



The Federation of Children's Book Groups Newsletter

Summer 2013

The FCBG presents a Festival of Children's Literature

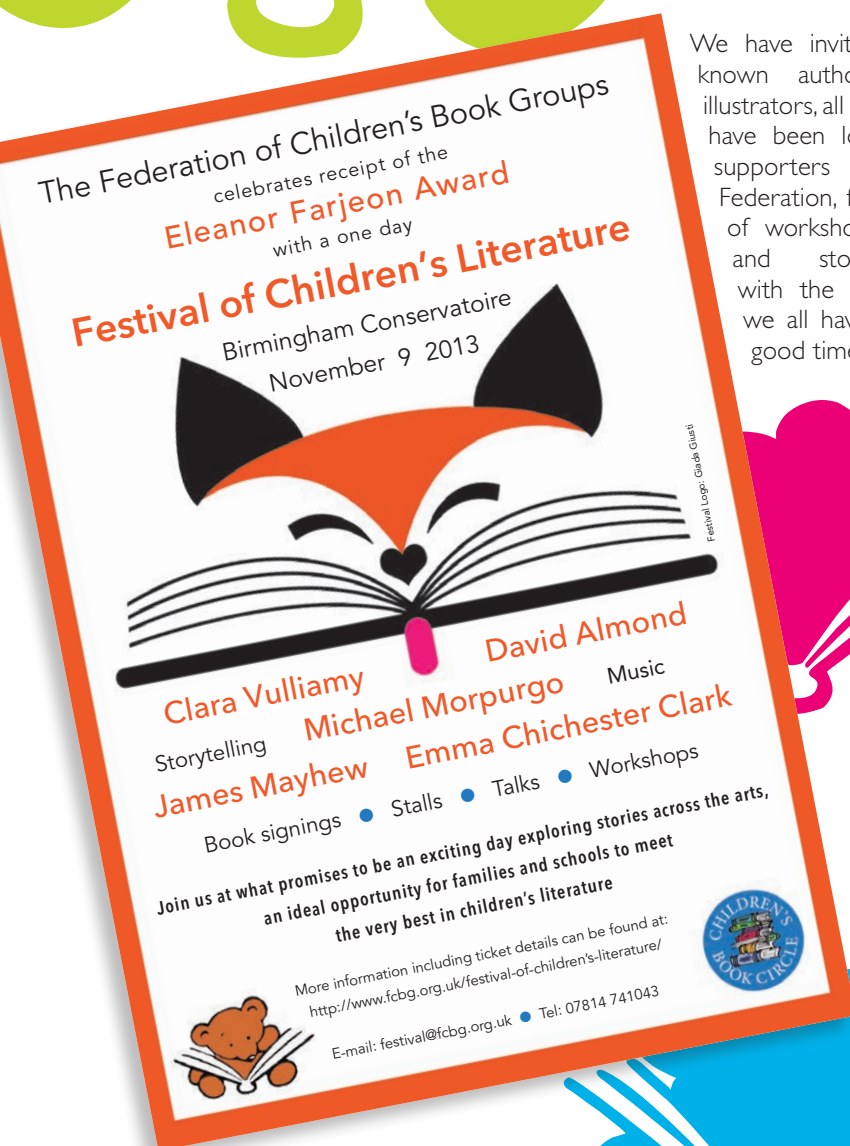
On Saturday 9th November the Federation will be hosting a Festival of Children's Literature at the Birmingham Conservatoire, as a celebration of all the hard work we do in promoting reading to children. After winning the Eleanor Farjeon Award for this work in 2011, we decided that the best way to celebrate was to do more of what we do well!

We have invited well-known authors and illustrators, all of whom have been long-term supporters of the Federation, for a day of workshops, talks and story-telling, with the aim that we all have a jolly good time.

Sessions include a talk from **David Almond**, this year celebrating 15 years since the publication of *Skellig*, a mini puppet theatre workshop for young children with **Clara Vulliamy**, and **Emma Chichester Clark** and **Michael Morpurgo** in conversation about their recent collaboration, a retelling of Italian classic *Pinocchio*. **James Mayhew** will also be offering an illustration-to-music workshop for children aged 10-14, with limited availability, using Benjamin Britten's *The Sword in the Stone*, a suite of music based on the novel of the same name by T.H. White. James will also be live illustrating to the same music in a concert performance in the afternoon.

We are offering each of our groups complimentary tickets for two of their members to attend a session of their choice (excluding the two workshops, due to limited availability for these). To claim these places, please contact festival@fcbg.org.uk before tickets go on sale to the general public on September 2nd.

And if more of you want to come along (and we'd love as many of you as possible to be there!) there's no need to worry as you will be able to buy additional tickets once they go on sale - keep an eye on www.fcbg.org.uk/festivalofchildrensliterature/ for the latest information.



www.fcbg.org.uk

inside

- An interview with the Festival's logo designer
- A snowy Conference report
- Group News and more!



A Festival Logo

During May the Federation ran a competition (advertised through our blog and online) for illustrators and graphic designers to design a logo for Festival of Children's Literature that takes place in November. On May 20th, after some very careful deliberation by the Federation Executive, we were very pleased to announce the winner as Giada Giusti, for her striking fox design. After the announcement Zoe got in touch with Giada, to ask her a few questions about her work and practices.

Can you tell us a little bit about your background?

My name is Giada and I work as an illustrator and graphic designer. I'm a graduate at the Istituto Europeo di Design. I draw since I was a child, essentially I like the character design. I love illustration, comics novel, animation and photography and I never draw without the music.

How would you describe your own style?

I think that my style is a mixture between traditional drawing and digital art, is a little bit ironic and gothic too.

What were your favourite books as a child?

When I was a child one of my favorite book was Alice in Wonderland. I loved the illustrations of Maurice Sendak's Little Bear, No Kiss for Mother by Tomi Ungerer and The Wizard of Oz.

Which children's illustrators living now do you particularly admire (Italian or from anywhere)?

There are many artists that I admire, one of them is Lisbeth Zwerger and I like two Italian illustrators, Maurizio A. C. Quadrello and Sergio Mara.

Why did you want to become an illustrator?

I decided to become an illustrator because of my passion for the drawings and for my capacity to create and imagine the characters of the stories. Illustration is a way of representing specific moment of a tale, I find it very interesting.

Have you already illustrated any children's books? (published or not published)

I've illustrated a short novel for a magazine called "Dall'Italia" and others little stories for children's books contests.

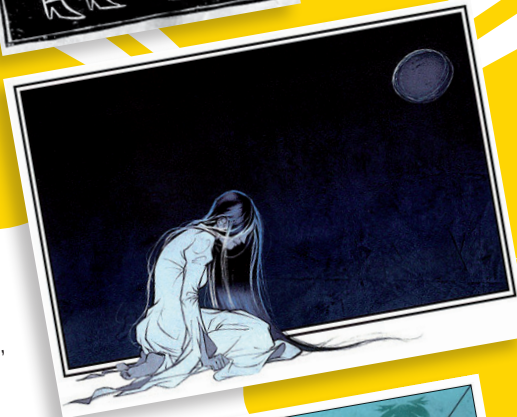
Is there a classic story or fairy tale which you'd particularly like to illustrate? If so, why that particular story?

I don't have preference for a classic story to illustrate because in each of them there are a little bit of mysterious and a lot of fantasy so it's always appealing.

What are you working on right now?

Currently I'm working on a series of illustration for an exhibition and I'm working as a graphic designer.

Thank you to Giada for creating such a wonderful logo for us, and I think we all wish her the best in her future career!





Malorie Blackman announced as Children's Laureate!

The 2002 Red House Children's Book Award winner (for *Noughts and Crosses*) will hold the position until 2015, and has already spoken up about her support for libraries and her plans to get more children reading.

Congratulations to Malorie, we look forward to seeing what you get up to over the next couple of years!

If you would like to learn more about the Children's Laureate, including past holders and what they did with their time in the role, visit www.childrenslaureate.org.uk

And for more about Malorie, you can find her own website at www.malorieblackman.co.uk

Red House seeks Young Writers for 2013 Yearbook

Do you know a budding writer, poet, or journalist? If so, the Red House Young Writer's Yearbook needs YOU!

We want aspiring young writers from around the country to enter the 2013 Red House Young Writers' Yearbook competition and win the chance to see their stories or poems published in a stunningly produced and designed book.

To enter the competition, children should be aged between 7 and 17. They can submit a story, poem or article and it's up to the individual what subject they choose to write about. This year the competition entries will be divided into four age categories: 7+, 9+, 11+ and 13+.

The deadline is 31st July 2013.

As well as becoming a published author, the winners will also earn the opportunity to attend a Red House Young Writers' Workshop, with a high-profile children's author, held – for the first time ever – as part of the celebrated Imagine Children's Festival at London's Southbank Centre. The workshop will provide participants with a unique, fun and stimulating opportunity to help them hone their skills and provide lots of feedback to encourage and inspire!

Matt Whyman, author of *Gold Strike* and *The Savages* says:
'The Red House Young Writer's Yearbook aims to showcase young talent in the raw. It provides a platform for new writers as they get to grips with their craft, and offers a huge boost to their confidence in seeing their work in print for the very first time.'

Now with a series of workshops for the contributors, to be held at the Imagine Children's Festival, it's time to put your stories and poems into words and just see where it takes you. It's been a pleasure and a privilege to edit the Yearbook over the last eight years, and see young writers starting out on their journey. Who knows? Some may go on to become literary legends, but even for those who choose other pathways this is a unique opportunity to find their voice and express themselves clearly and creatively – an essential skill for life.'

And Joe, a previous winner, says:

On learning he was a winner: 'I felt really pleased and totally amazed that my story was going to be put in a real book, like a proper writer.'

On seeing his story in the book: 'I kept thinking: people are going to read my story. It was an overwhelming feeling and I felt like I was going to burst with pride when the book arrived in the post!' On the impact it's had on him: 'It's given me confidence in my writing and made me want to write more stories.'

So, both winners and authors get a great deal out of involvement in the Red House Young Writers competition – but you have to be in it to win it! And to enter simply email your piece of work along with your name, email address, date of birth, age range (7+, 9+, 11+, 13+), your parent/guardian email address and your address to youngwriters@redhouse.co.uk, with a subject of "Red House Young Writers' Yearbook 2013 Competition".

For more information please contact Dominic Kingston:
dominic.kingston@thebookpeople.co.uk



A Snowy Conference Weekend

Conference was somewhat an adventure for those that travelled there this year, as we all set off with weekend forecasts for snow, which fell slowly on the Saturday, creating a magical landscape around the venue, with snow-covered formal gardens and large fields glimpsed through the windows. Trips between our accommodation and the rest of the venue required swathes of warm clothing, huddling down to protect ourselves against the cold, and no doubt for a few of us a brief worry that we'd been transported to Narnia. Inside a lively atmosphere was created around the publishers' stands, as we all discussed the latest and upcoming books, over warm cups of tea and pieces of cake (lots of birthdays and anniversaries celebrated this year). And of course there was an air of excitement around all of the talks.

Friday night

We got going, on Friday evening, with pre-dinner drinks celebrating the arrival of new publishers Curious Fox – who we are all excited to see more from as they grow. After dinner conference was officially opened by Michelle Paver, who had us all fascinated as she spoke about her work and some of the background to her writing.



The Two Steves

Following Michelle we were treated to the high-jinks of the Two Steves, who had thrown together a literary themed pub quiz for us, complete with a round on the history of the Book Award and one that involved willing participants dressing up as characters from Action Dogs to re-enact a scene. It was a fantastic way to break the ice, was an enormous amount of fun and there was a lot of laughter. Sadly my team didn't come anywhere close to the winning score, but we enjoyed it all the same! Saturday.

Saturday morning kicked off with Annabel Pitcher and Marcus Sedgwick, talking about their experiences of writing for young adults in a conversation led by Graham Marks (who put in a heroic effort over the weekend, leading multiple sessions standing in for those who couldn't make it). Emma Chichester Clark then treated us to a sneak peek of her illustration work for Pinocchio (a collaboration with Michael Morpurgo that will be published later this year) and shared with us the adventures of Plum, her dog, which are published in a regularly updated blog, which never fails to delight and amuse (though it may occasionally make you cry).

One of the real highlights of this year's conference was when Gill Lewis, author of *Sky Hawk*, *White Dolphin*, and *Moon Bear*, shared with us an animation she'd made especially for her talk. It's about how Gill grew up hating books, but how that changed for her when she met one librarian who made all the difference. Gill very kindly shared the video with us on the FCBG Blog, and you can find it here: <http://www.fcbg.org.uk/animation-by-gill-lewis-made-for-the-fcbg-conference/>



Gill Lewis

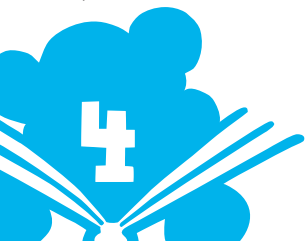
She also wrote more about her childhood experiences with books on her own blog, and you can find that post here: <http://gilllewisauthor.blogspot.co.uk/2013/04/why-i-grew-up-hating-books-and-why.html> Given the subjects of her books, and her previous job as a vet, it is perhaps no surprise that Gill's own route to reading grew from her interest in animals! The conversation between Mary Hooper and Sally Nichols took us in a completely different direction, as we heard all about why they choose to write historical fiction, and how they approach all the research that they need to do to make it convincing.



Gill Lewis animation



Action Dogs



Kevin Crossley-Holland



Later in the afternoon we all split off for the Seminar sessions – a chance to see speakers in smaller groups, with more opportunities for discussion and questions. I chose first to see Elen Caldecott, who talked to us about how she tries to appeal to both boys and girls in her writing, and the lessons she has learned through the publication of her first few books – particularly drawing attention to the evolution of cover designs. Following that I attended Adele Geras's seminar, on the print versus digital debate, which she gave from the perspective of an author, a reader and a grandmother. Adele has posted a little about her view of the seminar and the discussions following it here: <http://normblog.typepad.com/normblog/2013/03/the-power-of-the-page-by-adele-geras.html>

The seminars were followed by the AGM and groups meeting, and, as is often the case, very little time to relax before the gala dinner!

Elizabeth Wein, writer of Code Name Verity was our pre-dinner speaker, talking to us all about history as story, exploring the past through fiction, and how the past has influences on and lessons for us all. If you would like to read her full talk you can find it here: <http://www.fcbg.org.uk/elizabeth-weins-talk-from-the-fcbg-conference/>

After dinner we were entertained by Jonathan Meres, fresh from not quite winning the Red House Children's Book Award. As former stand-up comedian, he was able to keep us all laughing with anecdotes from his previous roles, and his life as the creator of The World of Norm.



Jonathan Meres

Sunday Morning

Kevin Crossley-Holland, provided us with a gentle, but magical start to Sunday mornings activities, talking about his own relationship with books, enchanting us with the journey he has taken from young boy, opening a museum in the shed in the garden, to the writer he is today, including the tale of how a swan encouraged him to study for his Anglo-Saxon exams during his first year at Oxford. If you'd like to read his full talk, you can find it here: <http://www.fcbg.org.uk/kevin-crossley-hollands-talk-at-this-years-conference/>

Graham Marks continued his heroic efforts on Sunday morning, in conversation first with Conrad Mason about his book Goblin's Gift and how he came to write

it, then later talking to both Melvin Burgess and Rachel Ward about the darkness in teen fiction. Following that, we briefly left the world of writing, and entered instead the world of pictures, with a conversation between the illustrators Jane Ray and Alex T. Smith.

It was fascinating to hear about their different ways of working, and the new directions that their work is going in.

We rounded off the weekend by listening to Eoin Colfer's humorous tales of growing up with his many brothers in Ireland, which had us all chuckling. And unfortunately, because of the snow, Conference had to come to an early close, as everyone was anxious to make sure they got home safely.

Curious about any of our other speakers? The FCBG blog featured interviews and guest posts from a lot of them in the run up to Conference, all of which you should be able to find through a search of the website. You can also find a lot of photos from this year's Conference, as well as previous events, on the Gallery pages of our website.

Rebecca Knight

Deadly Dragons and Midnight Feasts at Seven Stories

If you're looking for book-themed treats in the Newcastle area, then Seven Stories is always a good place to head. This summer they have two exciting exhibitions running.

The first, which opened in October last year, and runs until September, promises to transport you back to the Dark Ages, and the world of Cressida Cowell's How to Train Your Dragon series.

The second is the recently opened Mystery, Magic and Midnight Feasts: The Many Adventures of Enid Blyton. Showcasing Seven Stories unique collection of Blyton's original typescripts and illustrations, the exhibition invites visitors to immerse themselves in her magical worlds and head off on adventures with her well-loved characters.

Later in the year, in honour of Judith Kerr's 90th birthday, Seven Stories will also be reviving their retrospective exhibition Tiger, Mog and Pink Rabbit. More information on all of these exhibitions is available on the Seven Stories website.

Magical Books

on display at the Bodleian

If there is one thing I love about Oxford, it is its long history of producing some fantastic writers and fantastic books. Fantastic, of course is a key word here, given that the writers I am talking about include Tolkien, C.S. Lewis and Phillip Pullman. This summer the Bodleian library is playing host to a marvellous display of magical books, and many of the items on display will be of particular interest to those who love children's literature – especially of the fantastic kind.

The exhibition features manuscript pages, original illustrations, maps and gems from the Bodleian's historical collection. Included are a rare first edition of *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*, the plate that inspired Alan Garner's *The Owl Service* and Susan Cooper's personal collection of signs, modelled after those she describes in *The Dark is Rising*.

The exhibition runs until 27th October, so there is plenty of time to make a visit!

What I've Been Reading Lately... Rebecca

Every year before conference I have conversation with my sister that goes something along these lines:

"I will absolutely not pick up too many books this year..."

"Me neither, I've got so many I haven't read already."

"Just the ones that look reeeally interesting."

"And only what I can fit in my suitcase."

Most years we travel to Conference by public transport, we really can only take away what we can carry! But our resolve usually lasts as long as the first conversation we have with the publishers...

So I admit it, the pile I came away with was about as high as one of my arms is long, and those have formed the majority of my reading over the last few months.

Highlights from the list for me were:

Smuggler's Kiss – Marie-Louise Jensen (Oxford)

Set all around the Dorset coast (and mentioning places that I know very well from childhood summers) *Smuggler's Kiss* tells the story of Isabelle, rescued from drowning at sea by a notorious crew of smugglers.

Monument 14 – Emmy Laybourne (Hodder)

A tale of survival billed as 'Lord of the Flies meets The Day After Tomorrow' about a group of children trapped in a department store as the world outside goes crazy.

This Is What Happy Looks Like – Jennifer E. Smith (Headline)

The very gentle story of Ellie and Graham, who are put in contact by an accidentally mistyped email address, and form a friendship across the internet – which is changed when they meet in person.

On my bedside table right now:

C.S. Lewis - *The Silver Chair* – yes, my husband and I have been reading the entire series aloud to each other, because there is nothing that beats the pleasure of sharing stories, however well you know them already.

What I'm looking forward to reading next:

JRR Tolkien – *The Fall of Arthur* - picked up from the Bodleian shop after a visit to the exhibition above, this recently published work reminds us that Tolkien wasn't just an inventor of worlds and Anglo-Saxon scholar, but had an interest in later medieval literature too.

Make-a-book for World Book Day with South Bucks CBG

South Bucks held this book-making event straight after school on World Book Day, Thursday 7th March 2013.

This was a great activity for a small group of children (they recommend Infants - Year 1 & Reception) & their parents to enjoy quality, fun time together on a 1:1 basis. The aim was for parents to help their child create their very own, unique picture book to keep and read together at home, reinforcing vital family bonds and a shared love of books. It also allowed parents and teachers to meet in a more informal environment and build links.

SBCBG set up the classroom before hand, organising the tables with coloured pencils, glue sticks, scissors and cutting coloured sugar paper to size and folding to A4 & A5 size covers/pages for the children to choose from. SBCBG members & staff helped to source material like colour magazines, leaflets & brochures with wonderful pictures to cut out and a very long stapler for securing the books pages together at the end of the session.

Most children & parents came prepared for the event, some bringing photos from home or having chosen a "theme/topic" for their book. Lots of younger siblings stayed with their parents - the toddlers quietly making their own books too! All the children made lovely books, with chose topics including football, animals, food, princesses and nature & wildlife. All the children, parents & staff had a wonderful time!



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.

South Bucks

also recently held a *The Tiger Who Came to Tea* themed event, which was well attended, with more than 2 dozen children & their families turning up. They had a very popular raffle (with all the children desperate to win the RHCBA winner *Spooky, Spooky House*, a talented local Art student creating wonderful face-painting, and lots and lots of craft activities. And of course some tea and cakes!

Afterwards they had this to say:

"Our younger helpers were amazing - one young man acting the tiger all afternoon, in full costume. To start with on the floor with the tea-set and assorted soft toys and wriggly children, and at the end by acting out the story, complete with drinking from a couple of saucepans and burping with gusto!

Another young helper debuted as a portrait photographer, capturing individual children next to the collectively created stripy tiger picture. The children had each painted a small square of "Tiger Stripes" to make up the large patchwork style tiger collage.

Any late-comers, who had missed the initial reading of *"The Tiger Who Came to Tea"* were able to see each page of the original illustrations of this delightful story,

running on a repeating "loop" on a lap-top computer, throughout the afternoon.

As usual, everyone worked together with enthusiasm and commitment and the result was a great success. We received a text from one mother saying, '...my children had fun this afternoon and enjoyed the face-painting. Thank you.' What more could you ask?"

Dundee

The DUNDEE and Area Children's Book Group is currently organising school visits for newly signed author Pamela M. Butchart whose first book, *Baby Aliens Got My Teacher* will be published this summer.

During a week in May, Pamela visited at least one of the local testing schools each day to introduce her new book, taking with her lots of games, and asking the children to get creative with Plasticine!

Wolverhampton CBG

recently held school-based events with Louisa Bennett and Fletcher Moss. Fletcher was talking about his latest book *The Poison Boy*, a murder mystery featuring a boy who acts as food taster to the rich.

Aldbourne CBG

invited Karen Hellewell, the national secretary to talk to them about the history and future of the Federation at their AGM. She also told them about her plans for a Federation Archive - which will hopefully provide a comprehensive history of the groups as well as the national organisation (and if any of you have anything that might be relevant do let her know about it!)

In June they had a visit from Geraldine McCaughrean, who has recently been very generous in supporting a drive to help replace old worn-out Story Sacks at one of the groups local hospitals.

Oxford CBG

enjoyed taking Frances Hardinge, author of *A Face Like Glass* and *Twilight Robbery* to Matthew Arnold School where she held a very successful event. They have also held a successful Book Swap in one of the local shopping centres and are planning a Comic Drawing Workshop with Neill Cameron in July.

Lewes CBG

also held a book swap, and invited author-illustrator Liz Pichon to visit them in April. They've also asked all their members to save-the-date, as they are already starting to plan their 40th anniversary celebrations for June next year! We're looking forward to hearing what they've got up their sleeves...

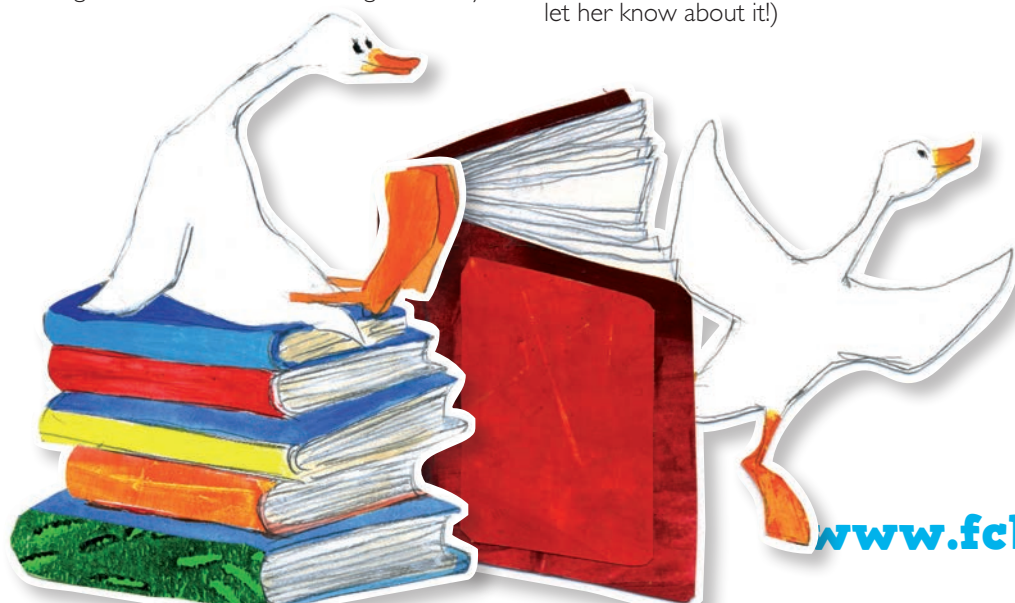
Herts CBG (formerly St Albans)

have very recently had a visit from Cathy Cassidy, have been continuing their monthly Sunday Stories at the Museum, and are currently looking forward to Adventures in Time and Space (see over for more details) and their next few Sunday story sessions: July 28th - celebrating National Archeology Month with the story of The Sandal, a lost shoe that finds itself in a museum; August 25th - defeating dragons in a reading of *King Jack and The Dragon* by Pete Bently.

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



Oxford One Day Conference

Oxford Children's Book Group are delighted to be holding their one day conference:

"Ways into Reading"

on Saturday 12th October at Oxford University Press, Walton Street, Oxford. 9.45 - 4.00 (Registration at 9.15)

Speakers are:
Andy Mulligan (author of Ribblestop and Trash), Victor Watson (Paradise Barn, The Deeping Secrets and Hidden Lies), Tracey Corderoy (author of over 25 books including I want my Mummy and Never Say No to a Princess), the Phoenix Comic, Andrea Quincey of Project X and Vineeta Gupta of OUP Children's Dictionaries. A tour of the OUP Museum will also be available. £25 members, £30 non-members, to include a light lunch. An application form is available from Fay Sinal (sifly@btinternet.com) or please send your details and a cheque (payable to OCBG) to Fay Sinal, 14 Manor Green, Hanwell, OX11 0DQ

Adventures In Time & Space

Sat 7 Sept, at the Weston Auditorium (University of Hertfordshire)

A Dr Who inspired day celebrating the shows 50th anniversary with workshops making Lego robots, stop motion films, rockets and drawing monsters with John Ross, comic strip artist from Dr Who Adventures magazine, activities, talks from authors (tbc) and even more. For more information call 01707 281127

A Quick Reminder

that it is now possible to make online donations to the FCBG using our BT MyDonate page: <https://mydonate.bt.com/charities/thefederationofchildrensbookgroups>. The page allows you to create your own fundraising page, with proceeds going to the Federation, so what might you be able to do to raise some money?

Deadline for the next issue is September 29th 2013

Please send all group news, ideas and photos to Rebecca Knight-Morgan: news@fcbg.org.uk
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Follow us on Twitter @FCBGNews, and on Facebook and don't forget our website: www.fcbg.org.uk where you can subscribe to our blog!

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The next Executive meeting is 19th October 2013

All meetings are held in London. Please contact Julia for further information at least two weeks in advance if you wish to attend as an observer.