

GRUG DAY - 1 December

Organisation of Grug Day took up much of our time during the preceding weeks. The weather was changeable and we kept our fingers crossed for a fine day - which we got! Even though we weren't open until 10am, children and their families began arriving at 9.30 - and there was a steady stream of visitors until closing time at 4pm. All up, we estimated over 150. Ted Prior was kept busy signing books and Grug made an appearance every half an hour. The weather was superb and some people even enjoyed a picnic lunch while they were waiting for Grug. So Grug Day was voted an outstanding success. Here are some photos:



I was the original publisher of Grug at Hodder & Stoughton in the 1970s and he was very successful. Now republished by Simon & Schuster he's a firm favourite with a whole new generation - with 150,000 friends on Facebook! There were young parents here who had themselves learned to read with Grug and they brought their young children here to meet him. Some parents even have their own original set of Grug books. It is very heartwarming and satisfying for me to see Grug so loved by such a wide age range and to see Ted Prior enjoying such success. AND, last but not least, THANK YOU to our willing volunteers, especially Victoria, who wore Grug, for old times sake.

ILLUSTRATORS IN RESIDENCE 2013



Dale Newman

Dale lives in Sydney and is passionate about illustrating for children. With a background in fine arts, she has mostly worked in educational publishing. Now she is working on a 288 page graphic novel written by Julie Hunt. Except for the night she joined our Trivia team (and we won!) she loved the uninterrupted time at Pinerolo to concentrate on this mammoth project.

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We are grateful to the Copyright Agency for funding this program



THANKS

During the October bushfires in the Blue Mountains we were overwhelmed by emails and phone calls from concerned people, especially those offering to help move the collection of artwork and books to a safer place. We were actually very lucky. While the rest of the Blue Mountains and Sydney experienced thick smoke and poor visibility, we had clear blue skies and couldn't even smell smoke. Our heartfelt thanks to all - please visit soon.

AUSTRALIAN CHILDREN'S LAUREATE

Congratulations to Jackie French, who has been appointed Australian Children's Laureate for 2014/15. She is a hugely energetic author and advocate for children's books, so she's bound to do a fantastic job. She succeeds Alison Lester and Boori Pryor, who were jointly our first Laureates. I'm sure they are looking forward to a well-earned rest.

I'm on the organising committee for the CBCA 11th National Conference - Discovering National Treasures - in Canberra next May, so I can reveal that Jackie will be the dinner speaker at the spectacular Australian War Memorial. She has also generously invited conference delegates to her place. It's a fabulous program and bookings are open now: www.cbcaconference.org.au

NEW PICTURE BOOKS

I've seen some really innovative ideas for Christmas trees on Facebook - one even made of books, which I thought was one of the better ideas. We can't have too many books, especially when we're young. So I hope everybody buys beautiful picture books for Christmas - and receives them! Some recent picture books follow similar themes: bedtime closeness and starting school. Here's the pick of those I've received (with thanks to publishers):

BURNING THE BAILS by Krista Bell, illus by Ainsley Walters (One Day Hill). This very topical book will be welcomed by all people following the Ashes on radio and TV. It is a fictionalised account of the Ashes story.

BUSHLAND LULLABY by Sally Odgers & Lisa Stewart (Scholastic). Cute baby animals highlighted on every double page by gently rhyming text and soft, restful illustrations quietly lead to a sleeping child. A good bedtime book.

EVERYTHING WE EVER SAW by Roland Harvey (A & U). What a terrific book for Christmas stockings! It's a combination of six family holidays all over Australia. Roland Harvey's chaotic, detailed illustrations and hilarious text will keep everyone occupied during the holidays. I love the smaller, square format.

FIRST DAY by Andrew Daddo & Jonathan Bentley (ABC Books). We all remember our child's first day at school. This one is no different: nervous mother, confident child. It is a fun introduction to be read all through January, as families prepare for the big day.

KISSED BY THE MOON by Alison Lester (Penguin). A gentle book with moving, sensitive text that reads like a prayer for a dearly-loved baby and the beautiful future that awaits them. The beautiful illustrations, mostly with a parent guiding and gently protecting, convey the message of peace and love. Highly recommended.

MATILDA SAVES SANTA CLAUS by Alex Field & Sophie Norsa (New Frontier). Matilda the mouse saves Christmas and receives a very special thank you from Santa. Delightful illustrations and simple story.

MY CHRISTMAS CRACKERS by Bronwen Davies (Scholastic). We all groan at the corny jokes in the Christmas crackers. This book is full of them and will provide lots of laughs during Christmas lunch.

MY FIRST ANIMALIA by Graeme Base (Penguin). *Animalia*, first published in 1986, has sold over 3 million copies. This book introduces the magic of Animalia to young children. It's a perfect Christmas present - a magnificent keepsake book for anyone. Highly recommended.

MY MERRY CHRISTMAS by Rosie Smith & Bruce Whatley (Scholastic). A very Christmassy book for everyone who loves all the preparations for Christmas.

PIZZICA PIZZICA by Hayley Egan. This unusual picture book is worth seeking out, especially for anyone interested in Italy. The text is in English and Italian and the illustrations have a folk feel. It's about a centuries old dance ritual from the Apulia region of Italy.

STANLEY THE SOCK MONSTER GOES TO THE MOON by Jedda Robaard (Five Mile Press). Jedda worked on this book when she was illustrator-in-residence at Pinerolo. Stanley is a lovable character whose father tells him he can do anything. That's when he decides to go to the moon.

STARTING SCHOOL by Jane Godwin & Anna Walker (Penguin). A most appropriate Christmas present for a child beginning school in the new year. A book full of new things to see and new friends to make. An important introduction to settle the nerves - for children and parents.

A SWIM IN THE SEA by Sue Whiting & Meredith Thomas (Walker). This book is awash with the feeling, and even the smell of the surf and the sand. The story of a small boy's first swim in the sea is captured perfectly in the family's story and the action-packed illustrations.

TEN FUNNY SHEEP by Ed Allen & Andrea Edmonds (Scholastic). Counting sheep used to help people go to sleep. This book is rollicking good fun. I can imagine families signing it at the top of their voices on Christmas afternoon. Then they have to go back and find the hidden numbers on every page. Good fun.

THE TWELVE DAYS OF CHRISTMAS ISLAND by Teresa Lagrange (A & U). This striking book highlights the unique bird life on Christmas Island and captures their vibrant colours in glowing illustrations. A very special Australian version of this Christmas carol.

DON'T FORGET!

If you are looking for a very special Christmas gift, we have a fabulous selection of original artwork from children's books. **Have a look at our gallery:** <http://www.pinerolo.com.au/gallery.html>

Also - there are lots of Grug books to choose from - and they are all a delight for young children. Encourage them to collect the whole series. There's even a boxed set with a plush toy. Check them out at your favourite bookshop. And just for good measure, here's another picture of Grug.



Warmest wishes to everyone for a very special Christmas. I'll be in touch in the New Year with our 2014 program.
Margaret Hamilton AM