



Editorial 215

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[215](#) [2]

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by **Ferelith Hordon**

Once again, time has slid past and we are starting to look forward to next year. But first I want to take stock of the past year.

The library scene is not as rosy as one might hope. Public libraries continue to struggle as councils are looking to make more cuts; check out [Public Libraries News](#) [3] for a sobering overview. Schools Library Services around the country are disappearing, the most recent being North Yorkshire and North East Wales. The continued failure to recognise the importance of trained staff who can interact with young people, providing that vital personal touch, recommending, encouraging and enthusing about books, is bound to have detrimental consequences for young readers.

Sadly this year we inevitably recorded the deaths of authors, illustrators and activists whose work has inspired. Among them were [Fritz Wegner](#) [4] whose art still delights in the **Happy Families** series written by Allan Ahlberg; and Gene Kemp, a Carnegie winner and staunch supporter of libraries ? and rebels. The death of [Dorothy Butler](#) [5] was particularly poignant for me: her belief that ?babies need books?, that everyone should read, and that books can and do make a difference, underpinned my career.

However, there is cheery news. The book itself is thriving, with beautiful books very much part of the scene; Bloomsbury for instance is confidently launching their new edition of **Harry Potter**, lavishly illustrated by Jim Kay. Indeed, illustrators are beginning to take their rightful place alongside authors on the podium, thanks to the campaign launched by Sarah McIntyre, [Pictures Mean Business](#) [6]. To add to the glow, British illustrators after an absence of twenty years, starred at the **Biennale of Illustrations, Bratislava**, with Laura Carlin winning the Grand Prix and Levi Pinfold a Plaque (special commendation).

In June we welcomed a new Children?s Laureate when Malorie Blackman stepped down after two very active years ? that inimitable and indefatigable champion of creativity, Chris Riddell. He is both author and artist, and happily embraces modern technology; his **Doodle Diary** is now delighting the world via social media.

Inclusivity and diversity continue to resonate. They were the theme of the recent YLG (Youth Libraries Group) Conference held in partnership with CDEG (Community, Diversity and Equality Group). Both are Special Interest Groups of CILIP (Chartered Institute of Librarians and Information Professionals), drawing together practitioners from different backgrounds. The [keynote speech](#) [7] by Karen McCluskey, Director of the Scottish Violence Reduction Unit, emphasised the importance of books that children can connect with. Speakers, both in the plenary sessions and in the workshops, spoke with authority and passion about providing books for different communities. They included Lisa Williamson who talked about the need for young LGBTQ readers to find themselves in a book; Pam Dix, Chair of IBBY UK, who talked about Cultural Diversity and Children?s Books, an aspect reflected again in the presentation by Sita Brahmachari; and Paul Register on the [Stan Lee Excelsior Award](#) [8] for graphic novels, and chosen by readers themselves. A highlight of the conference was the announcement that the CILIP Carnegie and Kate Greenaway Awards

would now incorporate a new award set up in partnership with Amnesty International, the [Amnesty CILIP Honour Award](#) [9], which will draw on the shortlists and showcase books that reflect and celebrate personal rights and freedoms. Of course, diversity also means introducing young readers to authors and illustrators who are not British. Translation continues to be an active topic of concern in that there is still too little. However there is some cause for optimism with the growth of specialist publishers like Pushkin Press, and the fact that translated books are now eligible for the Carnegie Medal.

Prizes are an important way of celebrating books. We watched with sadness as the Roald Dahl Funny Prize ended, only to cheer as, phoenix like, the [Laugh Out Loud Prize](#) [10] (the Lollies) was born. There has been no award for the YA novel since the Booktrust Teenage Prize ceased, however this year saw the launch of the [YA Book Prize](#) [11] sponsored by the Bookseller. Poetry may also be experiencing a bit of a revival after the [CLIPPA Award](#) [12] (Centre for Literacy in Primary Poetry Award) took centre stage, literally, at the Southbank with [Joseph Coelho](#) [13] winning; let us hope this really does continue.

There is plenty to shout about and much to look forward to in 2016!

Page Number:

1

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Links:

[1] <http://typo3.booksforkeeps.co.uk/member/ferelith-hordon>

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[3] <http://www.publiclibrariesnews.com/>

[4] <http://typo3.booksforkeeps.co.uk/issue/212/childrens-books/articles/obituaries/obituary-fritz-wegner>

[5] <http://typo3.booksforkeeps.co.uk/issue/214/childrens-books/articles/obituaries/dorothy-butler-obituary>

[6] <http://www.jabberworks.co.uk/pictures-mean-business>

[7] <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yEHJBQJUPMM>

[8] <http://www.excelioraward.co.uk/>

[9] <http://www.carnegiegreenaway.org.uk/amnestyciliphonour/>

[10] <http://www.scholastic.co.uk/lollies>

[11] <http://www.thebookseller.com/ya-book-prize/>

[12] <https://www.clpe.org.uk/poetry/clippa-centre-literacy-primary-poetry-award>

[13] <http://typo3.booksforkeeps.co.uk/issue/213/childrens-books/articles/featured-author/an-interview-with-clippa-winner-joseph-coelho>