



The Federation of Children's Book Groups

# Newsletter

Autumn/Winter 2015



Frank Cottrell Boyce and FCBG Chair Sarah Stuffins presenting the representative of Rainbows Hospice for Children and Young People with the Federation Gift at the Gala Dinner

## READ ABOUT THE JEAN RUSSELL STORYTELLER

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## READ ABOUT THE CONFERENCE

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**Children's Book Award 2016**

The Federation of Children's Book Groups  
Registered Charity 268289

**THE TOP 10**

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# 2016 JEAN RUSSELL STORYTELLER ANNA CONOMOS



We are delighted to announce that the 2016 Jean Russell Storyteller is Anna Conomos, who was selected as Young Storyteller of the Year in 2005, and has been enthralling and energising audiences ever since.

Anna was selected after a month-long search for a storyteller across the UK and she is thrilled to be chosen for such an exciting project. She tells traditional, international stories, many derived from her Greek-Australian heritage, and she is experienced in telling stories at festivals and at delivering workshops for those struggling with literacy and reading skills. One of Anna's enthusiasms is for telling stories across the generations, involving children telling stories to their elders and she often uses role play, games and music to enthuse her audiences. Highly participatory, she likes to use the whole space and loves to involve the teachers in her storytelling!

Anna will be working with 6 groups across the Federation who rose to the challenge of creating a storytelling project that would reach the more vulnerable and under-privileged young people in their communities. Aldbourne is working with a deprived school and ill children; Birmingham will be holding a 2 day Storytelling Festival with 4 schools and a parent/carer workshop; North Somerset will be having a week-long celebration of stories in schools with low levels of literacy; Oxford is focusing on school year group storytelling and oral language development in a StoryFest; Reading is working with the Whitley Arts Festival in a deprived area and Ipswich has developed a storytelling respite project for local young carers. The project will reach thousands of children.

The Federation would like to thank the Ragdoll Foundation for their generous gift to enable this project to take place, which was created to celebrate the memory of Jean Russell. Jean is still remembered by those who were with the Federation from the beginning. She worked closely with Anne Wood in the early days and played a fundamental role in developing the Federation. As an ill child, spending a lot of time in hospital, stories played a key role and she wanted to pass her passion on to others.

We are delighted that Anna will be working with us to create a lasting legacy in Jean's memory.



## BOOK APPS BEVERLEY HUMPHREY

**BOOK APPS** are sometimes looked down on as poor quality reading alternatives, and indeed it can be hard to sort the wheat from the chaff, but there are some excellent apps out there that can play a significant role in turning younger readers on to reading. They won't ever take the place of beautiful paper books in my opinion but they can provide a complementary experience that is both exciting and absorbing. It was very hard to choose a few from the probably far too many I have on my iPad but after some agonising I have chosen the following as my favourites:

### YOUNGER YEARS

**Three Little Pigs £3.99** I could have picked any of Nosy Crow's apps, they are all excellent quality. All of this publisher's apps are narrated by children and have an eye-catching 3D element that enhances the story being told. Interactive elements abound but never at the expense of story flow, well worth the price.

**Numberlys £4.49** Numberlys is a quite extraordinary app from Moonbot Studios, creators of the perhaps better known Fantastic Flying Books of Mr Morris Lessmore. As with Morris, Numberlys has a gorgeous picture book version and the book has a second app, Imagnotron, that works with the book and makes it come alive on your iPad. However the original app definitely stands alone - its theme is letter formation, beautifully explored in a vintage black and white movie-like way.

### MIDDLE YEARS

**War Horse £4.99** War Horse is one of my own personal top five apps and I have not yet found an app that surpasses it for production and information. The complete text of the book is here, along with an audio version read by the author himself. There is a performance by Michael Murpurgo of a shortened version of the novel as well, along with an interactive timeline and an Insights area packed full of videos of World War I experts talking about different aspects of the war and showing artefacts and settings that would keep kids enthralled for hours.

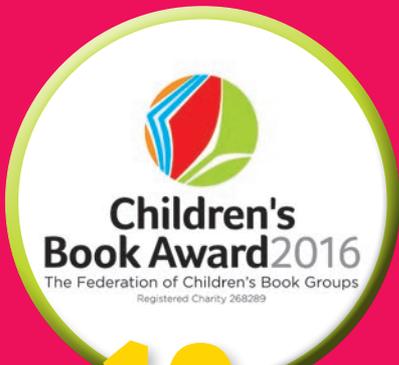
**Captain Underpants £2.29** Dav Pilkey's irrepressibly fun books have been popular with children for many years now and the app maintains the cheeky toilet humour that keeps them laughing - Beat Box to create your own music with wind and toilet sounds anyone?! Reading the book via the app is a very comfortable experience with each page seamlessly sliding into the next.

### TEENS AND ABOVE

**Lovecraft Collection £0.79p** This is not one to read when home alone - it's very spooky! A retelling of one of Lovecraft's gothic stories, this is best explored wearing headphones to fully enjoy the sound and atmosphere. Not for those of a nervous disposition but lots of young people enjoy being scared and this app will introduce them to the pleasures of being immersed in a book that sends chills running down your spine.

**The Unwanted Guest £3.99** App developers Moving Tales Inc specialise in bringing folk tales to life in their apps, all of which are high quality. The Unwanted Guest tells the story of a poor man who finds that Poverty as a physical entity has taken up residence in the loft of his house and is continually growing. The largely monochrome animated line drawings are very effective and the story is told engagingly without unnecessary emphasis on the pathos and moral of the tale.

*App prices are correct at time of writing this article and no, none of them are free but you do get what you pay for and none of these amazing apps are more than the price of a paperback book which makes them 'cheap as chips' really!*



# NSSM 2015 DRAGONS!



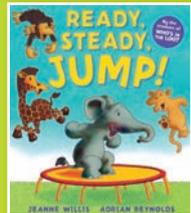
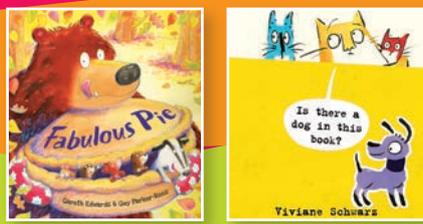
## THE TOP 10 SHORTLIST

The Federation of Children's Book Groups is delighted with the Top 10 for the Children's Book Award this year, which features a great variety of books by established and new authors. Sponsorship of the award by The Book People has now ended.

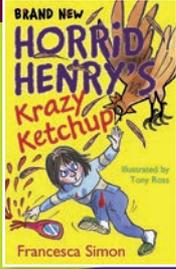
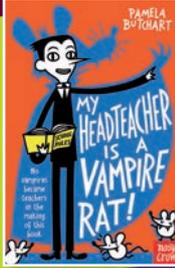
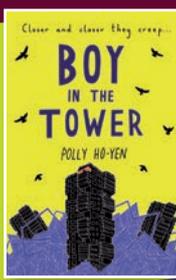
During the 14 years of the relationship with The Book People, the award went from strength to strength with ever growing numbers of votes and greater national recognition. The FCBG is now looking forward to an exciting future for the award, supported as always by the publishers.

Voting is now open via FCBG groups for the Top 10 and the winners will be crowned at a ceremony in London on 28th May 2016.

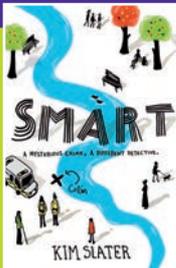
### YOUNGER CHILDREN CATEGORY



### YOUNG READERS CATEGORY



### OLDER READERS CATEGORY



There has been the most wonderful explosion of **Dragons** across the country since May this year! Book groups have held dragon-inspired days of stories and craft activities, schools and libraries have sent photos of busy children wearing dragon masks and making wonderful displays, and everywhere dragon stories have been enjoyed by all. NSSM was a great success and we would like to thank everyone who got involved.

The prize draw has finally taken place and we are delighted to announce the following lucky winners...

- **Oxted Children's Book Group** won the framed Dragon illustration by **Korky Paul**
- **Oxford Children's Book group** won a collection of Dragon Books.
- **Bishops Stortford College Prep School Group** won a collection of Dragon Books.
- **South Bucks Children's Book Group** won the **Giant Egg Kit**
- **Reading Children's Book Group** won a collection of Dragon Books.
- **Ipswich Children's Book Group** won the framed Dragon illustration by **Sarah McIntyre**
- **Bridgewater Primary School, Newcastle** won a collection of Dragon Books.
- **North Somerset Children's Book Group** won the framed Dragon poem by **John Foster**, illustrated by **Mario Coelho**
- **Dereham Neatherd High School**, in Norfolk won a collection of Dragon Books.



The FCBG would like to thank **Korky Paul**, **Sarah McIntyre**, **John Foster** and **Mario Coelho** for their generous donation of the dragon poem and illustrations.

We also thank **Bookspace for Schools** for their wonderful donation of the Giant Egg Kit, <http://www.bookspaceforschools.co.uk>, and many thanks to the publishers **Orion**, **Random House** and **Nosy Crow**.

For more pictures of NSSM - see News from the Groups pages.

## NSSM 2016

The theme will be **'A PLACE FOR STORIES'** and we are encouraging (safe) storytelling in unusual places.....on buses, trains, street corners, cafés, supermarkets, castles, ice rinks, museums, school playing fields, zoos – the opportunities are endless!

We shall ask for photos of youngsters reading in unusual (and safe) places – up a tree, behind the sofa, in a tent, on the plane, a train, the beach, in a caravan, in a canoe, under the bed etc etc (with parental permission of course!)

It should be really exciting and we are looking forward to seeing where stories will be shared! There will be more details on the website.



Author **Damian Kelleher** grew up in Sutton, attending St. Cecilia and John Fisher Schools. His books include *Life, Interrupted* and, most recently, *Dog in No Man's Land*, published to coincide with the centenary of the outbreak of World War I. Young reporter, Imogen Easton, Oxted CBG, caught up with him at the Federation of Children's Book Groups conference.

**Your book *Dog in No Man's Land* was written in association with the Imperial War Museum. Did they approach you or was it the other way round?**

It was actually my publisher who was approached and then they asked me if I would write the book. What was fantastic was that I was able to see a lot of the files that aren't open to the general public. I was able to read letters written by soldiers during the First World War and it was very moving and emotional. I felt very privileged to be able to read those letters and of course it was being able to read them that gave me the idea that I would have letters within the book itself.

**What were your favourite books when you were younger and have they influenced your writing?**

Well I think to some degree every book that you read influences your writing. I believe that so strongly because even if it's a book which you don't particularly enjoy, just reading someone else's point of view and getting someone else's perspective influences us all and I think that's why reading is so important to us really. The books that I loved when I was growing up involved magic or a fantasy world, things like the Narnia books, E Nesbit books. But then another book I really enjoyed was *The Family From One End Street* by Eve Garnett, which is a very old book. It made me laugh and humour I think is something I particularly like when I'm reading books. I love books that make me smile and make me laugh and this book was about the ordinary everyday lives of a working class family and I think it was probably the first time that anyone had written about that. And she does it in such a loving caring kind of way. There were 7 children in the family and things happened to each one of those children. It's really, really amusing and it's done with such grace and good spirit. And I don't think anyone who's reading that book could fail to love it really.

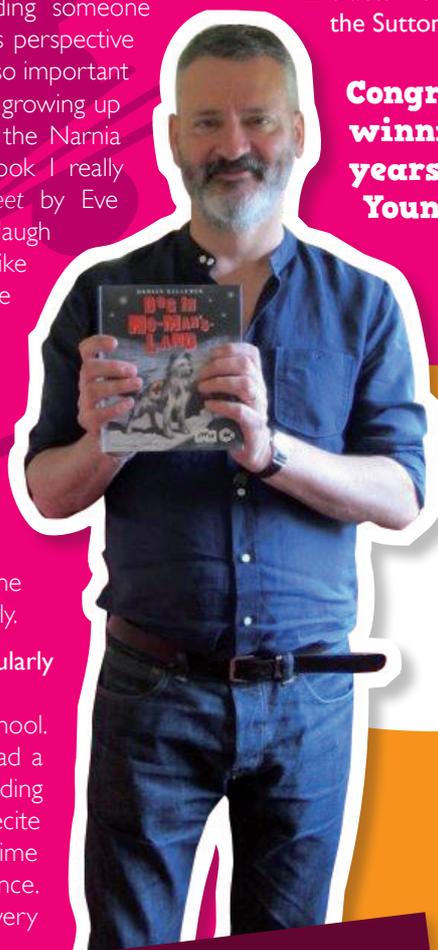
**Were there any teachers at school who particularly inspired you?**

There were two teachers at my primary school. There was a teacher called Miss Clark who had a real love of poetry and I can remember her reading to us. I can remember a poem that I learned to recite in her class. Those things stay with you all the time and those teachers make such a huge difference. Another teacher called Miss Harnett was also very

keen at helping us and encouraging us with creative writing. I loved writing stories even in those days. I think as a child when you sit and write a story and someone says to you "That's a great story", that's just the encouragement you need to direct you to books. When I went to secondary school I had an English teacher, Mr Weir, who was fantastic and always encouraged me. He always said "You should go to university; you should do English at university" and he really helped me to understand that I was capable of a lot more than I might have thought at the time. He was one of those teachers who can just direct you and just give you a nudge and he was one of those people who really made all the difference. If you ask people about school, everyone will have at least one teacher who made a connection with them and it really helped. We really need those teachers.

Extracts from a longer interview which first appeared on the Sutton Guardian website.

**Congratulations to Imogen for winning the best interview in years 12 and 13 in the Newsquest Young Reporter competition.**



**Building Bridges**

Forging connections & growing readers

## Federation of Children's Book Groups

### 2016 Conference

**'BUILDING BRIDGES – FORGING CONNECTIONS AND GROWING READERS'**

Telford Innovation Campus,  
University of Wolverhampton

1st to 3rd April 2016

Speakers include **Katherine Rundell**, **Jill Murphy** and **Andy Griffiths**

See [fcbg.org.uk/conference](http://fcbg.org.uk/conference) for more details and to book your place.

**AN INTERVIEW WITH  
Damian Kelleher**



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[www.fcbg.org.uk](http://www.fcbg.org.uk)

# Notes from the Green Room



**Publishers' Display**



**Rock The Boat Launch**  
One of the many cakes we enjoyed over the weekend



**Damian Kelleher interviewing the panel of Young Adult authors:**  
Lisa Williamson, Alice Oseman and Non Pratt

*An insight into what goes on behind the scenes at the Annual Conference by Executive Committee member Louise Stothard.*

I've always been rather intrigued by the idea of the 'Green Room' which seemed to me to have the aura of a hallowed, inner enclave where the great and good relax at their leisure, bathed in an ambient leafy light, before generously meeting up with us, their adoring audience...

At the last two FCBG conferences I have been able to help Ros Bartlett with the practical aspects of organising our wonderful speakers and I discovered the reality. The Green Room can vary from a classroom, a room with a couple of easy chairs to a re-configured hotel bedroom which had the added benefit of an en-suite bathroom, which is always useful even if the door doesn't lock.

Standing guard for your favourite author does bring you down to earth rather!

I hadn't considered that many of our speakers might be nervous and need reassurance that all will go well. Glasses of water and cups of tea were always appreciated and peace and quiet too... I quickly learnt to restrain my inner fan (gibbering with 'Oh it's sooo lovely to meet you and I sooo adore your books') and not to ask questions about the reasoning behind the plot/characterisation detail on p.56 of the novel they had probably written 18 months previously. It was fun when authors met other authors too and I hadn't realised that there would be some hero worship going on here amongst them too!

Not that I had long to chat or be in awe - I spent a lot of time rushing along corridors looking for errant authors who were trying to avoid the tedious mic check, filling jugs with (more) water, borrowing books for displays from the publishers and making sure that the audience had been chivvied along from the coffee break as we were not running to time. For that was another main pre-occupation - keeping our entertaining speakers on schedule so that the sessions

didn't run over which has consequences for dry sandwiches sandwiches, cold coffee or book signing, which always very important stuff!

Ah, yes, book signing - I have lost count of the number of pens which have been borrowed! I learnt to keep an eye on the speaker's belongings too - a preoccupied nervous author/illustrator is quite likely to 'mislay' their pencil case (containing the lucky pen for drawings) or the memory stick for THE presentation. Also to check that they have plenty of time to catch the train home or you will have to become an instant taxi driver to get them to the station in time.

Overall, it was a privilege to meet people I admire and to be reminded that they are just ordinary people who have a talent for writing or illustrating books. They are not necessarily natural speakers but always endeavour to do their best and are grateful to us, the FCBG, for giving them a chance to speak to and to meet their audience and they are always pleased to know that their talk has been enjoyed.

*Thanks to all at Lincs Childrens Book Group who worked so hard to make the 2015 Conference so 'Inspiring'.*



**Kjartan Poskitt's** entertaining presentation about local celebrity, Isaac Newton

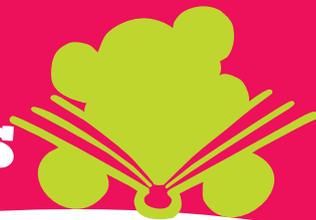


Executive committee members **Melanie McGilloway & Zoe Toft** with the FCBG's latest booklist **Inside the Box**



**Tom Moorhouse's** engaging talk about water voles and the books they've inspired

# NEWS from the groups



It is always great to receive news from our local Children's Book Groups. As you will see from the following reports some inspirational work has been going on around the country during the last few months.

## DUNDEE AND AREA CHILDREN'S BOOK GROUP

180 pupils from three local primary schools attended the Red House Children's Book Award Winner's Party held at Dundee University on the 8th September. The pupils enjoyed presentations by short-listed authors **Pamela Butchart**, **Debi Giori** and **Stuart Hill** and many queued to have their books signed.



Red House Children's Book Award Winners' Party held in Dundee. Pictures courtesy of *The Evening Telegraph*, Dundee.

## IPSWICH CHILDREN'S BOOK GROUP

As part of NSSM 2015 Ipswich CBG invited children to **Design A Dragon** in words or picture and enter our competition. Marvellous dragons of all kinds arrived, described in writing, drawn in pictures, models made of Lego, plasticine, cardboard and willow as well as two sock puppets.

After much deliberation the judges chose three winners: a beautifully descriptive poem, a well designed sock puppet and a marvellous painted model of a dragon called Loveheart made by a 4 year old with help from her



uncle. There were also three highly commended prizes given.

The prizes were presented during our event held as part of the **Solstice Storytelling Festival at Sutton Hoo** on Saturday 20th June. Brave souls entering the Dragon's Lair were able to help complete a dragon by making a scale to add to the outline picture. Our grateful thanks to committee member **Hannah Mee** for painting this.

We were joined by a trio of dragon slaying Anglo Saxons, from re-enactment group Eadfaelder, who also announced our winners and helped present the prizes.

The dragon remained on display at Sutton Hoo for their Dragon Quest weekend in July, when they held a competition to name it. Our dragon is now called Heatwave.

## LEWES CHILDREN'S BOOK GROUP

Many congratulations to founder member of Lewes Children's Book Group, **Diana Rogers** for all the work she has done in Lewes over 40 years to bring children and books together. In recognition of her dedication and hard work she was presented with a very well-deserved **Community Hero Award** at the Lewes Civic Awards ceremony in April.

## NORTH SOMERSET CHILDREN'S BOOK GROUP

North Somerset CBG has been delivering a packed programme of events, which included their **'Talk Like a Pirate Day'** held in Pirate Adventureland in Weston-super-Mare, featuring authors **Hugh Powell** and **Justin Somper**; and more recently a visit by author **Claire Barker** to talk to children in two local schools about her new book, *Knitbone Pepper - Ghost Dog*.

Group members have also been instrumental in launching the North Somerset Teachers' Book Award: [www.northsomersetteachers-bookaward.com](http://www.northsomersetteachers-bookaward.com). The aim of the award is to support teachers in selecting fantastic books to use in their classrooms, promoting a life-long love of reading.

**'Starting off was easy!'** writes CBG member Sue Wilsher. 'At this year's conference, I spoke to the publishers, inviting them to suggest titles. Members of the **Just About Books** group gathered their favourites and searched book shops for new treasures. A long, long list was created!

This had to be whittled down somehow - and the debating began. Having decided on the long list, we launched the website and set about reviewing the books on the list in a way that we hoped would help teachers like ourselves.

Over the summer, we read constantly and came together in September to hotly debate which books should make it onto our short list. On 28th September that list was made public and we have invited all our colleagues to join us in deciding which of these fantastic books will win each category.

The feedback and support that we have had has been amazing! The award will be announced on Saturday 7th November amid plenty of cake and biscuits!

It's been a lot of work, but great fun too. We're already reading for next year..!

## OXFORD CHILDREN'S BOOK GROUP

On September 27th the OCBG held a relaxed and successful family event at the Treacle Well in Binsey.

Despite the remote location, the Treacle Well Tales, attracted over 100 children and parents, to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the publication of *Alice in Wonderland*.

OCBG were delighted to welcome **Mark Davies**, author of *'Alice in Waterland'* to the event. The children also enjoyed meeting storyteller, **Julie Pottle**, who brought along the Story Museum's touring Alice exhibition, which took up most of the tiny church of Saint Margaret.



Oxford's NSSM Dragon Day



Outside, the weather was very kind to all, so children could listen to extracts from Lewis Carroll's much-loved book next to the well or under the huge yew tree. There were several fun activities on offer: making big bubbles; finding 'curiouser and curiouser' things on a Wonderland Treasure Trail; fishing for ducks in the Pool of Tears; pinning the grin on the Cheshire Cat; icing 'Eat Me' biscuits; creating red roses for the Queen of Hearts; trying the Lucky Dip; or just meeting other families and the friendly and very curious goats who live next door!

We did indeed have a super afternoon with a great many very happy faces.

## OXTED CHILDREN'S BOOK GROUP

Oxtd CBG has had a busy few months. Authors **Sophy Henn** and **Matt Dickinson** visited a number of local schools in the spring. The Group was delighted to be successful in its bid for a visit from **Jen Feroze**, from Lonely Planet Kids, who will visit a local school this autumn as part of National Non-Fiction November.

During National-Share-A-Story month, we ran a dragon workshop: we read dragon stories, and got involved in a range of dragon-inspired crafts including decorating a dragon egg biscuit, making a fire-breathing dragon, decorating a dragon mask, colouring sheets and puzzles, making dragons and a dragon story corner.

## READING CHILDREN'S BOOK GROUP

Congratulations to Reading's Children's Book Group, Getting Reading Reading (GRR), who celebrated their **10th anniversary** with a dragon themed event during Reading Children's Festival, which also coincided with National Share a Story Month. This exciting all day event included dragon making crafts, four author talks, a bookshop and cake! A full report written by two of our young members can be seen on the NSSM page of the FCBG website.

Congratulations also to GRR member **Chris Routh**, one of three school librarians who reached the final Honours List for the School Librarian of the Year Award. Chris has been an enthusiastic member of her local group in Reading for several years. She is a member of the committee there and has often hosted group events in her school, bringing school and community together. In 2014 Chris joined the FCBG Executive and brought all her enthusiasm and creative ideas to the national level', writes FCBG Chair Sarah Stuffs.

## SOUTH BUCKS CHILDREN'S BOOK GROUP

SBCG has been incredibly busy since the last newsletter, celebrating **Book Week** with a Book Swap and Make-a-Book sessions in local Primary Schools; a bumper birthday party for three favourite literary dogs; a storytelling and illustration workshop with author/illustrator **Alex Millway**, during Wycombe Arts Festival; and a dragon-themed storytelling event. Here are some extracts from the group's reports which can be read in full on the FCBG website:

'Over Book Week we believe about 120 families have benefitted from the voluntary efforts of South Bucks CBG, in bringing children & books together in enjoyable ways.

World Book Day itself, on 5th March 2015, found South Bucks CBG leading an after school "Make-a-Book" session at High Wycombe C of E School. Aply assisted by "Mary Poppins" and "Hermione Granger", some of the very caring and helpful staff, all wearing their Book Day costumes! Each child selected their own topic or theme for their self-made book and they all really enjoyed creating something special and unique from fire breathing Dragons and large stripy Tigers to beautifully colourful flowers and happy family memories.

This delightful event was attended by children with a range of abilities and families of wonderfully diverse ethnic origins - every continent of the globe was represented for this truly WORLD wide Book Day celebration.'

'**Puppy Dog Tales** celebrated some very special doggy birthdays of favourite literary dogs - the 25th anniversary of "Kipper" by Mick Inkpen, 32nd anniversary of "Hairy Maclary" by Lynley Dodd and the 35th anniversary of "Spot the Dog" by Eric Hill.

Everyone was invited to come dressed in their favourite dog costume or clothes for lots of tail wagging fun.' What followed was a wonderful afternoon of puppy dog inspired songs, dog themed stories and crafts, a 'Name that Dog' quiz, and homemade refreshments.

'A relaxed and happy time was had by all the families, engaging in the various 4 legged activities, taking care to complete each task without rushing and pleasure in listening to the wonderful dog filled stories of "Kipper" and friends adventures.

Many thanks to our young helpers, **Ben & Oliver** for their fantastic decorated biscuits demonstration and Rosie for helping the children collage and laminate their doggy inspired place mats for eating their party food.'

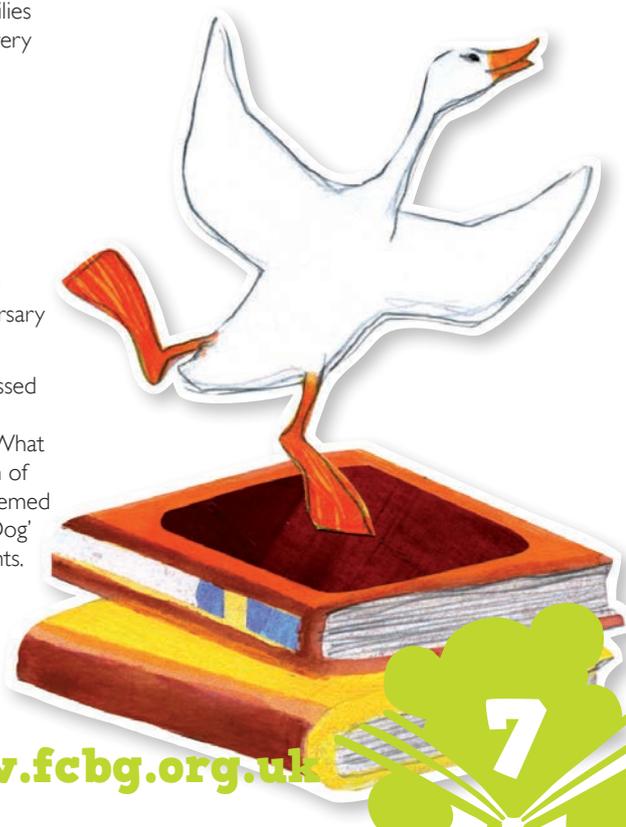
## More DRAGONS at NSSM!



Dereham Neatherd School, Norfolk

Dereham Neatherd School, Norfolk decorated their library with a dragon theme and gave each form group post it notes to 'share their favourite novel' on which were then displayed in the library for others to see under the dragon heads (the idea that the post its were extended scales of the dragon body) with Hot Reads, Books on Fire notices.

We also had a **Wellbeing Community Evening** so I took the opportunity to open the library to have 'dragon themed' activities including - How to Speak Dragonese, Design a Dragon (based on Top Trumps, Dragon Origami and also invited the school Warhammer club to join us showing how fantasy stories extend into games/adventures. Of course How To Train Your Dragon was also playing in the background!





## Dates for Your Diary

- November National Non Fiction November
- February 4 Harry Potter Night  
6 National Libraries Day  
16 International Book Giving Day
- March 3 World Book Day  
15 Shortlist for Carnegie and Greenaway awards announced
- April 1-3 'Building Bridges' Annual FCBG Conference
- May National Share a Story Month  
28 Winners of FCBG Children's Book Award announced
- June 17/20 Winners of Carnegie and Greenaway Awards announced

## Next Issue:

National Non Fiction November,  
Building Bridges Annual Conference,  
Children's Book Award winners and more!

Deadline for the next issue is  
30th April 2016

Thanks to **Rebecca Knight-Morgan** for all her work on the newsletter. We wish her all the best for the future.

Please send all group news, ideas and photos to **Chris Routh**,  
[chrisrouth@leightonpark.com](mailto:chrisrouth@leightonpark.com)

Follow us on Twitter **@FCBGNews**, and on Facebook and don't forget our website: [www.fcbg.org.uk](http://www.fcbg.org.uk) where you can subscribe to our blog!

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# Executive Committee

A warm welcome to our new Executive Committee member, **Sue Wilsher**. Her current role is to oversee FCBG publications. Sue is a primary school teacher who is passionate about inspiring children to read and offering children a wide range of reading experiences.

Sue has a huge personal library (and a very tolerant husband) and says that she is addicted to reading - 'mostly children's books as it's all my brain can cope with in term time!'

She is the founder of **Just About Books** (the local teachers' reading group), North Somerset CBG group and the North Somerset Teachers' Book Awards!

*The next Executive meeting will be Saturday 16th January 2016. All meetings are held in London. Please contact Sarah for further information at least two weeks in advance if you wish to attend as an observer.*

### Chair

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### Oxted CBG

### National Secretary to National Secretary and Group Liaison

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### Aldbourne CBG

### Treasurer and Jean Russell

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### Lincs CBG

### Minutes Secretary

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### Ipswich CBG

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