

Welcome

We are pleased to welcome two new members of staff to the Bag Books team:

Stuart Cummings, Director of Services

Stuart joined us in January after spending five years as a Special Needs Teacher, teaching pupils with SLD and PMLD. Prior to teaching, Stuart had also worked for Mencap, running holiday playschemes, and for Bury Metro as an Inclusion Support worker. Stuart was also Special Needs Manager for the World Scout Jamboree in 2007, and is involved with HCPT – The Pilgrimage Trust.



The Director of Services post is funded for three years by The Esmée Fairbairn Foundation and The Henry Smith Charity. Stuart is responsible for developing our range of books and managing our storytelling and training programmes.

Camilla John, Corporate Fundraising Manager

Having previously worked for the Guardian, ChildLine and the Cystic Fibrosis Trust, Camilla joined us in February as our first ever Corporate Fundraising Manager.



Camilla combines working part-time for Bag Books with bringing up her two young sons. She is keen to grow our portfolio of corporate supporters.

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



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Objects needed

Many of our stories make use of recycled items – you can help us by collecting items such as old keys, magazines and sardine tins. We are currently particularly short of old aerosol tops For more details see our website <http://www.bagbooks.org/objectsneeded.html>

Many thanks to "Gorgeous Jack" of Europa Trimmings who donated £200 worth of zips for use with the sleeping bags in our "It's Cold INSIDE" story.

2009 in figures

- During 2009 we ran 288 storytelling sessions for a total of 1,238 people with learning disabilities.
- All 32 of the schools responding to our survey following their participation in our Story-Go-Round tours thought that the children had benefitted from the storytelling sessions.
- We trained 501 people in multi-sensory storytelling.
- Our dedicated Craft Artists pulled out all the stops and, together with our volunteers, managed to increase book production by 8% to 996 books.
- Our website attracted 47,122 distinct visits – a 68% increase on 2008.
- Financially, our income increased by 30%, whilst expenditure overall decreased by 11% and expenditure on fundraising decreased by 27%. This has boosted our reserves and given us the confidence to budget for a 39% increase in expenditure during 2010.

Storyline

Issue 13, May 2010



The news from Bag Books

Our new "Telling Tales" project

Our new Telling Tales project got under way before Christmas. The project, which is funded by the Big Lottery Fund, aims to train librarians in multi-sensory storytelling by mentoring them at six storytelling sessions throughout the year.

The first session simply gives the librarians the chance to observe a trained storyteller using Bag Books for a storytelling session with children from a local Special School. As the sessions go on, the librarians do increasingly more of the storytelling themselves, until they are confident enough to arrange and run the sessions themselves once the project is over.

In the first year, the project is covering four regions of England and our Storyteller-Trainers are: Nina Martinez for London;



A librarian practices their multi-sensory storytelling at Chippenham Library. The story being told is "Gran's Visit", one of our oldest stories and last year's best-seller. Here the letterbox rattles and a letter arrives from Gran saying she's coming to stay.

Bernard Tagliavini for the South East; Kathie Johnston for the South West; with Justine de Mierre and our Director of Services, Stuart Cummings, taking on the East between them.

In September, the second year of the project will see it expanded to the rest of England and we are currently busy recruiting Storyteller-Trainers for the remaining five regions. We will then have a total of nine regions each with ten sets of trainee librarians and each planning six Storytelling sessions – that's 540 extra sessions on top of the 290 odd we usually do in a year.

Comments from the Librarians currently being trained include:

"I am picking up the text of the stories and also the techniques involved in the multi-sensory storytelling. Well done and thank you - invaluable training."

"Wow, I'm really encouraged by the children's response to my storytelling. It was interesting to see how the repetition built up their anticipation and enjoyment of the storytelling."

"I enjoyed the storytelling session today. It will help me to deliver the stories on future dates when going out to nurseries and pre-schools and with groups coming to the library."



LOTTERY FUNDED

East Midlands Story-Go-Round

Bernard, our Story-Go-Round storyteller has been out on the road again, this time taking multi-sensory storytelling to the East Midlands. The tour covered sessions from Leeds to Luton, visiting 25 different libraries, and providing storytelling sessions for 33 different schools and 330 children and young people with learning difficulties. Bernard also carried out 18 “taster” training sessions, training 218 people.

The schools taking part were all Special Schools from within the region and each school group enjoyed a selection of our multi-sensory stories being read by Bernard.



Our Storyteller, Bernard Tagliavini, in action.

Win a Mini First Hatchback 1.6

Following the success of last year's raffle, Bag Books is once again taking part in the draw organised by The Foundation for Social Improvement (FSI). The FSI Small Charity Car Draw is helping small charities like Bag Books a no-risk way to raise money and it's offering our supporters a chance to win a fabulous brand new Mini First Hatchback 1.6, kindly supported by Zurich.



The training sessions explain some of the background to Bag Books, the theory behind the products, a guide to running your own multi-sensory storytelling sessions and also include an opportunity to practice telling the stories.

Our Director of Services, Stuart Cummings, managed to get out to the sessions in Leicester, and was impressed with Bernard's energy and enthusiasm. He also spoke to many librarians who were keen to follow-up the day by getting multi-sensory storytelling going in their libraries.

One trainee said, *“This was a super session. I had no idea what to expect. It was very engaging and enjoyable. Bernard clearly delivered and explained the reasoning behind what was done. Thank you.”*

One teacher said the best thing was *“the sheer pleasure and happiness expressed by the students throughout the session.”*

Many thanks to all our Tour funders including The Stanley Thomas Johnson Foundation, The True Colours Trust, The Hilton in the Community Foundation and The Baily Thomas Charitable Fund.

Our next Story-Go-Round tour will take place in Scotland in September.

Tickets cost £2 each and if you buy them from Bag Books we will receive 95.2% of every ticket sold (the FSI take just 4.8% for their administrative costs). You can buy them online at <http://www.thefsi.org/charity/bagbooks> or we also have a supply of traditional paper tickets available, contact Dean Casswell at the address overleaf for details.

The Car Crash

The Car Crash is our latest story that has just gone into production. The story, aimed at teenagers and adults, is about Sam, a blind person who witnesses a car crash, goes to help and calls for an ambulance. It was written by our former Director, Chris Fuller.

The story pack includes objects such as a paramedic's bag, a stiff-neck collar and a spinal board. Bag Books was helped with the design of these items by visiting Wimbledon ambulance station. Duty Station Officer Taff Roberts said: *“The charity contacted us asking if we could help them to create a true-to-life story involving an ambulance, and then visited us to feel all the equipment and check the terminology we use. The finished product is incredible, I'm amazed how much the craft artists have been able to recreate.”*

The story was trialled at Breakspere School in Abbots Langley, Hertfordshire, with students especially liking the ambulance siren.

Our thanks go to the London Ambulance Service for their advice and to The Hedley Foundation for funding the costs involved in creating this new multi-sensory story.



Dean Casswell, Bag Books' Chief Executive demonstrates one of the pages to Taff Roberts and Gemma Wardell from the London Ambulance Service.

Christmas Fundraising

- Many thanks to everyone who purchased our Christmas Stickers. We had orders totalling just under £250 plus a further £300 in donations.
- For the second year running, the Anscomb family in Peacehaven made a donation to Bag Books in lieu of sending Christmas Cards – what a wonderful idea and thanks very much.
- We had a very nice surprise from HSBC when they also decided to make a donation instead of sending cards. They rang out the blue and we initially thought it was just the local branch and were staggered when we learnt it was the whole UK and the donation would be £30,000! Thank you so much.
- We also benefitted from many of our supporters doing their Christmas Shopping online via the links on our website www.bagbooks.org In the three months up to Christmas, the link to Amazon earned us £115.43 commission and the link to Buy.at raised £89.57. Again, thanks to everyone who helped.

Amazing volunteers

The number of volunteer days donated to Bag Books increased from 80 in 2008 to 186 last year. This has made a fantastic difference to us and we would particularly like to thank Grace Loi, Steve Holmes, Susie Riches, Nee, Nadège Gallard and Reza Rad who joined our long-standing volunteers Mrs Oakley and Mary Atkinson.

In addition, we were grateful to the teams of corporate volunteers from Linklaters, HSBC, Standard Chartered, Ashurst and Credit Suisse.

This year we are benefitting from the services of three new volunteers, Abigail Maware, Helen Boyd and Patrick O'Callaghan.

Many thanks to all our wonderful volunteers.