

NEWSLETTER NUMBER TWENTY-ONE

Let me shout this from the top of the hill: I'M SUPPOSED TO BE RETIRED! I know my newsletters from Pinerolo are supposed to come out every second month. But it's becoming increasingly difficult to find the time to do any. Life is so busy with so many different things:

Pinerolo is gathering steam. Word seems to be spreading about the place and the treasures here. Our Picture Books @ Pinerolo courses are in their ninth year. Last Saturday with Libby Gleeson was really successful, and I've already secured the fantastic *Tohby Riddle* for Saturday 23 May. Information about this is in the column right, or on our website.

Not only all that but being a National Board Member of the CBCA is a full time job! The announcement of the 2015 Shortlist for Book of the Year in Sydney was fabulous and I recommend the spectacular merchandise being produce this year. Go to the CBCA website and have a look at it. You'll want it! <http://merchandise.cbca.org.au>

As well as all that we've just formed a Blue Mountains sub-branch of the CBCA NSW branch. I'm sure local people are happy to hear that news and those who would like to be involved should email me so that their name can be added to the mailing list.

THEN there's also the CBCA 12th National Conference in Sydney next year - and the 70th anniversary of the CBCA Book of the Year Awards. I'm on the committee.

For your information I have included here a blog from Kit Carstairs at the Manuscript Agency. She will probably have had another baby by the time you read this:

<http://manuscriptagency.com.au/a-life-in-childrens-publishing-an-interview-with-margaret-hamilton/>
Phew!



Me with Libby Hathorn and her new book *EVENTUAL POPPY DAY*.

EVENTS @ PINEROLO AND BEYOND

PICTURE BOOKS @ PINEROLO

Our program of one-day courses on creating children's picture books has been running now for nine years. They are always fully booked and participants go away inspired and much more knowledgeable about how to realise their dream of a published book. Next will be the fabulous *Tohby Riddle* on Saturday 23 May. I recommend booking early: www.pinerolo.com.au/PDF/Riddle.pdf

FURTHER AFIELD

I attended the CBCA NSW AAA event in Sydney on 14 April. I had been invited to launch Libby Hathorn's book *EVENTUAL POPPY DAY*. It's an excellent and very affecting book and I can't recommend it enough.

The highlight of the event was the announcement of the CBCA 2015 Notables List and the Shortlist. I nervously awaited the announcement and was thrilled when my book *B IS FOR BEDTIME* was announced a Notable! This means it's deemed to be in the top 20% of children's books in Australia this year. How exciting! Here's the cover to remind you (any excuse!):



By the way. You know that I sell artwork here at Pinerolo. I've been very pleased to have the entire artwork of *B IS FOR BEDTIME* to sell on behalf of Anna Pignataro. Several pieces have been snapped up. But not it is a Notable Book, artwork will be even more sought-after. Get it while it's hot!

MAURICE SAXBY LECTURE by LIBBY GLEESON

6 May, MacLaurin Hall, University of Sydney

This biennial lecture recognises the incredible contribution made to the CBCA by the legendary Maurice Saxby. He was one of the most significant people involved in the development of children's literature in Australia. The lectures aim to continue the tradition of education about children's literature established so brilliantly by Maurice Saxby. **All bookings through TryBooking at: <http://www.trybooking.com/HLTJ>**

NEW PICTURE BOOKS

I've already mentioned Libby Hathorn's wonderful YA novel *EVENTUAL POPPY DAY* which I launched in Sydney. You might feel there's a bit much around about the wars at the moment, especially with the hundredth anniversary of Gallipoli, but my feeling is that every one of these stories needs to be told. If one child grows up compassionate and against war because they've read one of the excellent books around, we will have achieved something significant. Here are the new picture books received recently:

A HERD OF ELEPHANTS and *STARFISH ARE POINTY* by Graeme Base (Penguin). Graeme Base is one of the world's most successful illustrators. Animalia has been hugely successful internationally. These little books, part of the 'Little Bug' Series are aimed at early and pre-readers. They have fold-out pages, are very simple, colourful and brilliant. Highly recommended.

BLOW ME A KISS by Karen Collum & Serena Geddes (New Frontier). A new paperback edition of this charming book. A small boy loves shopping with his mum and he spreads joy to everyone he meets. A simple and heartwarming story with energetic illustrations. Highly recommended.

BLUE MOON by Tricia Oktober (Ford St). Tricia Oktober is well-known for her award-winning and beautiful illustrations. This new book features a cat who takes advantage of a blue moon and embarks on an amazing dream adventure. She visits incredible places and meets many famous cats. The superb illustrations are filled with not only cats but other elements to keep young eyes glued to the pages. Highly recommended.

CURLY GIRLY by Amanda Tarlau & Laura Hughes (Koala Books). Why is it that girls with curly hair always want it straight and visa versa? This enjoyable book is about just that, until Sophie finally realises that she likes herself just as she is. Recommended.

DON'T THINK ABOUT PURPLE ELEPHANTS by Susan Whelan & Gwynneth Jones (Exisle Publishing). Another Sophie! This little girl is worries about almost everything and she can't sleep. Her mum comes up with a novel solution which surprisingly involves purple elephants. A lively, engaging and colourful picture book. Recommended.

DUELGUM by Uncle Jo Kirk. Illustrated by Sandi Harrold. (Scholastic). This is an Aboriginal story retold by a Brisband and Wakka Wakka elder. Strong colour from cover to cover illustrates this story of a mother eel in the Brisbane River.

FISH JAM by Kylie Howarth (Five Mile Press). Toot loves nothing better than making music. But the rest of the sea creatures 'shhh' him and 'shoo' him and he is quite demoralised. Most of the simple text relates to making sounds, encouraging the reader to join in and make their own music. Sharing this book with a small child could be a noisy experience. Recommended.

HOW BIG IS TOO SMALL? by Jane Godwin & Andrew Joyner (Penguin). It's tough being small, especially around bigger boys – until you find your own place in the world, whatever your size. Rhyming text presents this perennial problem with a new twist. A very appealing book by a talented picture book duo. Recommended.

LEST WE FORGET by Kerry Brown, Isobel Knowles & Benjamin Portas. (ABC Books). Hot on the heels of *Anzac Day* comes another picture book, this one capturing the meaning and importance of remembrance. Innovative illustrations by two different illustrators depict in parallel the boy's story and that of his grandfather. A fascinating collaboration, well presented for young readers. Recommended

THE MAGIC CAR WASH SERIES by Rosie Smith, Bruce & Ben Whatley. (File Mile Press). *THE GIANT MOUSE* and *THE RUNAWAY CAR* are book 3 and 4 in this entertaining series for young readers, created by award-winners. They are bright, very colourful and lots of fun. Readers might even want to collect the whole series!

ONESIE MUMSIE! by Alice Rex & Amanda Francey (New Frontier). Some little girls have too many onesies! Obviously this one does, as she insists on trying every one on at bedtime. She finally settles down when her mother has a good idea. A good, cuddly bedtime story. Recommended.

MY POP IS A PIRATE by Damon Young & Peter Carnavas (UQP). From the duo responsible for *MY NANNA IS A NINJA* comes another fun book, this time about different grandpas. Some pops are quite eccentric but it's very special when your pop is a pirate! Lots of swashbuckling action, even the endpapers. Recommended.

THE RACE TO THE BEACH! by Anna Shuttlewood (Five Mile Press). Hilarious! The animals in the zoo escape for a day at the beach. There's a race into the water and a very heroic rescue. Detailed and fun-filled watercolour illustrations pack the pages with fun. So many animals having fun on the sand. Highly recommended.

RIDE, RICARDO, RIDE! by Phil Cummings & Shane Devries (Omnibus). A very moving story about war and its affect on ordinary village people, especially Ricardo who loves riding his bike. When frightening shadows threaten, he and his father dismantle and hide his precious bike. Then Ricardo's life is destroyed. Atmospheric, beautiful digital paintings complete this powerful picture book. Highly recommended.

There we are. I managed to get the April newsletter finished by the last day in April. I promise I'll try to do better for the June Newsletter.

I look forward to hearing from you and seeing you in the coming months. Best wishes from me and my mascot Grug.

Margaret Hamilton AM

