

# The Federation of Children's Book Groups Newsletter



**Diane Gaunt**

## Message from our Chair

What a year we've had! This time last year, as I write, we were anticipating Lockdown #1 and coming to terms with having to make the decision to cancel our conference. A year on, we are enduring a third Lockdown and we have lost another highlight of the year, having made an early decision to cancel this year's conference. Schools have been operating remotely or under special precautions for a specific group of children; libraries have been either closed or running click and collect only services; book groups have been unable to meet and have struggled with their mission of bringing children and books together. It has undoubtedly been a difficult time for the members of the Federation, and we are grateful for the good health enjoyed by most. Our thoughts are with those members who have been unwell.

As the saying goes, when the going got tough, the tough got going so there have been many positives, too. The Executive committee immediately moved to virtual meetings, initially once a fortnight and now once a month, which has enabled us to work more closely than ever before. A joyful Children's Book Award took place and, despite missing the face-to-face companionship of like-minded bibliophiles, the ceremony reached more people than ever before. National Share-a-Story Month and National Non-Fiction November went ahead and proved a great draw with our Twitter and Facebook followers. Publishers and authors showed great generosity in sharing access to new titles in a variety of virtual ways, and we developed a supplement to UpdāT

which keeps members informed of such book news. Despite an inevitable lack of Group news, our newsletter was still produced and sent out electronically. Behind the scenes, we have developed new policies and protocols aimed at more effective running of the Federation to serve its members.

We are looking forward. We are actively seeking funding opportunities to enable us to continue and to develop our initiatives; the Children's Book Award will be run over a two-year period this time, which will enable books published during the pandemic to feature equally with those to be published over the coming year. National Share-a-Story Month will soon be with us and will be a real treasure. And the planning for conference 2022 is well under way. There are many reasons to believe that tomorrow will be a good day!

I hope you will be able to join us on 17th April for the Annual General Meeting, which will take place virtually. We would also love your company for the quiz which takes place later that evening. We wish you all good health and fortitude to cope with the social demands of living through a pandemic and cannot tell you how much we are looking forward to seeing you in the flesh once more. In the meantime, please keep in touch with us and let us know what more we can do to support you.

**Diane Gaunt**

**Chair, Federation of Children's Book Groups**



**Our AGM is to be held as a virtual meeting at 4pm on Saturday 17th April 2021, followed immediately by a Group meeting (all welcome) led by Hilarie Medler. Papers have been sent out to all groups and individual members enabling you to submit questions in advance. You are then invited to join us at 7pm for a fun quiz, organised by author Christopher Lloyd, for all members.**

**Groups, please can you organise that one member represents your group at the AGM?**

**RSVP to Anne Bradley on [info@fcbg.org.uk](mailto:info@fcbg.org.uk) for attendance at both AGM and/or Quiz.**



# NATIONAL NON-FICTION NOVEMBER



Every year, schools across the country take part in NNFN. Here is a focus on the work carried out in Grewelthorpe Primary School in North Yorkshire.

## NNFN in Grewelthorpe C of E Primary School

Having chosen to study rainforests and endangered and extinct animals, our aim was to find out the facts and encourage people to adapt their behaviour to make for a better world.

As part of NNFN, we examined many non-fiction texts and websites to collect information concerning deforestation and the problems it is causing. The children researched individual animals on the WWF website and chose one to sponsor by producing persuasive PowerPoints to show to the school via a zoom assembly and then held a vote as to which to sponsor.

In addition, we looked at images of deforestation scenes and wrote poems based upon the animal's perspectives. We also produced some water colour forest scenes and printed our poems onto tracing paper which we attached to the water colour.

**ANDREW BRECKON, Year 5 & 6 Teacher**



## National Non-Fiction November Competition Winners



### KS1

This competition took inspiration from M G Leonard and Daniel Rieley's colourful eco-story *The Tale of a Toothbrush* (Walker Books, 2020). We invited children in KS1 (approx. ages 5-7) to draw or paint a picture of their own toothbrush and suggest one or more ways to reuse/recycle old toothbrushes.

The winners were selected by M G Leonard and Daniel Rieley from the entries shortlisted by the judging panel appointed by the Federation of Children's Book Groups. Each winner will receive a signed copy of the picture book, bamboo toothbrushes plus some other exciting surprises.

### Congratulations to:

**Thanushri** – (aged 5) Krishna Avanti Primary School, Middlesex

**Amilie** – (aged 6) View Primary Stockport

**Grace** – (aged 6) Claysmore Prep School, Dorset

We would like to thank Walker Books and M G Leonard, who provided signed copies of *The Tale of the Toothbrush*.



M G Leonard with Amilie's winning picture.



## KS2

We invited children in KS2 (approx. ages 8-11) to write a poem based on any aspect of the theme of The Planet We Share.

The winners were chosen from the FCBG judges' shortlist by Roger Stevens, poet, author, musician and founder of the award-winning Poetry Zone website. The winners will be published on the Poetry Zone website and will each receive a copy of *The Poetry Zone* anthology (Troika Books, 2018) and for their school, book group or library, a copy of *The Poetry Guide* (Troika Books, 2020); plus some other exciting surprises.

### Congratulations to:

**Rohana** – (aged 11) Dorchester Middle School, Dorset

**Alice** – (aged 9) Grewelthorpe Primary School, North Yorkshire

**Alyssa** – (aged 8) Vale View Primary School, Stockport

We would like to thank Troika Books and MacMillan who provided the book prizes.

**LIZZIE HALL**

**NNFN Coordinator**

### THE PLANET WE SHARE

by Alyssa, aged 8

The planet we share is in danger  
The environment has gone wrong  
The ocean is full of plastic  
You can't hear the whale's song  
The world around us is grey  
And we need to make it green  
We have time to change things  
If we stop being mean  
Everyone around the world  
We need to work it out  
We can do this together  
As long as we don't have a doubt  
Our future children deserve better  
Their outlook can be made bright  
Their world can be made safer  
If we all just do this right



### DESTRUCTION

by Alice, aged 9

The creatures of the rainforest  
Are in an impossible battle against mankind  
They can't win  
Humanity is too strong  
We're hurting them  
The vulnerable, hopeless animals and trees, dying  
Species of animals are becoming extinct  
Trees are horrified, frightened as we arrive  
We're slaughtering these amazing creatures  
The trees  
They're dying  
Because of us.  
Monkeys watching, still wandering the empty landscape  
Flames flickering around them  
Their home cracking and creaking in agony  
Imagine if you came home to a barren wasteland  
Would you like that?  
The innocent creatures are dying  
Destroyed, gone, forgotten



Alice with her winning poem and prizes.

# National Non-Fiction November KS2 Competition winner

## FOR A HUNDRED YEARS AND A HUNDRED MORE

by Rohana, aged 11

Five hundred years I've been stuck in the sand  
Since you discarded that bottle you held in your hand  
I rolled down the path and under a bush  
'Til that big winter storm gave me a push

In a flooding of water, I swam in the rain  
Along past the market and straight down the drain  
For more than a year I lived in that river  
Then a passing boat sent me on an endeavour

The estuary shoreline was teeming with weed  
I got stuck for a month but then I was freed  
I sailed for a decade on the roughest of waves  
Before drifting into the calmest of bays

Five years on, litter pickers arrived  
I was plucked from the ground, heavens alive!  
I was put in a sack with others like me  
But was carelessly placed too close to the sea

Then back out again with all of the others  
The big ones, the small, my sisters and brothers  
Accidentally drifting into a pod  
It all went dark as they swallowed the lot

I lay in that whale for six whole years  
Until the terrible day that confirmed my fears  
On that lonely beach it fell asleep  
Never again to dive and leap

Screeching gulls heaved me out  
Back into the sea, away from their shouts  
I could see the island in the mist  
But drifted past the pier, I missed.

I hit the sand with quite a punch  
My label lost, my lid was crunched  
The treacherous winds pushed me up the beach  
Into the dunes and out of reach

For a hundred years and a hundred more  
I tried to reach the rocky shore  
Trying and failing again and again  
'Til a plastic shovel ended the chain

Pulled from the sand after all that time  
Five hundred years and I'm still feeling fine  
When I think of the moments I've wasted it's frightful  
All I can say is, "Just please recycle."







# National Share-A-Story Month



National Share-a-Story Month planning is underway and we have had so much support offered from publishers across the UK. The theme for 2021 is **Myths, Magic and Mayhem**, an all-encompassing theme that promises to be an exciting celebration of stories. We have a brilliant short story writing competition with story starters from Kevin Crossley-Holland, Michelle Harrison and Robin Stevens. They have each provided a few sentences designed to entice writers to pick up their pen and complete the story! There is also a mythical beast illustration competition with a special guest judge... all to be announced in good time.

There is a display competition open to schools who choose to create a display around our theme!

Prizes are still being offered and we are so thrilled with the support from publishers!

One of the highlights of this month-long celebration is the blog pieces written by authors and illustrators. We have so many wonderful books and blogs to share so please tune in throughout the entire month of May to see how you can get your school involved!

Any questions can be directed to [nssm@fcbg.org.uk](mailto:nssm@fcbg.org.uk)

ERIN HAMILTON, NSSM Coordinator



Samantha Thomas



## Meet the Executive

I have been website coordinator for the FCBG for almost two years, which came about through my being a book blogger. I love both of these roles as they work hand in hand with my job as a primary school librarian, giving me access to books I can promote in person or online. I love nothing more than to find a book that I know will offer the escapism a child is craving, and to get the right book into the right child's hands makes all of the roles I have so fulfilling. If there is an opportunity to encourage reading for pleasure I take it with open arms, hence why I am also a committee member for my local FCBG children's book group - and why my home is fast becoming a second library!



# GROUP NEWS

## SOLIHULL GROUP NEWS

**Emma O'Brien, Librarian at Arden Academy, Solihull and a keen tester for the Children's Book Award writes:**

Arden has started their first Virtual Book Club and although the students cannot access the CBA books at the moment, they are meeting weekly to discuss books via Google Classroom.

There is a theme each week e.g. Myths & Legends, and chat for half an hour on discussion topics related to that theme. It's a great way for students to stay connected and promote a love of reading during these times. It's also helpful to pop bubble barriers! Because it is digital, every year group can join so there are Year 7s talking to 6th formers about their favourite books. Emma says it's heartwarming to see and highly recommends every librarian create a virtual book club if they are able to do so. She is hoping that after half term the students can access the library once more and get back to reading and voting on the Children's Book Award.

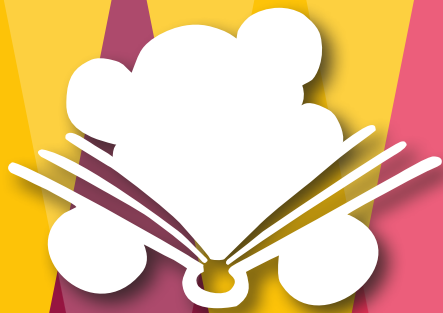


## HERTS CHILDREN'S BOOK GROUP

**Janet Syme, Librarian at Simon Balle All-through School, Hertford writes:**

For ten years the highlight of the autumn term for their Library has always been the annual Book Festival with half a dozen authors, poets and illustrators visiting as well as the Travelling Bookshop. In addition to the main Library for Years 7-13 they now have a second Larch Library serving their new Primary phase. They became the second All-through School in Hertfordshire, opening in September 2015 with their first two Reception classes in a modern, purpose built Primary building. (It will take until the intake in September 2021 for the new Larch Centre to fill.)

Whilst this year was a slimmed down week of Festival events, they managed to organise two live author sessions online with popular children's writer Emma Carroll. She spoke virtually with Years 4 and 5 classes first and students were very excited as *Letters from the Lighthouse* is in the literary canon for the next academic year. Also, Year 4 students are studying Egypt this year, so Emma talking about *Secrets of a Sun King* was particularly relevant. During Lockdown#3 they strongly encouraged their Year 7 students (whom she also spoke with) to watch Emma's new series of Creative Writing sessions on Instagram Live @emmacarroll2603 Tuesdays and Thursdays 10.00-10.30am until half term. These fascinating and accessible events have also been recorded.



For their 2020 Autumn Festival, Fiona Bentley, a book loving contact of theirs, who has started bookbinding as a hobby, made a special video for students. This was shown to small groups of enthusiastic Secondary students at lunchtime in the main library and to Year 5 classes during an assembly.

Fiona actually rebound two of their classics titles beautifully and she filmed the process, sending samples to school of the materials used. Their Art Department is also going to use the film when they look at bookbinding in one of their modules.

Please see Fiona @centifoliabooks on Instagram. Thus, despite Covid, their cherished Book Festival continued to inspire students!



## HARROGATE CHILDREN'S BOOK GROUP

2020 has obviously been a challenge for all our local book groups, not least the testing groups, as publishers struggled to get books out and schools were unable to collect votes due to Covid-19 restrictions.

HCBG continued to send out UpdaTED and Publisher news to members and they were delighted when one of their member schools, Grewelthorpe C of E Primary School, won a selection of books kindly donated by MacMillan Children's Books. The books are already on the shelves in school!



**Harrogate Children's Book Group**

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

**Deadline for the  
next issue:  
Monday, 18th October 2021**

**Please send all your group news,  
high resolution photos and top  
tips to [groupliaison@fcbg.org.uk](mailto:groupliaison@fcbg.org.uk)**

**Any other news or articles should  
be sent to [news@fcbg.org.uk](mailto:news@fcbg.org.uk)**





# DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

|                     |   |
|---------------------|---|
| <b>MARCH 31</b>     | Scottish Teenage Book Prize winner announced  |
| <b>APRIL</b>        | Little Rebels Book Award shortlist announced  |
| <b>April 17</b>     | AGM and Quiz                                  |
| <b>APRIL 23</b>     | World Book Night - 10th Anniversary           |
| <b>APRIL 29</b>     | Branford Boase Award shortlist announced      |
| <b>MAY</b>          | National Share-A-Story Month                  |
| <b>MAY 14</b>       | BookTrust Pyjamarama                          |
| <b>MAY 29</b>       | Elmer Day                                     |
| <b>JUNE</b>         | BBC Radio 2 500 Words Competition Final (TBC) |
| <b>JUNE 10</b>      | Empathy Day                                   |
| <b>JUNE 16</b>      | Carnegie/Greenaway winners announced          |
| <b>JULY</b>         | Little Rebels Book Award winners announced    |
| <b>SEPTEMBER 13</b> | Roald Dahl Day                                |
| <b>OCTOBER 7</b>    | National Poetry Day                           |

## Next Issue:

National Share-A-Story Month  
National Non-Fiction November  
Conference 2022

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

where you can subscribe to our blog!



## Executive Committee

The next full Executive meeting will be on **Saturday, 6th May 2021**. All meetings are currently being held via Zoom. Please contact **[chair@fcbg.org.uk](mailto:chair@fcbg.org.uk)** for further information at least two weeks in advance of the meeting if you would like to join as an observer.

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