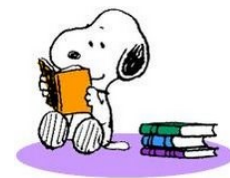


RGS: Bonkers About Books!

January 2022



Happy New Year!

I hope you have all settled into 2022 and are enjoying curling up with a book or two on these chilly January evenings. With the new year comes a host of new books being published so I'll be keeping you updated with some of these releases (I'll also be recommending books on my display in Waterstones Newcastle which is back after its usual Christmas break!). In the meantime, don't forget to tell me what you've been reading when you see me around school: I'm always happy to talk about books!

Happy reading! **Mrs Wall**

Daily Reading Lesson

Last term, in order to further promote and encourage reading throughout the school, we introduced a daily reading lesson immediately after afternoon registration. During this time, the form teacher reads a chosen novel to the class. Here's what each class are currently enjoying:

3D The House at the Edge of Magic - Amy Sparkes

3S selected stories from Just William - Richmal Crompton

3T Night Zookeeper And The Spying Giraffes - Joshua Davidson

4AW some myths from the Orchard book of Greek Myths and then The Demon Headmaster - Gillian Cross

4LW The Wild Way Home - Sophie Kirtley

4MH finishing The Deamon Headmaster - Gillian Cross, then The Wreck of the Zanzibar - Michael Morpurgo

5B continuing The Ghost of Thomas Kempe - Penelope Lively

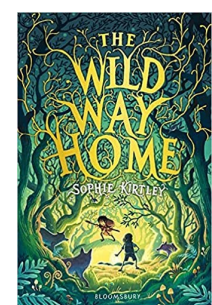
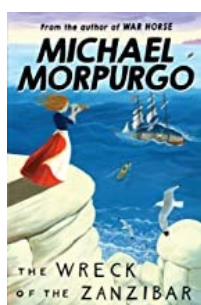
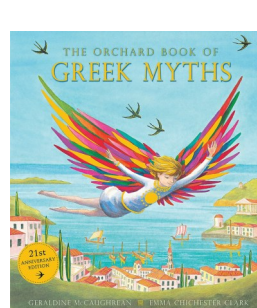
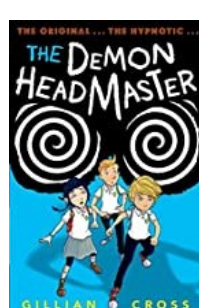
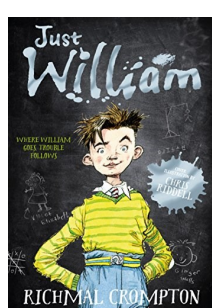
5M continuing Moondial - Helen Cresswell

5C continuing Malamander - Thomas Taylor

6L The Nowhere Emporium - Ross MacKenzie

6N Rumblestar - Abi Elphinstone

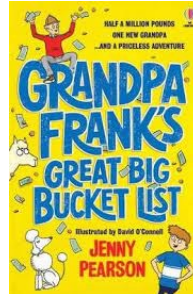
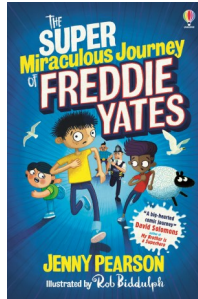
6W The Bird Singers - Eve Wersocki Morris



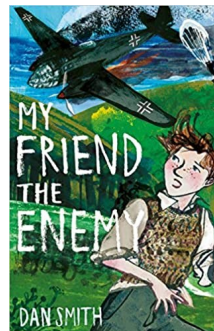
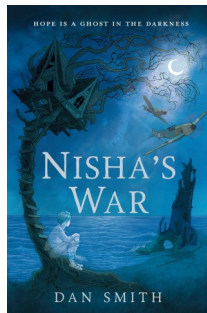
Fancy Meeting An Author?

Waterstones in Durham have a host of authors visiting over the next few weeks so, if you live in or near Durham, or you fancy a trip, here are the details (you may even see me there, but don't let that put you off!):

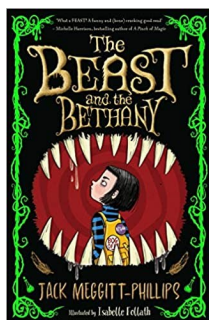
Saturday, 29th January, Jenny Pearson will be signing books from 11.00am - 2.00pm



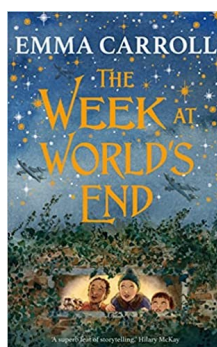
Saturday, 5th February, Dan Smith will be signing books from 12.00 - 2.00pm



Sunday, 20th February, Jack Meggitt-Phillips will be signing books from 11.00am - 2.00pm

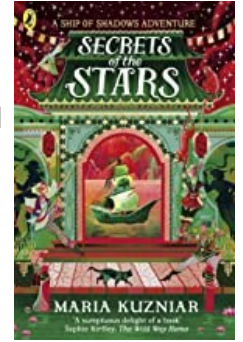


Saturday, 12th March, Emma Carroll will be signing books from 11.00am - 2.00pm

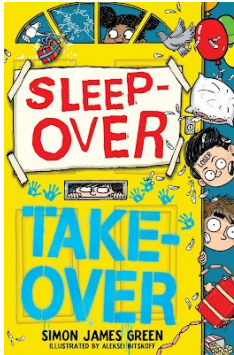


Secret of The Stars - Maria Kuzniar

Aleja, an inquiring warrior, always knew she was somehow or other part of the ethical 'Ship of Shadows'. But as the crew lurked further into the unknown and silently crept into the shadows looking for the next missing map piece, she found herself scandalized by a series of baffling clues that made no sense whatsoever. When the enchanted ship began a drastic journey to the other side of the world, Aleja started retaining bizarre visions. She realizes that someone is trying to tell her something-but what will it cost her to find out?



Sleepover Takeover - Simon James Green



Many of you will remember the daily live reading sessions I ran this time last year during our period of remote learning, when we all laughed along to The Life of Riley by Simon James Green, well, his new book, **Sleepover Takeover** has just been released and I can tell you that it is even funnier!

Otis and Jagger aren't part of the cool gang at school so don't get invited to any of the class parties; that is until uber-cool Rocco invites them to his 11th birthday party which, if previous years are anything to go by, promises to be an incredibly lavish affair. Although suspicious as to why they have been given the last minute invite, Otis heads to Rocco's house with Jagger where they find a marquee filled with all the food they could imagine, not to mention a sword swallower, a hypnotist ... it was every child's dream and so Otis made the most of it, taking a particular liking to the chocolate fountain! Following the sleepover, however, Otis wakes to find himself in a wedding dress and chaos all round him, but he has no recollection of what happened. Then he discovers that nobody else can remember what happened either! Discovering the truth will involve a mad-capped day around town, but will Otis and Rocco ever discover the truth, and where on Earth is Jagger?

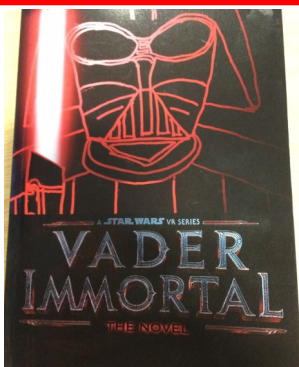
From the very beginning, the plot is fast-paced and funny (both for children as well as adults), and the bits in school with Mr Banerjee, the headteacher, really made me laugh out loud! It's the attention to details and the little touches and quips that make this such a funny book; the small comments as well as all the antics combine together to ensure that every reader will be laughing and cheered by this book!

It's obvious from the start that Otis and Jagger aren't part of the 'in-crowd' at school, and I like that they seem comfortable with that: they enjoy their friendship and make their own plans (although Jagger is a notorious trickster - I'm glad none of my students have pens that work like his!). I particularly like Jagger and his sense of style, and the way he helps Otis to choose his outfit for the party.

Amongst the laughs and the mayhem, **Sleepover Takeover** has some strong messages to impart to its readers; mainly about not being afraid to be yourself and that good friends will let you be yourself.

Sleepover Takeover is a rip-roaringly funny book that will brighten those dull, winter days; however, children be warned: it's probably best not to let your parents read this if you're about to have a sleepover!!

Self-Published News

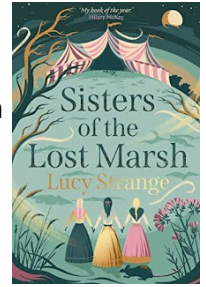


Many of you will know that we now have a self-published section in our libraries and it's been lovely to see work from children appearing (and also to see others borrowing them to read). The latest addition to the collection in the Penrith is this gripping book, Vader Immortal, written and printed by **Oliver** in 6W. It's proving very popular amongst Year 6 at the minute!

Remember to keep giving me your work for the self-published section: I love to read them and I know others are enjoying them too.

Sisters of the Lost Marsh - Lucy Strange

Milla lives on the farm with her 5 sisters, their Dadder and their Grammy. Life is tough and the sisters live in fear of their father who believes that the family are cursed. Grace, Milla's oldest sister is set to be married off but, when the Full Moon Fayre comes to town and Grace's fortune is told, she vanishes, leaving the family in turmoil. It's up to Milla to bring the family back together; something which entails her making a long and sometimes dangerous journey in search of answers.

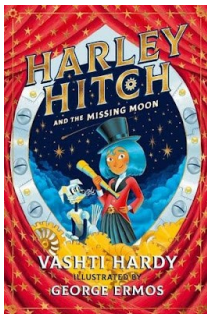


Set during a time when women were trialled for being witches, daily life is clearly tough. All 6 sisters sleep in one room and take it in turns to have the scratchy blanket. It is their Grammy who provides the love, stability and strength whilst their father spends much of his time drinking and threatening them. The arrival of the fayre provides a stark contrast and the heady mix of crowds, stalls and mysterious acts is a far cry from the girls' usual routine. Then, of course, there is Milla's journey which takes her to some dark and sinister places.

The book is dominated by strong female characters, lead by Grammy whose fierce love of her girls guides them. She has an inner strength that is powerful to read and which is clearly borne out of the love she has for her girls. I think that it is this that gives the girls their strength. They live in a time when superstition dominates and girls are oppressed, but Milla is strong and won't give up on her sister. She is determined to do everything she can to find her. However, it is Darcey who I believe is one of the strongest of the girls: despite all her father's actions (I won't spoil things), she knows herself and isn't afraid to be herself - I had huge amounts of admiration for her (and for Grammy too).

This is a triumph of a book. Dark and sinister, this is a powerful story of family, magic and myth that combines vivid story-telling with strong and engaging characters (I have to mention Flint!). You will quickly find yourself lost in this story ... just make sure you don't get lost in the marshes!

Harley Hitch and the Missing Moon - Vashti Hardy



Harley is back and this time she is determined to win the Pupil of the Term award so gone is the coloured hair, the tool belt and the tardiness; instead, Harley is focussing on her studies and is adamant she is not going to be distracted, that is until the Monocoles' Marvellous Machines Circus comes to town and she gets curious about Elle Disappearo the Great's act which uses a cabinet to transport a boy to another galaxy. Sneaking back-stage with Cosmo, Harley just wants to see how the cabinet works so she can try to replicate it herself ... but things don't go quite as she had planned! Then, to make matters worse, in the days that follow, lots of things begin to go missing, including the moon! Can Harley work out what's going on and help put things right before it's too

late?

I loved *Harley Hitch and the Iron Forest* when I read it earlier this year so I was particularly excited when **Harley Hitch and the Missing Moon** arrived just before Christmas. I loved being back in Forgettown with all its technology, the inventions and the robots (please can I have my own Sprocket?!) and the idea of being able to get advice by fishing in the Rusty River, and the map at the beginning of the book just added to my delight.

At the beginning of the book we see a dramatic change in Harley whose determination to win the Pupil of the Term award has lead her to take drastic action. Gone is her unique look and her desire to be different; instead she is determined to be like everyone else and I feel that she loses herself with this. I won't say anything more for fear of spoiling things but the development is key to the story.

Just like book 1, **Harley Hitch and the Missing Moon** is a wonderful read that is guaranteed to draw readers in from the start. The story is pacy, the characters are a joy to be with and George Ermos' illustrations are once again a delight. Combine that with messages about being yourself and friendship, and I know that Vashti has another guaranteed hit on her hands. I only have one question: what's next for Harley?!

Dragon Storm Tomás and Ironskin - Alastair Chisholm

The master of sci-fi, Alastair Chisholm, has shifted genres for his next venture and has dived into the fantasy world of dragons. The new series is set in Draconis where dragons once roamed the land but retreated thousands of years ago, following the **Dragon Storm** and are now nothing more than legend to the residents of the town.

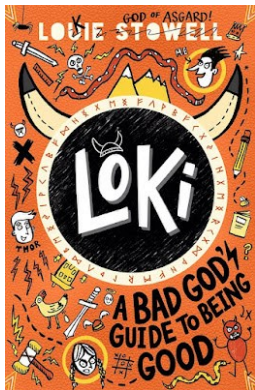
I have been lucky enough to read **Tomás and Ironskin** which introduces us to Draconis where Tomás lives with his parents. His father is the local dragonswords maker, as ordered by the king who wishes to be prepared in case the dragons reappear. Tomás is set to become an apprentice smithy like his father until Malik, one of the kings' clerks, arrives and tells Tomás about a secret society known as the Dragonseer Guild and invites him to join them. Having seen images of a dragon in the fire, Tomás joins Malik but will he take to the Guild and will he be able to master his new-found skills?

I have loved both of Alastair's sci-fi books and have been very excited at the prospect of a book for younger readers (this one is aimed at 7-9 year olds) as well as Alastair writing a different genre, and I was thrilled when I read **Tomás and Ironskin**. The book is perfectly pitched and paced so that younger readers will be drawn into the plot. The setting is vivid and allows readers to imagine themselves in the Guild and part of the lessons - I can imagine so many children at school who will be thrilled at dreaming of this!

I like Tomás as a main character: he is close to his parents and keen to follow in his father's footsteps; however, his curiosity having seen the image in the fireplace and the lure of something new seem to intrigue him. I'm looking forward to getting to know more of the team (including the dragons) as the series progresses.



Loki A Bad God's Guide To Being Good - Louie Stowell



Loki has been a bad god one too many times so Odin has banished him to Earth to live as an eleven year old boy in order to learn how he should behave. The instructions are simple: go to school, do good deeds and learn how to put up with Thor who has also been sent down to Earth as an eleven year old. Along with their fake parents (Heimdall and Hyrrokkin), they have to live on Earth for a month without telling anyone who they really are. During this time, Loki needs to keep a daily diary to prove that he is improving; however, the diary is intelligent so knows when Loki is lying about his day and corrects his entries (much to his annoyance!). He will gain points for every good deed but will lose points for anything bad; his starting score is -3000 with a target of +3000. At the end of the month Odin will read Loki's diary and decide his fate: return home or be condemned to eternal torture!

This was a brilliant read and just what I needed! It's funny and clever, and hugely appealing to children (and child-like adults!). The diary format, with the illustrations makes the book accessible to even the most reluctant reader, and Loki's sarcasm and observations about life on Earth as a child, make the book engaging and highly entertaining.

Loki, as the god of mischief, is determined to rebel against his fate: he can't stand being in such a wimpy body, he doesn't see the point of school and certainly doesn't understand the need to be nice to others. Yet, there is another side to him, one he needs to access if he is to avoid eternal damnation; he just needs to be able to access it. Can he be the hero he needs to be?

A fab introduction to mythology, **Loki A Bad God's Guide To Being Good** is Who Let The Gods Out meets Wimpy Kid and will undoubtedly appeal to fans of Marvel. A guaranteed hit when it's published in February, I just hope there is more to come!

The London Eye mystery

By Siobhan Dowd

The genre is Fiction

323 pages

Some of the vocabulary I have collected is 'Spontaneous dictating' and 'anvil-shaped cloud'.

My three words are: bewildering, illuminating and clever

COME TO LONDON!

Go and see a Show! There are so many to choose from in London! See a ballet, musical or even a Shakespeare!

Take a big red London bus to all the tremendous places around London.



Hire a speedboat and race up the Thames, passing under the Tower bridge if you can!



I can't count how many landmarks there are in London! Big Ben, Buckingham place and the National gallery are some famous ones.



Look at the effort that has gone into this poster in a book review book. **Scarlett** (6N) is advertising London after she read The London Eye Mystery by Siobhan Dowd. Well done!

Title: Scarlet and Ivy Book 1: The lost Twin
 Author: Sophie Cleverly
 Genre: Fiction
 Number of pages: 313 pages
 Vocabulary I've collected: Asylum
 Book in three words: Mystery, family, secretive.
 Task: 1



Letter
 to Ivy
 telling her
 about her
 acceptance
 at her sister's
 school.

30th August 1935

Dear Miss Ivy Grey,
 you are invited to our school.
 There has been a space opened up
 due to a recent unfortunate event.
 Your parents have kindly paid the
 fees. You are due to start as
 soon as possible. A teacher is
 sent to come and collect you
 and the details will be explained
 upon her arrival. Please pack
 your bags soon to take with
 you and get ready. Sorry for
 the short notice.

Regards,

Edgar Bartholomew
 (headmaster)
 Rookwood School for Girls

Scarlet and Ivy: The lost twin

- This is the story about how Ivy Grey became her twin sister Scarlet...
- A spine-tingling mystery set in a creepy boarding school. Ivy Grey must uncover the secrets behind her twin's 'unfortunate death' when she suddenly disappears from Rookwood school.
- One morning, Ivy Grey gets a letter from Rookwood school saying there is a free space from an 'unfortunate event' (which is her sister Scarlet's death). The letter says her parents have already paid the fees and she is due to go very soon. But does Ivy want to go? After all, this was the place her beloved 'sister died'. She talks to Aunt Phoebe, but Aunt Phoebe says she has to go. Terrifying Miss Fox invites quiet Ivy to 'take your sister's place'... Being sensible, Ivy reluctantly agrees only for the hopes of finding out what actually happened to her sister at Rookwood. Will Ivy be able to unlock the secrets of what happened through Scarlet's trail of diary pages hidden around the school? Can Ivy, a quiet shy girl, be able to solve this mystery before more danger approaches?

Miss Fox's

punishment
 cane

This book is the first in a brilliant series - perfect for fans of Harry Potter and the Murder Most Unladylike series. This book was so hard to put down and is a mystery that demands to be solved. I would rate this book a $4\frac{1}{2}$ as it is so descriptive and Sophie Cleverly clearly uses emotions a lot in this book. It would make you feel like you had stepped into the story!



$4\frac{1}{2}$ Rating for Book



Scarlet & Ivy



Ivy's Ballet Shoes

I really enjoyed this book.

And here's another wonderful example of a page from a book review book. Sisi (6W) has produced this beautiful and well-written review of Scarlet and Ivy: The Lost Twin by Sophie Cleverly