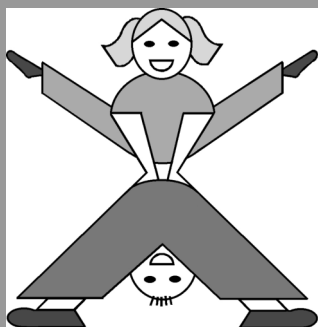


Volume 13, Issue 3
2010 - 2011

Editor: Kerry McCance
newsletter@playgroupprogramme.org



Playgroup Programme

January/February Newsletter

Happy New Year!

Welcome back to PGP and best wishes for 2011. If you've made some of these common New Year's Resolutions, perhaps PGP can help you keep them!

Become better organised

All the PGP Board email addresses have changed to standardised versions, so make sure you update your address book - they're listed in the table below.

Get rid of some of that clutter

Why not make use of PGP's recently launched Classified Ads service?

Adverts should be mailed to market@playgroupprogramme.org

and should include the category (buy/sell etc), the text, contact email and phone number. No photos are possible at this time. Deadline for submissions will be **Tuesday** for inclusion that week. Distribution will usually take place on a **Wednesday**. And to make sure you don't miss out on a bargain, make sure that market@playgroupprogramme.org is also added to your address books.

Become more involved in PGP

If you were at the brilliant Christmas Party, you'll no doubt be excited to see what Rachael, our Special Events Co-ordinator, next has in store for us. But she'd

appreciate you helping out in whatever capacity you can. Drop her a line at events@playgroupprogramme.org.

Raise money for a good cause

Check out the details of **Read For Me Read For You**, PGP's Sponsored Read on page 3. Funds raised will be supporting the charity Kids With a Cause. There's more information on this charity in the article too.

Become more creative

Write for the newsletter - the next deadline is 16th February, so please send your articles via email to the address below.

New Contact Details for PGP Board

Director	Audrey Stirling	director@playgroupprogramme.org
Treasurer	Christy Broome	treasurer@playgroupprogramme.org
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Registrar	Tania McMahon	registrar@playgroupprogramme.org
Communications Coordinator	Trish Clements	communications@playgroupprogramme.org

Three Month Calendar

Sat 01 Jan	New Year's Day	Wed 26 Jan	First Aid Course	21 - 25 Feb	School Holidays in Vaud
Mon 03 Jan	Back to School in France	Mon 31 Jan	Mid-Year Leader Workshop	28 Feb - 4 Mar	School Holidays in Geneva
Mon 10 Jan	Back to School in Geneva and Vaud	Mon 31 Jan	Start of PGP Second Semester	28 Feb - 11 Mar	School Holidays in France
Mon 10 Jan	Back to PGP	Wed 09 Feb	First Aid Course	Thu 17 Mar	St Patrick's Day
Mon 17 Jan	Board Meeting	Mon 14 Feb	Valentine's Day	Mon 21 Mar	Board Meeting
Tue 25 Jan	Burn's Night	Wed 16 Feb	Mar/Apr Newsletter Deadline	Mar & Apr	Read For Me Read For You

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Playgroup Programme

c/o Crossroads Church
chemin de la Brunette
01210 Ferney-Voltaire
France

Web: www.playgroupprogramme.org
Email: director@playgroupprogramme.org

We are a registered non-profit organisation.

Puffin's 70 Best Ever Books

By Juliette Chisholm
Bron and Wilf's Mum

The UK publisher Puffin has released a list of its 70 best-ever books for children to mark its 70th anniversary. Books are split into categories such as 'Best Mischief and Mayhem', 'Best Swashbucklers and Derring-Do', and even 'Best Alternatives to Twilight'. "The categories were picked to show that there's a Puffin for everyone and to suit all tastes, from those who love action and adventure to tales of family and friendship and even a vampire or two," said Francesca Dow, managing director of Puffin Books.

The list is as diverse in its characters as in its categories, so Huckleberry Finn rubs shoulders with Artemis Fowl, and Charlie and Lola with Fungus the Bogeyman, and the age range is from picture books through to teen fiction. Such is Roald Dahl's enduring genius that he has his own category – the brilliantly named 'The Best Phizzwhizzers' and there are both old and new classics such as 'Treasure Island' and 'Diary of a Wimpy Kid'. Parents will find old favourites like Peter Pan that they can introduce their children to and likewise, children can enlighten their parents as to just who Percy Jackson is (and no, he's not in Harry Potter...)

The list features in an excellent, informative booklet: "The Puffin Handbook" which is a comprehensive guide to Puffin children's books (from picture books to teen fiction) for parents, available free for download at <http://www.puffin.co.uk/static/grownups/>

It is packed full of useful information, including how to get and keep your children interested in reading, with author interviews and much more. I'm off to curl up with a copy of 'Ballet Shoes'.... Happy reading!

The Best Mischief and Mayhem

1. 'The Twits' by Roald Dahl
2. 'Diary of a Wimpy Kid' by Jeff Kinney
3. 'The Hundred-Mile-An-Hour Dog' by Jeremy Strong
4. 'The Secret Diary of Adrian Mole' by Sue Townsend

The Best Weepies

1. 'Watership Down' by Richard Adams
2. 'The Truth about Leo' by David Yelland
3. 'Two Weeks with the Queen' by Morris Gleitzman
4. 'Charlotte's Web' by E B White

The Best to Cuddle-Up With

1. 'The Very Hungry Caterpillar' by Eric Carle
2. 'The Bog Baby' by Jeanne Willis & Gwen Millward

3. 'Peepo!' by Janet and Allan Ahlberg
4. 'Hairy Maclary from Donaldson's Dairy' by Lynley Dodd

The Best Blood and Guts

1. 'The Enemy' by Charlie Higson
2. 'Dracula' by Bram Stoker
3. 'Being' by Kevin Brooks
4. 'The Hound of the Baskervilles' by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle

The Best Swashbucklers and Derring-Do

1. 'Treasure Island' by Robert Louis Stevenson
2. 'Captain Flinn and the Pirate Dinosaurs' by Giles Andreae & Russell Ayto
3. 'Young Samurai: The Way of the Warrior' by Chris Bradford
4. 'Robin Hood' by Roger Lancelyn Green

The Best Heroes

1. 'Artemis Fowl' by Eoin Colfer
2. 'Percy Jackson and the Lightning Thief' by Rick Riordan
3. 'Young Bond: SilverFin' by Charlie Higson
4. 'The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn' by Mark Twain

The Best Characters

1. 'Charlie and Lola: Excuse Me But That is My Book' by Lauren Child
2. 'Meg and Mog' by Helen Nicoll & Jan Pienkowski
3. 'Angelina Ballerina' by Katharine Holabird & Helen Craig
4. 'Fungus the Bogeyman' by Raymond Briggs

The Best Sugar and Spice

1. 'Milly-Molly-Mandy Stories' by Joyce Lankester Brisley
2. 'The Worst Witch' by Jill Murphy
3. 'The Velveteen Rabbit' by Margery Williams
4. 'The Princess and the Pea' by Lauren Child & Polly Borland

The Best Animals

1. 'Spy Dog' by Andrew Cope
2. 'The Sheep-Pig' by Dick King-Smith
3. 'My Family and Other Animals' by Gerald Durrell
4. 'Lionboy' by Zizou Corder

The Best Friends and Family

1. 'Dizzy' by Cathy Cassidy
2. 'The Borrowers' by Mary Norton
3. 'Little Women' by Louisa May Alcott
4. 'The Family From One End Street' by Eve

- Garnett
5. 'Ballet Shoes' by Noel Streatfeild

The Best Phizzwhizzers

1. 'The BFG' by Roald Dahl
2. 'Matilda' by Roald Dahl
3. 'Charlie and the Chocolate Factory' by Roald Dahl
4. 'Fantastic Mr Fox' by Roald Dahl

The Best War and Conflict

1. 'The Diary of a Young Girl' by Anne Frank
2. 'Once' by Morris Gleitzman
3. 'Goodnight Mr Tom' by Michelle Magorian
4. 'Carrie's War' by Nina Bawden

The Best BEST BEST BEST!

1. 'Stig of the Dump' by Clive King
2. 'Anne of Green Gables' by L M Montgomery
3. 'Finn Family Moomintroll' by Tove Jansson
4. 'How I Live Now' by Meg Rosoff
5. 'Junk' by Melvin Burgess

The Best Fantasy and Adventure

1. 'TimeRiders' by Alex Scarrow
2. 'Dot Robot' by Jason Bradbury
3. 'Journey to the Centre of the Earth' by Jules Verne
4. 'A Wizard of Earthsea' by Ursula Le Guin

The Best Weird and Wonderful

1. 'Alice in Wonderland' by Lewis Carroll
2. 'Five Children and It' by E Nesbitt
3. 'The Wizard of Oz' by L Frank Baum
4. 'Peter Pan' by J M Barrie

The Best Rhymes and Verse

1. 'Please Mrs Butler' by Allan Ahlberg
2. Michael Rosen's 'A-Z The best children's poetry from Agard to Zephaniah'
3. 'Talking Turkeys' by Benjamin Zephaniah
4. 'Bad Bad Cats' by Roger McGough

The Best Alternatives to Twilight

1. 'Beautiful Creatures' by Kami Garcia and Margaret Stohl
2. 'Vampire Academy' by Richelle Mead
3. 'The Luxe' by Anna Godbersen
4. 'Along for the Ride' by Sarah Dessen



Read For Me Read For You - a PGP Sponsored Read

By Audrey Stirling

Ruri, Harris and Caelan's Mum

We all love reading or listening to stories, both at home and at PGP, so we're expecting great success from PGP's first sponsored read. This will take place during the months of March and April for all children involved in both the Playgroup and Literacy programmes.

Through the sponsored read, named **Read For Me Read For You**, we hope to:

- encourage reading and listening to stories,
- raise money for a charitable cause, and,
- involve the children in a worthwhile cause and encourage awareness of the cause

How will it work?

Each child will receive a special Sponsored Read Pack which will include the following:

- sponsored read guidelines
- a special **Read For Me Read For You** contract to be agreed between the parent and child,
- a booklet, to detail all the books read, the money raised and to stick in stickers,
- a cardboard money box which the child can decorate and use to save money raised
- stickers

We really want the sponsored read to work for all

those involved - individual children, children with different reading abilities, those who like to listen to stories, and both small and large families. Therefore flexibility is important when agreeing the **Read For Me Read For You** contract with your children. For example, children could be sponsored per page or per book depending on their reading or listening ability. For more competent readers, perhaps embarking on one large book (e.g. Harry Potter) could lead to sponsorship in the form of an amount per hour. For those with larger families, parents could agree a lower amount with each child and then contribute as a family. As part of the Guidelines we would suggest an amount each child and/or family could raise. We also suggest that the sponsorship could be a good use of loose change!

We do not wish the Sponsored Read to be too taxing for either children or parents as the whole idea is to encourage the enjoyment of books through both reading and listening. It should work in conjunction with the readers or library books borrowed from PGP on a weekly basis.

We hope to have a selection of new and special books which children can choose from, as well as the current library and reader books available. There is also the possibility of involving the English bookshop Off the Shelf and/or a children's author to start the event off.

Kids with a Cause

The charity which PGP would like to support is the Swiss based Foundation called **Kids With A Cause - Europe**. Not only do they raise funds for

worthwhile causes, they also seek to introduce young people to the concept of charity and giving. They promote the idea of collective responsibility and ask children to help children in need both locally and worldwide.

The chosen cause could become a focus of PGP Literacy projects, encouraging understanding and direct links. Through presentations, we would like to raise children's awareness and understanding of the needs of the chosen community and how the money raised would benefit them.

PGP would like to help Kids With A Cause build a care centre in Mali, to welcome all ages of children in need, and help them continue their education. Currently they are in rented premises, but have bought land and plan to build a "green" centre. More information about the project can be found at www.moptimistes.org.

PGP will contribute in the form of bricks - each brick will cost 1CHF. This will also provide a small remuneration to the brick makers.

About Mali

Mali is a landlocked West African country, one of the poorest in the world, although it has experienced economic growth since the 1990s. For several decades after independence from France in 1960, Mali suffered droughts, rebellions, a coup and 23 years of military dictatorship. But since its first democratically-elected president took power in 1992, it has had a civilian government and enjoyed relative political stability.

Some PGP Favourite Childhood Books

My all time favourite was *The Magic Faraway Tree* by Enid Blyton. Even though I cannot remember the stories at all, I remember playing it in the playground - the children are getting it soon!

I also loved any *Famous Five* adventures which I am thoroughly enjoying re-reading with Anna and David - our reading choice is influenced by parental nostalgia at the moment!

Jane del Pozo

I loved the whole of the *Famous Five* series by Enid Blyton. The stories completely transported you into all kinds of adventures. My favourite character was George, the tomboy. I read yesterday that for the first time in decades Enid Blyton doesn't appear in the top ten of favourite books. She didn't do badly did she?

Micala Duvoux

I was a complete bookworm as a child, so it's been quite hard narrowing my favourites down to just one - so instead I've got two to share. The first is *Seven Little Australians* by Ethel Turner. Set mainly in Sydney in the 1880s, this is a children's classic that tells the adventures of the

mischievous Woolcot children, their stern army father, Captain Woolcot, and flighty stepmother, Esther. The characterisation of all the children is wonderful and you are pulled headlong into their lives and adventures - I so wanted to be one of them! This is a book full of love, mischief and humour, though a word of warning, there is a tragedy towards the end of the book that is almost unbearably sad and still packs a punch when I think about it all these years later.

The second book is *The Magic Finger* by Roald Dahl. This is the story of an 8 year old girl who puts the 'magic finger' on people when she gets angry. She gives her teacher whiskers and a tail for telling her she is stupid. As so often with Roald Dahl, it is the child who is in charge and I just loved the way the heroine could zap people when she was mad with them - how I wished I could do that when I was angry - such fun, such power!

Juliette Chisholm

One of my favourites was *The Secret Garden* by Frances Hodgson Burnett. My brother and I used to stay at my dad's aunt's house from time to time and she had a old copy with a green hardback

cover and wonderful illustrations. She had a really high, old-fashioned bed and a house with no central heating, so we used to cuddle up in there with a hot water bottle while she read the book. I remember the atmosphere as much as the book.

Louise Merifield

I was addicted to *Would You Rather* by John Burningham and would constantly re-borrow it from the library van to choose between bizarre choices such as "Would you rather...your dad did a dance at school, or your mum had a row in a cafe?" Maybe I loved it because I thought I was the curly red-head in the book? Or maybe I just really wanted to make stew with a witch and run with a gerbil in a cage? And maybe I still do...

Kerry McCance

I liked *The Twelve Dancing Princesses* by The Brothers Grimm. The idea of escaping secretly in the night certainly got the imagination going.

Katy Thompson

(Continued on page 4)

Top Tips for Top Quality Second Hand Children's Clothes Shopping in Geneva

By Juliette Chisholm
Bron and Wilf's Mum

I've always loved charity shops, jumble sales, car boot sales and flea markets and have developed sharp elbows and an eagle-eye for quality and a bargain over the years. Coupled with a love of all things vintage, the thrill of finding a piece of designer treasure on a charity shop rail still lures me in and the thought that you are giving old clothes new life in the name of a good cause never ceases to please me.

When we moved to Geneva 10 years ago I made a point of searching out the city's Oxfam shop equivalents but it wasn't until I had my first son Wilf that I discovered a whole new outlet for my second hand clothes passion – designer baby and children's clothes. French brands such as Bonpoint, Petit Bateau, Ikks, Catimini, Jacardi and Cyrillus all sell wonderful clothes at often highly inflated prices, so there's something very satisfying about finding these high quality brands for next to nothing! It's also worth remembering that as children grow so fast during their early years, there is remarkably little wear and tear on top quality labels – they are made to last. Here's where to start looking:

Brocante Armée du Salut, Rte de Chêne 18-20, 1207 Genève:

The Salvation Army in Chêne Bourg in downtown Geneva is in an unprepossessing building, but don't let that put you off as this is definitely a case of "location, location, location". Chêne Bourg is one of Geneva's top residential areas and this equals high quality donations – think Oxfam shop Chelsea. It sells furniture, bric a brac, books and toys as well as clothing. The great thing here is that the staff have done the hard work for you and to the left of the till is a rail where all the higher end children's clothes have been helpfully sorted for you. There are also two large bins of children's clothes that you can have a rummage through – the majority of which is H&M (which does not tend to recycle that well). However in the past I have found M&S, Next and Mini-Boden here along with

the excellent Dutch brand Hema which the staff don't recognise as top quality brands, so consequently the prices are even lower than the 'designer' rail. Pom d'Api shoes and Aigle wellies are often also available.

Emmaus, Route de Drize 5, 1227 Carouge GE:

This is a big warehouse in Carouge that sells everything including the kitchen sink to benefit the Emmaus community in the area. Clothing is on the upper level and again, Carouge is another very desirable residential part of Geneva so the calibre of clothing donated is generally high. In the past I have found Petit Bateau, Gap, Bonpoint and Polo Ralph Lauren items here but they are not separated out so you have to spend some time going through the rails.

Caritas and Croix Rouge also have shops in the city centre.

<http://www.croix-rouge-ge.ch/>

<http://caritasge.web1.bestsite.ch/p107001157.html>

The International Children's Clothing, Toy & Bake Sale:

This is a high quality 2nd hand children's clothing sale, held twice a year in Geneva. (Toys, baby equipment, maternity & women's wear are also available). The next sale will be on Sunday 10th April 2011, 1pm - 5pm at the Sacré-Coeur church in Plainpalais (25 bis Blvd Georges-Favon). Many of you may have already experienced this sale, but if not, be warned - this is not for the faint-hearted! It can become something of a bun fight as the clothes are piled up on tables laid out according to age group, and it gets very hot and stuffy. However you can find some top brands at knockdown prices - you just have to sharpen those elbows! Further information can be obtained by email: intchildrenclothinggva@gmail.com.

Trocs & Vide-Greniers

Every year, local communes on both sides of the border hold sales where local inhabitants can pitch a stall and sell their wares, and this is a great way

to stock up on clothing amongst other things. In Switzerland they are called *Trocs* and in the Pays de Gex they are called *Vide-Greniers*. They tend to take place throughout spring and autumn. Recent finds for my boys included a whole bundle of Ikks clothes at 1 Euro an item and Petit Bateau jumpers at 10 Euros a piece – fantastic!

For Geneva and its regions:

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

For the Pays de Gex, check your local commune's website/information board for details.

La 13e Grande Braderie Carougeoise

Carouge is one of the gems of Geneva and worth discovering if you haven't already done so. Formerly part of Savoie, it has its own unique look and feel and is a wonderful place to wander around, checking out the small shops and its many cafés and restaurants. Various street markets are held here throughout the year and on 7th and 8th May 2011 it is the turn of the Grande Braderie. Over a weekend, Carouge becomes one giant flea-market/car boot sale and there are bargains galore to be had. As with the Trocs and Vide-Greniers, the stalls are pitched by local inhabitants and it is a wonderful place to find Mums selling off their children's clothes at excellent prices. The whole of the Place Sardaigne is dedicated to children – clothes, toys, books, games – you name it, you will find it here! This is my favourite second hand event of the year and I never lose the thrill of the chase and knowing that a great find is just around the corner or on the next stall.

Finally, if you know exactly what you are looking for yet don't want to pay full price for it, eBay is always worth a browse – whether using the French or the UK site. They both operate in exactly the same way so even if your French isn't fluent you won't get stuck bidding for something you don't want if you follow the rules of the English version.

<http://www.ebay.fr/>

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

Happy hunting!



Some PGP Favourite Childhood Books

(Continued from page 3)

My mom read *Ramona the Pest* by Beverly Cleary to me when I was very young and then I read it again as a new reader and still loved it - so much in fact that I named my favourite doll Ramona.

On long car trips (and living in America, we had quite a few) my mother read *Stuart Little* by EB White and as we got older the whole family would try to solve the mysteries in *Encyclopedia Brown*.

I was extremely fortunate to have a fourth grade teacher who read to the class on a regular basis. She was something of a hippy and she read us fabulous books that sparked your imagination and lingered in your mind such as *Andy Buckram's Tin Men* by Carol Brink (sadly no longer in print) about

a boy who invents robots from old tin cans, *Mrs. Frisby and the Rats of Nimh* by Robert O'Brien, about a field mouse who must go to extraordinary lengths to save her son enlisting the help of super smart rats, and *The Frightened Forest* by Ann Turnbull, in which a young girl walks through a disused rail tunnel and accidentally releases an evil witch. Scary!

Christy Broome

My husband was addicted to all the *Biggles* books by Captain W E Johns and has thence only progressed to a slightly more grown up version of the same but I loved all sorts of things: *Ballet Shoes* and *White Boots* and anything else by Noel Streatfield, *Little Women* by Louisa May Alcott, any

fairy tales by Hans Christian Andersen and Oscar Wilde, *The Railway Children* and *Five Children and It* by E Nesbit, *Famous Five* and *Mallory Towers* series by Enid Blyton, *Ghosts and Goblins*, *Witches and Fairies*, *Charms & Changelings*, *Dragons*, *Giants* by Ruth Manning Sanders, *Gobbolino the Witch's Cat* by Ursula Moray Williams, *Milly Molly Mandy* by Joyce Lankester Brisley, *The Church Mice* books by Graham Oakley (fantastic for grownups and children - he did the illustrations too and they are brilliant!), *Tom's Midnight Garden* by Phillipa Pearce, *The Wolves of Willoughby Chase* by Joan Aitken (and the *Arabella and Mortimer* series for younger children) and *What Katy Did* by Susan Coolidge.

Jo Watkins

Learning to Read and Write with Jolly Phonics

By Leisa Campbell-Lendrum
Ellen, Owen and Matthew's Mum
Literacy 1 Teacher, Tuesday afternoons

Throughout Pre-Literacy, Literacy 1 and Literacy 2 and beyond we are using *Jolly Phonics* to teach the children to read and write. This is a synthetic phonics programme which works in the following ways:

The teaching is divided into 5 basic skills:

1. Learning the letter sounds
2. Learning the letter formation
3. Blending – for reading
4. Identifying the sounds in words – for writing
5. Tricky Words – irregular words

These are all taught at the same time and we are really seeing progress; as you can see from the samples of work on this page, written in lesson 11 of our Literacy 1 course on Tuesday 7th December.

Each week since September, the children have been taught two letter sounds and how to write those letters. We have sung the *Jolly Phonics Songs* and learned the actions – mmm and

rubbing our tummies, buzzing like a bee and flying kites. Each week we revise the sounds and letters with flashcards and our *Jolly Phonics Pupil Book 1*.

Once the children have been taught the letter sounds, they can learn to blend or "sound out" words with these letters, from s-a-t to z-i-p and b-o-x, and start to read. This is the most important skill to master in the path to reading.

The children have already learned their short vowel sounds, and have been told that these are short vowel sounds, because the more information a child has, the more they can use this knowledge when working. This knowledge has been used to help the children write the middle sound in the 3 letter, consonant-vowel-consonant (CVC) words (e.g a in cat).

As the children have had lots of practice with blending, they do not have any problem blending consonants together - we blended f-r-o-g this week too. They can also hear 'sh' and 'ch' in words.

The children have also worked on hearing the 'end sound' so that they can hear the last sound in the word and can write p-i-n or p-i-g.

After Christmas they will learn the long vowel sounds and their reading will really progress. The children still need work with letter formation though, and this continues throughout their time in Pre-Literacy, Literacy 1 and 2 and beyond.

What does this work show? See the list above and compare:

1. I know the letter sounds
2. I know the letter formation
3. I can blend the words for reading
4. I can hear (identify) the separate sounds and use this to help me write down the word

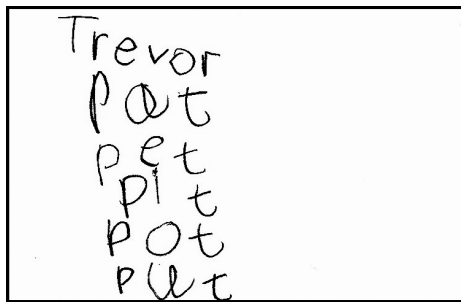
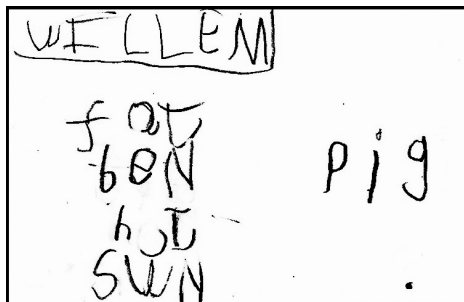
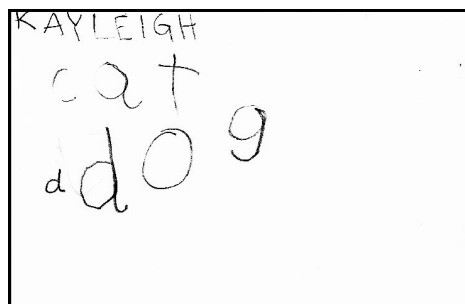
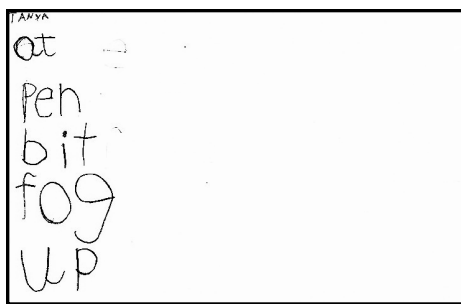
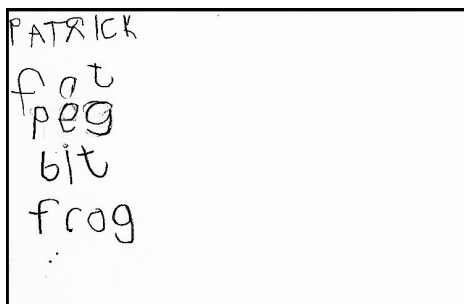
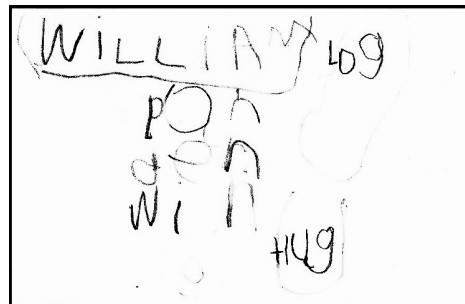
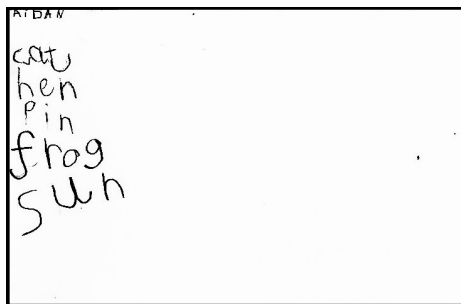
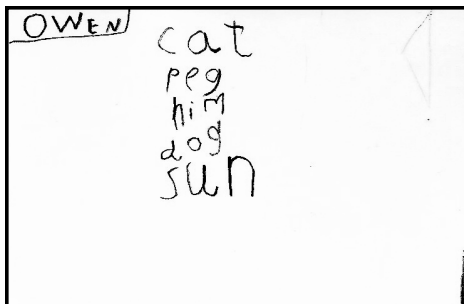
And number 5?

The children learn a 'tricky word' each week and with reading and writing practice of these words, and continuing blending, the aim is to read and write sentences by the end of Literacy 1! WOW!

I am already amazed and delighted at how effective learning to read and write like this can be.

Literacy Work - First Words

By Leisa Campbell-Lendrum's Literacy 1 Class



For next year the Literacy team will be offering a training course 'Teaching *Jolly Phonics*' for all volunteers wishing to teach Pre-Literacy, Literacy 1 and Literacy 2. If you are interested in taking part, speak to or contact Jane del Pozo.
literacy@playgroupprogramme.org

A Literary Quiz

By Kerry McCance

Kim, Angus and Ruth's Mum

The following are opening lines from well-known novels. But which novels? And who wrote them? Send your answers, with contact details, to newsletter@playgroupprogramme.org. There may even be a small prize for the person with the most correct answers...

1. It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune must be in want of a wife.
2. Mr and Mrs Dursley, of number four Privet Drive, were proud to say that they were perfectly normal, thank you very much.
3. It was a bright cold day in April, and the clocks were striking thirteen.
4. In my younger and more vulnerable years my father gave me some advice that I've been turning over in my mind ever since.
5. When Augustus came out on the porch the blue pigs were eating a rattlesnake - not a very big one.
6. If you want to find Cherry-Tree Lane all you have to do is ask the Policeman at the crossroads.
7. One thing was certain, that the white kitten had had nothing to do with it - it was the black kitten's fault entirely.
8. It was the day my grandmother exploded.
9. When he was nearly thirteen my brother Jem got his arm badly broken at the elbow.
10. What a lot of hairy-faced men there are around nowadays.

IN THE MARCH/APRIL ISSUE OF THE NEWSLETTER

Jokes Galore for April Fool's Day

Please share your family's favourite ones!

Simple Recipes For Family Meals

If you have a foolproof family recipe that even a fussy eater will try, we'd love to try it too.

**Deadline for submission of articles:
Wed 16th February**

Articles and items for inclusion can be emailed to newsletter@playgroupprogramme.org

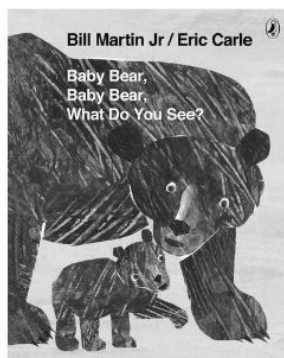
Library Corner

By Lucy Brown, PGP Librarian

Ben and Thomas' Mum

As librarian, I recently made a trip to 'Off The Shelf' bookshop in Geneva to buy some new titles for our library shelves. I spent an enjoyable morning browsing a whole range of English story books. It was a rare treat, as on trips to see family in the UK we rarely have time for bookshops except for the limited choice available in the departure lounge. 'Off The Shelf' is a lovely shop with great choice and very helpful staff.

The book shop owner, Helen Stubbs Pugin, spent some time with me as we chose some new titles for the library. New titles to look out for are: 'Baby Bear, Baby Bear, What Do You See?' by Bill



Martin and Eric Carle. It's a new title in the same series as the much loved 'Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?' 'Millie's Marvellous Hat' by Satoshi Kitamura is a wonderful story about a little girl who can't afford the hat she wants so instead she develops an amazing imagination for hats on peoples' heads including on her own head.

For our older readers we have added a book by Children's Laureate Anne Fine about a boy who can't keep quiet called 'Loudmouth Louis', plus some other books which were celebrated last year for World Book Day including 'Horrible Science - The Seriously Squishy Science Book' by Nick Arnold, 'Astrosaurs - Teeth of the T.rex' by Steve Cole and 'Odd and the Frost Giants' by Neil Gaiman.

'Off the Shelf' bookshop kindly donated a book to playgroup which they have reviewed for us below. It is a book which we felt is very appropriate for transient playgroup families. I would like to thank Helen for her time and encourage those of you who love browsing for books to make a trip to 'Off the Shelf'.

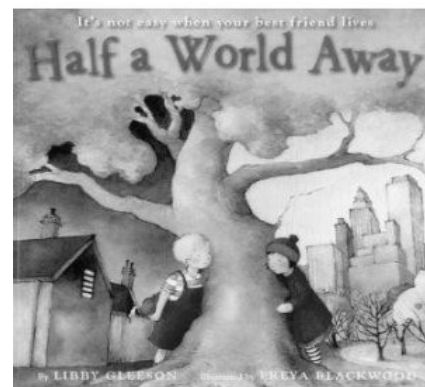
Lucy and Juliette can be contacted by email at lucy.brown@sfr.fr or julesdan@orange.fr. They are always keen to hear of your suggestions to add to the PGP Library shelves

Off The Shelf Book Review

By Helen Stubbs Pugin

In *Half a World Away* best friends Amy and Louis go everywhere and do everything together; building forts, burrowing in sandboxes, playing dress-up and lying in the grass watching the clouds pass. Then one day Amy and her family move to a big city full of towering grey skyscrapers on the other side of the world. In this beautifully illustrated story, Amy and Louis discover the power of love and friendship to cross oceans.

Written by Libby Gleeson and illustrated by Freya Blackwood, *Half a World Away* is the perfect book for children who've known separation from family and friends due to long-distance moves. Old friends might be sleeping while we're awake, and they might be enjoying summer while we're putting



on our winter coats, but loved ones don't disappear when we move away -- even to the other side of the world.

OffTheShelf

The English Bookshop

15 bvd Georges Favon 1204 Geneva
tel. 022 311 1090, www.offtheshelf.ch

Thoughts on a New Home

By Mary Pat Fisk
Ethan and Ella's Mom

A year ago this month, my family and I stepped off a plane from the United States. My husband had taken a two-year appointment with his experiment at CERN, so shortly before Christmas 2009, we packed up our house in Illinois, put half our stuff in the basement and attic, and loaded the rest onto a container bound for Thoiry.

We spent the first month or so shivering in our very cold, concrete house, unsure how to use the wood stove properly, and fearing the cost of running the many electric heaters on the walls. How we longed for our efficient gas furnace and solar hot water back in Chicago! It took six weeks for our shipment of furniture to arrive, so we made do in the meantime with a table and chairs, and two beds from IKEA.

Our children entered the local schools in Thoiry after the winter holiday, knowing only how to say "Hello, Thank You, My name is...", and count to ten in French. We were sure we would be peeling them off our legs at the door, but they bravely went off to school that first day, and every day after that. I felt a bit like Abraham Lincoln's mother, as we learned our lessons by the light of candles and fireplace those first weeks.

My daughter Ella entered Moyenne Section for a full day, a new experience for her. In the U.S., she attended preschool three days a week, but only half-day. We were delighted that she napped at school here -- probably her first naps since she was 2 1/2 years old! She came home after her first day in French school and we asked her how it was. "Great! We painted, and read a story about a bear!" It's been downhill ever since.

My son Ethan came home for lunch on his first day of CP, and we spend a panicked hour trying to teach him how to write and/or read his name in

script. He was distraught to find that not only did he not speak French, the letters the teacher and students were writing were "attaché", which he also could not read! In the U.S., students print their letters until 2nd grade (age 8-9) when they begin to learn cursive handwriting.

We arrived in France in the beginning of January. Both my children have birthdays in February, and Ethan's greatest desire was that he have two friends by his birthday to invite to a party. His father and I listened to this, hearts quietly breaking, and prayed that he had at least ONE friend in a short month's time. Lo and behold, after a few weeks he came home talking about his playground "club", and we had not two but THREE little boys over for the big day.

I feel much of our success in adjusting to life in France is owed to the many new Anglophone friends we have met during our time so far. People at the school gate have been so friendly and forthcoming when they hear a new "English" voice, and it was heartwarming to meet so many new friends so quickly. When I was growing up, my father was a US Navy officer, so we moved often (every 2-3 years). For me, the "ex-pat" experience has been much like the military experience. People are thrown together from all walks of life, but they share the common bond of being far from home, so they join together to be an impromptu family, of sorts. I've been so thankful for our new "family" here!

I have greatly enjoyed teaching Lit 5 this year for PGP. I taught secondary English for twelve years, both in Virginia and California, obtaining National Board Certification in 2003, just before my son Ethan was born. Shortly after that, we moved from San Diego, California to outside Chicago, Illinois, and I stopped teaching to be home with my newborn son. Our daughter Ella followed two years later, and I have been away from any formal classroom teaching until now. It's been great to be

back working with kids!

My focus in the classroom has mainly been literature and composition, so it has been an adjustment to work with language and literacy learners, but I am enjoying the challenge. I have been so impressed by the dedication of the parent volunteers involved with PGP.

As a teacher and a parent, one of my biggest concerns before we moved was how to support my children as emerging readers in their native English language, at the same time as support their learning of a new language. How would we do this? Wouldn't they be confused? This is not a permanent move for us, so it is important that my children be able to maintain their level of literacy with their peers back in the States. I started haunting bookstores and stockpiling workbooks (many of which lie still untouched on my shelf...). I learned quickly what all parents know, that it is VERY difficult to teach your own children, even if you are an experienced teacher. There is a much different dynamic with your own kids, so I am grateful for all the Lit 1 team for helping my daughter learn to read.

It's been an uproarious year, with lots of new experiences for all of us. I'm looking forward to the coming year as a time to cement new knowledge and new friendships, and to take advantage of the many opportunities our time here offers.

I would be most content if my children grew up to be the kind of people who think decorating consists mostly of building enough bookshelves.

Anna Quindlen
"Enough Bookshelves"
New York Times, 7 August 1991

What's On In and Around Geneva

(Continued from page 8)

15 and 16 Feb – **FAMILY SHOW:** "Alice et Versa" adapted from Lewis Carroll. From age 6. At 19:00, Théâtre Forum Meyrin, 1 place des Cinq-Continents, 1217 Meyrin. Bookings +41 /22 989 34 34. www.forum-meyrin.ch

17 Feb – **CIRCUS:** This year, the Phenix Circus presents "the world's best acts", a two-hour dazzling show with the best circus performances from around the world including France, United States, Russia, not to forget, the participation of the Beijing Circus. www.geneva-arena.ch

26 Feb to 13 Mar – **THEATRE:** "La Pantoufle" (the slipper) by Claude Ponti. For his first Theatre production, Claude Ponti, the famous author-illustrator for children had the wonderful idea - and

surprising one - to plunge into the life of a fetus ... A beautiful baby who has decided today to leave the slipper, which served as his nest in the round belly of his mother... From 6 years old. Le Théâtre Am Stram Gram, 56 route de Frontenex, Geneva. Tel +41 /22 735 79 24. www.amstramgram.ch

Until 27 Feb – **SLEDGING.** Experience this latest entertainment on the second floor terrace of La Praille shopping mall. Both entry and rental of a 1 or 2-seater sled are free of charge. www.la-praille.ch. Open daily, except Mondays.

Until 6 Mar – **SNAKE EXHIBITION:** The Lausanne's Vivarium is presenting Switzerland's first exhibition on "Europe's venomous snakes". Among many other snakes, the European vipers are represented here with more than 27 species, many of which are only known to

us since the opening of Eastern Europe. Find out and learn everything about some most spectacular snakes. Closed on Tuesdays. Mon and Fri, 13:00 - 18:00. Wed, Sat, Sun and public Holidays, 10:00-18:00. Thurs, 13:00- 22:00 with Crocodile feeding time: 20:00-20:30. 82 Ch. de Boissonnet, Lausanne. Tel +41 /21 652 72 94. www.vivarium-lausanne.ch

Congratulations to Celine and the rest of the Desana family, and a big welcome to Tomas, who was born on 30th November 2010.



Outside of a dog, a book is man's best friend. Inside of a dog it's too dark to read.
Groucho Marx

What's On In and Around Geneva

By Bérénice Fitzpatrick
Newsletter Assistant
Romain's Mum

JANUARY

5 Jan to 23 Feb - **CHILDREN'S**

WORKSHOPS: Wednesdays' workshops at the Museum of Natural History resume in 2011 with the first topic on "Volcanoes". A volcano expert will talk to children and answer all their questions. This program is presented in conjunction with the Museum's "Supervolcano" exhibition and in partnership with la Société de volcanologie de Genève (www.volcan.ch). From 7 years old. Children must be accompanied. Musée d'histoire naturelle, Geneva. 14:00 to 16:30. Free entry. Tel +41 /22 418 63 00. www.ville-ge.ch/mhng

Jan to Sep - **EXHIBITION:** "Supervolcano". Understand the mystery of volcanoes and phenomena such as lava tubes, mud volcanoes. Open Tuesday to Sunday, 10:00 -17:00. Musée d'histoire naturelle, 1 Route de Malagnou, Geneva. Tel +41 /22 418 63 00

11 Jan - **TODDLERS' STORY HOUR.** Every Tuesday of the month, "Born to Read" invites you to its weekly get together for mums and young children aged 6 months to 4 years to discover books and for babies to grow a relationship of pleasure with them. Every Tuesdays (except during school holidays), 9:30 to 10:30. Bibliothèque Municipale, Place du Casino 1, Morges. Tel +41/21 804 97 22. www.biblio.morges.ch

12 to 26 Jan - **THEATRE:** "Le chat et la mouette" (The cat and the seagull). It's not easy for four cats to teach a seagull how to fly! Four musicians, storytellers, actors and singers amidst a simple but powerful set, these are all the ingredients for this fun adventure. From 7 years old. Le Petit Théâtre de Lausanne, 12 place de la Cathédrale, Lausanne. For bookings, call: +41 /21 323 62 13. www.lepetittheatre.ch

14 to 29 Jan - **ARMY SURPLUS:** Army stock & camping material sale at Geneva Palexpo. www.geneva-palexpo.ch

15 Jan to 6 Feb - **PUPPET SHOW:** "Gilgamesh". The epic tale of Gilgamesh, the mythical Sumerian king dating back 5000 years. From 7 years old. Le Théâtre des Marionnettes de Genève, 3 rue Rodo, Geneva. Bookings: + 41 /22 418 47 77. www.marionnettes.ch

15 to 19 Jan - **PUPPET SHOW:** "Au lit petite souris!" (To bed little mouse!) presented by Les Marionnettes les Croquettes. Salle Communale de Satigny. From 4 years old. Tel +41 /22 880 05 16. www.regart.ch/croquettes

21 to 23 Jan - **FAIR: The 17th Exhibition for Holidays, Sports & Leisure** (Salon des

Vacances, Sports et Loisirs). A great way to get a wide variety of travel ideas and to discover what the region offers for sports and fun. Lots of demonstrations and activities for children. Geneva Palexpo. www.vacances.ch

21 to 23 Jan - **DISNEY ON ICE:** "100 ans de Magie". This is the party of the century! An unforgettable moment to celebrate the 100th year anniversary of Disney. Mickey and Minnie, Snow White and Buzz Lightyear together with more than 60 characters from Disney's magical world will take part in a two-hour extravaganza on ice at the Geneva Arena. Bookings at Ticket Corner or Fnac. www.geneva-arena.ch

22 to 30 Jan - **FESTIVAL: International Hot Air Balloon Festival, Château-d'Oex.** This is the 33rd edition of the Festival with more than 80 balloons from 20 different countries exhibiting in the middle of the Alps. Festival hotline: +41 /26 924 25 24. www.ballonchateaudoex.ch

25 Jan - **DANCE:** Che Malambo. Dance from around the world. From age 6. At 20:30, l'Esplanade du Lac, Divonne-les-Bains. Tel 04 50 99 17 70. www.esplanadedulac.fr

26 Jan - **THEATRE:** "Cuche et Barbezat font des bêtises" presented by En Scène Théâtre. From age 6. Lasting 1 hour. At 19:00, Espace Vélodrome, Chemin de la Mère-Voie 60, Plan-les-Ouates. Tel +41 /22 884 64 60. www.plan-les-ouates.ch/culture

29 Jan to 2 Feb - **PUPPET SHOW:** "Au royaume des elfes et des lutins", presented by Les Marionnettes les Croquettes in Plan-les-Ouates. From 4 years old. Tel +41 /22 880 0516. www.regart.ch/croquettes

OUTDOORS: Qimmiq Sledging around Mijoux. Discover the unique sensation of sledging in a common effort between man and dog. Gerard and his dogs will take your family for a unique adventure at Monts Jura. Call G. Baldensperger, tel. 04 50 41 39 74 or 06 29 59 91 85. www.qimmiqaventure.com

FEBRUARY

2 Feb - **CHILDREN'S WORKSHOPS:** "What is Design?" A workshop at the Musée d'art et d'histoire de Genève for children between 9 -13 years old. From 14:00 to 17:00. Reservation required. 2, rue Charles-Galland, Geneva. Tel +41 /22 418 26 00. www.ville-ge.ch/mah

2 and 3 Feb - **CIRCUS:** " Sur la route..." presented by the Cie les Colporteurs. From age 10. At 20:30, Théâtre Forum Meyrin, 1 place des Cinq-Continents, 1217 Meyrin. Bookings +41 /22 989 34 34. www.forum-meyrin.ch

3 Feb - **SHOW:** "Khalid K". Sound, story and music. From age 6. At 20:30, l'Esplanade du Lac, Divonne-les-Bains. Tel 04 50 99 17 70. www.esplanadedulac.fr

2 to 13 Feb - **THEATRE:** "Paul Poltron". This is the story of a very ingenious blacksmith and a princess who is completely bored! From 8 years old. Le Petit Théâtre de Lausanne, 12 place de la Cathédrale, Lausanne. For bookings, tel: +41 /21 323 62 13. www.lepetittheatre.ch

5 Feb - **MOVIE CLUB:** The Magic Lantern is a film club for children aged 5 to 12. It aims to inform about the wonder and beauty of cinema by showing some great films, specially selected for children. Each session begins with a small stage show and talk. At The Magic Lantern, you can watch super awesome films with something for everyone: cartoons, adventures, sci-fi special effects-packed, slapstick gags overflowing ... Films of all genres, from all countries and all ages! On Saturdays, 10:00-12:00 at Balexert. The next screenings are scheduled on 5 Mar, 26 Mar, 16 Apr, 14 May and on 25 Jun. Screenings are also taking place at The Rialto in Geneva (check website for specific dates). Membership for 2010-11 is 30 CHF for the first child and 20 CHF for each additional child. To join the clubs in Geneva or in Lausanne, go to www.lanterne-magique.org or call +41/22 740 03 83.

Feb - **CHILDREN'S WORKSHOPS:** "Le club des petits inventeurs" (Little Inventors' Club) proposes regular workshops for children between 7 and 12 years old, to discover, learn and make their own little inventions, which they will be able to take home afterwards. Tools, materials and snacks are provided at these fun, hands-on workshops organized by L'Espace des Inventions de Lausanne. The popular workshops will start again in February. Bookings are required. The new programme will be available at the beginning of the year. Check the website for more information. www.espace-des-inventions.ch

8 to 19 Feb - **THEATRE:** "Jojo le récidiviste". From 7 years old. Le Théâtre Am Stram Gram, 56 route de Frontenex, Geneva. Tel +41 /22 735 79 24. www.amstramgram.ch

9 to 13 Feb - **PUPPET SHOW:** "La princesse des dragons" (The Princess of the Dragons) presented by Les Marionnettes les Croquettes. In China, under the sea lives the king of dragons with his three beautiful daughters. The arrival of Bamboo, a young flutist from Earth upsets the lives of the underwater kingdom... Centre de Loisirs de Chêne-Bourg. From 4 years old. Tel +41/ 22 880 0516. www.regart.ch/croquettes

9 to 20 Feb - **PUPPET SHOW:** "Turlututu!" From 1 to 3 years old. Le Théâtre des Marionnettes de Genève, 3 rue Rodo, Geneva. Bookings: + 41/ 22 418 47 77. www.marionnettes.ch

(Continued on page 7)

www.playgroupprogramme.com