

Welcome from the PGP Director

By Audrey Stirling
Ruri, Harris and Caelan's Mum

I would like to say a huge welcome to all our new and returning PGP members and volunteers. I hope you all had a nice relaxing summer and I am sure that your children are looking forward to starting the fun, games and learning associated with PGP.

Thank you to everyone who has volunteered to take up a position in PGP, either by assisting or leading in the playgroup sessions, teaching or assisting in Literacy classes, or in a Board or Non Board Member capacity. With your ongoing support and commitment, the programme will continue to have the opportunity to develop and succeed, thus ensuring our children learn the skills associated with both play and education whilst building their confidence and happiness.

As a voluntary organisation, we always invite and encourage parents to help whenever they can. We are extremely grateful for the continued support of all our volunteers which ensures the success of this wonderful and extremely important community provision.

This year we have 10 playgroup sessions and 18 literacy classes including several new classes on Wednesday. We have quite an

amazing team of teachers and playgroup leaders. To manage our programme we have over 65 leaders, teachers and assistants helping over 230 children to have fun and learn.

We have 20 Board and Non Board Members managing various aspects of the organisation - a great achievement for a totally volunteer based organisation. As well as retaining a tremendous amount of skills and knowledge from continuing volunteers, this year brings a lot of new faces into PGP, particularly to the Board and in the Literacy programme. We are confident our new volunteers will bring with them a host of new ideas and skills.

Board Members

As mentioned, this year brings with it a lot of new faces and role changes. On the Board we have a new Leader Trainer and Representative, Micala Duvoux, a new Treasurer, Christy Broome, a new Special Events Coordinator, Rachael Reilly and a new Craft Coordinator, Tammy. Kerry McCance has downed tools as Craft Coordinator and taken on the remit of Newsletter Editor. Trish Clements has taken on the new role of Communications Coordinator, and will endeavour to enhance PGP's internal and external communications. It is going to be an exciting year with such a dynamic Board.

PGP Events

We will be running our favourite events again this year which include the group nights out, our Christmas party and Literacy Fayre, Volunteers' dinner and English book fairs.

We would like to introduce a few more PGP social events into our calendar, and not just for the children! We have a new Special Events Coordinator and Assistant, but are also hoping to set up an Events Organising Committee to help support planning and running the events. Would you be interested in thinking up new events and putting them into practice? If so, please let me know.

We Need Your Approval

In order for the PGP Board to operate this year, we would like you to approve the Board Members and the annual 2010-11 budget. To do this we NEED YOU to attend our Annual General Meeting on TUESDAY 12th OCTOBER at 8.00pm. This is an important meeting and it is essential that we have the full support of our membership, so PLEASE come and VOTE. To entice you, we will have a bit of a social evening after the formalities with food and drink available. I look forward to meeting you there.

Thank you all again and have a great year.

Contact Audrey at: pgpdirector@gmail.com

Three Month Calendar

Mon 30 Aug	Board Meeting	18 Oct to 01 Nov	School Break in Vaud	Sun 31 Oct	Clocks go back
Mon 06 Sep	Leader Training Evening	Tue 12 Oct	Annual General Meeting	Thu 05 Nov	Guy Fawkes
Thu 09 Sep	Jeûne Genevois	Mon 18 Oct	Nov/Dec Newsletter Deadline	Mon 08 Nov	Board Meeting
Mon 13 Sep	Start of PGP	25 to 29 Oct	School Break in Geneva	Thu 11 Nov	Armistice Day (Veteran's Day)
Sun 19 Sep	International Talk Like a Pirate Day	24 Oct to 03 Nov	School Break in France	Mon 22 Nov	Literacy Parent Information Meeting
Mon 20 Sep	Jeûne Fédéral	Sun 31 Oct	Hallowe'en	Thu 25 Nov	Thanksgiving Day

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Playgroup Programme

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We are a registered non-profit organisation.

Dad's Corner

By Michael Kewley
Oliver and Joshua's Dad

It was never really a boyhood fantasy but shortly after moving from Cartigny, in Switzerland, to our current home in Echenevex, France in 2006 and following an article I read in the village magazine, I signed up as a volunteer in our local "Corps des Sapeurs Pompiers". My motivations were manifold, but if I'm honest the primary one was that we had seen at first hand in Cartigny how the local firemen seemed to be at the centre of the village social scene: despite only being called upon 2 or 3 times per year to do anything remotely resembling putting out a fire, it was always the Sapeurs Pompiers manning the bar at the Fete Nationale, sitting the other side of the bar in the village café, and occasionally putting out the odd waste-basket fire or chopping up a fallen tree. Whilst I guess it goes without saying that I also had an interest in the professional aspects of the job, the truth is that the social side of being a volunteer pompier was probably what most attracted me!

As I soon learned, however, being a volunteer Sapeur Pompier in France is a somewhat different kettle of fish than it is in Switzerland or the UK. The overall mission of the French Sapeur Pompier is to protect people and their possessions (which includes animals), and this means that in France the scope of the role is wider than in some countries. Elsewhere the fire brigade often specializes only in fire and rescue (e.g. cutting people out of car wrecks), French Sapeurs Pompiers, however, are also the first point of call for any emergency medical and accident work. This includes incidents such as heart-attacks, haemorrhages, suicide attempts, car accidents and the like, that in Switzerland or the UK would be covered by a professional ambulance service. Whilst there is no paramedical training (so no ability to administer drugs, put in IVs etc), the most frequent call-out for a French Sapeur Pompier is for some kind of medical incident, which in pompier parlance goes under the general label of "Secours A Personne" (hence SAPeur...).

In addition to this, we do of course put out fires, the most frequent ones being rather mundane chimney fires or garden fires which have got out of control, and occasionally somewhat more impressive car fires. Being called to put out a burning building is somewhat less frequent an occurrence, although when it does happen really is the biggest test for a volunteer pompier, not only because the stakes are often highest for the victims, who may literally lose everything they own, but also because the level of risk, and sheer physicality of such a job, is on a different scale from the usual call-out. I have only attended at one major fire – 2 houses and adjoining farm buildings which were entirely destroyed by, of all things, a chimney fire that went unnoticed for too long – but that 15 hour callout really was a "baptism of fire"!

The last group of call-outs which complete the trilogy of normal fire brigade tasks are what are known as "Operations Diverses", i.e. miscellaneous, which cover anything from pumping out flooded basements, to destroying wasps nests, removing trees blocking roads, dealing with pollution (e.g. fuel oil spilling into waste water systems) and various animal-related jobs: dogs that have been run over, snakes which have escaped, cows which are stuck in ditches and yes – at least in theory – cats stuck up trees!

The huge variety of different call outs is one of the things which make the job so interesting and exhilarating. When the village siren (and our individual pagers) go off, which happens on average once or twice a week in our village, we never know as we head down to the fire station whether we are about to go out for a relatively non-urgent 30 minute job like removing a fallen tree, or whether we may be out for many hours (even occasionally several days), or dealing with something much more difficult. Serious injury and death are of course also sadly part of the job, and whilst our mission is always to protect life when we can, it goes without saying that sometimes we attend a victim who is beyond help. I have been reasonably lucky in not having to deal with too

many really distressing incidents, although have had some experiences which I certainly hope not to have again, and at times like these that the camaraderie of the brigade becomes so important.

In our village of 1500 inhabitants, there are 15 of us in the Corps, ranging in age from 16 to 60, including two females and, despite the occasional inter-personal squabbles, it is vital to know that we can all count on each other when we are out on a job. Most of the time the level of risk involved is limited - and the 20 days of initial training, plus regular monthly drills and operational experience limit it even further – though there are clearly times when we are literally relying on our team-mates to ensure we all get the job done and get back safely. That intense spirit of teamwork is another of the fantastic elements of the role. Naturally everyone has experiences of teams in sports or professional life – and many of us have no doubt participated in corporate "teamwork" exercises! – but when it is literally a matter of life and death it can be amazing how much more quickly a team becomes effective.

Of course, the other way we ensure good team spirit is a very active social life. So whilst I was surprised by the amount of call-outs we get, the range and variety of tasks we are expected to perform, and the amount of training and commitment that is required to become and remain a Sapeur Pompier (which I guess is somewhat reassuring in case you ever need to call us!), the one area where my expectations and reality were more or less in sync was the importance of the Sapeurs Pompiers in the village social life. Whilst there are many other associations and individuals who contribute to the life of our village, it is clear that the Sapeurs Pompiers play a pivotal role in some of the key village events like the Fete Nationale, at which I can usually be found behind the bar!

Emergency Numbers in France

Medical Emergency **15** or **18**
Fire, Flood, Accident etc. **18**
Police Emergency **17**

Emergency Numbers in Switzerland

Medical Emergency **144**
Fire **118**
Police Emergency **117**

Universal Number for all three services
anywhere in Europe **112**

An Interview with ... Bérénice Fitzpatrick

By Bérénice Fitzpatrick
Romain's Mum

Tell us a little about yourself, please.

I was born and grew up in the North of France, near Lille and completed my studies in Rouen, in the Normandy. After graduating from business school, I left for Asia to return 16 years later, married to an Australian and mother of two boys, Matisse who's 8 (now at ENP moving up to CE2) and Romain, 5 years old (in Lit 1). I think I've always had a passion for Asia ever since a little girl. For me, it's what some people would describe as my calling. My first work in Thailand was at Assumption University, where I taught international marketing and marketing communication for a few

semesters. Moving on to the corporate world, I held various management positions in marketing and corporate communications for various MNCs in Jakarta, Bangkok and Singapore, and also worked in Brunei, Vietnam, Cambodia and Myanmar, organizing contemporary art competitions and exhibitions.

Where you like to do your grocery shopping? Why?

No surprises here, my favorite place for grocery shopping is "Mekong Market," a little Asian food supply shop, rue de Versoix in Ferney-Voltaire. I love it because it's the opposite of Migros. Mekong Market is a tiny, dark and cluttered little shop, where you struggle just trying to make your way

over boxes to reach to the soy sauce on the shelf and most of the time, you can't even read what's on the labels because they're in Chinese, Thai, Japanese or any other Asian language. For me, it's an invitation to travel for all my senses!!!

What is your favourite restaurant in Geneva or environs?

My favourite Asian restaurant is in Montreux. We

(Continued on page 3)

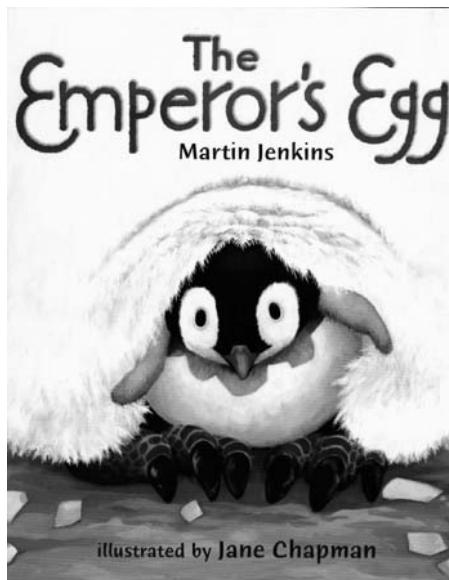
A Note from our Librarian...

By Lucy Brown, PGP Librarian
Ben and Thomas' Mum

Towards the end of the summer holidays we were in a dentist's waiting room and to fill the time we flicked through some books on the magazine table. To our surprise we found a beautiful English book— **'The Emperor's Egg' by Martin Jenkins**. The Emperor's Egg is a beautifully written factual account of the life of an Emperor Penguin. The Emperor penguin is the only large animal to remain on the Antarctic mainland throughout its bitterly inhospitable winter. Once the female has laid her egg, she heads back to the sea, leaving the male to incubate it. This is his story of how he spends two months with the egg on his feet! It was a wonderful story to share with my boys. The illustrations really capture the chill of Antarctica and the informative child-friendly text beautifully explains the life-cycle of Emperor penguins. We loved the book and as Librarian I shall be adding the title to our Playgroup Library this autumn so many more of you can enjoy the wonderful book.

A few days later, I followed up our story time at the dentist with a quiet afternoon watching the amazing film 'The March of the Penguins' directed by Luc Jacquet. My two boys 7 and 5 were

fascinated by the penguins filmed amongst spectacular Antarctic scenery. It was exciting for them to see the penguins take their first splash in the ocean. As a mum, it was satisfying for me to have linked the book and film together in this way.



Yasmin Kuhnen (our outgoing Library Assistant) and myself have carried out the Library inventory

over the summer. You will be interested to know that we now have over 1500 titles on our shelves. Unfortunately, each year books do go missing and this year over 60 books are missing. We would like to remind you all to take care of books and not to take books home without having them checked out first. Please also do check through your bookshelves at home and return any books which have a Playgroup Programme sticker.

Finally, I would like to thank Yasmin for all her hard work over the past years and I would like to welcome Juliette Chisholm to the library team. Juliette has spent many Wednesday mornings reading our library books to her son whilst waiting in the Lounge room, so she knows the books well.

If you have any questions for us then don't hesitate to contact us. If you would like to recommend any great books you feel would be a good addition to our shelves then do let us know.

Lucy and Juliette can
be contacted by email at lucy.brown@sfr.fr or
julesdan@orange.fr.

An Interview with ... Bérénice Fitzpatrick (continued)

(Continued from page 2)

never fail to stop there when we come back from Les Diablerets or Martigny. Around Geneva, I've enjoyed going to restaurants in Carouge, I just love the village feel of this part of Geneva. In contrast to the buzz of the City, I prefer the peaceful settings of restaurants and auberges in surrounding villages like Satigny, Russin and Peney-Dessus.

Do you have a favourite summer holiday destination?

Our last summer holiday immediately comes to my mind. I can still breathe and smell the fresh air of the Connemara, in Ireland. Oscar Wilde once wrote: "Connemara is a savage beauty". I have to agree with him. The landscape is magical and somewhat almost lunar. The people are warm and friendly with a great sense of hospitality and as expected, you are never short of interesting encounters. We rented this beautiful villa on the shores of Lough Corrib (Ireland's biggest lake), from where we did daily trips and walks in the surrounding countryside and of course... to the local pubs! What made this holiday special for us was that for my husband Steve, who is Australian, it was the first time a Fitzpatrick would return to the homeland (at least on his side of the family). Originally, the Fitzpatricks were the only Gaelic Clan to have the Norman prefix Fitz. They were sometimes referred to as the MacGilpatricks.

The Fitzpatricks' chiefs were rulers of Upper Ossary, a large territory in counties of Laois and Kilkenny. Earlier this year, Steve had commissioned an ancestry search based on DNA tests. Back in the 1850's, his family was based in Hollywood, which we discovered is a cute little country spot, at the border of the County of Clare and the County of Galway (which incidentally, is also the area where Grace Kelly stemmed from). From a family of 11, 8 left for the United States and 3 for Australia on board of the Lusitania, with among them Cornelius Fitzpatrick, from whom descends Steve's family. While visiting graveyards is not exactly what you have in mind for your holidays, it really gave a special meaning to our trip, with a deep sense of belonging to the places we visited. Even the boys were making every effort to grasp the concept of ancestry, understanding their family roots and where they stand in the family tree.

And a favourite winter holiday destination?

It would have to be anywhere with a beach and the sun! Unfortunately, I hate the cold and I can't ski, so winters are hard for me here. That being said, last winter we discovered a few exciting spots for sledging with the boys. For great family fun, we really recommend Les Diablerets in Switzerland, which has a sled track of 7.2 km in length. The descent crosses wild forest scenery lined by snow walls, which makes the track very safe for children. We also tried the 2.5 km long

sled track in nearby Villars, which leaves from Col de Soud (accessible with the Villars-Bretaye train) and ends above Villars. The track also runs through forests, but we found it more challenging for young children. But if you are really after sensations, then we recommend the steep sledging track of Château-d'Oex, thrills guaranteed there!

Bérénice is our newsletter assistant. She compiles the What's On... column for each edition, and is on hand to answer my many panics as I get used to the new role of Newsletter Editor! Thank you, Bérénice, for all you've done for the newsletter in the past, and for all that you're about to do!

AQUILA Children's Magazine

Fun, challenge and inspiration for 8-13 year olds
A recommendation from our librarian, Lucy Brown

I spent some time with my sister and family last spring and both her children ages 8 and 10 were reading and enjoying the activities in their AQUILA magazines. This monthly magazine comes highly recommended from them and I have just signed up for an annual subscription for my nearly 8 year old son.

If you are interested in finding a good monthly magazine in English for your children then visit their website:

<http://www.aquila.co.uk/>

An annual subscription including postage to Europe costs £45.

Welcome to Playgroup from the Craft Coordinator

By Tammy

When kids wield paintbrushes, it's never easy to know what to expect, but this article will hopefully give you some ideas of what the Arts and Crafts time at Playgroup is about.

The purposes of this part of a session are for the youngsters to have fun working with new materials, to develop confidence and to explore their creativity. The process of crafting is much more important than the finished product. Children's ideas should be fostered where possible. Their finished item will probably turn out way better than the example – I've seen this happen time and time again with my own children!

For those of you new to crafts, I hope you find our system simple to use. A craft basket is located in the bottom of the Supplies Cupboard in the Small Toy Room which contains all the materials needed to carry out the week's craft activity. The instructions for the craft are pinned to the notice board in the Craft Room, along with an example of the craft and a sheet for comments. Please feel free to tell me if a craft didn't work, if you have a suggestion for an improvement or if you loved it.

You can also get in touch with me by e-mail: pgp_craft@yahoo.co.uk.

When you take a look at the year's Craft Curriculum in the Parent Handbook, or on the Craft noticeboard, you'll probably recognise some old favourites from years gone by, but also find it full of new and exciting art and craft projects for our kids to get stuck into. Some crafts are highlighted. These are the messy ones and you should ensure that both adults and children attending playgroups that week come appropriately dressed. Aprons are available for children, but it can be difficult for them to control a paintbrush when they are enjoying themselves!

For most of the crafts, some preparation will be required, be this pouring paint onto paper plates, or cutting out pieces required to make an item. Helping your leader and assistant by volunteering for these tasks will make the craft time run more smoothly and hopefully retain the interest of the children for longer.

As with all other elements of Playgroup, the Arts and Crafts section runs to a budget. Over one hundred children take part each week in the craft

section of playgroup. Supplies are bought with the number of participants in mind, so please make sure that these are used carefully. If limits on materials are set, please ensure that you respect them so that groups later in the week have enough to carry out their crafts with success. If siblings are attending, colouring sheets are always available to keep them occupied.

One of the big craft trends at the minute is recycled crafts and, in this respect, playgroup is no different. We are always in need of cereal boxes and old newspapers, but this year we also need **LOADS of toilet rolls** and also **egg boxes**. There is a basket at the back of the Big Toy Cupboard in which you can leave donations of *anything* we may find useful.

I hope you all enjoy this year's crafts!



Welcome to Playgroup from the Leader Trainer and Representative

By Micala Duvoux

Noah and Livia's Mum

On behalf of the Playgroup Leaders and Assistants, I would like to welcome you to the 2010/11 Playgroup year.

As the new Leader Trainer and Representative, I'm attempting to take over the role from Trish Clements who did this work efficiently and enthusiastically for three years. Trish has given me a set of impeccably organised files, folders and notes as well as spending the evening explaining the work involved in this role. Any hiccups are therefore entirely my fault! Trish has now taken up the new role of Communication Coordinator and I know she has lots of ideas up her sleeve for making the Playgroup Programme even better for our members and more well-known in the area for our future members.

This year we have lots of fresh faces joining our team of Playgroup leaders and assistants, some of whom have taken up the role in this, their first year at playgroup. What enthusiasm! We equally have many volunteers staying on for another year (or years in some cases) and this dedication to playgroup is so appreciated and heart-warming. Our team of leaders and assistants this year are a valuable mix of innovation and experience and I'm certain that for you and your little ones this means lots of fun-filled sessions over the year!

Following on from the success of last year, our sessions will be based around themes. These

themes range from pirates to insects to jungle creatures! Leaders will incorporate, as they see fit, songs, games and activities suitable to the age and dynamic of the group. This means the sessions will be varied and interesting all year long. The themes are linked to the craft – have a look at what's coming up in the Craft Curriculum in the Parent Handbook.

On the subject of craft, I'd like to thank Kerry McCance, our outgoing Crafts Co-ordinator and new Newsletter Editor, for doing such an amazing job of creating this year's fun and varied craft curriculum. And a big welcome to Tammy who is taking up the role.

As a fully volunteer run organisation, we are very fortunate to have such wonderful members who step forward to Lead and Assist in the Playgroup Programme. Please support your leaders and assistants fully, as well as thinking about how you can become involved in the association.

Here are a few ideas of how you can help in your group:

- Arrive on time!
- Contribute to an Adult Snack rota;
- ensure that your and your children's hands are all squeaky clean when arriving to playgroup and practice good hygiene at all times;
- become the Library Assistant for your group - ask your Leader what this entails;
- continue chatting with a friend while doing the

washing-up, sweeping the floor, tidying – it can be never ending here too just like at home!

- Become the Big Toy specialist with another adult, knowing how to store the equipment safely in the Big Toy Cupboard;
- help prepare cut-outs before craft time and ensure lids are put back on markers and glue after craft time;
- if attending with a newborn and/or are unable to help with lifting, take on a lightweight task above;
- ask your Leader how you can help, and offer to take on a task for a few weeks at a time. As the weeks go by, please remember to continue to help out.;
- invest wholeheartedly in the songs, games or activities that are taking place in the session.

Your help will allow your leaders and assistants to dedicate more of their time and energy to animating the sessions, so that even more fun is had by all. If you have any ideas or suggestions to share, your Leader will be delighted to hear them.

Thank you for your support and I wish you and your child(ren) many happy times in your playgroups over the course of the year ahead.

What is a pirate's favourite piece of Apple technology?
An iPatch.



Welcome to the Literacy Programme from the Literacy Coordinator

By Jane del Pozo
Anna and David's Mum

I would like to welcome everyone to the Literacy Programme. This is my third year as Literacy Coordinator working with Leisa Campbell-Lendrum who provides advice on curriculum and teaching. Our goal continues to be to give volunteers the support and materials they need so they can concentrate their valuable time on preparing time spent with the children.

This year the Literacy Programme has grown even more to accommodate increased demand for places. We now have four pre-literacy classes and, due to a wait-list large enough to fill an extra class over the summer, five Literacy 1 classes. There are 55 volunteers helping to run 17 classes. This means lots of new faces this year.

As usual, we need to remind you of a few things to ensure that classes run as smoothly as possible:

- please respect class start and finish times (and have your child go to the toilet before class!);
- according to playgroup rules there must be a parent or guardian present at all times in the church while the child is attending the literacy session;
- you must sign your child in at the start of the session (sign-up sheets are by the door of all the classes) and indicate where you will be waiting;
- children must be picked up from the classroom at the end of the session.

We aim to help your children have fun in our classes in a caring environment, continuing from

the ethos of the Playgroup Programme. Our time with the children is only short, and our communication with you and your support at home in continuing the work done in class is an invaluable part of the programme. Please read the outline of the objectives for each level which, of course, are not set in stone, but are a guide to see how children can progress across the programme. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact your child's teacher, myself or Leisa.

After everyone has had time to settle in after the first weeks of classes, you will have an opportunity to meet teachers and assistants and see examples of materials and work from all levels at the Literacy

Why does it take so long for pirates to recite the alphabet?
They spend ages at sea!

Literacy Programme - Our Objectives for the Year Ahead

PRE-LITERACY: In Pre-Literacy we introduce your child to the letters of the alphabet. Our aims are to help your child to recognise the letters, to form the letters with their fingers and a pencil, and to know the sounds those letters make when learning to read. We will be using *Jolly Phonics* and *Letterland* resources so that you and your child can see their progress in workbooks. The letters will be taught in a sequence that will enable your child to "sound out" the letters and then words for themselves. The Literacy session is just 20 minutes but throughout the class the children will be learning the letters in a fun and multi-sensory way, through games, songs and stories. You can help your child at home by finding lots of objects beginning with the week's letter, practising the letter sounds and actions; and, of course, practising the correct pencil hold and forming the letters. The best way to help your child is to do little but often.

LITERACY 1: In Literacy 1, our primary aim is to help your child to read in their first language, English, before starting to learn to read in French. Using *Jolly Phonics* and *Letterland* resources, songs, actions, rhymes and workbooks we will help your child to identify and "sound out" letters and then words phonetically. The letters will be taught in the same order as in the Pre-Literacy year for handwriting, and in letter groups and sound patterns for learning to read. We will work on correct pencil hold and correct letter formation so that your child's reading and writing develops at the same rate. The lessons will include lots of interactive literacy games with the children making words on their own and together; and later on

simple sentences. We will read lots of different stories, non-fiction and poetry and these will be linked with the sounds and words of the week. There will be some craft work throughout the year as well.

LITERACY 2: In Literacy 2 we aim to develop your child's ability to read, write, speak and listen. For those children who are not reading we aim to improve their ability to identify and "sound out" words phonetically independently. For those already reading, we aim to develop their phonic knowledge and therefore their reading skills. We will continue the work covered in Literacy 1 on correct pencil hold and correct letter formation so that your child's reading and writing develops at the same rate. Your child will also be taught basic sentence structure and basic parts of speech and punctuation. We hope to read a variety of different stories, non-fiction and poetry and have a lot of fun with flash cards and literacy games. You can help your child by developing their speaking and listening skills at home - asking questions that require them to think and use different words, giving them new words when you speak, asking them to spell words in their head and on paper, reading non-fiction and poetry at home as well as bedtime stories. Finally, you can test your child's and your own phonic knowledge by asking them to teach you the phonic sounds - they love knowing more!

LITERACY 3,4,5 AND 6: These later stages of the Literacy Programme ensure that the children have the opportunity to consolidate the basic skills that they have learnt before.

- In Literacy 3 they will be becoming more independent in their reading and writing skills. They will now use these to write different types of sentences, work on comprehensions and writing their own stories and poems. The children will be encouraged to use these skills to learn how to record their ideas in a variety of ways.
- In Literacy 4 the children will be working on more complex comprehensions that will enable them to add their own ideas and thoughts in more detail. They will be more in charge of their own work and complete a range of special writing projects.
- In Literacy 5 and 6 the children will continue to work on the whole range of Literacy ideas. They will be required to work in a much more independent way and will be set work to which they will have to prepare their responses and decide on the best ways to present these.

In all of these Literacy years the children will be using the Folens programme which ensures that there is continuity and progression in their learning. The teacher will be moving the children forward and encouraging them to check their work in a more detailed way. They will be required to build on their reading skill using the extensive selection of reading books we have to offer them. It is essential that the children complete the work that they are set for homework as this will ensure that they are prepared for each lesson.

Please verify your contact information with your Teacher, Leader or Assistant as soon as possible. Your details will appear in the Member Directory. The Directory is confidential and cannot be used for any other purpose. Finally, please share your photos in the montage to be published in the Playgroup Yearbook.

Why didn't the pirate starve when he was marooned on a desert island?



Because of all the sand which is there!

What Every Leader, Teacher and Assistant Really Needs To Know...

There was one question on everyone's lips at the Leader Orientation Meeting this year. You'd be forgiven for thinking it may have been a question on the ins and outs of registration, or even the official PGP version of 'Down At The Station' but you'd have been wrong. The burning question was, "How do we make a decent coffee?"

Taking this journalism lark to new depths of seriousness, I tracked down the resident expert on the matter, Tijs Zijderveld (Anna, Willem and Johan's Dad), for his opinion on this most important of matters. Here's what he had to say:

The coffee is a tricky business at Playgroup. The thing is that I am a caffeine addict, and if I do not get my 2-3 cups in the morning I get a bit moody. So I had to find out the correct recipe, but the coffee machines at Crossroads demanded careful examination. They tend to be quite chalky, so the water only drips through slowly, which means that if you put too much coffee in there, it gets very

strong (which is fine for me but not for the others in my group). So instead of putting one measure spoon of coffee in there per 2 cups coffee, 1 per 3 is better (warning: if anyone de-chalks them, the recipe changes!). After some experience you just do it off-the-cuff. What I used to do is make a big pot before the group arrived, which somehow converted most into coffee-addicts, since at the end of the year I needed at least two pots! And for the weeks when we started in the crafts room I would transfer it into a thermos flask and have it ready for when the parents arrived..

Way back in 2008, Trish Clements (Hugh and Ronan's Mum) shared a secret recipe in the newsletter, told to her by former PGP member Vicki Beney. Vicki perfected a Frothy Coffee recipe, for those days when you need to add a bit of oomph to the PGP favourite brew.

- Add milk to the Bodum-type French Coffee Press found in the Snack Cupboard.

- Plunge up and down until you have frothy milk to add to the coffee. The result looks and tastes as great as the big bucks espresso machines.
- We highly recommend washing the plunger and container immediately after use. Please ensure that both are perfectly clean after you are done.
- This works equally well with warm or cold milk. If warming the milk, make sure the container is not made of metal and pop it in the microwave to heat through.



Useful Web Addresses

If you have just arrived in Switzerland, or even if you've been here for a few years, here are some websites which may help you survive your move and/or give you a greater insight into your new home country.

Swissinfo

<http://www.swissinfo.ch>

Swiss news and information about Switzerland, business, culture, sport, weather etc. Swissinfo covers Switzerland from every angle.

American International Women's Club

<http://www.aiwcgeneva.org/>

Glocals.com

<http://www.glocals.com/>

Meet expats and locals in Switzerland. Join local activities and share local information with other expats and locals.

AngloInfo Geneva

<http://switzerland.angloinfo.com/>

Comprehensive, independent, accurate and up to date information on every aspect of life in the Geneva region.

Swiss National Tourist Office

<http://www.myswitzerland.com/>

The Geneva Community

<http://www.thegenevacommunity.com/>

Geneva and nearby France based service for associations, clubs and business sharing information via website and email.

Genevalunch

<http://genevalunch.com/>

A community newspaper sharing news on life in

the Lake Geneva region and neighbouring France.

<http://playdegex.blogspot.com/>

Want to find a brilliant play park in the local area for your kids? Check out local dad Steve Traylen's blog. He's photographing and reviewing play parks around the area.

And to help with all that Literacy homework...

<http://www.readingandspellingchannel.com/>

Literacy skills are an essential part of learning, and as such, improving reading skills has an impact on society as a whole.

It is hoped that the Reading and Spelling Channel will become a one-stop-shop for individuals looking for information in this area. This website is aimed at parents and guardians, educators, researchers, children, youths and adults looking for answers, help and support.

The **Reading and Spelling Channel** also presents a comprehensive list of some of the reading and spelling resources from around the world which address specific learning difficulties in children, adolescents and adults. In addition we aim to point you to the available strategies for encouraging good reading and spelling practices for all age groups.

This is a brand new website and we are updating and improving it on a daily basis. If you have any comments/feedback, please send them to us via the website 'Contact Us' section.

And when the homework is finished and your kids want a bit of fun, check out these free

story sites which each contain loads of stories for a variety of age groups:

<http://storynory.com/> and <http://www.storybee.org/>.

If you have a useful webpage you want to share, get in touch at pgpnewsletter@gmail.com and we'll include it in the next issue!

Funny Laundry Is Back

Bringing the best English-speaking comedians to Geneva. Every 2 weeks starting Tuesday, September 22, at the P'tit Music'Hohl, 54 Avenue Louis-Casai, Cointrin, Geneva. Show starts at 8.30pm in a non-smoking theatre. Tickets sold at the door for 40CHF.

28 September Tom Stade and Wouter Meijs
12 October Tom Craine and Simon Bligh
26 October Tony Law and Fergus Craig
9 November Dave Fulton and George Egg

Funny Laundry also presents its BIG show on Thursday, December 2 at the Grande Salle du Palladium, Geneva. Paul Merton's Impro Chums. Paul Merton and his highly acclaimed Impro Chums are wonders of nature.

Impro Chums take audience suggestions and create cascades of fantastic tumbling laughter. Most of the time.

The Impro Chums are: Paul Merton - Richard Vranich - Lee Simpson - Suki Webster - Mike McShane

Tickets: 65 CHF. Show: 8.30pm. Doors Open: 6pm.

Tickets on sale through www.starticket.ch.

Go to www.funnylaundry.com for more information.

Why are pirates called pirates?
Because they arrrrrr...

Tell Me A Story!

Where can you go to hear stories for kids in English? Here are some ideas:

The Library In English, rue de Monthoux, 3, CH 1201, Geneva: +41 22 732 8097
Children's Story Hour, aimed at children from 3 - 7, is held on Wednesday afternoons from 15:00-16:00. You need not be a member of the library to participate in the Story Hour.

Echenevex Public Library, 89 rue des Maures, 01170, Echenevex: +33 4 50 41 57 98
Prompted by a suggestion from the primary school

staff in Echenevex, several Anglophone parents introduced a bi-monthly English story-hour for 4-9 year olds at Echenevex library. Held on a Saturday from 10.30-11.30, their next meeting is Saturday 16 October.

Off The Shelf (English Book Store), 15 bvd Georges Favon, CH 1204, Geneva: +41 22 311 1090

On the last Saturday of every month, they offer story time for 2-8 year olds starting at 10:30, as well as 10% off all children's books purchased before 12:00.

Third Culture Kids

Hey parents! If your child has spent a significant part of his or her development years outside your home culture, then he or she is very special ... and is also called a Third-Culture Kid (TCK).

Come join a discussion by Ruth Van Reken, the leading expert on TCKs, as she takes us through the joys and challenges of raising kids in a globally mobile culture. Invite your friends too! It will be on Tuesday, 28 September, 19:00h at Crossroads Church in Ferney-Voltaire, FR. For more information, contact crossroads@free.fr.

Letter from the Editor

By Kerry McCance
Kim, Angus and Ruth's Mum

Well, it's autumn again! The nights are drawing in, there's an unmistakable chill in the air, and the supermarkets will soon be knee deep in root vegetables and pumpkins. We've signed up to various activities from ballet classes to French lessons and sharpened all our writing implements in anticipation of the academic year to come.

Personally, I love autumn. I love the fresh start it provides without being as stressful as New Year with its frantic entertaining and inevitable resolutions. For me, this year at playgroup brings more fresh starts than usual, and, taking over the position of Newsletter Editor from Liz Stevenson is certainly the biggest. I'm slightly in awe – she's done it brilliantly for the last two years and I'm a

little scared to step into her great big shoes. I'll try my best to do her proud. Thank you, Liz, for all your hard work over the past years.

Since my earliest days in the programme, I've loved the newsletter and believe it to be a most valuable resource. Our family has eaten well, drunk well, read well, travelled well, shopped well and enjoyed brilliant days out, all from things that we've seen in the newsletter.

But it will only continue to be brilliant if you can help it to be so. Please send contributions by email to pgpnewsletter@gmail.com. They can be big or small, funny or serious, fiction or non-fiction, in fact, anything goes. Send photos, recipes, book reviews, gardening tips, questions, jokes, ideas for articles, anything and everything to continue to make our newsletter all it can be.

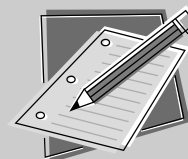
The November/December

Newsletter Deadline is

MONDAY, OCTOBER 18.

Send contributions to

pgpnewsletter@gmail.com



What's On In and Around Geneva

10 to 21 Oct - **PUPPET SHOW: "The pop-up Cirkus"** is a story of a magical circus which pops-up from a book. A short performance, which is just perfect for the little ones (2-3 years old). Le Théâtre des Marionnettes de Genève, 3 Rue Rodo, Geneva 4. Tel: +41 224 184 777. www.marionnettes.ch.

Until 17 Oct – **ART EXHIBITION:** La Fondation de l'Hermitage presents a major retrospective devoted to Edward Hopper (1882-1967), one of the best-known 20th-century American artists. Building around this exciting exhibition, the museum proposes several interesting activities for children: The "Fun tour" activity brochures give children the opportunity of discovering the exhibition from an amusing and instructive angle (in French only). Workshops for 6 to 12 year olds on Wednesdays and Saturdays. These include a discovery-tour of the exhibition (in French), followed by a painting workshop with a qualified activity leader, inspired by the masterpieces presented in the exhibition. Check website for dates. Bookings required. Tel: +41 21 320 50 01. <http://en.fondation-hermitage.ch>

15 to 17 Oct – **La Foire d'Automne & Bourse**

aux Sonnailles, Romainmôtier, VD. More than 80 exhibitors will be present at this new edition of the Autumn & Cowbells Exchange Fair on the site of Champbaillard, amidst the forests. A fantastic occasion to discover the beautiful middle-aged Abbaye de Romainmôtier, to taste authentic products from a region rich in gastronomy, traditions, not to mention...its wines. Serious collectors of cowbells and sonnailles (large size bells) now know Romainmôtier for its exchange fair. The cattle descent to the valley, a colourful and loud parade of cows magnificently decorated with crowns and sonnailles, is a great moment of emotion! <http://www.swissisland.ch/>

16 Oct - **English Storytime at Echenevex Public Library.** A bi-monthly English story-hour for 4-9 year olds at the library from 10:30 - 11:30. The Echenevex library also stocks a selection of English books from toddler to teenager and has a section dedicated to foreign language books – English, German, and Spanish. Bibliothèque municipale, 89 rue des Maures, 01170 Echenevex. Tel: +33 4 50 41 57 98

31 Oct - **Celebrate Halloween at the Parc Pré-Vert** at Signal de Bougy (Aubonne exit). A special

Halloween lunch is available at the restaurant from 11:30. Activities will start at 13:30 with the children's parade (weather permitting) followed by a show at 14:00 (free entry). www.signaldebougy.ch

13 to 31 Oct – **CHOCOLATE THEATRE : T'en fais une drôle de tête!** For ages 5 and up. Children will enjoy the distribution of bread and chocolate before or after the show. A 40 minutes performance at the Cafeteria at 9:45 or 14:30. Bookings are required! Theatre Am Stram Gram. 56 route de Frontenex, Geneva. Tel. +41 /22 735 79 24. www.amstramgram.ch

5 to 7 Nov - **Library in English - Book Sale.** Thousands of books for children and adults. The Library in English, rue de Monthoux 3, 1201, Geneva. Tel. +41 22 732 80 97. www.thelibrary.ch

Contact Bérénice at berenicefitz@yahoo.com with your items for inclusion in our What's On In and Around Geneva Column.

What's On In and Around Geneva

By Bérénice Fitzpatrick (Newsletter Assistant)
Romain's Mom

SEPTEMBER

Sep - **SCIENCE SHOWS: Fun with Physics.** The 2010/2011 program of the science shows at CERN will soon be released. The workshops are suited for children under 14 and run every Wednesday and Saturday. At 09:00 and 15:00 on Wednesdays, reservations required. At 15:00 on Saturdays, no reservation needed. At Microcosm, CERN CH-1211, Geneva, Building 33 (Reception), Entrance A. Tel: + 41 22 767 8484. Check website for early booking. <http://microcosm.web.cern.ch/microcosm/Content/Animations/Animations-en.html>

11 to 12 Sep – EUROPEAN HERITAGE

DAYS: Canton of Geneva. The theme of this year's heritage days in French-speaking Switzerland is "Cycles of Life". Public buildings such as maternity wards, hospitals, schools, training institutes, churches, mental hospitals, sanatoriums, cemeteries, etc... will open for the weekend allowing visitors to discover Geneva's architectural heritage. Free of charge. Full program on the websites: www.patrimoineromand.ch or <http://www.nike-kultur.ch>

18 to 19 Sep – EUROPEAN HERITAGE

DAYS: France. This nationwide cultural event allows visitors to discover monuments and places of interest. On this occasion in the Pays de Gex, you can visit Fort l'Écluse (<http://www.cc-pays-de-gex.fr>), or enjoy a guided tour of Ferney Voltaire's Pottery and Voltaire's Castle. <http://www.ferney-voltaire.net>

18 to 19 Sep – Russin's Grape Harvest

Festival. This is the 48th edition of the Russin's harvest festival. Visitors will have the opportunity to taste Chasselas whites, Gamay reds, new varieties and local cheeses and fish. Entertainment, concerts and parades will also take place throughout the village over two days. On the theme of "World Circus - Geneva 2010", young artists will perform on the streets for the delight of the young and old. A fun-filled family day in a beautiful setting! Sat. 14:00-03:00. Sun. 08:30-22:00. <http://www.fetedesvendangesrussin.ch/>

15, 22, 29 Sep and 6 Oct – CHILDREN'S

WORKSHOPS: The Little Inventors' Club (Le Club des Petits Inventeurs) proposes regular workshops for children between 7 and 12 years old to discover, learn and make their own little inventions, which they can take home afterwards. Tools, materials and snacks are provided at these fun, hands-on workshops organized by L'Espace des Inventions de Lausanne. Vallée de la Jeunesse 1, 1007 Lausanne. Tel: +41 213 156 880. For bookings, visit www.espace-des-inventions.ch

12, 19 Sep – **SCIENCE FAIR: Bread, Science and Chocolate.** Every Sunday afternoon in autumn, l'Espace des Inventions de

Lausanne offers a program of scientific explorations for families in a relaxed atmosphere. Recommended from age 10. Conference Starts at 16.00 – Free entry, included snack. Vallée de la Jeunesse 1, 1007 Lausanne. Tel: +41 213 156 880. www.espace-des-inventions.ch

24 Sep - **SCIENCE: The European Researchers' Night.** CERN invites you to discover the every day work of its physicists. Spend an unforgettable evening with CERN's researchers, a great opportunity to view science from a different angle, simple and entertaining. A tour of the LHC accelerator control rooms and experiments, interactive exhibits, concerts, workshops for children, tasting of cryogenic ice creams is what awaits you at CERN from 17:00 to midnight. More info and registration forms: <http://www.cern.ch/voisins>.

24 Sep to 1 Oct - **The Australian Festival 2010 at Gex and Vesancy.** A group of keen and cultured Australians have got together in Gex and Vesancy in France, to put together an inaugural Australian Festival. Come and take part in the festival activities: comedy, theatre, film, food, wine and football it's got it all. www.austfest.com

24 Sep to 17 Oct - **THEATRE: The Tempest,** a play by William Shakespeare co-presented by Am Stram Gram children's theatre (Geneva) and La Compagnie Super Trop Top. This particular adaptation of The Tempest will allow children to discover a major work of English Literacy but also help them raise key questions: What is nature? Culture? What is power? And most importantly, what is freedom? From 8 years old. A one-hour performance in French (no intermission). Limited spaces - reservation required: www.amstramgram.ch

25 Sep - **Night of the Museums.** To mark the 10th 'Nuit des Musées' in Lausanne and Pully, the Foundation Hermitage Museum will be open until 2 in the morning. Events: guided tours of the exhibition for adults and families, creative painting workshop for children, walking tours in the park, big book sale with exhibition catalogues, posters and postcards! From 14:00 to 02:00. See the complete program of the event on lanuitdesmusees.ch

25 Sep to 10 Oct - **PUPPET SHOW: "Treasure Island"**, a performance filled with pirate adventures. A one hour performance for children ages 7 and up. Le Théâtre des Marionnettes de Genève, 3 Rue Rodo, Geneva 4. Tel: +41 224 184 777 www.marionnettes.ch.

Until 30 Oct – **OUTDOOR EXHIBITION:** "The mysteries of everyday things", a brain-teasing exhibition around the lake presented by le Réseau Romand Science et Cité and the City of Divonne-

les-Bains. Free entry.

OCTOBER

From Oct – **CHILDREN'S WORKSHOPS:** The Conservatory and Botanical Gardens will soon release the program of their annual series of "green workshops" for children. These popular workshops are held Wednesday afternoons, for children between 8 and 11 years old. Check the website for early bookings <http://www.ville-gex.ch/cjb>

Oct – **FILM FESTIVAL: P'tits Yeux, Grand Ecran** (Little Eyes, Big Screen). Gex's annual children's film festival will take place during the French autumn break school holidays. Check out details of this year's festival program at: www.ville-gex.fr. Tel: 04 50 42 36 00

1 to 3 Oct – **Equid'Espaces** (Equestrian fair) in La Roche-sur-Foron will hold its sixth event this year building on its past successes: trials, a great variety of horses of different breeds and origins, competitions for all categories, demonstrations. In addition this year, 20 Camargue horses will perform an exceptional show for the pleasure of all horse-lovers. www.rochexpo.com

2 Oct - **"Desalpe"** (the annual alpine cattle descent) in Saint-Cergue. To the drone of alphorns, the crack of whips, the beat of folk music and the dexterity of flag throwers, herdsmen and about ten herds of costumed cows return to the village for the winter from their summer in the alpine meadows. Arrive early to watch the spectacular cow parade (8:30 to 11:30). There will also be a large selection of traditional and local foods as well as artisans' stands. Tel: +41 22 360 13 14. www.st-cergue.ch.

2 to 10 Oct – **FILM FESTIVAL: The 5th edition of the Geneva International Animated Film Festival** is an annual French-speaking Swiss event dedicated to film animation. The program this year includes a competition and a special focus on Japanese animation and of course, a vast array of quality children's and general audience films. For more info and a look at the program. www.cinematou.ch

10 Oct – **SCIENCE:** L'Espace des Inventions de Lausanne celebrates its 10th anniversary. A program filled with shows and activities for all ages. Free entry from 10:00 to 18:00. www.espace-des-inventions.ch

10 Oct - **The 5th Expat-Expo, Geneva.** A fair with over 160 exhibitors focused on the English-speaking community. A fun and informative outing for the whole family. Palexpo, Hall 7. 11:00 to 17:00. Free admission! www.expat-expo.ch