



**Annual Monitoring Report for the  
The International Research Centre for Primary English and Children's Literature'  
No. 12, 2008 -2009.**

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## **1. Overview for the academic year**

i. The aims of the Centre team in 2008-2009 have been to

- continue to develop the publications profile
- consolidate the work on projects previously set up
- develop collaborative projects with other institutions
- develop new research project opportunities suitable for funding bids
- make bids for external funding
- extend the Worcester Storytelling Festival
- develop the collection resources of the Centre
- continue to develop the local, national and international recognition of the Centre
- engage in consultancy

ii. Information in this report has not included activities and publications which would appear in the Institute of Education or ILS research reports, thus avoiding duplication of records.

iii. The past year has seen a continuation of the considerable level of activity and strengthening of the national and international profile of the Centre regarding research; projects; applications for funding for research; consultancy; the extension and development of resources; conference attendance and publication by Centre members and research students.

iv. In December 2008, Rachel Johnson successfully defended her PhD thesis 'A Complete Identity: the image of the hero in the work of G. A. Henty (1832-1902) and George MacDonald (1824-1905)'. Congratulations to Rachel.

## **2. Staffing**

Prof. Jean Webb: Co-Director and Children's Literature

Dr Robyn Cox: Co-Director, Literacy and Primary English

Dr Stephen Bigger

Hon. Professor: Prof Maria Nikolajeva.

Rachel Johnson Research Librarian – Collections development & maintenance.

## **3. Research students**

Full-time:

Research studentship Laura Jones (2008- ) (DoS JAW)

Kate Flynn was appointed as a full-time UW funded PhD research student following the successful application for the project on the representation of the overweight child in children's literature and media, 1960-2010.

Part-time:

Pippa Abbott (RC)

Steve Arnott (JAW)

Lone Hattinge (RC)

Rachel Johnson – PhD successfully completed December 2008 (JAW)

Fawzia Gilani-Williams (JAW)

### **3.i Associated colleagues at UW:**

Storytelling Festival Team: Steve Boffy, David Broster, Maureen Gamble, Rachel Johnson, Andy Stevenson.

Olympic Storytelling Project: Prof James Riordan, Dr Derek Peters, Steve Arnott

Obesity Project: Dr Derek Peters

Dr Claire Cochrane, consultation on potential projects

Dr Mikel Koven, folklore.

**3.ii Administration** Carolyn Ralphs at Faculty level for budget and administrative support for RLF Fellows.

**3.iii Time allocation** for staffing to the Centre was 1 module relief from teaching from the Institute of Humanities & Creative Arts (IH&CA) for Jean Webb plus a further 2 modules research time. Otherwise work has been carried out by Centre colleagues in their contractual allocations for research and scholarly development, and in their personal time.

#### **4. Research collections attached to the Centre.**

The Research Collections have undergone a number of significant changes during the year September 2008 – September 2009. The Centre team wishes to express their thanks to ILS for their ongoing support of the collections.

i. A part-time cataloguer was appointed by ILS in September 2008. As a result the Elkin Collection is now fully catalogued to Resources Online where details of the contents of the Collection can be viewed publicly. Cataloguing of the Brown, Hawkes, Manley, Severn, Westerman and Williams Collections is ongoing. A basic listing of the contents of these Collections can be viewed on the Research Collections webpage <http://www.worc.ac.uk/ils/635.htm>. The Wynne Collection has yet to be listed.

ii. The Collections were relocated to Bredon 27, 29, 31 and 33 in February 2009 where they continue to be accessible to researchers, students and members of the public. The Children's literature materials are predominantly held in Bredon 29.

iii. Work on the Research Collections webpages is ongoing in order to provide additional information on and background to the Collections.

#### **5. Review of research outputs and dissemination.**

The level of activity has been higher this year than previously. The information below includes only those activities directly associated with the work of the Centre to avoid duplication of information in Institutional and Departmental research reports.

#### **6. Conferences attended and conference presentations.**

##### **6.1 Rachel Johnson.**

i. 'Deep into Nature: Ecology, Environment and Children's Literature.' British IBBY/NCRCL MA Conference, National Centre for Research in Children's Literature, Roehampton University. Saturday 15th November, 2008. No paper given.

ii. Henty Society Conference. Nr Royston, UK. May 8<sup>th</sup>, 2009. No paper given.

iii. 'The University of Worcester Research Collections.' 'Children's Literature and Cultural Diversity', 19<sup>th</sup> Biennial Congress of the International Research Society for Children's Literature. Institut für Jugendbuchforschung, Johann Wolfgang Goethe-Universität, Frankfurt am Main, Germany, 8-12th August 2009. Funding from Graduate Research School part-time research student support fund.

## 6.2 Laura Jones.

- i. "Through Three Campaigns: G.A Henty's Construction of Englishness" Henty Society Conference. Nr Royston, UK. May 8<sup>th</sup>, 2009. To be published in the Henty Society Journal 2009.
- ii. 'Through Three Campaigns: the Construction of English Identity Through the Union of Past, Present, and Future.' 'The Best of Three'; Children's Literature Association 36<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference. University of North Carolina, Charlotte, North Carolina, USA. June 11<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup>; 2009.
- iii. 'Historical Fiction: The Construction of 'Englishness' through G.A Henty's Union of Past, Present and Future.' 'Children's Literature and Cultural Diversity', 19<sup>th</sup> Biennial Congress of the International Research Society for Children's Literature. Institut fur Jugendbuchforschung, Johann Wolfgang Goethe-Universitat, Frankfurt am Main, Germany, 8-12th August 2009.
- iv. Following her paper at IRSC Laura was invited to submit a chapter based on her paper to: Christopher Kelen and Björn Sundmark (eds) *Nations of childhood*. Publishing information not available as yet.

## 6.3 Jean Webb.

### Conference presentations:

- i. 'Is our future set in stone? A discussion of Michelle Paver's *Chronicles of Ancient Darkness*.'
- ii. 'Spirit Walking Across the Landscape: a discussion of landscape and the environment in Michelle Paver's series *Chronicles of Ancient Darkness*.' University of Worcester, 'Landscape and Heritage' conference. Institute of Science and the Environment and the Graduate Research School Research Focus. University of Worcester, November 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2008.
- iii. '*Voracious Appetites*' the construction of 'Fatness' in the *Boy Hero* in *English Children's Literature*. IH&CA seminar series, UW, Autumn 2008.
- iv. 'A.A. Milne's poetic world of childhood in *When We Were Very Young and Now We Are Six*.' 'Poetry and Childhood Conference'. University of Cambridge Faculty of Education and The British Library conference: The British Library, London. April 10<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup>, 2009. To be published, 2009-10.
- v. 'Planning, organising and delivering your research degree programme.' Keynote speaker and responding to the presentations. Irish research student training network in children's literature. Children's Literature Association Ireland; Queen's University, Belfast; Trinity College Dublin. Hosted by Queen's University Belfast. May 9<sup>th</sup> -10<sup>th</sup>, 2009. Funding for travel from the Irish research student training network in children's literature.
- vi. 'Children's Literature in England; the contemporary position.' Keynote and round table discussion with publishers and children's illustrators from Italy and France. The Minimondi Festival. Palermo, Sicily. May 18-20<sup>th</sup> 2009. Funding for accommodation The Minimondi Festival.
- vii. 'Fat or thin? A discussion of cultural perceptions of body size in *Fatty Rati* and *The Fattening Hut*.' 'The Best of Three'; Children's Literature Association 36<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference.

University of North Carolina, Charlotte, North Carolina, USA. June 11<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup>; 2009. Funded by IH&CA.

viii. 'States of being in *Howl's Moving Castle and the Time of the Ghost* by Diana Wynne Jones.' Diana Wynne Jones Conference, University of the West of England, Bristol. July 3<sup>rd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup>, 2009.

ix. 'The changing employment of the Greek and Roman Classics in children's literature, 1856-2012.'

Keynote. 'Asterisks & obelisks.' Dept. of Classics, University of Wales, Lampeter. University of Wales, Lampeter, July 6<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup>, 2009. Funding for travel and accommodation from Dept. of Classics, University of Wales, Lampeter. To be published, 2009-10.

x. 'Winds of Change Whistling Through the Willows: a discussion of the changing perceptions of the relationship constructed with the environment in English children's literature: 1908-2008.' 'Children's Literature and Cultural Diversity', 19<sup>th</sup> Biennial Congress of the International Research Society for Children's Literature. Institut für Jugendbuchforschung, Johann Wolfgang Goethe-Universität, Frankfurt am Main, Germany, 8-12th August 2009. Funding from IH&CA.

## **7. Publications.**

There are a number of papers and book chapters produced by Centre members during the period under review, however, they have not been included as their publication dates will be post September 2009.

### **7.i Robyn Cox (other publications and activities for RC come under the Institute of Education research report).**

Cremin, T.M., Mottram, M., Collins, F. and Powell, S. (2008) *Building Communities of Readers*. Leicester: UKLA Ideas in Practice Series.

### **Robyn Cox and Jean Webb.**

'The Stories Project' Primary Subjects 6, Council for Subject Associations PS5, Autumn 2009.

### **7.ii Rachel Johnson**

'Personal and Political Identity in G.A. Henty's *The Tiger of Mysore*' in *The Henty Society Bulletin*. No. 116. March 2009.

### **7.iii Jean Webb**

'Aesthetic Hegemony: Western Scholars and Native American Culture.' in *What Do You See? International Perspectives on Children's Book Illustration*. Jennifer Harding and Pat Pinsent (eds), Cambridge Scholars Publishing, October, 2008.

'Voracious Appetites' the construction of 'Fatness' in the Boy Hero in English Children's Literature' in *Critical Approaches to Food in Children's Literature*. Kara K. Keeling and Scott T. Pollard (eds). Routledge, January, 2009.

## **8. Research collaboration.**

- Across UW with various colleagues.
- Prof. Yahya Al-Nakeeb, Newman University College: Obesity project.
- Dr. Alysa Levene, Oxford Brookes University: 'Perceptions of Health in Children's Literature'.
- Prof Mavis Reimer, University of Winnipeg: Leverhulme Fellowship.
- Colleagues from the Universities of Cambridge, Newcastle, Warwick, Roehampton and Bolton on AHRC research training network bid.
- Dr Bjorn Sundermark, University of Malmo and Dr Janina Orlov, University of Stockholm; JAW research visits Erasmus funded November, 2009.
- Prof Kerry Mallan, Queensland University of Technology, funding bid for Master classes to be made Autumn 2009 to the Australian Humanities research council.
- International Youth Library, Munich; Centre for Research in Children's Literature, Copenhagen; University of Newcastle and the Institute for Research in Youth literature and Culture, University of Frankfurt: project development, Autumn 09.
- Faculty of Education, University of Cambridge. JAW invited to give a seminar in the Cambridge Faculty of Education public seminar series, November 2009.

## **9. Consultancy.**

### **i Wychwood Children's Festival.**

The Centre team acted as consultants to the Wychwood Children's Festival, May 2009, which was sponsored by UW. The following writers took part in the Festival on the recommendation of the Centre:

- Siobhan Parkinson, Ireland.
- Heather Dyer
- Cat Wetherall
- Carol Ann Duffy, Poet Laureate.

Ulf Stark, Sweden, was also going to present his work but was unfortunately taken ill and could not attend.

The weekend event was attended by members of the team who supported the artists and activities in which the children took part.

### **ii The Courtyard Hereford, Education conference January 2010.**

In July the Centre team met with the organizers of Courtyard Hereford, Education conference and made recommendations for the programme for the conference and speakers. Michael Rosen has agreed to give a keynote session at the conference to be held at the Courtyard Theatre Hereford in January 2010. RC and JAW will also be giving keynote talks.

### **iii. Enterprise in children's books: Blueberry Press.**

The Centre was approached by Andrew Corcoran, founder of the Blueberry Press. The consultancy project involves:

- situating enterprise in children's books internationally: report completed
- discussion of notions of enterprise with children in schools
- trialing stories which focus on enterprise and children written by Andrew Corcoran.

The consultancy will result in £3,000 from Advantage West Midlands on successful completion of the work early in the academic year of 2009-2010.

## **5. Income**

There was no direct income into the Centre budget this year as expenses outlined were covered by alternative means as indicated above.

## 10. Funding bids.

The considerable support and advice given by Prof. Antonia Payne and Dr. John-Paul Wilson was very much appreciated.

### i. British Academy/Commonwealth Universities

Joint Activities: Visiting Postdoctoral Researcher.

'A study of the construction of 'Indianess' in English, British Asian and Indian Children's Fiction.' £2,765.

Co-applicant: Dr Anto Thomas Chakramakkil, St. Thomas College (Trichur), Kerala, India.

Unsuccessful.

### ii. University of Worcester and University of Coventry.

Joint scheme for fully funded PhD students.

'Using Text Messaging to Engage Children in Creative Writing and Promote Literacy Skills.' £3,500 in addition to the bursaried studentship.

Dr Robyn Cox, Institute of Education, Worcester.

Dr Clare Wood, Dept. of Psychology, University of Coventry.

Unsuccessful.

### iii. ESRC

Collaborative Research Networks.

'Contemporary Childhoods in a Changing World': seminar series.

Newman University College, Birmingham. Circa £2,000.

Prof Yahya Al-Nakeeb, Newman.

Unsuccessful.

### iv. University of Worcester.

Fully funded PhD studentship.

Representation of the Body in Children's Literature and Media in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

Bursaried studentship plus up to £1,000 per annum for research support.

Dr Barbara Mitra, IH&CA, University of Worcester; Penney Upton, Institute of Health and Society, University of Worcester

Successful.

### v. Leverhulme Foundation

Visiting Fellowships.

'Discourses of British national identity in children's literature, television and film since 2000.'

£734 in addition to travel from Canada.

Dr Benjamin Lefebvre also supported by Prof Mavis Reimer, University of Winnipeg.

Successful.

### vi. Arts and Humanities Research Council

PhD studentship.

'Representations of New Religious Movements and Christian Sects in Young Adult Fiction.'

Fully bursaried PhD studentship.

Peter Bramwell.

Unsuccessful.

vii. Arts and Humanities Research Council.

Collaborative Research Training.

UK Research Training Network in Children’s Literature. £60,000.

Prof. Maria Nikolajeva, University of Cambridge; Prof Kimberley Reynolds University of Newcastle; Dr Gillian Lathey, Director of the National Centre for Research in Children’s Literature, Roehampton; Dr. Christine Wilkie-Stibbs, University of Warwick.

Unsuccessful.

viii. Wellcome Trust.

Medical History and Humanities Research Grant

‘Perceptions of Health in Children’s Literature in England 1840 to the present.’ Circa £ 94,571.

Dr. Alysa Levene, Oxford Brookes University.

First stage successful; awaiting final decision. Should be due December 2009.

### 10. Record of Income and Expenditure.

**Expenditure** There was no expenditure from the Centre budget since activities for Centre team members were supported either by IH&CA, ILS, the Graduate Research School research student support budget or external funding as indicated above. The Children’s Storytelling Festival was supported by external bids made by Steve Boffy on behalf of the festival and also by Widening Participation at UW. Additions to the Collections and the cost of expendable materials required were supported by a separate Collections budget in ILS.

**Income.**

£20: book sold belonging to a team member and proceeds donated to the Centre.

### 11. Research Centre Budget

Carry over budget	Outgoings	Income
£ 1151.74	0	£20.00
	<b>Total</b>	<b>Total £1171.74</b>
<b>Carry over budget for 2009-10</b>		<b>£1171.74</b>

### 12. Project overview and projection for 2009-10

i. **Royal Literary Fund** The contract was renewed and the post taken up by Heather Dyer, who is a successful children’s author. Heather was funded for two days a week by the RLF. The RLF academic Writer in residence continues to provide a valuable service to students and staff at UW. It will be continued throughout 2009-10 with Helena Attlee as the new Fellow.

ii **Worcester Children’s Storytelling Festival, June 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> 2009:**

- The programme successfully continued in the extended form introduced last year. Furthermore an additional day was added to the event at the Worcester City Children’s Library, plus a performance open to the public.
- There were no extra drama performances beyond the two days of the Festival this year.
- Circa 240 children attended on campus, plus teachers and helpers. Student involvement was strong from Drama Education and IT (in the creation of the website). It was a most successful event, with the planning and organisation running very smoothly. Thanks to



Steve Boffy who variously provided funding support and also to Widening Participation and IH&CA for their support.

- A yurt was provided for the story telling on campus
- Sessions on campus for each day were:
  - Ben Haggarty storyteller
  - E-Batik workshops: the two batiks made by the children are on display in the University foyer.
  - Three Pigs Puppetry Performance by Rob
  - Michelle Pogmore and the Attic Theatre Company 'Pippi Longstocking'.

It is hoped to continue with the Festival next year, but this is subject to funding support.

### **iii. Olympic Stories Project**

Work for the project has now been completed. The team will now develop a website for the dissemination of the work which has already produced one publication and the basis of a book proposal. Funding for the production of the website will be provided from the Museums and Libraries Association. (£1,000 achieved for this Sept. 09 from MLA).

iv. The Centre was visited in August 2009 by Dr Sabah Asawi, a British Council sponsored post-doctoral researcher from Saudi Arabia. Dr Asawi will also return in November 2009. In total her visit to the centre will comprise circa 2 months.

### **v. Leverhulme Research Fellow: Dr Benjamin Lefebvre.**

The Centre team was very pleased to have been successful in their bid for a Leverhulme Research Fellowship. The Fellowship is linked with Prof Mavis Reimer, Director from the University of Winnipeg and the Centre for Research in Youth, Texts and Culture. Prof Reimer will be visiting the Centre in spring 2010. A programme of research and events is planned for the year engaging with colleagues in the Centre, IH&CA and more widely in the University and externally. Dr. Lefebvre's research is on nationalisms, culture, media and texts for children.

### **vi. Obesity project.**

We were very pleased to have been successful with a bid for a UW research studentship. Kate Flynn has been appointed and will work on obesity, children's literature and the media. Dr Barbar Mitra and Penney Upton comprise the supervisory team with JAW as DoS. Although we were not successful for the research network bid, we will continue collaboration with Dr Derek Peters, Prof Al-Nakeeb and other colleagues to further this work.

### **vii. Project planning with the International Youth Library, Munich (IYL).**

JAW met with Dr Christiane Raabe, Director of the International Youth Library in Munich during the IRSCL conference in Frankfurt, August 2009. JAW was asked to act as a consultant to bring together a core group of key academics in Europe to develop research projects in association with the IYL. Those invited have agreed to participate in this collaborative development. In addition to Dr Raabe and JAW the core group comprise:

- Prof Hans-Heino Ewers, Director of the Instituts fuer Jugendbuchforschung Johann Wolfgang Goethe-Universitaet, Frankfurt, Germany.
- Dr Nina Christensen, Director of the Danish Centre for Research in Children's literature, Copenhagen, Denmark.
- Prof Maria Nikolajeva, Faculty of Education, University of Cambridge
- Prof Kimberley Reynolds, University of Newcastle.

The group will meet in spring 2010 either in Munich or Worcester to plan:

- a summer school for research students and postdoctoral researchers in children's literature to be held at the IYL
- a research training programme for research students and postdoctoral researchers in children's literature to be held initially at the IYL and then to circulate round the collaborating institutions
- an international research project which will use the resources of the IYL and the expertise of the core group plus other relevant parties

Dr Raabe will seek funding to support these activities.

**viii. The Children's Literature Research Centre, University of Nicosia, Cyprus.**

JAW met with Dr Petros Panaou, Director of the Children's Literature Research Centre, University of Nicosia, at ChLA and IRSCL.

A research visit to the Centre in Cyprus is planned for Centre team members to discuss potential research development and collaboration. This would be to develop European funded projects.

The Centre was also invited to join the second phase of the European funded research project on picture books. If the bid to be made in Sept. 2009 by Dr Panaou is successful, then there would be funding to employ a researcher at UW to carry out the work.

**ix. Masters Classes in Children's Literature: Australian collaboration.**

Prof Kerry Mallan, Queensland University of Technology, Brisbane, invited JAW and the Centre team to collaborate in the delivery of Masters classes in children's literature and research development. In the autumn of 2009, Prof Mallan is applying to the Australian Academy of the Humanities (AAH) for funding support. The AAH are keen for young researchers to travel and gain experience outside Australia. The project would bring a group of young Australian researchers, under Prof Mallan's guidance, to engage in a programme of Master classes at UW and to meet with other researchers and experts in the UK.

**x. Faculty of Education Research Group; University of Cambridge.**

In November 2009 JAW will meet with the interdisciplinary research group based in the Faculty of Education University of Cambridge which is headed by Prof Maria Nikolajeva, to discuss potential collaborative research developments. There are already cognate areas of interest for example in the environment.

**xi.** JAW has been invited to be a keynote speaker at the Australasian Children's Literature Association for Research congress, Wollongong in June 2010, the subject of the conference is 'Politics and Children's Literature'.

**xii.** JAW has been invited as a visiting speaker to the University of Auckland, New Zealand, summer 2010 to give seminars and lectures on postgraduate research training.

**xiii. Research visitors to the Centre 2009-10**

- Dr Sabah Asawi, November 2009
- Prof Mavis Reimer, University of Winnipeg, Canada: semester 2 2010 in association with the Leverhulme Fellowship.
- Dr Helen Frank, University of Melbourne, Australia. Post-doctoral research visit, spring 2010.
- Dr Lydia Kokkola, University of Abo, Finland. Research visit, semester 2, 2010.

**xiv. Doll book manuscript.**

The scanning of the manuscript should be completed in 2009-10 when work can begin on editing the manuscript and seeking a publisher.

**xv. 'Beyond Borders' International Picture Books project.**

JAW was an invited speaker at the Beyond Borders International Symposium on Picture books, University of Glasgow, Sept 2009. She was also asked to join the advisory group to set up an international research network in this area. There are already researchers from S. and N. America, Australia, Canada, across Europe, and the UK involved.

**xiv. Seminar series.**

The Centre team is planning to run a public seminar series during 2009-10 as there is now some funding in the Centre budget which would support a modest series of seminars.

*Prof Jean Webb, on behalf of the Centre team, Sept 30<sup>th</sup>, 2009.*