

## SKIPPED A MONTH!

There should have been a newsletter in September, but that month totally disappeared. We were away travelling for five weeks. It was a very complicated and exhausting trip but so varied. Firstly we attended a wedding on the Greek island of Milos, then a birthday party in Tuscany, followed by a weekend at the beach in San Remo, Liguria. We then flew to Ireland where we did almost the entire circuit of the country, then Newcastle and lots of other places in the UK. Of particular interest to children's book people would be our visits to the following and we highly recommend that you go too:

**SEVEN STORIES** – a whole building devoted to children's books. The day we visited we saw a group of little girls listening to a reading of ANGELINA BALLERINA, then donning tutus. We also saw a Shaun Tan exhibition and I sat in a wonderful storyteller's chair. The address is Lime St, Newcastle on Tyne. [www.sevenstories.org.uk](http://www.sevenstories.org.uk)

**ILLUSTRATIONCUPBOARD** - Contemporary illustration and artwork in the art district of St James, London. We visited on the day that an exhibition of Anthony Browne's work was ending and one of Shaun Tan's work was opened. 22 Bury St, St James, London. [www.illustrationcupboard.com](http://www.illustrationcupboard.com)

**THE HOUSE OF ILLUSTRATION** – Sir Quentin Blake is one of England's best-loved illustrators, so it is fitting that the inaugural exhibition here is of his work. 2 Granary Square, King's Cross, London. [www.houseofillustration.org.uk](http://www.houseofillustration.org.uk)

Finally, we stayed with our good friends Colin and Pam Webb in Bath. They run Palazzo Editions and are publishers of the wonderful series of classics illustrated by Robert Ingpen.

We attended David Almond's session at the Bath Children's Literature Festival and met John and Jill McLay, who began it all. We also delighted in being the first to see proofs of 'Alice Through the Looking Glass' - wonderful!



The House of Illustration, London

## ILLUSTRATOR IN RESIDENCE – Belinda Elliott

20 - 26 July



An extract from Belinda's report: 'Pinerolo is a beautiful cottage, in a lovely location, filled with wonderful treasures. The wealth of information that you shared with me was invaluable. I spent the time working on my new book 'Mate and Me'. I was able to get a lot of work done while I was there, having the time set aside to focus on my work. The original artwork and manuscripts in the cottage were inspiring. To be surrounded by these gave me added enthusiasm and was a valuable reference/ resource for me. I found the time I spent with you, Margaret, truly inspiring. You have a valuable insight into the publishing world, how a book should be presented and how it is developed. You were able to answer all of my questions and guide me along the way to putting my work together in a suitable way. I think that the program that you run at Pinerolo is a wonderful and valuable one.'

NEXT: Angela Sunde 26 - 31 October & then Dub Leffler

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## VISITORS

Award-winning author Emma Allen was holidaying in the mountains with her family. She came to visit on the Saturday after we arrived home. So did Lindy Batchelor from the CBCA Nth Sydney sub-branch. I don't know if I made much sense, but it was good to see them both. Then, just when we are remembering all those affected by the bushfires this time last year, we are hit by a heavy fall of snow, repeating October 2012.

## READERS AND WRITERS FORUM

Saturday 25 October, Katoomba Library 10am - 4pm.

A joint venture organised by Blue Mountains City Library and Varuna. See you there?

Bookings essential: 4780 5750

<http://readersandwritersforum.eventbrite.com.au>

## NEW PICTURE BOOKS

It's not a picture book, but I'm very impressed with Andy Griffiths. His new book *THE 52 STOREY TREEHOUSE* has been the TOP of the bestseller lists for weeks now. That's the TOP of everything. Every genre. Adult or children's. Well done, Andy! I think this is the first time that a children's book has achieved this.

My recent visit to the UK proved once again that Australian picture books are the best. Not only was Shaun Tan featured in two exhibitions but Australian picture books were prominent in bookshops (yes, we couldn't resist going into bookshops!).

Leigh Hobbs is also taking London by storm, with his new book *MR CHICKEN LANDS IN LONDON*.

Here are a few of the latest I've received from Australia's brilliant publishers:

*CELIA AND NONNA* by Victoria Lane & Kayleen West (Ford St). Nonna loses her memory, but Celia has a clever way of dealing with that. A heartwarming story about the bond between a child and her grandmother.

*EDWARD AND THE GREAT DISCOVERY* by Rebecca McRitchie & Celeste Hulme (New Frontier). Edward longs to make a great discovery, like his ancestors had. One day he does, and it changes his life. Good fun.

*EMU* by Claire Saxby & Graham Byrne (Walker). A fun way of entering the world of emus and learning about them, through simple information and engaging illustrations.

*ELEPHANTS HAVE WINGS* by Susanne Gervay & Anna Pignataro (Ford St). Evocative and beautiful mixed media pictures capture the essence of this gentle story based on the parable of the blind men and the elephant. Recommended.

*GO TO SLEEP, JESSIE!* by Libby Gleeson & Freya Blackwood (Little Hare). This award-winning partnership can do no wrong. Jessie's the new baby in the house, sharing her older sister's room. (I know what it's like, that's my childhood). The family try everything to get Jessie to sleep but a final, ingenious solution makes for a sleepy ending. Highly recommended.

*HEY DAD, YOU'RE GREAT* by Corinne Fenton (Black Dog). An appealing and lovable photographic celebration of fathers, following on from *Hey Baby, Oh Baby* and *Hey Mum, I Love You*.

*A HOUSE OF HER OWN* by Jenny Hughes & Jonathan Bentley (Little Hare). A rather indulgent father builds a treehouse for Audrey, who's bigger than she was yesterday. A loving relationship warmly reinforced by simple text and insightful illustrations.

*THE LAST KING OF ANGKOR WAT* by Graeme Base (Viking). The incomparable Graeme Base has created another striking, unusual book – a magical, tropical world where four tropical animals strive to be king. Highly recommended.

*THE MONSTER WHO ATE AUSTRALIA* by Michael Salmon (Ford St). Entertaining, funny and informative, this 30th anniversary edition of this popular book will entertain a whole new generation.

*MY DAD IS A BEAR* by Nicola Connelly & Annie White (New Frontier). Giving bear hugs is what this dad is best at. Heartwarming, gentle text and huggable illustrations combine in an appealing book. Recommended.

*OLIVER AND GEORGE* by Peter Carnavas (New Frontier). Oliver tries several ways to distract George from his reading, unsuccessfully. When George is finally ready to play, Oliver is reading! Playful fun.

*OUR VILLAGE IN THE SKY* by Janeen Brian & Anne Spudvilas (A & U). Beautiful, joyful illustrations and lyrical text celebrate the lives of children in a remote Himalayan village as they go about their daily chores. A wonderful book. Highly recommended.

*THE SKUNK WITH NO FUNK* by Rebecca Young & Leila Rudge (Walker). Poor Woody, a skunk born without a smell! His family are devastated. When he's put to the test though, Woody has an original way to defeat his foes. Mixed media illustrations perfect for the story.

*SO MANY WONDERFULS* by Tina Matthews (Walker). A warm and enthralling appreciation of living in a small town. A book to absorb slowly in order to enjoy the features of the town and the eccentric inhabitants.

*SYLVIA* by Christine Sharp (UQP). Quirky and original, this story of a very unlikely friendship is refreshing and entertaining. The illustrations, layout and design are a perfect match. Recommended.

*THE UGLY DUCKLING* by Frank Loesser & Nathaniel Eckstrom, performed by Justine Clarke (Scholastic). I can still hear Danny Kaye singing this song. This new treatment of Hans Andersen's classic tale is performed by a popular TV performer, beautifully illustrated and includes a CD of the song.

*VANILLA ICE CREAM* by Bob Graham (Walker). I never tire of books by Bob Graham. That means I'm biased, but this is another wonderful BG masterpiece. The simple things in life bring about enormous changes, in one fleeting moment. Highly recommended.

*WHALE IN THE BATH* by Kylie Westaway & Tom Jellett (A & U). A boy's vivid imagination has the family perplexed. Nobody believes there's a whale in the bath. That's why he can't have a bath. It's a convincing story though, that will enthrall young readers. Recommended.

*WILD ONE* by Sonya Hartnett & Lucia Masciullo (Penguin). The cycle of life is relentless and we sometimes lose track of the simple pleasures of childhood. Charlie rediscovers them just before it's too late. Beautifully told and illustrated. Recommended.

With Christmas coming up I'm planning a November newsletter. There's also *OPEN DAY* coming up - our 4th birthday. Watch this space! Thank you.

Margaret Hamilton AM

