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Newstead Wood School   Library   Bulletin

SUMMER

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Happy reading! – Miss Mullins, Miss Walker, and Miss McGarr

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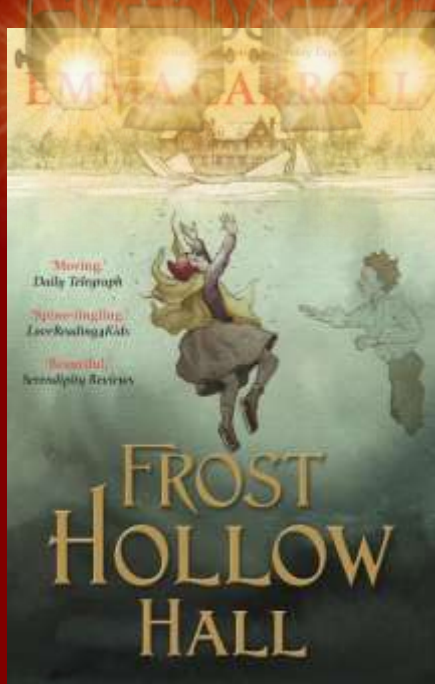
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Wish List Spotlight:

Frost Hollow Hall by Emma Carroll

Tilly's heart sinks. Will's at the door of their cottage, daring her to come ice-skating up at Frost Hollow Hall. No one goes near the place these days. Rumour has it that the house is haunted… Ten years ago the young heir, Kit Barrington, drowned there in the lake. But Tilly never turns down a dare.

Then it goes horribly wrong. The ice breaks, Tilly falls through and almost drowns. At the point of death, a beautiful angel appears in the water and saves her. Kit Barrington's ghost.

Kit needs Tilly to solve the mystery of his death, so that his spirit can rest in peace. In order to discover all she can, Tilly gets work as a maid at Frost Hollow Hall. But the place makes her flesh crawl. It's all about the dead here, she's told, and in the heart of the house she soon discovers all manner of dark secrets…

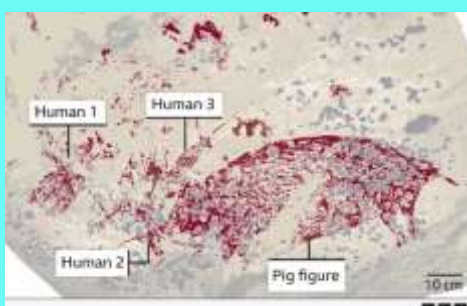## Frank Cottrell-Boyce Named as New Children's Laureate

Multi award-winning children's author Frank Cottrell-Boyce has been crowned the Waterstones Children's Laureate 2024-26. The role was passed over to him by outgoing Children's Laureate Joseph Coelho at a ceremony this month. The role of Children's Laureate 'celebrates creativity and storytelling, promotes the vital importance of reading and children's literature, and champions the right of every child to enjoy a lifetime enriched with books and stories.' Cottrell-Boyce said at the ceremony: "I am so proud to be here today, being passed the torch of the Laureateship. Writing and reading has transformed my life – and I write children's books because I think they help build the apparatus of happiness inside us… For too long, the life-changing benefits of children's reading have not been taken seriously. And now – as our children face an unknown future – we risk losing a generation unless we act. So, my tenure as Waterstones Children's Laureate will have happiness at its heart, but it will be about urgency. It will be about addressing invisible privilege and inequality. It will be about the increasing number of children in poverty being left further and further behind. It will be about calling for national provision so that every child – from their earliest years – has access to books, reading and the transformative ways in which they improve long-term life chances."

Cosmic by Frank Cottrell-Boyce

Liam is too big for his boots. And his football strip. And his school blazer. But being super-sized height-wise has its advantages: he's the only eleven-year-old to ever ride the G-force defying Cosmic rollercoaster - or be offered the chance to drive a Porsche. Long-legged Liam makes a giant leap for boy-kind by competing with a group of adults for the chance to go into space. Is Liam the best boy for the job? Sometimes being big isn't all about being a grown-up.

World's Oldest Figurative Cave Art Discovered

The oldest example of figurative cave art ever found has been discovered on the Indonesian Island of Sulawesi inside the caves of Karampuang Hill. The painting, found by Australian and Indonesian scientists, features a wild pig and three human-like figures and is at least 51,000 years old. This makes it more than 5,000 years older than the figurative cave art previously thought to be the oldest and means that modern humans first showed the capacity for creative thought much earlier than we had believed. Figurative cave art is that which contains representations of creatures or scenes from the corporeal world. The first evidence of humans drawing anything at all was found on rocks in the Blombos Caves in southern Africa and dates back to between 75,000 and 100,000 years ago. These first drawings consisted of geometric patterns. The newly discovered figurative cave art represents 'an evolution in the thought processes in our species that gave rise to art and science.' Professor Maxime Aubert from Griffith University said of the discovery, "The painting tells a complex story. It is the oldest evidence we have for storytelling. It shows that humans at the time had the capacity to think in abstract terms." Original BBC article here.

Labels: Human 1, Human 3, Human 2, Pig figure

The Human Past: World Prehistory and the Development of Human Societies by Chris Scarre
In The Human Past, a team of leading archaeologists, all well-known specialists in their fields, provides a seamless yet uniquely authoritative account of human prehistory on a global scale. It highlights the enormous diversity of human experience and the ways in which archaeologists are able to learn about it. This includes the deep prehistory of human evolution, the more recent prehistory of postglacial foragers and farmers, and the literate civilizations of Egypt, the Mediterranean world, South and East Asia, and Central and South America. It provides an introductory account that takes the student through the human past using a regional and chronological framework, focusing as much on the archaeology of the everyday as on the spectacular and unusual. The text is accompanied by hundreds of specially commissioned diagrams and photographs, many in full colour, that illustrate key sites, artifacts and regions, as well as clear timelines, boxes on key sites, methods, discoveries and controversies, and maps.
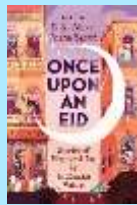

"The great instrument of moral good is the imagination." – Percy Bysshe Shelley

NEW

Once Upon an Eid edited by SK Ali and Aisha Saeed
Once Upon an Eid is a collection of short stories that showcases the most brilliant Muslim voices writing today, all about the most joyful holiday of the year: Eid! Eid: The short, single-syllable word conjures up a variety of feelings and memories for Muslims. Maybe it's waking up to the sound of frying samosas or the comfort of bean pie, maybe it's the pleasure of putting on a new outfit for Eid prayers, or maybe it's the gift-giving and holiday parties to come that day. Whatever it may be, for those who cherish this day of celebration, the emotional responses may be summed up in another short and sweet word: joy.

Fake Dates and Mooncakes by Sher Lee
Dylan Tang wants to win a Mid-Autumn Festival mooncake-making competition for teen chefs—in memory of his mom, and to bring much-needed publicity to his aunt's struggling Chinese takeout in Brooklyn. Enter Theo Somers: charming, wealthy, with a smile that makes Dylan's stomach do backflips. AKA a distraction. Their worlds are sun-and-moon apart, but Theo keeps showing up. He even convinces Dylan to be his fake date at a family wedding in the Hamptons. In Theo's glittering world of pomp, privilege, and crazy rich drama, their romance is supposed to be just pretend . . . but Dylan finds himself falling for Theo. For real. Then Theo's relatives reveal their true colours—but with the mooncake contest looming, Dylan can't risk being side-tracked by rich-people problems.

Damnable Tales edited by Richard Wells
This richly illustrated anthology gathers together classic short stories from masters of supernatural fiction including M. R. James, Sheridan Le Fanu and Arthur Machen, alongside lesser-known voices in the field including Eleanor Scott and Margery Lawrence, and popular writers less bound to the horror genre, such as Thomas Hardy and E. F. Benson. These are damnable tales, selected and beautifully illustrated by Richard Wells. They stalk the moors at night, the deep forests, cornered fields and dusky churchyards, the narrow lanes and old ways of these ancient places, drawing upon the haunted landscapes of folk-horror – a now widely used term first applied to a series of British films from the late 1960s and 1970s: Witchfinder General (1968), Blood on Satan's Claw (1971), and The Wicker Man (1973). But as this collection shows, writers of uncanny fiction were dabbling in the dark side of folklore long before. These twenty-two stories take the reader beyond the safety and familiarity of the town into the isolated and untamed wilderness. Unholy rites, witches' curses, sinister village traditions and ancient horrors that lurk within the landscape all combine to remind us that the shiny modern, urban world might not have all the answers…

She is a Haunting by Trang Thanh Tran
When Jade Nguyen arrives in Vietnam for a visit with her estranged father, she has one goal: survive five weeks pretending to be a happy family in the French colonial house Ba is restoring. She's always lied to fit in, so if she's straight enough, Vietnamese enough, American enough, she can get out with the college money he promised. But the house has other plans. Night after night, Jade wakes up paralyzed. The walls exude a thrumming sound, while bugs leave their legs and feelers in places they don't belong. She finds curious traces of her ancestors in the gardens they once tended. And at night Jade can't ignore the ghost of the beautiful bride who leaves her cryptic warnings: Don't eat. Neither Ba nor her sweet sister Lily believe that there is anything strange happening. With help from a delinquent girl, Jade will prove this house—the home her family has always wanted—will not rest until it destroys them. Maybe, this time, she can keep her family together. As she roots out the house's rot, she must also face the truth of who she is and who she must become to save them all.

The Mixed-Race Experience by Naomi and Natalie Evans
What does it mean to be mixed race in today's society? In this powerful book, Natalie and Naomi Evans, founders of anti-racist advocacy and platform Everyday Racism, explore the complexities of mixed-race identities - from the discrimination endured by the 1.2 million mixed people in Britain and millions more elsewhere, to the privileges it can afford. Sharing their own personal experiences of growing up in Britain to illuminate the nuances of racial identity, the book also weaves in: interviews with people from mixed backgrounds and in mixed relationships, research to dispel common myths and stereotypes, practical advice for mixed-race families and friendships. The Mixed-Race Experience will help you to recognise and confront the racism within your own family and communities, helping us all to deepen our intersectional awareness and commitment to allyship.

Bitterthorn by Kat Dunn
Blumwald is a town overshadowed by an ancient curse: in a sinister castle in the depths of the wild wood lives a monstrous Witch. Once a generation, she comes to claim a companion to return with her – never to be seen again. Now that time is drawing near once more… Mina, daughter of the duke, is grieving and lonely. She has lost all hope of any future for herself in Blumwald. So when the Witch demands her next companion, Mina offers herself up – though she has no idea what fate awaits her. Stranded with her darkly alluring captor, the mystery of what happened to the previous companions draws Mina into the heart of a terrifying secret that could save her life or end it.

Rare Bumblebee Numbers Rise Following Meadow Restoration

The population of the rare bilberry bumblebee is growing in Shropshire following a successful project to restore old hay meadows. The project, named Stepping Stones, is led by the National Trust with the aim of reconnecting isolated patches of wildlife habitat across the Long Mynd (a heath and moorland plateau) and Stiperstones (a hill) in Shropshire. A year ago, the project planted wildflower seed as well as yellow rattle seed – a critical plant species for creating meadows which slows down the growth of grasses by attaching itself to the root system, promoting the growth of diverse wildflower species in their place. The fields in the area are now teeming with wildflowers and pollinating insects. A key site for the project is Mose Farm on the Dudmaston Estate which is farmed by tenant farmer Martyn Bebb. The land being worked on a Dudmaston is about 160 acres in size, and Mr Bebb said that it will be a "mixed mosaic of heathland, acidic grassland and wood pasture, which will benefit a host of wildlife" when complete. Project manager of Stepping Stones, Charlie Bell, said that a core part of their mission was to some way in replacing the 97% of meadows in the UK that have been lost over the last 100 years. Bell said of the loss, "[it] has had a devastating impact on the plants and animals that use meadows for shelter, food and places to raise their young." The bilberry bumblebee favours upland areas like the one being restored in Shropshire but is nationally scarce: the Stepping Stones initiative is going some way to help the species thrive once more. Original BBC article here.

A Buzz in the Meadow by Dave Goulson
In 2003 Dave Goulson bought a derelict farm in the heart of rural France, together with 33 acres of surrounding meadow. Over the course of a decade, he created a place for his beloved bumblebees to thrive along with myriad insects of every kind. In this book you will learn how a deathwatch beetle finds its mate, about the importance of houseflies, why butterflies have spots on their wings, about dragonfly sex, bed-bugs and wasps. But it is also a wake-up call, urging us to cherish and protect life on earth in all its forms. A Buzz in the Meadow is a captivating look at our natural world and a call to arms for nature-lovers everywhere.

On This Day in History… The Birth of Mervyn Peake, 9th July 1911

Mervyn Peake was a writer, artist, and poet best known for his *Gormenghast* books. He was born to British parents on the top of Mount Lu in China and lived in China until December 1922 when his family left for England. Peake never returned to China, but Chinese influences can be detected in his works: Gormenghast Castle, the setting for his *Gormenghast* books, echoes the ancient walled city of his birthplace. Peake was educated in England at Eltham College and went on to write prolifically, as well as to illustrate his own books and those of others. Later in life, Peake's health declined, and he died as a result of dementia on the 17th of November 1968 at a care home run by his brother-in-law. He's buried in East Sussex.

The *Gormenghast* novels, originally conceived as a single on-going novel, focus on the great crumbling castle of Gormenghast and its strange inhabitants. There are three novels in the original series, as well as a novella. Peake was working on a fourth novel, *Titus Awakes*, at the time of his death. Peake's widow Maeve Gilmore completed *Titus Awakes* in the 1970s, but the book was not published until 2011 when it was discovered by the couple's family. Though often described as fantasy novels, the books do not fit neatly into the fantasy genre, as there are no fantastical elements in the first two books - however they are widely regarded works of fantasy due to the pseudo-medieval setting. It is suggested that the novels fit more properly into the speculative fiction genre. The *Gormenghast* series has been included in several lists of 100 best fantasy novels and was praised by literary critic Harold Bloom as one of the greatest sequences in modern world literature. Peake himself was named in the 2008 *Times* list of Greatest British Writers Since 1945.

The Gormenghast Trilogy by Mervyn Peake
Gormenghast #1: Titus Groan
Starts with the birth and ends with the first birthday celebrations of the heir to the grand, tradition-bound castle of Gormenghast. A grand miasma of doom and foreboding weaves over the sterile rituals of the castle. Villainous Steerpike seeks to exploit the gaps between the formal rituals and the emotional needs of the ruling family for his own profit.

Gormenghast #2: Gormenghast
Titus Groan is seven years old. Lord and heir to the crumbling castle Gormenghast. A gothic labyrinth of roofs and turrets, cloisters and corridors, stairwells and dungeons, it is also the cobwebbed kingdom of Byzantine government and age-old rituals, a world primed to implode beneath the weight of centuries of intrigue, treachery, and death. Steerpike, who began his climb across the roofs when Titus was born, is now ascending the spiral staircase to the heart of the castle, and in his wake lie imprisonment, manipulation, and murder.

Gormenghast #3: Titus Alone
Titus, almost 20, flees oppressive Castle Rituals. Lost in a sandstorm, helped by Muzzlehatch owner of traveling zoo and his ex-lover Juno, stranded in big city, arrested for vagrancy, he longs for home. Nobody has heard of Gormenghast, few believe. Titus wants to prove it is real.

Pi Approximation Day

Observed annually on the 22nd of June, Pi Approximation Day is also known as Casual Pi Day so as not to be confused with Pi Day which is celebrated on the 14th of March (see Pi Facts box below). The date was chosen as it coincides with the fractional value of pi, which is 22/7 and is often used as an approximation for the mathematical constant pi. Pi is the ratio of the circumference of a circle to its diameter and is represented by the Greek letter of the same name, π. The symbol was introduced in a mathematical context by Welsh mathematician William Jones in 1706 and popularised by Swiss polymath Leonard Euler who adopted it in 1737. The value of π is approximately 3.14159, but the fraction 22/7 is a common approximation that yields 3.142857 (etc) when calculated. While 22/7 is not as accurate as the true value of π, it is simple and easy to remember, making it a popular approximation used in various calculations, particularly in early mathematics education. Because its definition relates to the circle, π is found in many formulae in trigonometry and geometry, especially those concerning circles, ellipses and spheres. It is also found in formulae from other topics in science, such as cosmology, fractals, thermodynamics, mechanics, and electromagnetism.

Click here to see the first million digits of pi

Pi Facts:
- We currently know more than 105 trillion digits of pi thanks to a computer company using software called y-cruncher that worked on the problem for 75 days.
- Since the exact value of pi can never be calculated, we can never find the accurate area or circumference of a circle.
- We will never be able to find all the digits of pi because of its very definition as an irrational number.
- 14th March is celebrated as Pi Day because 3.14 are the first digits of pi, and when the date is written in the American format (mm/dd) it appears as 3/14.
- The record for reciting the greatest number of decimal places of Pi was achieved by Rajveer Meena at VIT University, Vellore, India on 21 March 2015. He was able to recite 70,000 decimal places. It took 10 hours, and he wore a blindfold to prove that he wasn't cheating.
- There is a form of writing made from the number Pi - it's called Pi-lish. People write piems (pi poems) with it, and even pi-kus (pi haikus).
- Pi wasn't always known as pi. Before the 1700s, people referred to it as 'the quantity which when the diameter is multiplied by it, yields the circumference.'
- In the late 1800s, British mathematician William Shanks worked manually to find the digits of pi. He spent years trying to calculate the pi digits by hand and found the first 707 digits. Unfortunately, the 527th digit he found was wrong, which made all of the following digits wrong too.
- In the 16th century, that Dutch-German mathematician Ludolph van Ceulen spent most of his life calculating the first 36 digits of pi. It is said that the first 36 numbers were engraved on his tombstone, which is now lost.
- Pi is literally infinitely long, but the number sequence 123456 doesn't appear anywhere in the first million digits.
- The number pi is very effective when used in calculations, for instance rounding the number pi to just 9 digits after the decimal and using it to calculate earth's circumference will yield incredibly accurate results. For every 25,000 miles, the number pi will only err to 1/4th of an inch.

Humble Pi: A Comedy of Maths Errors by Matt Parker
Our whole world is built on maths, from the code running a website to the equations enabling the design of skyscrapers and bridges. Most of the time this math works quietly behind the scenes . . . until it doesn't. All sorts of seemingly innocuous mathematical mistakes can have significant consequences. Maths is easy to ignore until a misplaced decimal point upends the stock market, a unit conversion error causes a plane to crash, or someone divides by zero and stalls a battleship in the middle of the ocean. Exploring and explaining a litany of glitches, near misses, and mathematical mishaps involving the internet, big data, elections, street signs, lotteries, the Roman Empire, and an Olympic team, Matt Parker uncovers the bizarre ways math trips us up, and what this reveals about its essential place in our world. Getting it wrong has never been more fun.

How to Bake Pi by Eugenia Cheng
What is maths? How exactly does it work? And what do three siblings trying to share a cake have to do with it? In How to Bake Pi, math professor Eugenia Cheng provides an accessible introduction to the logic and beauty of mathematics, powered, unexpectedly, by insights from the kitchen: we learn, for example, how the béchamel in a lasagne can be a lot like the number 5, and why making a good custard proves that math is easy but life is hard. Of course, it's not all cooking; we'll also run the New York and Chicago marathons, pay visits to Cinderella and Lewis Carroll, and even get to the bottom of a tomato's identity as a vegetable. This is not the math of our high school classes: mathematics, Cheng shows us, is less about numbers and formulas and more about how we know, believe, and understand anything, whatever our brother took too much cake. At the heart of How to Bake Pi is Cheng's work on category theory—a cutting-edge "mathematics of mathematics." Cheng combines her theory work with her enthusiasm for cooking both to shed new light on the fundamentals of mathematics and to give readers a tour of a vast territory no popular book on math has explored before. Lively, funny, and clear, How to Bake Pi will dazzle the initiated while amusing and enlightening even the most hardened maths-phobe.