



Editorial ? May 2008

Article Author:

[Rosemary Stones](#) [1]

[170](#) [2]

Article Category:

Editorial

Byline:

News and comment from the Editor.

In 1979 the journal **Signal** published a pamphlet entitled **Learning to Read with Picture Books** by Jill Bennett (who has been a reviewer for **Books for Keeps** from Issue No. 1). This highly influential publication encouraged a generation of teachers to put aside mind numbingly tedious reading schemes in favour of helping children to learn to read using 'real' picture books.

<!--break-->

In these days of 'phonics fever' and a worrying lack of knowledge amongst teachers about picture books, the market for picture books has diminished and there is concern that the picture book itself is now under threat. This may, of course, become a self-fulfilling prophecy as, according to former Waterstone's children's book director Wayne Winstone, publishers are increasingly reluctant to put marketing spend behind picture books. Winstone, who considers picture books to be 'a key stepping stone for children learning to read', points out that good titles are profitable as they will backlist for years. He is calling upon publishers to 'rethink the way they launch picture books'.

Amidst the gloom it is encouraging to turn to Booktrust's excellent initiatives to promote picture books and illustrators. Their The Big Picture Campaign was launched in 2007 and aims to stimulate confidence in the market for picture books by encouraging new audiences to discover picture books, by supporting new and emerging illustrators and by celebrating the contribution that picture books can make to a child's development.

As part of the campaign Booktrust invited a Panel of specialists to identify (from over 250 published illustrators) ten new illustrators who represent 'the best rising talent in the field of illustration today' in the UK. The chosen ten are:

Alexis Deacon, Polly Dunbar, Lisa Evans, Emily Gravett, Mini Grey, Oliver Jeffers, David Lucas, Catherine Rayner, Joel Stewart and Vicky White.

David Roberts and Sam Lloyd were highly commended.

Many of these talented newcomers have already featured in **Books for Keeps** in various ways - see, eg, Mini Grey's recent Authorgraph (**BfK** No. 167) and Take 3: Illustrators (**BfK** No. 152). The originality, vitality and quality of their work are evidence enough that picture book publishing in the UK is just too good to miss out on.

As illustrator Shirley Hughes commented of the chosen illustrators: 'The varied talents of these ten new illustrators represent the marvellous vitality of our profession. In an era in which we are bombarded by moving electronic imagery, looking at picture books is not only a vital part of learning to read but offers a lifelong pleasure in itself.'



[Rosemary_Stones_16.jpg](#) [3]

Page Number:

Source URL (retrieved on *Jan '20*): <http://typo3.booksforkeeps.co.uk/issue/170/childrens-books/articles/editorial/editorial-%E2%80%93-may-2008>

Links:

[1] <http://typo3.booksforkeeps.co.uk/member/rosemary-stones>

[2] <http://typo3.booksforkeeps.co.uk/issue/170>

[3] http://typo3.booksforkeeps.co.uk/sites/default/files/Rosemary_Stones_16.jpg