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*Try any goddam thing you like, no matter how boringly normal or outrageous. If it works, fine. If it doesn't, toss it. Toss it even if you love it.* Stephen King

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## INDUSTRY NEWS

### **WALKER BOOKS AUSTRALIA ACQUIRES BLACK DOG BOOKS**

Leading Australian independent children's publisher, Walker Books Australia, is pleased to announce that as of today, Friday 1st July, the book imprint Black Dog Books will be owned and distributed by Walker Books Australia.

Sarah Foster, Managing Director and Publisher for Walker Books in Australia, says the move is a big win for Walker Books, as well as the growing children's publishing industry.

"We are so thrilled to be welcoming such a wonderfully respected and unique brand into the Walker Books family.

With a stimulating list of titles, and an array of superbly talented authors and illustrators, the inclusion of Black Dog Books under the Walker umbrella is an exciting step in our continuing quest to set the standard of publishing excellence for children and young adults."

Black Dog Books is a multi-award-winning independent children's book publisher, with a roster that includes some of Australia's most highly-regarded authors and illustrators, such as Carole Wilkinson, best known for the five-time award-winning *Dragonkeeper* series; Robyn Annear's *Fly a Rebel Flag* and Elizabeth Vercoe and Kerry Abramowski's *The Grief Book: strategies for young people*.

Black Dog Books will be published, marketed and distributed by Walker Books Australia, through TL Distribution (TLD). TLD will supply stock for both Australia and New Zealand. <http://www.walkerbooks.com.au/Black-Dog-Books>

### **GOOD READING AND NATIONAL YEAR OF READING JOIN FORCES**

Good Reading - the popular monthly print and online magazine on all things books and reading-and the National Year of Reading are proud to announce a partnership to celebrate and promote books and reading throughout 2012. This initiative will provide opportunities to those in the book industry to get involved in the National Year of Reading. The shared goal will be to build interest in books and reading for all Australians.

As part of the initiative, Good Reading (gr) will produce two full-colour magazines during 2012, published in February and August. These will be available to readers for free, and will be accessible in print and online, through libraries, booksellers and a range of popular websites. This will reach a potential market of well over a million readers. Booksellers, publishers and libraries are encouraged to participate in these important magazines.

'We are very excited to be working with the National Year of Reading 2012 and are looking forward to providing two high-quality enticing consumer magazines that will not only celebrate and support this wonderful event, but encourage reading to all generations,' says Rowena Cseh, publisher of gr and SpineOut.

Margaret Allen, Chair of the National Year of Reading founder partners and State Librarian of Western Australia explains, 'If we can use the National Year of Reading to

help embed a reading culture in the home and at school, we can improve the lives of current and future generations of Australians. Recreational reading has the power to influence well-being in the way it inspires, informs and transforms our thinking.'

Gr's online magazine for young adults (YAs), SpineOut, will also be working in partnership with the Victorian State Library's website, Inside a Dog, to promote the National Year of Reading's YA campaign to high school students.

For more information contact Rowena Cseh

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W: [www.goodreadingmagazine.com.au](http://www.goodreadingmagazine.com.au) | [www.spineout.com.au](http://www.spineout.com.au) |

[www.lovetoread.org.au](http://www.lovetoread.org.au)

### **NEW ASA COUNCILLORS**

The Australian Society of Authors is proud to announce the appointment of three new members to its Council. The ASA Council is comprised of a number of eminent authors acknowledged to be important contributors to Australian culture and letters. The inductees in 2011 are David Marr, Helen Garner, and children's author Libby Gleeson.

### **BANANAS BURGLED**

Replicas of the ABC's Bananas in Pyjamas, B1 and B2, have been returned home safely after being stolen from the foyer of the ABC's Collinswood building in Adelaide. A man, 24, and a woman, 23, were charged with theft.

### **KOALA BOOKS**

Nicola Robinson is now commissioning editor of Koala Books, working one day a week. She follows Cathie Tasker who is currently enrolled in an e-book course.

### **WIMPY KID**

Book 6 of the bestselling Wimpy Kid series will be out on 16 November. US publisher Abrams is doing a first print run of 6 million copies. The Wimpy Kid series has sold over 1.5 million copies in Australia since the release of book 1 in 2008.

### **JK ROWLING**

Reports circulating that JK Rowling had purchased a house purchase in Tasmania have been denied. <http://www.abc.net.au/mediawatch/transcripts/s3242711.htm>

### **FORD STREET NEWS**

Paul Collins, author of Mole Hunt, guest blogs at Hey! Teenager of the Year: <http://heyteenager.blogspot.com/2011/06/guest-post-by-paul-collins.html> and interviewed by Claire Saxby at: <http://www.letshavewords.blogspot.com/> View the Mole Hunt trailer at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3S-eKDYqpEs>

### **THE BOY AND THE CROCODILE**

Affirm Press, an independent Australian publisher, is currently working on a not-for-profit picture book entitled 'The Boy and the Crocodile'. This name is taken from a legendary story of East Timor's history. The book is being illustrated by children from the Familia Hope Orphanage in East Timor, and will be published in November with ALL proceeds going to the orphanage. They're also producing a Tetum language version, which will be distributed to kids throughout East Timor. Books are available through the publisher's website: <http://www.theboyandthecrocodile.com.au/2011/04/14/off-to-east-timor/>

Follow the book's progress on their Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/The-Boy-and-the-Crocodile/218427928192111?sk=wall>

## INTERNATIONAL NEWS

### WRITE4KIDS TV

There is a new online TV channel for children's writing - Write4Kids TV. Presented by Children's Book Insider, you can find it at [www.write4kids.tv](http://www.write4kids.tv)

### CILIP CARNEGIE MEDAL

The 2011 CILIP Carnegie Medal 2011 has been awarded to Patrick Ness for his novel, *Monsters of Men*. *Monsters of Men* is the third and final instalment in the "Chaos Walking" trilogy. The two previous books in the trilogy, *The Knife of Never Letting Go* and *The Ask and the Answer* were also shortlisted for the CILIP Carnegie Medal, the first time this has been achieved by all books in a series. [carnegiegreenaway.org.uk](http://carnegiegreenaway.org.uk)

### KATE GREENAWAY MEDAL

The 2011 Kate Greenaway medal for illustration was won by Grahame Baker-Smith for *FArTHER*.

### ENID BLYTON LEGACY GOES TO SEVEN STORIES

A £750,000 legacy from the Enid Blyton Trust for Children will be bequeathed to the children's books centre Seven Stories. The Trust is being wound up and all assets donated to Seven Stories. [Guardian Telegraph](#)

### TWO FREE BOOKS FOR EVERY CHILD STARTING SCHOOL IN ENGLAND

Booktrust and Pearson today announce the 2011 titles for Booktime, which is offering two free books to every child starting school in England this autumn: *Tinga Tinga Tales - Why Elephant has a Trunk*, from the Puffin imprint of Penguin, and *Face Painting*, from Pearson UK, marking the first time Pearson's education business has provided books for Booktime.

690,000 children in reception classes will receive a free book pack in their first term of primary school, each pack containing two books to keep. In total 1.38 million books will be given away, weighing the equivalent of more than 20 African elephants.

The book packs are given away through Booktime, the national free books programme for reception-aged children. Booktime aims to inspire a lifelong love of reading by encouraging families to have fun reading together.

## INTERVIEW

### **June Alexander**

June Alexander grew up on a family dairy farm in Victoria in the 1950s. In grade six, she began to experience a body image problem and developed anorexia nervosa, a severe psychiatric illness that would challenge and shape her life. A love of the written word became a tool for survival. June has written and edited three books about eating disorders: *My Kid Is Back – Empowering Parents to Beat Anorexia Nervosa* (collaborator, Prof. Daniel Le Grange); memoir *A Girl Called Tim – Escape from an Eating Disorder Hell*; and textbook *A Collaborative Approach to Eating Disorders*

(release June 2011; co-author, Prof. Janet Treasure). In October this year, June will travel to the USA for major speaking engagements to promote *A Girl Called Tim*. These events will include a co-presentation with Prof. Le Grange at the National Eating Disorders' Association conference, Hollywood, on the theme 'Hope at Every Age'. Details: <<http://www.junealexander.com/>>

***A Girl Called Tim is a recount of your battle with an eating disorder. What did you hope to achieve by publishing your experiences?***

By publishing my experiences I hoped to help ease the suffering of people living with an eating disorder. I had often felt isolated, misunderstood and alienated and wanted others to know that they were not alone, and could recover. I did not want them to suffer as long as me. I also wanted their families and friends to know what living with an eating disorder is like. When a loved one develops an eating disorder the family and friends are affected too, and often feel very confused and afraid, and don't know what to do or say.

There is another reason for wanting to publish a book about my experiences, and that is, to give purpose and meaning to my life. This desire to publish was like a beacon, helping me to persevere in striving to beat my eating disorder. I was in my 30s when I knew I wanted to write a book, but was in my late 50s when I did so. I knew I had to regain my identity before writing it and regaining this identity took decades of struggle. In many ways, the book is my literary Everest – not only in writing but also in celebrating the conquering of my illness.

Since its February 2011 release, *A Girl Called Tim* reader reviews have surpassed my expectations, with many expressing gratitude for giving hope.

***How does memoir differ from autobiography?***

Both are written about the author's life by the author. I consider a memoir is about one part or chapter of life, in my case, a mental illness and its effect on my life. For instance, I could have written a memoir on life as a working mother, or as a newspaper editor. A memoir contains a special message or theme, a lesson in life.

An autobiography is about the fullness of one's life, to date, at least. It is like a record of life and its achievements. A memoir is like a series of connecting stories, the events of which may read like fiction at times, and yet the facts and people are real. My diaries provide much of the content in *A Girl Called Tim*.

***In A Girl Called Tim you recounted many emotionally painful experiences. Did this have any effect on you as you were writing?***

This is a good question! The answer is: 'Yes'. To write my memoir I needed to read through each page of my diaries, starting at age twelve when my anorexia was raging, and continuing through until age fifty-five, when I regained 'me'.

The decades of my twenties, thirties and forties were particularly hard to re-live. I could see with great clarity the influence of my illness on my thoughts, feelings and behaviours. The illness dominated and manipulated the real 'me' and it was like being lost in a dark, dense forest, unable to find the way out. I was suicidal, became divorced,

and alienated from my parents and sister during those years. So yes, it was hard to be reminded of the pain of this time. The strangest effect was physical – I have a spinal injury, with limited neck movement, and for eight months I could not move my neck at all! This meant I could not drive my car. Living in a rural area with no public transport close by, this meant I lost my independence. I felt like a bird without wings. I was fortunate to have a dear friend who was happy to drive me anywhere, but was rewarded with little thanks!

Independence is very important in recovery and to lose it in this way made me moody! However, I had plenty of support and I was recovered sufficiently to remain resilient and maintain my recovery. I was able to walk and remained grateful for this. I considered that my 'ED' (eating disorder) was doing its best to revive, rile me, isolate me and prevent my memoir from being published. I was determined not to let it succeed. The writing became easier as my recovery proceeded. When I completed my memoir, both my psychiatrist and neurosurgeon were amazed as me when my neck movement returned.

***Are there any rules regarding identifying other people? Have you had any instances when someone has been upset by what you have written?***

I don't know if there are rules, but certainly considerations, as one does not want to end up in Court. I discussed aspects of my memoir with lawyers and my publisher. Quite likely some people have been upset by what I have written, though no one has informed me of this. I tried to be respectful at all times but had to balance this with the need to maintain the truth of my story. Some people live in denial and can feel confronted when aspects of life are exposed for all to read. I like to think that while this may be painful initially for these people, that they too will experience healing and growth. Also, I was propelled along by the greater good. I was sharing my life, and needed to also touch on the lives of people close to me. I tried to protect them but at the same time needed to describe in some detail my perceptions of interactions with them. I hoped that these people would understand that the memoir's capacity to help others and raise awareness of mental illness for the common good would compensate for any embarrassment or hurt that they felt as an individual.

***When writing about your life as a child or teenager what tricks do you use to recall your feelings and perspective as they were in the past?***

Writing about my life as a child and teenager was made easy by my diaries. Also, my illness seemed to imprison me in a time capsule in some ways – feelings and perspective remain crystal clear. Now that I am free, I can feel sad for the girl, the teenager, the young mother, imprisoned by her illness for more than four decades, without succumbing to the illness itself. Although no longer dominated by my illness, I will never forget its thoughts, feelings and behaviours during that period of life. I tend to be a 'visual' person, with a photographic memory. Reading a page in my diary, at age fourteen for instance, about sitting on the school bus with my best friend, revives vivid memories – like switching on a movie. I picture myself in that moment and in that situation. I am there. I am re-living that moment and sharing it with the reader. I want to carry the reader with me.

***For me, a fascinating aspect of A Girl Named Tim was that you were always surrounded by people who loved and cared for you, even if they did not always understand you. How important was this to your recovery?***

The network of support by people who loved and cared for me was vital for survival, and crucial for recovery. My four children and their dad all deserve gold medals for standing by me, for not giving up on me, for loving me when my behaviour was anything but lovable! An eating disorder thrives on isolating, dividing and conquering ... this includes relationships as well as your life. Anorexia is the most severe of all mental illnesses. I was most fortunate to meet health professionals who believed in me – a GP, psychiatrist and eating disorder therapist. I was also fortunate to have friends who did not give up on me. Often they did not understand me, but they remained loyal, they remained 'there' for me.

To know that someone believes in you is vital in recovery. I call them recovery guides. When my 'ED' was raging and my self-esteem was zero, my health treatment team and my family would work hard to divert the illness thoughts and convince me that life was worth living and fighting for. They succeeded.

### ***What are the key aspects to writing a good memoir?***

Honesty, a sense of humour, ability to be candid and to create an interesting story that flows and carries the reader with it. A good memoir will be one with which the reader can identify, and relate to their own life in an enriching and inspirational way.

### ***Do you have any tips for someone wishing to embark on writing their memoirs?***

Start today!

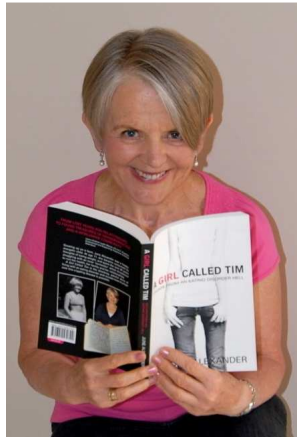
- Carry a notebook at all times so that you can jot down ideas and memories as they occur.
- Decide what period of life you wish to cover and decide your main reason for writing. Decide your audience – this could be yourself, your family or the world.
- Do you plan to self-publish or will you seek a publisher? Aim high!
- Be prepared to allow your story to evolve.
- Talk to people who know you well, do your research; listen to feedback.
- If you seek a publisher, be prepared to write many drafts. Writing a memoir is like creating a rough stone, such as that picked up off a gravel road, and shining it to reveal the gem within.

I believe everyone has a story to tell. Everyone can write a memoir. Everyone's life is worthwhile and has purpose. The trick sometimes is to find the courage to uncover and share this purpose. We can all learn from each other. This is what makes life worthwhile. This is about growth.

### ***Would you like to add anything else?***

*A Girl Called Tim* has surpassed all my expectations. I thought if I helped one person, my long journey of recovery, and my efforts in writing my memoir, would be worthwhile. The letters I receive from readers reveal that my memoir is helping and inspiring many people.

I feel deeply blessed and inspired to continue writing and advocate for better care and support for people with mental illness and their families. My lifetime passion for writing helped to save my life. I encourage everyone to write!



*A Girl Called Tim* by June Alexander (New Holland)  
PB RRP \$29.95  
ISBN 9781742570792  
[www.junealexander.com](http://www.junealexander.com)

## MARKETS

### IBBY

The Call for Papers Deadline for the 2012 IBBY London Congress *Crossing Boundaries: Translations & Migrations* from 23-26th August has been extended to Sunday 31st July, 2011. Further details can be found at <http://www.ibbycongress2012.org/call-for-papers.php>

### Australian Publishers

#### ***THE SCHOOL MAGAZINE***

##### **Illustrators' eligibility list**

Illustrators' eligibility list for 2012 is now OPEN. From 1 July to 1 October each year, *The School Magazine* updates its eligibility list for occasional or regular commissioned work for issues of *The School Magazine*. Expressions of interest are invited from accomplished artists who feel they have the appropriate skills and experience to illustrate literary texts for children. Artists on the eligibility list are sent texts to illustrate throughout the year, including poems, stories, plays, nonfiction articles and activities. It is best to familiarise yourself with the publication before applying. **SUBMISSION DEADLINE FOR SUBMITTING PORTFOLIOS: 1 OCTOBER**

##### **Comic Serials**

Submissions of comic serials for 2012 are now OPEN. *The School Magazine* runs at least two cartoon serials or graphic novellas in each issue of the magazine. **THE STRICT DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSIONS OF COMIC SERIALS IS 9 SEPTEMBER 2011.** For comic serial submission guidelines, please email Sue Murray, Assistant Editor: [sue.murray2@det.nsw.edu.au](mailto:sue.murray2@det.nsw.edu.au).

Comic serials can take the following forms:

- (a) a single page serial in ten parts;
- (b) two single page serials of five parts each;
- (b) a two page serial in ten parts.

For more information on either comic serials or the illustrators' eligibility list go to <http://www.curriculumsupport.education.nsw.gov.au/services/schoolmagazine/contributors/index.htm>

## **North American Publishers**

### **CHALET**

Chalet publishes adult fiction, non-fiction and YA. They are seeking completed novels 75,000 to 100,000 words or novellas 40,000 - 50,000 words. Send a query letter in the body of an email. Electronic submissions only accepted. Send a brief summary of your story, along with Chapter 1 of your novel specifying your genre and word count. For full details and submission guidelines go to <http://www.chaletpublishers.com/submissions.html>

### **JAKES**

This US magazine for 12 years and under aims to educate and involve youth in wildlife conservation, hunting and outdoors. There is also an online teen magazine *Xtreme JAKES eZine*. *JAKES* seeks nonfiction, fiction, and photos/artwork. Stories run 1000 – 2000 words. See the website for more information, payment rates and sample articles. (Scroll to bottom of page). [http://www.nwtf.org/tv\\_magazines/Writers\\_Guidelines.html](http://www.nwtf.org/tv_magazines/Writers_Guidelines.html)

## **OPPORTUNITIES**

### **ASA MENTORSHIP PROGRAM**

The Australian Society of Authors (ASA) is offering 15 mentorships to talented writers and picture book illustrators in 2011-2012. The Mentorship Program is open to all writers of 18 years and over who have not yet published full-length works and who have a substantial work-in-progress completed to at least first-draft stage.

The Program aims to give successful applicants the chance to develop their work-in-progress to a publishable standard. Successful applicants will have the opportunity to work closely with a mentor of their choice for 30 hours over a period of one year.

Entries will be accepted in the genres of fiction, non-fiction, poetry, graphic novels, young adult literature, children's writing and picture book illustration.

Entries are judged on literary merit. Entry is free for ASA members.

Entries close Friday 15 July 2011. For further information and an application form please go to: <http://t.co/oymXWmd> or contact Priscilla on (02) 9211 1004, [priscilla@asauthors.org](mailto:priscilla@asauthors.org)

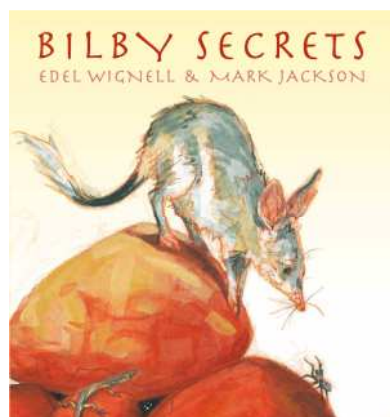
### **WRITER'S SURGERY**

Queensland Writers' Centre has launched the Writer's Surgery where applicants are teamed with professional mentors for a 90-minute consultation - a manuscript 'check up' to help overcome hurdles and achieve writing goals.

The session is designed to answer any questions regarding the writing process and provides the assistance needed for a manuscript to reach its potential. Each consultant will be able to discuss ideas and intentions and offer practical advice on technique and

industry practice. For more information check the QWC website. [www.qwc.asn.au](http://www.qwc.asn.au)

## BOOK LAUNCH



Edel Wignell, *Bilby Secrets*, illustrated by Mark Jackson  
Narrative non-fiction for ages 5-10 years  
2011, Walker Books Australia, Sydney  
ISBN: 9781921529320 (Hb)

To be launched by **Glen Ericson**, Senior Keeper and Supervisor for the Aus Bush precinct of the Melbourne Zoo.

**Time and date:** 6.30 pm, Wednesday 13 July 2011

**Place:** Readings Carlton Bookshop  
309 Lygon Street, Carlton 3053; Tel. (03) 9347 6633

**Mark Jackson's** splendid illustrations reveal the secrets of Little Bilby's life. He will show and explain fascinating works: roughs, proofs and images, some of which have never been seen before.

Finally, everyone will join in and sing '**Bilby Song**' words by **Edel Wignell**; tune - the 'Waltzing Matilda' chorus

Books available: \$29.95

Little Bilby is born in a burrow in the spinifex of the Pilbara in Western Australia. He sleeps safely in his mother's pouch until he has grown large enough to explore the burrow – two metres underground. Soon he grows up and accompanies his mother on foraging trips, learns about predators and how to avoid danger. At last he has grown up.

'Nature Story Books' feature two kinds of text on each double-page spread, both lyrical and descriptive – each in a different font. *Bilby Secrets* is the first to be published in Australia in 'Nature Story Books', a well-known Walker UK series. For Teachers' Notes see the Walker and Wignell websites.

[www.walkerbooks.com.au](http://www.walkerbooks.com.au)

[www.edelwignell.com.au](http://www.edelwignell.com.au)

[www.jack-pot-art.com](http://www.jack-pot-art.com)

## PINEROLO

Those who love reading children's picture books can do nothing better than to visit Pinerolo, the children's book cottage in Blackheath. It's a great day out for a group of like-minded friends or colleagues.

Pinerolo aims to promote Australian picture books and their creators, to educate children and adults about picture books and to bring people interested in them together in an inspiring environment.

## SCHOOL HOLIDAY PROGRAM: MORNING/AFTERNOON TEA TALKS

Groups who wish to refresh their knowledge about picture books or want to be introduced to THE MIRACULOUS JOURNEY FROM MANUSCRIPT TO FINISHED

PICTURE BOOK are welcome to come for a talk on the processes involved in picture book creation and publishing. Margaret Hamilton's talk is supported by a large collection of actual original artwork and development material demonstrating all the steps from writing to finished book.

Bookings are essential. Duration approximately 2 hours (10am - 12noon or 2pm - 4pm, or otherwise according to needs). Talks are available every day of the school holidays - if sufficient bookings.

Adults: \$20.00 per head includes tea/coffee and snack.

Readers under 18 years old: \$10.00. A minimum six people is required.

To ensure availability please book early by phoning or emailing (contact details below).

Margaret Hamilton AM

*Pinerolo, the Children's Book Cottage*

[www.pinerolo.com.au](http://www.pinerolo.com.au)

Margaret Hamilton Books

PO Box 172

Blackheath NSW 2785

02 47878492

0402 428911

### **POSITION VACANT: DIRECTOR/OPERATIONS MANAGER - SOUTH COAST WRITERS CENTRE**

The SCWC seeks a dynamic, highly organised and results-oriented new Director/Operations Manager, responsible for the management, development and operation of the SCWC. The SCWC is a small arts organisation, dedicated to the development and promotion of writers and literary programs in the South Coast of NSW. Tertiary qualifications in the arts or extensive job related experience required. 4 days per week (or a job sharing arrangement could be negotiated.)

Applications by 5pm, Monday 18<sup>th</sup> July 2011 to:

Rie Natalenko, Chairperson.

SCWC, PO Box 32 Wollongong NSW 2520

Information package: Ali Smith, [scwc@1earth.net](mailto:scwc@1earth.net), 02 4228 0151.

### **WRITING FOR YOUNG PEOPLE**

Join Pip Smith, founder of the short fiction event Penguin Plays Rough, in conversation with experienced writers about what it means to be a writer.

#### **Writing for Young People - Deborah Abela**

Wednesday 13 July 12.15 - 1.15

Customs House Library (Sydney)

Deborah Abela is the author of fifteen novels for 8-12 year olds: the Jasper Zammit (Soccer Legend) series, which she wrote with Johnny Warren, The Remarkable Secret of Aurelie Bonhoffen and the Max Remy Superspy series which is published in over six countries around the world. Her latest novel is *Grimsdon*.

**Telephone: 02 9242 8555. Bookings are essential. FREE event**

## COMPETITIONS and AWARDS

### THE 7th KATHLEEN JULIA BATES MEMORIAL WRITING COMPETITION

This competition is for an unpublished picture book text (older or younger readers) written by an Australian. All entries will be judged according to certain criteria including Manuscript Presentation (there *must* be a title page with entrant's contact details), Story, Language and Reader Impact. All entrants will receive a competition score sheet with 30 criteria showing their manuscript's strengths and weaknesses. Cost of entry is \$5.00 per manuscript. Cheques are payable to Di Bates and should be sent to PO Box 2116, Woonona East NSW 2517 by August 30. Prizes are \$100 first place, \$75 second place and \$50 third place. Please include a stamped self-addressed envelope if you wish to receive notification of results. The winning entry will receive a written critique with recommendation if the judge considers it to be publishable. Results will be published in Buzz Words. [www.enterprisingwords.com](http://www.enterprisingwords.com)

### NEMESIS DEBUT NOVEL COMPETITION

Nemesis is a new UK publisher. First prize is publication in 2012. The competition has no restriction on genre although manuscripts should ideally be between 70 000 and 130 000 words. Entry is fee and email submission is preferred. The competition closes on 14 August 2011. For more information go to <http://nemesispublishing.com/Debut-Novel-Competition-2011.aspx>

### CHILDREN'S WRITER POETRY COMPETITION

The contest is for a single poem, collection of poems, or verse story for children of any age, to 300 words. Entries may be serious or humorous, and take any poetic form. Winners will be selected based on quality of verse—including rhythm, meter, word choice, wordplay, imagery, and the use of other poetic devices (rhyme, alliteration, assonance, or others). Above all, the winning entries will have appeal for young readers. Entries must be received by October 31, 2011. Current subscribers to Children's Writer enter free. All others pay an entry fee of \$15, which includes an 8-month subscription. Winners will be announced in the March 2012 issue. Prizes: \$500 for first place plus publication in Children's Writer, \$250 for second place, and \$100 for third, fourth, and fifth places. For more information go to <http://www.thechildrenswriter.com/ad028/>

### SCHOLASTIC ASIAN BOOK AWARD

The National Book Development Council of Singapore and Scholastic Asia are jointly launching the 2012 Scholastic Asian Book Award (SABA). The award will recognise Asians and writers of Asian origin who are taking the experiences of life, spirit and thinking in different parts of Asia to the world at large. SABA is awarded to an unpublished manuscript (original or translation) targeted at children of ages 6 to 12 years. The closing date for the 2012 SABA is 17th October 2011, 5pm (Singapore time). For more information, please visit [www.scholasticbookaward.asia](http://www.scholasticbookaward.asia).

## FESTIVALS and CONFERENCES

### THE PORT FAIRY FESTIVAL OF WORDS

The Port Fairy Festival of Words is a festival for people of all ages and includes book sales, literary sessions, activities for children, and an art exhibition of book illustrations. For more information go to [www.exlibris.port-fairy.com](http://www.exlibris.port-fairy.com)

## **IPSWICH FESTIVAL OF CHILDREN'S LITERATURE**

The Ipswich Festival of Children's Literature runs from 5 - 14 September 2011. The theme is One World Many Stories. Sessions are available for school groups and there is also an adult program. Booking and program information is available to be downloaded from <http://www.learningplace.com.au/deliver/content.asp?pid=50255>

## **THE 3RD ANNUAL SUTHERLAND SHIRE WRITERS' FESTIVAL**

The new website is now up and running. Get all the latest updates on this year's festival. Find out who this year's presenters will be. The program will be unveiled shortly. Plus check out the blog for some very exciting news! [www.shirewritersfestival.weebly.com](http://www.shirewritersfestival.weebly.com)

## **WRITING COURSES and WORKSHOPS**

### **CREATING PICTURE BOOKS (VWC)**

**Presented by:** Meredith Costain

**Rating:** Introductory and Intermediate

**Type:** Course

**Additional dates:** Thursdays, 1 – 4pm 14 July, 11 August, 15 September, 13 October & 10 November

In this series of “hands on” workshop sessions, Meredith will outline the elements of creating text for picture books, from the initial idea to the finished jewel. There will be plenty of opportunities for small-group discussion and writing as we look at the range and scope of picture books, how to get ideas, language and structure, paging and storyboarding, and how to submit to publishers.

Meredith Costain is an award-winning and versatile author of over 100 books for children. Her picture book *Doodledum Dancing*, illustrated by Pamela Allen, was an Honour Book in the CBCA Early Childhood awards, and *Musical Harriet* was adapted for television by the ABC.

### **CREATIVE WRITING AND POETRY PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

Fremantle Children's Literature Centre has compiled writing activities and insights from top Australian authors for upper primary and secondary teachers in need of some inspiration for their creative writing programmes and their students.

MONDAY, 1 AUGUST, 9.00am - 2.30pm; Cost: \$140 (inc. GST) Morning Tea and light lunch included.

Venue: Fremantle Children's Literature Centre (Old Prison Hospital)

Email: [enquiries@fclc.com.au](mailto:enquiries@fclc.com.au); Web: [www.fclc.com.au](http://www.fclc.com.au); Ph: (08) 9430 6869

## **ACT WRITERS' CENTRE**

### **THE INSIDE STORY**

With Sue Whiting; 5.30pm Friday 29 July

**Cost:** \$10 non-members and \$5 members at the door (includes a glass of wine)

**Venue:** Bogong Theatre, Gorman House Arts Centre, 55 Ainslie Ave, Braddon ACT

**Bookings:** Bookings essential on 6262 9191 or [admin@actwriters.org.au](mailto:admin@actwriters.org.au)

## **IN A NUTSHELL: WRITING FOR CHILDREN**

With Sue Whiting; 10am-5pm (with a break for lunch) Saturday 30 July

In this workshop participants will find out what makes a good children's book, the different requirements for picture books and YA books, do some writing exercises and have all their questions answered.

**Code:** 2, 3, 4

**Cost:** \$108 members, \$96 concession members, \$168 non-members (includes 12 months of membership)

**Venue:** ACT Writers Centre workshop room, Gorman House, 55 Ainslie Ave, Braddon

**Bookings:** You can book by phone on 6262 9191, online via <https://app.formassembly.com/forms/view/10261> or at the office.

Sue Whiting's role as Publishing Manager at Walker Books, as well as eight years' experience as a children's book editor and her own experiences as a published author, enables her to speak about the publishing process from a variety of perspectives. In this talk she will provide insight into the world of publishing with tips about how to get a story off the slush pile. More information about Sue can be found at [www.suewhiting.com](http://www.suewhiting.com) and <http://suewhiting.blogspot.com/>

## **WRITING POETRY FOR AUSTRALIAN CHILDREN**

For this four-week on-line course Lorraine Marwood will take participants through several formats of writing poems for children. Each week Lorraine will set a writing task to cover the variety of poems currently published in children's poetry in Australia, and give feedback on participants' work. Course runs from 1-29 August. For more information go to [www.australianpoetry.org/education/professional-development](http://www.australianpoetry.org/education/professional-development)

## **GETTING PUBLISHED IN THE EDUCATIONAL MARKET**

with Pamela Rushby

Writing and selling an educational book isn't quite the same as publishing a novel. Educational publishers have different needs and constraints, and it's essential to know the market before you get started on your project. Join Pamela Rushby as she walks through the differences of educational publishing.

When: 6pm-8pm, Thursday 11 August

Where: Queensland Writers Centre, State Library of Queensland, South Brisbane

Cost: QWC members \$65 | Concession members \$55 | non-members \$110

Bookings: online or call QWC on 3842 9922

## ARTICLES

### **A NOTE TO PUBLISHERS: HOW CHILDREN'S AUTHORS CAN SUPPORT THEIR BOOKS IN THE EDUCATIONAL & TRADE MARKET**

© Dianne Bates

*Note: I was once asked to talk to a publishing house from an author's point of view about how I believed the publisher could better promote its authors' books. Sadly, my (unpaid) talk was cancelled. However, there is much here that is not only relevant to publishers, but also to authors and illustrators.*

As an author, the most frequent complaint I hear from my fellow authors about a publishing house is 'nobody tells me anything' so my first suggestion to any publisher is to send authors a list of where their book has been sent for review and what promotion has been planned for it. And authors, ask the publisher for that list if it is not forthcoming: the publicist is paid to work with and for you.

The best, most proactive and communicative publisher I have ever worked with is Paul Collins (Ford Street) for my most recent YA novel, *Crossing the Line*. We worked hard and productively as a team. First, Paul asked me to send my contracted but unpublished manuscript to two people who we hoped would give us quotes to help promote the book. I chose two high-profile authors whose work I admire – Margaret Clark, whose books are for the same demographic as mine, and Elizabeth Fensham because her *Helicopter Man* deals with mental illness, as does *Crossing the Line*. In the first few weeks that the book came out, thanks to publisher and author working as a pro-active team, I had at least 17 book reviews and 12 interviews/articles (radio and newspapers).

Basically all PR comes from the author and so he/she must be motivated. Quite often an author, especially a new one, has no idea of how they can promote their latest title, so it behooves the marketing and publicity department to provide authors with a promotion pack. This could include the press release that is sent out to the media and a high resolution copy of the book cover. I use the press release Paul Collins prepared for *Crossing the Line* again and again

Publishers, ask your author to contact all of their local media with the press release and their contact details. Recently I contacted a number of other proactive children's authors for their take on promotion in the educational market. Here is what they said:

Jan Latta (a highly successful self-published author)

*Today, for 5 hours, I have been emailing every principal, or librarian, about my books for my next visit to Hong Kong. If the timing is too tight for the school to book me for a presentation, I send a set of books for their approval. I've only had one book returned! In HK I never charge a speaker's fee as I have great success with book sales. Usually over 1,000 books sold a week.*

Hazel Edwards

*Offering discussion notes is a way of value adding to your book and publicising it long term by word of mouth.*

Edel Wignell

*Her strategy is to write articles for a whole range of magazines in Australia and overseas that in some way link with her current publication.*

Susanne Gervay/Paul Collins

*They make themselves available and actively promote themselves as being available for writers' conferences and festivals all over Australia.*

Sandy Fussell

*For her Samurai series (Walker Books) she has created an interactive website. She offers competitions and continually updates the site. Her launch party, which she organised, was the best I've ever been to. She sold over 80 books on the night.*

Patricia Bernard/DC Green

*Both of them travel extensively around Australia offering author talks and writing workshops, and both sell many thousands of dollars worth of their self-published books during their travels.*

*Patricia once paid to have an advertisement placed on Sydney buses!*

On looking at some publishers' website nowhere did I see links to their authors' websites. Nor did I find any indication whether or not they are available for author visits. One publishing house which does this very well is Allen & Unwin. Their website is very easy to navigate. Authors, insist that your publisher puts your website on theirs!

I would advise publishers' marketing departments to make a clear distinction between the adult and the children's authors. (Teachers and TLs don't have the time to work their way through publishers' websites: they want the information at their fingertips.)

One way in which any book itself can be a marketing tool is for the publisher to print on the back inside pages website details where teachers can find teacher notes, or print the teacher notes in the book itself. Also print the author's website address and the publisher's website address. DC Green of Barrel Books makes full use of his books to show the above details.

If the book's content is linked in any way to the school curriculum, it is a good idea for publishers to provide teaching resources that are appropriate for immediate classroom use (e.g. web quest, worksheets, word searches). This can even go on the blank pages at the end of the book!

When I asked a group of primary teacher-librarians about how to make books school-friendly, they said:

1. Publish portrait books, not landscape. (The latter stick out from the library shelf and are difficult to shelve)
2. Publish books that link with the HSIE
3. Offer us free author talks
4. Arrange pre-publication talks

One teacher-librarian wrote to me: *"The thing that stands out for me above all others is someone who knows their books and knows (enough) about education to make connections and answer intelligent questions. If I get an email or flier that just has the*

*publishers' blurb about the product and the price, then the consultant rings and says "Hi did you receive....do you want to buy..." I always say NO. It's been filed in the recycling long ago. I need to be able to TALK and LOOK and TOUCH (failing this, to return if unsuitable). There is a limited library budget and we need to take care that what we get is great not just OK or even good, for our educational purposes."*

What publishers can do to promote their authors is to first establish a relationship: find out what the author wants or is willing to do, for example:

- school/ teacher talks
- author tours
- book fairs
- promotional tour
- sending press releases to local media
- present at festivals and/or conferences
- talk to local organisations, for example VIEW clubs
- present at Staff development days, at Regional librarian meetings

Ask the author to write articles for industry magazines e.g. *Scan, Magpies, The Literature Base, Practically Primary, and Buzz Words*. Ask the author to write articles that link with special days, (for example, I wrote a number of articles for Mental Health Week, which linked with my book, *Crossing the Line*).

Arrange a 'connection' with an excursion destination (once again curriculum link is great). The best example I can think of is a big one - but it doesn't need to be this scale: to promote her book, author Felicity Pulman organised a tour of the Sydney Quarantine Station, the setting of her book *Ghost Boy*. Make sure books are there for sale. Link up with another author in the same education area/topic: this way you can provide a 'dual package' to schools, i.e. two authors on one school visit.

Target special interest groups e.g. English as a Second Language or Gifted and Talented Children. Make sure you match the child with the right book. Be aware of any special focus or special projects the Department of Education is undertaking - check their websites all the time and make contact at any opportunity. Be part of initiatives by education-related groups such as PETA - once again, check their websites all the time and make contact at any opportunity.

*Publishers, prepare an author kit giving advice on where to go for publicity and how they can represent their book and RH*

One of the best things you can do for an author is to arrange for him to speak briefly to your book reps. This gives the reps some anecdotal information and enthusiasm they can pass on to teacher-librarians. The reps can also give the TLs a sheet which provides information on how to contact the author for a school visit and where to look for teaching notes. On the day the author visits the publisher's office to talk to the reps, sit with him and between the two of you organise strategies for promoting the book.

#### ONLINE NEWSLETTER

Allen & Unwin and Walker Books Australia send me great online newsletters every month with details of their new titles, as well as news such as author tours, author interviews, competitions and giveaways. I often order books as a result of reading these

newsletters. (These are the best two; I prefer A&U's the most). Paul Collins of Ford Street also sends out a very good online newsletter promoting his recent titles. Publishers should be seen to be proactive.

### TEACHER-LIBRARIANS

Teacher-librarians love to be signaled out for the work they do. Every region has a teacher-librarian network. In the Illawarra there is the Illawarra School Librarians Association with 120 members. It would be a worthwhile exercise once a term for a publishing house to offer a night highlighting: invite an author, illustrator or designer along to talk about their work. Offer refreshments and discounts. These nights can be held in bookshops and serve a double function, making the bookshop a profit and strengthening the bookseller/publisher bond.

Have a 'meet the children's authors' event. This is an excellent way for a publishing house to get their writers to meet the general public (including teacher librarians and book reviewers, as well as the publishing house's staff, e.g. marketing and publicity people).

### BOOK LAUNCHES

It is a good idea to support book launches in schools. Richard Harland's launched the *Wolf Kingdom* series in a Wollongong school. Richard organised a bookseller for the day. She in turn contacted the school and sent order forms. On the day of the launch she sold 350 copies of the book. At a second launch, at another school, 300 additional copies were sold.

If they are proactive, authors can sell a lot of books; therefore it seems sensible to allow them to do so, so make provision for this in their contracts. Give them the same discount as booksellers. When my author husband Bill Condon and I worked in schools as performers, Bill would speak in the morning to infants' students, I'd speak to primary. At lunch-time we sold our remainders, usually for \$3 or \$5 each. It was not unusual to sell over \$1,000 worth of books in the one hour lunch-time period.

### FESTIVALS AND CONFERENCES

Publishers, encourage your authors to attend functions such as literary lunches, festivals and conferences. Publisher Paul Collins writes to each of his Ford Street authors asking them for a few lines of biography and then sent them collectively to all writers' festivals around Australia saying these authors are willing to appear at your festival. There are dozens of festivals and conferences and all of them have large audiences.

Publishers, make a list of all of your children's authors, along with their Send this list out to CBCA regional branches, conference & festival organisers, and regional teacher-librarian groups indicating that the authors are available for visits. When authors speak at conferences, provide bookmarks and promotional material. Give the author a list of local media (and contact details) when they are to appear at a festival, conference or literary lunch. The author can organise interviews – or, if you are accompanying author, you can organise them

### AUTHORS' EMAILS & WEBSITES

When authors send emails, encourage them to have a signature on each email which includes not only contact information, but the name of their latest books.

A website is an author's best investment in PR as it is that author's shop front. Hazel Edwards recommends that authors give added value. 'Have ready on your web site well-labelled activities which relate to that book title. This can be sent to schools, libraries or bookshops which have newsletters or events to which the author is invited.'

Publishers, give teachers' notes or additional resources to the author to put on his web site. Encourage the author to have a generic 'How to' or "How this book was written" 1,000 word article for easy sending.

#### CONTACTING MEDIA

- Provide humorous anecdotes about the writing/reception of a particular title in point form to give to journalists on the spot.
- Provide a brief bio & book details on one sheet to give to journos.
- The web site on a business card is the BEST.
- Have a hi-resolution author photo on your publishers' web site so it can be downloaded by festival organisers and save you e-mailing.
- Have links to your publishers/authors on your web site.
- Have a sheet pointing out the sales angles or topical issues for that title.

#### WHERE PUBLISHERS CAN PRESENT AUTHORS:

- School visits or writing camps (talking to children)
- Staff development days
- Regional librarian meetings
- Conferences and festivals
- Articles in teaching industry magazines
- On your website

*Dianne (Di) Bates is the author of 110+ books for children. Her latest is the Bushranger series of 11 books illustrated by Caroline Magerl and Steven Axelsen. These books and Di's How to Self-Edit (To Improve Writing) and Wordgames: Activities for Creative Thinking and Writing, as well as a four-module online course on writing for children are available through her website [www.enterprisingwords.com](http://www.enterprisingwords.com) You can contact her for school or writing workshop group visits on [dibates@pacific.net.au](mailto:dibates@pacific.net.au)*

#### DARKNESS TOO VISIBLE

Meghan Cox Gurdon discusses the themes, topics and language of YA books today and poses the question: Is contemporary fiction what young adults want to read and should be reading? She counters many arguments put up by anti-censorship groups and finishes with noting the low rate of readership in this age group today.

[http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052702303657404576357622592697038.html?mod=WSJ\\_hp\\_mostpop\\_read](http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052702303657404576357622592697038.html?mod=WSJ_hp_mostpop_read)

## ACHIEVEMENTS

### TRACEY SLATER

Tracey Slater has a short story 'Tristan the Brave' accepted by *Alphabet Soup Magazine*, to appear in the summer edition.

### KAREN ROBERTSON

Karen Robertson's book app, 'Treasure Kai and the Lost Gold of Shark Island' hit #5 on the US App Store for paid iPad books a in mid June.

<http://itunes.apple.com/us/app/treasure-kai-lost-gold-shark/id418289114?mt=8>

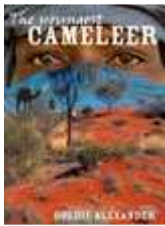
Karen was honoured to be the first guest interview for an exciting new online TV show called Write4Kids TV presented by Children's Book Insider. Interviewed via Skype, this video interview features Karen talking about turning children's books into book apps.

<http://www.write4kids.tv/?videos=karen-robertson-why-anyone-can-and-should-create-an-app-for-their-book>

### GOLDIE ALEXANDER

*The Youngest Cameleer* by Goldie Alexander [www.goldiealexander.com](http://www.goldiealexander.com)

Historical fiction about the DISCOVERY OF ULURU [www.fivesenseseducation.com.au/](http://www.fivesenseseducation.com.au/)



- Ever wondered how 'The Ghan' train got its name?
- Or who discovered Uluru?

In 1873, William Gosse's exploratory party attempted to find a route from Alice Springs to Perth. Instead they stumbled upon the Olgas and Ayers Rock (ULURU). William Gosse thanked his Moslem Cameleers, claiming he couldn't have done it without them.

In this novel based on Gosse's actual diary, fourteen year old Ahmed Ackbar, the fictional 'youngest cameleer', helps look after four camels. As the expedition treks into the interior, Ahmed must cope with homesickness, Jemma's enmity, and this new harsh territory.

## USEFUL BOOKS and WEBSITES

### DIGITAL KID'S AUTHOR

Karen Robertson has launched her new website and blog, Digital Kid's Author -

[www.digitalkidsauthor.com](http://www.digitalkidsauthor.com)

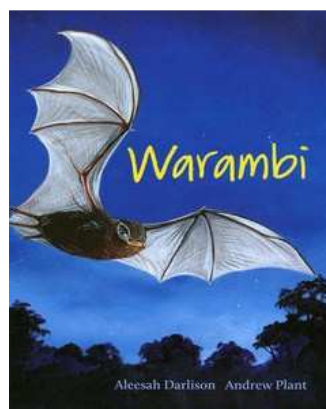
In her blog, Karen documents her experiences turning her children's book, 'Treasure Kai and the Lost Gold of Shark Island' into a book app, answers questions and shares her journey creating 'Treasure Kai' as a global brand using digital technology.

She offers a free report, 'Top 5 Things you Must Know about Creating Book Apps for Kids' and offers an eBook for sale, 'Author's Guide to Book Apps - a Guide for Children's Authors, Writers and Illustrators Wanting to Turn Stories into Apps'

([www.authorsguidetobookapps.com](http://www.authorsguidetobookapps.com)).

## BOOK REVIEWS

### PICTURE BOOKS



***Warambi*** by Aleesah Darlison, illustrated by Andrew Plant  
(Working Title Press)

HB RRP \$24.95

ISBN 978 1921504 28 0

Reviewed by Jenny Mounfield

Little bent-wing bat, Warambi, lived in comparative safety with her colony in a forest cave, growing and learning to fend for herself until ...

*One day the bat colony was woken by a terrible noise. The earth shook. Trees were ripped from the ground and came crashing down. Forest animals fled in panic.*

Amid the chaos that followed, Warambi became separated from her mother. Gone were the familiar sounds and smells of home. Eventually she found somewhere to tuck herself away from hostile eyes. But it was far from ideal.

Based on a true event, Warambi's story is one of survival. With themes of family, safety and the fear change can bring, this is a story that will resonate with children everywhere. Even a first day at a new school can induce similar feelings to those experienced by Warambi.

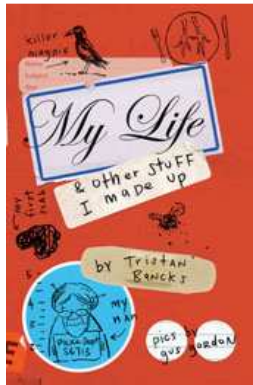
Darlison's language is evocative; sentences such as: '*Sunlight and metal burst into the darkness.*' are alive with imagery and emotion. So, too, are Plant's illustrations. Having trained as a zoologist and with a background in scientific illustration, there is none better equipped to illustrate books involving animals. Plant's depictions of Warambi, from tiny newborn to half-grown hunter, are a delightful combination of detail and sweeping lines. His use of colour and movement to convey mood, from subdued blues and sunset pinks in times of peace, to the starkness of jagged black and ochre, adds richness to Darlison's well-chosen words. *Warambi* will stand the test of time and will make a beautiful addition to every child's bookshelf.

Aleesah Darlison is the author of: *Puggle's Problem* and the *Totally Twins* series. Andrew Plant has illustrated over 130 titles, including Working Title picture book, *Puggle* written by Catriona Hoy.

*Jenny Mounfield is the author of three novels for kids, her most recent title being: The Ice-cream Man (Ford St). She has been reviewing for Buzz Words since '06 and also contributes to The Compulsive Reader: [www.compulsivereader.co](http://www.compulsivereader.co)*

More Picture Book reviews are available at [Buzz Words Books](http://www.buzzwordsbooks.com)

## YOUNGER READERS



***My Life and Other Stuff I Made Up*** by Tristan Bancks and illustrated by Gus Gordon (Random House)  
PB RRP \$15.95  
ISBN 978-1-8647-1817-1  
Reviewed by Oliver Phommavanh

*My Life and Other Stuff I Made Up* is a collection of short stories for younger readers. These bite-sized bursts of fun are inspired by Paul Jennings, Andrew Daddo and Andy Griffiths, the sort of stories that will keep kids enthralled and wondering if it really happened or not.

Tom Weekly is just your normal kid with a wacky life. This collection kicks off with his pet dog that is constantly getting kissed by a weird dog lover. Bancks just keeps upping the zaniness and laughs from there. Tom takes part in a hot dog competition, dared to eat vegemite off his sister's toe and gets attacked by magpies. Kids will be able to relate to that for sure! In fact, kids will find a part of themselves in Tom, who always finds himself in all sort of weird situations. My personal favourite is to see who has the toughest nan. When his nan and his mate's nan battle, it reads like a wrestling match.

Bancks is joined by Gus Gordon, who provides some illustrations to flesh out Bancks' out-there descriptions. They're a reliable combination to deliver laughs on each page. The notebook layout will inspire kids to write out their own fantastic tales.

*My Life and Other Stuff I Made Up* has been tried and tested by Bancks. There are some amusing lists and answers from kids on his school visits. He has tapped into a kid's curiosity and runaway imagination with these short stories. They're easy to devour and perfect for reading out loud.

*My Life and Other Stuff I Made Up* is highly recommended for ages 9 and up.

Read more book reviews for younger readers at [Buzz Words Books](#)

[Captain Congo and the Klondike Gold](#) by Ruth Starke & Greg Holfeld (Working Title Press)

HB RRP \$24.95

ISBN 978 1 92150427 3

Reviewed by Jenny Mounfield

[Pirate the Barking Kookaburra](#) by Adrian Plitzco (Bubenberg Audio)

RRP \$24.95 (ebook version free)

ISBN 978-0-646-54287-4

Reviewed by Anastasia Gonis

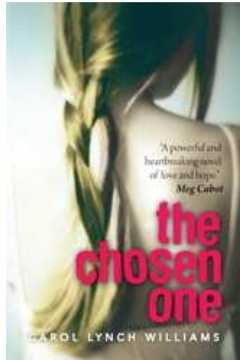
[The Boy Without a Soul](#) by Michael Panckridge (black dog books)

PB RRP \$16.99

ISBN 978-174203183-5

Reviewed by Anastasia Gonis

## OLDER READERS



***The Chosen One*** by Carol Lynch Williams (Simon and Schuster)  
PB RRP \$16.99

ISBN 978-184738938-1

Reviewed by Peta Biggin

Thirteen-year-old Kyra has grown up in an isolated community without ever questioning the fact that her father has three wives and she has twenty brothers and sisters and without ever questioning the strict rules imposed by 'the Prophet' who leads them. But now, Kyra has started keeping secrets: she reads books that are forbidden and sneaks away to meet Joshua. Kyra cannot accept the Prophet's decree that she is to become the seventh wife of her sixty-year-old uncle. She decides that she cannot stay, she must escape. But saving herself means endangering everyone she has ever cared for.

*The Chosen One* follows Kyra and her life in the lead up to her escape from a polygamist cult.

It is a community that is strict and controlling. They are forbidden to read anything other than the bible; all, but those in power, live in trailers with no luxuries; the Prophet chooses who will be married to whom. At first only restless at the restrictions imposed upon her, Kyra is heartbroken when she is told she is to marry her uncle.

Soon she is confronted with the brutality that the Prophet will resort to in order to maintain control. When Joshua requests that Kyra be allowed to marry him rather than her uncle, they are both beaten and he is evicted from the Compound. Unable to face her future, Kyra is presented with an agonising decision – she can be married to her overbearing and cruel uncle or she can escape and leave her family forever.

It is easy to get caught up in the agony of Kyra's decision. Her freedom is going to come at a high price – and not just for herself. She knows that her family will be made to suffer for her betrayal of the Prophet and his teachings.

Kyra's escape from the compound is difficult, bloody and harrowing. Ultimately, she gains her freedom and a start at a new life. The story, however, does not end neatly: we are never told if she sees her family again or what becomes of them; or if Kyra and Joshua find each other in the outside world. It does end hopefully, though. Kyra is reassured by the sight of a Russian Olive tree outside the window of the half-way house. It is the same type of tree she used to retreat to at the Compound. It reminds her of what she has fought for and what she won, her freedom.

*The Chosen One* not only provides an insight into cult life and the impact felt by those that leave. It is a novel that touches on many points: love, friendship, the concept of family, embracing individuality and courage.

The book was quite confronting in some sections. Kyra is threatened, emotionally blackmailed, beaten and witnesses a murder. That, to me, increased the story's appeal

– there is no sugar-coating of the details or false promises of a happily-ever-after. I thoroughly enjoyed *The Chosen One* and would happily recommend it.

Carol Lynch Williams is the author of several books including: *Carolina Autumn*, *My Angelica* and *Pretty Like Us*. She has a Master of Fine Arts in Writing for Children and Young Adults and helped develop the conference on Writing and Illustrating for young Readers at Brigham Young University. She lives in Utah with her husband and seven children.

Read more book reviews for older readers at [Buzz Words Books](#)

[The Ivory Rose](#) by Belinda Murrell (Random House)

PB RRP \$18.95

ISBN 978-1-7427-5071-2

Reviewed by Oliver Phommavanh

[Passion](#) by Lauren Kate (Random House)

PB RRP \$24.95

ISBN 978-0-3856-1808-3

Reviewed by Oliver Phommavanh

[Plague](#) by Michael Grant (hardie grant Egmont)

PB RRP \$ 22.95

ISBN 9781405256575

Reviewed by Anastasia Gonis

[Secrets of Carrick: T Antony](#) by Ananda Braxton-Smith (black dog books)

PB RRP \$18.99

ISBN 978-174203166-8

Reviewed by Anastasia Gonis

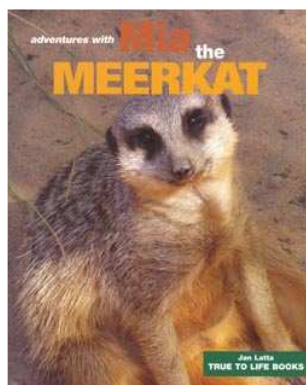
[Silvermay](#) by James Moloney (HarperCollins)

PB RRP \$24.99

ISBN 9780732292034

Reviewed by [Vicki Stanton](#)

## NON-FICTION



***Adventures with Mia the Meerkat*** by Jan Latta (True To Life Books)

PB RRP \$12.95

ISBN 978-0-9756770-7-0

Reviewed by Anastasia Gonis

Jan Latta went to Namibia in 2009 to photograph meerkats in the wild. Unfortunately time was against her and she was forced to produce this book through visits to the Mogo and Taronga zoos. It is the ONLY book in the series which was created from a zoo environment.

Mia the meerkat is the narrator. She introduces us to her family group which is called a gang, and guides us through their daily life and habits. She shows and tells us how and where they live and forage for food, and how and what they eat. (Mia's favourite food is scorpion, with sting removed of course!)

We learn about their homes; tunnels called burrows that they dig with their front curved claws, and why there are 70 entrances. Then there are the personal details of their grooming habits, the twenty sounds used to communicate with family, and the benefits of their extremely acute senses.

This is an amazing fact book which incorporates a great deal of information. A list of Meerkat Facts at the end includes their scientific names, habitat details, body length, height and weight, birthing, diet and lifestyle, with interesting websites for additional research.

The pages are set out with wonderful life-like photos, lovingly taken, that bring to life the accompanying text. These are a terrific series to teach children about the wild, and awaken them to the reality of endangered species.

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[Trailblazers: Caroline Chisholm to Quentin Bryce](#) by [Susanna de Vries](#) (Pirgos Press)

PB RRP \$39.95

ISBN 9780980621617

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