

# Ideas for National Non-Fiction November 2025



National Non-Fiction November is the Federation of Children's Book Groups' annual celebration of all things factual- and 2025 sees the 15th anniversary of the original idea from which this month stems.

Offering the perfect opportunity to investigate the amazing variety of information books on offer to children and young people, NNFN is a time to value and recognise the importance all things factual.

The theme for NNFN 2025 is  
**'Past Puzzles and Time Treasures'.**

This booklet contains some ideas and activities to support anyone who would like to organise sessions to celebrate National Non-Fiction November, helping children to discover the wonderful world of information texts.





# Let's celebrate!

From global events to personal stories, everyone can get involved with this year's theme of 'Past Puzzles and Time Treasures'. The work of historians, archaeologists, forensic science and reconstruction could be investigated along with historical mysteries, legends-local and otherwise- and historical trails. Buildings, statues and galleries can also play their part as do the countless wonderful objects they hold. Time treasures might lead to considering future events as well as those of the past- or changes in a place or building through time!



**If you do any of these activities, please do send in photos to [nnfn@fcbg.org.uk](mailto:nnfn@fcbg.org.uk) and we will share them on our website, newsletter and social media!**





# Games and activities to explore non-fiction texts



## Scavenger Hunt:

Give each team/ individual a checklist of different types of non-fiction to find on the shelves of the library/ classroom/ bookshop being used for the session. Alternatively, participants could have a selection of non-fiction books and hunt for different text features, e.g. headings, labelled diagrams. An example Scavenger Hunt sheet can be found in the NNFN Resources section of the FCBG website along with a blank version which can be filled in as desired.



## Play Musical Chairs:

Set the space up as if for musical chairs and place a non-fiction title in a bag under each seat with some sticky notes. When the music stops, everyone must pick up the bag from under their chair. They then have 2 minutes (or an appropriate amount of time) to browse the book. Ask them to record a comment about the book on a sticky note and stick the note on the inside of the cover. Play a set number of rounds and then gather up the comments and share feedback about the books.



## Play Pass the Parcel:

Wrap a non-fiction title as for a game of pass the parcel, but add a picture of the cover of another non-fiction book between each layer. As the parcel is unwrapped, the covers can be shared and discussed. The winner gets to keep the book in the parcel.



## Book Tasting:

Gather a wide selection of non-fiction books on a table and ask everyone to quickly select one. Set a timer for 2 minutes (or an appropriate length of time) and allow each child to browse their book. Count down the last 10 seconds to build tension and when the bell rings, get everyone to swap for another book. Play for an appropriate length of time and then ask each participant to choose the book which appealed to them most. Allow time for everyone to explain their choice.

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## Match a Pair with book covers:

Make two (reduced sized) copies of each of a selection of non-fiction book covers and use them to play Pairs. Mix the cards and lay them face down on the playing surface so that they do not overlap. Taking turns, each player should turn over two cards of their choice from any of the selection. If they match, they have 'won' these cards and keep them. If they do not match, these are returned, face down, to their original places. The next player takes a turn and play continues until all the pairs have been matched. The winner is the player with the most pairs. Plenty of discussion about the books is sure to arise!

An example card game can be found on the NNFN Resources page. There is also an example of 'Genre Pelmanism'.



## Match Up:

Choose a selection of non-fiction books and make copies of the covers. Write a short description about the content of each book. (This could be done by children prior to playing). Place the descriptions and the book covers face down and play as Pelmanism (above), but matching the description to the cover. The game can provoke lots of discussion about different genres and can be adapted to the age/ ability of the players.



## Matchboxes:

Collect a number of large matchboxes or similar (some craft shops sell blank craft matchboxes). Into each box put a selection of small items, models, pictures and words which relate to a specific subject or person, e.g. honeycomb, honey, pollen etc for bees or fossils, an ichthyosaur skeleton, a rock hammer for Mary Anning. Each child chooses a matchbox and takes out the contents, showing the rest of the group. Everyone has to guess the topic the matchbox is suggesting. If in a library, they can then locate the section where books on this topic are located and explore what's there or if not, relevant books could be on hand to be looked at and discussed. This activity can generate plenty of discussion!



## Lucky Dip:

To prepare for this activity, fill a large container with shredded paper. Put a number of non-fiction books into paper bags and tape this up to protect them. Place these amongst the shredded paper in the tub. Ask each child to take a turn finding a book in the dip and then ask them all to open their finds. This can lead to a discussion about whether these would have been books they might have chosen, whether, having picked them, they are now interested in giving them a go or whether they think the book they have chosen would be the perfect choice for someone else in the group.



## Create a poster:

Tap into children's own interests and ask them to create an information poster about a favourite topic. Show them examples which offer ideas about layout and encourage them to include different sections, illustrations and diagrams.



## True or False?

Create some true/ false statements based on a section of a factual text, selected according to the needs/ age of the group. Give children a copy of this either as individuals or in teams. Give them some reading time to familiarise themselves with this or read through this altogether. Read some statements based on the text and ask the children to record whether these are true or false, encouraging them to refer back to the text. Once all the statements have been shared, go through and establish which are true and which false.

Children could create their own true/ false statements based on a topic they are interested in and lead their own session.

An example can be found in the NNFN Resources section of the FCBG website.



## Did you know...?

Having put children into groups or pairs, allocate a book on a different topic to each and ask them to create a 'Did you know...?' question to share with the rest of the group. Alternatively, children could be asked to create these questions at home and bring them to a session, ready for sharing.



## Label it!

For this activity, you will need to have a piece of text and an illustration linked to it. For example, you might have some writing about the structure of the Globe theatre and picture of the theatre. The idea is that children will read the text and add relevant labels to the illustration using the given information.

## Guess Who with book covers:



Use copies of non-fiction book covers, set up the space so that each team can lay out their covers without the other team being able to see them. Each team must pick one cover to be the title the other team have to guess and teams then take it in turn to eliminate books by asking yes/no questions, e.g. Does it have an animal on the cover? Is it written by a woman?

An example of this as a board game can be found on the NNFN Resources Section of the FCBG website.

**If you do any of these activities, please do send in photos to [nnfn@fcbg.org.uk](mailto:nnfn@fcbg.org.uk) and we will share them on our website, newsletter and social media!**



# Teaming UP with Local Venues

**Is there a local venue that you could team up with for National Non-Fiction November?**

## **Museums and Art Galleries:**



A museum visit might be the perfect starting point for investigating a topic or personal interest. Many areas have small museums, focusing on local history which are well worth visiting and there many quirky museums around. Art Galleries have treasures in them - why not ask the children to write their own article about what they see, or create a project on one of the artworks that they see

## **Stately Homes:**



Giving a fascinating glimpse into past lives and times, there are so many ways to link stately homes to information texts. Many offer trails for children to follow, locating objects of interest.

## **Local Parks:**



Creating maps and plans can be great fun and a local park might be the perfect place to map out. You might be able to arrange a talk from a council gardener or park worker and perhaps discover how the park came to be a feature of the local area.

## **Libraries:**



Always a perfect venue for a visit, librarians are sure to be happy to arrange a visit to explore the library and learn how it works! Children could explore the local history section or look at books on a favourite historical period.

## **Bookshops:**



Another perfect location to visit, there are sure to be many ways in which your local bookshop would love to welcome you as part of the National Non-Fiction November celebrations.

## **Newspaper Offices:**



Do you have a local newspaper office or a village magazine? You might be able to visit the premises and see how a paper is made and perhaps write something about your group for publication. There is a BBC Bitesize article about [writing newspaper reports here:](#)



# Making Your Own Book

## Shape Books:



A shape book is one made in a shape which relates to the content and are popular with any age group. A visit to a castle could be recorded in a book of that shape, for example.

## Accordion Books:



An accordion book is one which can be constructed without stitching. Composed of a continuous sheet of paper, folded first one way and then the other, they can also stand up so you can view all the pages at once.

## Flap Books:



Flap books add an element of surprise as flaps are lifted to reveal the 'mystery' beneath! This could be answers to questions or hidden pictures.

## Pull-tab Books:



Pull-tabs add a special element to books, but need some careful planning to work successfully. A tab might reveal the date on which something happened or a figure from history, for example.

## Books with wheels:



A wheel can be used on the cover of a story or to different illustrations throughout a book to add movement and interest.

## Pop-Up Books:



Care needs to be taken with the folding, but pop-ups are always a fun addition to a book!

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# Take a Quiz...

A quiz makes a great NNFN activity for a book group or library club - as it can be adjusted in length and level of difficulty to suit the age of your group and time available. It could be used as a start-up activity or organised as a competition between teams.

Children could be tasked with creating a quiz for another group. Allow them to browse a selection of history books and create some questions- with the answers!

## KS1 Quiz

1. In what type of shop did the Great Fire of London start? Bonus point for the name of the road.
2. Who was found in the cellars of the Houses of Parliament on November 4th, 1605? Bonus point for explaining why he was there.
3. Who was the first person to step foot on the Moon in 1969?
4. Who was Mary Seacole?
5. Who was famous for finding fossils in Lyme Regis in Dorset? Bonus point for naming the creature whose whole skeleton she found.



# KS2 Quiz

1. What were Egyptian houses built of? *Mud bricks*
2. Who lived in Britain before the Romans? *Celts*
3. Why did the Egyptians want the Nile to flood? *It made the land fertile*
4. What did Greeks write with at school? *Stylus*
5. Who was the queen of the Iceni tribe that revolted against the Romans? *Boudicca*
6. How many years in a century? 100
7. How long was Queen Victoria's reign: a. 43 years, b. 23 years, c. **63 years**
8. Who was the first American President? *George Washington*
9. Who was the British Prime Minister during World War II? *Winston Churchill*
10. Name one famous artist from the Italian Renaissance Era *Michelangelo, Leonardo da Vinci, Raphael (also German artists Hans Holbein, and Albrecht Durer).*

# KS3 Quiz



1. Which King had the first castles built?
2. Land between opposing trenches in World War I was known as what?
3. Who founded the Suffragette movement?
4. Someone who excavates historical sites is called what?
5. In the Bayeux Tapestry which king of England is shown with an arrow in his eye?
6. Who discovered Radium, was the first woman to be awarded a Nobel prize and helped create the first ever ambulances?
7. The Tower of London is famously guarded by a group of birds. What type of bird are they, and what legend surrounds their presence?
8. What famous Egyptian pharaoh's tomb, discovered in 1922, was remarkable because it was found almost completely intact?
9. Christopher Columbus sailed across the Atlantic in 1492. What continent was he actually trying to find a new route to?
10. Who was the longest reigning monarch?

# Quiz Answers



## **KS1 Quiz**

1. **Answer:** The Great Fire of London started in a baker's shop on Pudding Lane on the morning of Sunday 2nd September 1666.

2. **Answer:** Guy Fawkes was discovered there. He was part of a group who decided to blow up the Houses of Parliament in an attempt to assassinate King James I and his government and restore a Catholic ruler to the throne.

3. **Answer:** Neil Armstrong.

4. **Answer:** Mary Seacole was a nurse during the Crimean War.

5. **Answer:** Mary Anning. She was the first person to find a whole Ichthyosaurus skeleton.

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## **KS2 Quiz**

1. Mud bricks

2. Celts

3. It made the land fertile

4. Stylus

5. Boudicca

6. 100

7. c. **63 years**

8. George Washington

9. Winston Churchill

10. Michelangelo, Leonardo da Vinci, Raphael (also German artists Hans Holbein, and Albrecht Durer).

## **KS3 Quiz**

1. William I

2. No man's land

3. Emmeline Pankhurst

4. Archaeologist

5. Harold Godwinson (accept Harold).

6. Marie Curie.

7. The Tower of London is famously guarded by a group of ravens. According to legend, if the ravens were to ever leave the Tower, the kingdom and the Tower would fall.

8. Tutankhamun

9. Asia

10. Louis XIV of France - 72 year and 110 days.



# Past Puzzles and Time Treasures

This page is dedicated to activities to do if you only have an hour spare - these would work well in a classroom setting in particular, but can be used for all occasions.

## General Activities



Ask the children to complete a research project using only nonfiction books, not the internet. They can make a booklet or a poster to display. You can hold this as an afternoon activity with the Book Groups, bring nonfiction from your local library to help



Set a nonfiction book for homework reading and ask the students to make a vocabulary list of new words that they have come across - share them all in lesson to learn lots of new things!



Read aloud from wellbeing books in reading time - these count as nonfiction! There are many wellbeing picture books to choose from - this could work for secondary schools too!



For older children - ask them to reinvent an artefact from the past and present it in a Dragons Den style presentation. This could be done in community groups such as Scouts or Girl Guides for one of their badges.



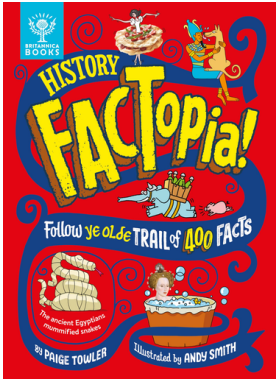
Ask the children to make their own quiz on the nonfiction book that they are working with to include as an activity for the next reader. Similar to a comprehension quiz or fact finding mission. You could include it as an extra activity if the book is picked up by another group (this one would work well in a library setting)



Create a book of the week with a 'did you know?' fact from the book. You can display this on social media, or with your local members. If you planned a visit to a museum, you could find relevant books and make posters for the museum to display

**If you do any of these activities, please do send in photos to [nnfn@fcbg.org.uk](mailto:nnfn@fcbg.org.uk) and we will share them on our website, newsletter and social media!**





← Inspired by this book?  
**Create a trail!**

With so much to see and explore, a visit to a museum or gallery can be a little overwhelming. Many heritage sites offer trails to engage children in the local history which you can use. However, these can easily be created and tailored to meet the needs of the group(s) you are working with.

### **I-Spy Trails:**

Create a sheet including pictures of things for children to find as they explore. They could add the name of the object, tick each thing off or create a label to accompany it depending on their age/ ability and the purpose of the trip.

### **Scavenger Hunt:**

Give children clues or riddles to guide them to specific locations/ items. This could be around the local area, or you could hide them around a playground if you are a class teacher.

### **Time trail:**

Make your own version of FACTopia! Create a time trail around your locality- or encourage children to do this and then present a guided walk to family and friends. Road and house names, village schools and churches, war memorials, statues all hold clues to the past. Children could interview friends, family and neighbours for information to contribute to this.

**If you do any of these activities, please do send in photos to [nfn@fcbg.org.uk](mailto:nfn@fcbg.org.uk) and we will share them on our website, newsletter and social media!**



Inspired by this book?  
Try out these activities!



Why not research your own inspirational person who communicates differently and make posters about them? *Marvelous Messages* talks about Thomas Edison who was deaf, Stephen Hawking, even a Queen of Britain who used one of the first electronic hearing aids!

In the book, Julius Caesar is mentioned as being one of the first people to create codes. Why not invent your own code or cypher? It can be really obscure, or really simple. Have fun with it! Use letters, numbers, pictures - whatever you can think of!

Why don't you invent your own way of communication, just like the inventors in the book did. You could invent a new language, new invention that can communicate in a different way, or use music/dance to communicate your own story.

From pages 54 and 55 - be inspired by writing a journal of how some animals in your local area communicate, such as bees, birds or bugs! Make it as scientific or creative as you like!

Why not learn how to sign your name using pages 20-21 from the book? You can go even further and see if your local library has classes or find videos online for different sign language words.

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## Inspired by this book? → Try out these activities!



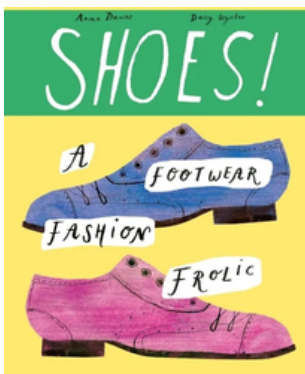
Hold your own 'witchy' celebration event. Children can dress up as their favourite witch from a book or from history. The book talks of the different designs that witches have been displayed as throughout history - they can draw their own modern witch!

Myth and Fact Sorting - Using a whiteboard or paper, Write out a Witch Myths and a Witch Facts. Read statements for the group of children and they decide what is real or not. This could be a fun debunking activity!

For older children - Debate the topics in the book - were the witch trials fair, is a 'witch' always a bad person. They will have to use the book to find the answers and information to support their arguments.

Ask the children to read the book and find a witch that inspires them to do a creative writing piece about - diary entry, short story ect. You can make it a competition in your book groups or have it as an activity at home.

## ← Inspired by this book? Try out these activities!



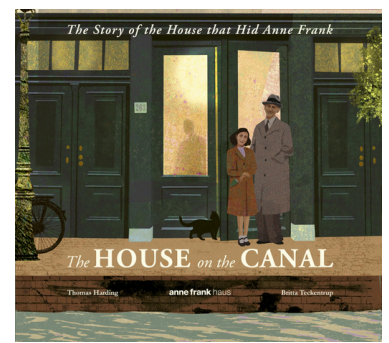
Draw your own shoe (or invent a completely new design) and either research the history of that particular shoe, or invent a history of your own

Make your own book about another object we use everyday - create it in a similar style of SHOES!

Have a go at making your own shoes out of materials you find at home - are you inspired by a particular style from the book?



Inspired by this book? →  
Try out these activities!



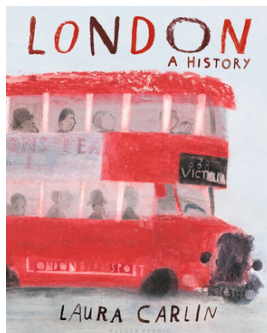
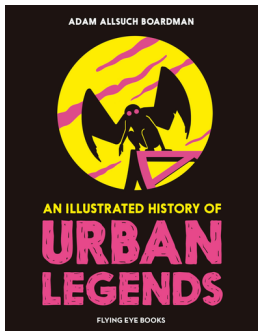
For a month long project - why not research a historical house in your local area. take photos and make your own booklet. Use historical documents or plan a visit to the house for a tour.



Write a diary entry but pretend that you are the house! Be inspired by the events of book and write as if the house were alive - what did the house 'think' throughout time?



The book's illustrations are mixed media collages - maybe make your own house history in a similar style, or pick a famous historical building and make your own set of images.



← Inspired by these books?  
Try out these activities!



Write your own local history with the help of your nearest museum or library. They will have access to resources and cool artefacts that you can include in your homemade book!



Investigate the urban legends around your local area - are there any unsolved mysteries or local legends? Make your own newspaper article or film your own news report, or even 'wanted' posters for the legendary creatures.



If you are creative - invent your own legendary creature! Make a fact file or write a story - or both! You could also rewrite an ancient mythological creature to give it new life.

**If you do any of these activities, please do send in photos to [nnfn@fcbg.org.uk](mailto:nnfn@fcbg.org.uk) and we will share them on our website, newsletter and social media!**



# Why not dig up some Recipes from the Past?



## Viking bread:

You can find a BBC Bitesize [recipe for Viking flatbreads here](#)

## Egyptian flat bread:

You can find a BBC Bitesize [recipe for Egyptian flat bread here](#)

## Ancient Recipes to try!

[Click here for a link to the British Museum](#) and their Ancient Recipes page

- try them out to link in with nonfiction about Ancient Greece and Rome!



## Tudor recipes:

You can find some [tasty Tudor recipes here](#)

## Tudor and Georgian recipes:

You can find some delicious recipes, including one for Georgian hot chocolate from the [Historic Royal Palaces website](#)

## Celtic Cakes:

You will need:

225g oatmeal, 75g plain flour, 50g butter, salt, bicarbonate of soda, water  
bowl, wooden spoon, sieve, saucepan, chopping board, rolling pin, cutters, cooling tray

What to do:

1. Preheat the oven to 220°C/ Gas mark 7. Put the oatmeal into the bowl. Sieve the flour into the bowl and add a pinch of salt. Mix together.
2. Add ¼ tsp bicarbonate of soda and mix well. Next, melt the butter over a low heat and add to the dry mixture.
3. Gradually add some boiled water to the mixture, stirring well until you have a firm dough.
4. Turn the dough out onto a board, sprinkle with a little flour and roll until about 1cm thick. Use a cutter to cut about 24 circles.
5. Place the circles of dough onto a greased baking tray and bake in the oven for about 15 minutes. Allow the cakes to cool on a wire tray before serving.
6. The cakes can be enjoyed plain or eaten with butter, honey or cheese.



Inspired by these books?

Try out these activities!





## Inspired by this book? Try Digging up the Past...



Creating an archaeological 'dig' is great fun and generates lots of excitement and discussion. This is an activity which takes some planning and thought, but is really worth the effort.

Fill plastic shallow storage boxes (measuring about 50cm x 40cm x 18cm) or cardboard boxes with shredded paper. Ideally, you need one box per group of three or four children.

Into each box, 'bury' items for children to find. These could relate to a particular period of history or be a selection of interesting objects. Try to vary the levels at which these are hidden.

Depending on the age of the children/ focus of the session, children could be shown how to 'grid' their site as archaeologists do and record their 'finds' on a plan.

Each group can then excavate their dig and identify their finds using reference materials.

Alternatively, you could try to make your own fossils! You can make them out of [salt dough - see link here](#), or make [your own excavation kits](#)! There are many different ways of making your own fossils - get creative!



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# Non-fiction is not just for November...



Although NNFN is a great way of focusing attention on information texts, there are plenty of opportunities to draw attention to the joys of non-fiction regularly. Here are some ideas for events and awards which take place throughout the year.

## Awards

### **MARCH: The Young People's Book Prize:**

This is run by the Royal Society 'to promote literacy in young people and to inspire them to read about science'.



### **MAY: The Margaret Mallett Award for Children's Non-Fiction:**

Established by the English Association in memory of Margaret Mallett, each year one of the books submitted to the English 4-11 Picture Book Awards is selected as the recipient of the Prize. The award for 2024 was won by *Saving H'Non - Chang and the Elephant* by Trang Nguyen and Jeet Zdung (Kingfisher).



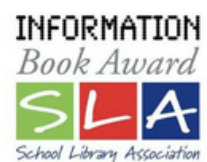
### **MAY: The British Book Awards (The Nibbies):**

These awards have a Book of the Year - Children's Non-Fiction category. The 2024 winner was *'Brilliant Black British History'* by Atinuke, illustrated by Kingsley Nebechi (Bloomsbury).



### **NOVEMBER: SLA Information Book Award:**

This award is divided into three age categories and 'aims to highlight the importance of non-fiction by celebrating the high standard of children's information books being published'.





# Themed Weeks

There are countless themed days, weeks and months throughout the year which are perfect for developing interest in information texts. Here are just a few...

## **MARCH:** British Science Week

A ten-day celebration of science, technology, engineering and maths. In 2026, it will run from the 7<sup>th</sup> until the 16<sup>th</sup> of March, with the theme of 'Change and Adapt'.

## **APRIL:** National Pet Month

Celebrates pet ownership by finding out more about all the cherished creatures who share our lives!

## **APRIL:** Libraries Week

Libraries Week is the annual showcase of the best that UK libraries of all kinds have to offer.

## **MAY:** National Biscuit Day

The 29th May each year is National Biscuit Day - perfect for investigating and creating recipes!

## **JUNE:** World Ocean's Day

Takes place on the 8th June every year.

## **JUNE:** Great Big Green Week

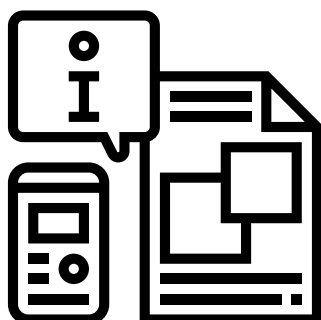
A national festival of fun, practical events. The dates for 2026 are 6<sup>th</sup> - 14<sup>th</sup> June.

## **OCTOBER:** Black History Month

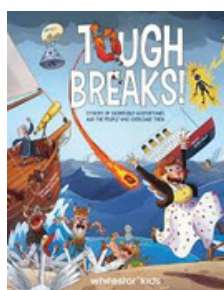
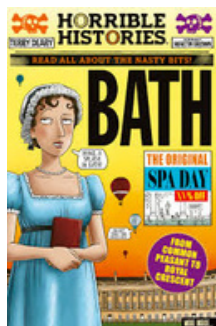
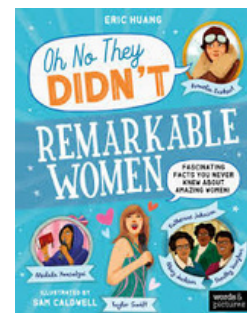
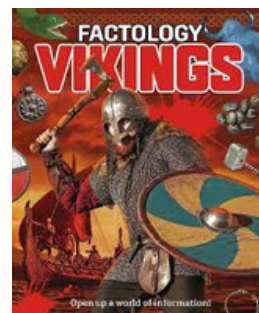
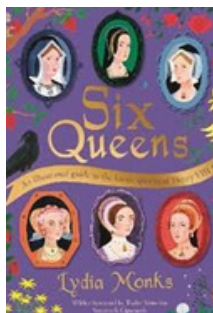
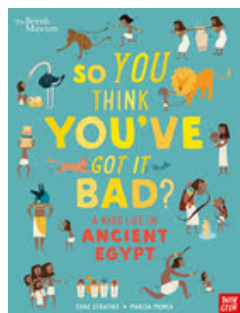
The theme for 2025 is 'Standing Firm in Power and Pride'.

## **OCTOBER:** Green Libraries Week

This will run from Monday 27th October – Sunday 2nd November 2025, celebrating libraries with a focus on the climate and sustainability.







Created by Sue Wilsher of Somerset  
CBG and  
Jasmine Brown, NNFN Coordinator  
on behalf of the FCBG.

