



Christmas Stickers

It's that time of year again and you can add that Bag Books feel to your own Christmas cards with our range of Christmas stickers. The stickers can also be used to seal envelopes or to wrap up presents.

We have two ranges available: 20 small gold stickers for £2 per sheet or 12 larger contemporary stickers for £3 per sheet. The important thing is that each sticker represents a donation to Bag Books.

Order at www.bagbooks.org/stickers.html or call us for an order form.

Christmas Shopping

Another way of supporting Bag Books is to use our links when you are shopping online so that we earn commission. If you buy through the tinyurl.com/BagBooksAmazon link to Amazon we will get 5 - 10% commission at no extra cost to yourself. Plus if you register at www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/bagbooks you can shop with dozens of well-known retailers such as John Lewis, Next, Boots and Hobbycraft whilst earning us commission.

Bags of time

To celebrate our 25th birthday, our talented woodwork volunteer, Tony Robinson, kindly made a clock in the shape of a bag that takes pride of place in our craft workshop - thanks Tony.



Build-a-Book

Over the past year we have received funding from The Garfield Weston Foundation, The QBE Foundation, Simmons & Simmons and the M&G Group to expand our Build-a-Book project with adults. We have visited 32 day centres and care homes helping adults to construct their own multi-sensory book for ongoing use. We hope to expand this project across South East England over the next year.



Storyline is published twice a year and is available in email and print versions. If you would like to change the format you receive in future please contact us. Similarly, please let us know if you'd rather not receive future editions.



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Storyline

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Multi-sensory stories for people with learning disabilities



25 years of Bag Books

We celebrated our 25th birthday a few weeks ago. Since we began operating in 1993 we have made nearly 19,000 multi-sensory books. We also aim to visit every one of the over 700 special schools across the UK every five years and over the past five years we have received feedback from nearly 3,000 special needs teachers in those schools. They collectively observed nearly 20,000 of their pupils and judged that 98% of those children had benefited from the Bag Books multi-sensory storytelling session.

Our Patron, author Sir Michael Morpurgo, hosted a party in our workshop to celebrate. Before proposing a toast he said, *"There can be no more difficult task than to reach people who have difficulty in reaching you. What this extraordinary organisation has done is to reach across the gap and to do it through stories. It's an ingenious concept but it's a concept based on great hope and great faith that you can improve and enrich the lives of those who seem to need it most. The invention is nothing if it isn't carried on and what's been really extraordinary is that clearly it's growing and I think it's the spirit in this room that is enabling that to continue."* You can watch Sir Michael's speech in full at tinyurl.com/BBMorpurgo

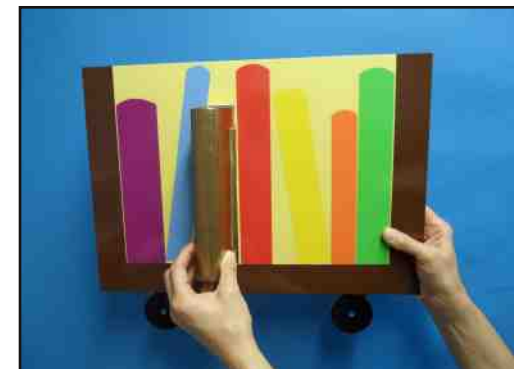


The Golden Book

We are just finalising our latest story, "The Golden Book". It's a rhyming story about a visit to the library. There is such a choice of titles and it's easy to get distracted by the illuminated ring of mushrooms, the rocking sailing ship or the smelly witch's cauldron but it's the golden book on the returns trolley that catches the eye.



The development of the new story has been funded by The Morrisons Foundation whose grant also includes the production of 59 copies of the book for special schools in Yorkshire.



A successful year of Storytelling

Over the past year our team of Storytellers have visited 127 special schools across the UK from Lowestoft to Haverfordwest and from Inverurie to Barnstaple. They've told stories to over 4,500 children and demonstrated storytelling to over 750 teachers. The feedback from the teachers has been fantastic and a few typical responses have been:

"The children were paying attention, engaging with props and taking turns. One of our children who would normally cry in the sensory room was actually quiet, looking and listening to the story. It encourages children to listen carefully and engage with the story."
Vale School, Haringey



"The two stories were both very appropriate for our class of PMLD pupils (aged 3-8). The content was fun and interactive, at a perfectly pitched level for our class. All seven pupils sat and were engaged for the whole 30 minutes (one of these rarely sits for more than 15 minutes normally). Wow! Staff could see the level of engagement and motivation. It was perfect. Thank you very much."
Portfield School, Haverfordwest

"The storyteller was fantastic, delivering the stories in an enthusiastic way and with perfect pace. All children were really engaged with the great variety of multi-sensory resources. They clearly enjoyed both of the stories as they were really focused and smiling/vocalising throughout. Two of the



children, who are particularly tactile defensive, responded wonderfully. They explored all of the resources without hesitation. Super responses. Our more tactile defensive children will be more likely to experiment/explore the resources in future sensory stories. Fantastic! Thank you :)"
Old Hall School, Walsall

Arsenal 1, Man Utd 1

Last year, Arsenal FC commissioned us to make a bespoke Arsenal themed multi-sensory book and make copies to be donated to special schools and an adult day centre in their local area. The resulting book included many Arsenal branded items as shown below.



Now we have been commissioned by Manchester United FC to produce a book about them for distribution in their area and work is just beginning on constructing the new books.

Volunteering for Bag Books

Over the past two years the number of days donated by volunteers has more than doubled and they are now at an all-time high. Volunteers now supply over a third of the labour required to make our books. One of our funders, John Lyon's Charity, commissioned a film about volunteering for Bag Books. The film was launched at our 25th Birthday party and can be viewed at tinyurl.com/BePartoftheStory. We have two main types of volunteers:

Remote volunteers who work from home and post their work to us or occasionally bring it in. This is mainly knitting tasks as it's time consuming but light enough to post. However we do also have a couple of woodworkers who produce items in their sheds and then drive in every few months with a load.

In-house volunteers who come into our workshop in Vauxhall usually on a regular day each week. The tasks here are quite varied and are best described as "Blue Peter" craft jobs such as cutting things out with scissors and sticking them down with tape. The main thing is that it's pretty varied work done in a social, friendly workshop.

Our in-house volunteers are sometimes joined by corporate volunteers who visit the workshop usually on a one-off basis for a team-building day. One recent corporate team from law firm DAC Beachcroft are shown on the right. We are their Charity Of The Year so they have been busy fundraising for us as well as coming along to help make multi-sensory books.



Sandra Allon

Sandra was a Trustee for over nine years until she sadly passed away in the summer. She was formerly the Merchandising Director for Europe for Aquascutum and a senior buyer at Harrods for 30 years. She was a great help to us, particularly in helping to recruit many of our storytellers and advising on staffing issues. She will be greatly missed and our condolences go to her husband, Bob.



Lesley Cousins

We were also sad to learn that Lesley, one of our regular knitters has passed away. She would knit whole clans of "Desmond's" often when she was away on holiday and then stuff them and add hair upon her return home. She'd then hand-deliver them straight to our office, their faces peeking out of her bag. Her husband Steve said that knitting for Bag Books "gave her great joy".

