



Maisy with some of her young fans. Photo by Helen Drake

Maisy visits Children's Bookshop

By Helen Drake

Jacqueline Wilson, Anthony Horowitz, and Michael Morpurgo (the outgoing Children's Laureate) are just some of the well-known authors who have already made an appearance at the Children's Bookshop, Muswell Hill, as part of this special year celebrating more than 30 years in the business.

On Saturday 21 May it was the turn of the character Maisy, much loved by small children everywhere, with the enormously popular character The Gruffalo appearing on Saturday 18 June.

"Meeting an author is great for parents but meeting an actual character means much more to children under four," said Kate Agnew, daughter of Lesley Agnew, who has run the bookshop for over 10 years.

With the rise of corporate bookselling, why is the Children's Bookshop still thriving? "Our range of picture books is broader than the chains. We also concentrate on individual books rather than just the characters you can buy everywhere," said Kate. "We only employ staff who are genuinely interested in the books and who know the titles and the characters."

Whereas most of the big chains purchase their stock

through central buying, stock at the Children's Bookshop is purchased by its shop floor staff so they are very knowledgeable about the range.

Indeed, staff are given days off solely for the purpose of reading new titles so they may offer a better service to customers and can talk people through the books.

Horrid Henry fans will be pleased to know that Francesca Simon will be signing books on 9 July, and Malorie Blackman, author of *Noughts and Crosses* will be appearing on 23 July.

The Muswell Hill Children's Bookshop, believed to be the longest-running children's bookshop in the UK, won the "Best Bookshop" category of the LBC Living London Awards 2005.

For information on forthcoming events contact the Children's Bookshop, 29 Fortis Green Road, N10 3HP on 020 8444 5500.

RSPCA news

The RSPCA Spring Fayre held in May raised £140 for clinic expenses. The charity thanked everyone who supported the event.

The next event is the Companion Dog Show to be held on Sunday 17 July at the Pentland Carnival in Victoria Park, Long Lane. Anne Lewis, of Manor Park Road, has organised this since 1993, so this is her thirteenth year at the helm. All her assistants are RSPCA volunteers and all profits from the show and our stall go to the clinic expenses.

There are 16 pedigree and novelty classes for all dogs from six months of age. Entry costs

£1.50 per class or six for £7.50. Forms are available at the clinic in Park Road, Animal Aid and Advice in the High Road and at Dunlop Pet Shop, Long Lane, Central Finchley. Entries are taken from 12 noon and judging starts at 1.30pm. News has just been received that our MP Rudi Vis had added his voice to a campaign calling on the Government to ban private owners from keeping primates (apes and monkeys to you and me) as pets.

Letters to the editor

Treehouse reassurance Dear Editor

One of your readers wrote about the site of the TreeHouse School for autistic children in Woodside Avenue in June. I would like to reassure all readers that in fact the foliage and wildlife have sprung up again in the past few weeks, and that we are concerned to preserve as much of the green meadow as possible.

We expect to start construction of our permanent building early next year. The temporary building is in the centre of the site to enable construction to take place at the back of the site behind us, and it will then be removed.

We have really appreciated the understanding and support of local residents through our application for planning permission and subsequent move to the temporary building.

We hope that people will bear with us during what will obviously be a disruptive time of construction. The outcome will be an attractive site that preserves the open green aspect across the lower part and provides a much-needed service for children with autism in North London.

**Christine Asbury
Chief Executive, TreeHouse**

**Send your correspondence to: "Letters Page",
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OBITUARY

Leonard Bruce Archer

By Miranda Newton

A funeral service for Bruce Archer, former president of the Design Research Society, was held at Holy Trinity Church, East Finchley.

Although he was born south of the river, Bruce spent almost all his adult life living in Highgate and East Finchley.

He was born in November 1922, the son of a serving soldier in the Scots Guards. After the war, he worked as an engineering designer, designing jigs, tools and later process plant. Work included involvement on the Routemaster bus, and precision tobacco processing machinery for Gallaghers. In 1950 he married JoAnn, forming a long and very happy marriage.

Bruce became a member of the Institution of Engineering in 1950 and in 1951 was awarded its national prize for the best thesis on design. That same year, the drab post war scene was galvanised by the Festival of Britain Exhibition. Bruce was deeply impressed by the modern arts, science and technology on show and, most importantly, industrial design. He realised that this discipline offered an opportunity to be both artist and engineer.

From 1957, he lectured at the Central School of Art and Design and began writing articles for Design magazine, promoting what he called a "rational approach to design". He was one of the first to promote design as a serious subject

for study.

In 1961, Bruce was invited to lead a research project in the Industrial Design Unit at the Royal College of Art where many hospital necessities were designed that went into widespread use. Amongst these were the *Kings Fund* hospital bed, the standard mobile medicine trolley, electro magnetic smoke control doors and a soiled dressings receptacle.

Bruce became a professor at the Royal College of Art, heading the Department of Design Research and stayed working with the college for 25 years. In the Thatcher era, he campaigned to get design and technology into the school curriculum. In 1976, he was awarded the CBE.

After retiring in 1988, he remained active as president of the Design Research Society and involved himself with Diabetes UK and the Parson Woodforde Society.

It meant a lot to Bruce that in the past 10 years he lived in an extended family of three generations here in East Finchley. He received superb and unstinting care from the Middlesex Hospital, from Haringey Carers and district nurse service and from St Anne's Palliative care team. He died at home with his family, according to his wishes.

Honest, kind, generous, and scholarly, he will be sadly missed.

A school week to talk about

By Diana Cormack

Everyone at Martin Infant School enjoyed a week full of events designed to encourage the development of the children's ability in speaking and listening, and so extend and enrich their learning potential.

Staff and parents prepared a series of activities that helped to develop the infants' social skills, extend their comprehension abilities, improve their listening and attention capabilities and practise their use of expressive language.

For example, pupils used key communication skills to help blindfolded friends negotiate an obstacle course and they learned to dance by listening to instructions and interpreting the moves in time to the music (plus they had to be in synch with everyone else.) There were tongue twister games, charades, mime, hidden musical instruments to identify, maths shopping games and even geography activities, which involved mapping directions.

Throughout the week, a volunteer group of parents, all talented artists and musicians, provided an on-going theme by working with the children on an interpretation of Peter and the Wolf. As well as acting out the drama in small groups, the

youngsters made storyboards and produced puppets, clay models, collage work and drawings to go on display as part of a superb end of the week show.

This was a full performance of Peter and the Wolf by parents, introduced by drama teacher Vicky Levy and performed by Sarah Down on piano with Catrin Dillon reading the dialogue. The infants sat enthralled and involved, joining in silently by miming at appropriate points.

They were also much taken by an amazing animal which had appeared overnight in their assembly hall. It was a huge wolf, big enough to allow children to go into its stomach and find the quacking duck. Tribute for this must be paid to David Aronsohn and to other parents involved in the production - Katrin Aradi, Helen Drake, Caroline Galletti, Lou Hains, Cecilia Holmes and Lisa and Phillip Vallentin.

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