



# LIFELINE 4: PROJECTS AND TOPICS

Article Author:

[Pat Thomson](#) [1]

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**Pat Thomson** concludes her seven-part series with the theme of Minibeasts.

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Putting a project together ideally begins with an unhurried survey of all the resources, and then a drawing together of the elements which most suit the age and ability of your particular group of children.

For the 5-12 age range, each section covers one major topic and suggests non-fiction books, stories and poems related to the one theme. The addresses of organisations which offer help and material to schools are also included. The result should be a broadly based range of options which remind you of good material, inform you about new books and maybe even suggest new approaches within the chosen theme.

## PART 7: MINIBEASTS

'Minibeasts' is a variable term when used in schools but generally means the invertebrates and amphibians in the early stages. As they are often used as a subject in the early teaching of science, the first section is devoted to this kind of text. The books are then grouped loosely according to the habitat and characteristics of the minibeast. The fiction is arranged in ascending age in each section.

## INFORMATION BOOKS

**The study of invertebrates, or 'minibeasts', figures strongly in primary science schemes:**

**A First Look: science for 4-8 year olds**, Cyril Gilbert and Peter Matthews, Oliver & Boyd 1982, 0 05 004148 7, £40.00. A science programme based on investigative activities, comprising teacher's notes and a resource pack of cards. There is a main card on 'Minibeasts' with cross-references to other cards, such as 'Pond Life', 'At Home in the Soil', as well as individual creatures, like 'Caterpillars'.

**Minibeasts**, Stages I and 2, Schools Council Science 5/13, Macdonald 1973 (1982), 0 356 04106 9, £4.99 non-net. Part of an invaluable series which moves comprehensively from objectives to bibliography, with plenty of practical activities in the middle. Good coverage of the subject as part of the science curriculum.

**Learning Through Science: All Around**, Schools Council, Macdonald 1982, 0 356 07553 2, £12.99 non-net. This

series partners the Science 5/13 project and consists of a teacher's book and individual, coloured workcards. Relevant sections are 'School Safari', 'Look Under a Flowerpot', Life Style, 'Snailways', 'Pond Life' and 'Study One' (a minibeast, that is).

**Science for Primary Schools**, Book 1B, S F King, Ward Lock 1985, O 7062 4533 4, £1650 for pack of five. A practical series for which there are also teachers' books, pupils books, extension activities and black line masters. The animal section includes earthworms and snails.

**Science Workshop**, Irene Finch, Longman 1981, 0 582 18348 0, o/p. Based on the BBC TV programmes. See 'Animals of the Soil' for observation, feeding and conservation. Additional references include a guide to the relevant Dewey numbers.

**Look! Primary Science**, Teacher's Guide A, Cyril Gilbert and Peter Matthews, Oliver & Boyd 1988, O 05 004161 4, £9.50. Two packs of cards and a teacher's guide for two age ranges. This one is for 7-9 years; Pack B (0 05 004162 2, £9.50) is for 9-11. There is a large theoretical section on science policy, and then minibeasts appear in the first section, 'Ourselves, Animals and Plants'.

**Science Horizons Level 2a: Looking at Animals**, West Sussex Science 5-14, Macmillan Education 1982, (1333 28535 2, £7.95. Sound introductory section for teachers, illustrated activities and information sheets. (Includes other animals as well as invertebrates.) Cross-curricular paths suggested.

**Science Horizons Level 2b: Pond Life**, West Sussex Science 5- 14, Macmillan Education 1986, (1 333 34917 2, £7.95. Does the same job for watery minibeasts, including important points about preparing a visit to water. Divides into outdoor and classroom work, as well as by animal.

#### **Books about particular minibeasts, grouped loosely by habitat and characteristics:**

**Life Under Stones**, John B Free, A & C Black 1981, 0 7136 2121 4, o/p. Well photographed tour of all the common creatures found under stones. Paragraphs of text describe the main features of each in brief.

**Earthworms**, Terry Jennings, Oxford, 0 19 918256 6, £3.50; (( 19 918250 7, £1.95 pbk. Part of the 'Into Science' series, this works by asking questions, encouraging experiment and observation. Good photographs and notes for teachers.

**The Life Cycle of a Snail**, Jennifer Coldrey, Wayland 1989, 1 85210 123 7, £5.95. Illustrations rather than photographs and brief text. Intended as a first natural history book, there are suggestions for keeping snails at the back.

**Snails and Slugs**, Chris Henwood, Watts 1988, 0 86313 691 5, £5.50. Part of the 'Keeping Minibeasts' series so the emphasis is on catching, keeping and observing them. See also **Earthworms** (0 86313 692 3), **Frogs** (0 86313 693 1) and **Spiders** (0 86313 694 X). There is a note at the end of each about releasing the creatures.

**The Story of the Ant**, John Paull, Ladybird 1980, 0 7214 0630 0, 99p. Concentrated text, photographs and diagrams. See also **The Story of the Spider**, 1980, 0 7214 06319.

**Snails, Worms and Spiders**, B Bornancin, Burke 1983, 0 222 00883 0, o/p. A business-like 'short course' on these creatures for upper juniors. Organised by habitat: in water, under stones, in the soil, plus spiders.

**Spider's Web**, Christine Back and Barrie Watts, A & C Black 1984, 0 7136 2428 0, £4.5(1. About the construction of the web and its function. Remarkable photographs, the spider like an amber jewel in the web.

**Spiders**, Lionel Bender, Watts 1988, 0 86313 759 8, £5.95. Concentrates on life cycle and fascinating snippets of unusual information. Identification chart and life-size drawings. Reminds us that there are many different spiders and

some are endangered. The photographs made quite an impact in class!

**Insects**, Elizabeth Cooper, Macmillan Education 1988, 0 333 46641 1, £6.99. 'First Facts' series with large print. Double spread for each aspect. Would work best as a basis for discussion.

**Insects**, Gwen Allen and Joan Denslow, Oxford 1969, (1 19 918004 0, £3.95. Well ordered reference book, much reprinted. Encourages close observation. Illustrated in line for identification details and colour for the animal in context.

**Beetles**, Pat and Helen Clay, A & C Black 1983, 0 7136 2349 7, £4.50. The introduction deals with the common features and then individual studies of some familiar beetles follow, divided by characteristics, such as 'pests'.

**The Silkworm Story**, Jennifer Coldrey, Deutsch 1983, 0 233 97553 5, £3.95. Opens with an explanation of the discovery of sericulture and the process from egg to moth. The full story is then repeated in detailed photographs with explanatory captions.

**Butterflies on my Mind**, Dulcie Gray, Angus & Robertson 1978, 0 207 95804 1, o/p. A personally committed book with conservation in mind. Beautifully illustrated, and well-presented for top juniors.

**The Butterfly in the Garden**, Paul and Mary Whalley, Methuen 1987, 0 416 6386(1 0, o/s. Life cycle, habitat, feeding habits and enemies, including humans and their effect on the butterfly's environment.

**Bumblebee**, Bo Jarner, A & C Black 1988, (1 7136 2976 2, £4.50. Clear, simple account of a year in the life of a bumble-bee, from the making of the nest to the replacement of the old queen by the new. Exceptional photographs.

**Bees, Ants and Termites**, Marie Farre, Moonlight 1985, 185103 (N)! 8, £3.50. Small handbook which concentrates on these social animals. Paragraph facts, informative illustrations.

**Life of the Ladybird**, Andreas and Heiderose Fischer-Nadel, Dent 1982. 0 460 06085 6, o/p. Picture book, but substantial text on the life cycle with explanatory close-up photographs.

**Ladybird**, Barrie Watts, A & C Black 1987, (1 7136 2856 1, £4.50. Text in simple sentences. Good photographs, augmented by line drawings of details.

**Dragonfly**, Barrie Watts, A & C Black 1988, 0 7136 3053 1, £4.511. Story of the dragonfly's life cycle, stage by stage. Full-page colour photograph on the right, explanation (not too much) on the left.

**Discovering Damselflies and Dragonflies**, Linda Losito, Wayland 1987, 1 8521(1 (161 3, £5.95. Specialist concentration on the odonata, starting with the prehistoric record. Well-designed, text substantial but easy to read. The life cycle is illustrated with photographs which show some of the different types.

**The Dragonfly Over the Water**, Christopher O'Toole, Methuen 1988, 0 416 06572 4, o/s. Fuller text, suitable for upper juniors, concentrating on the habitat. Other factors are covered, however, from breeding and defence to temperature control.

**Frogs and Toads**, Kate Petty, Watts 1985, (1 86313 314 2, o/p. Simplified, large print text, a picture for each point. A brief 'round up' of the main points is given at the back.

**Birth of Toads**, Elvig Hansen, Dent 1986, 0 460 06226 3, £5.50. A straightforward, descriptive narrative account of a year in the life of a toad, accompanied by stunning photographs.

**Freshwater Animals**, Gwen Allen and Joan Denslow, Oxford 197(1 (1984), 0 19 918007 5, £3.95. 'Clue Book' series. Life cycle, observation tactics and descriptions of the animal in its habitat, plus the identification guide.

**In the Pond**, Miriam Moss, Macdonald 1989, 0 356 13454 7, £5.50; 0 356 13787 2, £2.99 pbk. A handbook packed

with information about all the pond inhabitants. The insects are well-covered, especially in terms of metamorphosis. Activities are suggested, such as making pond maps and viewers.

### **The close relationship to man is acknowledged in:**

**Discovering Bugs**, George McGavin, Wayland 1988, 1 85210 065 6, £5.95. Concentrates on the real bugs (hemiptera) and this highlights creatures neglected elsewhere. Life cycle, defence, habitats and relationship to man are all covered.

**Zoo in the House** (1 85283 (119 )) and **Zoo in the Garden** (185283 020 4), David Taylor, Boxtree 1987, £2.95 each pbk. Although mammals and birds are included, both books have substantial accounts of minibeasts. The text manages to be discursive and technical and would appeal to the 'junior expert'.

### **For an identification guide:**

**No Bones**, Elizabeth Shepherd, Collier Macmillan 1988, 0 (12 782880 8, £6.95. The book begins with a set of identification keys. The reader works through until led to a descriptive passage on the creature under investigation. Very thorough, the system works well as long as the reader takes one stage at a time as instructed.

## **FICTION AND POETRY**

### **Picture Books**

**Mog's Box**, Helen Nicoll and Jan Pienkowski, Heinemann, (1 434 95658 9, £5.95; Picture Puffin, 0 14 050.796 5, £2.25 pbk. Mog wants a lunch box - but did not particularly want a caterpillar for lunch.

**Bye-Bye Fly!**, Colin Robinson, Bodley Head, (1 370 31108 6, £5.50. Young picture book. Everyone tries to swat that fly, without success.

**Leapfrog**, William Mayne and Barbara Firth, Walker, 0 7445 (1726 X, £5.95. The story, told in the present tense, is set in Tadpole Town. Good pictures of habitat and water creatures.

**The Butterfly That Stamped**, Rudyard Kipling and Alan Baker, Macmillan, 0 333 34137 6, £1.95; 0 333 38718 X, £1.75 pbk. As much colour in the language as the pictures in this 'Just So' story so plain versions are also useful.

**The Giant Jam Sandwich**, Janet Burroway and John Vernon Lord, Cape, (1 224 00674 6, £4.95; Picture Piper, (1 330 30354 6, £2.50 pbk. 'One hot day in Itching Down/Four million wasps flew into town,' and they are defeated by a jam sandwich. Rhyming story.

**Snail and Caterpillar**, Helen Piers and Pauline Baynes, Viking Kestrel, (1 7226 5269 0, o/p. A small adventure with good naturalistic illustrations of the creatures and the habitat. See also **Grasshopper and Butterfly**, 0 7226 6799 X, o/p.

**Leese Webster**, Ursula Le Gain, Gollancz, 0 575 02958 7, o/p. Picture book with a substantial text. The spider weaves a splendid tapestry in a museum but ultimately prefers her natural web woven out in the sun and air.

And, of course, from Eric Carle:

**The Very Hungry Caterpillar**, Hamish Hamilton, 0 241 (11798 X, £6.95; 0 241 11908 1. £2.99 miniature; Picture Puffin, (1 14 050.087 1, £2.25 pbk

**The Bad-Tempered Ladybird**, Hamish Hamilton, 0 241 89768 8, £6.95; Picture Puffin, 0 14 050.398 6, £1.95 pbk **The Very Busy Spider**, Hamish Hamilton, 0 241 11430 6, £10.95; 0 241 12532 4, £3.75 miniature

## Short Stories

**How to Stop a Train with One Finger**, David Henry Wilson, Dent, 0 460 06150 X, £7.50; Piper, (1 330 28978 0, £1.99 pbk. 'Eight Hairy Legs.' A problem with a spider in the bath until Mummy shows the proper way to remove one.

**A House Inside Out**, Penelope Lively, Deutsch, 0 233 98167 5, £5.95; Puffin, 0 14 03.2399 6, £ 1.75 pbk. Several stories about house insects, including 'Nat and the Great Bath Climb' - a woodlouse's Everest. .

**Now Then, Charlie Robinson**, Sylvia Woods, Faber, 0 571 14932 4, £5.95. 'Charlie Plans a Maths Lesson.' Charlie 'helps' the student to give a dramatic lesson with the aid of a few worms.

**How the Whale Became**, Ted Hughes, Young Puffin, 0 14 03.0482 7, £1 .99 pbk. 'How the Bee Became.' The demon jeweller made the bee but only God could breathe life into it.

**The Wonder Dog**, Richard Hughes, Puffin, 0 14 ((3.1069 X, o/p. 'The Ants.' The farmer and his sons get a dangerous ant's eye view of the colony.

**What the Neighbours Did**, Philippa Pearce, Viking Kestrel, 0 7226 5262 3, o/p; Puffin, 0 14 03.0710 9, £1.99 pbk. 'Fresh.' A simple freshwater mussel engenders strong feelings in this beautifully written short story.

**The Magician Who Kept a Pub**, Dorothy Edwards, Young Lions, 0 (X) 671785 3, £2.25 pbk. 'The Little Chap.' A strange child is found in the heather. He grows and thrives until he begins to spin silky threads in his room. An odd fantasy and a good account of a developmental stage in the life cycle of a moth or butterfly.

**Double Dare and Other Stories**, Jamila Gavin, Methuen, 0 416 21540 8, o/p; 'The Mulberry Tree.' Lorraine is not allowed pets but she begins to keep silkworms and learns their fascinating story.

**Nasty!**, Michael Rosen, Longman Knockouts, 0 582 25048 X, £6.50; Puffin, 0 14 03.1599 3, £1.50 pbk. 'The Bakerloo Flea.' Not a small flea, a gigantic one which terrorises the Bakerloo Line.

**The Ceremony**, Martyn Copus, Lions, 0 00 672598 8, £1.75 pbk. 'The Pond.' A lesson about tadpoles, and equally, a lesson about not believing everything your friends tell you.

## Novels

**Emily's Legs**, Dick King-Smith, Macdonald, 0 356 13685 X, £4.99; 0 356 13686 8, £1.99 pbk. Amusing short novel, at the end of which everyone should know how many legs a spider has.

**Software Superslug**, Joyce Dunbar, Macdonald 0 356 13494 6, £5.99; 0 356 13495 4, £1.99 pbk. Software the slug has a penchant for fancy names and for getting into trouble.

**Below the Green Pond**, Jane Waller, o/p. An underwater adventure, the characters being freshwater creatures. Appeals to young experts by its correct use of terms and scientific approach. Try Schools Library Services.

**Ned Kelly and the City of the Bees**, Thomas Keneally, Puffin, (( 14 (13.1227 7, £1.95 pbk. Intriguing and unusual. Following a blow on the head, a boy is able to enter the hive and live with the bees for a summer.

**Mindbenders**, Nicholas Fisk, Viking Kestrel, 0 670 81244 7, £5.95; Puffin, 0 14 03.2164 0, £1.75 pbk. Two children

use their exceptional powers of mind on an ant colony which seems to be providing the power. The results are alarming. Older juniors.

## Poetry

The first four collections have a good number of relevant poems in animal sections:

**Of Caterpillars, Cats and Cattle**; Anne Harvey, Viking Kestrel, 0 670 81218 8, £6.95; Puffin, (1 14 03.2157 8, £2.99 pbk. The 'Through My Lens' section.

**Is a Caterpillar Ticklish?**, Adrian Rumble, Robert Royce, 0 947728 17 1, £8.95; Puffin, 014 03.2776 2, £2.50 pbk. The 'Skitter, scatter, leap and squeak' section.

**Poems for 7-Year-Olds and Under**, Helen Nicoll, Viking Kestrel, 0 670 80757 5, £6.95; Puffin, 0 14 03.1489 X, £2.50 pbk. 'Leaping and Creeping' section.

**Seeing and Doing**, Rosalind Farrimond, Thames Television. Two anthologies: Thames Methuen, 0 423 00850 1 (Red) and 0 423 00660 6 (Blue), £3.95 each pbk.

**The Young Puffin Book of Verse**, Barbara Ireson, Puffin, 0 14 03.0410 X, £2.50 pbk. 'Hurt No Living Thing' and 'The Caterpillar' by Christina Rossetti, and 'Upside Down' by Aileen Fisher.

**A Third Poetry Book**, John Foster, Oxford, 0 19 918140 3, £5.95; 0 19 918139 X, £2.95 pbk. 'The Wolf Spider' by R C Scriven, 'Mosquito' by Peggy Dunstan, 'A Hair Raising Experience' by Carey Blyton, 'Cyril the Centipede' by Jeremy Lloyd, and 'Hannibal the Snail' by Julie Holder.

**The Jungle Sale**, June Crebbin, Viking Kestrel, 0 670 82195 0, £5.95. 'Cobweb Morning', 'Giant Moth', 'Silk-moth Monitor', and 'Please'.

**Midnight Forest**, Judith Nicholls, Faber, 0 571 14807 7, £2.95 pbk. 'Dusk', 'Shadows', and 'Woodlouse'.

**Before You Grow Up**, Fiona Akister, Viking Kestrel, 0 670 81712 0, £5.95; Puffin, (1 14 03.2368 6, pbk (summer 1989). Very short nonsense poems about bees, spiders and snails.

**Early in the Morning**, Charles Causley, Viking Kestrel, 0 670 80810 5, £8.95; Puffin, 0 14 03.2033 4, £1.50 pbk. 'Spin Me a Web, Spider', and 'Tell, Tell the Bees'.

**Pictures and Poems**, Philip Green, 112a Alcester Road, Studley, Warwickshire B80 7NR. Poems accompanied by A4 photographs, each on a separate card. Two useful sets: **Small Creatures** and **Small Creatures 2**.

## USEFUL ADDRESSES

### British Bee Keepers Association

National Agricultural Centre Stoneleigh  
Kenilworth  
Warwickshire  
CV 18 2LZ<  
(Info., Bee keepers!)

### Building Societies Association

Schools Liaison Officer  
3 Savile Row  
London  
WIX IAF ('Homes' chart)

**International Bee Research Association**

Hill House  
Gerrards Cross  
Buckinghamshire  
SL9 ONR  
(Book, aids list)

**Natural History Museum**

Visitor Resources  
Cromwell Road  
London  
SW7 5BD  
(Worksheets)

**Nature Conservancy Council**

P 0 Box 6  
Godwin House  
George Street  
Huntingdon  
PE 18 6BU  
(Info. and library service)

**Rentokil Ltd**

Felcourt  
East Grinstead  
Sussex  
RH 19 2JY  
(Chart)

**School Natural Science Society**

Publications Officer  
ASE  
College Lane  
Hatfield  
Hertfordshire  
AL10 9AA  
(Housing Living Things in the Classroom')

## Shell Education Service

Shell-Mex House

The Strand

London

WC2R ODX

(Posters, charts)

And for £3.00:

**Minibeast Snackpack** Urban Spaces Scheme

Polytechnic of North London

Holloway Road

London

N7 8DB

(A4 cards)

Themes previously covered in the series: **House and Home** (July 88), **Water** (September 88), **Clothing** (November 88), **Food** (January 89), **The Senses** (March 89) and **Celebrations and Festivals** (May 89).

**Pat Thomson** is Professional Studies Librarian at Nene College of Higher Education. past chair of the Federation of Children's Book Groups, and author of the 'Share-a-Story' series from Gollancz.

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