

Picture Books for Older Readers

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From *Song of the Golden Hare* by Jackie Morris (Frances Lincoln Children's Books, 2013)

EDITORIAL

What do we mean by 'older readers'? Elaine Moss suggests the age range 9–13 in her Signal Bookguide *Picture Books 9 to 13* (Thimble Press, 1981). Her thesis is that picture books should not be confined to the very young. So this issue of *IBBYLink* reflects that hope.

On 19 June the winner of the CILIP Kate Greenaway Medal was announced – Levi Pinfold for *Black Dog*. This picture book with its simple, traditionally framed story packs a real punch and can be enjoyed by quite young children. Yet it has so much more to offer an older audience as well, not just through appreciation of the sophisticated artwork, but through the different interpretations the reader can bring to the narrative that are a response to a masterly juxtaposition of text and picture. It is a reminder that picture books within the conventional format of 32 pages can convey as much as a multi-paged novel. And yet, where will you find it in a bookshop or library? On the shelves labelled 'Under 5s' or 'For the youngest' more often than not. And how often have I heard a parent comment to their child 'You are too old for those – they are just picture books'.

Today we live in a highly visual age where film, television and computerised activities flourish. And recently there has been a renaissance in the publishing of the illustrated novel. Surely 'picture books' should attract all ages and not be consigned to the Kinderbox? That is certainly the thesis presented by all those contributing to this issue of *IBBYLink* in which we look at the picture book and the older reader.

Naturally, we could not start without reference to that master of the format, Shaun Tan. It is with no apology that we reproduce a couple of excerpts from his essay on 'Picture Books', which can be found at (www.shauntan.net/books.html). Those who were lucky enough to hear his address at last year's IBBY International Congress – see a transcription in *IBBYLink* 34, pp.22–31 and a video

recording at www.youtube.com/watch?v=kUJINRAnnUI&feature=youtu.be – will know what an inspiration he is. His comments are the perfect introduction. Reinforcing and developing his thoughts, the articles by Vivian French and Jana Novotny Hunter, both authors and artists who have created picture books, outline the arguments that lead to the current blinkered attitude and show why it is mistaken.

However, it is all very well to know the theory. The pieces by Louise Wykes, Andrew McCallum and Alexandra Strick introduce real examples of using picture books with older readers, whether in a primary school, with secondary pupils or with young readers with additional needs. In all these cases it is clear that young people both appreciate and gain from the experience of being introduced to such material. Nor should we ignore the value that picture books hold for working across cultures; Penni Cotton talks about some of the initiatives that have developed from the European Picture Book Collection housed at Roehampton University.

What becomes evident in all these contributions, is the enthusiasm picture books inspire. It is such an enthusiasm that has driven two young entrepreneurs, Sam Arthur and Alex Spiro, to set up their imprint Flying Eye to publish picture books that will appeal to older readers – four years of age and up, according to their catalogue. What is behind their thinking is presented in a short 'interview'. Jackie Morris, an artist well known to all, reinforces the passion felt by all, through her own memories of discovering picture books and being inspired by them.

If we opened with a modern great, we close with a classic – a short review of an exhibition featuring the work of Ernest E. Shepard, an artist whose work is both ageless and timeless.

Ferelith Hordon

Shaun Tan: My Picture Books

... One of the questions I am most frequently asked as a maker of picture books is this: 'Who do you write and illustrate for?' It's a little difficult to answer, as it's not something I think about much when I'm working alone in a small studio, quite removed from any audience at all. In fact, few things could be more distracting in trying to express an idea well enough to myself than having to consider how readers might react!

In any case, I suspect that much art in any medium is produced without a primary concern for how it will be received, or by whom. It often doesn't set out to appeal to a predefined audience, but rather builds one for itself. The artist's responsibility lies first and foremost with the work itself, trusting that it will invite the attention of others by the force of its conviction. So it's really quite unusual to ask 'who do you do it for?' Yet it is a question inevitably put to my work in picture books such as *The Rabbits* (1999), *The Lost Thing* (2001) and *The Red Tree* (2001), which deal with subjects such as colonisation, bureaucracy, whimsy, depression and loneliness, typically in a strange or unusual manner.

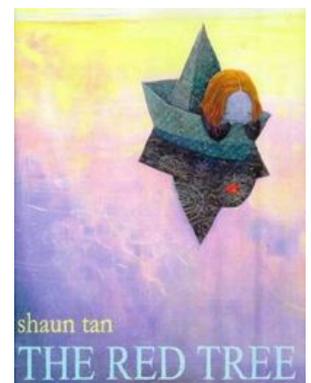
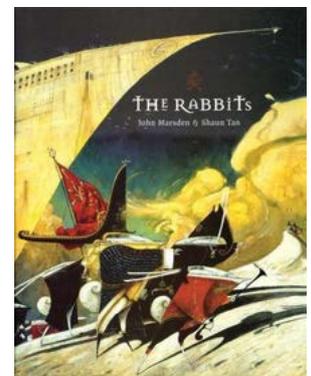
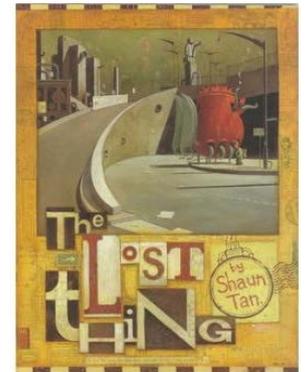
The reason of course is quite obvious. The idea of a picture book as a literary art form carries a number of tacit assumptions: picture books are quite large, colourful, easy to read and very simple in their storyline and structure, not very long and (most significantly) produced exclusively for a certain audience, namely children, especially of the younger variety. Picture books are generally put on the shelves of bookstores, libraries, lounge rooms and bedrooms for young children, where they apparently belong. Picture books are synonymous with children's literature. But is this a necessary condition of the art form itself? Or is it just a cultural convention, more to do with existing expectations, marketing prejudices and literary discourse?

The simplicity of a picture book in terms of narrative structure, visual appeal and often fable-like brevity might seem to suggest that it is ideally suited to a juvenile readership. It's about showing and telling, a window for learning to 'read' in a broad sense and exploring relationships between words, pictures and the world we experience every day. But is this an activity that ends with childhood, when at some point we are sufficiently qualified to graduate from one medium to another? Simplicity certainly does not exclude sophistication or complexity; we inherently know that the truth is otherwise. 'Art,' as Einstein reminds us, 'is the expression of the most profound thoughts in the simplest way'.

And it's clear that older readers, including you and me, remain interested in the imaginative play of drawings and paintings, telling stories and learning how to look at things in new ways. There is no reason why a 32-page illustrated story can't have equal appeal for teenagers and adults as they do for children. After all, other visual media such as film, television, painting and sculpture do not suffer from narrow preconceptions of audience. Why should picture books? It is interesting to observe that when I paint pictures for gallery exhibitions, I am never asked for whom I am painting.

Rather than talk about the differences between older and younger readers, however, I would prefer to consider what they might actually have in common. In particular, we are all interested in playing. We like to look at things from unusual angles, attempt to seek some child-like revelation in the ordinary and bring our imagination to the task of questioning everyday experience. Why are things the way they are? How might they be different? As an artist, these 'childish' activities are the things that preoccupy me when I draw pictures and make up stories, and they don't necessitate a consideration for any particular audience. What matters are ideas, feelings, and the pictures and words that build them. How can they be playful and subvert our usual expectations? What are the ways that something can be represented to most effectively invite us to think and ask questions about the world we live in?

PICTURE BOOKS FOR OLDER READERS



This is perhaps the key question for me as an artist as well as a (mostly) functional person, and the one I ask myself often; not quite aware of a fixed answer. Writing and painting is very much about trying different things based on hunches and intuition, often in a silly and playful way, and then looking at them critically to see if they make any kind of sense when cast against the backdrop of lived experience. Do imaginary objects stand up as meaningful metaphors? Do they 'make sense' on their own, without being pushed? Being an artist is not about manipulating objects or an audience so much as constantly assessing a series of often accidental and mysterious ideas.

[...]

Returning to that question, 'Who do you write and illustrate for?' Perhaps the best answer I can give is this: anyone who reads and looks. That is, anyone who is curious, who enjoys strangeness, mystery and oddity, who likes asking questions and using their imagination, and is prepared to devote time and attention accordingly. 'Books are not a way of letting someone else think in our place,' writes Umberto Eco, 'on the contrary, they are machines that provoke further thought.' The failure of the narrator in *The Lost Thing* to realise any meaning in his own story, seeing it as pointless, leaves such responsibility in the reader's hands. For me, a successful picture book is one in which everything is presented to the reader as a speculative proposition, wrapped in invisible quotation marks, as if to say 'what do you make of this?'

At the end of the day, any work of art finds its own audience, inviting them to make what they will of this or that idea. This is probably the main reason that *The Lost Thing* has been successful with all kinds of reader, including those who are normally quite reluctant to read picture books. 'There are many lessons to be learned from this book, but there is no requirement to learn them,' writes one reviewer. 'The reader can get as much or as little as they want.' Another critic comments that 'despite the off-handedness, some readers will inevitably seek meaning and indeed the style of the book invites such inquiry.'

[...]

What makes art and literature so interesting is that it presents us with unusual things that encourage us to ask questions about what we already know. It's about returning us, especially we older readers, to a state of unfamiliarity, offering an opportunity to rediscover some new insight through things we don't quite recognise (as it was for all of us in the very beginning). This is perhaps what reading and visual literacy are all about – and what picture books are good for – continuing that playful inquiry we began in childhood, of using imagination to find significance and meaning in those ordinary, day-to-day experiences that might otherwise remain unnoticed. The lessons we learn from studying pictures and stories are best applied to a similar study of life in general – people, places, objects, emotions, ideas and the relationships between them all. At its most successful, fiction offers us devices for interpreting reality, and imagining how many such interpretations might be possible. The novelist Milan Kundera has said that we go on being children, regardless of age, because in life we are always encountering new things that challenge us to understand them, instances where a practised imagination is actually more useful than all laboriously acquired knowledge.

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The Lost Thing. First published 2000.

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<http://www.shauntan.net/essay1.html>.

<http://www.shauntan.net/books.html>.

Each link below has illustrations and much other information on each of the three books mentioned in the article.

The Red Tree. <http://shauntan.net/books/red-tree.html>.

The Rabbits. <http://shauntan.net/books/the-rabbits.html>.

The Lost Thing. <http://shauntan.net/books/lost-thing.html>.

A Plea for Longer Picture Books

Vivian French

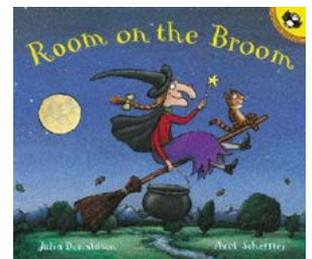
I must begin by declaring a vested interest. I've written four texts of well over 2000 words that have been published as picture books, and I do mean picture books – not stories with accompanying illustrations. OK – two are out of print, but one has been around for more than ten years, and I've a new one coming out next year. What will happen to it? Who knows?

And this, of course, begs the question: what, exactly, IS a picture book? I'd say it's where the visual storyline is as important as the text, where words and pictures carry equal weight, but don't offer the exact same message. I like Philip Nel's definition.

A picture book is a portable art gallery. It's also an intricate dance between pictures and words, in which – though neither leads, and neither follows – no step is out of place. (2010, n.p.)

There can (and to my mind, should) be a creative tension between the story and the illustrations; the reader is expected to decode both word and picture, and it's the combination that establishes the entirety of the story being told.

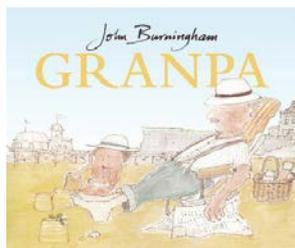
I find it distressing that there is an increasing tendency to regard picture books as being the prerogative of the very young and, as a result, texts are getting shorter and shorter. There are numerous hints and tips for writers that proclaim that the ideal text for a picture book should be 500 words or less, never more. Partly this is driven by market trends; a quick straw poll of my local booksellers supports my suspicion that there is a general assumption by adults that as soon as their child is capable of comprehending the written word, he/she no longer needs illustrations. I had many reports of parents extolling the virtue of chapter books because they think their child is too old for picture books. Often this comment is made while their child is happily perusing a copy of *Room on the Broom* or something similar ... but this book is snatched away when it comes to purchase time.



A couple of booksellers suggested that time restraints mean that book buyers are often looking for the quickest read, the easiest bedtime story, and that longer texts are rejected as being – guess what? – too long. Having had four children myself, I totally appreciate that sometimes a short picture book is a blessing – although a proper examination of the pictures, plus discussion of the complexities of the story (Why DOES he want his hat back? Why doesn't he just get another one? What's happened to the rabbit?) will extend the experience. But, if children are being moved on to chapter books earlier and earlier, are they missing out? What can a picture-book text provide that a chapter book doesn't? Is there really a case for allowing picture books with a word count of two or three thousand words to stand beside the others? What can they offer?

The obvious answer is that a longer text allows for more development; the story can take more than one twist and turn, and the main character's adventures and emotions aren't limited to a single event. A more sophisticated style of illustration may be used,

so that older children (well, the ones not indoctrinated by their parents or peers) feel happy about reading them. After all, children don't stop drawing or enjoying pictures at a specific age; we don't restrict television or film watching to the under sevens. (OK! You've seen the pictures! It's radio only for you from now on!) And the illustrations in picture books are as varied as the pictures in the National Gallery; many, such as those by Angela Barrett, Jon Klassen, Oliver Jeffers and Shaun Tan, transcend age ranges and have a universal appeal. I've had many discussions with children and adults on how the illustrations can alter one's perception of a story; a study of different illustrated versions of 'Sleeping Beauty' (the Ladybird book to Roberto Innocenti's version, say) will take the interpretation soaring from a tale for toddlers to a terrifying depiction of the loss of innocence. I'd never offer a book illustrated by the wonderful Innocenti to a young child; his books offer a shining example of how an illustrator, given enough space, can comment on or refute aspects of character and/or situation and offer an extraordinary emotional intensity and atmosphere.



This complexity of emotional issues found in picture books, both short and long, is something that isn't always recognised. In no way are the subjects 'an easy option'. Remember the empty armchair in John Burningham's book *Granpa* (1984)? The empty space and desolation after the death of a much-loved relative is implicit in every line. A child looking at that picture will encounter an emotion that they may not have experienced personally, but they'll encounter it in a safe environment where it can be discussed and thought about. They'll also discover that a picture is not merely a visual description of what happens in the text; it has its own creative life. Burningham's picture evokes a strong response; it would be hard to create anything like the same emotional punch in an early chapter book. (And, in all probability, the subject would be considered unsuitable. Death of a little girl's grandpa? T'chah!) But what is actually happening? It's just a picture of an empty armchair. There are no words explaining what has happened. The reader has to work to make sense and comprehend what's going on. It's a three-way process: word, image, imagination.

And, on the subject of words, the diversity of writing styles offered by picture books mustn't ever be forgotten or taken for granted. Most early chapter books have a simple sentence structure, vocabulary and plot line; picture books introduce children to rhyme, rhythm, staccato phrasing, lyrical cadences, wild fantasy, irony, alliteration, metaphor, and much, much more. Longer texts? Even more opportunities.

Interestingly, teachers adore longer picture books. Comments I collected during a recent tour of schools made this abundantly clear. They pointed out that children of all abilities can be included in a project based round a substantial text because even if the words mean little they can respond to the pictures. Every child can find something to say, and there's a great deal of interactive communication that helps with reading comprehension and vocabulary. Two head teachers told me that children of nine, ten and eleven who have been turned off reading can be brought back by rediscovering the fun and pleasure within the pages of a picture book, as long as the text is age appropriate.

SO – back to the bookshops. Would they stock longer picture book texts if more were available? Pause.

H'm.

Yes ...

But only if they're really really good.

Go for it authors, illustrators and publishers.

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www.philnel.com/2010/10/08/picture-book-is-dead/.

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Picture Books for Older Readers

Jana Novotny Hunter

A picture book tells a long, often complex, multi-layered story with a few carefully selected words and images, which distil, heighten, expand and illuminate the tale. How can this process ever be easy, and why has the picture book been assumed to be within the confines of younger readers? To be able to extract the salient points of a long story into a concise, cohesive version entails numerous skills including a highly sophisticated leap of understanding. Moreover, the conviction that expertise in decoding the printed word enables the reader to dispense with the crutch of pictures, is based on a fundamental misreading of the way we process information. In a culture rich in visual imagery is it any wonder that picture books are in fact enjoyed by all ages?

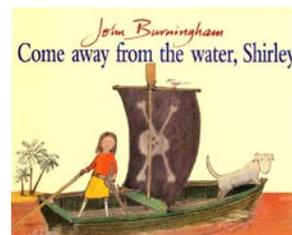
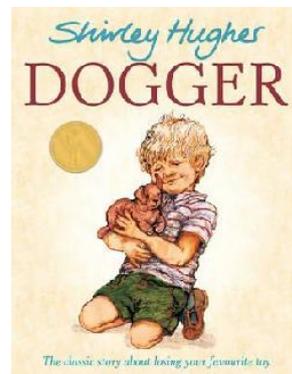
In *Not So Simple Picture Books*, Baddeley and Eddershaw (1994) demonstrate how related picture books can be used to develop the older reader's response to literature by finding similarities in psychological behaviour. Through comparing and contrasting linked books, they showed how readers gain deeper insights into emotions and experiences, and develop verbal skills as well as sensitivity. Rather than the conventional way of connecting a concrete theme, abstract concepts such as loss were examined.

The late Jan Ormerod, a consummate illustrator, could convey deep emotions in her work. In her picture book for older readers, *Sky Dancer* (text Jack Bushnell, 1996), the absence of a parent is dealt with in words and pictures, which together connote such a profound sense of loss and longing that the mother's demise need never be referred to directly. Instead, the symbolism of a powerful hawk allows the reader to understand that the girl's lost mother watches over and comforts her. (It is worth noting that this book was never published in Britain where reading, and by implication the need for pictures, start younger.)

A similar sense of bereavement pervades Shirley Hughes' *Dogger* (2009) where the disappearance of a toy creates the same level of anxiety.

When readers make connections between these quite different approaches to loss, respect for the powerful emotions in the smallest child can be gained, and a deeper sensitivity and wisdom developed. The ability to articulate such findings is further enrichment to the experience.

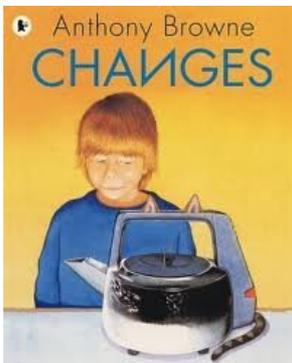
Abstract concepts such as time can also be explored, since picture books can bend and stretch time to create parallel worlds. In *Come Away from the Water, Shirley* (1977), John Burningham uses tangential text alongside images that tell an entirely different story. On a visit to the seaside, Mum and Dad park themselves in deck chairs, oblivious to everything but their own bland world, while Shirley gets cracking with her own pirate adventure. *Come Away from the Water, Shirley*, exhorts her mother, but Shirley, used to such curtailment of freedom, is exercising her bold imagination. Burningham's juxtaposition of both sides of the story, where each ignores the other, creates a tension that is both hilarious and ironic. The admonitions of dreary parents alongside the



colourful actions of their daughter, creates a secretive bond with the audience and a respect for their understanding.

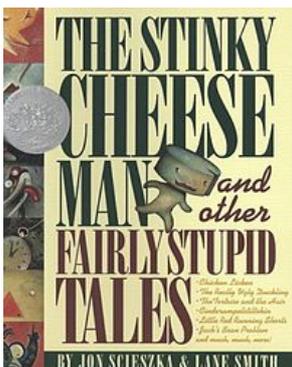
Such a book requires an ability to see time running concurrently, while at different rates. It also necessitates the maturity to see adults objectively, even critically. And yet, in the past the enjoyment of the picture book mirrored the age level of new readers, so only in countries where children start reading later were picture books appreciated longer. This new level of sophistication challenges such strictures, ensuring that older readers can feel justly proud of the maturity required to fully comprehend these books.

A picture book demands that the reader inhabit its world, and such worlds are as varied as the authors–illustrators themselves and the culture from which they originate. The reader can make connections with other worlds, and this process is not limited to books, but to all the arts. Filmmakers like Tarantino make allusions to the familiar icons of a genre in the same way that Anthony Browne does in alluding to famous works of art. This use of familiar icons, phrases or sounds expects a background knowledge that only the well versed can make, but questioning these allusions can provoke can enlighten and educate the reader. Picture books can prepare readers for the challenge that the arts make in referencing metaphors and sounds. In this way, they are a portal to greater understanding as well as preparation for a vastly complex world.



Symbolism and surrealism can be found in *Changes* (1990), where Anthony Browne juxtaposes everyday language with a fantastic environment, contrasting the word with the images tangentially. The prosaic language and pedestrian detail used, creates a tension between that and the symbolic illusions of the picture, as transformations occur like the kettle changing into a cat. Here hard becomes soft, cold becomes warm and dead becomes alive as the hero anticipates changes. We are observers of the strange sphere that he inhabits, fully aware that this is a book. As the pictures show an increasingly bizarre metamorphosis, the calm words show no fear. There are symbolic clues to the hinted changes – the painting of the Madonna and Child, a family photograph and a bird flying who has laid four eggs. But to mirror the quiet contemplative language, all action is stilled in a photographic way – frozen in time. *Changes* portrays the unease and curiosity of the only child contemplating a sibling in a most original and erudite way.

‘Literature is an institution that lives by exposing and criticizing its own limits, by testing what will happen if one writes differently’ (Culler, 1997: 46). In picture books enjoyed by older readers, similar limits have been explored, both in the construct of the book and the visual imagery that works within it. Instead of being the objective viewer distanced from the book, authors–illustrators like Jon Scieszka, Lane Smith and Lauren Child bring the reader into the book by playing with its very nature. They employ a sophisticated dialogue between reader and originator, while continuing to adhere to conventions such as size and page extent, which act as a platform from which rules may be exploded.



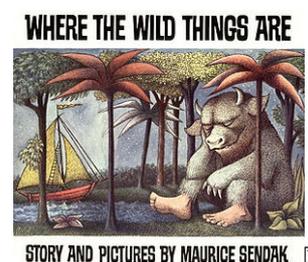
In Jon Scieszka and Lane Smith’s *The Stinky Cheese Man and Other Fairly Stupid Tales* (1992), the formal rules surrounding the paradigm of a book are challenged when the little red hen imposes herself on the endpapers and the character of the designer butts in with, ‘Listen Hen – forget the wheat. Here comes the Title Page.’ Expanding on this clever naughtiness the ‘Table of Contents’ becomes an essential part of the storytelling so that not only have boundaries been crossed, they are now weaving into one another in an inextricable way. The play on words where the ‘contents table’ is heavy enough to squash the characters is visually and literally funny as is the voice of the giant later on who squeezes the type in his threat to squeeze Jack. Dialogue that is both confrontational and anarchic appeals to knowing kids who are used to hearing the way adults and children interact, so this book appeals on many levels. These are not fairy tales but ‘fairly stupid tales’, just right for the age when puns are understood and

enjoyed. Children used to new ways of telling a story in computer games, television, film and advertising can fully appreciate such anarchy.

The content of the book is further played within *Who's Afraid of the Big Bad Book?* (2003) by Lauren Child, whose original, quirky style is matched by a title that twists a well-known phrase into something original. This edgy and funny book continues in subversive vein throughout, literally turning the picture book upside down. In the first spread the illustrator is brought to the attention of the reader, so not only are the formal constructs like tables of contents present, there is now an illustrator putting her oar in! The reader identifies with the hero, Herb, who is also a reader of the book, and a more subversive reader you couldn't wish to meet. Using scissors, Herb cuts out Prince Charming and the queen's throne from the book and draws a moustache on the royal lady. He then pastes on that most modern communications device – a telephone (which is used to good effect in this period story). There is Herb himself entering into the picture and directly interacting with the characters and the physical construct of the book – cutting holes in pages to leap through and drawing doors from which to escape. What a delight!



'The work is not something objective ... but is the experience of the reader' (Culler, 1997: 129). In this way, picture books serve the needs of a hugely varying audience. Maurice Sendak's *Where the Wild Things Are* (1963) is a story that can be simply interpreted as a boy's fantasy after being naughty, yet on a much deeper level it unveils the confrontation of feelings in a richly symbolic series of ideas. This ground-breaking book deals with emotion on both a surface and a subliminal level, and was a response to current developments in psychoanalysis. Max's temper tantrum is told through a journey into a fantasy world, where the wild things (his own angry feelings) create a tumultuous rumpus. The fact that these monsters may also refer to Max's strict parent makes it all the more dramatic when the monsters are overwhelmed and tamed by the boy. Sendak gives the power back to children made afraid by the force of their feelings and the adults who chastise them. Sendak explores anger in a symbolic way by playing with the layout of text and image to expand time, place and fantasy. By subtly enlarging the size and framing of the image on each subsequent spread, we understand how the real world is being left behind and it is only by revisiting the original formal layout that the return to reality is announced. Time, which has expanded, now snaps back when we're told Max's supper 'was still hot'. With few words but enigmatic images, Sendak is emphasising that while Max's fantasy took more than a year and a day, real time was only a few minutes long.



Sendak's great work is a fitting place to end, as it is a composite example of the multifaceted and insightful journey a picture book can take. For this medium engages in a highly creative process by which the reader attempts to connect the disconnected environment in which we live and to reconcile his/her place in it. The reader must then sift down the information and store it in a way that helps him/her understand and confront the expanding world in which he/she is growing up, whilst being entertained and engaged throughout. No mean feat in a book, a mere 32 pages long.

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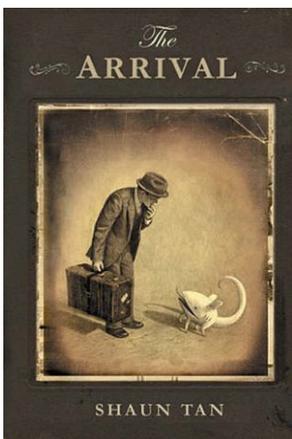
[Jana Novotny Hunter was born in Czechoslovakia and grew up in England. A graduate of Hornsey College of Art, she spent many years in America where she worked as a textile designer, teacher, writer and mother. She has written over 40 books for children, including the story of a deaf girl's struggle to become oral, *Read My Lips* (Walker Books, 2002). As a conference speaker and lecturer, she focuses on the relationship between image and text in picture books. www.janahunter.co.uk/.]

Where the Wild Ones Write: Using Picture Books with Older Children

Louise Wykes

'clonk....clonk...clonk'. I looked up from my register and surveyed the classroom. We were a week into the Autumn Term 2007 and my new Year 6 was settling down for their daily half-hour reading session. Everywhere I looked weighty tomes were being plonked down on the tables and some of the children's bags groaned with two or three whopping great novels. 'Nothing wrong with that' I hear you cry. Indeed, for those children who had the stamina to read longer texts our daily reading sessions were a delight. For those children who were struggling to read, this was a half hour wasted, counting down the minutes whilst they stared at the pages of a lengthy chapter book. Something had to be done.

I initially felt annoyed about this vogue for reading 'hard' books. I had been in post as literacy coordinator for a year, taking the lead from my inspiring head teacher. We created classroom book corners that groaned with high-quality texts of different genres and levels of difficulty, inviting authors in and pairing younger and older classes in a reading buddy scheme. Our school has a strong reading culture where every class is read to everyday. We administer reading tests that give us children's reading ages, and staff are trained to help children choose books that are right for their zone of proximal development. Teachers also have the creative freedom to choose which texts they focus on in literacy lessons. However, it appeared that none of this good practice had touched the older children's belief that if you're in Year 6, your choice of reading material must be a novel! How then, to set children back on the road to choosing a diverse range of appropriate reading material?



My concerns about older children's choice of reading books coincided with my termly visit to the CLPE library in Southwark, London. Whilst browsing, I came across a range of picture books by the illustrator and author Shaun Tan. I was immediately struck by how perfect these texts would be for Year 6 and how we had relatively few picture books for older children in our collection. The children were absorbed and moved by Shaun Tan's *The Arrival* (2006), *The Lost Thing* (2001) and *The Red Tree* (2001). All three texts deal with the experience of being an outsider, otherness and acceptance. Their beguiling yet sophisticated imagery was a fantastic way to help children explore the shades and layers of meaning present in all the best picture books. Class reading of these texts helped the children to understand that there was as much to be absorbed and discussed on an illustrated page as there was in a chapter of a novel. Their empathy with the plight of refugees and displaced peoples also deepened and evolved, feeding into our Second World War studies that term.

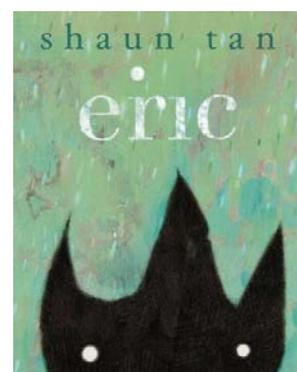
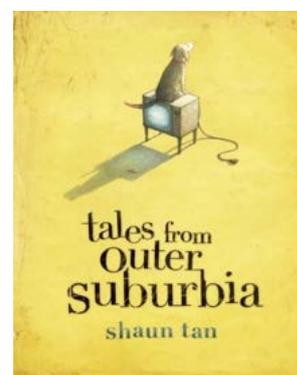
Most significantly, the fashion for reading only lengthy novels started to wane as children rediscovered the classroom book corner. They once more opened themselves up to a range of texts that were suitable for their reading abilities. Less able children were happy to read less sophisticated texts that gave them the sustained practice they needed to improve their reading skills. I almost felt a sigh of communal relief as some of the most able readers in the class chose to pour over the picture books of Shaun Tan, Roberto Innocenti and David Wiesner. The message was starting to get through: follow your interests, read what's right for you and you're never too old for a picture book.

Keen to pick up on the children's enthusiasm, I created a unit of teaching that focused on the work of Shaun Tan. I wanted to explore what type of writing would be produced as a response to the texts, and if the children would produce high-quality work without the model of a lengthy written narrative. I felt free to explore this idea, safe in the knowledge that the children were constantly being exposed to high-quality narrative fiction models generally in literacy lessons, guided reading and in their whole-class story at the end of the day. I was also not averse to creating some of my own narrative models if need be. I am always excited about the ways in which I can create written models that really focus on the next steps children need to take with their writing.

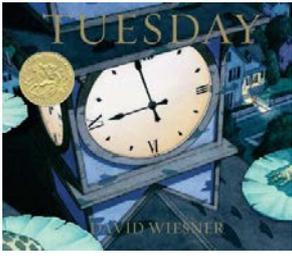
Shaun Tan's collection *Tales from Outer Suburbia* (2009) seemed a good place to start. The story that stood out particularly was that of Eric: a tiny, leaf-shaped exchange student who spends a few weeks with a kind if slightly puzzled host family. After one reading of the story it became apparent that the children would be leading the way with many of their written outcomes. Eric's beguiling appearance led to questions from the children, answered imaginatively in our discussions. The first page sees Eric appear with two suitcases that are actually walnuts. One musing of 'I wonder what Eric keeps in his nutcases?' led to children creating packing lists and explanations of the suitcases' contents, descriptions of Eric's bedroom and collections of tiny discarded items from the playground to illustrate their ideas. When children reach Key Stage 2 at seven years old, we sometimes move into the abstracts of learning before children are ready. Our study of Eric gave us lots of opportunities for working with the concrete: What would Eric use for a toothbrush? How would that make his life interesting with his host family? The children then wanted to make maps of Eric's town and write postcards to and from his family about his experiences during his stay. Pupils of all abilities felt a communal purpose to their writing and happily worked towards meeting high expectations of their written outcomes.

I also copied and laminated an Eric to take on school trips – my wonderful and long-suffering teaching assistant would often run ahead to place Eric in an interesting position as we moved through galleries, museums and parks. Children often chose to do their recounts of the day through Eric's eyes. When it came to writing a longer narrative, the class chose to focus on one of Eric's day trips with the family. I created a written model of an adventure where Eric became stuck in the elephant enclosure during a visit to the zoo. The children innovated around my story (who knew Eric could speak elephant?) or created their own following a similar model. Success criteria focused on features of the genre and children's vital next steps to make them more secure, sophisticated, comfortable writers.

During this unit of work a lot of high-quality writing was produced. If pupils are going to master writing skills at the level they need to access the secondary curriculum, it's important they are inspired to want to do lots of sustained practice. The work of Shaun Tan very much kept their interest and allowed me to challenge them to become better writers. The most significant point to note is that all the suggestions for writing came from the children. This often isn't the case with junior children's writing; we teachers often decide on the outcome before we talk to the children! No bad thing sometimes, as children do need to be directed to write a range of texts. Nevertheless, we must



remember that the flowers grow off the path. The enthusiasm and output created by allowing children (even the older ones) to lead their learning can bring great rewards in terms of achievement and attainment.



By the time they leave primary school, children are expected to be able to write a wide range of fiction and non-fiction texts. I've found picture books a fantastic way of allowing children to show what they've learnt over the years. A study of David Wiesner's *Tuesday* (1991) was a great source of inspiration for our older children. Wiesner's wordless tale of frogs leaving the everglades on magical floating lily pads to wreak havoc on the local neighbourhood was an instant hit amongst all children in the school. The oldest and most experienced writers loved the challenge of deciding which genre they would use to tell the story. Some wrote myths and legends; others wrote science-fiction stories that involved complicated government conspiracies. I received faux information pages on the 'Everglade Flying Frog' and cautionary tales about going into the swamps at night. What a fantastic way to celebrate our daily work at the grindstone where we help children to write such a wide range of genres. Of course, to be able to produce a wide range of writing at the end of primary school, children must be exposed to many forms of high-quality literature. Picture books and graphic novels are one of the ways in which we can enrich the reading and writing choices for children alongside great novels and poems.

In *The Times Literary Supplement* 19 July 2013, Dr Derek Haylock writes 'A fundamental principle for successfully managing change in an organisation is that those who have to implement the change should feel that they have ownership of it.' Much of the feedback from the teaching profession has not been included in the latest draft of the National Curriculum for English, leaving teachers feeling ignored and undervalued. The fact that there are no set texts on the primary English curriculum does give me hope that, with a good knowledge of children's literature, we can somewhat absorb the new objectives into our best practice. My experience with older children and picture books has added another string to my bow in terms of what works to get children reading and writing. Whatever the curriculum dictates, if we use our knowledge of books to inspire and engage children throughout their time at primary school, they will leave at 11 years of age with a life-long reading and writing habit. Moreover, in a world dominated by computerised handheld devices, working on picture books gives children the opportunity to understand more about how they are manipulated by visual imagery. The ability to read visual images is a vital skill to master if children are to make the right choices as the twenty-first century progresses.

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See page 5 for details of Shaun Tan's *The Lost Thing* and *The Red Tree*.

The story 'Eric' in *Tales from Outer Suburbia* is also now published as a book.

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David Wiesner (1991) *Tuesday*. New York: Clarion Books.

Websites

Illustrations and further details of the books are on the following websites.

The Arrival. www.shauntan.net/books/the-arrival.html.

Tales from Outer Suburbia. www.shauntan.net/books/suburbia.html.

Eric. www.shauntan.net/books/eric%20little.html.

Two illustrations from David Wiesner's *Tuesday*.

www.hmhbooks.com/wiesner/tuesday.html.

Roberto Innocenti. <http://loverforbooks.blogspot.co.uk/2010/01/roberto-innocenti.html>.

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What, No Visuals? Making Room for Picture Books in the Secondary English Curriculum

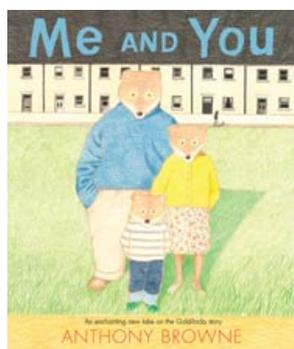
Andrew McCallum

By the time pupils enter secondary school, there is an assumption that they are too old to read picture books, let alone study them. Such a view is in keeping with the tone set by Secretary of State for Education, Michael Gove (2013), when he recently cited the use of Roger Hargreaves' *Mr Men* books in history GCSE revision material as evidence of a general 'dumbing down' in education. There is, indeed, no place for visual material of any kind in England's newly proposed secondary *National Curriculum Programme of Study for English* (DOE, 2013). This is in contrast to the existing curriculum (QCDA, 2007), which directs pupils to study 'how meaning is created through the combination of words, images and sounds in multimodal texts'. I have no knowledge of how frequently picture books are used to meet this requirement and suspect most teachers turn to the moving image, magazines or newspapers. The opportunity, though, is there, one that I advocate strongly elsewhere (McCallum, 2012: 41–50). Picture books, in the time they afford for contemplation and in their carefully structured interplay of images and text, offer multiple ways to reflect on how meaning is generated by both modes, in isolation and combination. So is there a future for picture books in the secondary classroom from 2014 when the curriculum is set to define reading as referring only to the written word? I believe that the answer is yes. Picture books, I hope to argue, can help pupils in their reading of the verbal. This does not so much go against the grain of long-standing work that promotes the value of young people learning to read both modes (Bearne and Kress, 2001), as suggest a way in which the immediate accessibility of images offers a route into the more abstract activity of reading words.

The ease with which images can be produced, reproduced and shared using digital technology has led to suggestions that we live in a 'visual age', with significant consequences for our understanding. Gunther Kress, for example, argues that a shift from predominantly verbal to visual modes of communication produces 'profound effects on human, cognitive/affective, cultural and bodily engagement with the world, and the forms and shapes of knowledge' (2003: 1). An alternative position, however, sees the current period as marked by 'the revenge of the text' (Goldsmith, 2011). It is not just that social media, blogging, fan-fiction sites, email, texting and instant messaging services have encouraged written communication on an unprecedented scale, but that digital images themselves are underpinned by written text, in the form of code. Just picture the (indecipherable) sequence of letters that appears on a computer screen when it crashes. Everything, ultimately, relies on written text.

Of course, the argument about whether our world is verbal or visual is largely redundant: it is both. However, the idea that the verbal fortifies the visual, certainly in developing sophisticated readings of texts, is worth exploring further. The image cannot remain as image if it is to be read. It will certainly engage with 'the vast reserve of visual experiences' (Arizpe, 2001) that we hold in our heads, and it can also be re-presented in visual form in accordance with choices of design. However, a fully nuanced, multidimensional response is often most easily done using words. In making this suggestion, I would like to draw an analogy between images and the cloud in Vygotsky's statement, 'A thought may be compared to a cloud shedding a shower of

words' (in McCallum, 2012: 41). Vygotsky explains that a thought, no matter how complex, can be reduced to a single unit. For example, everything I have done today can be stored under the thought 'today'. To articulate this thought I need to produce a shower of words. This process has been likened to an act of translation (Armstrong, 2000: 140) whereby, in Vygotsky's terms, 'thought is not merely expressed in words; it comes into existence through them' (in McCallum, 2012: 40). Images obviously exist before they are articulated as words, but perhaps reading them requires a similar process of translation in that they exist as single units, yet, like thoughts, have the potential to shed a shower of words. This is not significantly different from the processes involved in reading words. Words have meaning only in relation to each other; each one, in its particular context, triggers a series of connotations requiring acts of translation. However, the abstract nature of words, the length of written texts and the need to move through them chronologically, often at speed, makes reading beyond simple decoding challenging for many pupils. Perhaps the confidence to unpick meaning stored within words – key to reading beyond the literal – can usefully be approached through encouraging pupils first to unlock meaning stored within images. What follows suggests how this might be done using Anthony Browne's reworking of the Goldilocks story, *Me and You* (2010), as an example.



Opening Pages and Foreshadowing

The opening page of *Me and You* is set within clearly recognisable narrative conventions, but also presents several puzzles. There is a front-on picture of a symmetrical house, much like ones young children often draw. Three bears peer from its windows.¹ The picture is simply establishing the characters and setting, which can all be taken in at a glance. In articulating what I see, the picture sheds words like a Vygotskian thought. My description so far, though, is on a limited, literal level. Further reading requires the eye to move around the page, to infer and deduce meaning in much the same way as when closely reading the first page of a written text. At this point the shower becomes a deluge, as questions arise about how the images foreshadow subsequent events. The bears, for example, are positioned in different windows in a way to make them appear distanced from each other. The mother is cleaning hers, while the father, directly above her, sticks his head out from the loft, and the son, barely visible, peeps out from the ground floor. Is this family in crisis? Is this story about gender divisions in family units? The sense of unease is developed further by the appearance of a wolf, just the head showing, at the bottom of the page. This narrative, it seems, is not straightforward, a sense added to by the presence of a red ball in the family garden, hovering mysteriously above the ground. The reader is also made to question the position of the house. While in immaculate condition, a model of bourgeois affluence, it stands directly in front of an industrial landscape populated by cranes, chimney stacks and tower blocks. Is the family under threat? Does their unhappiness stem from insecurity in their social position? The whole picture is accompanied by just four words: 'This is our house'. It is a brilliant example of how meaning is generated in the 'ironic distance' (Nodelman, 1990) between written text and image in picture books. Yes, this is the house belonging to the bears, but it is also so much more. In a way this page mocks the inadequacy of words to portray a whole story. But this is where valuable learning about reading the words can be presented to pupils. In considering what Browne's images foreshadow, they can reflect on the hard work required to understand written texts. What exactly does 'This is our house' mean? What is the emphasis on the first person plural pronoun? Why the word 'house' instead of 'home'? Why the present tense? Even the most unassuming of vocabulary contains within it stored meaning.

Intertextuality

The above deliberately avoids mentioning intertextual references. Their abundance throughout the book makes Browne's work valuable for a consideration of the reading

process in general. Clearly the story is framed within an existing knowledge of the Goldilocks narrative. This gives the opening page so much of its effect, for fairy-tale bears are not expected to inhabit a house like this. This most definitely is a fairy story, though, as demonstrated by the presence of the wolf, which, in turn, alludes to the story of Little Red Riding Hood, a point added to by the redness of the hovering ball, which stands out against dominant pastel shades. Most of all, though, the page references recurrent motifs from Browne's previous work. The strong vertical lines and barred windows are the same as those found in books such as *Zoo*, *Gorilla* and *Hansel and Gretel*. Clearly, like his other books, this book will explore issues of imprisonment. In articulating such intertextual references, pupils gain a sense that they are imposing a reading on these images. They begin to recognise the hard work involved in reading, to see it as an act of translation, requiring reflective thought. The four words 'This is our house' must suddenly be read within the context of all previously encountered fictional houses.

Filling in Narrative Gaps

Even the most densely written novel contains gaps in its narrative, though the need to keep reading, to engage with what Stanley Fish calls 'the movingness of texts' (1990: 44), can create the illusion that this is not so. Acknowledging gaps, though, is a key aspect of reading. Highly skilled readers must grapple with what is not there alongside what is. Picture books can easily draw attention to such gaps in shifting from one image to another, with concurrent shifts in, for example, character, setting and time. The second page of *Me and You* is a good example. The story moves from the bears' comfortable home to four black-and-white panels set in recognisably urban, working-class streets. Readers are struck by the contrast to the first page and the need to make sense of the new images. Each panel contains two characters, presumably mother and daughter. They leave a house in the first panel, walk down a street in the second, continue to do so in the third, then stop outside a butcher's in the fourth. The gaps between panels are easy to account for, logically involving the couple walking. Simply recognising how readers can make these assumptions, though, aids reflection on the process of reading itself. Further exploration of the panels can then raise questions about gaps with less obvious explanations. Why, for example, does the girl look sad in the first panel, but happy in the third? And why is the mother staring in at the butcher's rather than entering? Browne's design choices also raise questions. Strikingly, he has chosen to make the girl's hair, peeping out from a hooded top, bright orange, in contrast to the rest of the black-and-white images. The girl is presumably Goldilocks, but the hood recalls Little Red Riding Hood. The most obvious gap is not between panels but pages. On the third page is a family portrait of the bears, once more in pastel shades. In the juxtaposition of realistic, urban, human images with unsettling non-realistic ones of fairy-tale bears, are we reading about a metaphorical as well as literal gap: the one keeping apart social classes (and even different stories)?

I have taken several hundred words to explain a few thoughts about the opening of *Me and You*. In a way, I hope that proves my point. Browne's images are immeasurably more effective at showing the story than my words are in telling it, but in articulating what is seen, in actively unlocking the meaning contained within his images as they interact with my stored knowledge of previous images and stories, I have tried to demonstrate processes that apply to reading writing as well as images. This involves moving beyond what is simply there on the page, to engage in acts of translation that release a 'shower of words'. What better way could there be to exploit the gaps all too apparent in prescriptive government legislation about what is and is not suitable for the secondary classroom?

Note

- 1 See 'Look Inside' at www.amazon.co.uk/Me-You-Anthony-Browne/dp/0552559105.

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The Value of Picture Books for Young People with Additional Needs

Alexandra Strick

Children's picture books can – and should – be enjoyed by any age. I am aware that this is hardly a revolutionary notion; however, it is one that cannot be said too often. So there, I say it again. It seems to me completely nonsensical to believe that children ought to 'grow out' of books with pictures and be ushered onto 'real' books as speedily as possible. Picture books have so very much to offer all audiences, irrespective of age. In fact I'd go so far as to say that the benefits and pleasure they impart improve with age. The variety of illustrated books we can enjoy and our ability to fully explore, understand and appreciate them surely grows with us.

By 'us' I mean everyone, including children and young people with any additional needs. Age-appropriate picture books are especially valuable – indeed *essential* – to many such readers, particularly 'older' children with additional needs.

So what particular benefits do picture books hold for such young people? What sorts of book can be particularly valuable? And what do we actually mean by 'additional needs'?

Like many people these days, I favour the term 'additional needs' in place of 'special needs'. It encompasses a veritable profusion of different needs, scattered across

mainstream and special-school settings. I am regularly reminded just how diverse and far-reaching the spectrum is through my work on various Booktrust (<http://www.booktrust.org.uk>) programmes for 11 year-olds, like the Bookbuzz accessible titles (www.booktrust.org.uk/programmes/secondary/bookbuzz/) and the School Library Pack for special schools (www.booktrust.org.uk/programmes/secondary/school-library-pack/).

In trying to seek out books to recommend for these students, I spend as much time as possible in schools, both mainstream and special schools, to consult students and teachers and continually remind myself of the breadth of needs children's books should be catering for. And it really is an immense gamut of needs. Sometimes needs will be multiple and complex, particularly in a special-school setting. Most special-school students are likely to be operating within the P scales (the scales used to assess the progress of children of 6+ who do not yet reach Level 1 of the National Curriculum) and the range of needs covered within those eight scales alone is vast.

A special-school classroom may be catering for students who are non-verbal, students who communicate through signing; students who have mobility impairments and/or difficulty with their gross motor skills; students who have mild, moderate or severe learning difficulties; students who have delayed fine motor skills; students who are on the autistic spectrum; and students with multiple, profound and complex needs.

This has huge implications on their engagement with books and reading. In many of the special schools I visit, teachers report that at least some of their students are never likely to be able to read independently. Others will be able to read, but at a very dramatically lower level than peers of the same age. For some students with multiple or complex needs, a teacher or parent may be looking for something as simple as a basic response to an associated sensory stimulation. Others (such as those who are on the autistic spectrum) might be able to read and understand the basic meaning of words, but perhaps struggle to understand the wider context, inference, associations or subtext. In addition to this vast spectrum of needs there are also specific areas of need, such as a specific reading disability (dyslexia) or sensory impairment (visual impairment or deafness).

So, trying to choose a list of perhaps eight books to suit this vast continuum of needs can be challenging to say the least. However, I can say that simple, accessible, age-appropriate picture books are amongst the first I try to seek out for any list.

Clear, legible text, uncluttered pages and good levels of contrast are key for many children with additional needs. This is crucial for students who are partially sighted or have learning difficulties, but is actually helpful to any child. That is why I get so irritated by the number of otherwise wonderful books that insist on making themselves inaccessible to some readers by having dark text laid over almost equally dark (and/or fussy, illustrated) backgrounds. And don't even get me started on the current picture book trend of ensuring text undulates across the page, zips up and down, includes a few random capital letters, loops the loop, and then changes size and font a few times for good measure (and that's just on one spread). Surely any really good picture book does not need to resort to cheap design gimmicks like this in order to convince us that it is memorable or 'quirky'?

Back to the point. Text needs to be a decent size (at least 16 point, but ideally larger). Interestingly, research data suggests a 30 per cent increase in the likelihood of fluent reading (a reading speed of more than 85 words per minute) for every increase of 1 point beyond 10 points.

For many students with additional needs, less is more – and this goes for the quantity of words in relation to image. Graphic books can offer a useful solution for many struggling readers, as can the wealth of new 'hi-lo' (high interest, low reading age) novels by publishers such as Barrington Stoke, Ransom, Watts, Rising Stars and others.

These are really meaty and age-appropriate reads aimed to appeal to tweens, teens and young adults, with text that has been skilfully edited to suit a lower reading age.

For other students the text needs to be even more minimal and easy to understand, but still age appropriate. The students I aim to support are aged 11 or 12 and whilst some of them have acute difficulties with reading, this does not mean we should be giving them books about snuggly bunnies or a baby duck trying to find Mummy. These are young people with young people's interests and need to be respected as such. Effective hi-lo picture books must offer much the same for struggling readers as Early Years picture books do – so simple sentences, illustrations that support (and are relevant to) the text, well-chosen vocabulary, compelling narratives, good characterisation and themes that are potentially pertinent to a young person's interests.

Picture books by the likes of Oliver Jeffers, Shaun Tan, Anthony Browne, Helen Ward, Mini Grey and Jo Empson have provided some particularly valuable material. Students in many of the special schools I work with also regularly request books by Roald Dahl/Quentin Blake, Korky Paul and Babette Cole, the inclusion of humour (particularly of a slapstick nature) proving perpetually popular.

In terms of other aspects that I look out for, picture books with rhyming text can be very effective for engaging many young people with additional needs. When I'm creating a list of suggested titles, I look to include at least one or two rhyming stories that lend themselves especially well to repeated readings and to associated activities and games. These can help capture and retain attention and focus listening skills. Rhythm and rhyme can also help to build anticipation and encourage both individual and group participation.

It's generally accepted that some young people (such as those with learning difficulty or on the autistic spectrum) may find books with familiar settings and concepts 'easier' to engage with than books that are very abstract, have complex visual subplots or rely on subtle irony, inference or association. There is definitely some truth in this. Simple, familiar contexts and settings can undoubtedly help to engage some students, providing reassurance, offering connections and reinforcing messages about how the world works and how society 'expects' people to behave in different situations.

However, this doesn't mean that there isn't also a place alongside such books for more challenging themes and less concrete concepts. Picture books with more sophisticated themes and approaches can play an immensely valuable role in gradually easing young people with additional needs into exploring new territory and ideas within a safe framework.

As much as I am asked for books offering students a simple story or an illustration of basic day-to-day activities, I also know from the feedback that well-chosen books about dragons and dinosaurs have proven hugely successful when used to explore new ideas or just to enjoy the beauty of the language and/or the illustrations. Sometimes it is a case of finding the right approach or exactly the right sensory tools to fully engage students in stories. The sensory story work of people like Joanna Grace (<http://jo.element42.org>) is ground breaking in this area.

Even the most 'challenging' picture books for older readers (for example, a complex book with no text at all or multiple narratives) should not be ruled out. A multi-layered picture book can often work on a number of levels, thus it can be enjoyed in different ways by different individuals in a group, each relating to it in their own way, but all *equally*.

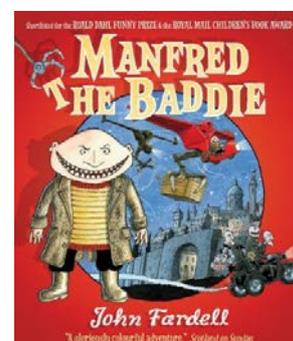
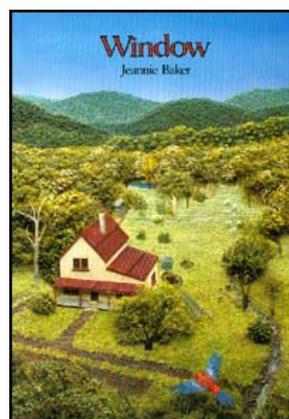
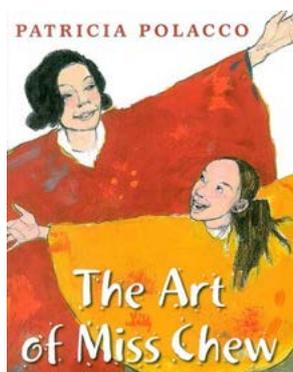
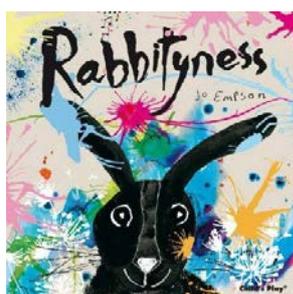
There is so much more I could write, but I finish this article with a simple plea and an even simpler plug. First the plea. Although recent years have seen a great increase in the number of hi-lo books and sophisticated picture books suitable for some struggling

readers, there remain some gaping holes in the mainstream children's book landscape, leaving many disabled children completely excluded. For example, there is a complete dearth of mainstream books with any kind of sensory content for older children. Why the assumption that tactile elements are purely the realm of pre-school audiences? Such additions can add stimulation, interest and great entertainment for readers of any age (I challenge anyone not to enjoy scratching and sniffing the armpits of the trolls in *Terrible Trolls* by Delphine Durand). So I urge any publisher (or kindly would-be benefactor) to get in touch with me if they would like to discuss an innovative project to make an 'ageless' sensory book or to work with the wonderful Outside In World (www.outsideinworld.org.uk) on an on-going project to translate accessible and inclusive books from other countries.

Finally, the plug. If you are interested in any aspect of making books accessible, inclusive and diverse, please do take note of the new venture developed by Beth Cox and myself: www.inclusiveminds.com. Together with other like-minded book people, we are working on a range of projects helping to ensure that children's books include everyone and reflect a truly diverse society.

A few to look out for

Every child is different, but the following books have proved popular with some of the older students with additional needs I've worked with.



Manfred the Baddie by John Fardell (Quercus, 2009)

Quirky comic-style gem about a baddie who turns good.

Rabbityness by Jo Empson (Child's Play, 2012)

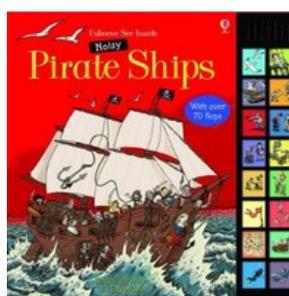
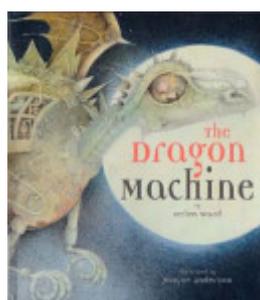
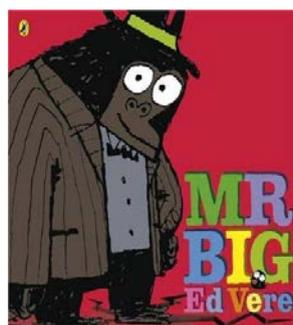
Delightfully accessible picture book about friendship and loss.

The Art of Miss Chew by Patricia Polacco (Putnam, 2012)

Autobiographical book about nurturing talent and self-expression.

Window by Jeannie Baker (Walker Books, 1991)

Australian wordless picture book that can be enjoyed on different levels.



Mr Big by Ed Vere (Puffin Books, 2008)

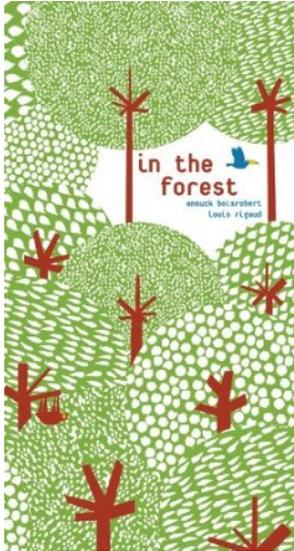
Quirky, stylish, simple and accessible.

Dragon Machine by Helen Ward and Wayne Anderson (Templar Books, 2005)

Exquisite book (with accompanying CD) about the power of imagination and friendship.

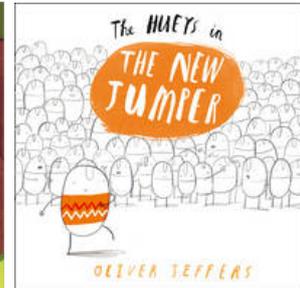
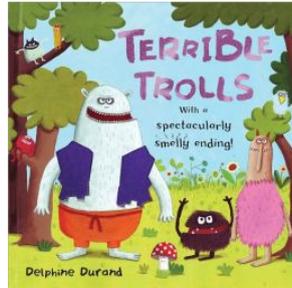
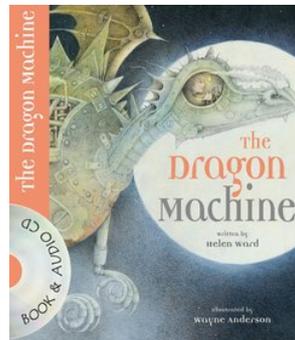
Noisy Pirate Ships by Rob Lloyd Jones and Jorg Muhle (Usborne Books, 2009)

Lift-the-flap book with sound buttons, packed with factual detail and humour.



In the Forest by Annouk Boisrobert, Louis Rigaud and Sophie Strady (Tate Publishing, 2012)

Dramatic pop-up book with a powerful environmental message.



Terrible Trolls by Delphine Durand (Campbell Books, 2008)

Touch-and-feel book that succeeds in appealing to a wide age range.

The Hueys and the New Jumper by Oliver Jeffers (HarperCollins, 2012)

Difference is good in this very funny and ultra-simple picture book.

[Alexandra Strick is a consultant (inclusion and disability), Booktrust manager/founder and Outside In World co-founder. With Beth Cox, she runs Inclusive Minds, a collective for people who are passionate about inclusion, diversity, equality and accessibility in children's literature and are committed to changing the face of children's books].

The European Picture Book Collection (EPBC) Moves On

Penni Cotton

The first European picture book collection (EPBC, 2000), which was created between 1996 and 2000, is relatively well known now and has been used widely throughout the world in primary classrooms. Rather less known are two of the main projects that have developed from it. Namely, the European school education training course (ESET, 2004) and the second European picture book collection (EPBCII, 2011). This short article will give a brief overview of all three projects, highlight other projects that have developed from the first EPBC and propose further reading.

EPBC: www.ncrcl.ac.uk/epbc

The first European picture book collection was created with funding from the European Commission (EC) to help children throughout the European Union (EU) to understand more about each other and what it means to be European. It was suggested that they do this by reading the visual narratives of carefully selected European picture books, focusing on the universal themes that permeate the books, looking at the similarities between languages and cultures, and accepting and celebrating the differences.

The collection comprises 20 picture books from the 15 countries that were part of the EU in 1996. Details of these books and the background to the project can be found on the EPBC website, together with publication details, information about why they were chosen and activities for classroom use. There is also a teachers' resource section on the website that gives suggestions for activities that can be done in class before using



the EPBC. A 20 minute video of teachers using the EPBC in a French primary school in London can be found at www.youtube.com/watch?v=vtYmKkrmWzQ.

The books and activities were chosen by European colleagues from the 15 EU countries and reflect the cultures of the countries of origin. The criteria for the books' selection were that they should:

- Tell a good visual story
- Have minimal text with some words common to more than one language
- Be considered by both children and adults to be amongst each country's very best picture books
- Be used widely in primary schools
- Depict a universal childhood theme
- Reflect the culture of the country where possible.

The EPBC website is available in English, French, German, Nederlands, Portuguese, Spanish and Welsh.

ESET: www.ncrcl.ac.uk/eset

The European school education training course was developed, with the help of EC funding, at the request of teachers who trialled the EPBC books. They felt there was so much material available that they were not really sure of the best ways to access it.

The aims of ESET were to:

- Create an online teacher training course in several languages using the EPBC materials
- Help children gain greater linguistic, literary and cultural understanding and a sense of what it means to be European
- Provide a structure for teachers and teacher educators
- Create three modules: Language, Literature and Culture
- Develop five detailed sessions for each module with free downloadable practical activities
- Make the course flexible so that teachers and teacher educators could use all or parts of it, depending on their needs.



On the top left of the website's homepage, there are the flags of all the EU countries before Croatia, the 28th, joined on 1 July 2013. On the right there are the flags of seven other European countries, including Croatia, which were not part of the EU at the beginning of this year. By clicking on a flag, it is possible to read the introduction to the ESET project in all the languages of that country. For example, in Switzerland (not part of the EU), the introduction is in French, German, Italian and Rumantsch, whilst for Cyprus it is in both Greek and Turkish. The teaching sessions, however, are in English, French, German, Nederlands and Portuguese – the languages of the children's literature experts and teacher trainers who developed the ESET course.

Before accessing the teaching modules, it is necessary to register on the ESET site with your name, institution and email address. This is because it is extremely useful to know who has accessed the website and is taking advantage of the freely available materials. From this information, we know that over 600 educationalists have so far used the site from all five continents, not just from Europe.



EPBC II: www.epbcii.org

The second EPBC collection was created by Dr Petros Panaou (Nicosia University, Cyprus) after he had completed his doctoral thesis on the EPBC. He was very interested in updating the first EPBC collection to include picture books from all the 27 countries of the EU. Between 2009 and 2011, I worked with him to secure EC funding and then as literary advisor to the project, whose partners came from Austria, Cyprus, Estonia, Greece and Poland. The website, therefore, is in English as well as in the languages of these countries.

The aims and objectives of EPBCII were slightly different from either the EPBC or ESET, namely to:

- Promote the structured pedagogical use of picture books focusing on second-language teaching and learning

- Create online flipping ebooks (either the whole book or part of it depending on copyright permission)

- Create online interactive activities that could be used alongside the ebooks

- Engage teachers and pupils in creative literary, linguistic and cultural comparative processes

- Encourage, enhance and support pedagogical approaches towards the teaching of European languages and literatures.

Clearly the focus of EPBC II was much more on second-language learning through the use of carefully selected picture books from the EU. A catalogue of 60+ books from all 27 EU countries is at www.epbcii.org/files/epbcii_catalogue/index.html. This large collection of books was possible because each partner contacted colleagues in three or four other EU countries to ask advice about their selection of picture books, thus making for a very rich and useful resource. Many of the titles can be read as 'flip' books but, as already mentioned, the number of pages permitted depended on the goodwill of the publishers! The flip books can be accessed from www.epbcii.org/index.php?page=shop.browse&category_id=181&option=com_virtuemart&Itemid=11&epbc=II. Additionally, there are specific activities that go with the individual books, as well as some that could be used with any picture book. The focus, however, is still on language, literature and culture, as on the ESET site.

One of the most useful resources on the EPBCII website is the teacher training module at www.epbcii.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=13&Itemid=5 and the *EPBC Guide for Teachers* is full of helpful advice on how to use the materials. It also has comments from teachers who have used them and so gives confidence to those who might be a little unsure of just where to start!

Other Projects and Further Reading

Since these projects were developed, a number of other picture-book collections have been created, both inside and outside Europe. Projects such as the Catalan picture-book collection and the BARFIE (Books and Reading for Intercultural Education) picture-book collection were two of the first, whilst the New Zealand and Pacific Rim collections are much more recent.

The Catalan picture book collection (CPBC) was created in collaboration with Professor Maria Gonzalez Davies of Blanquerna University, Barcelona, Spain. She was very keen to modify the EPBC methodology for use with her students as second-language learning material. Not only did these future teachers translate the books, they also created activities to be used alongside them that would enhance children's knowledge of the Catalan culture. The BARFIE picture book collection, on the other hand, was an extension of an EC funded project co-ordinated by Professor Lilia Ratcheva at the [Institut für Jugendliteratur](http://www.jugendliteratur.at) in Vienna. As its name implies, this picture-book collection

was developed to support intercultural education. Both these collections can be accessed through the homepage of www.ncrcl.ac.uk/epbc.

The New Zealand picture book collection (NZPBC) (www.picturebooks.co.nz) was the brainchild of Nicola Daly, at the University of Waikato, New Zealand. She visited Roehampton University's library a few years ago and was intrigued by the EPBC display in the NCRCL (National Centre for Research in Children's Literature) section. After further research and much practical interaction with teachers and librarians, she used the EPBC methodology in order to create her own collection of picture books from New Zealand in both the English and Maori languages. The NZPBC website also includes practical activities to help both children and teachers to learn more about the complexity of New Zealand culture. Shortly after this, she also created a Pacific picture book collection (www.pacificpicturebooks.co.nz) that relates to the Pasifika communities in New Zealand.

It is hoped that this brief overview gives some indication of how picture-book collections have developed and moved on since the end of the last century. Suggestions for further reading can be found at: www.roehampton.ac.uk/Research-Centres/National-Centre-for-Research-in-Childrens-Literature/Members/.

[Penni Cotton is Senior Research Fellow at the National Centre for Research in Children's Literature (NCRCL), Roehampton University, London, UK, and is director of the EPBC and ESET projects. Since the publication of *Picture Books sans Frontières* (Stoke on Trent: Trentham Books, 2000), in which she explains the rationale behind her work, she has written numerous articles and presented many papers world-wide on the subject. She has also contributed to the organisation of several European conferences, including Littérature Européenne pour L'Enfance et la Jeunesse in Montolieu Village du Livre (France) where she lives for part of the year. In addition, she has been interviewed about European children's literature on a number of radio programmes, including the BBC World Service.]

Flying Eye Books: An Exciting Venture in Publishing

Sam Arthur

History and Creation of Flying Eye

When we started Nobrow Press one of our main sources of inspiration was children's books. After publishing a few books aimed at younger readers under our Nobrow imprint we soon realised that we weren't necessarily reaching our key demographic, that is to say, kids! Under Nobrow, our Leporello series (*Space Race*, *Rise and Fall*, *Swan Lake*, *Flesh and Bone*) could be described as 'all ages', but more of our books needed to be under an imprint aimed at a younger audience in order for readers to find them more easily. So, after lots of hard work, the idea of a dedicated children's imprint became a reality. We devote the same editorial care to Flying Eye as we always have with Nobrow and spend just as much time making sure the production is just right. Now that all children's titles are published under Flying Eye Books, Nobrow Press will be purely for grown-ups.

How We Work (i.e. where we look for illustrators, authors, etc.)

With our Nobrow Press list of comics and graphic novels (for adults) we test out new artists in the pages of the Nobrow magazine with a double-page spread comic or illustration using a colour separation other than CMYK. Then we feed the best of those through our 24 page 17 cm x 23 cm comic series, which allows them to explore a slightly extended narrative form. Then the best of those progress to a full hardback graphic novel. We usually find these artists and authors through being well connected

with the illustration scene in London and by maintaining a close relationship with illustration MA course tutors.

For Flying Eye Books (our children's list) we work a little differently. Each year we visit as many of the graduate illustration shows as possible to meet the new graduates. We also keep an eye on people's blogs that we're watching develop. When we see potential in someone, we'll often ask them in for a meeting to see their full portfolio and hear more about their professional experience.

We run an open submissions policy, but this means that we have capacity to reply only to a small number of people to whom we want to talk further. We realise that this can be dispiriting to those people who don't get a response, but it means that those who are contacted get more attention from us.

Having a good blog or website that is up to date with the person's work is really important. If we like a submission the first thing we do is check online to see other work that they have done. Our perception of artists and writers is therefore influenced by whatever presence online they have. Online presence could just be a bunch of drawings uploaded to a Flickr page – it doesn't have to be a fancy website. If they have nothing it makes it difficult for us to get a picture of what they do and the decision to work with them will be affected by that.

Our Mission

As young entrepreneurs, we think it important to create 'picture books' for an audience of young people from four and up to teen and adult.

First, all the directors at Nobrow come from an illustration or children's publishing background. We share a love of art books, comics, picture books and highly illustrated reference books. We're also firm believers in the power of putting brilliant books in the hands of children and that there is no need to stop reading 'picture books' as you grow up. They can be as sophisticated and engrossing as any novel, play or film.

Beautiful picture books should be cherished by all. They aren't just something for adults or very young children. Children, young adults and adults should have the opportunity to have books that they can really appreciate for their stories and their beauty as objects. If anything, children and young adults are much more important. This is the next generation of readers and it is up to publishers to set the bar high, to give them the opportunity to experience something wholly engaging from the books they read; whether it comes from the print, binding, illustrations or narrative.

[See reviews of books from Flying Eye on pages 32 to 33.]

[Sam Arthur is Flying Eye Books' Company Director.]

Inspiration and Enthusiasm

Jackie Morris

I have few memories of early childhood. The sharpest, clearest one is of watching my father draw a bird. He made a lapwing appear on a piece of paper using only a small sharpened stick. To a child's eye this was magic, akin to alchemy. That one moment shaped my life to this day. It could be said that this was my first inspiration.

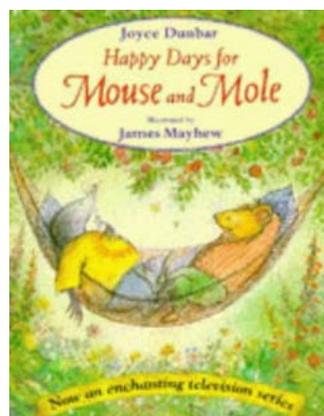
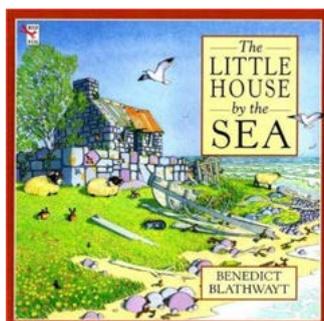
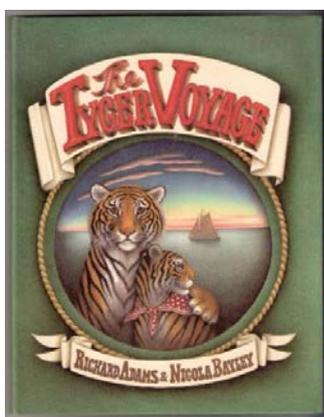
From that moment I knew what I wanted. It wasn't that I wanted to be an artist. I didn't know what an artist was. What I wanted was to have that skill, the craft, the wit and understanding to make this happen again and again. I simply wanted to be able to draw and draw well. It was only later when I learned that grown-ups had things called jobs and if your 'job' was to be an artist you could do colouring in all day long and people would pay you.

Meanwhile I was learning to read, or desperately trying to. It didn't come easily. We had few books at home. Libraries were my doorway into the maze of literature, and when I finally grasped the key to the code I found shelves filled with worlds and wonderful lives to explore.

I drew, I looked, I learned. School taught me primarily that I didn't like school, uniforms, authority, rules. It also taught me about the Renaissance, artists distant in time, place and thought (and, curiously, all male, as history wrongly taught us). It also taught me that the people of the world spoke many languages, but images could be understood by all. Like migrating birds, images crossed boundaries and borders.

Years later here I am, an artist, illustrator, author, still learning, still finding inspiration all around.

My first inspiration towards a career as an illustrator came when watching television (a thing I rarely do these days). I saw Nicola Bayley painting for *The Tyger Voyage*, working in a television studio and I thought, yes, I could do that. I didn't want to work in children's books, I wanted to illustrate to make a living so that I could paint in my 'spare time'. It had been hammered into me at school that you couldn't make a living as an artist, it was what rich people did for a hobby. Not something for people like me. Being an illustrator was my idea of a compromise.



After 10 years of illustrating I fell into the world of children's books by accident. Twenty years of illustrating books has taught me something about how to do it. During this time my teachers have been my contemporaries, my children, illustrators of the past. I began my first picture book the week my son was born.

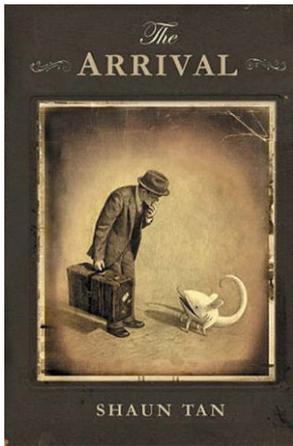
Reading has taught me much about writing, as has working with books. Reading aloud, sharing.

Benedict Blathway showed me through his books – how adding detail upon detail could keep a child looking, could make a book last for so much longer. His landscapes are so full with birds and small creatures. His book *The Little House by the Sea* reflected back to my children the world they were growing up in.

James Mayhew encouraged me, was a sounding board, a shoulder to cry on, an inspiration. My children grew up with *Mouse and Mole*, *The Cloth of Dreams*, *Dare You!* and *Koshka's Tales*, and while I read the stories to them I was looking at the balance of picture and text, colour and design, and I was learning.

My children loved books that were beautiful, stories that were rich in detail, strong stories. They weren't attracted to the pink-glitter girl books, the bogies and the pants books, the one-joke novelty books. They loved the rhythm and the language of Michael Rosen, books like *Songbird Story* about Fip and Feppa. They wanted the same story over and over. They loved Blathway's *Little Red Train*, Maurice Sendak's *Where the Wild Things Are* and the curious strangeness of *Outside Over There*. They loved not only *The Tyger Voyage* but also *The Patchwork Cat* and *The Mousehole Cat*, and were delighted when one day when we went to Cornwall, to Mousehole – they 'walked into

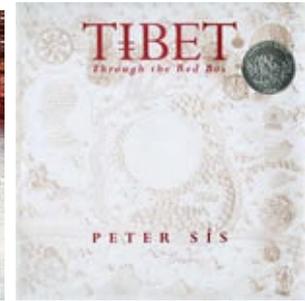
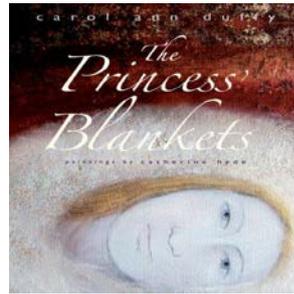
a picture book'. It was wonderful for me, reading stories (and we had so many books in the house it was like living in a library). I was spending time with my children AND it was part of my working day as I was learning my craft.



WHERE THE WILD THINGS ARE



STORY AND PICTURES BY MAURICE SENDAK



Now that both my children have grown up. I have not lost the love of great picture books. *The Princess' Blankets* by Carol Ann Duffy and Catherine Hyde is a wonderful picture book for grown-ups, a book that you can live a lifetime with, share with a child or a lover. Likewise Shaun Tan's *The Arrival* is a picture book for teenagers, grown-ups. Not a single written word, but a story told with great depth and beauty.

Peter Sis takes picture books to a new level. On shelves in shops I see rows and rows of books with simple rhyming texts and cartoony pictures, but these still leave me cold, while Sis's *Tibet Through the Red Box* makes my heart sing and my soul soar. Beautifully produced, written with a spare and elegant language, illustrated with perfect images and with an overall design that is just so right, *Tibet* has heart, soul and respect for both subject matter and reader.

The Island by Armin Greder tells a tale in stark colours that would give any child nightmares, but reflects society back to us with perfection and should be read in every school and to every politician in the land. It is a powerful picture book, not beautiful by any means, but then it deals with the subjects of racism, xenophobia and hate, and shows what the best picture books can do.



To counter this there is the beautiful *Missed Connections: Love, Lost and Found* by Sophie Blackall. This is a picture book for grown-ups, an antidote to *The Island*, a book about love and longing, told in pictures and very few words. Perfect.

All these books are an inspiration to me. They make me wish, long, desire to produce work that lifts the hearts of others the way that they lift mine when I spend time at peace in their pages.

So many books are published every year. Most picture books are made for young children. Most of my output ranges around the difficult area of picture books for older children, doing battle with those who think if a book has pictures in it must be for little children. I do love to play sometimes in the world of younger readers, but my real passion is in making books for people, people of all ages.

So, the other day I met a book that made my heart sing and my soul soar. *The Promise*, by Nicola Davies, illustrated by Laura Carlin and published by Walker Books. This is a perfect parable for modern times, an antidote to all the things I hate about the picture-book market. From its production, with jacket and endpapers, colourful casing, through the illustrations, all with skilful design and beautiful paper quality and text, this book has everything. The story reflects the world seldom seen in children's books right back at us all: 'When I was young I lived in a city that was mean and hard and ugly.' Not the cosy snuggle up tight in front of the Aga world, but one familiar to so many children today. This book will be the mark of quality for every good bookshop. The prose is lyrical, poetic, stark: 'gritty yellow wind blew constantly, scratching round the buildings like a hungry dog.' When you read it aloud the words taste perfect. The illustrations are a meeting of Eric Ravilious and Paul Klee, and a language all of Laura Carlin's own.

So, what is it that inspires me? The wonderful work of my contemporaries, life and light, being told that a child loves a copy of one of my books so much they sleep with it under their pillow, hearing stories blowing in the wind; line, colour and beauty, so many things. Most of all I suppose, the need, desire, wish, to have my small voice heard in a busy chaotic world of stories.

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www.catherinehyde.co.uk/exhib_this.php?s=11&cat=2.

An animated version by James Mayhew of Joyce Dunbar's text of *Mouse and Mole*.

www.joycedunbar.com/mouseandmole.html.

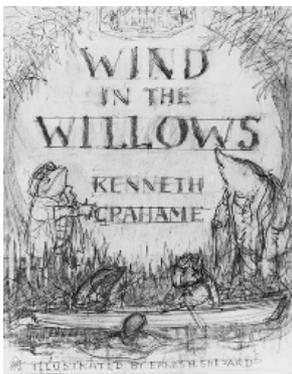
Jackie Morris's blog. www.jackiemorris.co.uk/blog/.

Ratty, Mole and Toad at Nymans

June Hopper Swain

Nymans National Trust Property, Handcross, West Sussex, RH17 6EB. 13 July – 1 November 2013.

An exhibition of Ernest H. Shepard's original illustrations for Kenneth Grahame's children's book *The Wind in the Willows* (1931), including those that were hand coloured by Shepard for the 1969 edition, has been mounted in the upstairs gallery. Providing some fascinating glimpses into Shepard's life and work, this exhibition also explains his links with Nymans.

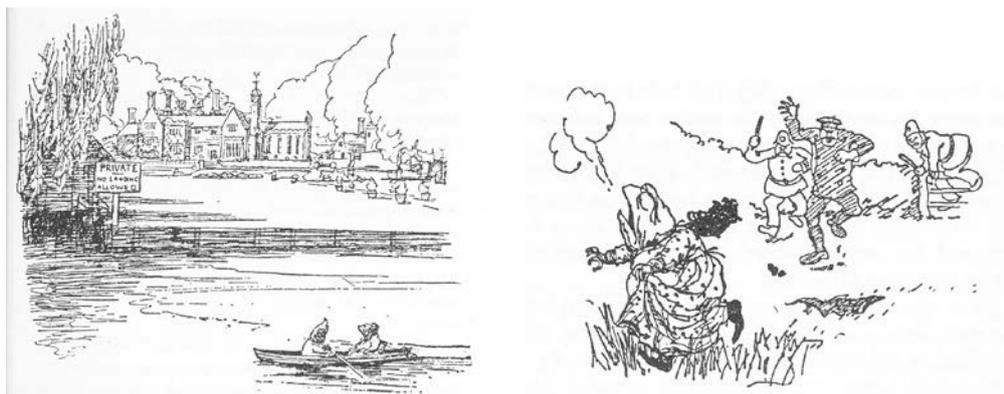


At an early age, Shepard (1879–1976) showed a precocious talent for drawing. This talent was encouraged at St Paul's School, London, and it was while he was still at the school that he studied art at the Heatherley School of Fine Art in Chelsea. He won a scholarship to the Royal Academy School in 1897 and it was while there that he began to draw professionally. Having had a cartoon accepted by *Punch* in 1907, he became a regular contributor to the magazine in 1914, a collaboration that lasted many years. During the First World War he was a commissioned officer with the Royal Artillery, where he reached the rank of Major and won the Military Cross at Arras. He was to become a prolific illustrator who provided the drawings for such authors as Eleanor Farjeon, Malcolm Saville and Frances Hodgson Burnett among many others, but his work is most closely associated with the books written for children by A.A. Milne and Kenneth Grahame.

Shepard illustrated Milne's collection of children's poems *When We Were Very Young* (1924), *Now We Are Six* (1927), *Winnie-the Pooh* (1926) and *The House at Pooh Corner* (1928), the last two for which, together with the song books that accompanied them, he provided the enduring pen-and-ink images of Pooh, Piglet and Eeyore. A few years later, Shepard was to show the same skilful interpretation of Grahame's texts as he had with Milne's.

Kenneth Grahame (1859–1932) wrote a collection of essays based on his own childhood, *Pagan Papers* (1893), and two very successful volumes of short stories, *The Golden Age* (1895), which included some of the essays from *Pagan Papers* with new ones added, and *Dream Days* (1898). Both volumes, which were evocations of childhood, although not written for children, were to be illustrated by Shepard in 1928 and 1930, respectively. After *Dream Days*, several years elapsed before the publication of *The Wind in the Willows* (1908), which had been created originally as a bedtime story for Grahame's son Alastair. It is interesting to note that Shepard felt that *The Wind in the Willows* did not need illustrations, and, indeed, Grahame's prose is rich in imagery. Who could forget, on the very first page, the author's description of Mole deserting his spring-cleaning and burrowing his way out of his dark little home and up into the welcoming sunlight (thus reflecting the part-longing of Grahame, committed to a secure position at the Bank of England, for the Bohemian life); or that strange, mystical chapter 'The Piper at the Gates of Dawn' that is so unlike the chapters that precede and follow it? Shepard did, however, feel that he could interpret Grahame's prose more successfully than other illustrators had before him and he succeeded admirably in producing the definitive images that can be seen on display at Nymans. As the exhibition tells us, Grahame described to Shepard the kinds of place that he imagined Ratty, Mole and Toad frequenting and the artist took his sketchbook out to various locations and drew them.

In some paperback editions of *The Wind in the Willows* much of Shepard's delicate line work has been all but lost, so it is a particular pleasure to see in the Nymans exhibition the quality of the artist's original so-familiar illustrations. There are, for instance, two versions of the picture in which Toad makes his escape from prison disguised as the washerwoman: one is a detailed working out in pencil, the other in pen and ink and colour wash. As the exhibition also tells us, Shepard had close connections with Nymans, having met the owners, Leonard and Maud Messel, through Maud's father, whom Shepard had met when he was an art student. Shepard visited Nymans several times to sketch and paint, and it is suggested that Toad Hall, which features in all its grandeur in the background of the picture in which Mole and Rat are canoeing on the river, is modelled on Nymans (sadly partly destroyed by fire in 1947). Both the pencil and coloured versions of this picture are also on display, as are the letters written by Shepard to Colonel Messel following each of his visits to Nymans.



The Wind in the Willows illustrated with Shepard's pen-and-ink drawings is available from public libraries and from bookshops, where a de-luxe edition with the drawings in colour can be obtained also. For those readers who are interested in finding out more about Shepard and his work, there are two volumes of memoirs, *Drawn From Memory* (1957), in which the artist writes about his Edwardian childhood in St. John's Wood, London, and includes pictures that he drew when he was aged seven and eight years old, and *Drawn From Life* (1961). While both titles are currently out of print, they can be obtained through public libraries, and inexpensive copies can sometimes be found in second-hand bookshops.

While Shepard did eventually grow tired of his Pooh drawings that had made him so famous, just as Grahame and Milne grew tired of the creations for children for which they were most renowned, one would like to think that he always maintained an affection for his work on *The Wind in the Willows* for which this exhibition is a small but very fitting tribute.

Websites

Nymans National Trust Property. www.nationaltrust.org.uk/nymans/.

Wind in the Willows at Nymans. www.nationaltrust.org.uk/nymans/things-to-see-and-do/article-1355780821763/.

Illustrations from The Wind in the Willows by Ernest Shepard.
www.kennethgrahamesociety.net/illustrators/ernestshepard.htm.

See www.wind-in-the-willows.com for information on E.H. Shepard.

For details of other artists and general information on Kenneth Grahame.
www.kennethgrahamesociety.net/index.htm

REVIEWS

Picture Books

Black Dog

Levi Pinfold, Dorking: Templar, pb. 978 1 8487 7748 4, £6.99, 2012, 32pp.

One morning, a black dog appears outside the Hope household. As each member of the family wakes up to the sight of this monstrous creature, it grows ever bigger in size. Only the youngest member of the Hope family, Small, is brave enough to confront the Black Dog. As it chases her through snowy forests, under bridges and amidst a playground, Small shows no fear and, with a jeering rhyme, challenges the beast in its pursuit: 'you can't follow where I go, unless you shrink, or don't you know?' In doing so, the dog becomes smaller and smaller as the little girl leads it back to her house. Inside, the Hope family wait, comically armed for battle with kitchen utensils, the dining table providing a barricade. However, they need no longer fear the Black Dog; having eventually returned to the size of a regular hound, it is welcomed into the family home.

Winner of the 2013 Kate Greenaway medal, Australian author and illustrator Levi Pinfold tells his story with beautiful, gothic illustrations. Throughout the book, the pictures depict an appealing strangeness akin to that seen in certain illustrations by Pinfold's Australian counterpart Shaun Tan. In one particularly striking spread, the Black Dog looms enormously over a tiny Small: 'What are you doing here, you guffin?' she asks, unafraid. Great thought has been given to in the images; those readers who look closely will notice parallel stories being played out in the background. Miniature sepia vignettes surrounding the text contribute further to the tale. This is an engaging, pacy and thought-provoking story about the nature of fear and the power of our imaginations.

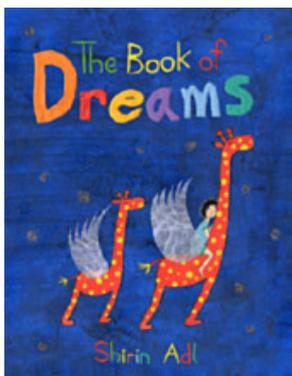
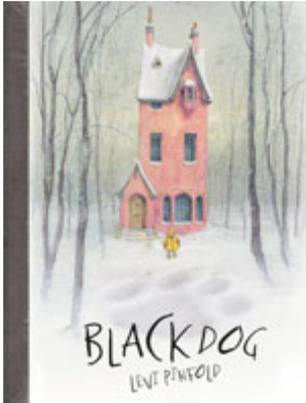
Kerenza Ghosh

The Book of Dreams

Shirin Adl, London: Frances Lincoln Children's Books/Janetta Otter Barry Books, hb. 978 1 8478 0383 2, £11.99, 2013, 32pp.

We all dream, some of us are more aware of this than others. When we dream, we are asleep, but, paradoxically, our experience is of being awake. Thoughts, fancies, images and emotions make up the content of dreams, but how they are configured is a mystery. They are evidence that we have an inner world, but one that we do not consciously order. Mankind has been fascinated by dreams throughout the ages and has recorded them in stories and countless other ways.

In this eye-catching book, Shirin Adl makes a delightful and accessible contribution to the subject of dreams. Using colour boldly she opens the door to those nocturnal imaginative adventures that dreams present us with which can seem perplexing and out of reach unless we are given an opportunity to recognise them as valid narratives that can be voiced. The title on the book cover stands out in bright colours on a background of midnight blue dotted with gold spirals. Two scarlet giraffes mottled with yellow spots and sprouting large gauzy wings drift across this starry sky. A small child, astride the leading giraffe, nestles into its neck; all have closed eyes. On the back cover a girl, her arms outstretched, seems to be sleep walking on an extended golden spiral suspended in the night sky. Above her head an invitation reads 'Would you like to ...?' Below this balancing act other phrases suggest that anything is possible when you dream.



Inside the book the invitation is confirmed. The end pages continue to depict the starry night sky, and there, far away as though seen through a telescope, there are small figures engaged in all sorts of activity along a heavenly highway. The pages then open up, in close up, to fantastical colourful scenarios and strange dimensions. The first double-page spread shows a boy, wrapped in a colourful blanket of knitted squares, peacefully sleeping on a green hillside. Three rudimentary colourful creatures inhabit this landscape. They could have come from his drawing book, like the trees in the background. Large, multi-coloured stars, perhaps from a star chart, embellish a sky that is a watery wash as though this might resemble the experience of the sleeper dissolving into a dream state. Wait! Above the sleeping boy there appears to be a large, closed eyelid, and is he asleep in the crook of a crocodile's leg? Every page presents new, and sometimes ambiguous, possibilities. A dark, scary dream scene is followed by an exciting fight with a monster. Children, who are perhaps the dreamers, fly, play under water and become small or large in contrast to their surroundings. Animals, fish and birds, some of which may come from the nursery toy cupboard, also give voice to their strange experiences.

The book concludes on a playful note, a reminder that 'dreams are toys'. First we climb up to bed, then, letting go, we slide into sleep and perhaps into dream. A safe passage through the night cannot be guaranteed; if not, comfort will be at hand. The reward of a good night's sleep may be a story to share in the morning. Shirin Adl's collage style gives a tangible dimension to an experience that at first may seem ungraspable to small children until the unimaginable becomes imagined with another.

Judith Philo

Persephone : A Journey from Winter to Spring

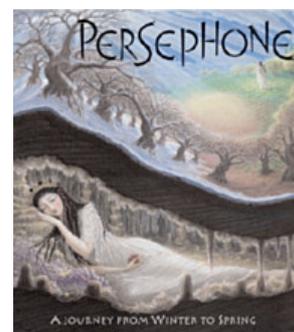
Sally Pomme Clayton, illus. Virginia Lee, London: Frances Lincoln Children's Books, pb. 978 1 8478 0422 8, £7.99, 2013, 32pp.

It is always satisfying to come across a carefully produced picture book in which the illustrations enhance and carry forward the narrative, especially when conveying an important ancient Greek myth like that of *Persephone: A Journey from Winter to Spring*.

Sally Pomme Clayton, the narrator, provides a dramatic, lively rendition, which is not surprising as she belongs to an acclaimed Company of Storytellers, performing, sharing and creating stories. The illustrator, Virginia Lee, specialises in portraying magical transformations. Right from the start, her endpapers convey the contrasting, colourful earth filled with spring flowers, where we first meet the heroine Persephone, and the dark, flowerless, rocks of the Underworld, where Hades reigns supreme. Both are separated by a vast, dull brown, layered, impenetrable wall. Throughout she pays attention to details with classical touches such as the hairstyles and costumes of pale-faced Persephone and her mother Demeter.

Lee vividly shows the sudden arrival of black-bearded Hades, pulled by four horses black as night, with his sable cloak furling behind him, suggesting speed, as they race along. The violence of the capture cannot be thwarted by the small water nymph whose dwelling is the pool into which the chariot, horses and Persephone hurtle down and down below. After the vibrant, beautiful bright greens of earth, the towering rocks, snakes and crawling creatures, hissing lakes and smouldering field of lava fill Persephone with dismay.

It is not long before Demeter seeks revenge and, wrapping her cloak about the earth, brings about a harsh winter and hunger so nothing grows. This desperate state causes Zeus to intervene and, once again, the artist dramatically depicts Hermes, his messenger, flying from the heavens to command Hades to release his new queen. How Hades reacts and why the seasons are as they are the tale reveals. The epilogue, which



adds valuable information about Greek festivals and practices associated with Demeter and Persephone to this day, is appropriately framed in classic columns, and so the cycle of life and death, nature and fertility is explained.

This is an attractive book for independent reading at 7–11, as well as for sharing with 5–7 year olds.

Susan Bailes

One Night, Far From Here

Julia Wauters, London: Flying Eye Books, hb. 978 1 9092 6302 4, £15.99, 2013, 36pp.

‘One night, in the ...’, so starts each sequence of this attractive interactive picture book. To the accompaniment of a simple text, the author–illustrator takes the reader around the world, looking at different habitats. In case this sounds too familiar, there is a refreshing surprise. Each section starts by introducing the nightlife of that area. Turning the page, one discovers it is an acetate overlay, and the sun rises to reveal more wildlife emerging from their surroundings. The day moves on, a further acetate brings the area to life, as animals and birds who have been there all the time, concealed by the undergrowth, emerge before your eyes. Nor is a teeming wild life the prerogative of exotic climes; as the final section reveals, it is all around us in our back gardens.

This is a lovely book that could be used with a wide range of ages, abilities and tastes; a book that could be savoured alone or shared one to one, or with a group. Magic.

Ferelith Hordon

Topsy Turvy World

Atak, London: Flying Eye Books, hb. 978 1 9092 6304 8, £11.99, 2013, 28pp.

Open the covers, and the image there sets the tone of this book – a mouse chases two terrified cats off the page. For this is a topsy-turvy world where nothing is as it should be. Here the business man is the beggar, the animals run the circus, the baby feeds his mother – the fun is in exploring the pictures to discover not just the obvious topsy turvy, but the anarchic details. There is no text, apart from Atak’s opening poem, which emphasises the theme of a world turned upside down. Instead, bold illustrations that burst out of the pages engage the reader with an energetic immediacy.

Atak (Georg Barber) is an established and well-known graphic artist in his native Germany. His style, reminiscent of Grosz and Ken Kiff, is characterised by bold colours, dramatic images and movement. This is not a book for those who will be offended by Atak’s almost vulgar, cartoon approach, but it will delight a wide range of young people, confounding their expectations of what a picture book can be, encouraging discussion and subtly developing visual literacy. This would be a welcome addition to any bookshelf.

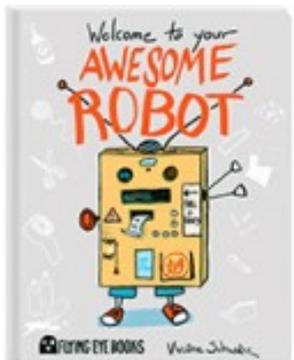
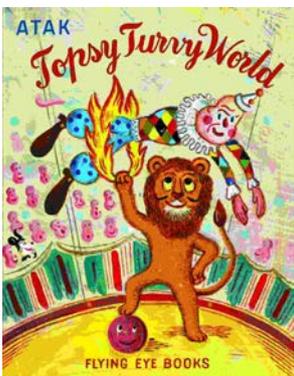
Ferelith Hordon

Welcome to your Awesome Robot

Viviane Schwarz, London: Flying Eye Books, pb. 978 1 9092 6300 0, £8.99, 2013, 32pp.

Picture books should be for the youngest – easy bedtime stories? Maybe not. This title is not.

A box arrives – an empty box. Should this be a disappointment? Far from it. As any parent knows, it is not the present that is the best gift, it is the packing. Here is the template and full-instruction manual for transforming that empty box into a fully functional robot – and what fun there is to be had on the way.



Viviane Schwarz has already established a reputation for playfulness with *There are Cats in this Book* and its sequel. This reputation is not diminished by this title. Combining a comic-style narrative, in which we see the mother and daughter ‘playing’ together, with practical instructions (complete with safety warnings) that will allow the reader to also build a robot, Schwarz brings us a picture book that is both fun and instructional. Bold text, a simplified colour scheme and the artist’s trademark graphic style will also ensure that this book crosses many boundaries, providing a playful activity for the whole family – or maybe a class. Look no further for the Christmas present of the year.

Ferelith Hordon

Wild

Emily Hughes, London: Flying Eye Books, hb. 978 1 9092 6308 6, £11.99, 2013, 32pp.

Wild eyed with wonder, a small naked girl stares out from the cover of this picture book, the pupils of her eyes wide and luminous. Turn to the title page and the same child looks grim and cross, her hair trussed into a topknot, a hint of restrictive clothing below her chin.

Thus begins this tale of nature versus nurture, of a child brought up by animals, like Mowgli in *The Jungle Book* and the Wild Boy of Aveyron. Following a blissful early childhood, where she is depicted being taught to speak by a chorus of birds, catch fish to eat by a bear and her cubs, and play roughly by foxes, spinning in a whirl of snapping jaws, the unnamed child is discovered in the forest by ‘some new animals’. These miserable creatures take her home and try to force her into their accustomed way of doing things. A newspaper headline indicates that she has been taken in by a psychiatrist and that she is considered to be a feral child. Her unhappiness eventually explodes and she returns to her former serene life, taking with her the family’s cat and dog.

The text is minimal – spare, yet subtle, and the pictures speak volumes. For one picture the caption simply reads ‘They spoke wrong.’ The carefully composed illustration depicts the child crouched in an enormously tall chair while the man points at pictures and records her speech via an old-fashioned gramophone, suggestive of Professor Higgins bullying Eliza Doolittle into ‘speaking proper’.

I look forward to sharing this picture book with a wide age range of children, all of whom will enjoy the anarchic pictures and who will understand its message at a variety of levels.

Ann Lazim

Hot Air

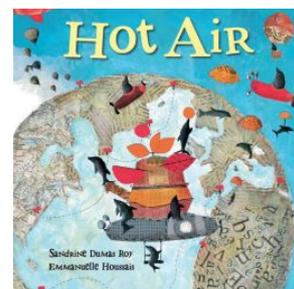
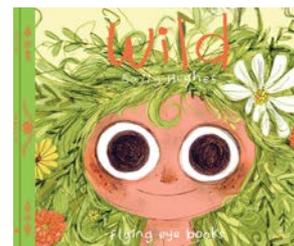
Sandrine Dumas Roy, illus. Emanuelle Houssais, trans. Sarah Ardizzone, London: Pheonix Yard, pb. 978 1 9079 1222 1, £7.99, 2013, 34pp.

This picture book tackles the environmental theme of global warming and especially excess gas produced by grazing cattle. Children love a joke about farts and this book offers an extended opportunity with more visual and verbal puns than belly laughs.

The basic message is simply put:

The sun is getting too hot and there’s
no getting away from it. We’re gasping
for air and there’s not enough rain.

and looked at from the animals point of view, though with a measure of anthropomorphism:



So the animals decided to hold a conference with the title
'What's wrong with the weather?'

The world of the animals communally addresses the problem. After many suggestions they come up with a solution to fit 'cowtalytic converters' to the cows to send their gas to a processing plant which will refreeze the rapidly melting ice – but is it too late? The illustrations, bursting with life and colour, are collage and mixed media with expressive use of text layout, and lettering in different typefaces. Imaginative and detailed contraptions to deal with the changing climate will bear close scrutiny, and whimsical depictions of animals using bizarre modes of transport such as dolphins in hot-air balloons and cows on skis, reinforce the environmental message.

The message of concern is tempered with humour and the optimism of a practical solution, but ultimately it is clear that more needs to be done and readers are invited to come up with their own ideas.

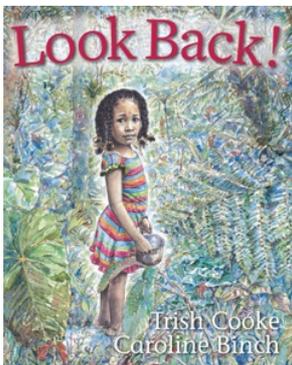
Julie Mills

Look Back!

Trish Cooke, illus. Caroline Binch, London: Papillote Press, pb. 978 0 9571 1872 0, £6.99, 2013, 32pp.

A young girl looks anxiously back at us from the cover of this absorbing picture book. At the endpapers we peer into the rainforest that she's walking through – what can be lurking there?

In this book, from a publisher specialising in books about Dominica (www.papillotepress.co.uk), Grannie tells Christopher a scary tale about her Caribbean childhood and her attempts to trap the mysterious Ti Bolom, a creature who follows children at night but can never be seen. Christopher, in his own very different environment, then tries to catch Ti Bolom himself. He can hear Ti Bolom's footsteps behind him, but who or what is he, and does he really exist?



The relationship between Grannie and Christopher is beautifully portrayed by author and illustrator, both former award winners. It is a lovely book for sharing and reading aloud, with sound effects and repetition for teller and listener to enjoy. The traditional storytelling device is repeated throughout:

'Eh Kwik!' Grannie called.

'Eh Kwak!' Christopher answered.

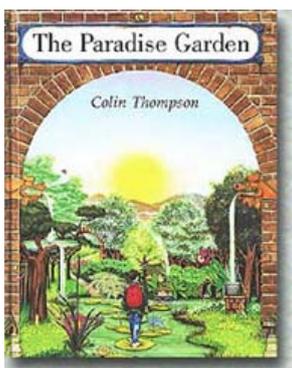
Thus reassuring the reader or listener that, though scary, this is 'just' a story.

Sue Mansfield

The Paradise Garden

Colin Thompson, Australia: Random House, pb, 978 1 7416 6419 5, AU\$17.95, 2010, 32pp. [Originally published London: Jonathan Cape, 1998. Available on amazon.co.uk.]

Peter, a young boy, is beleaguered by the continuous abrasive noises in his own home and on the surrounding city streets. He longs for a peaceful time, and a place where he may relax and be free from a harsh reality. It is clear that Peter is a neglected child, struggling to manage with the turmoil of his parents' divorce. Being unable to cope, he escapes to spend his summer in the city park. There, he swims with giant goldfish in lotus-filled ponds, picks bananas and exotic fruits to eat, and collects seeds and trinkets. He has time and space also to think about his sister, his friends and his parents. When winter arrives the boy must finally go home. Though the situation between Peter's parents is unresolved, the story's ending is satisfying and not over-



sentimental: having returned home, Peter plants the seeds he has collected to grow his own paradise garden that he can retreat to whenever he wishes.

Matters worthy of attention are presented subtly in this story: ideas about what makes for happiness, about emotional abuse and the healing powers of nature, about noise pollution and about the psychological impacts of life in a busy city. Thompson's dense illustrative style offers vivid insight into the child's experience and emotions, and with each reading, details that filter into the reader's subconscious become clearer: the boy's eyes are downcast, his smile strained; this is the face of a child who is isolated and has had to grow up too quickly, but the burst of colour that surrounds him provides a way in to paradise and hope.

Peter's story is complex, simultaneously happy and heart breaking, as reflected by the illustrations that, in turn, feature the beauty and the grotesque within nature and life. The pictures present that which is surreal and Thompson plays with size and perspective: one object is made to look like another; birds and butterflies appear enormously over small people. Readers who have visited Kew Gardens in London will recognise references to the Palm House and the Pagoda. Thompson presents a treasure trove of plants, flowers, birds, beasts, random objects and miniature homes, inviting the reader to look closely and explore the wonders of Peter's garden alongside him.

Kerenza Ghosh

Novels and Tales

Black Sheep

Na'ima B. Robert, London: Frances Lincoln, pb. 978 1 8478 0235 4, £6.99, 2013, 272pp.

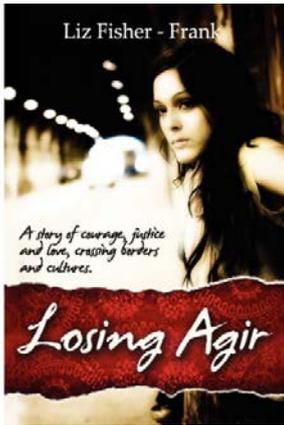
Robert's hallmark as a writer is her ability to capture and explore a variety of experiences of inner-city life. She consults with young readers to ensure that she uses the correct vocabulary and speech, which authenticates her writing but does mean the books risk dating quickly.

In this book she explores the conflicts between the aspirations of three families: the middle-class ambitions of a 16-year-old black student Misha and her mother, her Rasta stepfather and his new family, and her black boyfriend Dwayne, who is part of the gang on his estate and trying to escape its criminal tentacles. The tensions of the situation are well explored in a fast-paced gripping story, with the experience of gang life particularly well described.

Robert takes on a number of big issues in this book and as a result it is not her strongest, speaking as a committed fan of her work, particularly because the characters are not well developed and there is too much stereotypical comment. The appeal of Islam for young black men (who have been raised in a strong Christian community) is an interesting twist to the story and one that I hope she will develop more, and with a rather more critical standpoint, in future books. Nevertheless, I am sure that this book will be popular amongst young adult readers.

Pam Dix





Losing Agir

Liz Fisher-Frank, Live It Publishing, pb. 978 1 9069 5468 0, £9.99, 2012, 198pp.

In this gripping debut novel, human-rights lawyer Liz Fisher-Frank uses her insights and firsthand experiences to portray the lives of two teenagers from different cultures. Alice Chambers, 15, and Agir, 16, have both suffered significant loss and trauma. Both find themselves, quite unexpectedly, sharing the same foster home with Tom and Glenda Martin at No 37, Jupiter Mansions.

The novel begins violently with Agir's vivid perceptions during an early morning February attack by Turkish soldiers on the mountain village of Ormanici. Agir and his family are Kurds. Unfortunately he is swept along and arrested with his father and all the men, leaving his mother, younger brother and sister behind. The author states that 'Although Agir and his family are fictional, the events described in my book about the morning raid all stem from the facts of the case.' As in Elizabeth Laird's powerful *Kiss the Dust*, about Kurdistan, this novel is concerned with the ethnic minority seeking its own state. We learn from Agir later that the men suffered torture at the hands of the Turks, who forced false confessions out of them stating that they were involved with the PKK, the Kurdish rebel group. Agir's father managed to escape and Agir was left alone. His fluency in English, as he had been educated by his father, a translator, means that he manages to escape to England.

In England, the overstretched social worker, Frances, has at last found a suitable home for Alice who is in care having lost her parents, and separated from her younger 12-year-old brother Billy. It is not until nearly the end of the novel that Alice tells her harrowing tale to Agir. Deftly the writer depicts foster-father Tom Martin as a despicable man who treats his wife 'like a dog'. It is directly as a result of Alice and Agir's courage that his wife Glenda feels empowered to tell the truth in court and so breaks away from him and also from her dependence on tranquillisers.

Throughout the twists and turns of the plot, the relationship between Alice and Agir develops into one of respect and love. Their bravery is inspirational. Finally the book provides the reader, 11 year olds and upwards, with references for useful factual information concerning refugees, asylum seekers and children in care, as well as citing human rights and the case of Ahmet Ozcan v. Turkey.

Susan Bailes

SOS Lusitania

Kevin Kiely, Dublin: O'Brien Press, pb. 978 1 8478 0172 3, £6.99, 2013 256pp.

The accomplished Kevin Kiely, Irish poet, novelist, playwright and literary critic, provides us with a powerfully descriptive, firsthand account through the eyes of 13-year-old Queenstown boy Finbar Kennedy, whose father Jack is sea captain on the liner the *Lusitania*. Following a premonition, a nightmare in which the great liner sinks, Finbar resolves to protect his father by running away to sea.

After carrying luggage onboard for a wealthy passenger, Baroness von Leiditz, Finbar is forced to hide away to avoid being seen by his father, and finds himself overhearing an intriguing conversation between Aleister Crowley and the Baroness. In return for the acquisition of the German Navy's secret codebook, Crowley will ensure that the Baroness will be given two million pounds in gold, along with access to weaponry, and so improve her family's position with the Kaiser. Unfortunately Finbar is discovered, but he escapes niftily and finds himself in the cargo hold of the liner where he becomes trapped for some time. The vivid detail conveys his fear of rats and need for water, licking the moisture off the walls. Understandably he becomes ill and, once discovered, is taken to see his father to prove his identity. Suffering from pneumonia, Finbar's attempts to warn the nurse and doctor are interpreted as delirious ranting;



nevertheless, his father sensibly checks to see if the boy's account of the weapons and codebook has any element of truth in it.

It is not long before the engines cease and the passengers disembark in New York where the buildings 'scrape the sky'. Sure enough, the spy, Mr Crowley, is not to be trusted and Finbar is in danger. Prior to the return voyage Finbar reads in *The New York Times* 1 May 1915 of a deadly warning by the Germans to those returning to Ireland as the liner will find itself in a war zone and will be fired upon.

Employed as a deckhand and messenger between the bridge and Marconi room, Finbar is well placed to learn of important news. He also makes friends with a wealthy American family and the lovely Penny Mayberry. Kiely provides details that support a possible conspiracy theory as the liner has an unusual cargo which our hero discovers. Also the captain of the *Lusitania* is mysteriously ordered to reduce speed, which places it in great danger as a German U-boat lurks off the coast of Ireland. Kapitan Schweiger, anxious to earn an Iron Cross, attacks, with devastating results as history records. Finbar is separated from his father and we are kept in suspense right up until the end as to their fate.

All in all this is an excellent read and the ingredients of the First World War, stowaway, spies and gold make it stranger than fiction.

Susan Bailes

The Unforgotten Coat

Frank Cottrell Boyce, photog. Carl Hunter and Clare Heaney, London: Walker Books, pb. 978 1 4063 4154 6, £7.99, 2012, 112pp. [First published 2011, hb.]

I don't read many children's books nowadays, as my own children are teenagers. However, the mark of a good children's book is its ability to engage adults too!

The Unforgotten Coat grabs your attention from the start: an intriguing title, a good cover picture and clear print to read with children – set out as if written in a school exercise book. And then there are the photographs, the first one before page one! I was hooked and longing to know more about the characters and landscapes in the photographs, which all turn out to be rather misleading in the end!

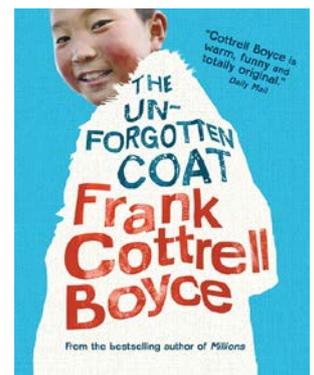
The story is told by Julie, a schoolgirl, and is the tale of two Mongolian refugee boys who turn up in her Bootle school class. They nominate Julie as their 'Good Guide' – a responsibility she takes seriously, showing the boys all there is to see in her school and community. The relationships between the children are well described, but the portrayal of children's acceptance of outsiders and their thirst for knowledge is superb.

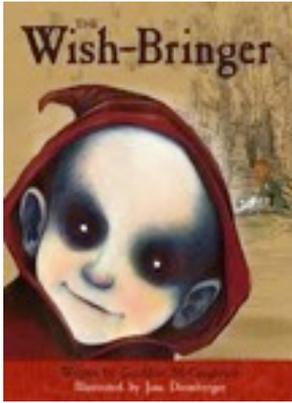
Mongolia is outside the world of this Bootle school before the arrival of Chingis and Nergui, but the children soon find out for themselves the customs, culture and geography of this far-off land. They are encouraged in their desire to learn more by Chingis and Nergui, who add a little fabrication and embellishment!

Whilst taking her 'Good Guide' duties so seriously, Julie becomes aware that all is not as it seems, and Frank Cottrell Boyce clearly shows the ability children have to pick up on adult emotions, in this case, fear. I thoroughly enjoyed this book, and without giving away the ending, the story finishes with Julie in her adulthood returning to her primary school prior to demolition.

The author's notes reveal that the storyline was based loosely on an experience at his first author visit. The story is extraordinary, which with this knowledge made it even more enjoyable. I am looking forward to rereading *The Unforgotten Coat* with my daughter!

Rachel Underwood





The Wish-Bringer

Geraldine McCaughrean, illus. Jana Diemberger, London: Phoenix Yard Books, pb. 978 1 9079 1206 1, £7.99, 2012, 56pp.

The suggested age for this book is 8–10, but I find it very hard to categorise. The book lay in front of me at an IBBY UK committee meeting and I found the cover illustration so disturbing that I had to put a piece of paper over it. The eyes are very haunting. The double-page illustration between the title and imprint pages (repeated as end matter) is very dark and shows cats in an underworld of caves and stairs but strangely showing candles and an altar in the foreground and a cross at the top of a staircase. A world under what? A city, Naples, revealed as I started to read the text. The text starts at Chapter 2 and states ‘You can’t have a story without a beginning’, to tell us that Marcello doesn’t know his beginning as he ‘turned up one day on a doorstep, a baby packed in a crate of straw.’

The book is the second in a trilogy about ugly little Marcello, dressed as a monk, living under the city with some cats (who take a partisan stance) and a fellow street child, Napolina. He has two caps. With his black cap on he is ‘pesky little trickster’. With his red cap on he is impelled to grant any requested wish. Napolina is constantly taking away his black cap and putting it in the wash to force Marcello to ‘Find someone to be nice to’.

The language of the book is unusual, not exactly folktale style but certainly stylised. Each chapter is a story of Marcello’s activities in either of his caps, with links between the chapters but only tentative. One link is the Frezza brothers who hate Marcello as he hates, and fears, them. Their part in the story of Marcello is important. The book ends abruptly so I suppose the reader has to wait for the final book of the trilogy to find out about Marcello’s birth, although he does learn in this book a little about his father. The stories are based on the Neapolitan folktale of Munaciello. The author learned of it on visit to Naples.

To give an example of one of the stories. A poor boy shouts to Marcello ‘I want to be the Duke of Naples’ and because Marcello is bearing his red cap, he cannot ignore the wish. So the Duchess wakes up to find a smelly Avido in bed with her as her new husband and instantly hides in the closet, while the old Duke finds himself in Avido’s bed alongside Avido’s wife, who comments ‘You’re better than Avido, and you smell lovely’. The mishap is resolved by the old Duke eventually throwing Avido into his fishing lake. Did he survive? An enigma.

I was a little lost in the story of the lovelorn couple, Roberto and Rosetta, whom Marcello helps elope and to deliver Rosetta from the claims of Fippo Freeza. In a moment of euphoria, Marcello throw both caps in the air and they are caught by Fippo. When Fippo finds that Rosetta has escaped with Roberto, he takes his revenge on Marcello with a terrible wish. The text says ‘And what could he do, the little Wish-Bringer, but grant Fippo’s wish.’ But he does not have on his red cap?

The text ends in mid-air with Marcello in a very worrying place and state. The last pages of the book remind the reader about Book 1 ‘It began with a knock at the door and no one there ...’ and then gives a trailer of Book 3: ‘But is he brave enough for the truth? In the meantime, Naples goes on peeping through its shutters, heart thumping, watching for Moncello, the Good-Luck-Bad-Luck boy.’

The illustrations set the atmosphere well and often frame or creep between the text. The font is clear and the lines are well spaced for a young reader as well as for an adult reading to a child. Although a paperback the internal pages are glossy and give a good feel when reading. A dark but humorous book with a macabre cliffhanger that could frighten a nervous reader.

Jennifer Harding

The Naming of Tishkin Silk

Glenda Millard, illus. Caroline Magerl: London: Phoenix Yard Books, pb. 978 1 9079 1224 5, £5.99, 2013, 95pp.

Griffin Silk is a small boy whose name conjures majestic associations with eagles and lions. He has an unusual birthday, 29 February, and his father has predicted that 'he would be an uncommon sort of boy. Precipitated into starting school because his mother is not well enough to teach him as she has done his older sisters, Griffin regrets his 'uncommonness', feeling it to be a burden and the cause of his present discomfort. Names carry a depth of meaning in Griffin's family. The names of his five older sisters echo the colours of the rainbow: Scarlet, Indigo, Violet, Amber and Saffron. A pet crow, rescued as a fledgling, is called Zeus. Griffin's beloved dog, the runt of the litter and who is deaf, is named Blue.

Griffin's father values a quality he calls 'cogitation', thoughtfulness, and it is this capacity that enables Griffin to manage a difficult first day at school. Challenged by bullies about his family, his name and the suggestion that he is a baby, Griffin holds his own, earning the respect of some of his tormentors; his final words to them are that his absent mother will soon return home with his baby sister. Paradoxically, by surviving this adversity, Griffin's sensibilities are awakened to the reality of what he and his family are presently experiencing but not openly facing, the absence of their mother and the newborn baby sister. Retreating to the shade of an elm tree and soothed by the feel of the spring breeze and the sound of rustling leaves, Griffin quietly says the word Tishkin, a name that has silently occupied his mind for a long time, and whose significance the reader will understand later.

Starting school turns out not to be such a difficult experience for Griffin. He finds a new friend, Layla, there. In their imaginative play together they share moments of 'magic' and the bonds of trust and friendship between them deepen. As Griffin rediscovers that experience of unspoken understanding that exists between those people you are close to, he begins to engage with the changes and uncertainties in his life, and finds the courage to explore and share feelings and thoughts that haunt him. With Layla's encouragement, Griffin requests an early celebration of his birthday, sending a special invitation to his mother, who at last returns home. We learn that the chosen day, 27 February, would have been the first birthday of the baby who died inexplicably and who has remained unnamed as the family became consumed in their grief. It is Griffin who ceremoniously names her Tishkin Silk, and in doing so brings her into the life of the family.

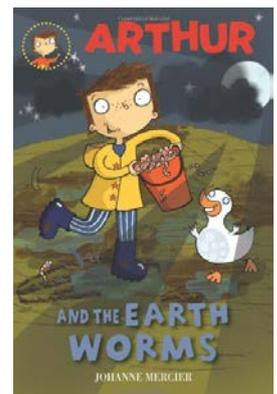
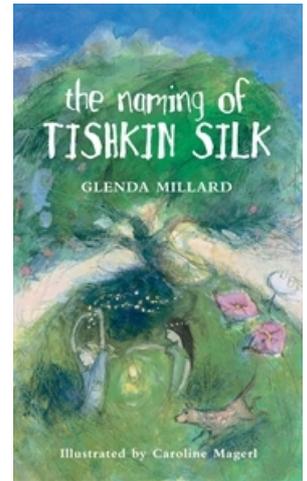
This is a lyrical and tender novel that sensitively explores the impact of grief on a family through the experience of its youngest member, who, in the course of a new and rewarding friendship, discovers reserves within himself that facilitate the family healing. Suitable for 8–12 year olds.

Judith Philo

Arthur and the Earthworms

Johanne Mercier, illus. Clare Elsom, trans. Daniel Hahn, London: Phoenix Yard, pb. 978 1 9079 1217 7, £4.99, 2013, 44pp.

This is one of six titles for newly independent readers, originally published in Quebec and translated from French by Daniel Hahn, with new illustrations by Clare Elsom. Arthur is a curious and enterprising 7 year old with a Grandad who is more than happy to give him support in his adventures and, sometimes, as in this story, act as their instigator. Here, Grandad suggests that, with a small surfeit of worms that Arthur has collected for his pet duck, Arthur should set himself up as a worm salesperson to passing anglers. It's not a thriving trade, but then Arthur gets a staggering order for 450 earthworms, leading to an early morning assault by all the family on the



neighbourhood's gardens. It's a gentle story that relies on the humour of relationships and odd situations. It takes place just over the border in comic fantasy, and the pared-down undemonstrative prose, well served by the translation, is complemented by Clare Elsom's wacky cartooning, where Arthur's big eyes express his perpetual wonder and excitement at the world, and his pet duck (unnamed throughout the story) looks as if a plastic duck has luckily found some feet and escaped the bathroom.

Clive Barnes

Poetry

Here Come the Creatures

Wes Magee, illus. Lorna Scobie, London: Frances Lincoln Children's Books/Janetta Otter-Barry Books, pb. 978 1 8478 036 2, £6.99, 2013, 96pp.

This is one of the four books published annually in May and August by Janetta Otter-Barry's low-priced poetry series, now in its third year. Each year the series publish one book by a new or less well known or neglected author. I assume that Wes Magee is considered an unfairly neglected poet.

I met Wes Magee's poetry when Emily Roach gave a workshop at the 2011 IBBY UK/NCRCL MA annual conference, that year on poetry. Her topic was death and dying and she gave an analysis of Wes Magee's 'Until Gran Died' from *Morning Break and Other Poems*, which I now possess. After each situation is described, there is the verse:

I thought
I could deal with funeral
that is until Gran died.

A heart-rending poem of a child mourning.

The book under review was therefore a shock. It is described by the publisher as:

A brilliant, varied collection of poems for very young children, suitable for early years and Key Stage One [4–8 year olds]. Funny, sad, silly, sing-along, the poems are about friends and families, pets and creatures, school, space travel – and more. There is something for everyone in this collection – with lots of action and joining in.

So these poems are for young children and are fun, with an emphasis on the everyday seen through the eyes of a child. I would not describe any of the poems as sad, except perhaps 'Gran's Old Diary' where a child finds a diary in the attic, with the suggestion that Gran is no longer alive so there is a hint of sadness.

The black-and-white illustrations are really part of the text and are excellent, giving added weight to the poems. The design of each poem is also telling:

In autumn
the trees wave in the wind
and the leaves come tumbling
down
down
down.

(from 'Autumn Leaves')

To indicate the variety of poems, here are some titles:

Stroke the Cat	Amy and her Harp
Kiss Chase	Bounce a Ball
The Digging Song	Odd Socks in the Morning
Going to Gran's	Mad March Hare

One Day?
My Teachers

Books at Bedtime
In Creepy Castle

The what I suppose is now a requirement to be 'inclusive' felt a little too obvious. For example, the names in 'The Skipping Line' are Sarah, Sam, Ahmed, Pam, Precious, Dee and Leroy, with another poem including Faz, Guljit, Jeeta and Hanna. There are poems on the Muslim festival of Eid, one of the Hindu festival of Diwali and one entitled 'Questions on Christmas Eve'. Here is a quotation from the last mentioned poem:

But... how can his reindeer fly without wings?
Jets on their hooves? That's plain cheating!
And... how can he climb down the chimney pot
when we've got central heating?

Both the stated age group and everyone above that age will enjoy these poems. And will be stunned by the imaginative fulfilment of each poem by its illustrations.

Jennifer Harding

Information Books

Beatrice's Dream: Life in an African Slum

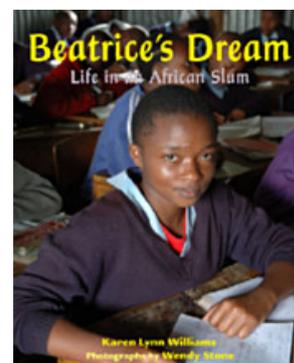
Karen Lynn Williams, photog. Wendy Stone, London: Frances Lincoln Children's Books, pb. 978 1 8478 0418 1, £7.99, 2013, 32pp.

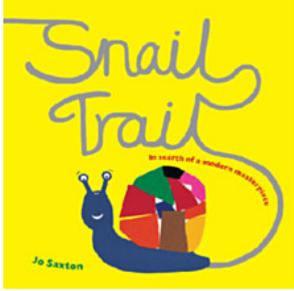
A 13-year-old orphan, Beatrice, gives her account of her daily life in a Kenyan shantytown in Kibera, Nairobi. The whole town is one of the biggest slums in Africa, built totally on rubbish and refuse and covering 2.5 square kilometres, with over half a million people living there. She is living with her oldest brother and his wife, and attends a school built of tin, a half hour away. She walks there whatever the weather, whether it is through mud in the pouring rain, or with dust blowing in her eyes and teeth in the dry season. She is very proud of her education and being in Class Seven. Each day they eat *githeri*, a mix of beans and maize. Part of their curriculum includes HIV and AIDS as this is a serious problem in Kibera, with many people affected by the virus.

We learn there is no electricity – instead they use a paraffin light. She loves going to school on Saturdays and relaxing in the library. Her dream is to be able to go on to secondary school and become a nurse. Beatrice goes to a youth centre, where, like other children, she is trying to put together a book about her family with the support of a community volunteer. She feels confident at school, where she is not alone and feels safe.

The strength of this informative book is the sensitive combination of a real young person's experiences and the vivid photographs showing the harsh realities of life for deprived people. What is most striking is Beatrice's optimism despite the many hardships she has to cope with. We learn that by the time this book was completed, Beatrice has successfully moved on to study at a girls' boarding school in Nairobi. Such determination and attitude provides an excellent role model for the reader. It is also encouraging that the Kenyan government has begun a programme to build new homes in Kibera so that thousands of people in the slum have better living conditions.

Susan Bailes





Snail Trail

Jo Saxton, London: Frances Lincoln, pb. 978 1 8478 0423 5, £6.99, 2013, 32pp.

With the help of a friendly snail, bearing a bright Matisse style collaged shell, the viewer is invited to help search for snail's favourite painting, which just happens to be his very own 'snail portrait' by Henri Matisse. As we follow snail's broad silvery trail, he slides through eight modern masterpieces, each encounter providing an insight into the artist's work and revealing something about the painting. The book references eight key modern artists – including Dali, Pollock, Rothko and Picasso, but, disappointingly, no women.

Art-loving snail comments on each picture, 'far too hot ... drips as well as drops, ... too black ... too blue!' The light-hearted rhyming text is fun to read out loud, and finger following the meandering snail trail through to the end is irresistible. If the snail's trail had been lightly embossed it would open up the fun for visually impaired children too. We reach the last picture, Matisse's *The Snail (L'Escargot)*, with a resounding shout of recognition from snail: 'Hooray! ... ME!'

The book is well designed – the generous white backgrounds enhance each masterpiece, allowing us the visual space to really look and linger over each one. There's a lovely final description of how Matisse made his 'Snail' collage (he called it 'painting with scissors'): it would inspire anyone to have a go.

The author, Jo Saxton, is a professional art historian, and an expert in art and education for school-age children, and her expertise is clear to see. It's a charming and inventive way of introducing modern art to very young children – lightly mixing historical fact with an endearing fictitious snail.

Carol Thompson

AWARDS AND COMPETITIONS

CILIP Carnegie and Kate Greenaway Medals 2013

Titles must have been first published in the UK between 1 September 2011 and 31 August 2012. Books first published in another country must have been co-published in the UK within three months of the original publication date.

CILIP again ran a shadowing scheme for both medals, engaging thousands of children and young people in reading the books on the shortlist. The shortlist was announced on 19 March 2013 (see *IBBYLink* 37). The winners were announced on 19 June 2013 at a ceremony in London. Karen Robinson was chair of the judging panel for 2013 and is Youth Libraries Group (YLG) chair elect.

Both winning books are tales of triumph over terror. In Gardner's *Maggot Moon*, the unlikely young hero Standish who, like his creator, is dyslexic, stands up to a sinister dictatorship whilst friends and family around him 'disappear'. Pinfold's *Black Dog* (reviewed in this issue of *IBBYLink*) sees a little girl called Small Hope facing fear head-on in the form of a monstrous giant black dog. Both Gardner and Pinfold are entering the children's books hall of fame as first-time winners of the coveted golden medals. They each receive £500 worth of books to donate to their local library. Pinfold is also awarded the £5,000 Colin Mears Award cash prize.

However, this year the shadowers did not agree with the judges and chose Sarah Crossan's *The Weight of Water* for their favourite for the Carnegie, and Chris Mould's *Pirates 'N' Pistols* for their favourite for the Kate Greenaway.

Carnegie Medal

Sally Gardner (2012) *Maggot Moon*, Hot Key Books (11+)

A ruthless regime is determined to beat its enemies in a race to the moon. But when his best friend Hector is suddenly taken away, it is up to unlikely hero Standish, his grandfather and a small band of rebels to confront and defeat the ever-present oppressive forces of the Motherland.

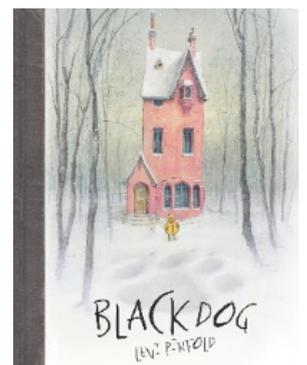
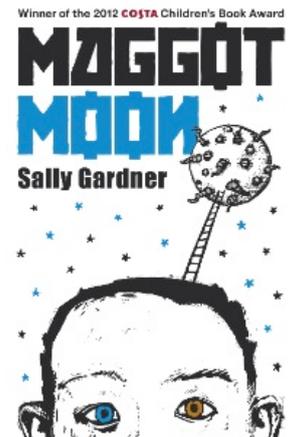
Kate Greenaway Medal

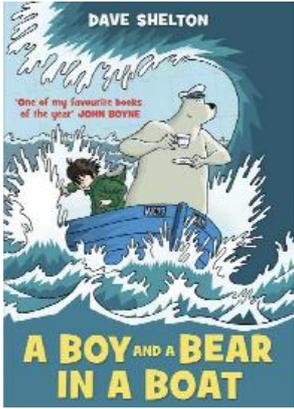
Levi Pinfold (2011) *Black Dog*, Dorking: Templar Publishing (5+)

A black dog appears outside the Hope family's home. As each member of the household sees it and hides, the dog grows bigger. Only Small, the youngest Hope, has the courage to face the Black Dog. When it chases her through the forest she shows no fear, so it grows smaller and smaller. Finally, back to the size of a normal hound, the Black Dog is welcomed into the Hope household as their newest addition.

Website: www.carnegiegreenaway.org.uk/home/. Shadowing website: www.carnegiegreenaway.org.uk/shadowingsite/.

For further information, contact Anwen Hooson at Riot Communications: anwen@riotcommunications.com, or Liz Hyder: liz@riotcommunications.com.





Branford Boase Award 2013

The BBA was set up to reward the most promising new writers and their editors, as well as to reward excellence in writing and in publishing. The award is made annually to the most promising book for seven year olds and upwards by a first-time novelist.

Dave Shelton and his editor David Fickling have won the 2013 Branford Boase Award for *A Boy and a Bear in a Boat* published by David Fickling Books in 2012.

Lydia Syson and her editor Sarah Odedina were Highly Commended for *A World Between Us*, published by Hot Key Books, the first time since 2004 that a book has been highlighted in this way, and proof of the strength and depth of the 2013 shortlist.

A Boy and a Bear in a Boat is the story of a boy and a bear who go to sea together, equipped with a suitcase, a comic book and a ukulele. Their journey doesn't quite go to plan. Surprises include storms, sponges and a starring role for a disgusting (possibly radioactive) sandwich.



A World Between Us is set in Spain in 1936. Felix, a spirited young nurse, has travelled to Spain to help the cause of the Republicans in the Spanish Civil War. But she is also following Nat, a passionate young man who has joined the International Brigades fighting Franco. And George – familiar George from home – is not far behind, in pursuit of Felix. As Spain fights for its freedom against tyranny, Felix battles a conflict of the heart.

The Branford Boase Award is the only award to recognise the role of the editor in nurturing new talent. This is David Fickling's third win and he has now won the award more times than any other editor.

Chair of the judges was Julia Eccleshare, children's literature expert and children's books editor of *The Guardian*.

Young Muslim Writers Awards 2013

The project, organised by the charity Muslim Hands and in association with the Yusuf Islam Foundation, aims to improve child literacy in the UK. Awards are given in each Key Stage 1–4 for the best short story and for the best poetry. A Writer of the Year is then chosen from the winners of each award.

The 3rd Young Muslim Writers Awards (YMWA) ceremony celebrated the winners of the 2013 competition on Tuesday 2 July at Senate House, University of London.

The afternoon ceremony opened with a recitation from the Quran by Hafiz Sufyan, followed by a traditional storytelling performance by Abas Eljanabi. Performance poet Dreadlockalien took the stage in an interactive freestyle performance, using the names of this year's winners to create one of his poems.

The 2013 Writer of the Year is Huda Emeraan, the winner of the Key Stage 2 (7–11) Poetry section. Her poem is 'Golden Glint'.

The United Kingdom Literacy Association Book Award Winners 2013

The UKLA book awards are the only awards judged entirely by teachers. This year they recognise three UK debut authors. This trio beat off competition from established international bestsellers and medal winners to take the top prizes. The winners for the book categories 3 to 6, 7 to 11 and 12 to 16 years were announced at the UKLA International Conference at Liverpool Hope University on 5 July 2013.



3 to 6 years

Good Little Wolf by Nadia Shireen, Jonathan Cape, 2011.

In this picture book the illustration and the language work together flawlessly to guide the young reader through the story. *Good Little Wolf* takes key emblems from folklore and then subverts them in a glorious final twist. Utterly unsentimental, it has originality, wit and the power to hook young readers.

7 to 11 years

The Weight of Water by Sarah Crossan, Bloomsbury, 2012.

This is a well-crafted tale of Kasienska and her mother, who come to England to search for her father. The story takes the reader on an unforgettable journey through the difficulties and pleasures of becoming part of a new and often harsh society. *The Weight of Water* is a powerfully emotional and beautifully rich poetic text, filled with issues demanding to be shared and discussed, and accessible to children about to make their own transition to secondary school

12 to 16 years

Code Name Verity by Elizabeth Wein, Electric Monkey, 2012.

The author makes her UK debut with a story of two young women in the Second World War. It is a story that does not flinch from the brutality of torture and interrogation, but it includes moments of wry humour that both lighten the tone and bring the characters vividly to life. It is written in the first person with a clever interweaving of narrative, recollection and characterisation that twists and turns in intriguing ways, keeping the reader guessing throughout.

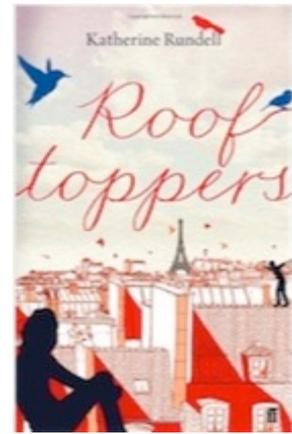
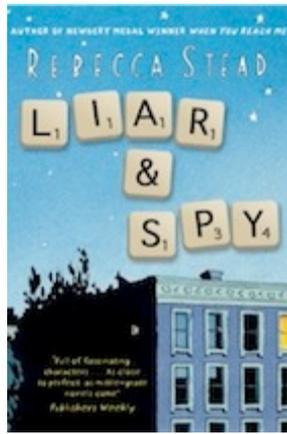
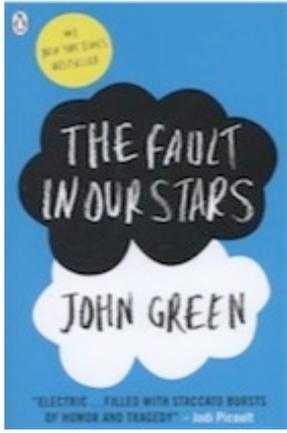
The Guardian Children's Fiction Prize 2013

The shortlist was announced in the newspaper on 12 August 2013.

www.theguardian.com/books/2013/aug/11/guardian-childrens-fiction-prize-2013-shortlist.

The shortlist takes a transatlantic twist as two American authors (John Green and Rebecca Stead) battle it out with two UK authors (David Almond and Katherine Rundell). Julia Eccleshare is chair of the judges. The shortlist was chosen by two previous winners, Hillary McKay and Andy Mulligan, and the 2010 Costa winner Jason Wallace. The winner will be announced in October.

The Guardian children's fiction prize is shadowed by a Young Critics scheme in which children have their say on the longlisted books. www.theguardian.com/childrens-books-site/2013/jun/24/childrens-fiction-prize-book-club-2013. The longlist is at www.theguardian.com/childrens-books-site/2013/jun/03/longlist-2013-guardian-children-s-fiction-prize.



John Green. *The Fault in our Stars*. Penguin Books, 2012. [12+]

Augustus at a support group, both their lives are about to change. She persuades him to read her favourite book, *An Imperial Affliction*, and together they set out to find the reclusive author. But as the two grow closer to one another, they are forced to confront the stark reality that their relationship can only end one way. United by one inspirational story and the desire to live life to the full, they set out on a journey that will redefine everything you think you knew about life. Beset by the 'sick-lit' controversy, this is a raw, poignant and at times heart-breakingly funny story of the tragedy and triumphs of life

Rebecca Stead. *Liar and Spy*. Andersen Press, 2012. [10+]

Life gets steadily worse for Georges (the s is silent) after he moves into a new apartment block. Dad has taken a pay cut in a new job, and Mom has to work longer shifts to make up. Luckily distraction is at hand, as Georges gets caught up in a game with another boy living in the block. Home-schooled Safer's spying game is scary but fun, while his home provides an interesting and supportive alternative refuge for Georges from his family problems. But gradually Georges begins to doubt everything he once took at face value, and glimpse truths that he can no longer avoid. His journey of self-discovery is tenderly and sensitively told within an exciting adventure.

David Almond (illus. Oliver Jeffers). *The Boy who Swam with Piranhas*. Walker, 2012 [9+]

Stanley Potts is just an ordinary boy, but when all the jobs in Fish Quay disappear his Uncle Ernie develops an extraordinary fascination with canning fish. Suddenly their home is filled with the sound of clanging machinery and the stench of mackerel, and Uncle Ernie's obsession reaches such heights that he would even can Stan's beloved goldfish! Stan, however, has his own destiny, which leads him – via a hook-a-duck stall – to Pancho Pirelli, the blue-caped madman who swims with piranhas. And as Stan delves into the waters, he finally discovers who he really can be.

Katherine Rundell. *Rooftoppers*. Faber & Faber, 2013. [10+]

Sophie, a baby found floating in a cello case after the sinking of the *Queen Mary*, is rescued by a charmingly eccentric academic who takes her in and brings her up. Together they eat unusual meals, study haphazardly, wash infrequently and dress unusually. When the authorities threaten to put Sophie in a home for orphans, she decides to go in search of her mother. Together, she and Charles set off for Paris, where they are soon stopped in their tracks by petty rules. But Sophie isn't one to give up easily. Escaping on to a roof, she finds Matteo, living off pigeon, washing in rainwater and travelling unseen across the great roofscape of Paris. With Matteo's help Sophie learns the tricks of roof-top living, how to break into buildings and bamboozle officials. A nimble adventure with a warm-hearted ending.

Frances Lincoln Diverse Voices Children's Book Award 2013

Seven Stories: National Centre for Children's Books. 23 May 2013.

Tariq Mehmood is the winner for *You're Not Proper*. It is the story of two girls with one religion and two very different lifestyles. It offers insight into young people's lives and the challenges they face around identity and cultural heritage. Mehmood receives a cheque for £1500 and an editorial consultation with literary agent Caroline Sheldon.

John Nicoll, founder of the award, spoke via Skype to the winner in Beirut, Lebanon, where he is Assistant Professor in the English Department at the American University. Memhod said, 'I have children who are not white, who read a lot, but they themselves are fictionally invisible. In Diverse Voices, I saw the recognition of the importance of creating a new literary landscape that reflected the world around us, that is blooming with thousands of different flowers, in which children are its scents.'

Swapna Haddow received a cheque for £200 for being Highly Commended for her story *Samosa Girl*, and Jude Ensaff was Commended and received £100 for her story *One of a Kind*.

Memhood's book will be published by Frances Lincoln Children's Books.

Independent Booksellers Week Children's Book Award 2013

Publishers were invited to submit titles from which independent members of the Booksellers Association selected their best 12 children's books for 2013. The winning books was chosen by two judging panels comprised of authors, broadcasters and booksellers, and chaired by BA President Patrick Neale. The IBW Book Award is unique as it is the only award chosen by independent booksellers in the UK. The winner is from the USA and this is her first UK award.

Wonder by R.J. Palacio, Corgi Books, 2012.

August (Auggie) Pullman was born with a facial deformity that prevented him from going to a mainstream school – until now. He's about to start 5th grade at Beecher Prep. The thing is that Auggie's just an ordinary kid, with an extraordinary face. But can he convince his new classmates that he's just like them, despite appearances?

R.J. Palacio has written a spare, warm, uplifting story that will have readers laughing one minute and wiping away tears the next. Wonderfully realistic family interactions, flawed but loving, lively school scenes and short chapters makes *Wonder* accessible to young readers of all levels.



Prologue to an Adventure, the Developing Dylan International Writing Competition

Entry to the competition opens on 1 October 2013 and closes on 27 June 2014. The competition winners will be announced at a ceremony in November 2014.

The winners will have their work read and broadcast by Dylan Thomas fans such as Radio 1 DJ Huw Stephens and be in with a chance to have their writing published. Literature Wales invites all budding writers aged between 7 and 25 to enter.

The entry can be a song lyric, a poem, a funny limerick – any form of creative writing as long as it has been inspired by the Welsh writer Dylan Thomas and is no longer than 30 lines. The organisers suggest that entrants read some of Thomas's stories, scripts and poems for ideas (the National Library of Wales' website at www.llgc.org.uk is a good place to begin). Some suggested themes for the different age categories are:

Ages 7–11: Family/Holiday/New Life

Ages 12–15: Folklore/Journey/Night

Ages 16–18: Tradition/Superstition/Eerie

Christopher Tower Poetry Competition 2013

Entrants were required to be least 16 years of age and under 19 years of age on 1 March 2013. They must be in full or part-time education at a school, college or other educational institution in the UK. Students enrolled on higher-education courses are not eligible to enter the competition. Entries had to be no more than 48 lines in length and only one entry per student was allowed, the subject being ‘the details’.

The winning poems can be read from www.towerpoetry.org.uk/winning-poems.

The first prize was awarded to Azfa Ali of Oxford Spires Academy.

Origins

1 *Killindoni*

In my hometown:
I felt the rough sand
scrub against my feet;
chased salty orange crabs
who pinched my pinkie tight; so by
firelight,
I would crunch into lemon-seeping
shells,
feel the faint texture of sand resting
on my tongue.

2 *Refugee on a Motorway*

Clutch the parcel of clothes
balancing on your head,
stare at the cluttered road ahead
with your *Kanga*
wipe off beads of sweat.
With trembling legs,
brush past the first car’s face:
enter the metal maze,

feel the hot steel
crush you into a flower.
See the world like a
white square tower
turn into a haze.
Let your skin shed its brown
and instead become blue,
violet, pomegranate red.

3 *Scotland*

In my country:
I grew up in the Gorbals,
with Kwiksave, the Junkies,
and chucking snowballs;
watching fireworks
on the eighth floor of my council
flat,
listening to the bangs and cracks;
watching the orange flames
flower out.

(Copyright © 2013 Azfa Ali)

Newcastle Centre for the Literary Arts (NCLA) Young People’s Poetry Award

www.ncl.ac.uk/ncla/.

This year sees the introduction of a new Basil Bunting award, the Young People’s Poetry Award (http://basilbuntingaward.co.uk/w13/?page_id=36), with categories for 10–14 year olds and 14–18 year olds (age on 1 March 2013).

There are several reasons for introducing a young people’s section to the Basil Bunting Poetry awards for 2013. Bunting himself wrote poetry when he was at school. One poem he dedicated to the school clock, saying:

You have seen a score of years
Full of schoolboy ink and tears.

Also he dedicated his *Complete Poems* (1968) to:

Unabashed boys and girls [who] may enjoy them. This book is theirs.

The aim of the award is to encourage young people to write their own poems.

Entry to the award is free and up to ten poems may be entered by each candidate. Each poem submitted must be in English and not longer than 42 lines. The submitted poems must not have been published (which includes self-publication, website or online publishing and broadcast), nor entered in any other competition prior to the date of the awards ceremony. The full terms and conditions can be read at http://basilbuntingaward.co.uk/w13/?page_id=293.

The judge for both age groups is the former poet laureate Sir Andrew Motion. Readers may be used to help the judge in choosing a longlist. A shortlist may be published but no date for this has yet been given. The judge's report will appear on the website after the awards ceremony. There will be first, second and third prizes of £50, £30 and £20, respectively, and up to three commended.

The results of the award will be published on the new Basil Bunting Poetry Award website (<http://basilbuntingaward.co.uk/w13/>) after the awards ceremony, which will take place in The Queens Hall, Hexham, on 29 November 2013, when Sir Andrew Motion will also give a public poetry reading.

After the awards, the winners and those commended will be invited to submit ten poems to Neil Astley, editor of Bloodaxe Books. Without obligation, Neil Astley will respond to the poems submitted.

Entry forms can be accessed from http://basilbuntingaward.co.uk/w13/?page_id=36. The closing date for this year's entries is 30 September 2013.

CONFERENCES, EXHIBITIONS AND EVENTS

Federation of Children's Book Groups Annual Conference 2014

Books and Beyond.



The FCBG's annual conference, organised by one of the local children's book groups in collaboration with the National Executive, takes place every year in spring in different locations around the country. In 2014, the conference will take place in Worth, West Sussex, 11–13 April.

See www.fcbg.org.uk/conference/ as details become available or email info@fcbg.org.uk.

Seven Stories: The National Centre for Children's Books

Mystery, Magic and Midnight Feasts: The Many Adventures of Enid Blyton

Until 30 April 2014.

This is a special opportunity to immerse yourself in Enid Blyton's world of adventure and stories, whether your favourite is The Famous Five series, Malory Towers and the other schools series, *Noddy* or *The Magic Faraway Tree*.

Supported by Hodder Children's Books, the Heritage Lottery Fund, Egmont and Macmillan Children's Books.

Tiger, Mog and Pink Rabbit: A Judith Kerr Retrospective

21 September 2013 – 16 February 2014.

To celebrate Judith Kerr's 90th birthday the Tiger, Mog and Pink Rabbit exhibition will return to Seven Stories. The exhibition is home to a life-sized tiger, ready for tea, and Mog's basket, perfect for curling up in with a good book. This exhibition showcases almost 80 years of original artwork – created in Judith Kerr's childhood and as a refugee, in her early career as an illustrator in war-torn London and in her family life that inspired the books that are still loved by children today.

Supported by HarperCollins and Gateshead Council Fostering Service.

NEWS

NCRCL News

The Pinsent Prize is awarded for outstanding work on the onsite MA in Children's Literature. The Hancock Prize is awarded for outstanding work on the distance learning MA in Children's Literature. A third prize has now been established: the Cotton Prize, sponsored by Penni Cotton, for outstanding work on visual texts. The 2013 Pinsent Prize was awarded to Sarah Pyke. The Cotton Prize was awarded to Marianne Bradnock. The Hancock Prize was not awarded this year.

[Lisa Sainsbury, Director NCRCL]

Children's Illustrator Calendar 2014

Peter Sheldon (Peters Bookselling Services) is producing a quality, spiral-bound, A4 seasonal calendar with original illustrations from Michael Foreman, Anthony Browne, Pat Hutchins, Nicholas Allan, Ruth and Ken Brown, Nick Sharratt, Shirley Hughes, Clara Vulliamy, Tony Ross, Colin McNaughton and Chris Riddell. This is an at-cost project with a charge of £5 per calendar plus £1.50 p&p. Distribution will take place at the end of November to early December. If you would like to order a copy/copies (perfect for Christmas presents), contact Anne Marley by 18 October with your requirements: anne.marley@tiscali.co.uk. Any profit acquired by the project will be donated to Cancer Research UK, in memory of Linda Banner, Librarian, Publicity Manager and winner of the 1999 Nibbie Award for an outstanding contribution to the National Year of Reading.

Seven Stories: National Centre for Children's Books Fundraising

Seven Stories has won the National Lottery Good Causes Award for Best Education Project 2013. The National Lottery Good Causes Awards are voted for by the public. The project featured in programme about the National Lottery awards in early September on BBC1 and can be viewed in the BBC archive.

www.sevenstories.org.uk; www.facebook.com/7stories; www.twitter.com/7stories

[Amanda Beckham, amanda.beckham@sevenstories.org.uk]

Dylan Thomas 100 Festival

The website for Developing Dylan, Literature Wales' new education project, is now live: www.developingdylan100.com.

Creative-writing workshops are available for teachers to book and to discover the cross art-form workshops that will get young people playing with Dylan's world through social media, music, visual art and spoken word.

Young writers from 7 to 25 are also be able to find out about the Developing Dylan international writing competition. See under Awards and Competitions on page 47.

The website offers a sneak preview into [Dylan Live](#), the live music and bilingual spoken word show that will bring Dylan Thomas' 1950s New York back to life through a fusion of vinyl, jazz, beat poetry, hip hop and spoken word. Poets Martin Daws, Aneirin Karadog and Zaru Jonson, hip-hop artist Ed Holden, DJ Dyl Mei and academic Huw Vaughan Williams will sample, reinterpret and mix music that is quintessentially New York with Dylan Thomas' words for a unique live experience.

Whether through prose, verse, music or visual art, Developing Dylan will celebrate the diverse ways in which Dylan Thomas' poetry can be appreciated, shared and enjoyed.

Developing Dylan is funded by the Welsh Government and will form part of the official Dylan Thomas 100 Festival.

Children's Poet Laureate of Wales 2014–2015

At a ceremony in June at the Urdd Eisteddfod in Pembrokeshire, Eurig Salisbury, the 2011–2013 Bardd Plant Cymru (Children's Poet Laureate of Wales) announced that the next poet to take on the role will be Aneirin Karadog. The performance poet is already a familiar household name, appearing on S4/C as a feature presenter on *Heno* and *Sam ar y Sgrîn*. He was also a prominent member of both the Welsh Language pop group, *Genod Droog* and the hip-hop duo *Y Diwygiad*. With a Welshman as a father and a mother from Brittany, Aneirin Karadog is fluent in Welsh, English, Breton, French and Spanish. You can apply for a workshop by contacting barddplantcymru@llynyddiaethcymru.org or call Literature Wales on 029 2047 2266.

Bardd Plant Cymru is a project supported by Literature Wales, the Welsh Books Council, S4C and Urdd Gobaith Cymru.

For more information about the Bardd Plant Cymru project, see www.barddplantcymru.co.uk or follow Bardd Plant Cymru on Twitter [@BarddPlant](https://twitter.com/BarddPlant).

Firefly Press

Firefly Press, a new children's publishing house in Wales, was recently launched at the Hay Festival. Based in Cardiff and Aberystwyth, Firefly will be publishing titles for 5–19 year olds with both print and e-books. The new company has already won a contract from the Welsh Books Council to publish a series of books for 7–9 year olds. This Dragonfly series will be in bookshops and as e-books from May 2014. The series will be lively and contemporary and based in Wales.

The press will launch its Dragonfly series with *Dragon Gold* by illustrator and author Shoo Rayner, and *Steve's Dreams*, by Pembroke and Cardiff-based Dan Anthony, author of the Rugby Zombies series. The press will also be publishing books for 9–12 year olds from next year.

A scintillating teen thriller, a robotic dragon, a flying bedroom and a boy called Steve all feature on Firefly's first list of books for young adults, to be published in 2014. This list includes a young adult thriller, *Blackfin Sky*, by Rhyl-based debut novelist Kat Ellis, which sees Skylar Rousseau drown off Blackfin Pier on her sixteenth birthday. She is mourned by her whole town, only to reappear at school three months later as if nothing had happened.

The Flying Bedroom is a collection of amazing adventures for 5–7 year olds by established children's author Heather Dyer (*The Boy in the Biscuit Tin*, *The Girl with the Broken Wing*).

www.fireflypress.co.uk/home.html.

Children's Poet Laureate USA

11 June 2013. Term of office 11 June 2013 – 10 June 2015.

The Poetry Foundation has appointed poet Kenn Nesbitt to serve as the next Children's Poet Laureate: Consultant in Children's Poetry to the Poetry Foundation. In awarding the \$25,000 cash prize and two-year title, the Poetry Foundation aims to raise awareness that children have a natural receptivity to poetry and are its most appreciative audience, especially when poems are written specifically for them.

Kenn Nesbitt, 51, is the author of numerous books of poetry for children, including *The Tightly-Whitey Spider* (2010), *My Hippo Has the Hiccups* (2009), and *Revenge of the*

Lunch Ladies (2007). His books abound with humorous and silly situations, and his poems have appeared in hundreds of anthologies, magazines and textbooks worldwide. His poems have also been adapted to other media, including music and film. Nesbitt wrote his first children's poem, 'Scrawny Tawny Skinner,' in 1994, and published his first poetry book, *My Foot Fell Asleep*, in 1998. Nesbitt succeeds J. Patrick Lewis to become the fourth Children's Poet Laureate, and the youngest ever to hold the title.

The inaugural Children's Poet Laureate was Jack Prelutsky. The Poetry Foundation installed the office of the Children's Poet Laureate in 2006, after its research study, *Poetry in America*, demonstrated that a lifelong love for poetry is most likely to result if cultivated early in childhood and reinforced thereafter.

Nesbitt's will post monthly children's books recommendations, starting in July 2013: www.poetryfoundation.org/children/.

My teacher took my iPod. She said they had a rule; I couldn't bring it into class or even to the school.	she made sure we were occupied and cracked a wicked smile.
She said she would return it; I'd have it back that day. But then she tried my headphones on and gave a click on Play.	Her body started swaying. Her toes began to tap. She started grooving in her seat and rocking to the rap.
She looked a little startled, but after just a while	My teacher said she changed her mind. She thinks it's now okay to bring my iPod into class. She takes it every day.

(From *Revenge of the Lunch Ladies: The Hilarious Book of School Poetry*, illus. Mike and Carl Gordon, New York: Meadowbrook Press, 2007)

Newcastle Centre for the Literary Arts (NCLA)

www.ncl.ac.uk/ncla/.

Grant for Young Voices

NCLA has been awarded a grant from the Clore Duffield Foundation for its Young Voices project (<http://youngvoices.nclcommunity.org/>). The grant will be used to introduce 120 young people selected from across three secondary schools to writers featured in [NCLA's digital archive](#). Pupils will be given the opportunity to respond to poetry and prose from the archive, work with local writers and perform their work.

IBBY NEWS

IBBY Section Newsletters

The latest newsletters uploaded to www.ibby.org/index.php?id=932 and <http://www.ibby.org/index.php?id=1266> are the following.

[Asian-Oceania Newsletter No. 5 July 2013](#)

(Special issue on the 1st Regional Congress)

[IBBY South Africa, August 2013](#)

[IBBY Australia No. 18, August 2013](#)

[IBBY Bolivia, July 2013 \(in Spanish\)](#)

[IBBY Australia No. 17, May 2013](#)

[IBBY Canada, May 2013](#)

IBBY UK Honour Books 2014

The IBBY Honour List is a biennial selection of outstanding, recently published books, honouring writers, illustrators and translators from IBBY member countries. Important considerations in selecting the Honour List titles are that the books are representative of the best in children's literature from the country and that the books are suitable for publication throughout the world. The Honour List diplomas are presented at the IBBY Congresses where the catalogue is introduced and the books are shown for the first time. Thereafter seven parallel sets of the books circulate around the world at exhibitions during conferences and book fairs. Permanent collections of the IBBY Honour List books are kept at the International Youth Library in Munich, the Swiss Institute for Child and Youth Media in Zurich, the Bibiana Research Collection in Bratislava, JIBBY in Tokyo and the Northwestern University Library at Evanston, Illinois.

Writing

The Unforgotten Coat

Frank Cottrell Boyce (photog. Carl Hunter and Clare Heaney), Walker Books, 2012.

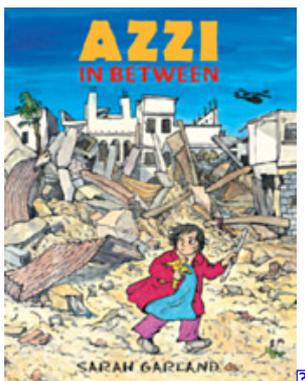
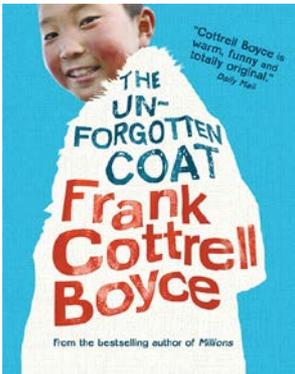
'Written as if in an exercise book by Julie who looks back on an extraordinary incident that happened when she was in Year Six. In her account she describes the unexpected arrival at the school of Chingis and Nergui, two brothers from Mongolia. When they ask her to become their 'Good Guide' and show them what they need to know, Julie gets completely caught up in their stories and the imaginary and all too horribly real dangers they face.'

See a review in on page 37.

Illustration

Sarah Garland, *Azzi in Between*, Frances Lincoln Children's Books, 2012.

'Azzi and her parents are in danger. They have to leave their home and escape to another country on a frightening journey by car and boat. In the new country they must learn to speak a new language, find a new home and Azzi must start a new school. With a kind helper at the school, Azzi begins to learn English and understand that she is not the only one who has had to flee her home. She makes a new friend, and with courage and resourcefulness, begins to adapt to her new life. But Grandma has been left behind and Azzi misses her more than anything. Garland's expressive line quivers with tension and her subtle use of dark colours and shadow conveys the moments of fear and drama as the family escapes.'

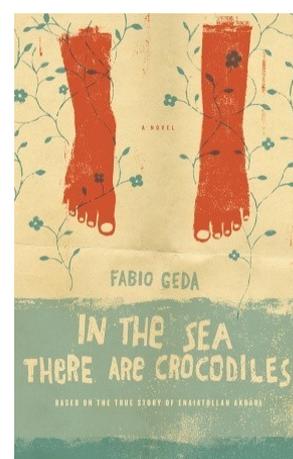




Translation

Howard Curtis (text Fabio Geda), *In the Sea there are Crocodiles*, David Fickling Books, 2012.

‘When 10-year-old Enaiatollah Akbari’s small village in Afghanistan falls prey to Taliban rule in early 2000, his mother shepherds the boy across the border into Pakistan but has to leave him there alone to fend for himself. Thus begins Enaiat’s remarkable and often punishing five-year ordeal, which takes him through Iran, Turkey and Greece, before he seeks political asylum in Italy at the age of 15. Along the way, Enaiat endures the crippling physical and emotional agony of dangerous border crossings, trekking across bitterly cold mountain pathways for days on end or being stuffed into the false bottom of a truck. But not everyone is as resourceful, resilient or lucky as Enaiat, and there are many heart-wrenching casualties along the way.’



IBBY UK/NCRCL MA Annual Conference

Froebel College, Roehampton University, London. Saturday 9 November 2013.

‘Feast or Famine: Food and Children’s Literature’

As a focus for imaginative gratification, food has a longstanding relationship with children’s literature: from Sinclair’s jam-filled ‘coach-wheel’ in *The Holiday House* (1839) to Paddington’s marmalade sandwiches; from starvation in Brenda’s *Froggy’s Little Brother* (1875) to feasting in J.K. Rowling’s Hogwarts. Moving beyond the immediate concerns of children’s literature, the rise of the cup-cake culture in the early twenty-first century and the recent success of the BBC’s *The Great British Bake Off* point to an on-going fascination with food that extends beyond sustenance to creation, image and consumption. This timely conference considers the rich complexity of the relationship between food and children’s literature.

Keynote presenters include Nicky Humble (Roehampton University), Jean Webb (Worcester University), Guo Yue (writer, musician and Chinese cookery specialist) and Fiona Dunbar (author of the Lulu Baker series, which is now a major CBBC TV series).

The conference will feature panels with well-known writers and publishers, and a range of stimulating workshops on everything from cannibalism to cookbooks (see below).

The programme, speakers abstracts and biographies are still being finalised. They will be added to the online store as soon as they are confirmed. The direct link to the conference on the online store where you can book your place. When booking you are required to choose your workshop.

<http://estore.roehampton.ac.uk/browse/product.asp?compid=1&modid=2&catid=104>.

If you have any problems with your booking, contact Lucy Parsons on l.parsons@roehampton.ac.uk or by calling 020 8392 3698.

The conference starts at 9.30a.m. and should end at approximately 6.00 p.m.

Workshop A

Aoife Byrne. 'Pearls and Pomegranates Cannot Buy It': Food and the Treachery of the Capitalist Marketplace in Oscar Wilde's Fairy Stories

Kay Waddilove. Women, Work and Chocolate: Food, Power and 'Sites of Struggle' in the Post-War Novels of Noel Streatfield

Workshop B

Sinead Moriarty. Dog Meat for Dinner: Food in Heroic Era Antarctic Narratives for Children

Simone Herrmann. The Island that Provides: Food Supply and Sustenance in Robinsonades for Children and Young Adults

Workshop C

Devjani Ray. Identity and Culture of Taste in Colonial Bengal: Cannibalism and the 'Other' Mother in *Thakumar Jhuli* [Grandmother's Bag of Tales]

Karen Williams. 'Babies on toast': 'Edible' Children in Early Nineteenth-Century Children's Literature

Workshop D

Sarah Hardstaff. Poachers and Scavengers: Reconceptualising Food in Children's Literature

Helen Day. Surveillance and Invisibility: Dining Places and Spaces in the Harry Potter Series

Workshop E

Zahra Amlani. From Whiz Cinnamon Rolls to a Sloppy Joe: Fifty Years in Children's Cookery Books

Gili Bar-Hillel. The Mad Hatter's Coffee Party: Bridging the Gastronomical Divide in the Translation of Children's Literature

Workshop F

Franziska Burstyn. The Myth of the Magic Porridge Pot: Never-Ending Edibles in Children's Literature

Pat Pinsent. A Varied Menu: Children's Poetry about Food

Workshop G

Vasiliki Labitsi. 'Precious Apple – Sinful Apple': Visual and Symbolic Representations of Apples in Picture Books and Western Art

Rebecca Long. 'Your Nose Knows where you Belong': Food and Love; Surviving and Thriving in the Deepwoods

For information on the workshops, contact Erica Gillingham, gillinge@roehampton.ac.uk

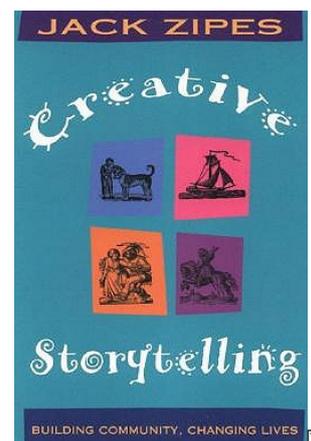
Jack Zipes 'Once Upon a Time: Changing the World through Storytelling'

IBBY UK in association with the Centre for Literacy in Primary Education (CLPE).

Centre for Literacy in Primary Education, Webber Street, London SE1 8QW. 1 October 2013, 6.00 p.m. (for 6.30 p.m.) – 8.30 p.m.

Tickets £5.00. To book, please email: ann@clpe.co.uk or phone 020 7902 2287.

Jack Zipes is one of the world's foremost authorities on children's literature, and on fairy and folk tales in particular. A storytelling enthusiast and entertaining speaker, he has written *Creative Storytelling: Building Community, Changing Lives* (Routledge, 1995), which 'proposes an interactive storytelling that creates and strengthens a sense of community for students, teachers and parents while extolling storytelling as animation, subversion, and self-discovery.' Jack Zipes is normally resident in the USA, so this is a rare opportunity to hear him first-hand.



To the Members of IBBY

19 August 2013

Dear Friends

Once again the Frankfurt Book Fair is just around the corner. Brazil is the guest country this year at the fair.

In 2012 IBBY held a forum discussion about the Hans Christian Andersen awards. A film was made of the discussion and can be accessed from the IBBY website, www.ibby.org. This year we shall be holding another forum discussion, this time on the work of IBBY around the world. The session will take place in hall 3.0 between 10a.m. and 11a.m. on Friday 11 October 2013. Come along if you can, but if you cannot make it we shall be filming the whole discussion.

To encourage IBBY members to visit the fair, the Marketing and Communications Department of the fair have generously offered IBBY members trade visitor entry tickets. If you wish to take up this offer, they ask that you complete a survey of nine questions related to children's literature. All you have to do is complete the survey and leave your email address in the appropriate box (question 10). The organisers will then send you an electronic voucher for you to use to get your entry ticket. This offer is only for entry to the 2013 Frankfurt Book Fair and does not include any travel or accommodation arrangements.

https://de.surveymonkey.com/s/KidsUniverse_english

If you decide to attend or have plans already to attend, come and find me at the stand of IBBY Germany: *Arbeitskreis für Jugendliteratur*, hall 3.0, K117, where you will be warmly welcomed by your colleagues from Munich.

[Liz Page, Executive Director, International Board on Books for Young People]

IBBY Presence at the 2012 Frankfurt Book Fair

To celebrate the Hans Christian Andersen Awards, IBBY, with support from the Frankfurt Book Fair, organised a panel discussion featuring the awards. The participants were Junko Yokota, a former juror; Wally de Doncker, immediate past Vice President of IBBY; David Almond, winner of the 2010 award for writing; Roger Mello, two-time finalist for the illustrator award; and Miriam Gabriela Möllers, an expert on children's and youth literature who acted as moderator.

The hour-long discussion took place on 2 October in hall 3.0 as part of the *Forum für Kinder- und Jugendmedien* programme. Thanks to an arrangement with *Pioneerfilm*

from Ludwigshafen, Germany, we invite you to view a shortened version of the discussion: www.ibby.org/index.php?id=1262. The film is also available on [YouTube](#).

We would like to thank Birgit Fricke from the Frankfurt Book Fair for supporting this panel discussion and IBBY Germany for their long-time support of IBBY representation at the fair. And, most of all, we thank Nami Island Inc., for sponsoring the Hans Christian Andersen awards.

[Liz Page, Executive Director, International Board on Books for Young People]

Silent Books: Final Destination Lampedusa

IBBY Italy thank the IBBY sections for their cooperation in the 1st edition of the successful project Silent Books. More than 110 books from 23 countries were sent. The books were first displayed in the forum of the Palazzo delle Esposizioni in Rome and for the next two years they will form a travelling exhibition that will tour the world.

As part of this project the Palazzo delle Esposizioni's Scaffale d'arte, which is a library specialising in international art publishing for children, will keep a copy of each book to create the first documentation and research collection of wordless books. This collection will be open to scholars and the public.

The copies bound for the island of Lampedusa were delivered to the City Council in June and, together with other important donations, will become the foundation of the island's future library for Italian and immigrant children. IBBY Italia is now working closely with the local authorities to implement all the necessary steps for the library's start-up.

The catalogue, produced by Chiara Carrer and Sara Verdone, giving details of the Honour List books and a list of all the books, can be downloaded from www.ibby.org/fileadmin/user_upload/silent_books_Lampedusa_Exhibition_catalogue.pdf.

[Silvana Sola, IBBY Italia president; ibbyitalia@gmail.com]

IBBY World Congress 2010

Santiago de Compostela, Spain, 8–12 September 2010

The Strength of Minorities

The languages at the congress were Spanish and English so papers are in only one of these languages. Many of the papers are in English. The programme included the presentation of the Hans Christian Andersen Awards 2010, the IBBY-Asahi Reading Promotion Award 2010 and the IBBY Honour List 2010.

Speeches and papers are at www.ibby.org/index.php?id=1042.

The following papers discuss picture books, but not necessarily for older readers, although Evelyn Arizpe's paper is on wordless picture books.

[Diversity and Multiculturalism in Australian Children's Picture Books](#) Joanna Andrew (Australia)

[Indigenous Languages in some Australian Picture Books](#) Robin Moncrieff Morrow (Australia)

[Diversity and Multiculturalism in Australian Children's Picture Books](#) Joanna Andrew (Australia)

[Publishing Warm Books from the Warm Countries, in Particular Picture Books](#) Vagn Plenge (Denmark)

Visual Journeys with Immigrant Readers: Minority Voices Create Words for Wordless Picture Books Evelyn Arizpe (UK)

Globalizing Diversity and Tolerance through Children's Books: A Case Study of Japanese Picture Books Loved by Many Readers Sachie Asaka (Japan)

The Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art: Celebrating the Art of the Picture Book Marion E. Rocco (USA)

Bringing the Joy of Books to All Children: The 'Barrier-Free Picture Books from Around the World' Traveling Exhibitions Hisako Kakuage (Japan)

All the speeches and papers can be read at www.ibby.org/index.php?id=1042. None are illustrated but photographs taken during the congress can be viewed at www.ibby.org/index.php?id=1100.

7th Biennial Manal Forum 2014

The Sharjah City for Humanitarian Services will organise the 7th biennial Manal Forum on 4 May 2014, focusing on the issue of children's literature and disability. The organisers are looking for contributions from experienced experts and organisations working in this field. The forum is in association with UAE IBBY.

The Sharjah City for Humanitarian Services is based in Sharjah. Its mission is to provide training, education and job opportunities for people with disabilities of all ages and nationalities in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). See <http://www.schs.ae>.

The Manal Forum takes a topic related to culture or media and disabilities. The 2014 forum will revolve around the issue of children's literature and disabilities.

The organisers are looking for presentations of good and innovative practices from all over the world in the following fields:

- Writing, illustrating or publishing inclusive and accessible books for children with all forms of disabilities (writers, illustrators, publishers and researchers are invited to submit papers).
- Promoting reading among children with disabilities (individual practitioners and representatives of organisations are invited to apply).

Since the forum will be organised within the framework of the celebrations of Sharjah, Islamic Culture Capital for the Year 2014, contributions from Islamic countries are especially welcome.

If you are interested in making a presentation, send a 250-word summary to the following e-mail address: nabulsi@schs.sharjah.ae before 31 October 2013.

The working languages of the Forum are Arabic and English.

Bookbird: A Journal of International Children's Literature

The board of Bookbird, Inc. have announced the appointment of Dr Björn Sundmark as incoming editor from 2015 to 2013. Dr Sundmark is Associate Professor of English at the Faculty of Education, Malmö University, Sweden. He is currently research editor of *Barnboken*, an online children's literature journal published by the Swedish Institute of Children's Books and is a former editor of *Educare*, an educational research journal published by Malmö University. He is on the board of the Swedish National Cultural Council. He is a member of IBBY Sweden, and on the advisory editorial board of *Bookbird*. He succeeds Dr Roxanne Harde, whose term of office concludes in 2014. *Bookbird* is the quarterly publication of IBBY.

The 20th Annual IBBY UK/NCRCL MA conference will take place at Roehampton University, London, on Saturday 9 November 2013. The subject is food with the title: 'Feast or Famine: Food and Children's Literature'. See under IBBY News to book your place.

For more information contact Ann Lazim (annlazim@googlemail.com) or Laura Atkins (L.Atkins@roehampton.ac.uk).

The next issue of *IBBYLink* is *IBBYLink* 39, Spring 2014 (copydate 12 December 2013) and will contain reports and papers from the 20th annual IBBY UK/NCRCL MA conference 'Feast or Famine: Food and Children's Literature'.

Articles on other subjects, reports, information about conferences, and similar items are also welcomed. Contributions to Ferelith Hordon: fhordon@aol.com.

If you are interested in becoming a reviewer for *IBBYLink*, contact Sue Mansfield: mansfield37@btinternet.com. New reviewers are always welcome.

Titles for Review

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

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Editor: Ferelith Hordon

Associate editor: Jennifer Harding

Reviews editor: Sue Mansfield

To sponsor a future issue of *IBBYLink*, contact Ferelith Hordon, fhordon@aol.com. 8 Terrapin Court, Terrapin Road, London SW17 8QW.

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