



Newsletter Number Two, August 2011

Enquiries: Margaret Hamilton 4787 8492, hamiltonbooks@iprimus.com.au

www.pinerolo.com.au

116-120 Shipley Road, Blackheath NSW 2785

I began with the best of intentions – that newsletters would be monthly, or at least quarterly. But the months have flown and here I am at the end of July sending only the second newsletter. What follows is a summary of this year so far.

Since Open Day last November, a steady stream of visitors has come to enjoy Pinerolo. Groups of school students, groups of librarians and teachers, a meeting of booksellers, publishers, authors, illustrators, even a mothers and babies group, have all been here. So I have been kept very busy and am encouraged by the interest in my collection of artwork and picture books. I love the 'oohs and aahs' when people find artwork from a book they remember from childhood or, better still, when a child discovers a current favourite.

VISITORS TO PINEROLO

Visitors have included **Madeleine Winch**, with her daughter Jessie and grandson Wolfie, fabulous new author; our first 'writer in residence' **Choe Brereton** (Walker Books!) and her husband Dominic, **Jeannie Baker** and her husband David, **Steven Axelsen** and his mum, plus of course **Dee Huxley** for our one one-day course earlier this year.

It was a pleasure to welcome bestselling UK author **Joe Delaney** for a Saturday afternoon soiree with his devoted fans. More recently we had a visit from world-renowned publisher **Patsy Aldana**, from Groundwood Publishing in Canada. We had become friends with Patsy through annual meetings at Bologna Children's Book Fair in Italy. So when I heard that she was coming to Sydney for the Writers Festival as a guest Visiting International Publisher, we contacted her. Fortunately she had time to come and stay



Writer in residence Choe Brereton and her husband Dominic.

the night, so we were able to show her not only Pinerolo, but all the local sights.

Open Day on 25 April turned out to be family day. Many people who came were holidaying in the Blue Mountains and had seen my sign in local shops. It was raining so many took advantage of buying some of the ridiculously cheap books to read by the fire that afternoon. Of particular interest was our 'illustrator in residence'. **Anne Bowman**, illustrator of the beautiful book *Count Them While You Can* here, doing work on illustrations. It was inspiring to watch.

READING WEEK IN THE BLUE MOUNTAINS

Organised by **Paint the Blue Read**. I'm helping to enlist local shopkeepers in Blackheath. We'll read picture books to children on Friday 2 September. Shops involved include the newsagent, the shoe shop, estate agent, cafe, credit union, crystal shop and of course Gleebooks. It will be a challenge to find books appropriate for those locations, but it promises to be fun. We're also looking for **volunteers** to read books, so please contact me if you'd like to join us.

CHILDREN'S BOOK WEEK

Children's Book Week is on August 20 – 26. The CBCA Children's **Book of the Year Awards** will be announced in Adelaide on Friday 19 August. Check out the Shortlist and the 2011 Notable Australian Children's Books at <http://cbca.org.au/awards.htm>

This is the most exciting week in the children's books calendar. Why not bring a group of children here to celebrate and to enjoy Australian picture books? Call or email me to book. I can offer a talk about picture books, adults @ \$20, readers under 18 @ \$10.00.



Madeleine Winch (right) with her daughter Jessie and grandson Wolfie.

PINEROLO ON THE MAP!

Wasn't it exciting to watch Le Tour de France, especially Stage 17 and 18 in Pinerolo! This is of course the town after which we named our place at Blackheath.

ALSO COMING UP

Picture Books @ Pinerolo – 22 October – one-day course on creating children's picture books, with award-winning illustrator **Dee Huxley**. Five years of satisfied customers. Booking form on our website: www.pinerolo.com.au

THANKS TO PUBLISHERS

My thanks to publishers who have put Pinerolo on their list and send advance copies of new picture books. I promote these at courses and whenever I talk to visitors at Pinerolo. I intend to include in this and future newsletters reviews of as many as I can and might even begin a 'reviewing blog' if I can work out how to do it! This will reinforce my stated aim to promote Australian picture books.

Margaret Hamilton AM



This is what it's all about ...

... children loving books! (At Pinerolo of course).



REVIEWS

ONCE THERE WAS A BOY, by Dub Leffler. (Magabala) He lives alone, on an ancient boat on the beach, so the illustrations portray vast landscapes inhabited by just one boy. The sense of aloneness is almost palpable. Until a girl appears. Their first encounter is while the boy is picking and eating sapotes, the delicious tropical fruit that tastes like chocolate.

What follows is a tender story of the power of love and friendship in the face of temptation and subsequently a broken heart. The language is beautiful and touching. 'This is my heart,' she said, 'and because I broke yours, I'm giving it to you.' A note from the author states: 'I wrote *Once* to show kids that boys have feelings too (just like girls) and that sometimes those feelings can get hurt and that's okay; especially when you're willing to let your friends help when you're feeling sad'. A sentiment beautifully achieved.

THE PERFECT PRESENT by Fiona Robertson. (Penguin/Viking) The story begins with Henry being too excited to sleep because tomorrow is his birthday. He guesses the presents he'll receive – in alphabetical order – a nice touch. Henry's best friend Spot (a duck) has planned the perfect present but his presentation is usurped by a big box from Henry's grandparents. It contains a very special surprise. Henry is besotted and totally neglects his best friend. So Spot sadly leaves home. The dangers he encounters threaten to engulf him until at last, he is rescued by Henry and the perfect present. The simple illustrations contain extra reading in the labels and conversation and the split-action pages move the story along and provide extra detail and interest.

A thoroughly enjoyable book in every way; a touching and heart-warming story about loyalty and friendship. Highly recommended for beginning readers.

SOME DADS ... by Nick Bland. (Scholastic)

Just in time for Fathers Day comes this enjoyable picture book about fathers. They come in all shapes and sizes and the dads in this book are all different animals having fun with their children. It's a simple book highlighting the joys of being a father and bringing humour and warmth to everyday situations. Written and illustrated by a successful picture book creator, this is bound to be a hit with families who share books together.

BEN & DUCK by Sara Acton (Scholastic)

An early childhood book to be read again and again, for its clear, simple sentences, its engaging illustrations and its warm story of friendship. Ben goes to the park to feed the ducks. He meets one special, very large duck who takes a liking to his food. The duck follows Ben home and what follows is an enjoyable rapport between the two that develops into lasting friendship. Expressive illustrations and clear text against plenty of white space will encourage young readers to relate the words to the pictures.

FOR ALL CREATURES by Glenda Millard, illus by Rebecca Cool (Walker Books Australia)

This book pays homage to all creatures, to love and life, to kindness and gentleness and to the marvel of being alive. The lyrical language is rich, tender and warm, varied, evocative and thought provoking, yet playful and imaginative. It doesn't shy away from complex words like metamorphosis or new phrases like 'haughtiness and humpiness' and 'scribbled silver secrets'. Rebecca Cool's illustrations are dramatic and varied. The rich colours leap from the page as a procession of animals strides through the book. Every double-page spread is a surprise and a wonder that will enthral young readers, whether they are reading independently sharing with an adult. In this 'quick fix' world, it's the kind of book that will slow us down, to give us time to savour the language and to enjoy the illustrations again and again.

Also received and worth a look:

ALPHA MONSTERS by Chris Kennett (Scholastic)

BUTTON BOY by Rebecca Young & Sue deGennaro (Scholastic)

THE DREAM OF THE THYLACINE by Margaret Wild & Ron Brooks (Allen & Unwin)

SONG OF THE DOVE by Errol Broome & Sonia Kretchmar (Walker)