

## Olympic Games and Sport

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An original painting by Dora Oronti, author, illustrator and publisher in Cyprus, who has generously sponsored this issue of *IBBYLink*.

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## EDITORIAL

‘Play up! play up! and play the game!’

(Sir Henry Newbold, 1899)

This ‘Olympic’ summer seems an appropriate time to celebrate the role of sport of one form or another in children’s books. Since at least the mid-nineteenth century, particularly in books set in schools, games and athletic contests have often had a leading role. Maybe this is because the only time a sizeable proportion of the population indulge personally in any form of sporting activity is at school, notwithstanding their subsequent enthusiasm for the efforts of celebrity tennis players or their chosen football team. Inevitably, from Thomas Hughes’ *Tom Brown’s Schooldays* (1857) onwards, boarding schools are the location of many of the sporting scenes depicted, and the team spirit is portrayed as intrinsic to patriotism, leading so many public-school boys to the outposts of the Empire (often converting the ‘natives’ to participation in their favoured pursuits in the process). The poem from which my epigraph is taken, ‘Vitai Lampada’, explicitly links war and cricket, and its inclusion in a prominent place in the contemporaneously published anthology I had during my war-time schooldays cannot have been coincidental. The vast number of books and magazines for boys that feature vital matches or contests have their counterparts in girls’ fiction, from Angela Brazil to Enid Blyton and Antonia Forest, and, more recently, Anne Digby (*The Big Swim*, 1979, which is set in a day school). Being successful at Quidditch (described by Elizabeth Schafer as ‘an amalgam of soccer, basketball, field hockey, lacrosse, dodgeball, rugby, cricket, and polo’) is shown in J.K. Rowling’s Harry Potter books as being nearly as important as defeating Voldemort.

This year, sport is in the news even more than ever. To the perennial topics – football, Wimbledon and the latest cricket series – new material about the prowess and chances of British Olympic athletes is constantly added. It is good

to see that this current of interest is being exploited by people in the book world. Patrick Ryan gives a full account of an exciting project that involves well-known football teams and players with the literacy of their young fans. Football is also the basis of another project exciting young people’s interest in books, this time involving Chelsea Football Club, described by Wendy Buddin and Michael Foreman. The link between storytelling and physical activity that he details seems to have important implications that could well be used in other contexts. The ‘unexpected heroes’ project described by Jean Webb and Robyn Cox, and involving the creative talents of the late much-lamented gifted writer and scholar Jim Riordan, is more directly related to the Olympic enthusiasm, while Stella Thebridge details some of the challenges and opportunities that this very enthusiasm poses for the library services, while P.M. Hanby reminds us of some books of the past that also feature the Olympics. Melanie Sefton’s account of the response of readers to a challenging novel that links football with ecological issues also reveals how an interest in sport can be a way in to confronting wider problems.

On a completely different note, we would like particularly to thank Dora Oronti, from Cyprus, for sponsoring this issue of *IBBYLink*. One of the many colourful pictures by this artist and children’s book writer graces our text and hopefully should whet the appetite of readers for more. A review of one of her recent books, *Beatrice and Benedict* (available in the UK from Amazon as a Kindle ebook ASIN: B006MZMW4O, 2011, £4.99; I also have a limited number of paper copies), appears in *IBBYLink* 33, and among her earlier work is an impressive series (currently only available in Greek) mediating artists, including Van Gogh and El Greco, to young children.

**Pat Pinsent**

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**33RD IBBY INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS**

CROSSING BOUNDARIES: TRANSLATIONS AND MIGRATIONS

23 - 26 August 2012, London



See p.53 for this very important event for IBBY UK as it hosts the IBBY International Congress this August in London.

Many countries have organisations and literacy agencies that develop events, projects and publicity intended to motivate children, teens and adults to read for pleasure and use the library. In the UK, one such agency is the National Literacy Trust (NLT), which ran the project Kick into Reading (KiR) that I was involved in. The KiR format was simple. A storyteller or writer trained a football club's coaches working in the community, its study-centre staff, and its apprentice players (called scholars) and first-team players to tell and read aloud stories to children. Libraries invited primary schools to story times led by these coaches and players. Children attending the KiR library story times, later visited clubs with their families for another story time, a club tour and a chance to meet players, and were given free tickets to that day's match.

We worked repeatedly with 23 well-known football clubs, reached over 80,000 children and involved thousands of adults (football staff, writers, poets and storytellers, library staff, teachers and parents). This experience exposed me to an interesting range of practices that showed up patterns and ways of thinking about narrative, learning and teaching, cognition, literacy and sport.

The aim of the project was to provide positive role models (sports personalities, mostly men) to encourage children (particularly boys) to read more and to use the library. Clubs were equally keen to support girls' reading and interests, and each club had female coaches and players taking part, and all audiences were a mix of girls and boys. Story times were aimed at 8–11-year-old listeners because, for inexperienced storytellers, this is the easiest age to which to tell stories and also because research shows that the crucial transition from beginning reading to sustained reading habits occurs during this age range.

Libraries targeted schools that were not using libraries regularly, or at all, those with few students registered as library members and those with the usual indicators causing concern for literacy levels. To measure impact, NLT designed questionnaires for the children, football-club staff, teachers, parents, library staff and storytellers/writers, with randomly selected individuals surveyed. Librarians tracked and compared changes in library membership and use among the groups invited to the story times. We found that:

- 96% of the teachers thought KiR encouraged children to read more;
- 72% of the children who were not library members joined after KiR;
- 100% of the librarians thought KiR encouraged children to hear more stories;
- all KiR participants afterwards used the library 25% more frequently than those children not on the scheme.

The project consistently met its objectives, which pleased everyone involved. Of greater interest were the following unexpected outcomes:

- Coaches continued telling stories, integrating storytelling in their regular work (for example, telling stories rather than cancelling soccer practice due to rain, or using storytelling to motivate or manage unruly groups).
- Players gained greater confidence in public speaking, and felt a change in self-image and awareness, causing them to consider teaching or coaching as alternative careers.
- There was greater parental/family participation in both library services and in local football-club activities.
- Better networking resulted between community organisations, institutions and services (librarians, coaches and players, teachers and head teachers).

As Jim Sells, manager of KiR, pointed out, literacy is not solely achieved through reading lessons and schoolwork. He regards it as a communal effort and that, to become readers, children need to be in a community of readers. The NLT sports projects seemed

to strengthen networks, making a community by involving far more community members in informal and formal education.

Observing coaches' and players' storytelling and children's responses provided insight into current ideas in cognitive studies regarding literacy. Footballers were trained in a variety of story-time activities (oral stories, picture-book storytelling, riddles, singing games, etc.). They tried all these in training, but used only those elements of the repertoire they felt most comfortable with. The processes they displayed in practising and performing these materials were fascinating. Choices and methods of delivery naturally reflected each storyteller's personality, age and background, but also cultural aspects of the club and its community: each club and each individual displayed a distinctive style and voice very quickly. This prompted enthusiastic interaction with the children, and consistent displays of mental and physiological phenomena associated with flow.

What fascinated me was how quickly the confidence to tell and the ability to engage listeners was manifested – more swiftly and deeply than normally happens with other professionals I train to tell stories (teachers and classroom assistants, library staff and those training to be professional storytellers). The explanation for this could relate to mental processes involved in, or arising from, intense physical experiences occurring on a regular basis, and the adaptation of this kind of thinking when it was applied to storytelling performance.

Early on, Peter Rhoades-Brown (former Chelsea player and coach for Oxford United), who, with Oxfordshire Libraries, created KiR, said:

Kids, I love watching your faces when you're listening to stories. I can see you're really into the story, thinking about what just happened, guessing what's going to come next, you're working it all out in your head. It's the same as when you're playing football: you're thinking ahead, about where the ball is, where it's going, where you are, where are the other players, remembering what's happened, thinking what's coming next. You're using the same part of the brain, same part of the imagination. Listening to stories, reading, playing football, it's all the same, really, all using the same parts of the brain.

When I heard this, I instinctively felt he was correct, and began noticing similar altered mental states in listeners and sports fans. People engrossed in reading a book, listening to a story, or watching or playing in a match are in the psychological *and* physiological state identified as *flow* by Mihály Csíkszentmihályi and as a *hypnogogic trance* or *liminal state* by others. In such states, chemical changes occur in the body and brain, processes that cognitive scientists and neurologists identify with neurological activity, particularly the development of synapses. Such chemical changes also create enjoyment, even if the activity is physically challenging. Sport obviously is, but also, though less obviously so, are aspects of reading, telling and writing, which also require the body to develop refined fine and gross motor skills, balance, and hand and eye coordination over a series of repeated experiences until they become automatic, executed subconsciously in order to engage in the habit fully.

Such altered mental states are created by contexts and actions that envelop the attention of the individual so that the immediate surroundings become forgotten and a specific element (the story, the game) is the entire focus. The process involves a triggering of associative memories. When those who love to hear or read stories encounter the text, aurally or visually, they begin to reflect on what is already known pertaining to the text, and to predict what comes next. This desire to know or confirm what we guess pulls us along so that we don't notice anything but the narrative and are 'stuck in the book'. This is the same for fans watching a match: a game has a beginning, middle and end, conflict and resolution, back stories and subplots (who is injured, the rival team's reputation for dirty tricks, will player scandals in the media distract them, etc.). Like a child totally caught up in a told story or a bookworm engrossed in a favourite novel, the spectator is absorbed in the game.

This was demonstrated in *how* football storytellers told a story as much as by what they told and how audiences responded. A significant number of footballers and coaches opted to tell personal, autobiographical stories or to insert autobiographical experiences into the short traditional tales. When relating autobiographical tales, they used a conversational style of vernacular speech, incorporating alliteration, simile and cliché along with banter, rhetorical questions and comments, and repetition and rhythm. Their speech also included disfluencies (hesitation forms, fillers, non-lexical vocables) that a listener expecting polished speech (such as an actor, politician, professional storyteller or performance poet) might criticise, yet the children listened intently and actively. I think this was due to the rhythm and inclusiveness of such speech, causing an intimacy that humans crave, particularly children. Football storytellers also repeated narrative actions, motifs and topoi. Structurally and linguistically the style was similar to the rhetoric of a newspaper's sports page or a television or radio commentary, but, significantly, it also resembled the structure and language of folk and fairy tales. Additionally, there was a kinaesthetic expression: football storytellers did not act out elements of the narrative as stage actors might, but instead narrating certain actions prompted subconscious physicalising of that action. The kinesiological or muscular memory meant that rather than act out kicking or heading a ball, gestures or muscular twitches betrayed the fact that the body remembered that activity, so the entire body language conveyed the meaning and immediacy of narrative events.

For their narrative performances, the football storytellers intuitively incorporated physical experiences and mental strategies created by years of training, practice and playing by use of vocalisations, language and gestures. All this combined to keep up the momentum in the narrative performance and sustain listener engagement, triggering associative memories and creating reflection/prediction processes leading to mental simulations and altered states in the listeners.

This previously unconsidered relationship between physicality and producing and receiving narrative also caused me to rethink how we interpret or respond to certain genres. Teachers, literary scholars and critics tend to interpret literature, especially folklore, fairy tales and children's literature, with a reliance on psychology. Bettelheim's Freudian interpretation of Grimm, along with others' use of Jungian theory to interpret mythology and fairy tale, are still commonly and unquestioningly applied when analysing oral and literary stories. Yet myths, legends, folk tales and fairy tales were created when both narrators and audiences were personally knowledgeable about hand-to-hand combat. They knew, in a visceral way, about fighting with a sword, wrestling, and archery, as well as exhausting menial tasks such as hunting and gathering, farming, spinning and weaving, and scouring pots and pans while sitting in the ashes of a fire. They also knew first-hand about suffering hunger pangs of a famine. Just as sports fans enjoy a visceral knowledge of running, tackling, leaping, heading and scoring (having played the sport they enjoy, at least when they were young), and just as those physical experiences provide the associative memories required for them to reflect and predict the actions leading to their enjoyment (and experience of 'flow'), so did the audiences of legends like *Beowulf* and *The Iliad* and other classical myth and folklore. Therefore it's possible these tales were told, heard and read in distinctively different ways from how we today experience such literature.

A. Fecica and D.K. O'Neill, in their study of preliterate children's simulation of narrative movement during story comprehension, have shown that the way in which the brain is used when understanding a narrative correlates with physical sensations that the children have experienced and remember. Brain patterns and memories of concrete experience and objects contribute to the development and understanding of metaphor. This suggests that experiences, such as sport, contribute greatly to cognitive development in that, like narrative, they rely on remembered physical aspects and related mental states. There are connections there still to be explored and tested.

Such thoughts were reinforced by a project that was an off-shoot of KiR and other NLT schemes. Brentford and West Bromwich Albion football clubs suggested that they recruit disaffected and reluctant readers from local secondary-school and college students and train them as storytellers alongside the KiR coaches and players. The

students then went to feeder primary schools to lead story times to small groups, and were rewarded with Junior Reading Champion status and given tickets to matches. The project was a great success and was repeated. The same schools and school librarians were involved with a new cohort of students. Librarians informed me that the original students were still telling stories at primary schools, and their reading habits had improved. Intrigued, I asked if I could survey and interview these students.

Student feedback was consistent and raised some important questions. They reported that they enjoyed the storytelling and felt it provided such benefits that it should be a mandatory part of every secondary school's English curriculum. Benefits students themselves identified included:

- greater confidence and self-esteem;
- fluency of language;
- a positive impact on their reading *and* writing;
- better communication between the students and their teachers, and between the students and younger children and family members;
- improved role or self-image within their extended families and peer groups.

School librarians confirmed that students' reading habits had improved, but felt this had dropped off after a time. The students insisted this was not so – rather, they found the school libraries limiting and were instead using public libraries, bookshops, the internet, and, particularly, apps.

When asked why they read more (to find stories to tell younger children, or for their own pleasure), the students replied that it was for their own enjoyment. All students consistently reported that reading was easier because of the storytelling. When asked why this was, students replied, with great consistency, that before they were told stories or actually told stories themselves, they never visualised what they read. They insisted that storytelling experiences made it easier to visualise, making reading easier and more enjoyable, and that it was easier to 'hear' the voices of the characters and to be more aware of their sensations and of the settings. As intellectual activity, none of this happened, they claimed, before their experiences with storytelling.

This raised many questions.

Did the pupils really not visualise anything when reading prior to the project?

Did they, in fact, visualise, but were not aware of this beforehand?

Did storytelling make them conscious of visualisation processes giving them a new tool?

Did confidence and self-esteem, arising from a new idea of themselves as storytellers, contribute to new images of themselves as readers/learners, thus making reading easier and more enjoyable?

Does oral narrative have a specific role (or a number of roles) in cognitive development in developing literacy?

If so, is it a matter of listening to told or read-aloud stories, or of telling and reading aloud skilfully?

What does this say about our curriculum, the literacy strategy, and about specific intervention strategies such as synthetic phonics?

Prior to KiR I never noticed connections between sport and the areas of literacy, literature, storytelling and cognition. Since then, I've been led to believe that all share key elements concerning physicality, associative memories and altered mental states, and also the development of a self-image, confidence and physical abilities. These are necessary elements not only in the development of literacy and related cognitive processes, but also in the appreciation of literature and the establishment of critical literacy, critical thinking and executive functions.

There were countless expressions of this kind in the interaction between the children and the football storytellers. Repeatedly, the children challenged the footballers, asking why they were telling stories instead of playing football. The footballers told them they were there because children, especially boys, don't read and they wanted to motivate them to do so. Indignant, the boys asserted that they did read and then listed their reading material to prove it. Often they listed sport magazines and sport sections in newspapers, comics and graphic novels, and internet sites and apps that the teachers admitted later they forget to consider as reading material and so assumed there was no reading going on. When discussing the language used in talking about or reporting on football, two Year 3 boys claimed there was a lot of alliteration and similes, and went on to demonstrate this with several examples derived from football. The teacher acknowledged that she didn't think those boys had learned such concepts, since she had only modelled and asked for examples using objects in nature.

Learning and teaching don't just happen in a classroom, nor are narrative experiences confined to a book or story time at a library or bedtime. As Dewey pointed out in *Education and Experience*:

Perhaps the greatest of all pedagogical fallacies is the notion that a person learns only the particular thing he is studying at the time. Collateral learning in the way of formation of enduring attitudes, of likes and dislikes may be and often is much more important than the spelling lesson or lesson in geography or history that is learned. For these attitudes are fundamentally what count in the future. The most important attitude that can be formed is that of desire to go on learning.

The coaches, particularly, were not just interested in teaching football. They recognised that everyone needs to develop through enjoyment, via physical and social experiences. Individuals are not just learning how to dribble, pass or head a ball when practising football. They are also learning about self and about others, and not just the physical skills, but mental and linguistic abilities too. Besides the physical training, experience is also related by examples that someone with experience provides to the learner, that is, by stories. The same happens with 'real' reading, which is not just decoding, but engagement with the thoughts and experiences of others who, in turn, develop readerly thoughts and experiences. Sport, reading and storytelling are all collateral learning in Dewey's sense of the term.

[Patrick Ryan has worked as a teacher and professional storyteller for over 30 years. He regularly tours Britain, Europe and the USA performing, lecturing and conducting a variety of workshops. He has written for the BBC and has also actively participated in several major storytelling projects. Although based in London, he is currently a research fellow at the George Ewart Evans Centre for Storytelling at University of Glamorgan.]

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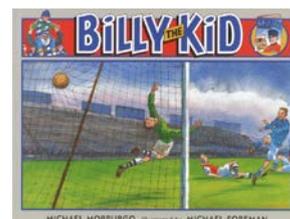
## **Chelsea FC Foundation's 'Education Through Football' Project**

*Wendy Buddin and Michael Foreman*

### **Wendy Buddin**

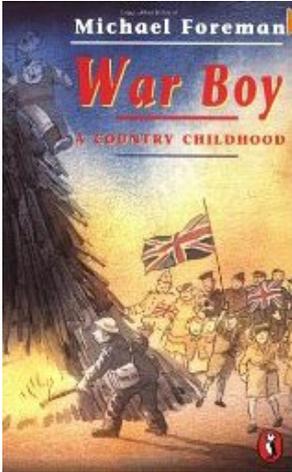
This project is based on the book *Billy the Kid* (2002) by Michael Morpurgo, illustrated by Michael Foreman. The book tells the story of football-mad Billy who grows up in Chelsea during the 1930s and eventually achieves his dream of playing at Stamford Bridge. Unfortunately the year is 1939 and the war intervenes to destroy his hopes and leave him penniless and alone, until he is befriended by a family, when once more football becomes his life and Stamford Bridge his spiritual home.

The project links to the primary-school curriculum in Literacy, History and Citizenship and provides teachers with a range of resources and special events. It has been funded by the football club since 2005 and has reached over 7000 pupils so far. It is now supported by the Premier League Charitable Fund, which has enabled the project to grow. In addition to the four London Boroughs nearest to Stamford Bridge, Education



Through Football now engages pupils in schools around the club's training ground in Surrey.

Class teachers are provided with resource packs containing lesson plans using the book as a starting point. Education officers visit schools with football-related artefacts to help pupils understand the context of the story and how life has changed since the 1930s. Senior fans visit schools for oral-history sessions, and Paul Canoville, Chelsea's first black footballer, talks to children about his experiences.



One of the highlights of the project is a visit to either Stamford Bridge or the training ground, where pupils meet Michael Foreman. His talk never fails to keep children and teachers spellbound as he tells stories of his childhood during the Second World War (as featured in his award-winning autobiography *War Boy* (1989)), and his life as an author and illustrator. Class teachers report that the project has a huge impact on pupils' enthusiasm for writing and their grades improve as a result. For example: 'This project has significantly improved my pupils' writing skills', 'Michael Foreman is inspirational, I could listen to him for hours', and 'One of the boys in my class shows little enthusiasm for anything in class, but today he has been absolutely enraptured by Michael Foreman – at last I have found something to engage him'.

### **Michael Foreman**

I have been involved in this project for the last seven years and am delighted by the way it has flourished. For the children, of course, spending the day at a Premier League ground is a nice change from the classroom, but before they can do this, they are expected to study the book, aspects of the Second World War and some local history. When I meet them, therefore, they are well prepared with informed questions and so the session becomes much more of a conversation, an exchange between the children and myself, and more rewarding than the normal school visit.

The sessions at Stamford Bridge include a tour of the stadium, dressing rooms and museum, and the training ground day includes coaching sessions on the same practice pitches as those used by the Chelsea players. There seems to be no shortage of parents volunteering to accompany the children – particularly the dads!

### **Works Cited**

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Foreman, Michael (1989) *War Boy: A Country Childhood*. London: Pavilion.

[Wendy Buddin is Chelsea FC Foundation's education manager. Michael Foreman is a well-known illustrator and author and a supporter of Chelsea Football Club.]

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## **Olympic Stories: Unexpected Heroes**

*Jean Webb and Robyn Cox*

The pending 2012 London Olympic Games has stimulated a good deal of interest in endeavouring to involve children in activities associated with the Olympics and in thinking about values embedded in the Olympic ideal. The aims of the varied programmes that have been sponsored by various bodies such as the British Council, the 2012 London Olympic Committee, UNICEF and UK Sport have gone far beyond inspiring children to be the fastest runner or the winner of a gold medal. Programmes for schools are associated with leadership, enterprise, eco-awareness and sustainability, and creativity and the arts, as well as involving children in sport and a healthier lifestyle.

The project 'Olympic Stories: Unexpected Heroes', which ran from 2007 to 2012, was a cross-disciplinary collaboration at the University of Worcester that took a rather different tack. Colleagues from Education, Sports Science, Art and Children's Literature were interested in a different approach that highlighted thinking about those who would not have been in the spotlight of the history of the Olympic Games; a position in which most of the population find themselves. We were inspired when, during the 2008

Beijing Olympics, a number of unexpected heroes emerged – those athletes who may not have won many medals, but who won the hearts of the spectators worldwide via their effort, self-efficacy or personality. It is these unexpected heroes who inspire us all in our lives and urge us to engage in the Games.

Our approach was to find a way of highlighting to children in schools that participation and enjoyment are more important than being the winner. One of the obvious ways to do this for students in primary schools was to utilise the power of children's literature. We asked Jim Riordan, a professor of Sports Science as well as an award-winning children's author, to write a set of stories based on legends that featured the unexpected hero, the woman or the weak, for example. Very sadly Jim Riordan died earlier in 2012. In addition to recording our activities, we would also like this piece for *IBBYLink* to be a record of Jim's valued contribution to literature for children, as well as to the generosity and warmth with which he participated.

These stories retold by Jim formed the basis of an exciting, interactive and dialectic project that we believe has fulfilled our objectives and will provide a strong background for teachers and students to work together while taking part in the excitement associated with being the host country for the 2012 Olympic Games. The stories retold by Jim provide rich springboards for talking about sport, participation and heroes. They are 'Robin Hood and the Archery Contest', 'The Viking Gods' Visit to Jontunheim', 'Three Strong Women' and 'The Story of Atlanta'. Once these stories were written, Steve Arnott, an innovative illustrator and film maker, produced the very unusual illustrations for them. By using *objets trouvés*, such as the ordinary kinds of figure a child would have in a play box, Steve's work suggests to children that they can also be makers of images. These images give depth and further accessibility to the stories as the illustrations invite the viewer into the world presented by both the words of the story and the objects in the illustrations.

An innovative strategy was developed to ensure that the stories held interest for primary-aged children and to test drive the understandings about school students' participation in the 2012 London Olympic Games. This development was carried out by Associate Professor Robyn Cox who is a teacher educator and researcher into children's literacy use and learning in schools. The drafts of the stories retold by Jim were taken into schools, and children were asked to be 'critical friends' to the author and illustrator. Both the author and illustrator found that this provided them with a robust platform on which to develop their ideas so that the stories would 'speak' to the children, and it provided the team with the much-desired feedback. As a result of this consultation, the author, illustrator and researcher were able to consider the tangible excitement and energy generated in the build-up to the 2012 Olympic Games. Robyn's work in schools took the idea of the energy of the 2012 London Olympics further than a passive dream, involving children, stimulating them to consider the values that lie beyond aspiration and competition: the values and ideals that matter to them.

The theme 'Unexpected Heroes' became the touchstone for the project, and what began as a simple collaboration between academics working together turned into a more dynamic project that accepted the value of children's voices and thoughts towards the children's literature aspect of the project. Most important, the project allowed the children to be involved in the critical and creative process involved in producing children's literature, and, perhaps, to see themselves as possibly one of the unexpected heroes of the 2012 London Olympics.

See <http://rosshannis.co.uk/temp/olympic/index.html> for further details of the project.

[Jean Webb is a professor at University of Worcester, UK. Robyn Cox is Associate Professor at the Literacy Research Hub, Australian Catholic University, Sydney, Australia.]

## The 'Jamie Oliver' of Children's Literature: Twelve Readers Reading Mal Peet's novel *Keeper*

Melanie Sefton

'I'm the Jamie Oliver of children's literature! I want to wean children off pot noodle. There are plenty of people out there producing lip gloss and thongs, or junior James Bond. I just want to give them something substantial. I like to get a lot of stuff in there. I like to think you've had a meal by the time you get to the end.' (Mal Peet, *Achuka* interview, July 2004)

A significant feature of contemporary British and American children's literature appears to be the underlying belief of writers that literature is able to confront children with difficult issues, and that it can, and perhaps should, inform their attitudes towards real social problems, such as dysfunctional family life, deprivation and minority rights. *Keeper* is a fine example of this challenging literature for children. In this novel, World Cup-winning footballer El Gato recounts to journalist Paul Faustino how, as a boy, he escaped from following his father's footsteps into the brutal logging trade by learning goalkeeping skills from a ghostly predecessor in a hidden clearing of the rainforest. After the interview he announces that he plans to leave football at the height of his career to become a keeper of a different kind: a defender of what is left of the rainforest.

Mal Peet's novel does not flinch from portraying the harsh realities of the lives of South American loggers and the 'rape' of the rainforest, while demonstrating how hard work and a sense of mission may elevate even the most socially disadvantaged. It mixes sport biography and ghost story with classical bildungsroman, while its questioning of traditional values and its use of metafiction in the frame narrative to produce a questioning perspective in the reader are thoroughly postmodern. In all, Mal Peet certainly sets out to realise his aim of giving his adolescent readers a substantial 'meal'.

The sustenance that Mal Peet offers his readers in *Keeper* is revealed in the ways in which one group of readers digested the novel and succeeded in inferring some of its intellectual and emotional implications. The group consisted of twelve children, all middle class, but of mixed nationality, aged 12 and 13 in a British-curriculum international school in Budapest. My approach was to encourage them, through group discussion and individual written explorations, to see reading as primarily an experience in which both their emotional and their cognitive responses were valid and valuable. I sought to strengthen in the children the idea of literature as an interactive experience. Mal Peet's novel offers the reader a smorgasbord of experiences that feed a range of approaches to the text: experiential, aesthetic, cognitive and interpretative, engagement and identification with the characters, situational empathy, and analogy from and into their own experiences of life, as well as any detached judgement of literary quality.

The potential of *Keeper* for eliciting rich responses is considerable. It has a triumphant working-class protagonist, it mixes fantasy and realism, it addresses an urgent contemporary issue – the destruction of the rainforests – and it mixes informal syntax and register with vivid metaphor. Although its characters are almost exclusively male, *Keeper* is accessible to both sexes.

The encounter with the Keeper allows El Gato to enter a wider world, to move beyond the embedded assumptions of his own family culture. On a deeper level, the novel explores the importance of belonging and of mattering – in particular the sense that life should have a mission. The young readers commented on these themes. One said of El Gato after his footballing triumphs: 'He's done what the Keeper wanted him to do because he hadn't fulfilled his destiny yet, and now he can save the forest.' Another summarised the whole book within an understanding of this theme: 'The book is about how El Gato grows up and what challenges he faces. At the end he finds his place in life.' It would seem from these comments that Mal Peet has achieved his intention.

*Keeper* does not shrink from showing the length and hardships of the learning process, and offers the reader the experience of guided discovery as El Gato is trained both in

football and for life. The young readers responded to this sense of shared discovery: ‘El Gato discovers things – the Keeper doesn’t give him all the answers. You put the pieces together and learn things too.’ ‘El Gato changes from a small and unsuccessful boy with the help of the Keeper, it’s like when a small tree is growing, taking a long time until it is as strong as nothing else.’ ‘It’s about a boy growing up to be someone nobody expected him to be and discovering the real him, exploring his full potential in life.’ The common thread in all these comments appears to be the response of these readers to the novel’s revelations of the possibilities life holds, an aspect clearly important to the adolescent reader.

The use of the supernatural Keeper serves to foreground and intensify the sequences depicting El Gato’s training. These also add a note of mystery and dramatise the theme of destiny in the novel. Peet’s use of the ghost Keeper also invites consideration of the depth of human life, with our connectedness to the past and to previous generations, a point that was also appreciated by the children. Several readers saw the text partly as a detective story.

In return for the food for thought it offers through its themes and its mix of reality and fantasy, the novel draws emotional responses from the reader, mostly stemming from situational empathy with the progress of El Gato. Recent research has shown clearly the integral connection between emotion and cognition, so books that help strengthen this link may well fulfil a particularly valuable function. The spontaneous comment from one boy that ‘the book shows you what it’s like to grow up’ was endorsed by the group as a whole.

For all the adolescent readers, the forest scenes of El Gato’s training were undoubtedly the most resonant. The vivid settings and metaphors drawn from tooth-and-claw nature slow the reader’s pace and produce heightened empathy with El Gato’s learning from his ghostly mentor. Readers saw the forest scenes as an escape from reality and entry into a fantasy world.

Alongside its magical and metaphorical significance, the forest itself is portrayed as a very real place, and a place under threat. It is frequently personified as the violated victim of human brutality. This affective portrayal of the forest as friend and yet victim invites a reader reaction of antipathy against human intervention. The novel thus succeeds in provoking a reader response on an issue of urgent contemporary concern. For adolescents, environmental protection is a matter of heightened importance, much more than it was for their parents in their youth. This novel certainly seems to have convinced these readers that literature is an experience of considerable value, connected both to their own lives and to a world beyond those lives.

### **Work Cited**

Peet, Mal (2003) *Keeper*. London: Walker Books.

[Melanie Sefton works at Britannica International School in Budapest, teaching English Language and Literature to Cambridge International IGCSE and A level. She also manages the pastoral care and sixth form at the school. She was awarded an MA in Children’s Literature from Roehampton University in 2007.]

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## **Olympics on Loan**

*Stella Thebridge*

### **2012 Summer Reading Challenge**

The 2012 Games have brought their own brand of difficulty to the business of lending books from library services. In public libraries, the national Summer Reading Challenge (SRC) for 4–11-year-olds always picks up on topical themes where possible and has taken the sport/active theme in previous Olympic years (‘Reading Rollercoaster’ in 2004, ‘Team Read’ in 2008). The SRC theme allows for marketing of the Challenge with characters, a back story and related stickers to collect during the Challenge,

although children are encouraged to read whatever they like at whatever their level – the goal is to read six books over the summer school holidays. Other themes have included wildlife, animals in various guises and space. In this Olympic year, however, with London as host, the cultural focus has been chosen (linking to the Cultural Olympiad) with storytelling as the theme and a title of ‘Story Lab’, where the back story is about children being instructed by a computer called Professor Cortex in a five-sided story laboratory to rescue three items (sticker sets – one bronze, one silver, one gold) ‘to boost the imagination of the Story Lab’.

There are other references to the Games, and the ‘laboratory’ will be an online resource and will be replicated as a 5-sided cardboard model, given to children when they start the Challenge. The participants will add stickers to the model and record the books they have read as they progress through the Challenge.

It will be interesting to see how the story theme can be maximised in libraries where this is the ‘bread-and-butter’ of our regular work. Many staff will be involved in sporting links, particularly in activity and author events, and the book promotions will need to be more targeted than the general story theme as our shelves are already well-stocked in this general way!

Every year the organisers of the Challenge, the Reading Agency (TRA), produce suggested booklists divided into younger and older readers that relate to the theme. Looking at these (the lists are on the TRA’s website) there are some general story titles like *Alice in Wonderland* and some stories that clearly relate to the history of the Olympic Games, e.g. Vince Cross’s *My Story: Berlin Olympics*, one of a series from Scholastic that brings individual perspectives on past events to life in fictional form for children.

The number of books related to the theme that can be used in promotion is particularly challenging. Publishers do not want a stack of out-of-date books called ‘Olympics 2012’ still around in 2013. Families are not going to buy these books in huge quantities, and libraries will lend only a limited quantity, again for a relatively short period. General titles on the history of the Olympics are useful, but again will be out of date as soon as the London Games are over.

### **Schools Library Services**

Schools library services (SLSs) have experienced a unique situation this year with the 2012 London Games. Their role is to lend books to schools for their own libraries (usually fiction) and in topic boxes for pupils to use in class. The schools choose the topics required for each class and SLS staff select both books and artefacts, where these are available, according to Key Stage and any special requests. Most topics are non-fiction, but they may include fiction, e.g. ‘stories from around the world’ and a fictional account of an historical incident (the Great Fire of London, war stories, or a collection of poems on the theme) where appropriate. We realised that this year there would be requests for a topic box on the London 2012 programme, but did not realise until well into the spring term that it would be quite so pervasive. Some schools asked for ‘Olympics’ for every class, for example. Staff reacted quickly with a separate deadline for requests for this topic (not something we would usually do) and then proceeded to assess the need. Around 100 schools had requested at least one box, with others suggesting it could be part of a box with other themes included. We aim in Warwickshire to put between 20 and 25 books into a box, depending on the subject, with an artefact where possible. It quickly became clear that a minimum of 2000 books was required, and that we would never have 100 suitable artefacts (some schools did get flags of the world or cultural artefacts, but this was a limited opportunity!). We then set about being creative with what the boxes might include. How were teachers planning to teach ‘the Olympics’ for a whole term? This must surely include the history of the ancient games, the modern games, geography about countries of the world, previous hosts, a certain amount about fitness and the wide range of sports involved, and previous activities that came into the Cultural Olympiad (knitting springs to mind as one of those!). This immediately widened the scope of what we might lend – we have a good deal on ancient Greece, other forms of competition, health and exercise, sports, sporting

venues and stadia, and, of course, a great deal of books relating to geography and other cultures. We were quite prepared to buy in stock, but, as with publishers, we did not wish to be saddled with a stack of books that would never be borrowed again, so we limited ourselves to purchasing more books with the generic information that would merit further loans.

In terms of the artefacts, we used some wonderful information panels from a travelling exhibition that had been prepared by Warwickshire's Museum Service when the Games were first announced. These panels depicted the history of the modern games as well as information on Warwickshire's sporting and cultural heroes (we can always rely on Shakespeare, our ultimate cultural hero, but also included George Eliot who was born near Nuneaton and is quite regularly celebrated in our county). We asked our print unit to produce 100 each of 2 × A3 posters of the panels. These made a beautiful local addition to the boxes and schools will be allowed to keep them afterwards. We also printed off the Department for Children, Schools and Families's 'getting involved' booklet, as experience has shown us that hard-pressed teachers will use information in their hands, but may not get round to downloading it. For younger children, various editions of the 'hare and tortoise' story and other competition/sport-related texts provided a useful addition to the theme. We also ensured that the schools had a cover sheet to make them aware of how the boxes had been compiled, outlining the range of related subjects covered and the background to the free posters. At the time of writing we await feedback from the schools once the boxes have gone out early in the summer term, but we feel at the moment that we responded to this one-off situation in the best way possible given the popularity of the topic, the unique status of the 2012 London Games and the limited range of material available specifically on the forthcoming games.

### Further Information

See [www.readingagency.org.uk/children/summer-reading-challenge/](http://www.readingagency.org.uk/children/summer-reading-challenge/) for details of 'Story Lab, the 2012 Summer Reading Challenge from the Reading Agency.

Department for Children, Schools and Families (2009) *2012 Olympic Games and Paralympic Games: Getting Involved in the London 2012 Games*. [www.pshe-association.org.uk/uploads/media/17/6823.pdf](http://www.pshe-association.org.uk/uploads/media/17/6823.pdf).

[Stella Thebridge is Senior Librarian: Children, Young People and Families (jobshare), Warwickshire Library and Information Service, Warwickshire Schools Library Service Manager.]

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## Olympic Games

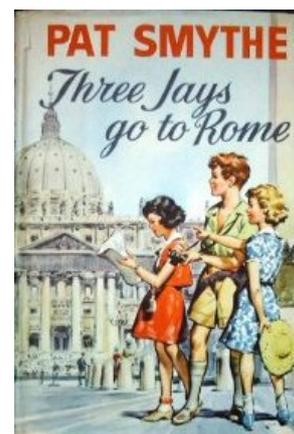
*P.M. Hanby*

It is interesting to see that the Olympics has attracted authors in the past, including those who have actually participated in the Games. These three books featuring various Olympic sports may be unfamiliar to our readers.

### *Three Jays Go to Rome*

Pat Smythe, London: Cassell, pb. 978 0 0069 0207 2, OP, 1960, 126pp.

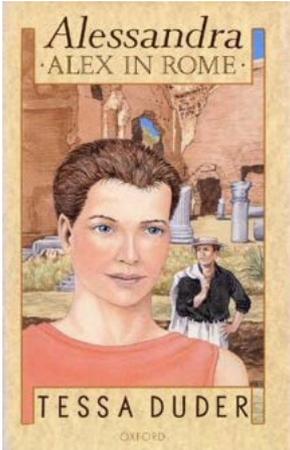
This book is the sixth in a series that uses a factual background – the author's home and life in showjumping – as a setting for a fictional adventure story. The three Jays, their friends and their adventures are pure fiction, but in this book the Rome Olympics of 1960 play a significant part. As with the others in the series, Pat Smythe tells the story in the first person. The combination of fact, including real people as well as locations and the author's own horses, with the fictional adventures of the children makes for a somewhat disjointed narrative. Most of the story is of the journey overland with adventures on the way and a fair amount of cultural stops in France and Italy. The last two chapters are set in Rome, ending in a detailed account of the showjumping event where Smythe comes ninth on Flanagan. The book ends with a restaurant meal where



Smythe quotes Baron de Coubertin's words: 'The important thing in the Olympics Games is not to win, but to take part. The important thing in life is not the triumph but the struggle. The essential thing is not to have conquered but to have fought well.'

*Alessandra: Alex in Rome*

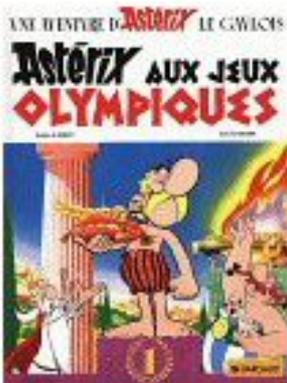
Tessa Duder, London: Oxford University Press, hb. 978 0 1955 8230 7, OP, 1991, 173pp.



This is another book featuring the 1960 Rome Olympics and is again part of a series – the third in a quartet. Alex, who is nearly 16, is the youngest member of the New Zealand Olympic team – the only swimmer. The previous book focuses on her training and eventual selection, with much emphasis on the strict routine involved. This rings true, as the author herself was a swimmer who won a silver medal at the 1958 Commonwealth Games. Since the book deals with a real event, there is much factual detail, and indeed real people, but Alex and her story are fiction. The New Zealand team in reality did not include a swimmer, but the winner of the women's 100 metre freestyle in the book is the Australian Dawn Fraser – as was actually the case. Alex in Duder's book wins the bronze. Set against the story of the Olympics is romance – Alex meets Tom, a young New Zealander who is studying music in Italy, and when she can escape from training they explore Rome together. This is another book written in the first person, partly by Alex, with alternate chapters narrated by Tom. Although this is at first somewhat disconcerting, familiarity leads to ease. The book provides an enjoyable story in its own right, but it ends on an unfinished note; the story of Alex and Tom is not finished until the fourth book of the quartet.

*Asterix at the Olympic Games*

René Goscinny, illus. Albert Uderzo, trans. Anthea Bell and Derek Hockridge, London: Asterix/Orion Books, hb. 978 0 7528 6626 0, £10.99, [French publication 1968] 2004, 48pp.



This is an entirely different book. It was published to coincide with the Mexico Games of 1968, and the English translation four years later was in the year of the Munich Games. There was also a French film in 2008, when the Beijing Olympics took place. It is a hilarious romp through an Olympic Games in 50 BC, featuring Greeks, Romans and Asterix the Gaul. By various dubious means he emerges victorious and wins the Victory Palm. It is the usual mix of verbal and visual jokes, and makes a good addition to the series.

While none of these three books is great literature, they certainly indicate writers appreciate the interest sport provides to child readers, and how the occasion of the Olympics lends itself to incorporation in series books.

[Pat Hanby is a Visiting Fellow, University of Reading Library.]

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*John Dunne, Carol Thompson and Clive Barnes*

Chinese children's illustration is still little known in Britain, and the exhibitions and the discussion forum held at the London Book Fair in April revealed a world of illustration that is gaining increasing international recognition. Award winners in their own country, the three visiting illustrators are gradually becoming better known outside China. Liang Peilong has exhibited his work worldwide. In 2005 Xiong Lang was invited by the Hans Christian Andersen Fund in Denmark to illustrate a bicentennial edition of Hans Christian Andersen's Fairy Tales. *Little Stone Lion* (*China Times* Best Children's Book Award) has been published in an English edition in the USA by Heryin Books (2006) and can be sampled at [www.amazon.com/Little-Stone-Lion-Kim-Xiong/dp/0976205610#reader\\_0976205610](http://www.amazon.com/Little-Stone-Lion-Kim-Xiong/dp/0976205610#reader_0976205610).

Illustrations from the exhibition can be seen at *The Guardian's* online gallery at [www.guardian.co.uk/childrens-books-site/gallery/2012/apr/16/gallery-chinese-illustration](http://www.guardian.co.uk/childrens-books-site/gallery/2012/apr/16/gallery-chinese-illustration).

### Two Perspectives

#### 1. Strengthening the Links (John Dunne)

Links between IBBY UK and the Chinese Section of IBBY (CBBY) were firmly established at the London Book Fair at Earls Court in April when we co-hosted a seminar featuring both Chinese and UK illustrators. The seminar was the highlight of what became a series of meetings between illustrators from both countries. Two exhibitions featuring the work of the visiting illustrators were held, one of reproductions at the M.P. Birla Gallery, near Earls Court, from 16–22 April, and the other of original works at the British Museum, on 17 and 18 April.

The M.P. Birla Gallery was the venue for an exhibition of China's contemporary children's book illustrations and picture books. On the morning of the LBF seminar, UK illustrators John Burningham, Michael Foreman and Carol Thompson (a member of our IBBY UK committee) had an opportunity to meet their Chinese counterparts: Jiang Jianwen, Xiong Liang and Liam Peilong, to look at their work, and to discuss art training and publishing opportunities in each country. The picture book is not an established genre in China and it is only the exposure to Western books in recent years that has led to a rising interest in this art form.

The afternoon seminar at the LBF was entitled 'The Era of Picture Reading' and more than 80 people attended. Michael Foreman presented illustrations of drawings made during his many travels in China and Asia generally, especially two fold-out panoramic illustrations that he did during this period. He also showed how almost all of these drawings became finished art work in his later books. Clive Barnes and John Burningham did a double act in presenting illustrations from John Burningham's key works, accompanied by his comments. The Chinese illustrators – Jiang Jianwen, Xiong Liang and Liam Peilong – presented their work in different ways, including descriptions of the technique of painting on rice paper. They all shared an appreciation for British picture books and said they were enjoying their experience of visiting London. (See photograph below taken at the seminar.)

The final element of the visit took place two days later at the British Museum where Anthony Browne spent two hours with the Chinese illustrators, viewing the exhibition there and discussing his work and theirs in some detail.

We hope that the contacts made during the visit will help to encourage further publication of British picture books in mainland China (some are already published in Taiwan).

CBBY is also associated with an ambitious project to publish the work of Hans Christian Andersen Award recipients and nominees in China, including Anthony Browne, Michael Foreman and John Burningham, within the next few years. It also hopes to publish IBBY-related items such as Jella Lepman's autobiography. We hope, too, that it will lead to Chinese book illustration for children becoming better known in this country. Further details from Mingzhou Zhang, IBBY EC member and CBBY Vice President, [mingzhouzhang68@yea.net](mailto:mingzhouzhang68@yea.net), or Amphi Zhang, his assistant on this publishing project.



At the LBF seminar: Xiong Liang, Liam Peilong, Jiang Jianwen, John Burningham, Michael Foreman, Clive Barnes, Mingzhou Zhang. Photograph © John Dunne.

At the end of the visit, CBBY made a gift of the reproductions in the exhibition at the M.P. Birla Gallery to IBBY UK and we are hoping that we may be able to arrange for further exhibitions of this work in Britain.

## **2. An Artist's View (Carol Thompson)**

Monday 16 April saw the opening of the 41st London Book Fair, one of the most important publishing trade fairs, the focus this year being on China. On the same date, the first exhibition in Britain of Chinese contemporary children's illustrations and picture books, opened at the M.P. Birla Gallery, London. This splendid modern gallery space showed 80 artworks drawn by 15 renowned Chinese illustrators, three of whom had come to London to attend the LBF and to speak at the seminar 'The Era of Picture Reading'.

As a member of the IBBY UK committee I attended the opening ceremony along with British illustrators John Burningham and Michael Foreman. We were warmly received by Mingzhou Zhang, vice-president of Chinese IBBY and our translator, who easily bridged any communication gaps. The three Chinese artists, Liang Peilong, Xiong Liang and Jiang Jianwen, although little known in Britain, are gaining increasing international recognition. We talked about their freedom to write and illustrate, and the growing importance and rapid development of children's picture books in China.



*Kid Fisher*

**Illustration by Jiang Jianwen.**

Liang Peilong showed me his exquisite traditional Chinese brush-drawing illustrations in inks and watercolours from *Moonlight*. His own techniques, derived from traditional Chinese culture, but clearly reflecting modern Chinese children's lives, have developed over many years. He is the recipient of many awards, both in China and internationally.



*Moonlight*

The work of the young Xiong Liang skilfully combines a more edgy, abstract style in *Pumpkin Monk*. We looked at his expressive artworks together, unique and exciting to my Western eye and unmistakably Chinese with his spare textured brushwork and muted palette. He told me of his love of Western picture books and their influence on his own work.



*Pumpkin Monk*

During an informal lunch in a local café, the artists were keen to talk about our way of working, relationships with publishers, working with schools and generally earning a living! In fact, many of the topics covered were those that arise when any group of illustrators get together. Each of the British illustrators had worked in a variety of other jobs to keep the wolf from the door! The Chinese artists were open to our questions about their freedom to work and publish in China.

Then there was a dash over to Earl's Court and the LBF for the afternoon discussion forum, introduced by Clive Barnes, chair of IBBY UK. Taking part with the three Chinese artists were John Burningham and Michael Foreman. This event was jam packed, standing room only – clearly a crowd-puller at the fair, and a rare chance to hear from and see the work of two of Britain's finest picture-book artists and three of China's.

Michael Foreman's PowerPoint was particularly pertinent as he talked about his travels and journey through China as a young man, the details beautifully recorded in watercolour sketchbooks: an English artist's perspective on the Chinese cultural landscape of the time. John Burningham, whose work is published and admired in China, showed his glorious artwork for *Borka* and *Oi! Get off our Train*, to the delight of the audience.

The Chinese illustrators, through a translator, each talked about their ideas and influences. Liang Peilong explained how, over many years, he had developed his unique painting techniques evolving from traditional Chinese painting. Xiong Liang talked of his interest in the child's inner world – a modern expressive approach to the picture book. Too quickly, time ran out – the audience were reluctant to leave as there were so many questions that needed to be asked and photographs to be taken.

This fine exhibition and forum brought a fresh stimulus to the discussion of a Chinese picture-book world that is still remote to me. Despite the chill wind of dissent blowing through the LBF, this was a rare opportunity for learning, laughing and engagement.

### **Additional Note from Clive Barnes, Chair of IBBY UK**

The Chinese illustrators' exhibition will be in temporary store in London, pending us finding a more permanent home for it. The reproductions are all excellent quality and framed (the originals have returned to China). Suggestions for a suitable location would be gratefully received. The cooperation with CBBY over the exhibition was a great success. Following the seminar at the LBF, the Chinese illustrators spent two hours with Anthony Browne at the exhibition of the original illustrations at the British Museum on Wednesday. Anthony Browne was marvellous, talking at length to the illustrators and to the Chinese TV company covering the exhibition, as well as looking carefully at each of the 70 odd illustrations. The Chinese illustrators were really pleased.

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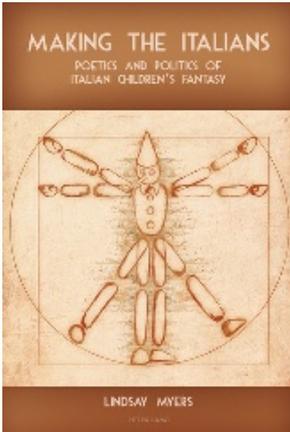
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## REVIEWS

### Books about Children's Literature

#### *Making the Italians: Poetics and Politics of Italian Children's Fantasy*

Lindsay Myers, Bern: Peter Lang, pb. 978 3 0391 1361 3, £35.00, 2012, 251pp.



Ask the average generally well-informed student of children's literature about Italian fantasy and you'll be sure to get the title *Pinocchio* and possibly the name of its author, Carlo Collodi (Lorenzini). This would almost invariably be followed by a long silence during which the person questioned would try unsuccessfully to think of any others. In fact, as Lindsay Myers points out, the majority of Anglophone studies of fantasy for children have concentrated on books written in English, to the extent that knowledge of authors writing children's fantasy in other languages scarcely goes beyond Collodi, Antoine de Saint Exupéry and, more recently, Michael Ende. As a result, our understanding of the complex relationship between the creation of fantasy and the cultural and socio-political climate is inevitably limited. Myers' highly informative, readable and cogently argued study goes some way to remedying this deficiency, at least as far as Italian children's literature is concerned.

Myers identifies nine 'structural sub-genres' between 1870 and 2010 and, for each of the specific historical periods concerned, provides a detailed analysis of three or four chosen texts. This approach enables her to associate the stages of Italian history, notably the rise of Fascism, with specific approaches to writing for children. Before the publication of *Pinocchio* in 1883, the 'memoir' fantasy, which uses a biographical framework to tell the stories of such protagonists as a chicken, a family of white mice and some porcelain dolls, reveals the desire of the middle classes to educate the poor to accept their place in society within the period of Italian unification. Influenced by his wide reading of French literature and his interest in satire, Collodi departed from this mould by depicting a rogue or 'monello', and instigated a new sub-genre that tended to focus on the deficiencies of the Italian educational and legal systems.

The period shortly before and during the first world war witnessed what Myers terms the 'microcosmic' and 'quest' fantasies, which, in different ways, provide alternative perspectives on society. The succeeding 'surreal' and 'superhero' fantasies reveal a variety of responses both to contemporary Italian culture and to Mussolini's increasing dominance.

For a short while after the Second World War, we see the 'community' fantasy, which focuses on the necessary transformation of society, before a new take on Collodi's work leads to the 'Pinocchioesque' fantasy. This can be seen as a reaction to some of the social problems associated with Italy's increasing prosperity between 1950 and 1980, together with an increasing element of postmodern experimentation with form. Finally, Myers gives the name 'compensatory' fantasy to works published between 1980 and 2010, in which the protagonists are all human children who have adventures in distinctively Christian secondary worlds, unlike the contemporary secular world where such values were being replaced by consumerism and materialism.

While Myers' taxonomy may not be accepted without question by all scholars in her discipline, the book should be a valuable source to those unfamiliar with Italian fantasy. It is extremely fully annotated and has detailed bibliographies. It also provides a fascinating model for those who are interested in examining the links between literature and its socio-historical context.

#### Pat Pinsent

(This is a shortened version of a review due to appear in a future issue of the *Journal of Children's Literature Studies*.)

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## Story Books

### *A Ravelled Flag*

Julia Jones, illus. Claudia Myatt, Chelmsford: Golden Duck, pb. 978 1 8992 6205 2, £7.99, 2011, 303pp.

A review of *The Salt-Stained Book*, the first volume in the nautically based Strong Winds trilogy appeared in *IBBYLink* 32 (Autumn 2011). The eagerness with which I awaited the second book has been repaid by the recent appearance of *A Ravelled Flag*, which sustains all the good points of its predecessor, and anticipates an equally engaging concluding volume later in 2012. As I noted before, Julia Jones owns the yacht *Peter Duck*, one of a number belonging at one time or another to Arthur Ransome. The Ransome connection extends beyond this, as her parents knew Ransome and bought the yacht after his death, then allowing their small daughter to read many of the Swallows and Amazons stories in the quarterberth on board that Ransome had originally used to store his typewriter.

Jones' trilogy has strong intertextual connections with the Swallows and Amazons series and other earlier literature, so if you are familiar with Ransome's books it adds an additional piquancy to Jones' novels. This is also true if you know Longfellow's long narrative poem 'Hiawatha', and have read R.L. Stevenson's *Treasure Island*.

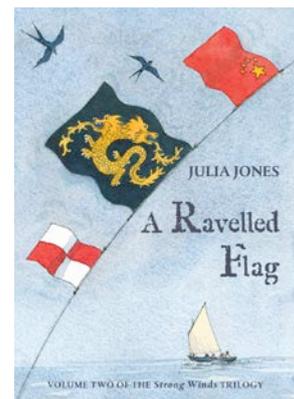
Donny, the teenage hero of the earlier book, and his mother Skye are now living with his 80-year-old veteran sailor great-aunt Ellen, who prefers to be called 'Gold Dragon', on her schooner, *Strong Winds*. Donny is profoundly deaf and severely dyslexic. A series of disasters befalls the boat, some of which are precipitated by Skye, still obsessed by native American folklore, and who has developed a drinking problem. This is exacerbated by the medication provided because of her supposed mental-health issues and fuelled by an unknown supply of vodka to which it emerges she has access. Once more we meet the scheming and unscrupulous Inspector Flint and his sidekick Toxic, who appear to be in league with someone on the mysterious and threatening ship *Hispaniola*. We also renew our acquaintance with the Children's Social Services (not for nothing shortened by Jones to 'SS'), whose latest attempt to break up the newly reunited family involves making 100 per cent school attendance demands, and then sabotaging Donny's means of getting there. Donny's looked-after child colleagues reappear, with Anna continuing to try to find her mother and a slight thaw in relationships with the previously icily upright family who provided their care. The sailing-mad Ribiero family, who helped Donny in *The Salt-Stained Book*, now also appear to be the object of mysterious and dangerous interference in their lives, but steadfastly support Donny and Anna, very much twenty-first century reincarnations of Ransome's strong, independent young female characters.

Mystery, adventure and humour all leaven the sometimes disturbingly vivid portrayal of families desperate to re-form as a functional unit, frequently battling against those authorities who should be helping them, and always confronted by those who *can't* or, more worryingly, *won't* understand them. Through Anna's search for her mother, Gold Dragon's relationship with a scientist many years earlier comes to light, and readers experience the intensity of bereavement felt by young and old when he dies before meeting Anna or his former lover. Anna's researches also reveal a frightening underworld of gangmasters, and Jones shows us that slavery still exists in the UK, targeting those trapped by ethnicity, origin or debt. Jones has a particular facility in seamlessly integrating all these elements, and we are never preached to, nor feel weighed down by the social comment that pervades these books. The trilogy spans a year, and this is a winter's tale, both in time and the darkness of its subject. I look forward to the concluding volume, *Ghosting Home*, with some more spirited adventure, and to the restoration and reconciliation of families torn apart by events.

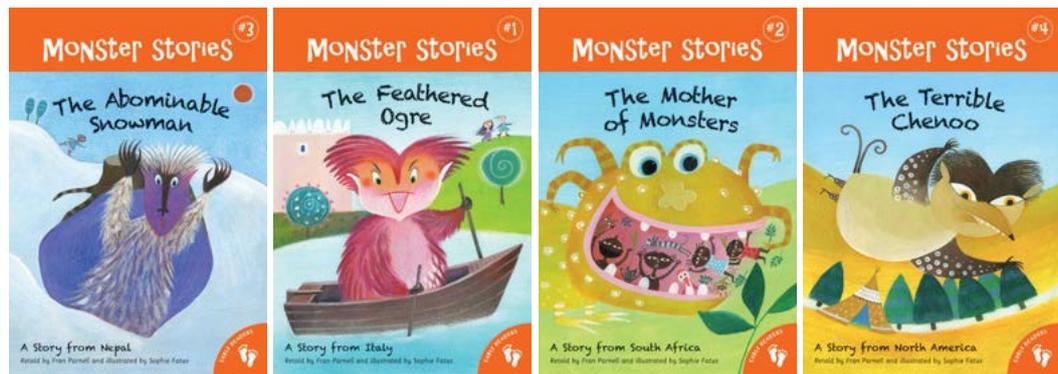
**Bridget Carrington**

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## Early Readers



### Monster Stories (Barefoot Early Readers Series, Books 1-4)

Fran Parnell, illus. Sophie Fatus, Oxford: Barefoot Books, £5.99, 2011, 48pp.

*The Terrible Chenoo*, pb. 978 1 8468 6555 8

*The Mother of Monsters*, pb. 978 1 8468 6559 6

*The Abominable Snowman*, pb. 978 1 8468 6557 2

*The Feathered Ogre*, pb. 978 1 8468 6561 9

This is wonderful series of first chapter books aimed towards early readers. The simple sentences and vocabulary have been carefully chosen to give new readers a motivating start. Despite the simple sentences, the vocabulary is still enriching. The stories are interesting and engaging and will appeal to this age group, especially boys. The font is clear, well spaced and easy to read.

The author has taken some ancient stories and rewritten them to appeal to children of today and she has succeeded in her delivery, making the characters easy to relate to as well as creating plots that make the reader want to read on. Each short book tells the myth/legend of monsters from all over the world, such as an abominable snowman from Nepal, a Chenoo from North America, the Mother of Monsters from South Africa and a feathered ogre from Italy. The illustrations are vibrant and inviting and paint the monsters as scary, yet somehow loveable! Since these are cultural stories, it is nice to see subtle references to the country settings, but not too many as to make it stereotypical.

This series is a refreshing take on the early-reader genre and would make a great addition to any new reader's bookshelf. The books would also be a fantastic resource in a classroom.

**Shireen Babul**

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## Non-Fiction

### *Under the Weather: Stories about Climate Change*

Tony Bradman, ed., London: Francis Lincoln, pb. 978 1 8450 7944 4, £6.99, 208pp.

This book is a collection of stories compiled by Tony Bradman, who felt that the voices of the youth were lost in all the discussion over global warming and so gathered some talented writers to explore the situation from a child's point of view. The result is a fascinating collection of stories set almost all over the world, from the UK to Zambia, Canada to Sri Lanka and everywhere in between.

We meet a young man trying to rebuild the coral reef in the Philippines, a girl from London inspired to become a marine biologist, a boy in Suffolk who tries to cut pollution in his town by getting all the students to cycle to school and a girl in Australia who dreams of a future where we have found a way to solve climate change.



Despite the subject of this book being quite gloomy, it is an empowering read. The main characters of most of the stories are children and teenagers who are inspired to take the matter of climate change into their own hands. They gather friends and community members to solve problems in their neighbourhoods and their countries.

This book would be an excellent choice for any upper Key Stage 2 or Key Stage 3 readers, especially those who prefer fiction based on fact.

**Shireen Babul**

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***Muhammad Ali: The King of the Ring***

Lewis Helfand, illus. Lalit Kumar Sharma, New Delhi, India: Campfire Publishing, pb. 978 9 3807 4104 8, £7.99, 2011, 92pp.

As someone who has little interest in competitive sport I did not expect to find the task of reviewing a graphic biography about the career of a boxer an enlightening prospect. Far from it, to be candid. But I was wrong. The story of Muhammad Ali is an uplifting saga on many levels.

Early in his boxing career he courted unpopularity by converting to the Islamic faith and abandoning what he regarded as his slave name of Cassius Clay. In his time heavyweight boxers could be fast or strong, not both. Ali exploded this convention. He could 'float like a butterfly, sting like a bee'. Ali had to persuade others that this style of boxing could succeed. Not only were sports writers, boxing fans and potential rivals doubtful whether Ali's style could work, even those who managed and trained him took some persuading.

Ali's style was extravagant both inside and outside the ring. He wound spectators up by 'showboating', taunting his opponent and dancing round the ring like a lightweight. Outside the ring he was equally outgoing, predicting the round in which he would win, insulting his opponents and reciting doggerel verse about them: he was the 'Louisville Lip'. He turned up to deliver his challenge at Sonny Liston's house at 3 a.m.

He famously declined to accept the military draft during the Vietnam War. Although the American public in the end turned against the war, at this time it was backed by the majority of Americans, service being classified as a 'patriotic duty'. Ali knowingly provoked hatred and contempt by becoming a conscientious objector. He was stripped of his titles and banned from boxing. It beggared belief that after such a lengthy and traumatic interruption he returned to the ring and regained his crown.

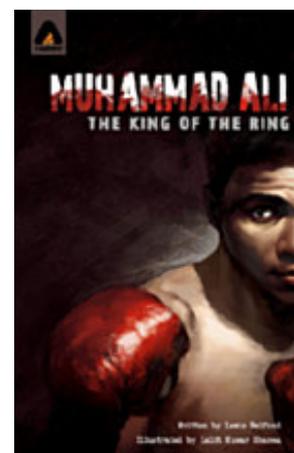
Ali paid a huge price for his success. He now has Parkinson's disease and speaks and moves with difficulty. As a disabled reviewer I found the honesty with which his disability is described thoroughly praiseworthy.

The text and the images in this graphic work complement each other perfectly. My only misgiving about the book centres on the nature of some images. In the real world, boxing is a squalid and messy business. Sharma's images, much influenced by Roy Lichtenstein, depict it as colourful and heroic.

Ali's story is complex, as is the character of its central figure, with elements of the epic, the heroic, the comic and the tragic. This book conveys with detail and immediacy one of the great dramatic stories of our times.

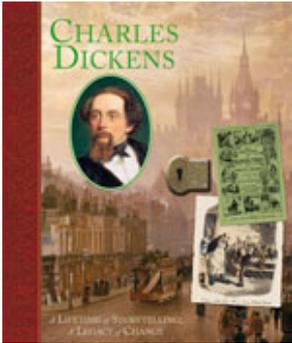
**Rebecca R. Butler**

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***Charles Dickens: A Life of Storytelling; A Legacy of Change (Historical Notebook series)***

Catherine Wells-Cole, London: Templar Publishing, hb. 978 1 8487 7117 8, £14.99, 2012, 30pp.



Catherine Wells-Cole's introduction to the life and times of Charles Dickens is both informative and enjoyable in equal measure. Her thoughtful and at times witty discussion of the world of Dickens brings to life the Victorian era and the social conditions that had so much influence on his writing.

The text is greatly enhanced by the format, which allows readers to interact with the wealth of material that is on offer. This includes personal letters written by Dickens that have to be removed from their envelopes before reading, fold-out maps and plans of Victorian London and its institutions, flaps which reveal précised introductions to Dickens' major works, and illustrations from the covers of the novels' original serialisations – to highlight just a few of the entertaining features.

Although the narrative is linear in that it follows the unfolding progression of Dickens' life, aligning key events with his fictional writing, it is arranged thematically. This encourages readers to dip in and out of the book and to follow up some of the subjects that are introduced, whether related to Dickens specifically, his life, writing and relationships with other key writers of the period, or to the changing Victorian landscape. This includes subjects such as education, the workhouse, prisons, the theatre and Christmas.

This is a thoroughly engaging book that offers readers the potential for hours of entertainment while learning about life in Victorian Britain and the impact this had on Dickens. The book also provides an introduction to Dickens' major fictional works, giving an insight into their reception in serial form and their influence in charting and challenging the evident injustice and inequality existing between rich and poor at the time he was writing. As we celebrate Dickens' bicentennial, this is certainly a fitting contribution to the literature on his life and works written for a primary-age audience of 7+. However, it could equally act as a general introduction for the adult unfamiliar with Dickens or the Victorian period and encourages readers of all ages to explore further.

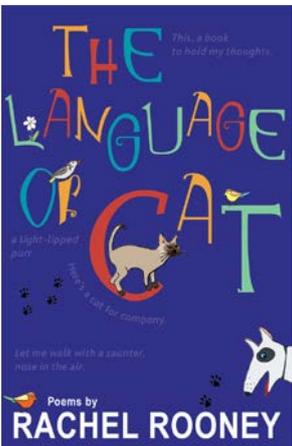
**Michele Gill**

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**Poetry**

***The Language of Cat and Other Poems***

Rachel Rooney, illus. Ellie Jenkins, London: Frances Lincoln Children's Books, 978 1 8478 0167 8, £5.99, 2011, 96pp.



This collection of poems has the virtue of appealing both to the adult poetry lover, and to a wide age range of children. Rachel Rooney is adept at using traditional verse forms such as the sonnet for her contemporary themes, the subjects of which reveal her understanding of the mindset of young readers. A poem that illustrates her technical versatility, 'Defending the Title', is highlighted on the cover; it begins 'I am the word juggler' and continues with a later stanza:

I am the brain rattler.  
Shaking ideas  
like dice.  
A notion  
in poetic motion.

Many poems show Rooney's enjoyment of how children play with imagined scenarios: in 'Bring and Buy' a child sells his mother for 'six quid' at the Summer Fayre but the first replacement turns out to be too slapdash while the second is too smart. So he wants the real one back even if he has to pay out a tenner for her! The tragedy in 'Three

Goldfish', culminating in two children each thinking the other was responsible for the feeding, is one that many households will empathise with. 'This Modern Monster', a 'high-tech beast', poses a puzzle: what can communicate with its mates and spy on its owner, yet sits in the palm?

The title poem shows that Rooney must have spent many hours watching cats:

Teach me the language of Cat;  
the slow-motion blink, that crystal stare,  
a tight-lipped purr and a wide-mouthed hiss.

Let me walk with a saunter, nose in the air.

Teach my ears the way to ignore  
names that I'm called. ...

Her admiration for the feline species may not please dog lovers, as in the final stanza she demands

Don't teach me Dog,  
all eager to please; that slobbers, yaps and begs for a pat,

but I hope even they will forgive her and admit the merits of this collection. The variety of both subject and form means that there is something for everyone, and surely should give inspiration to the young (and even the not so young) to write their own verse.

## Pat Pinsent

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### Picture and Illustrated Books

#### *Mr Leon's Paris*

Barroux, trans. Sarah Ardizzone, London: Phoenix Yard Books, pb. 978 1 9079 1208 5, £6.99, 2012, 30pp.

This elegant book, translated from French, tells the story of Mr Leon, a taxi driver in Paris, reflecting on his many years in the business on the eve of his retirement from what he views as a truly wonderful job.

Every passenger he encounters leaves a lasting impression and there are constant references to the link between their names and their destinations. The illustrations, in muted tones and naive abstract lines, provide additional information on every page as to the key characteristics of each new passenger in the back seat of Mr Leon's taxi.

The back cover reveals a beautifully detailed, hand-drawn map of the city centre, with Mr Leon seen driving into view along one of the roads entering from the left-hand side.

For anyone planning a trip with children to Paris in the foreseeable future, this book presents an alternative view of the city from the usual guidebook recommendations and should be seen as a must read.

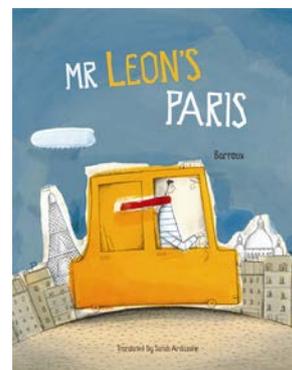
#### Sarah Stokes

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#### *Food Chain*

M.P. Robertson, London: Frances Lincoln, pb. 978 1 8478 0165 4, £6.99, 2012, 24pp.

It is quite remarkable just how effectively a narrative can be conveyed through nothing more than nouns and adjectives when accompanied by vibrant, engaging images, but it is precisely this that M.P. Robertson's picture book on natural life cycles achieves. A naughty boy does something unmentionable with his pet fish (I don't want to spoil the story!), and so begins the fish's new life experience, battling for survival in the wide, open sea. Robertson's illustrative style, at once both entertaining and horrific, transports the reader into a world where it really is survival of the fittest.



A beguiling read, especially when it comes full circle towards the end. Children constantly demand its rereading and take great delight in discussing the naughtiness to be spotted on every page.

**Sarah Stokes**

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***Frank n Stan***

M.P. Robertson, London: Frances Lincoln, hb. 978 1 8478 0130 2, £11.99, 2012, 30pp.

When Franklin P. Shelley's mother tells him 'We'll see' in response to his request for a little brother, he determines not to hang around until she decides the time is right. Instead he works day and night designing, planning, resourcing and, finally, building his own 'brother': a giant robot he names Stan.

Stan proves himself to be a highly useful addition to the family, as he quickly finds ways of helping out around the house. Despite Frank's parents thinking him a rather alternative brother for their son, they soon adapt to his slightly strange ways and are more than happy to accommodate his willingness to complete all of the household chores. Frank is so preoccupied with playing with his new creation, that he fails to notice the subtle changes in his mother's body shape during the first half of the book.

But Frank and Stan's lives are turned upside down when a real baby arrives home one day. Frank now has a sister to demand his full attention and doesn't see how sad this makes his robot sibling, who now feels surplus to requirements.

Stan's surprisingly emotional response to his change in circumstances and the choices which follow make this a wonderful tale of belonging together, falling out and working hard to understand the feelings of others. A beautifully observed commentary on the trials and rewards of family life.

**Sarah Stokes**

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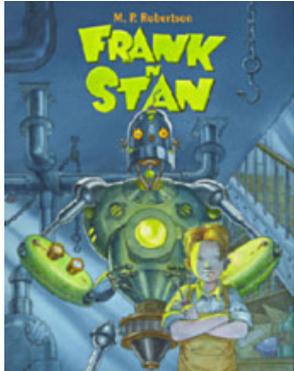
***The House that Jack Built***

Gavin Bishop, Wellington, NZ: Gecko Press, hb. 978 1 8774 6779 0, £10.99, [1999] 2012, 40pp.

This picture book represents a significant part of New Zealand's history, and gives insight into its colonial history. It draws from the cumulative traditional rhyme of the same name to tell the story of Jack Bull, who travelled to New Zealand from London as a new settler in 1798. The reader is presented with the series of events that begin when Jack builds a house: the events from the original rhyme are used metaphorically to show the arrival of European settlers in New Zealand during the early eighteenth century.

The illustrations are skilfully crafted to portray the profound impact of 'Pakeha' colonisation on the local Maori, from trading food and land for clothes and weapons, to the loss of culture and the deaths during the New Zealand wars. (Many New Zealanders appear to dislike the term 'Pakeha' which refers to a New Zealander of Caucasian descent, believing it to have negative connotations.) Sets of eyes appear in each picture, signifying the Maori spirits watching every change that the Pakeha make to the land. The end papers contribute to the story: those at the beginning show the reality of Jack's life in London in 1798 and he is shown with a cart of possessions, including the red door that comes to symbolise Pakeha society. The final end papers depict the conflict between the Pakeha and the Maori. There are several other details in the illustrations to notice and interpret on subsequent readings.

Awarded the 2000 New Zealand Children's Book of the Year, this new edition of Gavin Bishop's book, originally published by Scholastic, was released to coincide with Waitangi Day in 2012 (6 February). This day commemorates the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi, which guaranteed the Maori rights to their land and also gave them the rights of British subjects. Gavin's book clearly tells an important and serious tale. As such, it would probably appeal more to older readers (8+), who would benefit from



having an awareness of colonial history and Maori folklore. At the end of the book there is a short history of the events, which provides the reader with some additional information.

### **Kerenza Ghosh**

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#### ***A Hen in the Wardrobe***

Wendy Meddour, London: Frances Lincoln, pb. 978 1 8478 0225 5, £5.99, 2012, 160pp.

The author is a fresh, perceptive new voice in children's literature. This is the first of a series called Cinnamon Grove and has already won the 2010 John C. Laurence Award for 'writing that improves relations between races'. The book also won the illustration award in the 2009 Islamic Foundation's 7th International Writing Competition.

Ramzi's family (his father is Algerian and his mother British) spend an extended holiday in Algeria trying to cure his father's sleepwalking, brought on by his homesickness. This provides plenty of opportunities for cultural observations of Algeria and the Muslim way of life, and comparisons with life in the UK. These are explored in a sensitive and often amusing way. The book is suitable for Key Stage 2 (7–11) readership.

### **Pam Dix**

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#### ***Excuses Excuses***

Anushka Ravishankar, illus. Gabrielle Manglou, London: Tara Books, hb. 978 9 3803 4012 8, 2011, £10.99, 46pp.

Neel is a young boy who has the very best of intentions when it comes to following rules, but somehow he just can't stick to them! His story begins with a declaration of how he aims to better himself each day for one week:

On Monday Neel decided

He'd be in time for school

On Tuesday he decided

He'd obey every rule

...

On Saturday he decided

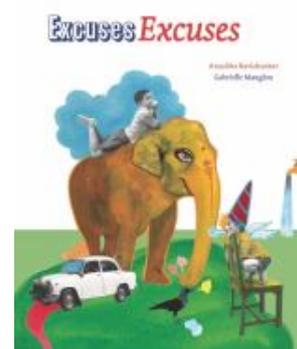
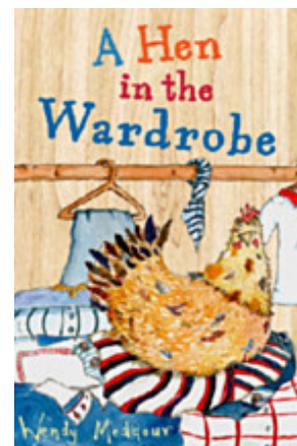
To do everything he should.

Yet despite all of his positive assertions, Neel's vivid imagination and theatricals often carry him off in a mischievous direction. Instead of being a helpful son on Wednesday, he brings home a stray dog. On Friday, when trying to be sociable and good he inadvertently insults his aunt by pointing out that her eyebrows are painted on. Whilst cleaning his room on Saturday, he accidentally floods the house, then happily suggests that his parents enjoy the abundance of water since the weather is so hot! Neel attempts to explain his efforts, but no one believes him: '*Excuses! Excuses! Excuses!* they cried'. In spite of being told off and made to stand in a corner on Sunday, Neel remains light-hearted and determined to be good:

There's no cause for sorrow,

I'll start once again – It's a new week tomorrow!

For all of his antics and excuses, Neel is a charming character whose behaviour represents the gleeful childhood dilemma of knowing the importance of rules, but also the delight in breaking them. As this is a rhyming story with clear character voices and humorous scenarios, the text lends itself well to being read aloud and performed, and children will probably relish re-enacting Neel's tales and experiences! Manglou's



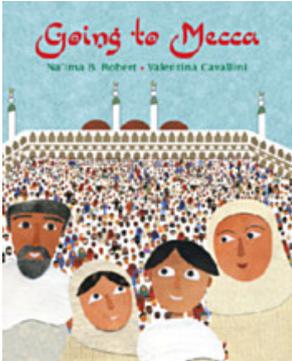
engaging artwork mixes black and white photography with splashes of colour, reflecting the zany nature of Neel's clowning.

**Kerenza Ghosh**

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***Going to Mecca***

Na'ima B Robert, illus. Valentina Cavallini, London: Frances Lincoln, hb. 978 1 8478 0153 1, £11.99, 2012, 32pp.



Na'ima Bint Robert has developed a distinctive style in her various books that explore aspects of Islam for younger children, and a strong narrative that embeds aspects of religious observance within the story in a lyrical style. *Going to Mecca* is a story of pilgrimage, the Hajj, told through the experience of one British Muslim family: two parents and two young children. The Hajj is of great significance for Muslims as it is one of the Pillars of Islam and this is clearly explained. A clear glossary outlines the significance of each specialist word.

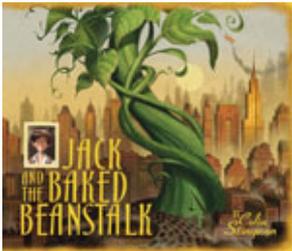
The story begins with the family's preparation for the journey, then explores each of the stages of the pilgrimage, ending with the family's return to the UK. Cavallini's illustrations add an extra level by focusing on the British Muslim family on most of the pages so that the child reader has the excitement of searching for and identifying them on most of the double-page spreads. The depictions of the crowded scenes, both in the Ka'bah and on the pilgrimage to Mina are beautiful and moving.

**Pam Dix**

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***Jack and the Baked Beanstalk***

Colin Stimpson, Dorking: Templar, hb. 978 1 8487 7251 1, 2012, £12.99, 40pp.



This reworking of 'Jack and the Beanstalk' takes place in a busy city, where the fast-food business belonging to Jack and his mother becomes threatened when a newly built flyover entices their regular customers away. In an attempt to win their regulars back, Jack is sent to buy some good quality coffee beans, but, in keeping with tradition, he ignores his mother's request and buys a tin of baked beans instead. When the tin is discarded by Jack's mother, a giant baked beanstalk grows in its place, which Jack climbs without hesitation in search of the treasure at the top. Throughout, the story makes direct reference to the traditional tale, and those savvy readers who remember the original might notice that Jack forgets to recall the giant living at the top of the beanstalk until it is too late! Luckily for Jack, this giant has no intention of eating him. Instead, he spends his days counting his money and wishing for an opportunity to carry out his favourite hobby, cooking. There are other changes to the original tale: the hen lays giant eggs instead of golden ones and the singing harp is replaced by a magical radio. This last item could be the answer to Jack's fast-food business problems!

This enjoyable subversion invites the reader to make comparisons with the traditional tale: any elements of the story that seem unusual and idiosyncratic soon become acceptable when compared to the original. The illustrations have a lively, animated quality that is befitting of the hectic city setting, and the theme of money and greed versus happiness transfers well to an urban backdrop. Stimpson's version of the story could provide a basis for children to write their own subverted fairy tale.

**Kerenza Ghosh**

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***Under the Spell of the Moon: Art for Children from the World's Great Illustrators***  
Patsy Aldana, ed., trans. Stan Dragland, London: Frances Lincoln, pb. 978 1 8478 0138 8, £7.99, [2006] 2012, 80pp.

Reissued in advance of the 2012 IBBY International Congress in London in August this year, comes this celebration of children's book illustration from around the world. The book was compiled by IBBY and originally published in Canada by Groundwood Books, whose founder, Patsy Aldana, is a former president of IBBY and will be a speaker at this year's congress. It was first published in the UK in hardback by Frances Lincoln in 2006.

Thirty-two illustrators have each been given a double-page spread and asked to illustrate an original or traditional rhyme, riddle or piece of prose. The result is a wonderful exhibition of the illustrators' art, rich in colour and variety, and demonstrating widely different approaches. There are illustrators from every continent, but they are not arranged in order, so each page turned brings new interest and surprise. The text chosen for illustration appears in both the illustrator's own first language and in English. Sometimes it forms part of the illustration itself, as in 'Vice Versa' by Lisbeth Zwerger, where the hare sits in a field of grass formed by the spidery text, but always the illustration is an integral part of the page design. The result is not only a collection of illustrations, but a picture book to pore over and enjoy.

The UK is represented by Quentin Blake and Anthony Browne and by happy chance the opening spread is by Peter Sís, this year's winner of the Hans Christian Andersen Award for illustration. Many of the illustrators are less well known in the UK. All have donated their work to this book in support of IBBY.

In her foreword, Katherine Paterson describes the founding of IBBY by Jella Lepman and the need for the continuing work of IBBY today. Frances Lincoln must be congratulated on the reissue of this handsome book in paperback, 12.5% of the proceeds of which will be donated to IBBY.

## **Sue Mansfield**

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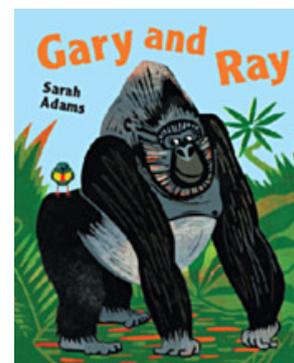
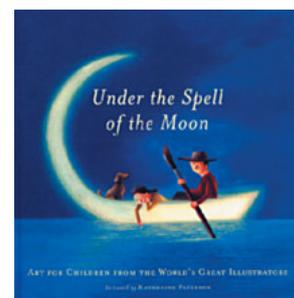
### ***Gary and Ray***

Sarah Adams, London: Frances Lincoln Children's Books, pb. 978 1 8478 0260 6, £6.99, [hb. 2009] 2012, 36pp.

The reviews editor offered this book at an IBBY committee meeting. It was placed on the table with the cover facing us. No one, including me, picked it up. Why did the cover not attract us? I can answer only for myself. The title put me off as the name Gary puts me in mind of some teenager, not very literate. The name Ray makes me think of someone similar but a bit more literate. I have to admit to not realising that the animal is a gorilla nor that the bird is a sunbird. So why am I reviewing this book? Because no one else chose it and because I recognised the name Sarah Adams as among Martin Salisbury's students on the Anglia Ruskin University's Children's Book Illustration MA. She graduated in 2007 and this is her second published book.

The story relates the tale of Gary, a gorilla, who is lonely. He is befriended by Ray, a sun bird. The story is set in an African forest. Gary sees all the other animals with friends with whom they can play – 'The elephants played together. The monkeys hugged each other. Even the owls were friends. But poor Gary had no one.' The story struck me as rather too predictable – that he was going to find a mate. And so he does, but the twist in the story is that the mate Susan (the right name for a bird?) was found for him by Ray, a tiny sunbird.

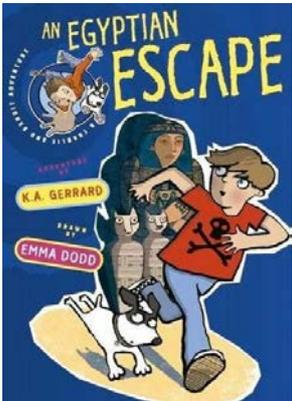
I was not at all excited by the text, nor really by the story the text tells, but the illustrations are a different matter. The opening spread is of jungle foliage, in various shades of green, orange and yellow. The next spread shows Gary looking sad, with pairs of elephants, monkeys, owls, tigers, kudu and bison looking content, all against a forest background. The following illustrations depict each scene, showing the moods of each



participant and are vivid and expressive. The final spread shows Gary and Susan with their young child, the text reading 'And Gary was never lonely again.'

**Jennifer Harding**

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***An Egyptian Escape***

K.A. Gerrard, illus. Emma Dodd, Bath: Templar Publishing, pb. 978 1 8487 7628 9, £6.99, 2012, 88pp.

This book records the second adventure of Charlie and his dog Bandit. Bandit digs a hole in the garden, which, naturally enough, turns out to be a time portal transporting the dog and his owner back to the Egypt of 1906. There they meet an archaeologist and his two grandchildren, Poppy and Jack.

The archaeologist and the children are searching for the eye of Pakhet, an object that represents two of ancient Egypt's greatest feline deities and which confers huge powers upon its finder. An important question is posed. Is the eye an actual physical object that can be found and handled? Or is it something more abstract, more metaphysical?

As you would expect in an adventure story like this, the archaeologist, his grandchildren and the time-travelling boy and dog are being shadowed by the sinister Dr Bull and his henchman, Haru. The unfolding narrative answers the questions: who will find the eye and what lies in store for both teams?

This is Indiana Jones for Year Five and upwards. The adventure story is somewhat enlarged by a political dimension. The mother of Poppy and Jack is an ardent suffragette and some of her libertarian zest is embodied in Poppy, enshrined in a notebook of the expedition kept by Charlie. The notebook adds useful detail to the narrative which is otherwise heavily image dependent.

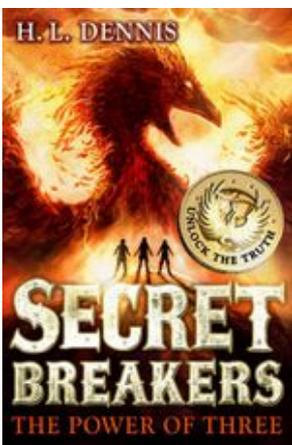
In one memorable moment, the boy from the twenty-first century hands his iPod to the twentieth-century girl, who is suitably impressed.

The narrative style is sparse, relying on the graphics for detail, but reassuringly fast-paced. The book might be a success with reluctant readers or readers with difficulties. The graphic style is simple and bright. It looks as if the illustrator has deliberately striven for a style reminiscent of children's art. At the same time the graphics invite adaptation to a computer-generated-imagery (CGI) film medium.

**Rebecca R. Butler**

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**Books for Young Adults**



***The Power of Three (Secret Breakers 1)***

H.L. Dennis, London: Hodder Children's Books, pb. 978 0 3409 9961 5, £5.99, 2012, 336pp.

This book is intended to be the first of a six-book series Secret Breakers, centred on the attempt to decode an ancient manuscript MS408 and featuring three children. It is based on the principle that their minds are open to new ideas so that they may discern what adult code breakers have missed. Described on the publicity material as 'Da Vinci Code for kids', with a puzzle-solving story line that is intended to involve the reader in the attempt to discover meanings, the book is designed to appeal to a specific kind of young reader; certainly the comments from readers between 10 and 14 which appear on the book jacket suggest that it does indeed achieve this aim. There is also a good deal of incidental information; for instance, about the role of the codebreakers at Bletchley Park during the war, though sometimes it is difficult to distinguish fact from fiction in this respect.

Dennis makes a real attempt to differentiate between the characters of her three main protagonists, while the plot line never becomes too complicated to follow. The book

could certainly 'hook' certain types of young reader – those with an interest in mystery and a reasonable degree of facility with number, for instance. Some of the scenes are quite vivid, such as the one set in the Brighton Regency Pavilion. The fact that it strains an adult's capacity to believe in both the basic situation and much of its development is not really a flaw in books in this genre!

### Pat Pinsent

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#### *Poppy's Hero*

Rachel Billington, London: Frances Lincoln, pb. 978 1 8478 0192 0, £6.99, 2012, 288pp.

Rachel Billington, the daughter of Lord Longford, has followed in his footsteps by involving herself with the welfare of prisoners. She is more than qualified therefore to portray the experience of Poppy, whose father, Big Frank, is imprisoned in Grisewood Slops (presumably Wormwood Scrubs), facing trial as a drugs smuggler. Polly's belief in his innocence is such that with the help of schoolmate Angel, whose father is also in prison, she and 'Wimpy' Will concoct a rather unlikely scheme for the escape of Big Frank. Their plans are thwarted when he is transferred to Castlerock prison (on an island with steep cliffs, presumably Portland), when Polly at last learns from her father that he is in fact guilty.

In giving this plot outline, I am not robbing the novel of suspense, as I am sure even the youngest child reader would regard the escape plan as unlikely to succeed, while there are sufficient indications in the inter-chapters which describe Frank's arrest and trial to alert us to the fact that he is not altogether the wrongly convicted hero his daughter thinks him to be. Rather the interest of the book lies in the interactions between Polly and other characters: her strong but vulnerable Polish mother Irena; her friend Jude who tells her how her 'wonderful hero dad' is in prison; the hard-edged Angel; and the sickly Will whom she had despised but comes to value for his support. Most of all it is about the complex relationship between Polly and the father she initially idolises, goes on to feel anger against, and, finally, after his brilliant performance in the prison production of *Guys and Dolls*, comes to accept for himself: 'he's guilty, which means he's bad, but he's also a star and my dad who loves me' (p.272).

I suspect that this book might well fail to hold the interest of the majority of young readers who have no family connection with prisoners. Nevertheless it could have a valuable function, perhaps within a classroom context, for increasing knowledge and promoting discussion on the subject. In particular, the way in which Polly and her father work together on creating 'The Rat who Wanted to be Liked', a story which is completed by Will and is likely to be published, affords possibilities for discussion and creative writing.

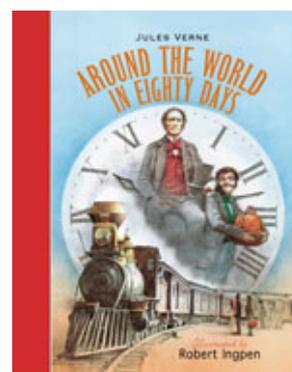
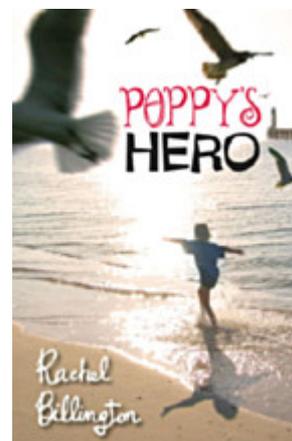
### Pat Pinsent

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#### *Around the World in Eighty Days*

Jules Verne, illus. Robert Ingpen, Bath: Templar Publishing, hb. 978 1 8487 7620 3, £14.99, 2011, 224pp.

This fine edition of Jules Verne's popular, classic adventure story has been fully illustrated by Robert Ingpen. On the cover a compact visual synopsis will intrigue a modern young reader more familiar with space-age travel and accessories. The end papers, treated like faded ink records, depict the route across the world and also include sepia-like portrait sketches of the two main protagonists. Within the covers Robert Ingpen has captured the particularities of the characters and the vicissitudes of their exciting travels, bringing the text to life with vividness and colour. When Jules Verne introduces the two main characters, Phileas Fogg and Passepartout, to the reader he describes their manner and dress in great detail. The sense of closely observed detail is mirrored in the full-length portraits that Robert Ingpen provides, and this invitation to engagement is sustained throughout the book in a variety of visual modes. Chapters are



headed by or end with illustrations of objects such as a fob watch, a set of playing cards, a wooden telegraph transmitter, a box camera with plates, and a compass, all of which contribute to setting the scene and period. As the plot is built up and unfolds, half-page illustrations, like film stills, amplify the atmosphere and provide detailed views of location, such as the Reform Club where the wager is made and the custom house regarding plans for the journey. Double-page spreads convey the action: journeys by boat, train and sledge, crowd scenes in India, such as that at a funeral pyre, a drug den in Hong Kong and, later, snowy encounters with Sioux Indians. The final chapter's illustration is of Passepartout bearing a tray with glasses and a bottle for the purpose of a quiet domestic celebration and an end to rash adventuring.

Ingpen recalls that when he was an art student he was greatly impressed by Michael Todd's wide-screen version of the story, which included a dramatic balloon scene across the French Alps. Ingpen says that he envies the imaginative freedom that the film maker took, but that as the illustrator of this unabridged version he has 'tried to be true to the continuity of events in this tale'. Despite his expression of regret, I think that Ingpen is being too modest. I think that the integrity and skill he has used to illustrate this edition offers the reader greater imaginative scope than the film. The film offers a different, more direct, experience of excitement that could complement the reader's first experience of the book.

Ingpen has illustrated a number of other classic children's stories in a series published by Templar. I suspect his artistry illuminates the true spirit of every tale and adds pleasure to the reading.

**Judith Philo**

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## Graphic Books

### *The Treasured Thief*

Ryan Foley, illus. Sachin Nagar, New Delhi, India: Campfire Publishing, pb. 978 9 3800 2892 7, £6.99, 2011, 64 pp.

This graphic book tells the story of Shakila, a beautiful princess from an African country who comes to Egypt seeking a husband. The story is in part derived from the writings of the Greek historian Herodotus. The princess has many suitors. She asks them all the same two questions: What is the cleverest thing you have ever done? What is the wickedest thing you've ever done? Many candidates shrink from answering the second question.

The last candidate is Akhenta. He agrees to answer the questions, but he first tells Shakila the story of his father Kharzim, who constructed a pyramid where the pharaoh Rhampsinitus could store his wealth. The pyramid is built, to the satisfaction of the pharaoh. But Kharzim is then attacked by a gang of thugs who threaten to enslave his wife and daughters if he doesn't pay what he owes them.

On his death bed, Kharzim tells his sons that in the structure of the pyramid he has built a secret tunnel leading into the vault. Planning to find a doctor for their father, the sons then steal from the pharaoh's treasure. But their father dies.

The family being still in debt, the brothers keep stealing small amounts until the pharaoh become suspicious and lays a trap for them. Khnepus, the younger brother, is caught. In order to avoid incriminating his brother Akhenta, Khnepus asks his brother to kill him. He does so, and removes his brother's head to avoid his being identified.

When their mother learns what has happened she insists that the body must be reclaimed for burial. With a personal history like this, it's no surprise that Akhenta has good answers for the princess's two questions.

Nagar's graphics, though a touch lurid, serve their purpose of attracting young readers who might otherwise be repelled by the savagery of the story. Helpful explanations of



Egyptian beliefs, such as that of the afterlife, are provided without unduly interrupting the narrative flow. The book is published by an Indian company, producing texts for young European and North American readers. We really do inhabit one world.

**Rebecca R. Butler**

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## REPORTS

### **2nd Biennial NCRCL Conference: 'Children's Literature and the Inner World'**

Saturday 12 May 2012, University of Roehampton, London.

The proposed aim of this conference was to 'explore relationships between imaginative writing and the workings of the mind ... how can we know what goes on within other people's heads, especially when those other people are children?' Alison Waller's opening talk confronted this question with reference on the one hand to philosophers ranging from Descartes to Ryle and Dennett, and on the other to three books for young adults, Peter Dickinson's *Eva* (1988), M.T. Anderson's *Feed* (2002), and Mary Pearson's *The Adoration of Jenna Fox* (2008). All these books create situations in which the protagonists experience an interference in the 'normal' interaction between brain and the rest of the body – respectively by a brain transplant into the body of a chimpanzee, a brain implant of a piece of mobile technology, and a transplant into a synthetic body. These somewhat alarming scenarios enable the authors to put into a different perspective some of the long-enduring philosophical questions about the nature of human consciousness.

David Rudd's intriguing reference in his title to the Möbius strip, the simple device that enacts a continuity between the concepts of 'inner' and 'outer', was illuminated by reference to a range of children's texts, from Maurice Sendak's *Where the Wild Things Are* (1963) and Anthony Browne's *Zoo* (1992) to Lewis Carroll's classic and oft-discussed *Alice*. His framework for analysis included the work of Carolyn Steedman and Kathryn Hume, not forgetting the ever-relevant Lacan.

In the workshop that I attended after lunch, Catherine Butler linked books written about life in Second World War by authors who experienced it as children, with some near-future dystopias. Irina Kyulanova explored children's emotional responses to war, as portrayed in some recent novels and young writers' memoirs. One of the other parallel sessions looked at 'Love and Embarrassment' in chosen picture books (Magdalena Sikorska) and young-adult fiction (Erica Gillingham), while Anthony Pavlik looked at anthropomorphism. The other parallel session focused on 'Interiority and Children's Reading', in which Jeffrey Canton engaged with issues relating to 'childist' approaches to children's literature and Margot Stafford looked at a 1920s' six-volume home library for children.

Farah Mendlesohn's lively and at times provocative plenary talk challenged facile generalisations about 'all children' reacting in specified ways to literature, concluding in a defence of an anecdotal approach, provided we remember to value other people's responses as much as our own: 'As primates we are primed to look for someone's inner self.' Finally, Philip Gross, a professor of creative writing and award-winning poet, presented a variety of thoughts for further consideration: Are illnesses of addiction perversions of creativity?, Do parents perhaps not need to worry too much about suitability of material for young people as they'll work out for themselves what isn't for them? He suggested that children could be seen as co-creators of their own lives, and also that one of their endeavours is to work out what is inside adults. He concluded his talk, and a very thought-provoking conference, with a description of a technique he has found useful in encouraging creative writing: asking people to invent the idea of a very special box and also the very individual contents that might be found in it.

[Pat Pinsent]

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### **Children's Book History Society Biennial Harvey Darton Award 2010/2011**

Bertrand Russell Room, Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London. 29 March 2012.

The Children's Books History Society was founded in 1969. Among its aims is that of encouraging communication between students, research workers, collectors, etc., who find themselves working in a notoriously neglected field. It administers the biennial Harvey Darton Award.

The award is given for a book that contributes fresh and detailed knowledge in the history of British children's books, recognising that such material may appear within a broader context than the purely historical, such as bibliographies, and wider literary and critical works. Foreign-language books available in English are also eligible.

F.J. Harvey Darton (1879–1936), after whom the award is named, is chiefly noted for his so-far-unsurpassed *Children's Books in England: Five Centuries of Social Life*, Cambridge University Press, 1932, 3rd edn, 1982. The jury consisted of Brian Alderson, Susan Bailes and Mary Cadogan.

A presentation was made of each shortlisted book, detailing its contents, critiquing it and judging its eligibility for the award. This was followed by an announcement of the winner. The shortlisted books were:

Dennis Butts. *Children's Literature and Social Change*. Lutterworth Press, 2010.

Matthew Grenby. *The Child Reader 1700–1840*. Cambridge University Press, 2011.

John Meriton. *Small Books for the Common Man: A Descriptive Bibliography*. British Library and Oak Knoll Press, 2010.

Joe Pearson. *Drawn Direct to the Plate: Noel Carrington and the Puffin Picture Books*. Portsmouth: Penguin Collector's Society, 2010.

Brian Sibley. *Harry Potter: Film Wizardry*. London: Transworld, 2010.

Marina Warner. *Stranger Magic: Charmed States & the Arabian Nights*. London: Chatto & Windus, 2011.

Matthew McLennan Young. *Field & Tuer, The Leadenhall Press: A Checklist with an Appreciation of Andrew White Tuer*. British Library and Oak Knoll Press. 2010.

The winner was Mathew Grenby's book *The Child Reader 1700–1848*. A popular choice. The book looks at the first users of the new children's literature that developed in the eighteenth century, the titles children owned, how they acquired and used their books and what they thought of them. Grenby has drawn on diverse sources, including inscriptions and marginalia, letters and diaries, inventories and parish records, and portraits and pedagogical treatises. From such sources he has reconstructed sociological profiles of consumers and the often touching experiences of individual children. Grenby's discoveries about the owners of children's books, and their use, abuse and perception of this new product contributes to an understanding of how children's literature was able to become established as a distinct and flourishing element of print culture. The distinctive use of the short inscriptions that the owners wrote in their books is revealing. For example, a thirteen-year old annotated the description 'an intellectual mirror' of *The Looking Glass Mind* by declaring it 'an unintellectual mirror ... an inelegant collection of the most disagreeable silly stories and uninteresting tales'!

Mathew Grenby is Reader in Children's Literature at Newcastle University, UK.

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## World Book Day's Storytelling Superstar Competition

1 March 2012.

Children's Laureate Julia Donaldson and author Cressida Cowell announced the winner on World Book Day of the quest to find Britain's best storyteller.

Alison Williams, a mother of one, was named the first ever Storytelling Superstar. She left the judges highly impressed with her engaging retelling of 'The Tale of the Little Raindrop' – performed with the inventive use of a nappy and Christmas tree bauble! See [www.worldbookday.com/competitions/storytelling-superstars/](http://www.worldbookday.com/competitions/storytelling-superstars/). The prize was a year's worth of children's books for National Book Tokens. The other judge was Sue Jones, the Reading Agency's Programme Manager for Young People. Jones commented 'Good reading starts early and research shows that children who share a book with others are more likely to develop language skills and advanced reading levels.'

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## National Libraries Day

1 February 2012.

Children's Laureate Julia Donaldson wrote a poem for National Libraries Day, 'Library Poem'. For more news of the day, see [www.nationallibrariesday.org.uk/](http://www.nationallibrariesday.org.uk/). Donaldson will be visiting public libraries across Scotland, England and Wales this autumn.

### Library Poem

Everyone is welcome to walk through the door.  
It really doesn't matter if you're rich or poor.  
There are books in boxes and books on shelves.  
They're free for you to borrow, so help yourselves.

Come and meet your heroes, old and new,  
From William the Conqueror to Winnie the Pooh.  
You can look into the Mirror or read The Times,  
Or bring along a toddler to chant some rhymes.

The librarian's a friend who loves to lend,  
So see if there's a book that she can recommend.  
Read that book, and if you're bitten  
You can borrow all the other ones the author's written.

Are you into battles or biography?  
Are you keen on gerbils or geography?  
Gardening or ghosts? Sharks or science fiction?  
There's something here for everyone, whatever your addiction.

There are students revising, deep in concentration,  
And school kids doing projects, finding inspiration.  
Over in the corner there's a table with seating,  
So come along and join in the Book Club meeting.

Yes, come to the library! Browse and borrow,  
And help make sure it'll still be here tomorrow.

(Copyright © 2012 Julia Donaldson)

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### Costa Children's Book Award Winner 2011

Quaglino's, London. 24 January 2012.

The prize has been won by Moira Young for *Blood Red Road* (Marion Lloyd Books).

*Blood Red Road* is set in a lawless future land, where life is cheap and survival is hard. Saba's twin brother is stolen by mysterious, black-robed riders. She sets out on a desperate journey to find him. Ahead lie violence and treachery, and Saba will need a spirit as tough as her crossbow to survive. But her companions are the cleverest bird that ever flew and a handsome thief with eyes the colour of moonlight.

The category award judges were Helen Fospero, TV presenter, Eleanor Updale, author, and Tony West, Lion and Unicorn bookshop, Richmond. The chair of the awards was Geordie Greig, editor of the *London Evening Standard*.

The Costa Book Awards recognise the most enjoyable books of the last year by writers based in the UK and Ireland. Originally established by Whitbread plc in 1971, Costa announced its takeover of the sponsorship in 2006.

For further details and the shortlist, see [www.costabookawards.com/pdfs/Childrens-Book-Award.pdf](http://www.costabookawards.com/pdfs/Childrens-Book-Award.pdf).

### **Royal Society Young People's Book Prize 2011**

The Royal Society, Carlton House Terrace, London. 1 December 2011.

This book prize celebrates the best books that communicate science to young people.

The prize is open to books in which science is a substantial aspect of the book's content, narrative or theme and which are written for young people aged up to 14. Books submitted for the prize must have been first published in English in the calendar year of 2010. The authors of the shortlisted books each receive £1,000 and the winner receives £10,000.

An adult judging panel selects a shortlist of six books. The winner is selected by judging panels of young people from across the UK. The Royal Society has awarded a junior book prize since 1988 with the aim of encouraging the writing, publishing and reading of good and accessible books that communicate science to young people.

The winners of the 2011 prize are Christiane Dorion and Beverley Young for *How the World Works*. How did life begin? Is the earth moving beneath our feet? Why does it rain? The book aims to answer to these questions and many more in a hands-on exploration of our planet. Bulging with pop-ups, tabs to pull and flaps to lift, the book is a fact-packed guide will reveal the awe-inspiring wonders of our world.

For the shortlist, see <http://royalsociety.org/awards/young-people/shortlist/>, and for previous year's shortlists and winning books, see <http://royalsociety.org/awards/young-people/>.

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### **Frances Lincoln Diverse Children's Book Award 2011**

Seven Stories, Newcastle Upon Tyne. 24 June 2011.

Helen Limon won the 2011 Frances Lincoln Diverse Voices Children's Book Award for her book *Om Shanti, Babe*. Her story was inspired by families she met during a trip to India. Though she has written several books for children before, this is her first novel.

The story is about Cassia, a teenager who is forced to take another look at the world around her when she goes to India with her mother. She learns about fair-trade and environmental issues, as well as struggling to accept her mother's new Indian partner. And like every teenager, she has crushes! First on pop star Jonny Gold, and then Dev, an Indian boy she meets on a train.

The judges described *Om Shanti, Babe* as 'Fabulous ... laugh-out-loud funny'.

*Om Shanti, Babe* has been published by Frances Lincoln Children's Books.

Runner-up was Karon Aldermon for her story *For Keeps* about Benedicta (Ben), her mother and younger sister who are asylum seekers from Cameroon. 'While their uncertain future and hand-to-mouth existence cast a shadow over Ben's friendships and fun times at the school glee club and on church outings, she has decided that Newcastle is her home. With her friend Becky, she resolves to help a bullied school-friend, Jaz.'

A special mention went to Australian Michelle Richardson for her *Tek*, 'who accompanies her cold and distant father, an expert on Australian Aboriginal culture, to a desert army base, where her gift for communicating with the *ngapan* (spirits of the dead) surfaces just when it is most inconvenient'.

See under News and the 2013 award for the criteria of Diverse Voices.

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## FORTHCOMING EXHIBITIONS, AWARDS AND EVENTS

### **Celebrating 15 Years of Harry Potter Magic**

Tuesday 26 June – Friday 31 July 2012.

Bloomsbury has launching a nationwide competition to find the ultimate Harry Potter fan. Fans are invited to write a letter of no more than 50 words explaining why they love Harry Potter. Entrants are encouraged to include drawings, doodles, etc. to make their letters elaborate.

The competition is designed to encourage entrants to visit their local bookshop or library as the only way to enter is to post their fan mail in one of specially designed post boxes to be displayed in these places during the dates given above.

The winner and runners-up will be announced on Saturday 1 September 2012.  
Registration closed on 23 April 2012.

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### **Daydreams and Diaries, the Story of Jacqueline Wilson**

Seven Stories, Newcastle Upon Tyne. 15 October 2011 – 13 September 2012.

This is a chance to find out about Dame Jacqueline, in the first ever exhibition dedicated to the bestselling author. The exhibition guides you through a journey of her favourite stories, characters, daydreams and working process. It shows how her favourite characters began, including Tracy Beaker, Hetty Feather and the Illustrated Mum, from ideas to text and working with illustrator Nick Sharratt to bringing her stories to life. Visitors can also follow Dame Jacqueline on her creative journey during the making of *Sapphire Battersea*, the sequel to *Hetty Feather*, released in September 2011. The exhibition is supported by Random House Children's Books

For more information see [www.sevenstories.org.uk/whats-on/daydreams-and-diaries-the-story-of-jacqueline-wilson-e49140](http://www.sevenstories.org.uk/whats-on/daydreams-and-diaries-the-story-of-jacqueline-wilson-e49140).

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### **A Squash and a Squeeze: Sharing Stories with Julia Donaldson**

Seven Stories, Newcastle Upon Tyne. 17 March 2012 – 13 February 2013.

This exhibition brings Julia Donaldson's captivating stories to life. It shows how she wrote modern classics such as *The Gruffalo*, *Princess Mirror-Belle*, *The Troll* and *The Highway Rat* and explores original artwork by her many illustrators – most famously Axel Scheffler. Visitors can follow her journey from song writer for children's television to current Children's Laureate. Children and their families can share stories and explore sensory environments based on Donaldson's books. They can also enjoy following in Toddle Waddle's footsteps, climbing into the cave with the Cave Baby and meeting the Gruffalo. Other activities include a sing-a-long to Donaldson's songs on Julia's Jukebox and performing a play on Seven Stories stage. The exhibition is supported by Scholastic, Macmillan Children's Books and Alison Green Books.

For more information see [www.sevenstories.org.uk/whats-on/a-squash-and-a-squeeze-sharing-stories-with-julia-donaldson-e49331](http://www.sevenstories.org.uk/whats-on/a-squash-and-a-squeeze-sharing-stories-with-julia-donaldson-e49331).

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### ***Tiddler and Other Terrific Tales***

Empire Theatre, Consett, Co. Durham. Thursday 21 June 2012.

The stage show of Children's Laureate Julia Donaldson's stories.

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### **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](mailto:info@childlitassn.org).

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### **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](http://www.aclar.org/index.php/callsforpapers/8-cfplisting/28-cfp-aclar-2012-conference).

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### **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](http://www.ielt.org/pagina/actividades?id=785).

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### **Young Times Design Competition**

Closing date 27 July 2010.

Organised by *The Times* and Random House publishing group, and celebrating Vintage Children's Classics list intention to republish E. Nesbit's *The Railway Children*, children aged 7–11 are invited to enter a drawing or painting for a coloured cover illustration. Entrants must submit their entry using the official competition entry form at [www.vintage-books.co.uk/classics/Competition/TheRailwayChildrenCompetition/](http://www.vintage-books.co.uk/classics/Competition/TheRailwayChildrenCompetition/). The illustration should be on A4-size paper.

*The Railway Children* was first published in 1906. The new edition will be sold worldwide.

Judges for the competition are Dame Jacqueline Wilson, author and former children's laureate, and Jez Alborough, illustrator.

The winner will receive a library of 20 Vintage Children's Classics books of their choice and 10 copies of the Vintage Children's Classics edition of *The Railway Children* featuring their winning cover illustration. There will be prizes also for two runners-up. The winner will be announced in *Young Times* (part of *Times 2* supplement to *The Times*) in the week of 29 October.

For further information, see [www.vintage-books.co.uk/classics/](http://www.vintage-books.co.uk/classics/).

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### **IBBY UK/NCRCL MA Conference: Call for papers on the theme of 'Beyond the Book'**

Deadline for papers 31 July 2012.

University of Roehampton, London. 10 November 2012.

Now, more than ever, people are debating what constitutes a book. With the development of ebooks, apps, self-publishing and fan fiction, as well as the popularity of book adaptations to film, TV and stage, book boundaries are extended and broken all the time. The boundaries of children's books have always been flexible, with merchandise included with John Newbery's *A Little Pretty Pocket Book*, published in 1744, and J.M. Barrie's classic character Peter Pan appearing in various guises before being

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immortalised in fiction. The 19th IBBY UK/NCRCL MA conference will consider the many incarnations of stories that take place 'beyond the book', as well as the impact of children's books on wider culture, including discussions of the publishing industry and book design, digital developments, marginalia, adaptation, festivals, museums, collections and more.

The conference will include keynote presentations by well-known writers, publishers and academics. Proposals are welcomed for workshop sessions (lasting about 20 minutes) on the following or other relevant issues/areas from any period in the history of international children's literature.

- The book industry, including editorial and marketing, production, cover design and other peritextual features and distribution channels;
- Digital developments, including apps, websites, ebooks, self-publishing, blogs and social networks;
- Adaptations beyond the book, including film, TV, radio and theatre, as well as book trailers, YouTube videos, music, etc.;
- Marginalia, and other evidence of how children read/interact with books;
- Blogging;
- Fan fiction;
- Websites, such as Pottermore, that affect the way readers perceive and understand the worlds constructed from books;
- Merchandising, book festivals;
- Museums, book collections, societies;
- The role of books/stories in popular culture.

We welcome contributions from interested academics and other researchers in any of these areas. Brief accounts of the papers that are presented at the conference will be published in the Spring 2013 issue of *IBBYLink*, the journal of IBBY UK.

The deadline for proposals is 31 July 2012. Please email a 200-word abstract (for a 20-minute paper), along with a short biography and affiliation to Laura Atkins: [L.Atkins@roehampton.ac.uk](mailto:L.Atkins@roehampton.ac.uk).

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### **Foyle Young Poets of the Year Awards 2012**

Deadline for entries 31 July 2012.

An award is an opportunity for any young poet aged 11–17 to accelerate their writing career. The award has been in operation for 15 years. This year's judges are Helen Mort (a previous winner and now a published poet) and Christopher Reid. Each year 100 winners (15 overall winners and 85 commendations) are selected. Funding is by the Foyle Foundation. Entry is free. Winners from the 15–17 age category attend a week-long intensive residential Arvon course where they develop their creative writing skills alongside fellow poets. Winners from the 11–14 age category benefit from poetry residencies at their school, followed by distance mentoring.

Individuals may enter more than one poem (we suggest no more than 6–8). The full entry rules are at [www.poetrysociety.org.uk/content/competitions/fyp/rules/](http://www.poetrysociety.org.uk/content/competitions/fyp/rules/). For further information see [www.poetrysociety.org.uk/content/competitions/fyp](http://www.poetrysociety.org.uk/content/competitions/fyp).

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## **Teaching Caribbean Poetry – Cambridge University Summer School**

Cambridge Faculty of Education, Centre for Commonwealth Education, Trumpington House, Homerton College, Cambridge. 28–30 August 2012.

This three-day course for secondary and 6th form English teachers is part of the newly launched Caribbean Poetry Project which is a collaboration between Cambridge University and the University of the West Indies. The course is designed to help teachers become more confident in tackling poetry – Caribbean poetry in particular.

Course content will include:

- The music of Caribbean poetry
- ‘Nation language’: The languages of the Caribbean and their impact on the poetry
- The role of the environment in Caribbean poetry
- Poetry of resistance and oppression
- Views of the Caribbean from Inghlan – British Caribbean poetry
- Odysseys – the work of Walcott and other key contemporary poets
- Performances from poets, including John Agard and Dorothea Smartt (tbc)

The cost of the course is £225 including lunch, dinner and refreshments. Bed and breakfast is available at Homerton College for £70 per night.

See the project website for further details at: <http://caribbeanpoetry.educ.cam.ac.uk/> or contact Bryony Horsley-Heather, Tel: +44 1223 767680 (bsjh2@cam.ac.uk) or Morag Styles (ms104@cam.ac.uk).

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## **The Power of Caribbean Poetry: Word and Sound**

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.

Conference fees including lunch, dinner, tea and coffee will be £200. Day rate: £75 for 20th, £100 for 21st and £70 for 22nd, for early-bird bookings. Onsite accommodation is available at Homerton College for £60 per night.

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

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## **Children’s Book History Society Annual Conference**

Crown Court Church of Scotland, Covent Garden, London WC2. Saturday 13 October 2012.

The conference will celebrate the 200 years since the publication of the first German edition of *Children’s and Household Tales* of the Brothers Grimm.

For further details contact Pat Garrett [patricia@abcgarrrett.plus.com](mailto:patricia@abcgarrrett.plus.com).

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### ***The Times* Chicken House Children's Fiction Prize 2013**

Closing date for entries 26 October 2012.

The competition is open to entrants aged 18 or over. Entry is limited to one per person and must be by post to 'Children's Fiction Competition', The Chicken House, 2 Palmer Street, Frome, Somerset, BA11 1DS. The entry must be clearly labelled with the entrant's full name, address, email and telephone number.

Entries must be the original work of the entrant and not previously commercially published and distributed (self-published works are allowed). The entry must be a full-length manuscript of no more than 80,000 words, with a suggested minimum of 30,000 words. It should be suitable for a worldwide children's audience aged between 7 and 18.

Picture books and graphic novels will not be accepted and illustrations will not be considered.

All entries will be read by a Chicken House editorially managed team of experienced freelance readers who will select a longlist of approximately 20 entries. The longlisted entrants' names and general locations will be published on the Chicken House website ([www.doublecluck.com](http://www.doublecluck.com)) and on *The Times* website (<http://thetimes.co.uk/chickenhouse>) in January 2013. Each of the longlisted entrants will receive a reader's report giving editorial advice. A final shortlist of five entries will be announced online by Chicken House and *The Times* in February 2013. The judges will choose a winner from this shortlist, to be announced in spring 2013 (anticipated to be 31 March 2013).

For full details see <http://doublecluck.com/submissions/>.

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### **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](http://www.uni-kassel.de/projekte/en/brueder-grimm-kongress-2012/startseite.html).

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### **Frances Lincoln Diverse Voices Children's Book Award 2013**

The closing date for all entries is 31 December 2012.

The judging panel for the 2013 award has been joined by Shami Chakrabarti, Director of Liberty (the National Council for Civil Liberties) and Alex Wheatle MBE, the award-winning British novelist of Jamaican heritage. The other judges are Kate Edwards (Seven Stories), Jake Hope (Lancashire Libraries) and Janetta Otter-Barry (Frances Lincoln Children's Books).

Frances Lincoln, publisher, and Seven Stories, the national centre for children's books, give the award in memory of Frances Lincoln (1945–2001), to encourage and promote diversity in children's fiction. The award is for a manuscript that celebrates cultural diversity in the widest possible sense, either in terms of its story or the ethnic and cultural origins of its author.

The prize of £1,500, plus the option for Janetta Otter-Barry at Frances Lincoln Children's Books to publish the novel, will be awarded to the best work of unpublished fiction for 8–12 year olds by a writer aged 18 years or over who has not previously published a novel for children. The writer may have contributed to an anthology of prose or poetry. The work must be written in English and it must be a minimum of 15,000 words and a maximum of 35,000 words.

The award aims to:

Take positive steps to increase the representation of people writing from or about different cultural perspectives, whose work is published in Britain today.

Promote new writing for children, especially by or about people whose culture and voice are currently under-represented.

Recognise that as children's books shape our earliest perceptions of the world and its cultures, promoting writing that represents diversity will contribute to social and cultural tolerance.

Support the process of writing rather than, as with the majority of prizes, promoting the publication.

For more details see [www.franceslincoln.co.uk/en-gb/Page/98/Diverse\\_Voices.html](http://www.franceslincoln.co.uk/en-gb/Page/98/Diverse_Voices.html);  
email: [diversevoices@sevenstories.org.uk](mailto:diversevoices@sevenstories.org.uk); tel.: 0845 271 0777.

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### **Newcastle Centre for Language Arts Under-19 Belonging Poetry Competition**

Deadline 20 July 2012.

Jackie Kay launched this competition at the NCLA Festival of Belonging, held at various Newcastle–Gateshead venues 30 April – 6 May 2012: 'Who makes us what we are and where do we belong are questions we all ask ourselves. Does your identity change when you are forced to move country, or when you choose to leave your homeland? Does your identity change when your accent does? ... Can you be simultaneously placed and misplaced?'

Shortlisted poems will be transformed into a poetry trail across the area in autumn 2012.

For further information, see [www.ncl.ac.uk/ncla/](http://www.ncl.ac.uk/ncla/) or email [ncenla@ncl.ac.uk](mailto:ncenla@ncl.ac.uk).

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## NEWS

### Children's Laureate

News of the activities and initiatives of Julia Donaldson are on the Children's Laureate website, [www.childrenslaureate.org.uk](http://www.childrenslaureate.org.uk).

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### Fenland Poet Laureates

Wisbech and Fenland Museum, Wisbech. 24 February 2012.

Honorary titles of Junior Fenland Poet Laureate, Fenland Young Poet Laureate and Fenland Poet Laureate for a year have been created. A competition was launched to find the laureates, who will work with Atelier East to identify opportunities to be part of the community, chronicling special events and celebrating Fenland.

There were three competition awards in three categories: Junior (5–10), Young (11–16 and Adult (17+). Entrants were asked to submit a poem that represented and related to the theme of 'Fenland' and the Young and Adult entrants were also asked to submit a short plan of what they would do with their year as laureate if they won. The following poems are reproduced with permission Atelier East.

#### **The Ancient Fens by James Collingwood-Smith (Junior Fenland Poet Laureate)**

A sinister unknown landscape.  
To those that live outside.  
A muddy mystic swamp.  
Dangerous to explore.  
And the Fen folk stand tall and proud.  
In their homes in the swirling mists.

#### **The Fens by Oliver Osborn (Young Fenland Poet Laureate)**

The fields of the Fens are flat and wide,  
The creatures beneath are trying to hide,  
From a predator who's on the prowl,  
The silent flight of the lonely barn owl.  
  
His beak is sharp, his feathers are soft,  
Using delicate wings to stay aloft,  
Swooping to kill, talons extended,  
He reaches out and a small life is ended.  
  
The harvester goes through the soil,  
The endless cycle of farmers' toil,  
Another day's work has just been done,  
We rest to admire the low setting sun.  
  
Out in the night two bulging black eyes,  
They belong to the animal looking up at the sky,  
A huge black eagle searching for prey,  
This time no luck, he will try another day.

The winner of the adult category, Elaine Ewart, who is now Fenland Poet Laureate, was runner up in the Main category of the NCLA Water Poetry Competition 2012 and is a postgraduate student at Newcastle University on the Creative Writing course. Her winning poem can be read at [www.atelier-east.co.uk/2012/02/fenland-poet-laureate-awards-the-winning-poems/](http://www.atelier-east.co.uk/2012/02/fenland-poet-laureate-awards-the-winning-poems/).

The book of the poems can be previewed at [www.blurb.com/books/3082822](http://www.blurb.com/books/3082822) and purchased at [www.blurb.com/bookstore/detail/3082822](http://www.blurb.com/bookstore/detail/3082822).

The competition was funded by Clore Duffield.

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## David Almond Fellowships

Newcastle University's School of English Literature, Language and Linguistics and Seven Stories, the national centre for children's books, have announced the creation of David Almond Fellowships for research in children's literature.

The fellowships aim to promote high-quality research in the Seven Stories collections that will call attention to their breadth and scholarly potential. The two awards of £300 each are to facilitate a research visit to the Seven Stories collections in Newcastle upon Tyne, UK of at least three days by a bona fide researcher working on a relevant project. Applications will be considered from candidates in any academic discipline. The successful applicants will have a clearly defined project that will benefit from having access to the Seven Stories collections. All applicants should consult the Seven Stories catalogue as part of preparing their applications:

<http://www.sevenstories.org.uk/collection/>. A well-developed dissemination strategy will be an advantage. Priority will be given to the importance of the project and best use of the Seven Stories collections as judged by a senior member of the Children's Literature Unit in the School of English Literature, Language and Linguistics at Newcastle University and a senior member of the Collections team at Seven Stories.

Applicants must hold a first degree or higher from a recognised institution of higher education. The deadline for submissions is 1 June 2012.

Further details from Kim Reynolds, [Kim.Reynolds@ncl.ac.uk](mailto:Kim.Reynolds@ncl.ac.uk).

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## Newcastle Centre for Language Arts Water Poetry Competition 2012

NCLA, Newcastle University, set up this competition in association with the water theme of the Newcastle Institute for Research on Sustainability and Northumbrian Water.

The North-East Young Adult Category (free entry for up to three poems) awarded a 1st prize of £250 with five runners up receiving £50. The judges were John Burnside and W.N. Herbert. Sam Summers was the winner with 'I Made Time Stop', which is both deep and amusing, with a flow to it not unlike the water from the tap he describes.

Obviously the first thing that comes to mind is a dripping tap  
Or a gushing tap gushing ad apparent infinitum  
And I'm holding my breath through a clenched fist  
And unblinking  
Stop.

And if I could I'd run through a pet shop and take a feather from every bird and take the still but still damp saliva from each dog's mouth on the tip of a new finger and change the trajectories of goldfish and watch to see if they'd blink and steal some of the money from the till and give it to you.

I'd run through a supermarket and empty a box of cornflakes over a short person's head just to see if I could stop them in mid-air and take in the beauty of a head suspended in a cloud of cornflakes like a forever snowglobe with cornflakes instead of snow and a head.

I'd run through a garden centre at night and set off the burglar alarm and discover what a still sound sounds like and I bet it's something beautiful beautiful beyond all comprehension like four rainbows at once or your smiling nose and then I'd play with the rakes.

Once I'd really gotten the hang of it I'd begin to annoy the bees and when they got close enough to sting me I'd make them stop and I'd keep doing it until I was covered in frozen bees and then I'd strut around town in my suit of bees and everybody would think I was really cool.

I'd get so good that I could stop a beam of light before it reaches the end of a room and then I'd climb inside it and surround myself with it and it would taste like honey

and it would feel like the best parts of the sky and when it flooded my lungs I could sing like money and you.

I'd empty a primary school dining hall and fill the air with neatly shredded paper and 'Just Like Heaven' and I'd tap you on the nose to wake you up and we'd dance for as long as we wanted in the forever snow and I'd freeze one of your tears so that I could stare into it for as long as it takes to figure out why and then we'd kiss a millennium kiss and then I'd go home and finish washing my hands.

(Reproduced with permission Victoria Adams, Creative Writing Development Officer, NCLA, and the author.)

The winning and highly commended poems can be read at <http://archive.nclacommunity.org/content/tag/young-adults-category>.

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### ***The Times* Chicken House Children's Fiction Prize 2012**

*Sleepwell and Fly* is the winner of the annual competition to find a new star of children's fiction, an unpublished children's author. It is a novel about a 12-year-old boy who works as a poison-taster for the rich, and who wakes up to find himself trapped in a room with his friend, 'a bag of bones in a bloody lake'. This is the first novel by Fletcher Moss, the pseudonym for the 40-year-old assistant headteacher of a large state secondary school in Manchester, and will be published by Chicken House next year.

Judges were Barry Cunningham of the publisher Chicken House; Michelle Paver, bestselling author of the *Chronicles of Ancient Darkness* series; the librarian Sean Edwards; Nikki Gamble, director of Write Away and Just Imagine; Melissa Cox, Waterstones' children's fiction buyer; the literary agent Neil Blair; Steve Potter from The Book Depository; and Hannah Warren, the 15-year-old teen judge. Sean Edwards remarked on its 'echoes of *Oliver Twist* – 'You can feel the hero's terror and I can just see my reading groups getting stuck into this!'

Moss said he was inspired by visiting Alnwick Castle. Seeing Alnwick's extraordinary poison garden gave him the idea for a grubby orphan acting as a food taster for rich people.

*Sleepwell and Fly* was chosen from a strong shortlist of five. See <http://doublecluck.com/index.php>.

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### **Foyle Young Poets of the Year Award Winners 2011**

The entries are from aspiring poets aged 11–17. Entrants are divided into age categories 11–14 and 15–17. 100 winners (85 commendations and 15 Overall Winners) were selected by the judges, Imtiaz Dharker and Glyn Maxwell, and received their awards at a prize-giving event on National Poetry Day, 6 October 2011. The winning poems can be read at [www.poetrysociety.org.uk/content/competitions/fyp/fyp2011/](http://www.poetrysociety.org.uk/content/competitions/fyp/fyp2011/). Here are two sample (the shortest!):

#### **Flora de Falbe: 4pt suicide note**

touch-texting typing  
microcosms of what we mean.  
abbreviating our names.  
writing them in pixels  
unfriended my friend  
the other day, walled her off my wall;  
snapped in my limbs like hinges and  
minimised myself.

(Copyright © Flora de Falbe 2012. Reproduced with permission of the Poetry Society 2012)

**Phoebe Stuckes: Reeling**

I felt like I was drowning in an endless shingle of X's and Y's.  
I wanted to build a fort of cereal boxes in between me, and them, I wanted to hurl  
text books at them like a noisy hermit.  
Instead I gave up, doodled on school desks, ruled out engineering as a profession.  
Is it possible to feel aeronautical, beneath graph plotted stars?  
I wanted to draw a positive correlation, from me to you. No marks (?)  
No marks at all (-)  
It doesn't matter how pretty your handwriting is.

(Copyright © Phoebe Stuckes 2012. Reproduced with permission of the Poetry  
Society 2012)

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**iF Poems/The Times 2012 Young Poet of the Year**

The shortlist was announced in *The Times* on 30 January 2012.

Under-17s were invited to submit their original poems for the chance to be a Young Poet of the Year. The shortlist is divided into the age groups 0-6, 7-12 and 13-16. See [www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/public/poetrycompetition/article3303140.ece](http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/public/poetrycompetition/article3303140.ece). The entered poems can be read at [http://extras.thetimes.co.uk/public/young\\_poetry/](http://extras.thetimes.co.uk/public/young_poetry/). Here are random samples from the shortlist for each age group:

**Alex Bromham (0-6): Autumn Leaves**

Swirling yellow  
Swirling and sweeping the floor.  
Red damp, tickly leaves floating down.  
Brown curling dancing leaves parachuting down.  
Frosty, lovely whirling down to the freezing floor.

**Emily Davies (7-12): [extract]**

A is for Ant quickly scuttling home;  
B is a Bear sitting all on his own;  
C is for Cat who is stalking a mouse;  
D is the Dog who's protecting the house.  
E's a big Elephant crushing a tree;  
F is a Fish leaping out of the sea;  
G's for Giraffe, with its head in the sky;  
H is a Horse who is clip-clopping by.

**Connor McKee (13-16): Snow**

A crisp sheet of bitter dust --  
like walking on clouds.  
  
A dusting from the divine --  
brittle daggers hung from ledges.  
  
An invasion of everything we know  
before legions of light return.  
  
The daggers are thrown down --  
armies turn to liquid before us.

The poets also recorded recitals of their poems at  
[www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/public/poetrycompetition/article3303331.ece](http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/public/poetrycompetition/article3303331.ece).

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### **Poetry by Heart. A Forthcoming Schools Poetry Competition**

Sir Aron Motion, former Poet Laureate, and Julie Blake, Education Officer at the Poetry Archive, are currently raising funds and devising the competition infrastructure for a poetry recital competition for school pupils. It will be a national 'poetry remembering and reciting' competition. This plan is being set up at the behest of Michael Gove, Secretary of State for Education.

Trials will be held this summer and the competition aims to start in September 2012. Each contestant will choose a poem written before 1914 and one written after. The poems must be chosen from an anthology that Motion is editing. These poems will be memorised and then recited aloud.

There will be school heats, regional heats and then a semi-finals and finals weekend at a large venue. Motion says 'it's not about showing off, it's about manifesting a deeply understood idea of the poem'.

For further information, [info@poetrybyheart.org.uk](mailto:info@poetrybyheart.org.uk).

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### **Costa Short Story Award**

Quaglino's, London. 24 January 2012.

Costa is expanding the Costa Book Awards to introduce a new Short Story Award. The new award will run in association with the Costa Book Awards, but the winner will not be judged alongside the other five category winners in Novel, First Novel, Biography, Poetry and Children's Book. The competition will be officially launched later this year. Details so far do not say if a children's category will be included.

For further new on this see [www.costabookawards.com/](http://www.costabookawards.com/).

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### **CILIP Carnegie and Kate Greenaway Shortlists 2012**

27 March 2012.

Both medals are awarded annually by CILIP, the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals.

#### **Carnegie shortlist:**

Four debut novels feature on the shortlist for this year's CILIP Carnegie Medal

First children's novels by Lissa Evans, Ali Lewis, Annabel Pitcher and Ruta Sepetys vie with books by former CILIP Carnegie Medal winners David Almond and Patrick Ness, Sonya Hartnett and Andy Mulligan.

The eight books are variously suitable for readers of 12 years or younger, bucking the trend of recent shortlists that have majored on teenage and young adult fiction. Against diverse settings ranging from contemporary England, outback Australia and wartime Siberia, to places imagined but with strong echoes of our turbulent world today, the shortlisted novels take young readers into the lives and minds of a diverse cast of characters as they contend with everything from bereavement, poverty, corruption and tyranny, to a recalcitrant young camel and the difficulty of finding the right words.

David Almond (2010) *My Name Is Mina*, London: Hodder Children's Books (9+).

Lissa Evans (2011) *Small Change for Stuart*, London: Doubleday (8+).

Sonya Hartnett (2010) *The Midnight Zoo*, London: Walker (9+).

Ali Lewis (2011) *Everybody Jam*, London: Andersen Press (12+).

Andy Mulligan (2011) *Trash*, Oxford: David Fickling Books (12+).

Patrick Ness (2011) *A Monster Calls*, London: Walker (9+).

Annabel Pitcher (2011) *My Sister Lives on the Mantelpiece*, London: Orion (10+).

Ruta Sepetys (2011) *Between Shades of Grey*, London: Puffin Books (12+).

### **Kate Greenaway shortlist:**

Ink and Photoshop software, watercolours and wax crayons, paper cuts, and even beetles and breadboards: an enormous variety of techniques and art styles are celebrated on the shortlist for this year's CILIP Kate Greenaway Medal.

Previous winners Catherine Rayner and Emily Gravett have again impressed the judges with their skilful command of paint, layout and narrative; 2010 nominee Viviane Schwarz is back, portraying her bold cats exploding from the pages; Petr Horáček and Vicky White both illustrate animals too, but in very contrasting styles: Horáček's puffin is rendered in bright, bright acrylics and wax, while White uses charcoal, paint and pastel to equally stunning effect. Meanwhile Rob Ryan's exquisite paper-cut illustrations perfectly match Carol Ann Duffy's text in *The Gift*.

This year the shortlist highlights the importance of illustration in books for older readers: Dave McKean's extraordinary piece of graphic storytelling is integral to David Almond's *Slog's Dad*; Jim Kay's atmospheric and textured images are an organic and vital element to Patrick Ness's text in *A Monster Calls* (also shortlisted for the CILIP Carnegie Medal).

Emily Gravett (2011) *Wolf Won't Bite*, Basingstoke: Macmillan Children's Books (4+).

Petr Horáček (2011) *Puffin Peter*, London: Walker Books (4+).

Jim Kay (text Patrick Ness) (2011) *A Monster Calls*, London: Walker Books (9+).

Dave McKean (text David Almond) (2010) *Slog's Dad*, London: Walker Books (8+).

Catherine Rayner (2011) *Solomon Crocodile*, Basingstoke: Macmillan Children's Books (4+).

Rob Ryan (text Carol Anne Duffy) (2010) *The Gift*, Oxford: Barefoot Books (6+).

Viviane Schwarz ([2008] 2011) *There Are no Cats in this Book*, London: Walker Books (4+).

Vicky White (text Martin Jenkins) (2011) *Can We Save the Tiger?*, London: Walker Books (6+).

The winners will be announced at the Barbican Centre, London, on Thursday 14 June 2012.

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### **UKLA Book Awards Shortlists 2012**

Monday, March 12, 2012.

The books were selected by 60 teachers from Coventry and Leicestershire. These include six books by debut authors, alongside experienced past Carnegie Medal winners. The list also includes an international perspective, with a book first published in Canada, and one in translation from France. The selectors look for books with powerful language and across the age range 3–16.

#### **Shortlist 3–6**

Suzanne Bloom ([2007] 2010) *A Splendid Friend, Indeed*, Slough: Alanna Books.

Alexis Deacon (illus. Viviane Schwarz) (2011) *A Place to Call Home*, London: Walker Books.

Marjolaine Leray (trans. Sarah Ardizzone) (2011) *Little Red Hood*, London: Phoenix Yard Books.

Catherine Rayner (2010) *Iris and Isaac*, London: Little Tiger Press.

Jeanne Willis (illus. Sarah Fox-Davies) (2011) *Mole's Sunrise*, London: Walker Books.

Chris Wormell (2011) *Scruffy Bear & the Six White Mice*, London: Jonathan Cape.

#### **Shortlist 7–11**

Nicola Davies (illus. James de la Rue) (2011) *A Girl Called Dog*, London: Corgi Books.

Ruth Eastham (2011) *The Memory Cage*, London: Scholastic Books  
Lissa Evans (2011) *Small Change for Stuart*, London: Doubleday.  
Gill Lewis (2011) *Sky Hawk*, Oxford University Press,  
Simon Mason (2011) *Moon Pie*, Oxford: David Fickling Books,  
Katherine Rundell (2011) *The Girl Savage*, London: Faber & Faber,

#### **Shortlist 12–16**

Lindsey Barraclough (2011) *Long Lankin*, London: Bodley Head.  
Kevin Brooks (2010) *iBoy*, London: Puffin Books.  
Phil Earle (2011) *Being Billy*, London: Puffin Books.  
Andy Mulligan (2011) *Trash*, Oxford: David Fickling Books.  
Patrick Ness (illus. Jim Kay) (2011) *A Monster Calls*, London: Walker Books.  
Kenneth Oppel (2011) *Half Brother*, Oxford: David Fickling Books.

The final judging will be by teacher judges, and the winners will be announced at an award ceremony at the UKLA International Conference, University of Leicester, on Friday 6 June 2012.

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#### **Vintage Classics New Children's List**

Vintage Children's Classics will launch in August 2012 with 20 titles, with a further 20 being published by the end of the year. The list is aimed at 8–12 year olds. The advisory board includes Random House Children's Publishers' managing director Philippa Dickinson and Dame Jacqueline Wilson, author and former children's laureate.

The launch list will feature out of copyright perennial favourites such as Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, Frances Hodgson Burnett's *The Secret Garden* and Robert Louis Stevenson's *Treasure Island*, alongside much-loved contemporary classics exclusive to Random House, including *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time* by Mark Haddon and *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas* by John Boyne. Each of the books will be available in both print and ebook format. Also in August will be the launch of World of Stories, an interactive website dedicated to Vintage Children's Classics, with fun quizzes, downloads and extra material for children to find out more about the stories.

See [www.vintage-books.co.uk/classics/VintageChildrensClassics/](http://www.vintage-books.co.uk/classics/VintageChildrensClassics/); for the 20 titles, see <http://issuu.com/vintagebooks/docs/childrenscatalogue?mode=window&backgroundColor=%23222222> and for World of Stories see [www.worldofstories.co.uk/](http://www.worldofstories.co.uk/).

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#### **The Guardian Hot Key Books Young Writers Prize Young Writers Prize**

*The Guardian* and Hot Key Books (an imprint of Bonnier) have launched a search for the next generation of writers of children's fiction.

The search is for new young writers between the ages of 18 and 25 who write in one of two categories: for ages 9–12 or 13–19. Entrants should be unpublished authors, new to the literary world. The winners, one for each age category, will be selected by a panel of judges who will consult with school children. Each winner will be given editorial support and the chance to be published by Hot Key Books.

The judging panel will comprise representatives from *The Guardian*, Hot Key Books, booksellers, school children and authors representing both age groups.

A final shortlist of five entries for each category will be sent out to the judging panel on 1 December 2012. Winners will be announced at the London Book Fair in April 2013.

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### **Puffin Digital Picture Book App**

Puffin Picture Books has acquired world rights to its first digital picture book app, *Edmund and Cecilie*. This represents Puffin's first acquisition of a collection of digital picture book stories. The app, which will launch later this year, follows Edmund, a storytelling dragon, and Cecilie, a little girl with an appetite for adventure, as they open doors into an enchanted storytelling world full of words and magic. Chris Mould, an established artist and writer, has created new characters and animator Matt Haworth has created the illustrations. 'The challenge is to produce something that is interactive but still about reading'.

To learn more about digital storytelling apps, see the video at [www.thelandofme.com/](http://www.thelandofme.com/). If you have an iPad, you can download one free. You can also download it to your computer. See [www.thelandofme.com/](http://www.thelandofme.com/)

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### **European Picture Book Collection**

For those interested in how European picture books can be used in primary schools, a video about the European Picture Book Collection is now available on YouTube. It lasts about 20 minutes and follows three French teachers in a London primary school as they work with the books. It is in both English and French, with subtitles where necessary. The link is [www.youtube.com/watch?v=vtYmKkrmWzQ](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vtYmKkrmWzQ).

Websites that relate to the video are [www.ncrcl.ac.uk/epbc](http://www.ncrcl.ac.uk/epbc), [www.ncrcl.ac.uk/eset](http://www.ncrcl.ac.uk/eset) and [www.epbcii.org](http://www.epbcii.org).

[Penni Cotton]

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## IBBY NEWS

### IBBY UK AGM and Event

Random House, London. 2 May 2012.

Random House hosted this year's AGM, attended by a reasonable spread of members, who heard from Clive Barnes about the progress made in registering as a charitable company limited by guarantee. The consequence of this is that the personal liability of members is no more than £1, while subscriptions can now be gift aided. All this provides an invaluable back-up to the running of the international Congress in August, and, hopefully, inaugurates an era of reinvigoration in our activities. Attractive new publicity material was displayed, which we hope will support our plans to increase membership. We particularly need to target librarians, who do not feature as largely among the membership as might be hoped. Clive also gave an account of the various award nominations: for the Hans Andersen, the Asahi and the Astrid Lindgren, none of which had been successful this time, despite the hard work put in by several members in preparing the necessary papers. A good deal of work had also gone into IBBY UK's involvement with Chinese IBBY (CBBY) and the recent visit of the Chinese illustrators (of which an account appears elsewhere in this issue of *IBBYLink*), as well as the IBBY Christmas card and the evening in October celebrating our Hans Andersen nominees. The greatest continuing endeavour, however, is the 2012 IBBY International Congress 2012, 23–26 August at Imperial College, London. An exciting programme, involving acclaimed authors, scholars, children's laureates and translators, together with a large number of workshop and poster presentations, has been arranged (details elsewhere in this issue). As part of the process of instituting the new charity, current members of the committee were nominated and re-elected.

After the business part of the evening was over, we enjoyed a lively interactive session between Chris Riddell and Paul Stewart, the creators of the *Edge Chronicles* and, more recently, the *Wormweald* series.



**Seated: left Paul Stewart, right: Chris Riddell. Photograph © 2012 John Dunne.**

It was fascinating to see Chris's drawings being created while the presentation was going on – in fact, the visual aspect had been the inspiration of their partnership. They spoke of how they came to collaborate as a result of having children at the same school,

and how the close proximity of their homes has been a very helpful factor in their creative process – a humorous note was their account of giving signals to each other via their gardens! They certainly gave good support to their assertion that children’s authors are not ‘grand figures’ but are accessible to all their fans. Chris, who, unlike Paul, does occasionally work as an individual writer, indicated how much he missed Paul’s input when doing so. The questions that followed their talk revealed how popular their work is abroad, as well as the inventiveness which had been applied to the names of some of their characters, notably the German version of the Gloamglozer – Der Schleimschmeichler!

[Pat Pinsent]

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### **IBBY UK Section**

IBBY UK, the British Section of IBBY, is now IBBY UK Section: A Company Limited by Guarantee. The company IBBY UK Section Company No. 7892957 is also now a registered charity, Registered Charity No 1145999.

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### **Bologna Book Fair 2012**

A large contingent of us went to Bologna, ten of us over the week, which meant that we had a constant presence at the IBBY stand both to promote the 2012 IBBY International Congress in London and IBBY in general. I would like to thank everyone on behalf of the IBBY Committee for all their hard work. We distributed nearly all the Congress postcards that we had taken, 1,000 +, and some of the new leaflets, which arrived later in the week. We were able to talk to a number of people about what IBBY does and encourage them to join their national sections. We saw a number of leaflets produced by IBBY internationally, some of which we brought back with us and which will prove useful for promotion locally.

[Clive Barnes, Chair IBBY UK]

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## **33RD IBBY INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS**

CROSSING BOUNDARIES: TRANSLATIONS AND MIGRATIONS

**23 - 26 August 2012, London**



This will be only the second time the IBBY International Congress has been held in the UK. The previous time was in Cambridge in 1982. The Congress organising committee has been working hard to put together an unforgettable event since the Congress is unlikely to take place in the UK again for many years. IBBY UK members are urged to attend and meet colleagues and friends from around the world.

### **Programme**

- There will be keynote talks from Patsy Aldana, Emer O’Sullivan, Michael Rosen and Shaun Tan.
- Aidan Chambers and Bart Moeyaert will be ‘in conversation’.
- Jamila Gavin, Elizabeth Laird and Beverley Naidoo will discuss stories that have migrated across time and place.
- Former children’s laureates Anthony Browne and Michael Morpurgo and Children’s Laureate Julia Donaldson will speak following the opening ceremony.
- Illustrators Shirin Adl, Kitty Crowther and Chen Jiang Hong will discuss how migration has influenced their work.

- Storytellers Michael Harvey, Dashdondog Jamba and Sonia Nimr will tell stories in their own languages.
- Publishers are sponsoring lunchtime and breakfast sessions, as well as tea/coffee breaks, enabling us to squeeze in even more events. Speakers include Anthea Bell, Helen Dennis, Candy Gourlay, Saci Lloyd, Kai Meyer, Dee Shulman, Tessa Strickland, Mandy Sutcliffe, Verna Wilkins and Louise Yates.
- A live-translation session will feature two translators discussing their independent translations of the work of Spanish author Eliacer Cansino.
- Bookstart will celebrate its twentieth anniversary in a session with speakers who have been inspired to set up similar projects in their own countries.
- Around 130 papers will be presented in parallel sessions (list on the website at [www.ibbycongress2012.org.uk/seminars-workshops.php](http://www.ibbycongress2012.org.uk/seminars-workshops.php)).
- Over 60 posters will be displayed throughout the Congress. There will be two poster sessions – 45 minutes during Friday and Saturday lunchtimes.

### **IBBY events**

- The Hans Christian Andersen awards will be presented to author Maria Teresa Andruetto (Argentina) and Peter Sís (Czech Republic) at a ceremony at the Science Museum, close to the Congress venue Imperial College.
- The IBBY Asahi Reading Promotion awards will be presented to projects from Argentina and Cambodia.
- The 2012 IBBY Honour List will be unveiled in a presentation involving some of the nominees and some London children who have read their books.
- The IBBY Open Forum will take place at beginning of the Congress to enable members of IBBY sections (now numbering 77) to get to know each other.
- The General Assembly on the last day will elect the incoming IBBY Executive.

### **Wonderland: A festival of international writing for children**

This is being organised at the British Library to coincide with the Congress in collaboration with Booktrust and the Congress team. Several Congress speakers will be taking part. It is linked with the British Library's 'Writing Britain' exhibition. For more information see [www.bl.uk/whatson/](http://www.bl.uk/whatson/)

### **Walking tours, visits, and pre- and post-Congress tours**

Information about these is on the website <http://www.ibbycongress2012.org>.

### **How IBBY UK members can help**

- Register to attend as delegates
- Publicise the Congress through all your networks
- Fundraise
- Volunteer to help with guiding delegates during the Congress
- Offer homestays for international delegates

Get in touch with Kathy Lemaire [info@ibbycongress2012.org](mailto:info@ibbycongress2012.org) or Ann Lazim [annlazim@googlemail.com](mailto:annlazim@googlemail.com).

[Ann Lazim, Co-director, IBBY International Congress 2012]

## **2012 IBBY-Asahi Reading Promotion Awards**

The IBBY-Asahi Reading Promotion Awards, initiated by IBBY and sponsored by the Japanese newspaper company the Asahi Shimbun, is presented to projects run by groups or institutions that are judged to be making a lasting contribution to reading promotion for children and young people. The award is given every two years to two projects.

IBBY UK nominated Book Aid International ([www.bookaid.org/](http://www.bookaid.org/)), but has not been successful in its bid. The winners were announced at the Bologna Children's Book Fair during the IBBY press conference on 19 March 2012. The prize money of US\$10,000 for each winning project will be presented at the 33rd IBBY International Congress at Imperial College, London, UK, at a special festive occasion on Thursday, 23 August 2012. The two award winners are:

Abuelas Cuentacuentos, the grandmother storytelling programme, Argentina

SIPAR, Cambodia

Abuelas Cuentacuentos is organised by the Mempo Giardinelli Foundation (FMG) and engages older persons who like to read stories to children. Specialised personnel at the Foundation train volunteers and organise programmes in many schools in the metropolitan area of the city of Resistencia, the capital and largest city in the province of Chaco, in north-east Argentina.

SIPAR began as a Franco/Cambodian association in 1982 to help Cambodian refugees living on the Cambodian–Thai border during the Khmer Rouge regime. When the government fell, SIPAR helped to rebuild the educational network and by 1993 was focusing its activities on reading, including organising libraries all over Cambodia and setting up rural reading centres. From 1993 to 2011 more than 1,000 librarians were trained in the SIPAR workshops. Recently the Cambodian Ministry of Education has taken over the network. In 2000, SIPAR started running training workshops for publishing, writing and illustration, mostly for children's books. Today SIPAR has a small publishing department that is run by Cambodians. They have published 70 titles, and printed 130,000 free copies for the 200 SIPAR libraries and the students at the teacher training colleges for primary schools.

For more information see the press release at [www.ibby.org/index.php?id=312](http://www.ibby.org/index.php?id=312).

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## **2012 Hans Christian Andersen Awards**

The Hans Christian Andersen Awards, considered the most prestigious in international children's literature, are given biennially by IBBY to a living author and illustrator whose complete works are judged to have made lasting contributions to children's literature.

The winners were announced by IBBY at the Bologna Children's Book Fair on Monday, 19 March 2012.

IBBY UK nominated Philip Pullman for the author award and John Burningham for the illustrator award. John Burningham was shortlisted. Neither was a winner, to our disappointment as we feel that both are more than worthy winners. The author award winner is María Teresa Andruetto, Argentina, and the illustrator award winner is Peter Sís, Czech Republic. The medals and diplomas will be presented at the IBBY International Congress in London, UK on Saturday, 25 August 2012.

In awarding the 2012 Hans Christian Andersen Medal for writing to María Teresa Andruetto the jury recognised her mastery in writing important and original works that are strongly focused on aesthetics. She creates sensitive books, which are deep and poetic with a clear literary base. Her books relate to a great variety of topics, such as migration, inner worlds, injustice, love, poverty, violence and political affairs. She was selected from 27 authors nominated for the award. The four finalists were Paul Fleischman (USA), Bart Moeyaert (Belgium), Jean-Claude Mourlevat (France) and Bianca Pitzorno (Italy).

In awarding the 2012 Hans Christian Andersen Medal for illustration to Peter Sís the jury recognised his extraordinary originality and deep creative power to relate highly complex stories that can be interpreted on many different levels. The jury particularly appreciated his use of different design and artistic techniques, as well as his innovative approach using a subtle balance to depict well-documented and historical events and fantastic elements. Sís was selected from 30 illustrators nominated for the award. The four finalists were Mohammad Ali Baniyasadi (Iran), John Burningham (UK), Roger Mello (Brazil) and Javier Zabala (Spain).

For more information see the press release at [www.ibby.org/index.php?id=312](http://www.ibby.org/index.php?id=312).

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### **IBBY Section Newsletters**

The latest newsletters uploaded to [www.ibby.org/index.php?id=932](http://www.ibby.org/index.php?id=932):

European Newsletter, April 2012

IBBY Ireland, March 2012

IBBY Australia, February 2012

IBBY Bolivia, January 2012

IBBY South Africa, January 2012

IBBY Ireland, January 2012

A IBBY Europe Facebook group has been online for a year now. If you are unfamiliar with Facebook, there is a step-by-step guide 'IBBY Europe on Facebook: How to Use It' in the November 2011 edition of the European Newsletter at [www.ibby.org/fileadmin/user\\_upload/european\\_newsletter-11\\_11/IBBY\\_European\\_Newsletter\\_November\\_2011.htm](http://www.ibby.org/fileadmin/user_upload/european_newsletter-11_11/IBBY_European_Newsletter_November_2011.htm).

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## LIST OF REVIEWS

### Books about Children's Literature

*Making the Italians: Poetics and Politics of Italian Children's Fantasy*  
Lindsay Myers

### Story Books

*A Ravelled Flag*  
Julia Jones, illus. Claudia Myatt

### Early Readers

*Monster Stories, Books 1-4*  
Fran Parnell

### Non-Fiction

*Under the Weather: Stories about Climate Change*  
Tony Bradman, ed.

*Muhammad Ali: The King of the Ring*  
Lewis Helfand, illus. Lalit Kumar Sharma

*Charles Dickens: A Life of Storytelling; A Legacy of Change*  
Catherine Wells-Cole

### Poetry

*The Language of Cat and Other Poems*  
Rachel Rooney, illus. Ellie Jenkins

### Picture and Illustrated Books

*Mr Leon's Paris*  
Barroux

*Food Chain*  
M.P. Robertson

*Frank n Stan*  
M.P. Robertson

*The House that Jack Built*  
Gavin Bishop]

*A Hen in the Wardrobe*  
Wendy Meddour]

*Excuses Excuses*  
Anushka Ravishankar,  
illus. Gabrielle Manglou

*Going to Mecca*  
Na'ima B Robert,  
illus. Valentina Cavallini

*Gary and Ray*  
Sarah Adams

*An Egyptian Escape*  
K.A. Gerrard, illus. Emma Dodd

*Jack and the Baked Beanstalk*  
Colin Stimpson

*Under the Spell of the Moon: Art for Children from the World's Great Illustrators*  
Patsy Aldana, ed.

### Books for Young Adults

*The Power of Three (Secret Breakers 1)*  
H.L. Dennis

*Poppy's Hero*  
Rachel Billing ton

*Around the World in 80 Days*  
Jules Verne, illus. Robert Ingpen

### Graphic Books

*The Treasured Thief*  
Ryan Foley, illus. Sachin Nagar

### Olympic Games (see article)

*Three Jays Go to Rome*  
Pat Smythe

*Alessandra: Alex in Rome*  
Tessa Duder

*Asterix at the Olympic Games*  
René Goscinny, illus. Albert Uderzo

### **IBBY UK/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'. See p.39 for call for papers, deadline 31 July 2012.

The conference will include keynote presentations by well-known writers, publishers and academics. All aspects of the book industry; digital developments; book adaptation; evidence of how children read/interact with books; blogging; fan fiction; relevant websites; merchandising and book festivals; museums, book collections and societies; and the role of books/stories in popular culture will be discussed.

For more information, see [www.roehampton.ac.uk/ibby/index.html](http://www.roehampton.ac.uk/ibby/index.html) or contact Laura Atkins: [l.atkins@roehampton.ac.uk](mailto:l.atkins@roehampton.ac.uk).

### **IBBY International Congress 2012**

The 33rd IBBY International 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](http://www.ibbycongress2012.org/register.php).

The next issue of *IBBYLink* (Autumn 2012, no. 35) (copydate 15 September 2012) will be devoted to reports from the IBBY International Congress 2012.

Articles on other subjects, reviews, reports, information about conferences and similar items are also welcomed. Contributions to [PatPinsent@aol.com](mailto: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](mailto:mansfield37@btinternet.com).

### *IBBYLink* 34 Summer 2012

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To sponsor a future issue of *IBBYLink*, contact [PatPinsent@aol.com](mailto:PatPinsent@aol.com).

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