Selected for the Boys into Books programme, this is the story of a young Rwandan refugee now living in the UK. He is finding it hard to settle into his new school and misses his grandfather, who is still in Rwanda. A mishap in the playground leads to Christophe telling his shocking story, but he is horrified when his teacher wants to write it down. A story's power is lost when it is written down!

This is a gripping and sensitive story, which contains a vast amount of action in just 74 pages. It is fast moving and will keep the attention of even the most reluctant readers. The author introduces moral, social and cultural issues such as human rights, genocide and freedom of speech. It also carefully explains the conflict between the Hutus and Tutsis in a way that most 8–12 year olds would understand.

There is plenty to discuss in this story and it will give children a lot to think about beyond their day-to-day lives. Karin Littlewood's illustrations wonderfully capture the action of the playground and innocent pleasures of childhood, as well as the terrifying events in Rwanda.

[An earlier edition of this book was reviewed in *IBBYLink* 18 Spring 2007.]

Nicola Collins



Armel's Revenge

Nicki Cornwell, illus. Erika Pal, London: Frances Lincoln Children's Books, pb. 978 1 8478 0224 8, £5.99, 2011, 90pp.

The sequel to *Christophe's Story*, *Armel's Revenge*, sees Christophe given the job of looking after the newly arrived Armel because they both speak French. Armel's surly attitude baffles Christophe, while Armel's anger grows ever deeper. Christophe resolves to avoid Armel until he is faced with a situation he literally can't run away from. The devastating consequences of the showdown lead to Armel telling his story and making a decision about his future. Christophe and Armel discover they have more in common than they ever imagined.

Christophe and the readers are taken back to his escape from Rwanda, and the Hutu–Tutsi conflict is once again at the heart of the story. The theme of conflict is also explored in the character Con and his family who have emigrated from Northern Ireland to avoid the Troubles. This is a brave story that highlights how prejudices and hatred can influence the same families for generations.

The black-and-white illustrations by Erika Pal carefully add to the horrific events witnessed by both Armel and Christophe in Africa, without being too graphic. They also convey the action of the classroom and playground in a very realistic manner.

Nicola Collins

No Use Crying

Zannah Kearns, London: Frances Lincoln Children's Books, pb, 978 1 8478 0214 9, £6.99, 2011, 320pp.

No Use Crying is the title of Zannah Kearns' debut teen novel and, indeed, much proverbial spilt milk comes to light as 14-year-old Niki gradually unravels her family's secrets and faces up to new and, sometimes uncomfortable, truths.

The novel begins with Niki and her single-parent mum, Angie, relocating to London to care for Niki's grandfather, Robert. It is the latest move in Niki's young life, a childhood marked by constant moving around that has left her without any real sense of belonging. This sudden transition is the catalyst for much that has been suppressed to come to light, for Niki had been told by her mother that her grandparents were dead. Naturally Niki sees her mother's deception as a betrayal. Her sense of security is further rocked by her growing suspicion that Angie is hiding other things from her, including information about her absent father Damien, whom Niki has been taught to fear as a dangerous criminal. Angie steadfastly refuses to discuss Damien, but Niki's fierce desire to discover more gives her the courage to secretly track down her father. The realisation that he appears to be entirely different from her mother's portrayal raises yet more questions and anger in Niki.

Zannah Kearns explores issues of family estrangement and reconciliation, openness and deception, through all the main characters. Niki's mother and grandfather both harbour hurts and secrets that they have internalised over many years, and family relationships have suffered as a result. Past mistakes have led to the punishment of herself and others: the gradual exposure of these is painful, and carries implications for all three characters. In spite of her anger at her mother's lack of openness, Niki, in her own search for truth, constructs a web of deception herself as she secretly begins to build a relationship with her newly found father.

Kearns does not over-simplify issues or characters. Niki's sudden appearance clearly presents problems for Damien, but Kearns makes clear that it is healthier to face up to situations and deal with them, than to run away or bottle them up. Despite Angie and Robert's deception, Kearns presents them sympathetically: their deep sense of loss of what might have been is particularly poignant. Niki's search for the truth about her family and her own identity make the book a compelling read. Despite her insecurities, Niki is a feisty, engaging character who, in the midst of facing difficult family issues, must also find her feet at her new high school, learn to negotiate some tricky friendships and face some potentially threatening situations.

No Use Crying is Kearns' first novel and I think she is a writer to watch. Despite some unconvincing elements, the novel is well written and pacy, and Kearns demonstrates an excellent ear for teen dialogue in multicultural Britain. The novel is gritty but not grim. At the end the overriding feeling is one of optimism; that although past mistakes cannot be erased, openness and forgiveness can go a long way to making the future better.

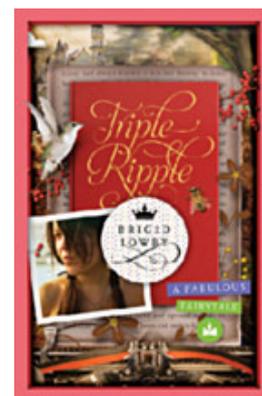
Anne Walker

Triple Ripple

Brigid Lowry, Crows Nest, NSW: Allen & Unwin, pb. 978 1 7423 7499 4, £6.99, 2011, 252pp.

Award-winning New Zealand author Brigid Lowry's novel comprises three discrete narrative strands, each delivered in a distinct voice and typeface, which are woven together over the course of 250 pages. At the core of the book is a fairy tale containing both traditional and modern elements: a spoilt princess, an endearing serving girl and a curse to be overcome.

Standing alongside 'The Fairy Tale' are 'The Writer' and 'The Reader'. 'The Writer', who perhaps, or perhaps not, reflects the voice of Lowry herself, is a literary construct who purports to be engaged in creating the fairy-tale narrative and who allows the real reader to witness her indecisions, rewritings, plot options and procrastinations. 'The



Reader' is a character called Nova, a teenage girl who is struggling with issues at home and school and who is also reading and reflecting on 'The Fairy Tale'.

Triple Ripple is a book about writing and reading a book, but despite its overt exploration of narrative voices and plot construction, this deliberately self-conscious text also manages to be playful and light hearted.

The chapter headings and their accompanying illustrations are quirky, the individual stories are satisfying, and the characters of 'The Writer' and 'The Reader', and those within 'The Fairy Tale', though not deeply explored, are vividly drawn and engaging. Lowry succeeds in making us care about Nova, Glory, Rolf, Mrs Blossom and Princess Mirabella.

Triple Ripple works well at getting readers thinking about how writers construct texts, tell stories and make meaning, and how we as readers react to stories as they enter into our lives and imaginations. It is easy to see how *Triple Ripple* could prove a useful and fun learning tool in schools, although, as it features mainly female protagonists, it is likely to appeal to girls more than boys.

Triple Ripple operates as a kind of literary prism, allowing separate narrative beams to be opened out. A literary conceit it may be, but Brigid Lowry blends her elements skilfully and playfully, making this a thoroughly enjoyable and entertaining read.

Anne Walker

Blood Runner

James Riordan, London: Frances Lincoln Children's Books, pb. 978 1 8450 7934 5, £6.99, 2011, 176pp.

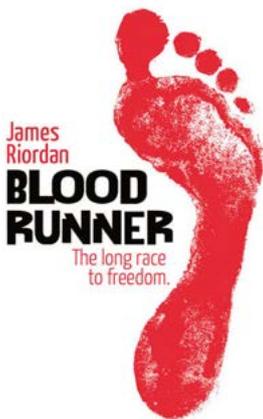
The dismantling of apartheid in South Africa provides the backdrop for this uplifting novel by James Riordan. The central character, Sam, and his two brothers – the wonderfully named Looksmart and Nicodemus – witness the deaths of their parents and sister when South African police open fire during a peaceful protest. Sam, a fast runner, flees for his life. The brothers escape and resolve to join the struggle against racial injustice. For Looksmart and Nicodemus this ultimately means taking up arms, but Sam is destined to play his part in a very different way.

Leaving their injured brother in hospital, Sam and Looksmart move to the Bantu homelands to work for Uncle Sabata, a tribal chief. Sabata arranges a clerical job at the mines for Looksmart, while Sam's work as a shepherd allows him the opportunity to develop his running skills. Sabata is impressed by Sam's athleticism and inspires him by recounting the true story of Abebe Bikila, who won a gold medal for Ethiopia in the 1960 Rome Olympics. This fires Sam's imagination; he grows determined to develop his running skills and make a statement on behalf of all black Africans by representing his country on the international stage. As apartheid crumbles and South Africa is readmitted to the Olympic Games, Sam's opportunity finally comes.

This is a slim book, which punches above its weight. The realities of South Africa under apartheid could easily have resulted in a harrowing read, but Riordan never loses sight of his audience. Through Sam's courageous personal journey, he makes a difficult and complex subject accessible to young readers (11 years plus, I would suggest). Riordan's understated prose style enables him to depict injustice with clarity and power, but without unnecessary horror.

The presentation is not morally simplistic though; good and bad actions feature among both black and white characters. Neither does Riordan shy away from acknowledging uncomfortable compromises; Uncle Sabata, whilst supporting Sam, nevertheless 'takes his cut' by providing white mine owners with black workers.

The main focus throughout the book is the character of Sam, who shines through as a person of hope and action. His courage in adversity and his commitment to his vision make this an inspiring and uplifting read.



Sam is a fictional character inspired by Josiah Thugwane, who won a Gold medal for South Africa in the 1996 Olympics. The fact that this story is woven around South Africa's recent history makes it all the more powerful.

Anne Walker

REPORTS

Patrick Hardy Lecture 2011

Puffin Books, The Strand, London. 27 September 2011.

Jonathan Stroud, the author of the best-selling *Bartimaeus* series, spoke about his personal development as a writer of fantasy (from the age of nine!) at the Children's Book Circle's annual Patrick Hardy lecture. He charted his enjoyment of fantasy from Blyton's *Magic Faraway Tree*, through Tolkien, Garner, Pratchett and Wynne Jones. He emphasised the importance to him of the playful aspects of fantasy, fostered by his involvement in producing game books and the multiple choices generated by the internet – the latter probably also having influenced the hallmark of his best-known books, the footnotes in the characteristic voice of the opinionated djinni. To read the lecture, see http://jonathanstroud.com/images_news/jonathan_stroud_patrick_hardy_lecture.pdf.

Goldilocks on CCTV

The Island Queen, Islington, London. 29 September 2011.

At the launch of *Goldilocks on CCTV* by John Agard and Satoshi Kitamura (illustrated by Satoshi Kitamura) John Agard was on typically good form. He talked about being led into fairy tales by his youthful fascination with the way the story of Rumpelstiltskin focused on the question of the character's name, suggesting that he may have unconsciously related this to the loss of name of those West Indian slaves who lost their names. He went on to entertain a packed room by reading several of the poems in the collection. (See review elsewhere in this issue of *IBBYLink*.)

School Library Association 2011 Librarian Awards

Mermaid Conference Centre, Blackfriars, London. 3 October 2011.

This annual event this year included the new Library Design Award.

The 2011 School Librarian of the Year is Carol Webb, who works at Forest Hill School, London. She is currently researching information literacy and uses her library lessons to further this area throughout the school. The others on the shortlist are Helen Emery, who has her own graduate trainee scheme in place at King Edward VI School in Lichfield, and Wendy Roberts, whose colleagues at Ardingley College in Sussex were so impressed by her work that they actively sought an award for which to nominate her.

Before the winner was announced, several speakers expressed concern about the current threats to school libraries, while the talk by author Philip Reeve included an account of how he had during his schooldays found the library a refuge – the 'heart of the school'.

This image linked well with the second part of the proceedings, the award for library design, something that is clearly crucial to its effectiveness. Kevin Crossley Holland created an image of the small library in the village where he grew up – years later when he was in the village again, he sought to return a loan copy of *Our Island Story* that he had subsequently rediscovered, but to his distress found that the library was no longer there!

Beating off stiff competition from the excellent designs of the new Atrium Library at St John's School, Marlborough, and the imaginative furnishings of The Elms Junior School at Long Eaton, the Library Bus from Rosendale Primary School in Lewisham won this new award because of its creativity and the message it gives to children that reading is fun. As ever, this ceremony was a very positive and encouraging occasion, reminding all present of the high-quality work that is being done all over the country.

Design and Illustration for the Next Generations

Penguin, The Strand, London. 6 October 2011.

This Children's Book Circle event brought together Val Brathwaite from Bloomsbury, Sarah Dyer, an illustrator, Caroline Sheldon, a literary agent, and Lionel Bender, a book packager of illustrated non-fiction. They each discussed their earlier careers before going on to give some practical advice to would-be illustrators about submission of material – notably to do their homework in finding out the most suitable publisher for their type of work.

Children's Book History Society Annual Study Day

Crown Court Church of Scotland, Covent Garden, London. 15 October 2011.

The study day celebrated the centenary of Frances Hodgson Burnett's *The Secret Garden*. The day began with a discussion between two biographers of Frances Hodgson Burnett, IBBY UK member Ann Thwaite, whose biography is very much the standard work, and Gretchen Gerzina, now teaching at the University of Brunel, Uxbridge, whose more recent work evolved out of an encyclopaedia article she was commissioned to write. Carole Dunbar spoke about class and associated issues in Burnett's work, noting in particular the importance to the novelist of growing up in Manchester during a period of social change. Anne Harvey presented the rich tapestry of film and television adaptations of the book, noting in particular how Noel Streatfield's *The Painted Garden* depicts one such (fictional) adaptation. Dennis Butts presented some thought-provoking material on the politics of *The Secret Garden*, and, finally, Peter Hunt entertained his audience with a lively presentation of the matters that do, or do not, merit footnotes in a scholarly edition of the text. Altogether, a splendid celebration of one of the most evocative children's classics.

Literature and Young Adults

The University of Luxembourg and the Centre national de littérature, Mersch, Luxembourg. 20 and 21 October 2011.

This cross-cultural conference, held on the first day at the campus of the University of Luxembourg and on the second at the nearby Centre national de littérature, was both stimulating and challenging, especially to the smallish contingent of people from the UK, the inadequacy of whose language skills was evident when confronted with papers in French or German, accompanied by a synopsis in the other of these two of the three official languages of the Duchy. Everybody also speaks the local language, while their English is well-nigh perfect too, as many of the presentations also demonstrated. The subjects of the talks ranged from the situation of literature for young adults in South Africa (where there are 11 official languages, but, inevitably, many people from minority linguistic groups prefer to write in English), through such familiar names as J.K. Rowling and Philip Pullman, to Garth Nix, Helen Dunmore, graphic novels and child narrators in several linguistic settings. On the first evening Poetry Factory staged a reading of their own works (in various languages) by a group of young local poets. Altogether it was an enriching experience that made us realise how (literally) insular we can easily become.

Roald Dahl Funny Prizes 2011

Unicorn Theatre, London. 1 November 2011.

Michael Rosen, the founder of the award during his time as Children's Laureate, led the proceedings. Two classes from schools involved in reading the shortlisted books took part in the ceremony: Year 1 from St. Joseph's Infant School in Wembley performed a scene from *First Week at Cow School* (Andy Cutbill, illus. Russell Ayto, HarperCollins Children's Books) and Year 7 from a junior school in Littlehampton read poems about the books, both classes receiving loud applause for their efforts. The winner of the 0–6 category was *Cats Ahoy* (Macmillan) written by Peter Bentley and illustrated by Jim

Field, and, in the 7–14 category *The Brilliant World of Tom Gates* (Scholastic) by Liz Pichon.

(John Dunne)

School Library Association Information Book Award

Free Word Centre, London. 2 November 2011.

This is a new award, sponsored by Hachette Children's Books and Peters Bookselling Services, for what are firmly labelled 'information books' rather than 'non-fiction'. It is designed to support school libraries and to highlight the high standard of resources available. The judges, chaired by Chris Brown, selected:

Under 7s *The Great Big Book of Families* by Mary Hoffman, illus. Ros Asquith. London: Frances Lincoln Children's Books.

7–12 *Animals at the Edge* by Jonathan and Marilyn Baillie. London: Franklin Watts.

12–16 *How to Make a Universe with 92 Ingredients* by Adrian Dingle. London: Scholastic. (Overall winner)

Children's Choice winners were:

Under 7s *My Very First Art Book* by Rosie Dickins and Sarah Courtauld, illus. Gus Gordon. London: Usborne Children's Books.

7–12 *The Murderous Maths of Everything* by Kjartan Poskitt, illus. Rob Davis. London: Scholastic.

12–16 *The Life and Times of William Shakespeare* by Kristen McDermott and Ari Berk, illus. various artists. Dorking: Templar. (Overall winner)

The complete shortlist can be read at www.sla.org.uk/information-book-award.php.

Eleanor Farjeon Award 2011

Penguin, The Strand, London. 29 November 2011.

The Eleanor Farjeon Award is made for distinguished service to the world of British children's books and is given to someone whose commitment and contribution is deemed to be outstanding. Founded in 1966, it is presented annually in memory of the celebrated author Eleanor Farjeon (1881–1965). The award recognises the unsung heroes who contribute so much to every aspect of children's books. The award is administered by the Children's Book Circle and sponsored by the Eleanor Farjeon Trust.

There was a very strong list this year, including such figures well-known to IBBY UK members as John Newman and Ferelith Horden, who were competing against Philippa Dickinson and two organisations with excellent records of encouraging children's reading, Volunteer Reading Help and the Federation of Children's Book Groups (FCBG), the eventual winners. The ceremony was prelude by an introduction from Anne Harvey on behalf of the Eleanor Farjeon Trust, and a scintillating talk by author Geraldine McCaughrean. She started by saying that she hadn't prepared a talk, but had luckily found, in a litter bin in a park (contemporary political comment here), a number of letters related to the book industry. These, ostensibly, included several caustic comments from dignitaries about libraries and the school curriculum, interspersed with others concerning the constant relocation of a fictional conference (involving such trouble spots as Tripoli, Syria and North London in August), because of fluctuations in the global situation. This hilarious start was followed by the presentation of the award, and a speech by Adam Lancaster on behalf of the FCBG in which he gave a short account of its history since its foundation 45 years ago. All of us who know the work of the FCBG through their activities will agree that this was a worthy winner.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

2nd Biennial NCRCL Conference: ‘Children’s Literature and the Inner World’

University of Roehampton, London. Saturday 12 May 2012.

Building on its history of highly successful international summer schools and one-day conferences, in 2010 the National Centre for Research in Children’s Literature (NCRCL) launched an exciting new series of biennial conferences of which this is the second.

If, as suggested by David Lodge, literature is a record of human consciousness, then children’s literature can potentially offer fascinating perspectives on the interior lives of children and young people. This conference will explore relationships between imaginative writing and the workings of the mind. It is a chance to examine how authors and readers approach the troubling question of how we can know what goes on within other people’s heads, especially when those other people are children.

Confirmed plenary session speakers are Philip Gross (University of Glamorgan), Farah Mendlesohn (Middlesex University), David Rudd (University of Bolton) and Alison Waller (University of Roehampton).

We invite proposals for workshop papers on literature for children or young adults and the themes:

- imagination
- the emotions
- consciousness and the unconscious
- perception
- memory
- the mind and body
- the reading process.

300-word abstracts for proposed papers, along with a short biography, should be sent to Alison Waller (a.waller@roehampton.ac.uk) by Wednesday 1 February 2012. See <http://ws1.roehampton.ac.uk/researchcentres/ncrcl/events/ncrclconference/index.html>.

‘Stranger in a Strange Land’: Exploring Texts and Media for Young People across Cultures and Continents

University of British Columbia. 28 April 2012.

A graduate student conference. See <http://blogs.ubc.ca/childlitconference2012/>.

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’. 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 or 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'. 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-cfplisting/28-cfp-aclar-2012-conference.

Grimm Brothers Conference

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

The title of the conference is 'The Grimm Brothers Today: *Kinder- und Hausmärchen* and its Legacy, 200 Years After'. See www.ielt.org/pagina/actividades?id=785.

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

Homerton College, Cambridge. 20–22 September 2012.

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, the three-year project aims to 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 Smartt.

The call for papers includes details of the conference fees and accommodation (<http://caribbeanpoetry.educ.cam.ac.uk/resources/CPpcallforpapers.pdf>). Abstracts (300 words approx.) should be sent to Bryony Horsley Heather (bsjh2@cam.ac.uk) by 31 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'. See www.uni-kassel.de/projekte/en/brueder-grimm-kongress-2012/startseite.html.

NEWS

There are indications that the significant role of children's literature is gradually becoming more recognised internationally:

ITI Bulletin, the Journal of the Institute of Translation and Interpreting for July/August 2011 has a feature article by Gillian Lathey, subsequent to the publication of her book *The Role of Translators in Children's Literature* (see review in *IBBYLink* 30). See www.iti.org.uk/indexMainG.html.

Muse India (<http://museindia.com>) Issue 39, Sept/Oct 2011, is devoted to the genre of English-language young adult literature in India.

A special issue of *Lettres russes* is to be devoted to Russian children's literature. See www.lettres-russes.fr/.

Children's Literature in English Language Education is a new biennial online journal for those involved in the field of English learning as a second or foreign language. Its mission is 'to disseminate information and provide a forum for the exchange of experience and research on the power of literature for the young'. Co-editors are Christine Lütge, Janice Bland and Sandie Mourão, and the advisory board includes many distinguished scholars. Details at www.clejournal.org.

The 2012 London Rare Books School will examine significant trends in the history of children's book publishing and collecting. See <http://ies.sas.ac.uk/cmeps/events/courses/LRBS/index.htm>.

Children's Laureate

The first issue of a newsletter, to be circulated every quarter, gives information about the activities of Julia Donaldson since she took up the position in June 2011. She has been present at several events in Scotland and also at the Cheltenham Literature Festival. She is particularly focusing on the need to support libraries. See www.childrenslaureate.org.uk.

Wales' First Young People's Laureate

Gwyneth Lewis, equally and brilliantly creative in Welsh and English, became the first National Poet in 2005, principally as a writer in English. As the post alternates linguistically, she was followed by Gwyn Thomas, a leading poet in the Welsh language. The first Bard Plant Cymru (Children's Poet for Wales), appointed specifically to encourage reading and writing in Welsh was named 12 years ago, and the latest incumbent, Eurig Salisbury, was announced at the Urdd Eisteddfod in June 2011. A few months later, Catherine Fisher was formally announced as the first Young People's Laureate at an event held in St David's Centre, Cardiff. Wales now has a triumvirate of laureates.

Wales' first Young People's Laureate has been appointed as part of a campaign to increase literacy levels among the nation's youth. Acclaimed children's author Catherine Fisher officially stepped into the new post on 18 October 2011.

The appointment comes amid increasing concerns that the popularity of social media and computer games among young people is having a damaging effect on reading and writing skills. But Fisher is confident that literature can combine with technology to reach out to young readers. She is also keen to see more authors visit schools and youth groups so that any barriers can be broken down.

'It's a bit daunting but obviously I think it's a very important task,' said Fisher about her new role, which will inspire creative writing as well as reading. 'We are a country with a strong literary heritage and I think it's really important that children's books are seen to be a part of that. Having a laureate as a figurehead is a really good way of getting that message across to people. There's a lot of competition today from other media but I

think that a book still has its place. There are ways of combining computer games and books, which might be where the future is, especially for teenagers.'

Fisher, who is from Newport and was shortlisted for the coveted Whitbread Children's Book Prize in 2003 for her novel *The Oracle*, said the first book she engaged with as a child was Lewis Carroll's *Alice In Wonderland*.

'I always liked fantasy and adventure stories like [Robert Louis Stevenson's] *Treasure Island*. What you read, especially when you're young, affects your whole life.'

Unsurprisingly, she now specialises in the fantasy genre and had her first book, *The Conjuror's Game*, published in 1990. 'I started off writing poetry when I was young and moved into fiction at university. I don't think I actually decided to write for young people – you just write a story and it's the way it happens. I've always been interested in magic, fantasy and mythical fiction.' Over the years, her novels have been translated into 20 different languages and the rights to her 2007 futuristic story, *Incarceron*, were optioned last year by 20th Century Fox. Twilight star Taylor Lautner is rumoured to have secured the lead role.

As young people's laureate one of her main aims is for more authors to meet up with their young readers. She thinks that once children see the faces behind the words, they are more likely to pick up the books. 'It would be good for them to meet the kids in all kinds of environments and not just schools – it means that reading won't be seen as work then, but fun.'

(WalesOnline.co.uk; *PN Review* 203:6)

Diverse Voices

Frances Lincoln have announced the judging panel for the 2013 book award, designed to encourage previously unpublished fiction for readers between 8 and 12: Shami Chakrabarti, Alex Wheatle, Kate Edwards, Jake Hope and Janetta Otter-Barry (who has the option to publish the winning novel). Closing date for entries is 31 December 2012. See www.franceslincoln.co.uk/en-gb/Page/98/Diverse_Voices.html for more details.

Interjuli

The next issue of this interdisciplinary journal will be titled 'Children's Literature and the Family'. See www.interjuli.de/en/index.php.

Anthologise: A National Poetry Anthology Competition for Secondary Schools

Competition closing date: 1 March 2012.

Spearheaded by Poet Laureate Carol Ann Duffy, this Laureate Education project is intended to encourage the wider reading, appreciation and enjoyment of poetry by pupils in schools. Open to all schools in the UK, groups of any size are invited to work together to create an anthology of poetry, using the resources and guidelines provided on www.anthologise.co.uk. These resources include articles, hint and tips from the Poet Laureate and other poets and anthologists; recommended reading; advice on researching poetry; links to useful websites; and suggested themes.

The judges are the Poet Laureate Carol Ann Duffy, National Poet for Wales Gillian Clarke, Scots Makar Liz Lochhead, John Agard, Grace Nichols and Cambridge Professor of Children's Poetry Morag Styles.

The winning anthology will be announced in June 2012 and the winning school will be visited by the Poet Laureate. The anthology will be published by Picador, with a foreword by HRH The Duchess of Cornwall and Poet Laureate Carol Ann Duffy.

IBBY NEWS

News from IBBY UK

IBBY UK Section: A Company Limited by Guarantee

Here is the latest news of the steps that the IBBY Committee is taking to put us on a more secure financial footing before the 33rd IBBY World Congress in August, which is definitely the biggest financial commitment which we have ever undertaken.

Earlier last year we completed the (as it turned out) rather drawn-out process of registering as a charity, bringing us considerable benefits in the form of being able to claim Gift Aid on our subscriptions. Later in the year we registered ourselves, under the name 'IBBY UK Section', as a Company Limited by Guarantee, which limits the financial liability of IBBY members. As part of this, we have adopted a new governing document or Articles of Association, which incorporates our old constitution. The next step is to register the new company as a charity and dissolve the previous charity transferring its assets to the company, a development which was unanimously agreed at a special general meeting at the IBBY UK/NCRCL MA conference in Roehampton on 12 November last year.

None of these changes affects either our overall aims or activities, although the new Articles of Association do add some further formality to the way we conduct committee business. We are also required to submit annual reports to Companies House and to the Charities Commission when we complete registration. We anticipate that registration of the new company with the Charities Commission will be a quicker process this time, since the wording of the objects that is incorporated in the new Articles of Association was agreed after considerable discussion with the Charities Commission last time around. We hope that everything will be completed by the time of our AGM in March or April (date to be announced).

Should you wish to take a look at the new Articles of Association, or our certificate of incorporation for the new company, then send me an email. Eventually these documents will be on the IBBY UK website.

Could you, Would you, Come and Join the IBBY Committee?

We have a busy year ahead of us, and we are aware that, enthusiastic and capable as our committee members are, there are limits to what we can achieve. Some of us, too, are getting long in the tooth and old in the ways of IBBY. In short, we could do with some new blood and new ideas. The committee meets in London about 4 or 5 times a year and we would welcome new members. If you are interested, please drop me an email. If you feel that you do not want to join the committee itself but would still be interested in helping in some way, then let me know.

Clive Barnes, Chair IBBY UK (clivebarnes@nttworld.com)

IBBY UK Greets the World

Following a message from the Pakistani section of IBBY, IBBY UK sent our Christmas card to all national sections, together with the hope that we would see representatives at the World Congress in London in August 2012. We received greetings in return from Ghana, Mexico, Indonesia, China, IBBY HQ in Basle, Estonia, Israel, Argentina, Iran, Korea, Nepal, Turkey and the Czech Republic. Many attached a seasonal illustration from one of their county's children's books, which was a memorable way to celebrate the transition into 2012.

Bridget Carrington

IBBY European Newsletter, November 2011

A new column '3 questions to ...' was introduced in this edition. Each issue will address three questions to a member of a European IBBY section to get to know that person and the national section. This issue met Eva Devos of IBBY Belgium–Flanders Section. IBBY Europe is now on Facebook at www.facebook.com/pages/IBBY-Europe/206787579351045. The November 2011 issue of the newsletter can be read at www.ibby.org/fileadmin/user_upload/european_newsletter-11_11/IBBY_European_Newsletter_November_2011.htm

IBBY Asian Newsletter, December 2011

This second issue of the Asian newsletter covers the IBBY sections of the Middle East and Asian. There are items from Australia, Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Iran, Japan, Korea, Pakistan, Palestine and the United Arab Emirates, including photographs from many events and promotions. This issue can be read at www.ibby.org/fileadmin/user_upload/asian-newsletter-december-2011-high-quality.pdf.

IBBY UK/Books for Keeps Celebrate John Burningham and Philip Pullman

Royal Overseas League, Park Place, London SW1A 1LR. Tuesday 18 October 2011.

Books for Keeps readers, IBBY UK members and guests from the children's book world turned out in force for an evening of celebration to mark John Burningham's and Philip Pullman's nominations for the international Hans Christian Andersen Awards 2012 and to hear them discuss their work. IBBY UK has nominated John Burningham for the illustrator award and Philip Pullman for the writer award.

In a lively conversation with IBBY committee member John Dunne, Philip Pullman reflected on the ten titles that IBBY UK have selected to go to the international jury of the Hans Christian Andersen Awards 2012. While Pullman is primarily known for his fantasy series *His Dark Materials*, his interest in history was also discussed. The music, literature and folklore of late eighteenth and early nineteenth century Germany contributed to *Clockwork*, which pays homage to the oral style of the Grimm brothers.

The impact of the invention of photography that enabled us, for the first time, to know what ordinary people looked like in the late nineteenth century prompted him to set the Sally Lockhart books around 1872, a time, he said, 'on the cusp of the modern world when we could also still have some idea of how people spoke to each other'.

The most exciting moment in Pullman's literary career was, he revealed, the moment in his garden when he realised that the children's and the adults' daemons in *Northern Lights* could be different: the children's daemons could change, while the adults' were fixed. This moment was more exciting than receiving his first royalties cheque. But what is Philip Pullman's daemon? A magpie or a rook, he revealed, because writers are stealers of tales and ideas. And how do you work out what is your own daemon? Pullman suggested that you ask your friends anonymously to write down what they think it is: 'And if they all say "slug", that's it! Or you could get yourself some new friends ...'.

John Burningham, in a wide-ranging conversation with IBBY UK member Carol Thompson, talked of the traumatic impact of having parents who dumped him for short periods at nine different schools. Eventually he ended up at Summerhill where he spent a lot of time in the art room with an inspiring art teacher. He eventually did illustration and graphic design at the Central School of Art in London, following a conversation with a friend on Waterloo Bridge who was doing just that. Burningham, who had no idea what to do next, thought 'good idea!'

Asked about his method of working, he revealed that he doesn't have a sketchbook. When he has an idea for a book he will do dozens of mapped-out pages with approximations of artwork and text until he sees that it works. Geese, dogs, Suffolk landscapes feature in different ways in many of his books, as does the house that became

Mr Gumpy's house with its veranda – it came from his imagination, but Burningham was later to buy a very similar house.



Asked about his next book, John refused to talk about it as it would be a 'bad omen'. This sentiment was echoed by Philip Pullman who would not be drawn on future plans either, although there may, when he is ready, be another book about Lyra.

(Adapted from Books for Keeps website <http://booksforkeeps.co.uk/>, with permission)

IBBY World Congress 2012, Imperial College London – Come One, Come All!

There's a clock in Trafalgar Square counting down the days until the start of the 2012 Olympics. However, we have to wait just a little longer than that for the 33rd IBBY Congress 'Crossing Boundaries: Translations and Migrations', which will take place on 23–26 August at Imperial College London. This is the first time the international congress has been held in the UK since 1982 and is a not-to-be missed opportunity to meet people from all around the world who want children everywhere to have access to high-quality literature and reading experiences.

Speakers confirmed so far include Shirin Adl, Patsy Aldana, Anthea Bell, Anthony Browne, Aidan Chambers, Julia Donaldson, Jamila Gavin, Candy Gourlay, Elizabeth Laird, Kai Meyer, Bart Moeyaert, Michael Morpurgo, Beverley Naidoo, Emer O'Sullivan, Michael Rosen, Shaun Tan, Verna Wilkins and Louise Yates.

Shaun Tan's keynote speech will be followed by a panel of illustrators talking about the influence of migration on their work – names to be announced soon. Sign up to our website www.ibbycongress2012.org to get updates about this and other details soon to be confirmed (select REGISTER from the top menu and then go to REGISTER YOUR INTEREST near the bottom of the page). These include a group of storytellers from different countries telling stories in their own languages and a live translation session featuring a Spanish author.

The winners of the 2012 Hans Christian Andersen Awards will be invited to receive their medals in a ceremony to be held at the Science Museum. We will know who they are after an announcement at the IBBY press conference at the Bologna Children's Book Fair on 19 March. Have a look at the IBBY International website www.ibby.org/index.php?id=1186 to see the list of who has been nominated.

Writers, illustrators and translators who have been nominated to the 2012 IBBY Honour List will receive their diplomas, and we have an exciting plan to bring their work to life before your eyes.

We will look at how ideas have migrated as well as people and stories. We will be welcoming our current Children's Laureate, Julia Donaldson, and former laureates Anthony Browne and Michael Morpurgo, and we hope to explore how the concept of a Children's Laureate has migrated to Ireland, the USA, Australia,

Another idea that began in the UK and has become widespread is the Bookstart scheme, administered by Booktrust. Bookstart celebrates its 20th anniversary this year and there will be a special session in which people involved in similar schemes around the world talk about their experiences.

Whilst we will be celebrating the achievements of the British children's book world in an international context, the idea behind our theme of translations and migrations is to explore how the movement of people and their languages and stories is mutually enriching throughout the world. We had a tremendous response to our call for papers. Around 300 submissions came in, of which we are able to find space on the programme for only just under half. The list of papers accepted is on the website. They represent a wide range of variations on and interpretations of our theme, and are from around 44 countries.

In addition to the main programme, there will be pre- and post-congress tours to places of significant interest to lovers of children's literature. Information on these will be on the website shortly.

How IBBY UK Members Can Contribute to the Success of our Congress

First of all, register as a delegate. There is the possibility of paying in instalments. If you are not able to register online, contact Ian Dodds who can send you a registration form: 020 8831 6116; ianmdodds@btinternet.com

Secondly, have you any fundraising ideas, large or small? Please get in touch!

Finally, could you offer a homestay to another delegate? Read what my co-director, Kathy Lemaire has written about this below and contact her if you think you could offer this.

See you at Imperial College 23–26 August 2012!

[Ann Lazim, Co-director, IBBY World Congress 2012, annlazim@googlemail.com.]

Have You Tried a Homestay?

The first international conference I ever attended was in Israel. I was very excited about attending, and very broke. Fortunately the conference organising committee were able to offer the ‘homestay’ option, and I was very grateful to be able to take advantage of this. I turned up, tired and dusty, at the flat door of another librarian in Tel Aviv, who welcomed me warmly. I felt I had found a sister! I stayed with her for the course of the conference and one or two days afterwards so that she could show me a few places in her exciting country. I slept in her spare bed, ate breakfast with her and gained confidence in my ability to travel round Tel Aviv on public transport. A year or two later I did the same thing in Alabama for a different conference. This time I was staying in a modern log cabin with an elderly lady who had been president of the Alabama Library Association; she fed raccoons off her back porch and still swam 30 laps each day. She had two librarians to stay, the other from Nepal.

A couple of years later I was delighted to play host to Irith from Israel, and later to Jane from Alabama, when they came to stay with me for holidays. I enjoyed this almost as much as I’d enjoyed staying with them! We did lots of tourist things, and they both said how much they appreciated staying with someone who lived here, instead of in a hotel.

As co-director with Ann Lazim, of the 2012 IBBY World Congress in London, I know that London, especially in this Olympic summer, is going to be very expensive for many delegates. We really want to encourage people from developing countries to attend, and know that the cost even of university accommodation will be high.

Ann and I would like to encourage you to consider offering a homestay option to one or two people, depending on your capacity, and if you live in London. All you need to do is to provide bed and breakfast, and friendship, to your guest(s). In return they will probably bring you a gift from their country, take you out for a meal, or maybe cook for you. And of course, you then have the option to go and stay with them in their home country at some time in the future. It is such a rewarding thing to do, and will also help us to get an exciting mix of delegates to the congress.

If you feel you might be able to offer this, or would like to ask more about it, feel free to contact me and I will be delighted to help.

[Kathy Lemaire, Co-director 2012 IBBY World Congress
Kathy.lemaire@btinternet.com.]

2012 IBBY UK/NCRCL MA Conference

Roehampton University, 10 November 2012.

The 19th annual conference is titled ‘Beyond the Book’ and is on the topic of performance.

Presentations at plenary sessions and workshops will look at all aspects of performance in this modern age.

Keynote speakers are currently being contacted and more details will be in the next issue of *IBBYLink*.

There will also be a panel of experts, workshop sessions, exhibitions and book sales, together with the opportunity to meet others enthusiastic about children’s literature. A call for papers will be sent out for the workshop sessions in July. Details will of the sessions will then be put on the NCRCL website (www.roehampton.ac.uk/ibby/index.html) when choices have been made.

Further information, including details of speakers and workshop presenters, will be put on the NCRCL website as it becomes available. For any enquiries, contact Laura Atkins: l.atkins@roehampton.ac.uk. Sue Mansfield is the IBBY UK member of the working party: mansfield37@btinternet.com.

[Gilllian Lathey and Jennifer Harding]

2012 IBBY-Asahi Reading Promotion Award

IBBY UK has nominated Book Aid International (www.bookaid.org/). The jury met 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 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.

LIST OF REVIEWS

Books about Children's Literature

Contemporary Children's Literature and Film: Engaging with Theory

Kerry Mallan and Clare Bradford (ed)

Story Books

The Leopard Boy

Julia Johnson, illus. Marisa Lewis

Marco Moves In

Gerry Boland, illus. Áine McGuinness

Farm Boy

Michael Morpurgo, illus. Michael Foreman

Shadow

Michael Morpurgo, illus. Christian Birmingham

Zero to Hero

Rob Childs, illus. John Williams

The Shipwreck (The Inuk Quartet Volume 1)

Jorn Riel, illus. Helen Cann

Where the Stones Sing

Eithne Massey

Barrington Stoke Books for Reluctant Readers

Tudor Rose

Anne Perry

Rose of No Man's Land

Anne Perry

Non-Fiction

Charles Dickens: Scenes from an Extraordinary Life

Mick Manning and Brita Granström

In the Sea there Are Crocodiles – The Story of Enaiatollah Akbari

Fabio Geda

Poetry

Hey, Little Bug! Poems for Little Creatures

James Carter, illus. Mique Moriuchi

Come into this Poem

Tony Mitton, illus. Caroline Holder

Imaginary Menagerie

Roger McGough

Goldilocks on CCTV

John Agard, illus. Satoshi Kitamura

Picture Books

Let's Celebrate! Festival Poems from around the World

Debjani Chatterjee and Brian D'Arcy (ed)

Fox

Margaret Wild, illus. Ron Brooks

Little Lion

Lesley Beake, illus. Erika Pal

My Bear Griz

Susan McGinness

Lola's Fandango

Anna Witte, illus. Micha Archer

Red Car, Red Bus

Susan Steggall

A Stork in a Baobab Tree: An African Twelve Days of Christmas

Catherine House, illus. Polly Alakija

Shake a Leg

Boori Monty Pryor and Jan Ormerod

Monster Day at Work

Sarah Dyer

Lulu Reads to Zeki

Anna McQuinn, illus. Rosalind Beardshaw

Woolly Mammoth

Mick Manning and Brita Granström

Books for Young Adults

Beatrice and Benedict

Dora Oronti

Lord of the Lightning

David Butler

India Dark

Kirsty Murray

Sea of Tears

Floella Benjamin

Christophe's Story

Nicki Cornwell, illus. Karin Littlewood

Armel's Revenge

Nicki Cornwell, illus. Erika Pal

No Use Crying

Zannah Kearns

Triple Ripple

Brigid Lowry

Blood Runner

James Riordan

IBBY/NCRCL MA Annual Conference 2012

Roehampton University, London. Saturday 10 November 2012.

The topic will centre on performance and the provisional title is Beyond the Book.

For more information, see www.roehampton.ac.uk/ibby/index.html or contact Laura Atkins: l.atkins@roehampton.ac.uk.

IBBY World Congress 2012

The 33rd IBBY World Congress will be held in at Imperial College, London, 23–26 August 2012. The title is ‘Crossing Boundaries: Translations and Migrations’. 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.

Registration is open – see www.ibbycongress2012.org/register.php.

The next issue of *IBBYLink* (Summer 2012, no. 34) (copydate 30 April 2012) 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.

IBBYLink 33 Spring 2012

The newsletter of the British section of the International Board for Books for Young People (IBBY UK), published three times a year.

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

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