

## WINTER AT PINEROLO

Winter here is nowhere near as cold as in the real Pinerolo, in Piedmonte Italy. This medieval town is surrounded by the mountains that divide Italy and France and they are frequently covered with thick snow. Not so at Pinerolo, Blackheath. Although we've had temperatures below zero and promises of snow, so far there has been none. In spite of the cold it's been a prime time for visitors.

## VISITORS

It's always good to see my friends in publishing and to share my place with them. **Erica Wagner** is the Children's publisher at **Allen & Unwin**, based in Melbourne, so it was great that she had time to visit us and stay the night. Her visit co-incided with **Illustrator in Residence Lachlan Creagh**, so conversation about children's picture books was lively and stimulating. I greatly admire the brave and beautiful picture books Erica is publishing, undaunted by the ebook threat.



*Me with Erica and Lachlan*

I love talking to children about picture books. The group from **Blackheath Public School** were right on my wavelength! With their teacher **Sheryl Cootes**, they have been studying picture books in detail, especially **Margaret Wild**. So it was a pleasure to meet them and to share my collection of original artwork with them.

### PICTURE BOOKS @ PINEROLO

<http://www.pinerolo.com.au/PDF/Gleeson.pdf>

The day with **Libby Gleeson** was so successful I had to turn people away. Fortunately **Libby** has agreed to come again.

There's no-one better to learn from about picture books. Bookings essential. Come along and learn everything you ever wanted to know about picture books but were afraid to ask.

Keep an eye out for the announcement of the **CBCA Book of the Year Awards** on **15 August**. **Libby's** picture book *Banjo and Ruby Red* is shortlisted!

## ILLUSTRATOR IN RESIDENCE – Lachlan Creagh

15 - 21 June

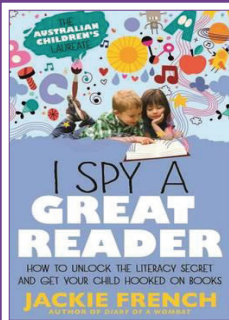


Lachlan is well known for his series of books, 'Little Mates' A to Z, his wombat books and especially his illustrations of dinosaurs. So he wowed the children at **Blackheath Reading Day**. His week at Pinerolo was spent developing working drawings of fantasy creatures that could inhabit the Australian bush. He went for bush walks around here to soak in the atmosphere and the native vegetation. He also loved the ten kangaroos who came one day and the bird life that visited us every day. So watch out for a **Lachlan Creagh** book inspired by his week at Pinerolo. He wrote in our visitors book: 'Fantastic, productive and welcoming. And so many fine feathered friends!'

NEXT: **Belinda Elliott** 20 - 26 July

Also visiting in July was a delightful group of eleven students from **Salisbury University in Maryland USA**. They were in Australia for a study tour and I was thrilled to welcome them to Pinerolo and present a talk about Australian picture books and how successful they have been overseas, particularly in the US. I served **Tim Tams** for afternoon tea. One of them wrote in the visitors book 'Tim Tams Rock!' On the same day it was good to see **Pat Moore**, the President of the **NT branch of the CBCA** and her friend **Fiona Rhodes** from **Leura School**. It was an exciting afternoon for all of us.





## MUST-HAVE BOOK OF THE MONTH

This is a new feature. Out of the review copies sent to me by publishers, I'll be choosing a special book to feature in this panel. They'll mostly be picture books, as that's what I love best, but this first one is not. It's by Australia's children's laureate Jackie French.

**I SPY A GREAT READER** (HarperCollins, \$19.99) is for every family, every new

parent. There's nothing more magical than sharing a book with your child, being part of their reading development. Fostering a lifelong love of reading is the best gift you can give them. Don't stop reading when they learn to read, share it as a family activity. This book is so enthusiastically written and it's full of tips about sharing the fun and the love with your child. Highly recommended.

## NEW PICTURE BOOKS

C S Lewis once said: 'No book is really worth reading at the age of ten which is not equally, and often far more, worth reading at the age of fifty and beyond.' That applies to picture books – any age, any time. Thanks to publishers for sending review copies of their books. Please support them by buying these books:

**THE AMAZING A TO Z THING** by Sally Morgan & Bronwyn Bancroft (Little Hare). Two of our finest Indigenous creators team together for this unique and exciting Australian alphabet picture book.

**CRIQUEY AND CAT** by Chris McKimmie (A & U). What to do if the stars were blown out of the sky by a storm? This award-winning creator suggests a brilliant, creative solution.

**THE CROC AND THE PLATYPUS** by Jackie Hosking & Marjorie Crosby-Fairall (Walker). Reminiscent of 'The Owl and the Pussycat' this very Australian story of two friends on an outback trip rings true and is lots of fun. Illustrations in acrylics and coloured pencils are free-flowing and expressive.

**EMUS UNDER THE BED** by Leann J Edwards (A & U). The creator of this book hopes to foster greater appreciation of the Aboriginal people and culture through her art. This special book is about a girl and her auntie.

**HASEL AND ROSE** by Caroline Magerl (Penguin). This gifted illustrator's first written book – the story of finding courage and a sense of belonging in new friendships.

**IMAGINE A CITY** by Elise Hurst (Omnibus). I became totally lost in the world this beautiful book creates – imagined by children as they ride on a train. A very special book with magnificent pen and ink illustrations.

**LISA ABSOLUTELY LOVES ART** by Sophie Norsa (New Frontier). Picasso the cat is lost in the art gallery so Lisa hunts for him through many famous paintings. A useful guide to the paintings at the back of the book introduces them to young readers.

**LONE PINE** by Susie Brown, Margaret Warner & Sebastian Ciaffaglione (Little Hare). A beautifully produced Anniversary Edition of this CBCA Notable Book, to commemorate the centenary of Anzac.

**MR CHICKEN LANDS ON LONDON** by Leigh Hobbs (Allen & Unwin). Bound to be an international bestseller like **MR CHICKEN GOES TO PARIS**, this trip to London is a hilarious sightseeing tour around the city. Another Leigh Hobbs triumph. Also recommended: **THE BIG BOOK OF OLD TOM** – not strictly a picture book but five books in one huge paperback!

**ONE MINUTE'S SILENCE** by David Metzenthien & Michael Camilleri (A & U). Contemplate what you would think about during one minute's silence. This powerful book imagines both sides of the action at Gallipoli. Highly Recommended.

**ONCE UPON A TIMELESS TALE** (Little Hare). This is a brilliant new series of small-format, affordable picture books featuring well-known fairy tales illustrated by Australian illustrators. 'Goldilocks and the Three Bears' illustrated by Anna Walker, 'Jack and the Beanstalk' by Andrew Joyner, 'The Ugly Duckling' by Jonathan Bentley and 'The Princess and the Pea' by Mitch Vane. More to come.

**OUR VILLAGE IN THE SKY** by Janeen Brian & Anne Spudvilas (A & U). A delightful and evocative recreation of a day in the life of a group of children in a remote Himalayan village – so different from life here.

**OUTSIDE** by Libby Hathorn & Ritva Voutila (Little Hare). Reminiscent of 'Alice in Wonderland' this sumptuous book is a day observed through the eyes of two children. Lyrical, poetic text teamed with spectacularly detailed digital illustrations.

**PIG THE PUG** by Aaron Blabey (Scholastic). In simple rhyming text the story unfolds of selfish Pig who will not share his toys – and how he finally learns, the hard way, about sharing with his best friend.

**POPPY CAT** by Sara Acton (Scholastic). Sara's trademark free-flowing, expressive illustrations tell the simple story of a girl and her cat and the antics they both get up to during the day.

**SCARY NIGHT** by Lesley Gibbes & Stephen Michael King (Working Title Press). Lesley's first book promises many more and she is so fortunate to have Stephen to illustrate it. Three intrepid companions brave the scary night to take a surprise to a friend. Well done, Lesley!

**THE STONE LION** by Margaret Wild & Ritva Voutila (Little Hare). I gave this book 5 stars in a review for Bookseller & Publisher. It's a stunningly beautiful picture book about the power of human kindness, heart-warming, poignant, perfectly told. Highly recommended.

So that's all I've got room for in this newsletter. Let me know if you find any of these books and what you think of them. I love feedback.

And don't forget **B IS FOR BEDTIME**, my first picture book, magnificently illustrated by Anna Pignataro.

Goodbye from my mascot Grug.

Thank you.



Margaret Hamilton AM