

Hullabaloo!

Newsletter of the Teaching Resources Collection at Bishop Grosseteste University Library



Cover photographs by Frances Pearson

A very warm welcome to the spring edition of *Hullabaloo!*

This edition is a very special one as we, a group of second year English Literature students, have taken over the reins from Emma and Janice to bring you a brand new *Hullabaloo!*

As many of you know, we have a Teaching Resources Collection here at Bishop Grosseteste University, and this has been introduced to encourage children and adults alike to start reading for pleasure. A recent Ofsted report found that over a third of primary school children reach the age of eleven without being able to read and write properly, and twenty percent are still having serious difficulties by the time they leave secondary school.

Minister of State for School Reform Nick Gibb has always recognised the importance of reading for pleasure: "Children should always have a book on the go. The difference in achievement between children who read for half an hour a day and those who don't is huge – as much as a year's education by the time they are 15." This academic and emotional growth is something we too are passionate about, and we hope that we can encourage children to read more and become as engaged in literature as we are.

Happy reading,

The Hullabaloo! team

In this issue:



Why should children read?

An insight into the benefits children's literature has on social skills.



Drawing thoughts from Lynne Chapman

Children's book illustrator Lynne Chapman discusses how her artwork is brought from the studio to the bookshelves.



Competition time!

In this issue are two competitions, giving you the chance to win a *Spot the Dog* book and a £10 National Book Token! Have a look inside to find out how.

Contributors:



Kelly Charles
[Editor] Literature lover. I am happiest when lost in a good book. (Welsh and proud!)



Frances Pearson
[Designer] With a creative mind full of literature and art, my first love, the stage, continues to inspire my pursuits.



Robert Baines
I enjoy sports and socialising, but more importantly I enjoy reading and encourage you all to read too.



Georgina Hall
Most at home when creatively traversing her own imagination.



Samuel Lock
Aspiring writer, avid reader, and ardent daydreamer!



Jasmine Mills
Hard-working student and Mummy who loves to get lost in a book.



Lauren Squires
A bibliophile from a young age with a passion for fantasy.

Why should children read?

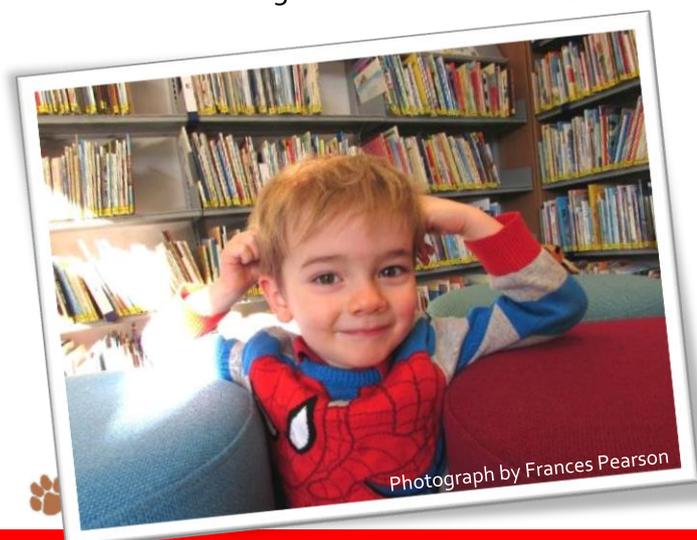
by Jasmine Mills

The importance of reading for our youngsters

I think we are all aware that reading is essential for children, even if we're not really sure why. From a tiny age babies are read to and encouraged to look at picture books, and adults are forever trying to involve children in reading, both for fun and for educational purposes, at home and at school. From a young age it builds their imaginations, helps them to recognise differences in colours and shapes, animals and genders, and then, as they get older, it develops their understanding of emotions and difficult life situations that as a very young child they might be sheltered from. It also, of course, improves their reading skills and enables them to enjoy a book alone, not just with the person who is reading it to them.

We took my three year old son Alfie (pictured below) to the Teaching Resources Collection (TRC) at Bishop Grosseteste University to see how he felt about it. Alfie loves reading and going to the library near our house, and even though the TRC was an unfamiliar environment he was thrilled to be there. He got extremely excited about the large animal bean bags and was instantly comfortable in his surroundings. He grabbed a book that he wanted to read and we sat and read together.

I am comfortable in my belief that Alfie's growing love for reading will help him develop as a person. In my opinion it is more than just a method of entertainment. It is a tool of education, it will teach him about culture and acceptance, how to love people for their soul and not their appearance. It will help him understand more difficult situations like illness or death. It will help him lose himself in a different world when the world he is in doesn't seem exciting enough. It will help him to connect with other people, give him something in common with friends, or even something to debate with them. It will help him through any situation good or bad and I couldn't be more grateful as a mother to have such a tool as a book to help me in my parenting and give my son the best advantage he can have in his life.



Photograph by Frances Pearson

The Teaching Resources Collection

by Jasmine Mills

Reading tools for children and adults alike

In Bishop Grosseteste University's Teaching Resources Collection (TRC) there is a wide range of tools to encourage reading for children. These include books, story sacks, audio-visual materials, resource packs, artefact boxes and toys. It has giant cuddly toys that encourage children to sit and read, either in a group or alone. It is a comfortable and fun environment which inspires not only the child to pick up a book, but the adult to join in the fun with them. It also includes resources to support students training to work in educational settings, although it isn't just for these students to use - it is available to all staff and students in the university.

There are books to suit every age group. The importance of the very first fabric picture books is a clear starting point for the child to begin their reading journey. Fabric books that are mainly pictures, books with squeaky buttons or crinkly fabric, bath books and hardback books that are solid enough for a child who is likely to chew every page if allowed to hold it. The books slowly become more complex, containing more words and slightly more humorous illustrations, and the subjects become more sincere. They include themes such as the death of a family pet, or a child being picked on for being different, allowing the child to begin to develop more understanding about life. Soon pictures become less frequent and the book may become a novel.

Competition time!

How many paw prints can you spot?

Spot the Dog has walked all over this issue of *Hullabaloo!* and left his muddy paw prints everywhere. By finding all of them you could be in with a chance of winning your very own *Spot the Dog* book. This is in celebration of the beloved work of late children's author Eric Hill.

You can enter by emailing us at hullabaloo@bishoptg.ac.uk and telling us how many paw prints you spotted, followed by your name and contact details. The deadline is 15th May 2015. Good luck everyone!



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2015: Key dates for children's literature

- 4-10th May: Children's Book Week.
- 22nd June: Winners of Carnegie and Greenaway Awards to be announced.
- July: The Summer Reading Challenge begins; read as much as possible during the holidays!
- 6th July: The beginning of Children's Book Week.
- 13th September: Roald Dahl Day.
- 5th October: World Teachers' Day.
- 8th October: National Poetry Day: this year the theme is light.
- 16th October: Marks the 65th anniversary of C.S. Lewis' children's classic *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*.
- 26th November: 150 years since the publication of Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865).

Remember this year will also see the announcement of the new Children's Laureate!



Drawing thoughts from Lynne Chapman

by Frances Pearson

An interview with children's picture book illustrator Lynne Chapman

As vibrant and animated as her artwork, Lynne Chapman is a best-selling children's book illustrator with over twenty years' experience in illustration. Her distinctive pastel pictures accompany children's stories from authors such as Julia Jarman and Miriam Moss, as well as her own baby books. Engaged not only in the creation of humorous and memorable 'critters', Chapman also travels the country delivering storytellings and workshops to children and adults alike.

"From quite a young age I knew I was going to do something to do with art", Chapman smiles. Although graduating with a degree in printed textile design, the sketchbooks she displayed at her degree show got her a job offer with a greetings card company. Enjoying being paid to draw, she worked as a freelance editorial illustrator for around the next ten years.

"The only drawback really to being a freelance illustrator is that you spend far too long on your own at home and so I went and got a job teaching in FE [Further Education] just to get out and interact with real people. And that ended up taking over my life a bit because trying to do a half-time teaching job just doesn't really happen. So when I left that I wanted to go back into illustration but do something different so that it didn't feel like a retrograde step, so that it felt like a move forward". Chapman viewed children's books as the pinnacle of illustration work and so, with no formal training, she produced a new portfolio of artwork and was fortunate enough to be commissioned.

The process from being commissioned to seeing the final book on the shelves is surprisingly long. This is due to the sheer amount of stages in the process, which begins with Lynne being approached not by an author, but by a publisher. "The author doesn't really get to decide who illustrates their work unless they're somebody very big". Instead they are presented with a few illustrators to choose from and, when chosen, Chapman shows them her character designs, "just to make sure that I'm coming from the right place". Once these designs are approved, she creates 'roughs', which are plans for each illustration in the book.



Photograph by Frances Pearson

Only after feedback from the publishers can Chapman finally begin her full-colour pastel artworks.

Pastels themselves are a difficult medium to use, being chunky and often leaving white paper showing through. Chapman solves this by using large sheets of pink paper and sharp pastel pencils to add detail. Why though does Chapman make it so difficult for herself? "I got the hang of it, and enjoyed [using] it for editorial[s]", she explains, "then when I went into children's books I'd prepared a completely new portfolio of watercolour work, and took it out with some of my other stuff in there – and nobody was interested in the watercolour work! They were all interested in the pastel illustrations, so the decision was made for me!".

Chapman's artwork takes between six weeks and two months to complete, and is then sent to be scanned at a reprographics house so that high-resolution digital versions can be created. The 'finishing work' is done on these, adding text or overlays and removing the pink backgrounds, as well as smoothing out any colour issues and being proof-read. Only at this point does the author get to see the final produced work.



An illustration by Lynne Chapman for her picture book *Baby Can Bounce!* (published by Egmont Children's Books), showing the stages the artwork goes through from roughs, to pastels, to the final digital version.

Reproduced by kind permission of Lynne Chapman.

Importantly, it is then the job of the sales team to sell the idea of this new book to bookshops all around the country, so that when it is published they will stock it. Co-editions are also sold to other publishers at international book fairs, which is why any text used in Chapman's illustrations is added as a separate overlay, so that the language can be easily changed. Finally then, "at some distant hazy date in the future, which is normally somewhere around a year and a quarter, a year and a half, sometimes even longer, from when I started the artwork, it will be published", Chapman says delightedly, "and hopefully at that point it can go straight onto the bookshelves, because all that's been sorted!".

It is indeed a very long process then. Drawing the characters is an exciting time however, and Chapman has a soft spot for the baddies. "I like characters that are evil, because there's so much more to do with an evil character than a fluffy cute character!". Chapman quotes the Anaconda from *Class Two at the Zoo* as an especially fun example, as she had to work out different ways of depicting him eating the children. "Generally the more mischievous they are, the more I enjoy it", she laughs.

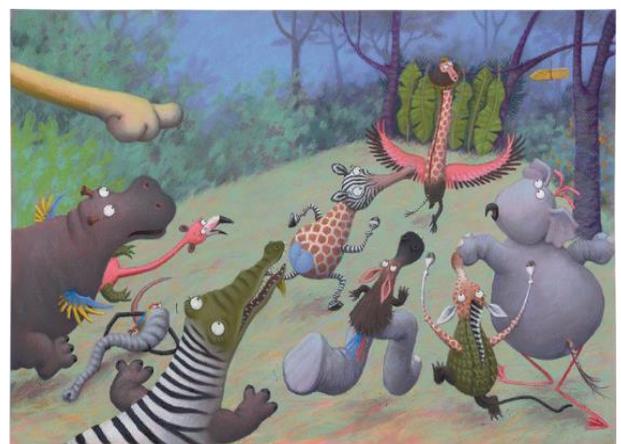
It seems, then, that Chapman has a pretty perfect job, full of quirky characters and a vivid imagination. However, she admits that it isn't always plain sailing. By turning something you love into a job, she explains, it becomes an obligation which can take away your passion. "It starts to turn it into work, and if you're not careful, you do lose the joy in it, so you have to work quite hard at keeping that alive". To try and remedy this, Chapman carries sketchbooks with her and draws for fun, keeping it separate from her commissioned work.

"It's also quite lonely", she admits. She has no colleagues to talk to, as they are all in London and so they normally only have email conversations. She worked in education for a while to combat this, and then later an even better solution came while she was working on children's books: "One day people started inviting me into schools", she explains. Reluctant at first to take part in sessions with children, she has now realised it is something she is good at and her confidence has grown. This has made her a far happier person with a much healthier lifestyle. "It saved my life because instead of spending all my time on my own, I now have my working life peppered with school visits". She now relishes spending some days going "completely bonkers" with kids, describing it as "the perfect foil" to her work. This opportunity to be social in turn gives her the energy to go back to her quiet studio and create her artwork.

Clearly then, Chapman has found techniques over the years that help her to work both efficiently and happily. What advice does she have for other artists trying to break into children's book illustration? "It's a fine line between trying to do something that is different enough that you are going to catch people's eyes, without being so different that you're not in line with what people need", she explains. Publishers of children's books want fundamentally cute characters, and so weird and wacky experimentation is not necessarily going to work unless it is combined with a good technique. After all, characters go through a range of emotions in every children's story: "You've got to be able to say what you need to say, to get across what you need to get across", Chapman says, "and then to be experimental on the back of being able to have fundamental drawing skills".

A final thought from Chapman is about the importance of encouraging children to read from a young age. "Books are a way in which children exercise their imagination and I think you have to exercise your imagination in the same way you exercise your muscles", she explains. "If it's always laid on for you in the way that the television and computer games are, where all the work is done, you don't learn to invent for yourself, and that's surely got to be a bad thing. Learning to use your imagination is going to make you a creative person, and whether that means you're good at the arts, or whether that means you're a more creative thinker in terms of science or maths or music or any field, you need to be a creative thinker if you want to be at the top of your game".

Chapman herself must have started reading from a very young age then, because she is most certainly at the top of her game! If you have enjoyed learning about this lovely and talented illustrator, head to www.lynnchapman.co.uk to find out more about her and her work.



Chapman's original pastel work for an illustration in *Jungle Grumble*, a picture book written by Julia Jarman (published by Piccadilly Press). Reproduced by kind permission of Lynne Chapman.

Down the rabbit hole...

by Georgina Hall

Alice's Adventures in Wonderland celebrates its 150th anniversary

Down the rabbit hole. Eat me. Drink me. Off with her head. 150 years on since the original publication of Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* in 1865, these are the images which continue to appeal to both children and adults alike. Ingrained profusely in all forms of modern media, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* has become a tale one needn't read the original book to understand. Now, with the story's 150th anniversary just around the corner on the 26th November, many across the country are celebrating this literary milestone, be it in the form of themed events in schools, celebratory stamps in the post office, and so much more.

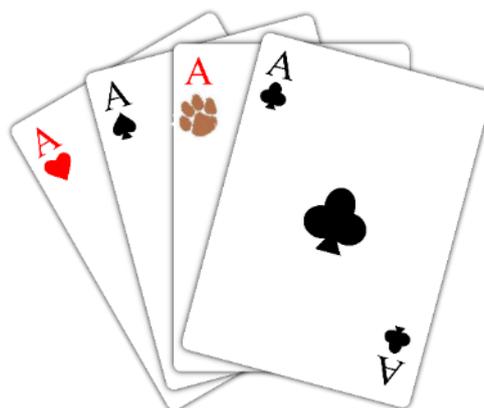


Mad Tea Party, by John Tenniel, 1865

Despite receiving poor reviews at the time of its publication, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* is no doubt an influential text, inspiring literature, films, artwork, music and games over the years, each appealing to a different audience. While many publishers continue to produce the story in its original form (often including John Tenniel's original illustrations), others have since taken varying interpretations. Many shortened adaptations of the story have been made into picture books, allowing young readers to read without parental guidance. Taking hold of the story's darker elements, Gena Showalter's *Alice in Zombieland* and the EA computer game *Alice: Madness Returns* target a young adult audience, making horrific alterations to the story known to many from childhood.

Countless film adaptations of the story have also been created over the years, most prominently Disney's 1951 animation and Tim Burton's 2010 live action adaptation (a sequel to which is scheduled to be realised in 2016). Following the success of such adaptations, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* has influenced media across cultures, through its inclusion in the American television series *Once Upon A Time* and Japanese QuinRose anime and manga series *Alice in the Country of Hearts*. However, not all adaptations of the story have been as light hearted as the original tale. In the case of the 1915 play, *Peter and Alice*, Wonderland merges with First World War England and the audience is shown an elderly Alice mourning the loss of her sons.

Without a doubt, whether you choose to read the original tale or not, Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* has become highly influential over the course of these 150 years, allowing countless readings and adaptations to emerge across time and cultures. Love for the story can even be found here at Bishop Grosseteste University in the form of our 'Alice in Wonderland'-themed coffee shop, *Curiositea*.



Hungry for more?

by Samuel Lock

What is so good about adapting books into films?

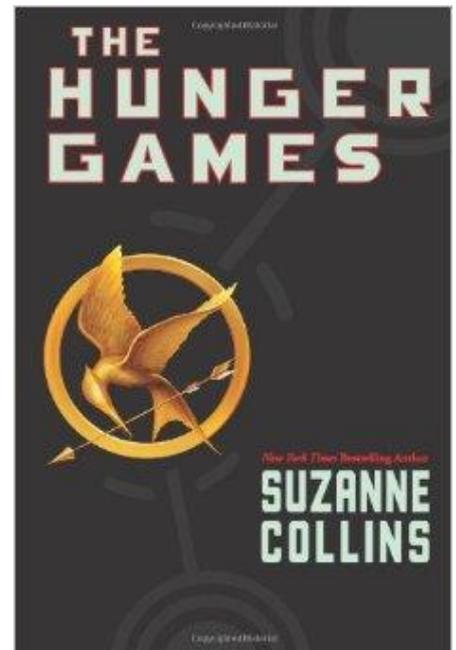
In light of the recent success of *The Hunger Games* film series, are film adaptations important for children's literacy or are they discouraging reading by providing a shorter and more visually stimulating alternative medium?

Now this isn't to say that film is primarily bad, but the argument that film and TV limits a child's imagination is a valid one. Being spoon-fed every image to go with a story arguably leaves no room for the child to imagine for themselves and exercise the creative parts of their brain. According to Kidshealth.org, "kids and teens 8 to 18 years spend nearly 4 hours a day in front of a TV screen and almost 2 additional hours on the computer (outside of schoolwork) and playing video games". The TV screen is used to incorporate film as well. Although this statistic may sound like a bad thing, film adaptations are not without upsides for both children and the original books.

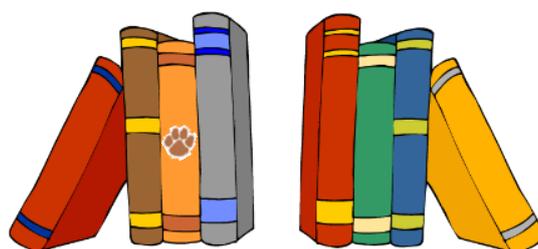
Perhaps one of the most currently influential film series adapted from a novel is Suzanne Collins' *The Hunger Games* series. In it, our protagonist Katniss Everdeen is thrust into a war against oppression in the annual 'cleansing' event known as the Hunger Games. Collins' books and the subsequent films can be seen to teach children and teenagers the value of bravery, intelligence and loyalty. The strong female lead character provides a great role model for young girls to look up to, highlighting how influential books and films can be to children and how they can complement each other in getting children into reading.

This series has had huge success with over £1 billion being made at the world wide box office. However, on initial release the novels themselves only reached sales of £50 million. This is not to say that the films are better or that less people are reading nowadays. It is however interesting that because of the release of the film series, Scholastic has reported a growth in print sales of 55%, from 23.5m copies to 36.5m sold. This figure is truly amazing and shows the reach that a Hollywood adaptation can have on the literary world. However not all credit is due to the fact that the films are a global success – no, it is the quality of the original novels. I myself admit that I have only read the books since seeing the first film on screen and I am not ashamed of that. Nobody should be; if there is anything that encourages a person to read then that should also be encouraged.

This is only a short example of how film adaptations can benefit novels and also benefit readers old and new. If you are a fan of *The Hunger Games* series or want to get started it is available in Bishop Grosseteste University's Teaching Resources Collection (TRC), along with many more brand new additions including James Dasher's *Maze Runner* series and Veronica Roth's thrilling *Divergent* series. Interestingly, each series has film adaptations out now so why not enjoy both book and film!



Book cover reproduced by kind permission of Scholastic Children's Books



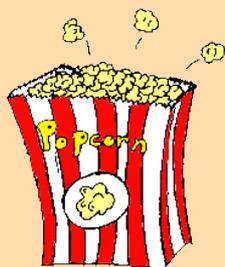
The Venue

Children's films coming soon to BG's cinema

Our campus is home to The Venue – our own reasonably priced cinema! Every Saturday has a film appropriate for children in the Family Film Club, which is showing such films as:

- 18th April: *A Bugs Life* (U)
- 25th April: *Bugsy Malone* (U)
- 5th August: *Robin Hood* (U)

All details and tickets are available to buy online or in The Venue itself. Visit www.thevenueincoln.co.uk for more information.



Fifty years of Narnia

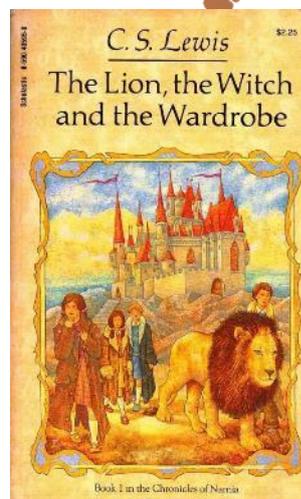
by Robert Baines

Celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*

October 16th will mark the fiftieth year since *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* first began captivating readers with the tales of Peter, Edmund, Susan and Lucy Pevensie, following their adventures with humour, fantasy and allegory. C.S. Lewis' story has captured children's attention and engaged with their imagination for the past fifty years; it has become widely accepted as a classic and is among the most loved of all children's books. The Narnia stories were Lewis' only novels for children and they originated from an image Lewis had of a faun carrying an umbrella and parcels in a snowy wood, one which stuck with Lewis until he decided to write a story about it.

The story is based around the four children and their discovery of a magic world called Narnia, a dangerous place for human beings with its continuing battle between good and evil. An evil ruler, the White Witch, has cast a spell over Narnia making it always winter, but never Christmas. This epic tale follows the journey of the children, with the help of good animals including Aslan, a powerful and majestic Lion, in their attempts to rid Narnia of the White Witch and her wicked presence.

The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe is full of fantasy, action, magic and adventure and is the first of seven tales of Narnia; the journey continues in *Prince Caspian*, *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*, *The Silver Chair*, *The Horse and his Boy*, *The Magician's Nephew* and *The Last Battle*. This first novel especially has entertained the mind of both young and old readers for the past fifty years and I predict it will do for many years to come. It is a true classic of children's literature and is rightly celebrated as such. Well done Lewis!



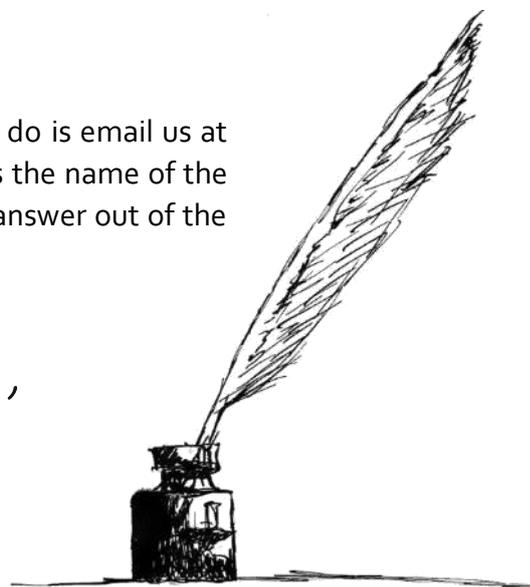
Book cover reproduced by kind permission of Scholastic UK

'First line' poetry competition!

Win a £10 National Book Token

As in previous issues there is a new first line below. All you need to do is email us at hullabaloo@bishopg.ac.uk with your name and contact details, plus the name of the poet and poem. The deadline is 15th May 2015 and the first correct answer out of the hat will win a £10 National Book Token. Good luck!

'They dip their wings in the sunset...'



What's it like studying children's literature?

by Robert Baines

Exploring children's books from an academic perspective

As second year English Literature students, our second semester involves studying children's literature, its history and origins, as well as re-reading childhood favourites. One thing that is extremely interesting is a comparison between a text and the movie adaptation, for example the way you perceive a character in a text compared to their counterparts in the film. For me one of the biggest differences can be seen in J.M Barrie's 1905 story *Peter Pan* and the animated 1953 Disney adaptation. Within the original story the character of Pan can, in my view, be considered a quite evil and manipulative character. However within the Disney adaptation the character is extremely heroic and just. Having grown up with the Disney character in my head, it's fascinating to read Barrie's story and feel my perspective change.

Another thing which interests me personally about the module are the texts that are considered children's literature. Recently I have finished an assignment in which we had to present on a children's book of our choice. I decided to choose *War Horse* by Michael Morpurgo, a fascinating and powerful depiction of courage and friendship in the darkest of times and worst of wars (a book which, by the way, I recommend to you all). However on various occasions when I spoke to friends about what I was doing, they were shocked that *War Horse* was considered children's literature due to the topics it discusses, and this in many ways highlights the big debate around the boundaries of children's literature. But one thing's for sure; the subject throws up some vastly enjoyable and fascinating reads.

Blind date with a book

by Georgina Hall



A Valentine's Day treat for book lovers

Don't judge a book by its cover. It is a saying known by all, though in an age obsessed with appearance and design, rarely do we practice what we preach. Increasingly, books are designed with attractive covers to draw in particular target audiences, though by sticking to designs—and in turn genres of books—we know and love, we limit the range of experiences a book may bring, dismissing those which ordinarily would not appeal.

Here at Bishop Grosseteste University over the Valentine's period, the library staff put together an event known as 'A Blind Date with a Book'. During the course of the event, students were encouraged to borrow a book which had been wrapped to conceal its author, title and blurb, preventing the chance to judge the book until reading began. This allowed them a chance to explore the library's selection of fiction—possibly for the first time. As well as reading a book, those who took part were given a slip to 'rate their date' and feed back their experiences, with responses ranging from "forgettable and dull" to "an unexpected pleasure."

With 200 books wrapped for the event, almost all of which were issued, A Blind Date with a Book has been a great success. Plans are already in place to carry out the event again next year. I for one found the experience thrilling; being able to explore a new and unfamiliar author, story and genre. For some the experience has even extended to inspiring future teaching methods, believing it to be an effective method in urging children to read for pleasure. Therefore, without a doubt, whether avid reader or dabbler in books, this has been an incredible experience for many.



Photograph by Georgina Hall

Carnegie and Kate Greenaway Awards 2015

by Lauren Squires

Carnegie Award 2015 shortlist:

Brian Conaghan: *When Mr. Dog Bites*

Bloomsbury

Sarah Crossan: *Apple and Rain*

Bloomsbury

Sally Gardner: *Tinder*

Orion

Frances Hardinge: *Cuckoo Song*

Macmillan

Elizabeth Laird: *The Fastest Boy In The World*

Macmillan

Tanya Landman: *Buffalo Soldier*

Walker

Geraldine McCaughrean: *The Middle of Nowhere*

Usborne

Patrick Ness: *More Than This*

Walker

Kate Greenaway Award 2015 shortlist:

Laura Carlin (illustrator) Nicola Davies (text):

The Promise

Walker

Alexis Deacon (illustrator) Russell Hoban (text):

Jim's Lion

Walker

William Grill: *Shackleton's Journey*

Flying Eye Books

John Higgins & Marc Olivent (illustrators)

Marcus Sedgwick & Julian Sedgwick (text): *Dark*

Satanic Mills

Walker Books

Catherine Rayner: *Smelly Louie*

Macmillan

Chris Riddell: *Goth Girl and the Ghost of a Mouse*

Macmillan

David Roberts (illustrator) Sally Gardner (text):

Tinder

Orion

Shaun Tan: *Rules of Summer*

Lothian Publishing

The Carnegie and Kate Greenaway Medals, presented by CILIP (the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals) on an annual basis, have been around for many years. The awards represent excellence within children's literature: the Carnegie Medal is awarded for outstanding literature for children and young people, whilst the Kate Greenaway Medal is awarded by children's librarians for outstanding illustration for children and young people. The awards themselves are considered the UK's oldest and most prestigious for children, making them some of the most valued that authors and illustrators want to win.

Both of the awards have been celebrated by BGU library in past years in different ways, and this year is no exception. In the past students have participated in events such as the Shadowing Challenge and the Rewarding Reads: A Children's Literature Challenge. The Shadowing Challenge in 2013 consisted of several phases, the first being students and members of the BGU community reading nominated titles and filling in a review form with their initial reactions before returning the book to the library. The second task asked for people to vote on their favourite shortlisted texts from each award. By doing so they could be entered into a special prize draw to win copies of both of the prize winning books from that year! The Rewarding Reads challenge followed in 2014. Initially it had similar tasks such as reading from nominated titles and providing initial reactions. The second part of this scheme consisted of a children's book swap and discussions about the books by BGU lecturers. Both schemes met with success from the BGU community, which will hopefully carry on into this year's event.

To promote the Carnegie and Greenaway Medals this year BGU Library has purchased the 20 books long listed for each medal for the Teaching Resources Collection.

In addition several special events have been organised using the Carnegie and Greenaway books to generate discussion on the role these prizes can play in promoting children's literature.

- In November last year the Education Studies students attended a session on Promoting Children's Literature across the Curriculum.
- In February, author and illustrator Lynne Chapman visited BGU to coincide with the announcement of the long lists.
- There will be displays and other events leading up to the winning announcement in June.



Obituary for children's author Eric Hill

by Kelly Charles

Spot the Dog author dies aged 86

Eric Hill, author and illustrator of the famous children's books *Spot the Dog*, has sadly died aged 86. A simple lift-the-flap picture book, with the lovable puppy Spot at the centre of every tale, Spot quickly became a best seller and stole the hearts of children all over the world, being translated into over 60 languages. Hill's incredible creation went on to become well known, with well-loved adaptations for both television and DVD having since been released. Sales figures rocketed, reaching over £60 million, and 30 years later 'Spot the Dog' is still a prevalent character found on shelves everywhere, be it in the many books that he wrote, or in the merchandise that Hill's idea generated.

As with many children's books, Hill was inspired by his own son Christopher. When he came to bringing his idea to fruition, he initially wrote his story on an advertising flier. This had a small flap that lifted up to reveal something underneath. Hill's son Christopher was very amused by this and Eric took his son's enthusiasm and used it to create a new way of telling his story, making it more like a game to engage young readers. The idea was original and bold, and the simplicity of *Where's Spot?* along with the fantastic drawings that Hill created set it apart from other children's books.

Eric had an eye for detail, and his desire for the Spot books to be produced in the best quality meant that each one was more like a work of art that doubled as an entertaining and engaging toy for children.

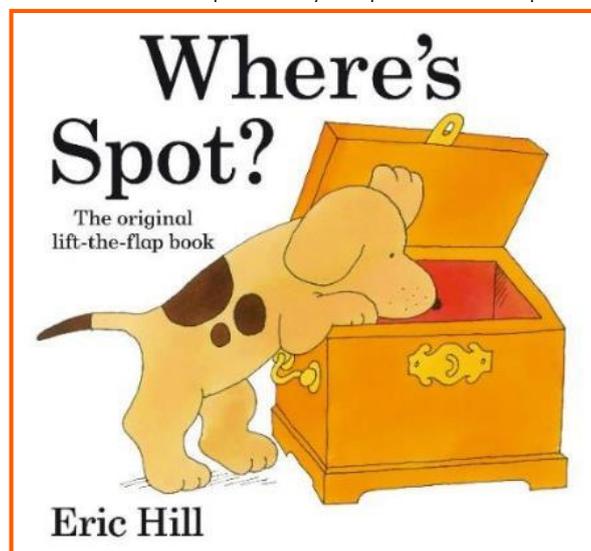
WHAT IF...? by Anthony Browne

by Jasmine Mills

Bedtime stories with Alfie and his Mummy

As we sat comfy and snuggled ready for bed, I showed my son Alfie the new story we were to read at bedtime. It was 'WHAT IF...?' by Anthony Browne. Alfie was terribly excited; there's nothing quite like delving into a new story for a three-year-old. Alfie loved the illustrations, he liked the front cover, and in the windows he thought that the shadow of a bear and some fish was hilarious. The story is about a little boy going to his first big party, and being very worried about it. Reading this story provoked Alfie's memories of his own birthday party back in February, where he had such fun, and so I reminded him of times he might have been worried about going to parties. The story goes on to have Joe, the little boy, and his Mummy walking down the street looking for the party. Alfie enjoyed the scenarios that they came across in looking through windows for the party, particularly a rather large game of snakes and ladders in someone's front room! After dropping Joe off, it illustrates the worries of a Mother having to leave their child when their child is worried, but of course Joe loved the party and wanted a party of his own. Alfie really connected with this story; he related to the worries of the little boy, as I connected with the worries of the Mum. The ending was lovely and conclusive, with a great feeling of relief and happiness! Alfie went to bed with a smile on his face (and a promise to read it again the next day).

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In June 2006, Eric was honoured to be chosen as one of a handful of 'literary ambassadors' at the *Children's Party at the Palace*, one of the events held to celebrate the Queen's eightieth birthday. In 2008 he was also awarded an OBE for services to children's literature. He has been, and will continue to be, recognised as one of the most influential authors in children's literature by generations young and old. His legacy will live on for many more years to come, I am sure.



When I Was a Nipper

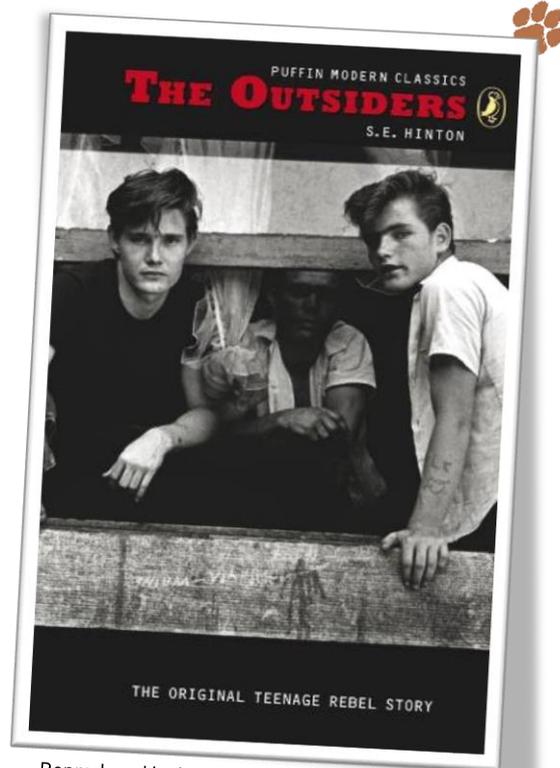
by Kelly Charles and Emma Sansby

This issue's 'When I was a Nipper' has been written by Emma Sansby, Head of Library Services at BGU. Emma is one of the creators of *Hullabaloo!*, and until this year has been heavily involved in the writing, editing and design of every newsletter along with Janice Morris. As our team have taken over the reins this year, we wanted to allow Emma the opportunity to actively contribute to the newsletter rather than being the one behind the scenes. She has chosen to write about the book *The Outsiders* by S. E. Hinton.

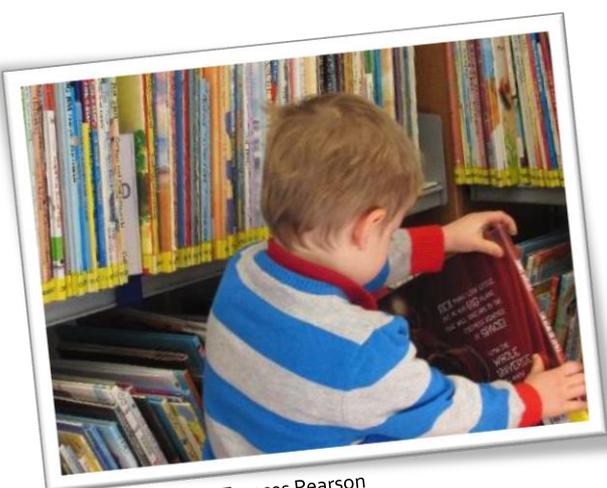
"I don't remember exactly how or when I acquired my copy of *The Outsiders*. I was probably about 14 and I suspect I picked it up having read about the film adaptation that was released the previous year (which, incidentally, was cast with a pretty amazing array of up-and-coming talent, including Patrick Swayze, Rob Lowe, Matt Dillon and Tom Cruise). What I do remember is how completely obsessed I was by the book, in that way teenagers have of becoming wrapped up in a person or a film or a book or a band. I was so obsessed in fact that I even wrote a letter to the author, S. E. Hinton. To this day I'm gutted she didn't write back.

The Outsiders is a coming-of-age story written and set in Tulsa, Oklahoma in the mid-1960s, focusing on a few weeks in the life of recently-orphaned high school student Ponyboy Curtis (14, real name), his two older brothers, Sodapop (16, ditto) and Darry (20) – both of whom are working full time to try to keep the family together – and their close-knit group of friends. All are 'Greasers', from the poorer east side of town, whereas their rivals, the 'Socs' (short for Socials) are from the more affluent west side. What makes the book extra special, though I didn't know it when I was a nipper, is that Hinton wrote it whilst still a high school student herself.

The book is about friendship, family and loss, and, to be fair, quite a lot of fighting and underage smoking and drinking (it has courted controversy over the years as a result!), but it was always Ponyboy's achingly honest, heartfelt narration that drew me in. Its most famous line, "Stay gold, Ponyboy. Stay gold...", is a reference to Robert Frost's poem *Nothing Gold Can Stay* and, in a strange coincidence, the day before I wrote this article I happened to be watching the Ben Stiller film *The Secret Life of Walter Mitty* when one of the characters shouted 'Stay gold, Ponyboy!'. I nearly fell out of my chair."



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Photograph by Frances Pearson

If you'd like help choosing a book for your child, class or even just finding your old favourites for a bit of reminiscing, the library staff at Bishop Grosseteste University would be happy to help you. Drop into the Teaching Resources Collection in our Cornerstone Building and let us help bring your favourite childhood stories back to life.

For more information about our TRC, visit <http://www.bishopg.ac.uk/student/library/teaching/Pages/default.aspx> and, as always, happy reading!

Frances Pearson