



The Federation of Children's Book Groups

Newsletter

Winter 2012

Red House Book Award 2013 Top Ten Shortlist!

FOR YOUNGER CHILDREN

Can You see Sassoon? by Sam Usher, published by Little Tiger Press

Dog Loves Drawing by Louise Yates published by Jonathan Cape

Spooky Spooky House written by Andrew Weale and illustrated by Lee Wildish, published by Picture Corgi

Welcome to Alien School written by Caryl Hart and illustrated by Ed Eaves, published by Simon and Schuster

FOR YOUNGER READERS

Gangsta Granny by David Walliams, published by Harper Collins

May Contain Nuts/The World of Norm by Jonathan Meres, published by Orchard

Operation Eiffel Tower by Elen Caldecott, published by Bloomsbury

FOR OLDER READERS

Eight Keys by Suzanne LaFleur, published by Puffin

Hit Squad/The Medusa Project by Sophie McKenzie, published by Simon and Schuster

The Power of Six by Pittacus Lore, published by Razor Bill/Penguin

Want to know more about any of the authors or illustrators in the Top Ten? Well, as well as the Q&A with Elen Caldecott later in the Newsletter, you can also find out all about them in the guest posts they wrote for the Red House Book Award blog tour – to know where to find them visit our own blog at www.fcbg.org.uk/blog/

The Awards Ceremony will take place at the Imagine Festival at the Southbank centre on 23rd February 2013. Do keep an eye on www.redhousechildrens-bookaward.co.uk for news and information, to cast an online vote, and also for the opportunity to win exciting prizes including Top Ten books, and tickets for the ceremony! And, if you are going to be coming to London for the ceremony, don't forget to check out what other exciting things will be going on as part of the Imagine festival!

TOP TEN AUTHORS ON TWITTER

@samuelusher
@andrewweale
@elencaldecott
@sophiemckenzie
@davidwalliams
@carylhart1
@jonathanmeres



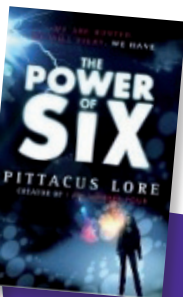
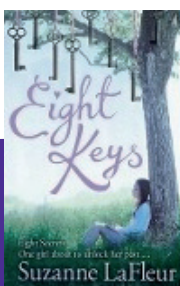
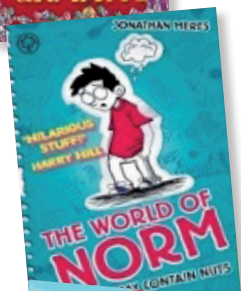
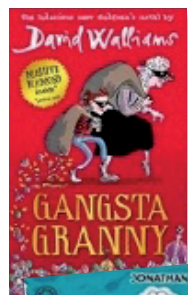
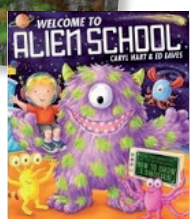
inside

The new FCBG website

5 years of Bookaroo

All the latest news from the groups

red house
children's
book award!





What the Federation are up to online...

Hopefully everyone has now heard the news that the FCBG website has had a bit of a revamp over the summer, and hopefully you've all gone and taken a good look at it! If you hadn't yet heard then we definitely encourage you to pay a visit to our new online home as we have all sorts of exciting things going on there, including information on all our national initiatives and all our individual groups...

THE FCBG BLOG

A new feature on our new website is the FCBG blog, which will keep you up-to-date with all our big news, as well as letting you know about any exciting competitions and events coming up – including all our groups events! We'd like to encourage everyone to subscribe to the blog, meaning that every time we post something, you'll get a message direct to your email inbox to let you know.

Subscribing is very easy - just visit the 'blog' page on the new website then look for this on the right hand side of the page:



Just enter your email address into the box, and click the subscribe button!

THE FCBG ON TWITTER

Every other Sunday for over a year now, we have been hosting a Twitter chat about Children's books, using the hashtag **#fedbkgrp**, and have covered many topics including, recently, books about school and journeys. We have a number of people who join in regularly, and it has been a great way of getting more people involved with the Federation and what we do. We'd love for more people to join us, but if you're not sure about joining Twitter, or can't make it on a Sunday evening, then the list of books mentioned is often added to our blog!

WHO TO FOLLOW:

There are several members of the national exec committee, as well as many people involved with local groups on twitter, all the publishers, bookshops, bloggers and lots of other people who really, really love books, and talking about them.

The Exec Committee on Twitter

@FCBGnews

Zoe: @playbythebook

Melanie: @librarymice

Adam: @FCBGadam

THE FCBG ON FACEBOOK

The Federation are also on Facebook, where we have been posting lots of our news and sharing many blog posts and other interesting things.

To find us search for Federation of Children's Book Groups, and click 'like' to be kept up-to-date.

WE'RE ON YOUTUBE TOO...

Although there's not much there at the moment we are hoping that this is something we can develop – and we're going to need some help doing it! It would be fantastic if groups could get involved making videos from events, and sharing them with us (and if you already have some, do let me know!)



Social Networking:

A group's perspective



Wolverhampton CBG's Facebook

presence came about during the school snow closure days in January 2010. At the time I was a keen FB user and quite keen on Farmville; although I have never been a computer games fan, unless you count hand-held *Snow Invaders*!

I set up the group for Wolverhampton CBG in the hope that some of my FB friends would like to join and be alerted to future Wolverhampton CBG events. I set the group up following the FB instructions. I should admit now that I am not good at following online instructions and tend to be more of a button-presser. Also I only vaguely know the difference between a page and a group!

You can set up the group with admin rights for certain members, so I have some of our committee members who use FB. I was also able to write a brief description of the group and FCBG aims. It was quite exciting when people accepted invitations to join the group and friends of friends and the FB community began to grow our numbers, we even have authors including Alan Gibbons, Celia Rees and H M Castor. It is great when they contribute posts too. We have 70+ FB members at the moment.

I began by advertising our next events along with links to forthcoming authors WebPages and book promotions on YouTube. When the events were over we added photographs and posts about the event. It is an open group therefore all FB users can add photographs and posts too. I have also posted links to our FB group on other group pages, including FCBG. I think it is just as important to respond and contribute to other people's posts.

The responsibility of posting photographs of individuals attending our events is awkward and I have always asked permission from supervising adults. Therefore I have often requested that those attending the event post their own photographs.

The Wolverhampton CBG FB group has altered with changes that Facebook have made over time. Members now have to be approved or selected from friends by one of the admin members. Therefore it is a bit hit or miss if anyone else finds your group. The simplicity or complexity of a group name can determine your success in being found by anyone else.

It is an advantage that events that are listed go automatically to all group members. It can be a disadvantage that all group members can post, especially members with their own agenda who aren't personally known by Wolverhampton CBG. Fortunately we have not experienced any malicious posts.

Time can be an issue. Over the summer I feel I have neglected Wolverhampton CBG's presence on FB; although, it is difficult to know if FB has any impact on publicity for the evening events. I believe it is now possible to know if anyone has read posts, I need to investigate this. Initially we did try to publicise the fact we had a FB presence, again this seems to have lapsed.

Although FB has been Wolverhampton CBG's biggest attempt at social networking, I did open a personal Twitter account where I only tweeted about Wolverhampton CBG and other reading and book related topics. This was quite satisfying as it gave me the opportunity to publicise the FB link and follow and be followed by like-minded Tweeters. I passed on a comment from a student from Colton Hills School to Darren Shan, who sent a comment back.

It was also a good way to communicate with publicists and feel part of the literary community... Unfortunately I had problems with my account and closed it down. I do regret this as it was very interesting, but I haven't found the time to start again.

On the whole my social networking experiences have been positive; you never know who you might connect with. May be having reviewed my experiences here it will inspire me to resume my social networking; it is something that you need to do regularly to benefit from.

If you would like to join Wolverhampton CBG on Facebook search for Wolverhampton Children's Book Group.

Lisa Wharton, Wolverhampton CBG Secretary



A Q&A with Elen Caldecott!

As well as being one of the RHCBA Top Ten shortlisted authors Elen will be running one of the seminar sessions at our 2013 conference (more details below)! She now has 4 books to her name, with *The Mystery of Wickworth Manor* having been published in July, and her previous jobs include archaeologist, nurse, theatre usher and museum security guard. It was while in this last job that she had the idea for her first book, as she explains below...

What started you off writing?

I had a really good teacher in primary school who gave me lots of encouragement. I had written a story about a girl who traveled to a distant planet; there, she met a race of giant spiders who wanted to attached themselves to her face and suck out her soul (you know, a comedy). Instead of referring me to a doctor, the teacher said that she liked the story and that it was well written.

That praise meant a lot - it still does!

Did you read a lot as a child? And do you have any particular favourites?

Yes, I read all the time. I have walked into more than one lamp-post as a result. I loved the Malory Towers series by Enid Blyton. I also loved Roald Dahl, especially *The Witches*, which I still think is really dark and funny.

It has been previously mentioned that your experience working in museums almost led you to become a criminal mastermind - would you care to expand on that?

Ha! Yes, I worked as a museum security guard. Idle daydreaming meant that one day, when I was in the stuffed animal gallery, I wondered if the stuffed elephant would fit inside the goods lift. As soon as I realised that it would, I immediately wondered how you could steal it with CCTV watching and guards patrolling and alarms rigged up... Having Kirsty Jenkins do it in my first novel meant that I didn't have to!

The Mystery of Wickworth Manor is based on the painting The Negro Coachboy, on display at Erdig Hall. What was it about that particular painting that sparked your interest?

I had been led to believe, when I was growing up in the 1980s, that immigration of people to Britain from the West Indies, or African countries was a recent phenomenon, maybe 40 years old. But seeing that painting made me realise that my idea of British history was wrong - the black boy in the painting dates from the 18th century. I think whenever you realise you've been wrong about something it makes you want to find out the truth.

Would you care to tell us about your writing routine?

I work best in the mornings. So I get up, walk my dog and then work for a few hours. Some afternoons I run errands or do admin, other times I go to a lovely cinema I work in. I set myself word goals to make sure I'm writing fast enough.

And finally, are you working on anything at the moment that you can share with us?

I'm working on lots of things! My next book is nearly ready though. I think it will be called 'The Great Ice-Cream Heist' (I'm 99% certain). It's about a girl who has to decide how far she's willing to go for friendship.

It sounds like her seminar should be a lot of fun!



It's never too early to book your place at the FCBG conference!

The 2013 Conference takes place 22nd -24th March 2013 at Culford School, Bury St Edmunds and it looks like there is already plenty to look forward to. As well as Elen, the conference will include seminars from Adele Geras, Andrew Hammond, and winner of the RHCBA 2012 Younger Readers category Liz Pichon. Other likely highlights are a pub quiz with The Two Steves, historical chat from Harriet Castor and arty chat from Emma Chichester Clark, Jane Ray and Alex T. Smith, plus Marcus Sedgwick, Melvin Burgess, Gill Lewis, Sally Nichols, Michelle Paver...

As full, interesting and exhilarating a weekend as ever, from the sounds of things!

All information about Conference 2013, including a booking form, can be found on our website.

(Please note that information presented here is taken from the provisional programme and may be subject to change.)



Celebrating 5 years of Bookaroo!

By Jo Williams

When I moved to India in June 2007 I never envisaged quite the direction my life would take. I hoped that I would be able to find some way to continue FCBG's mission of bringing children and books together but had no idea quite how this would happen.

So it was with happy circumstance that I read about Eureka!, the only children's bookshop in Delhi. The shop was tiny but with shelves of books stacked from floor to ceiling and the owners', Swati and Venkatesh, passion to offer books of all kinds to children shining through. I felt excited about future possibilities.

Looking back, Bookaroo's beginnings lay in the small, informal readings and activity sessions that Eureka! conducted, mainly with friends from the neighbourhood pitching in with storytelling and an author visit in-between. It was a novel concept for children, and a store that catered exclusively in children's books was unheard-of back then, in India.

In the mission to get children and books together, even more activity sessions were arranged at Eureka!, and most importantly many ideas were exchanged in the intense discussions that followed between the three of us.

Swati and Venkatesh were keen to learn about Hay Festival and buoyed by the growing and insistent demand for more author talks and activity sessions we began to dream of holding the first children's literature festival in India.

We were considering a simple one day affair in November to take advantage of the best weather; when during a meeting, a literature festival was suggested but was rapidly dismissed by the chairman as being untenable in its own right, Venkatesh drew himself up to his full height (he had been our BFG!) and announced that we would be holding such a festival in November!!!! Swati and I gulped and meekly nodded in agreement.

This was a real rallying call. Within a few days several others joined our ranks and it was decided that the first children's literature festival in Delhi would take place in November but for 2 days not one and in addition would run an outreach programme, Bookaroo in the City, reaching out to under-served children in the capital in the preceding week.

With just 3 months to pull it all together, including finding sponsorship, it was quite a tall order but many hands make light work and the support from all the authors and illustrators was unstinting.

Another happy circumstance provided the venue. An arts trust set in 7 acres of ground complete with Banyan Tree, amphitheatre, think tank, terracotta horses, and lots of hidden nooks and crannies, a real oasis of calm in the mayhem of Delhi.

That first year, 2008, we had 44 events for children aged from 4-14 with 36 speakers, 3 of whom were international. There are no ticket sales for festivals in India, all events are free and open to all so we operated a pre-registration system as such a festival was something unknown, but all places were taken up in less than 7 days and numbers for the weekend were around 3,000.

Now in our fifth year we have extended to 3 days, one being a Schools' Day where about 1200 students are invited from some 30 schools, the other two days are open to all with 100 sessions and some 67 speakers from all over India, France, the UK, Germany, Sweden, Singapore and Australia, BookArt, an illustrators' exhibition showcasing work by 10 illustrators and Bookaroo in the City will reach out to 100 schools this year.

Our dream is to take Bookaroo all over India especially to those town and cities which do not usually enjoy such cultural events. However, as we are entirely dependent upon sponsorship it remains a dream at this time, although in 2011 we ventured to Kashmir and held Bookaroo at Delhi Public School, Srinagar. In view of the security issues we just had national speakers but when we returned this year we were able to take along 3 international speakers.

It has been a steep learning curve and there have been some memorable moments both challenging and heart-warming - running out of food and water two years running as no caterer would believe that there could possibly be so many people interested in children's books, shelves for the bookshop arriving still wet with paint, a school in Sikkim flying their students down the first year and returning every year with growing numbers.

The thrill of seeing such a beautiful spread of programmes systematically arranged by age, catchy titles and author bios was something new for Bookaroo's visitors. A children's book session in India would normally mean reading from a book and then being given something to draw. In Bookaroo, there was choice. Suddenly, it was not storytelling alone. There were dramatized readings, illustrations, a doodle wall and lots of craft. The book had come alive.

We owe huge thanks to our sponsors and supporters, especially many of the publishers and arts councils both in India and other countries without whom we would not be able to offer such a diverse programme, to all the speakers who give of their time freely and to our volunteers who, as at The Olympics, make it all work on the day.

Looking forward to the next five years and seeing where they lead!



Anthony Horowitz, 2010



Shamini Flint 2011

Oxford Children's Book Group

celebrate turning 20!

From Moira Da Costa:

"Our 20th birthday party was a great success. The Story Museum was a brilliant venue and we decorated the hall with bunting and balloons. The magnificent cake with our 20th birthday logo took pride of place and Freya and Bea, who won our competition for the design, were there to cut the cake. Our scrapbooks of the past 20 years were there to look at and also on display were the books of every author and illustrator who has visited our group over the years. John Foster, a founder member of the group and much loved poet entertained the children with stories. Bill Laar also held the audience spellbound with his stories and there was the opportunity to visit the Storyloom with Ted Dewan. It was a fun filled and memorable afternoon."

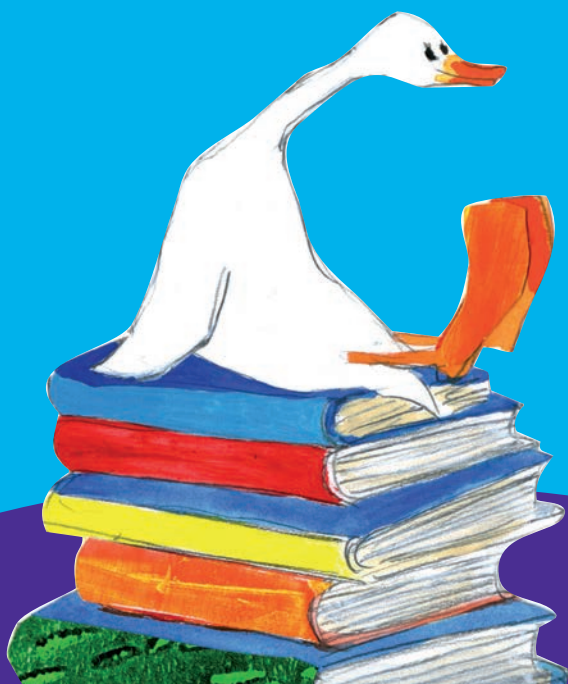
And let's hope they have many future celebrations!

Although the Storyloom is no longer on display at The Story Museum you can find out about their future events here:

<http://www.storymuseum.org.uk/>

Meanwhile we are also celebrating the creation of 2 new groups!

We are really happy to welcome 2 new groups to the FCBG family, both launched during the last few months, one in Staffordshire and one in North Somerset. Staffordshire CBG held their inaugural event with Morris Gleitzman at the beginning of October, and it was a great success. We are all looking forward to hearing more about these groups and their future events on these pages.



Freya and Bea cutting the cake



John Foster discussing his poems



Kathryn Langrish, Julia Jarman and Linda Newbery busily answering our quiz



Sarah MacIntyre and Lavin Marlow at the party



Ted Dewan demonstrating the Storyloom



NEWS from the groups



Thank you to all the groups who send in details about their events. The web site is regularly updated with group activities.

Aldbourne CBG

Have been incredibly busy over the last few months! After a lovely day, in the Summer, spent making lots of wonderful things for their Carnival float, they finally got to show everything off at the beginning of September. The Carnival is a real highlight of the Aldbourne year and this year the ACBG theme was 'The Tiger who Came to Tea' and members were invited to dress up as anything from the book - a tiger, Sophie, Sophie's mum or dad, a cake, a cereal box, or even a teapot! The group were very pleased to come 2nd in the competition for best float – congratulations to them!

October saw the group welcome Chris Lloyd, creator of the *What On Earth* books, to the group. He visited a local primary school during the day, and stayed on for an evening event so that everyone – including adults and older children didn't miss out. They've also, very recently, held their annual bonfire night party – a traditional celebration with food and fireworks!

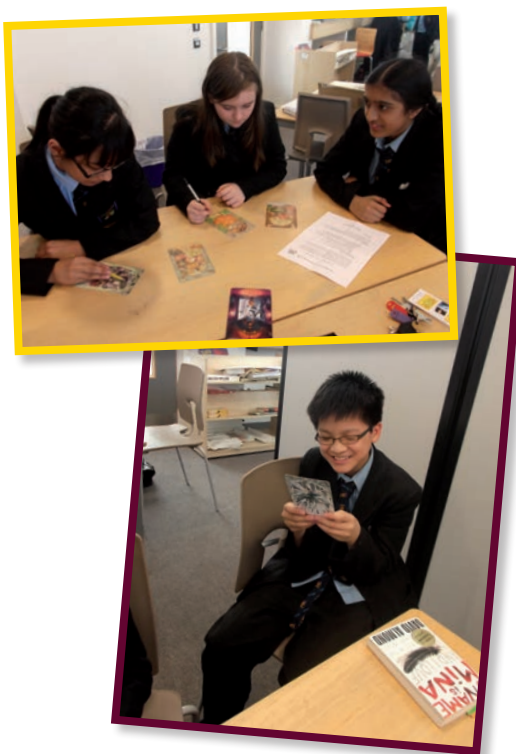
Yeo Valley CBG

The Yeo Valley Reading Gang got together at the beginning of September – their first meeting after the Summer holiday – to celebrate 70 years of Enid Blyton's Famous Five books!

Their next event will be a celebration of Diwali – the Festival of Lights - on 18th November. Entertainment will include Indian music, dance and stories, as well as the opportunity to taste some excellent Indian food, learn about henna tattoos, and dress up in traditional Indian dress. There will also be some Indian inspired crafts, a raffle and a bookswap.

Wolverhampton CBG

Were visited in July by Elen Caldicott, to talk about her book *The Mystery of Wickworth Manor*. We've also received some fantastic pictures from one of their member schools from earlier in the year, of one of their classes putting the *Story World* cards to good use during National Share a Story Month! Their teacher commented that 'even though we are a senior school with older children they loved the cards and were more than happy to use them as a base to make up their own stories. The dialogue was most impressive with a lot of imagination reading different scenarios in to even the individual cards, how they would use them and what each one meant.'



South Bucks CBG

In September South Bucks CBG hosted an evening with children's author Tamara Macfarlane. Not only is Tamara a successful children's writer - follow the adventures of Esme in *Amazing Esme* and *Amazing Esme and the Sweet Shop Circus* - but she is also founder and owner of two successful children's bookshops - Tales on Moon Lane - in Herne Hill and Primrose Hill.

(Tales on Moon Lane is a lovely shop, and well worth a visit if you are in the area!)

Their most recent event was an interactive fun afternoon of demonstrations, talks, crafts and books all on the subject of Flight.

Get Reading Reading

Have had several very exciting events recently, including a celebration of Roald Dahl Day at Reading Library. They celebrate Roald Dahl Day every year, and this year their focus was on *The BFG*, which was celebrating 30 years since it was first published!

They also welcomed author and publisher Verna Wilkins, also for an anniversary celebration. This one was for 25 years of Tamarind Books. Verna told them her inspirational story and introduced them to some of her books, which include *The Life of Stephen Lawrence* and *Dave and the Tooth Fairy*. Early November saw the group celebrating National Non-Fiction Day with Chris Lloyd!

St Alban's

Held an event in October with dragon expert Cressida Cowell, author of the *How to train your Dragon* series. They've also recently held a couple of events for the BIG DRAW, one with Tony Ross and the other with The Etherington Brothers, both were entitled 'Take a Line for a Walk'.

Ipswich

Had an exciting time in October with Matt Dickinson, author of the *Mortal Chaos* adventure stories. Matt is also a film maker who has travelled on expeditions all over the world, including a successful ascent of Mount Everest.

Don't forget to send all your Group News to rebeccajane.knight@googlemail.com and keep up with all events on the website: www.fcbg.org.uk

Don't forget that you can keep up with events on the website www.fcbg.org.uk and many of the groups now have their own website where you can find even more ideas!

www.fcbg.org.uk

ADAM LANCASTER NAMED LIBRARIAN OF THE YEAR BY SLA

You may not have heard the news yet, but former FCBG chair, and current NNFD and NSSM co-ordinator Adam Lancaster was, in October, named as SLA Librarian of the Year 2012. Writing on the FCBG blog last month, Adam had this to say:

"It's not just one person that makes a successful library, or a successful anything for that matter. So being named School Librarian of the Year has not only been a fantastic honour for me but a recognition of all the people that have had a hand in making our library so fantastic.

Students play a big part in our library and without their enthusiasm and dedication to taking part in the things we offer our library wouldn't be what it is now [... and...] I have a lot to thank the Federation for."

We are incredibly pleased for him – congratulations Adam!

WANT TO GET INVOLVED IN THE FCBG EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE?

We are currently looking for someone to help us in National events such as National Non-Fiction Day and National Share A Story Month, or to assist at Imagine, or carry out research for the booklists. We work hard but have a laugh at the same time! We would particularly welcome anyone with an interest in or experience of events management or publicity. If you are interested in finding out more then please contact info@fcbg.org.uk and consider coming along to the next committee meeting, which will take place 11am, Saturday, January 19th 2013 at 80 Strand, London, WC2R 0RL.

CORRECTIONS:

Please note that the contact information for **Karen Hellewell, the FCBG secretary** printed in the previous issue was incorrect. It should be as follows: Hampton Farm, Bowerhill, Melksham, Wiltshire, SN12 6QZ . TEL: 01225 353710. email: info@fcbg.org.uk

Also, **Vice-Chair Sarah Stuffins** would prefer you to use this email address should you need to contact her: Sarahstuffins@btinternet.com

Next issue: Spring 2013

Please send your copy, pictures and ideas to:
Rebecca Knight, Flat 2, 96 Ifield Road,
London, SW10 9AD
Or email: news@fcbg.org.uk
Tel: 0207 3515355

Copy deadline is 25th February 2013

Editorial Team – Rebecca Knight, Daniella Gluck, Ellie John, Jessica Knight and Louise Stothard

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National Non-Fiction Day 2012

The third ever National Non-Fiction Day took place on November 1st this year, and has been celebrated by FCBG groups around the country. Adam Lancaster wrote a piece for the blog, outlining his ideas for the future of this celebration of information and facts.

"Non-fiction has been having a good amount of press time recently as people start to realise, even more than before, the importance facts and information can play in not only the education of young people but also in the progression of reading for pleasure..."

Out of the spotlight there are a lot of things going on as a party of publishers, educational specialists, journalists and organisations try to keep the momentum rolling for the promotion of non-fiction. [...] boosting the impact everyone can have by organising some sort of celebration of **National Non-Fiction Day** itself, and by taking part in the **School Library Associations (SLA) Information Book Award.**"

To read more of Adam's thoughts on non-fiction and plans for NNFD please visit <http://www.fcbg.org.uk/national-non-fiction-day-is-here/>

OUP AUTHOR ROAD SHOW 4TH – 7TH FEBRUARY 2013

The OUP road show will take four award-winning authors, Tim Bowler, Gillian Cross, Geraldine McCaughrean and Sally Prue, to four different cities, Dublin, Glasgow, Manchester and Bristol, in only four days.

In each city there will be an event celebrating the publication of their latest books. After a chaired discussion between the four authors the audience will have the chance to put their own questions to the authors before a drinks reception, which will give everyone a chance to chat further with the authors. Be on the lookout for more information on these events!

