

Hullabaloo!

Newsletter of the Children's Collection at the Sibthorp Library, Bishop Grosseteste University College Lincoln

Volume 5, Issue 1, January 2009. Compiled by Janice Morris and Emma Sansby. Please direct all comments to hullabaloo@bishopg.ac.uk

Welcome!

...to a special Lincolnshire edition of *Hullabaloo!* in which we have devoted the entire inside spread to a celebration of Lincolnshire authors and literature. We also discover Caroline Pearce's favourite book when she was a nipper, and bid a fond farewell to much loved animator and author Oliver Postgate. As an aside Emma would like to extend her congratulations to Janice on her article *Picture Books for Everyone* which was published in the January edition children's book magazine *Books for Keeps* (a previous 'featured journal'). Stay warm!

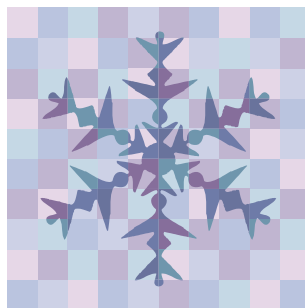
Emma & Janice

Is The Moon Tired?

Is the moon tired? she looks so pale
Within her misty veil:
She scales the sky from east to west,
And takes no rest.

Before the coming of the night
The moon shows papery white;
Before the dawning of the day
She fades away.

Christina Rossetti (1830-1894)

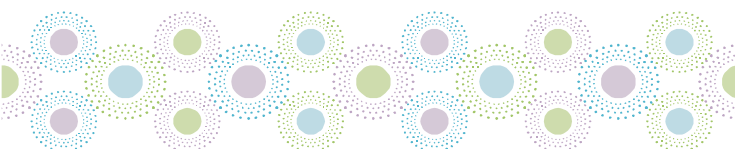


Logo Competition

Are you a budding artist bursting with ideas? Do you fancy designing a logo for our Children's Collection? The Children's Collection is the name we give to our collection of children's books (around 30,000 of them), and though it has been in existence for several decades it has never had its own logo. We like the idea of promoting the collection and giving it an identity which reflects its significance, and so in true Blue Peter fashion we are giving *Hullabaloo!* readers the chance to design a logo for us. It will be used on all of our leaflets and promotional literature and will be displayed on the wall in the Collection.

The winner will receive Janice's selection of ten classic children's picture books. Before you start to design please email us at hullabaloo@bishopg.ac.uk for the competition guidelines and an entry form.

The closing date for entries is May 1st and the winner will be announced in the May edition. Good luck!



Dates For Your 2009 Diary

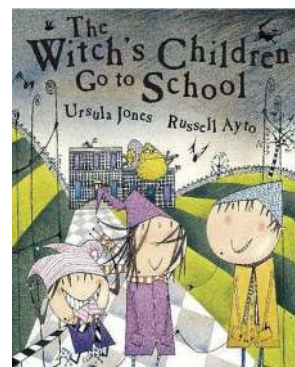
February 27th	National Doodle Day (cool!)
March 5th	World Book Day
March 21st	World Poetry Day
April 2nd	International Children's Book Day
May	National Share-A-Story month Look out for the new <i>Hullabaloo!</i>
May 13th-17th	Lincoln Book Festival + LYPBA announcement
July-August	Summer Reading Challenge
September 8th	International Literacy Day
September 13th	Roald Dahl Day
October	International School Libraries Month National Poetry Day Look out for the new <i>Hullabaloo!</i>
October 5th-11th	Children's Book Week

Awards Roundup

The **Costa Children's Book Award** was won by Michelle Magorian for *Just Henry* (Egmont, £6.99), her first new book in 10 years. Set in post-war Britain, the judges described it as "a gripping and masterful tale".

The **Booktrust Teenage Prize** went to Patrick Ness's *The Knife of Never Letting Go* (Walker Books, £7.99), which last issue we reported also won the **Guardian Children's Fiction Prize**.

A new prize this year was the **Roald Dahl Funny Prize**, which in the 6 and under category was won by *The Witch's Children go to School* by Ursula Jones and Russell Ayto (Orchard Books, £5.99), and in the 7-14 category by *Mr Gum and the Dancing Bear* by Andy Stanton and David Tazzyman (Egmont, £5.99). Michael Rosen chaired the judging panel.



The 2008 **Eleanor Farjeon Award** went to Chris Brown, Reviews Editor of *The School Librarian* magazine (he coordinates over 650 book reviews each year!).

Charlie and Lola creator Lauren Child has been designated a **UNESCO Artist for Peace**.

The **YoungMinds Book Award** went to Tabitha Suzuma for her book *From Where I Stand* (Definitions, £5.99).

And finally, congratulations to Terry Pratchett for his knighthood, to Jane Gardam for her OBE, and Wendy Cooling (Bookstart founder) for her MBE, all announced in the **2009 New Year Honours list**.

ClipArt from DiscoverySchools.com

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See previous issues of *Hullabaloo!* at www.bishopg.ac.uk/hullabaloo

Celebrating Lincolnshire Literature!

There are lots of authors and illustrators with Lincolnshire connections. You've got your ex-pat yellowbellies (those born and raised in Lincolnshire but who have since moved away) like Keith Gray, Morris Gleitzman, Judith Nichols, and June Oldham. You've got your actual Lincolnshire residents like Penny Ibbott and Mark Chambers. And you've got authors that have written about Lincolnshire but don't necessarily live here, like Louise Dale, M.L. Robertson, Alison Prince, Anthony Horowitz, Sheila Sancha and Marie-Louise Jensen. (Have we missed anyone?)

On these pages we've focused on one person from each category, with a profile of Keith Gray and a review of his latest book, and reviews of books by Mark Chambers and M.L. Robertson. Plus assorted other Lincolnshire tidbits!

The Yellowbelly: Keith Gray

Although he now resides in Edinburgh, Keith Gray is a true yellowbelly, having grown up in the Cleethorpes area, which is where his latest book, *Ostrich Boys* (Definitions, £5.99) begins.

Keith started to write in his early teens after reading Robert Westall's *The Machine Gunners*. All through his teenage years he knew that he wanted to write but he also knew that he had to make a living, so when he left school he took a job as a truck driver and then at Pizza Hut to make ends meet. At the age of 21 he wrote *Creepers*, his third attempt at a novel. It got him noticed, then published (in 1996), and then shortlisted for the Guardian Children's Book Award. Since then Keith has written several books including *From Blood: Two Brothers*, *Warehouse*, *Happy*, *Malarky*, *The Runner*, and the horror-inspired *Hunting the Cat*, *Before Night Falls* and *Fearful*. He is currently 'Virtual Writer in Residence' for the Scottish Book Trust.

What we like about Keith here at Hullabaloo! is that he writes really engaging books for boys. Books about friendship and loyalty that have an honesty and an integrity (and often a bit of comedy) to them, and which address difficult themes like bullying, runaways, domestic violence, and suicide.

Keith's latest novel *Ostrich Boys*, which was nominated for the Costa Children's Book Award, is a perfect example, as Mandy explains ...



PGCE Student Mandy Spurr reviews Keith Gray's latest book, *Ostrich Boys*

Whilst deep friendships are often featured in stories for girls, Keith Gray's *Ostrich Boys* shows the complex and deep friendship between three boys in a way that readers will believe, but there is no swapping of friendship bracelets; it is written in a way that is natural and that teenage boys will be able to relate to – no schmaltz in sight. Keith Gray is a superb writer for teenage boys and he is not afraid of talking about the darker realities of life.

His latest novel explores the friendship between three teenage boys after the sudden death of one of their friends. In memory of their friend Ross; Kenny, Sim and Blake embark on a journey from their home in Cleethorpes to take Ross' ashes to Ross in South Scotland to complete a journey that their friend always wanted to make. Typically, the journey does not go as smoothly as they had hoped. As their friendship is

tested these three close friends learn things about each other that they did not think was possible.

The book is so cleverly written that the subtle clues placed throughout the narrative come together in a way that is as unexpected to the reader as to the boys themselves. Gray is able to balance the humour and the darker elements of the novel in a way that does not jar or belittle the serious subject in any way.

Cover image used by permission of Random House Children's Books



The Writer in Residence: Mark Chambers' *Best Friends*

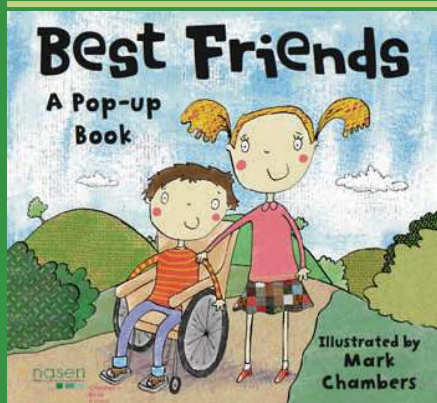


Illustration ©2008 Mark Chambers, Tango Books Ltd, London

By Dr. Richard Woolley, Senior Lecturer

If it wasn't February, I would put Mark Chambers' *Best Friends: a pop-up book* on my Christmas list: I enjoyed it from the moment I picked it up.

In the book, a girl tells of the fun she has with her best friend. They embark on adventures to find dinosaurs, swash-buckling pirate escapades and take part in an Olympic sprint. Whether they are engaging in such imaginative play or just spending time together the story shows the value of friendship. Incidental to the story is the fact that one of the two children uses a wheelchair.

Mark Chambers' illustrations are both eye catching and appealing and the pop-up pages and interactive tabs and flaps mean that once you start to read you want to discover what happens next... not only what will happen in the story but also what will pop up on the next page, literally.

This book won the NASEN (National Association for Special Educational Needs) Book






Award 2008 in the Best Children's Book category. It is easy to see why, as this is one of those rare books that includes disability as an ordinary part of everyday life. Details of a new resource showing a range of high quality picture books that include disability will be included in a future edition of *Hullabaloo!*.

LYBPA Voting Underway

Now in its sixth year, the 2009 Lincolnshire Young People's Book Award shortlist was announced last October. The schedule is a little different from previous years: voting will continue until April 10th 2009 with the winners due to be announced at the Lincoln Book Festival in May. You may also have noticed that the Award has a bright new logo.

Any child aged 9-14 can vote for their favourite shortlisted book, either by completing a voting form and taking it to their local library, or by voting online at www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/lybpa. Children are also being encouraged to submit comments about the books online at the same URL. The shortlisted titles are:

9 - 12 years

-  *The Legend of the Worst Boy in the World* by Eoin Colfer
-  *The Great Escape* by Natalie Haynes
-  *Ottoline and the Yellow Cat* by Chris Riddell
-  *The Truth Sayer* by Sally Prue
-  *My Dad's a Birdman* by David Almond

12-14 years

-  *The Swan Kingdom* by Zoe Marriott
-  *Here Lies Arthur* by Phillip Reeve
-  *Sundae Girl* by Cathy Cassidy
-  *Hurricane Gold* by Charlie Higson
-  *The Black Book of Secrets* by F.E Higgins



**If Kent is the garden
of England,
Lincolnshire is its
farmstead.**
Select Lincolnshire

Lincs BookTalk

Our children's literature reading group, *BookTalk*, has now met four times and has focused on authors like the Ahlbergs, Michael Morpurgo and Philippa Pearce. At our most recent meeting we discussed Lincolnshire-born Morris Gleitzman's *Two Weeks With the Queen* and *Boy Overboard*. The next meeting is on March 14th: keep your eyes peeled for more info –everyone is welcome!

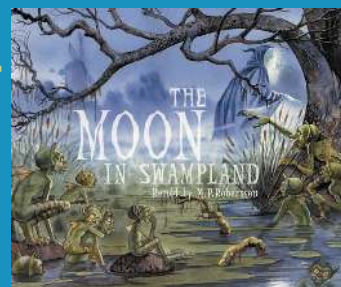
A Lincolnshire Setting: *The Moon in Swampland*

By John Halocha, Reader in Geography Education

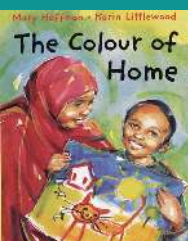
As a young teacher I regularly drove across the Fens to and from school in Whittlesey. 'The Moon in Swampland' vividly brings back memories of driving along dark, unlit fen roads with dikes full of water on each side, hungrily trying to lure me into them (or perhaps it had just been a hard day at school!)

This book conjures up a strong sense of place where good and evil, light and darkness are in constant turmoil. It is a re-writing of a Victorian tale that was told to children in an attempt to stop them wandering into the watery fens at night. I think it would have been very successful if they could have also benefited from seeing the green and slimy creatures who lurk beneath the surface of the water, as are so vividly illustrated in this telling of the tale.

The story is of a small boy who is prevented from being caught by the fen 'bogles' because the moon comes down from the sky and lights his way to safety. In the process the moon is caught and locked up by the bogles who hate light in any form. Everyone thinks the moon has deserted them but the boy explains that the moon has been trapped. A wise old woman tells the townspeople what they must do. Interestingly, she has a pickled bogle in a jar on her table. Such details in the illustrations provide rich opportunities for discussion and reflection with young children. A rescue party risks danger as they pick their way across the fen in darkness. When they reached the place where the moon is trapped, they fling off their cloaks to reveal brightly glowing lanterns which scare away the bogles. The boy swims down to rescue the moon: in a 'blinding flash and, like a comet the moon soared back into the heavens'. And from that day she has stayed in the heavens to help everyone, including young teachers, find their way across those dangerous and slimy places.



The Moon in Swampland by M.L. Robertson © Frances Lincoln Books 2004



A New Generation of Yellowbellies

Some of Lincolnshire's newest residents are immigrants and migrant workers. With this in mind 'One Day We Had to Run': *The Development of the Refugee Identity in Children's Literature and its Function in Education* is an article by Julia Hope which appeared in the December issue of *Children's Literature in Education*. The article provides a very useful and detailed overview of children's books about refugee experiences published over the past 50 years. Hope states that until the 1990s most books about refugees placed the stories firmly in the past but that more recently the focus has shifted to 'current themes, growing out of present conflicts and modern life experiences'. Deborah Ellis, Morris Gleitzman, Mary Hoffman, and Beverley Naidoo have all written about children fleeing from conflicts and their experiences of finding themselves in unfamiliar countries, dealing with extraordinary circumstances. Too often we read about what adults think about children's literature. The significance of Hope's article is that she interviewed children. They agreed that books about refugees play a very important role in raising awareness, tolerance and understanding of the refugee's experiences among teachers and fellow students – not only in English lessons but in Citizenship and PSHE, Drama, Art, Music Geography and History. Inspired by the article, Janice has produced a bibliography of the books on refugees and asylum seekers that we stock in The Sibthorp Library. Check it out at www.bishopp.ac.uk/hullabaloo

When I Was A Nipper...

Learning Technologist Caroline Pearce tells us about her favourite book when she was a nipper...

When I was a nipper, to escape my unusually large family, I read a lot... I was very much into escapism and fantasy, but the book which sprung to mind for this article was much more factual and historical: My Dad used to read to us round the dinner table from **Father's Big Improvements** by Caroline Emerson.

Written in 1936 and set in a small American town it harked back to a child's view of growing up in the 1880s & 1890s. Jimmie Marshall, the main character, is just four when we join him and his family, as his baby sister is born in the middle of the 'great storm' of 1888. There were no telephones, no cars, no proper plumbing, heating or electric lights. We were reminded that families weren't always as well off as we were (crafty of my Dad as most other families were better off than us); reminded that there was once a first time for all these things we took for granted. We followed their tale as the old tin bath and



Image from a 1965 Scholastic edition

pump are made redundant by running water, and as the pipes freeze and burst for the first time and father decides it's time they had a monster of a furnace installed in the cellar. The Marshall family was the first in the town to get electricity and when they switched it on people outside thought the house was on fire! Next came the telephone, which mother was determined not to have in the house, just as I vowed never to have a mobile. Bicycles were next, then the automobile, and finally an aeroplane flies over.

So many big improvements all crammed into one very exciting childhood! In the last chapter they go on holiday to an old log cabin with no amenities and realise that how lovely, relaxing and peaceful it is to live like they used to once again. Maybe this book, and my other favourite, Enid Blyton's **The Magic Faraway Tree**, explain why I now live in the woods surrounded by old junk and a feeling that I was born too late!

First Words Competition

Last issue's winner was the University College's Learning Technologist *Caroline Pearce* who received a £10 book token (and whose arm we subsequently twisted to write the above Nipper article!) for correctly spotting that our quote came from David Almond's **Skellig**.

Our new first words, from a title that's currently very much in demand, are:

"I'd never given much thought to how I would die."

E-mail the title and author together with your name by April 30th to us at hullabaloo@bishopg.ac.uk and that £10 book token could be yours!

As a child, my number one best friend was the librarian in my grade school. I actually believed all those books belonged to her.

Erma Bombeck (1927-1996)

Farewell Oliver Postgate (1925-2008)

Back in December you may have been surprised to hear lots of strange whistles and noises as you went about your normal business. That will have been people of a certain age lamenting the loss of Oliver Postgate, who died on December 8th, aged 83. Likely it was a Clangers whistle, or the squeaky 'heeeave' of the mice on the mouse organ, or the deep 'pushht-kum' of Ivor the Engine.

Oliver Postgate was born in Hendon in 1925. (Actress Angela Lansbury was his cousin). He went to drama school but ended up working for a TV company, where, in the late 1950s, he came up with an idea for a children's TV series called

Alexander the Mouse using a system whereby animated characters are attached to a fixed background by magnets.

It didn't take long for Postgate and his colleague Peter Firmin to create their own production company, which they called *Smallfilms*. Postgate wrote the stories and did the filming and voices, whilst Firmin created the models and artwork, and all in a disused cowshed in Kent. One of their first creations, in 1959, was *Ivor the Engine* (Postgate was inspired by a former fireman on the Royal Scot), and then came *The Saga of Noggin the Nog*, *Pingwings*, *Pogles Wood*, *The Clangers*, and of course saggy old cloth cat



Image courtesy of The Smallfilms Treasury

Bagpuss (who apparently should have had ginger stripes but there was an accident during the dyeing process!). The

last Smallfilms production, *Pinny's House*, was made in 1986.

If anything, it is Postgate's distinctive voice that people remember the most. And remember they certainly do—in the weeks following his death numerous tributes were paid, and it became clear that he had a huge impact on many young lives (Emma's and Janice's included).

Postgate's autobiography, *Seeing Things*, illustrated by Peter Firmin, was published in 2000.

Featured Website: LoveReading

LoveReading is an online independent bookstore set up in 2005 by three book lovers. The site is designed to help you find the next book you -or your children- want to read. Featured books are all ones that the owners have read and recommended, and for all of them you can read the first 10-15 pages as part of their impressive *Opening Extracts* feature.



Two of LoveReading's sister sites are **LoveReading4Kids** and **LoveReadingforSchools**. We really like the Kids site—it's attractive and welcoming and contains several featured categories, as well as loads of information about all the latest titles. We know committed bookworms when we see them and the people behind these websites definitely are—their passion for books is very apparent and we applaud it.