

# Friends Matter- June 2021

The regular newsletter from The Friends of Brixham Library

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Friends of Brixham Library



## Forward

This month's newsletter is full of hope. As further covid restrictions were lifted on Monday 17 May, we can now all look forward to the next huge change later this month. Of course, many of us are asking the question will life return to how it was or have lessons been learnt or lifestyles changed so that it always be very different in the future. As you can imagine I can't answer these so I'll bring us back to today and matters where we can all play our part. None more so in the importance of youngsters learning to read as well as being read to, enables them to gain a skill that can be life changing in so many ways. As a result, this month's newsletter has the spotlight on early years reading from a teacher's point of view. Three regular newsletter readers with teaching backgrounds have drawn on their personal experiences later in the newsletter. This is followed by details of this years 'Summer Reading Challenge' which will be very different because of the pandemic but children and young people are at the very heart of this annual library activity.

Continuing our environmental theme, this month we look at bug hotels and how you too can make an impact in your very own garden along with an update on our contribution to the '5K in May challenge' amongst other things.

## Welcome to New Members

This is an opportunity to welcome Chris Coote, Jill Pasmore, John & Vivienne Dolden as new members to FoBL. All three have come to FoBL via the Monday Health Walk.

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Reading does matter!

For me it all started with the nightmare of Dick & Dora, the reading scheme that my Primary School used and one day it just clicked into place and I have never looked back. Just as I now look at my first Noddy story as a very early crime thriller, Enid Blyton's, 'The boy next door' as adventure thriller, progressing through Biggles and Arthur Ransome stories. Such reads have never been forgotten. Later, I have spent many happy hours sitting with my own daughter reading 'Mog', 'The Hungry Caterpillar' and 'The Gruffalo'. Thus, I welcome the following experiences so different from my own and yet so revealing and providing complete contrasts to the reading habit that feeds us all.

Learning to read ..... Like riding a bike!

'I want a go' ..... Watching your big brother, friend, cousin scooting along on a bike. Excitement. Fun. Then the joy of touching your first bike – a bit big and unwieldy maybe. Lots of 'sticky out' bits which might do something? Climbing aboard, holding tight to the handlebars, pressing the brakes. The first wobbly attempts and tumbles. Then some added little wheels and helping hands keep you upright and send you spinning on your way. Gradually, slowly, with help, you learn how to balance, push forward and soon ..... you are flying!



Now remember your first books – you've seen them before in other hands – words and stories come out of them somehow. Helping hands show you which way to hold them, how the pages turn one at a time, how the squiggles go left to right and top to bottom. Soon, as you listen and follow the fingers pointing to the squiggles some of them begin to match up with familiar words and sounds which have been repeated to you over and over again. You 'have a go' at reading along; shapes become sounds; sounds become words; words start to make sentences. You can tell the story as you turn the pages. Your helpers are there for when you stumble, you read together and gradually, slowly you learn how to decode, put the words together and soon ..... You are flying!

Gift for a Lifetime

During the recent lockdown I had a spell of finding it hard to get to sleep. My mind would start to race, and I would find myself wide awake and thinking about all kinds of things. One night I decided to try out a Sleep Story from a meditation App on my phone. I made myself comfortable, clicked the button and the quiet, soothing, soporific voice of Stephen Fry filled my ears.

I had hoped for a gentle flow of frankly quite boring words which would soon have me drifting off to sleep. To my great surprise the words that washed over me were these:

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*Wynken, Blynken and Nod one night  
Sailed off in a wooden shoe -  
Sailed on a river of crystal light  
Into a sea of dew.*

*'Where are you going and what do you wish?  
The old moon asked the three.  
'We have come to fish for the herring-fish  
That live in this beautiful sea.'*



With that one short rhyme, from words that I had not heard or thought of for 60 years, I was instantly back to my childhood home, listening to my Mum and sister reading me the words. I could 'see' the pictures, feel the pages, smell the paper, remember the rhyme and rhythm of the words.

Over the years I have shared books with my children, my grandchildren and those I have been privileged enough to teach, and those few minutes confirmed for me just how important an activity it is.

The power of sharing familiar books and rhymes and of reading together lasts a lifetime. What a gift!!

## Recollections

Many years ago, in the 1970s I was a young teacher still learning about the challenges that face children regarding reading. One particular young boy still sticks in my mind, he struggled with texts so was confined to learning to read via a supposedly engaging scheme all about Roger Red Hat and Billy Blue Hat. However, he did not engage with this scheme and I shared this at Parent's Evening with his family. His Dad was amazed at my concern regarding reading ability, after asking a few questions he turned to his wife and said, 'I can't understand his problem, he reads the Sporting Pink cover to cover every weekend!' I learned my lesson, engage interest, the text to start with is irrelevant, interest is the motivation to learning. From there onwards we had an arrangement, we would read a section of The Sporting Pink, then a few pages of the reading scheme! Needless to say, his progress escalated monumentally! This story has remained with me, so this young boy also taught me a valuable lesson.

One other thing sprang to mind when I was thinking about these. I worked for about 15 years in a school in a very 'poor' area of town and around 98% of our children spoke English as an additional language. The parents were supportive and keen for their children to do well but many felt that they hadn't got the skills to help them and that teaching them to read was 'our job'. We spent a lot of time with the parents showing them the value of sharing books in whichever language they felt comfortable and in non-threatening ways. One of the things we did was ask the children to bring in photos of them with someone in their family sharing some reading. It could be in any format and the more creative the better. We made the photos into large posters to put round the school and had a competition

Reading  
IS  
Everywhere!

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where children voted for their favourite. It was very successful – we had pictures of children and adults reading labels on food packets, recipes, seed packets, newspapers, letters, road signs, instruction manuals, as well as books of all kinds. The parents loved it and the children were really proud. But the best thing was that they all started to realise that reading is everywhere and sharing it does not have to be onerous!

### Fireman Sam...



When Alasdair asked me to write something for the newsletter about reading to children, three incidents immediately sprang to mind. The first was how saddened I was when a four-year-old, just starting school, informed me that her favourite book was the Argos catalogue. What riches she had missed out on. By comparison, at the age of three, our daughter (Kirsty) had listened to her favourite Fireman Sam stories so frequently that she knew them word perfectly and woe betide you if a single word was omitted or changed. She lived and

breathed Fireman Sam, to the extent that we were presented at playgroup with paintings ‘that Samantha has done this morning’. As an adult, she hasn’t become a firefighter, but is a primary school teacher. Finally, a friend recently told me of her toddler grandson picking up a book and getting most frustrated when ‘swiping left’ had no effect on changing the picture. How times change!

Reading to children is an absolutely crucial part of them learning to read for themselves. Sharing books with an adult helps them to familiarise themselves with a variety of pre-reading skills such as which way to hold the book, how to turn pages and establishing links between the written and spoken words.

In addition, hearing stories develops vocabulary, helps children to understand some of our complex grammar rules and establishes patterns of words and phrases (They pulled, and they pulled, but they could not pull up the enormous turnip.) Without hearing these repeatedly and thus becoming familiar with their usage, children cannot be expected to use them independently.

Stories fire the imagination and provide children with a wide range of experiences, far greater than they would encounter in real life. Hearing about different situations and how the characters respond to them can help with their own social and emotional development. For example, The Enormous Turnip teaches about cause and effect, problem solving, resilience and teamwork, to name but a few.

Finally, children who are involved with and excited by books learn to concentrate for increasing periods of time. The plea for “just one more” story at bedtime hopefully heralds the beginning of a life-long enjoyment of books, which in itself opens up doors into so many other areas of learning. As the head teacher of the infant school that I attended as a child once said, “If a child can read, they can learn to do anything”.

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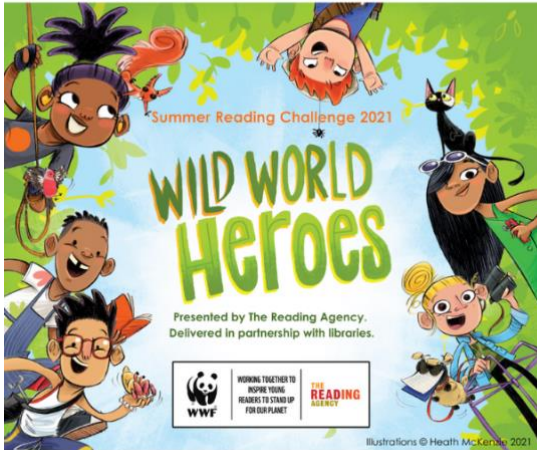
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## The regular newsletter from The Friends of Brixham Library Summer Reading Challenge 2021



Saturday 19th June see's the launch of our Summer Reading Challenge. I would like to say a huge thank you to everyone that has donated to the friends "Go fund me" page. As I write this you have helped raised £700 towards our £1000 target. This past year has been very difficult for everyone, children and their education has suffered. We talk to parents/carers that come into the library and we hear the same stories about how they feel their children's reading levels has dropped since being home schooled as there were so many distractions at home and with most parents having to work from home at the same time too.

As it is very unlikely, we will be able to hold events in the library over the summer, we once again are having to use social media to reach out to children and offer story time and activities online. To encourage children to sign up and complete the Summer Reading Challenge we will be using the money raised to provide each child that completes the challenge a goodie bag and a voucher for a free ice cream on the Harbour. We would normally have a party, author events, Mermaids and clowns for the children to enjoy throughout the summer, so we thought this was a good way of still giving the children a reward for finishing.

Once again, from myself, the team at Brixham library and the whole of Libraries Unlimited, thank you for helping us help the children in our community.

Also, I would like to say a personal thank you to my AMAZING friends' group for putting this all together.

### Give a child the gift of books

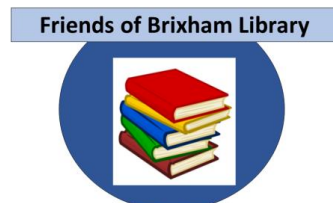


We really want to reach out to parents that have had babies in lockdown and might not have an idea of what our library offers. When a child joins the library, they will get their own library card (a choice of 3 colours) they will also receive a free book to choose from, thank you the friends of Brixham library for purchasing these books. Children aged 0 to 3 will be able to start our Bookstart passport. We give the child a passport and every time they come into the library the staff

will stamp their passport. There are 10 certificates to collect and at the end they will receive a little bear.

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Children aged 3 to 5 can start the Bookstart sticker story book. When they come to the library, they bring their book in and collect a sticker. The book makes a lovely story.

For older children we have Book Quest, there are 3 levels sea, jungle and sky. The aim is to read a 100 books per level. There are certificates to collect along the way and little mini challenges. After each level they will receive a badge and a special certificate which we are able to present them in their school assemblies.

See you soon  
Kind regards, Emma

## Bug Hotels



For many of us, the natural world holds an on-going fascination and one thing that lockdown has taught us is that there is lots to see on our very own doorstep. The fascination of bugs and the plight of bees are amongst the many environmental topics that regularly appear in our magazines, newspapers and on TV. Here in Brixham, the Town Council have risen to the challenge converting one of the old red GPO Phone Boxes into a Telebug Hotel and it does look



rather fine. This can be found in Edinburgh Road, Brixham. However, making your own Bug Hotel couldn't be easier and as long as you have a small space in your garden and a few materials, you too can enjoy the benefits and glow in your own environmental success. Such sanctuaries don't need to be more than a stack of twigs and leaves and if you prefer to buy one, then most garden centres have ready made products on offer. On the other hand, if you have an old box, prop it on its side, stack and fill it with dried stems, straws and grasses, bits of brick with holes in, sticks and hollow plant stems and anything



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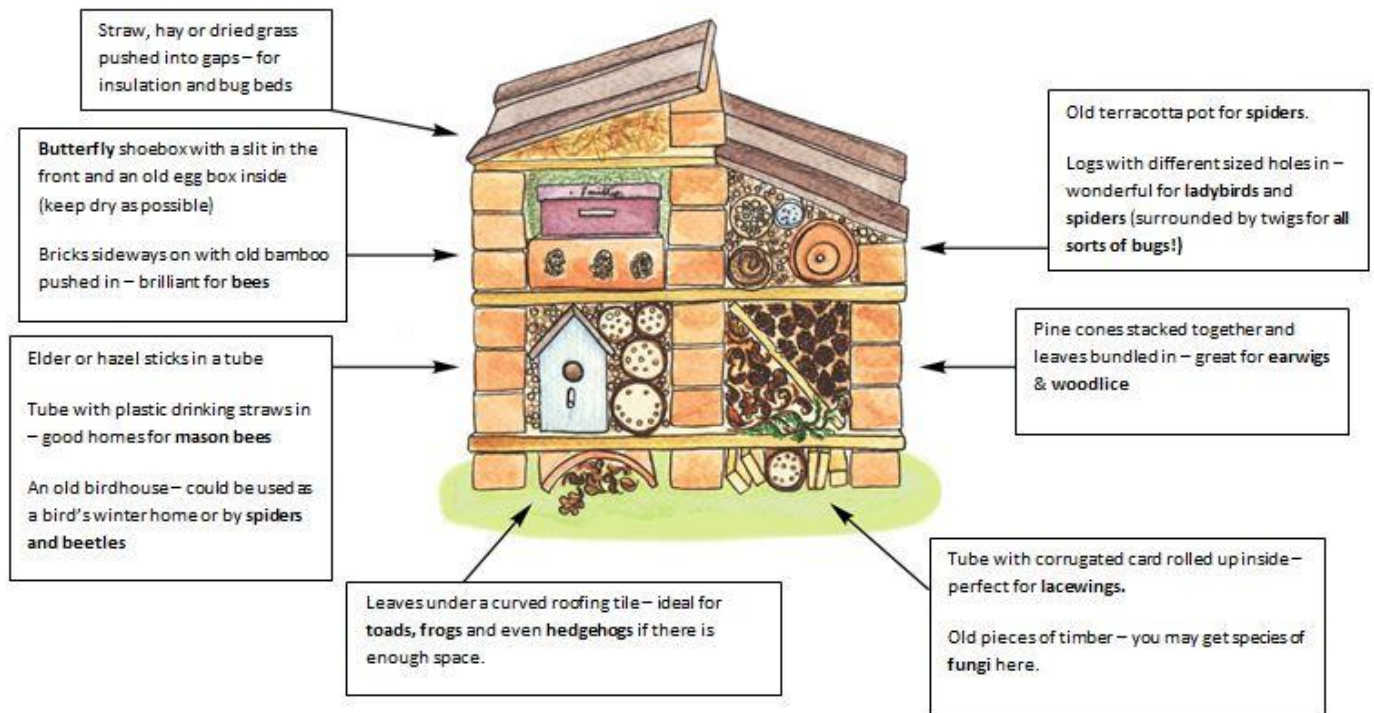
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that will make your visiting bugs want to make their home there. In doing this, you will encourage anything from hedgehogs to toads, solitary bees to bumblebees and ladybirds to spiders and woodlice to come and shelter. So, go on and have a go and you'll be surprised how easy it is and how rewarding it can be.



## Membership Secretary - Update

**Membership Cards 2021/22:** Please note that all membership cards for all people whose standing orders cleared in April or who have left cash or cheque payments, have been available to collect from the library for a few weeks. Cards for people who have recently set up standing orders will be available as soon as we get clearance regarding payment.

**Subs:** Please do remember to pay your £5.00 for this year! Understandably many didn't last year.

**Contact details:** **If your contact details have changed**, please let me know via a new membership form clearly marked 'updated details.' Thank you I have recently received a couple of these.

Please continue to support Friends of Brixham Library, in turn this helps our wonderful library and the community it reaches out to, Angie Robson

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## 5K in May – Update



FoBL members rose to the challenge and on Monday 10 May undertook the '5K in May' challenge walking from Brixham Library up to the start of the Monday Health Walk, around to Berry Head and back to the library. Some members were very kind and donated money to the challenge and to date we have raised £145.00 towards this Libraries Unlimited country wide initiative. May I take this opportunity to thank all those who took part and who generously donated their money.

*That's fantastic news, well done! Do pass on my thanks to all those who took part,*

*Thanks,*

*Alex Kittow, Chief Executive – Libraries Unlimited*

*That is an incredible amount of money, just wanted to say thank you to everyone as this really does help us in trying to achieve our aims. I have confirmed the amount and informed our fundraising team and they also said how amazing this is. Again, thank you and I will keep you posted on how much this initiative raises.*

*Kind Regards,*

*Jay Carter - Centre Manager, Torbay Libraries*

## Monday Health Walk

I am pleased to report that we have three new Walk Leaders in Peter Lytton, Angie & Clive Robson. Having undergone their training, they are all now fully qualified to lead on a Monday. On FoBL's behalf may I thank them for putting themselves forward helping to share the load each Monday.

## Feedback

Your comments do really make a difference and following publication of last month's newsletter you said:

*Very impressive indeed. You and the team are a beacon of enthusiasm and enterprise in an otherwise bleak landscape. My own home library might as well not exist - its presence is so low-key that it barely makes it on to the horizon, which is sad for a town (thankfully not Brixham) full of potential readers and supporters. JD.*

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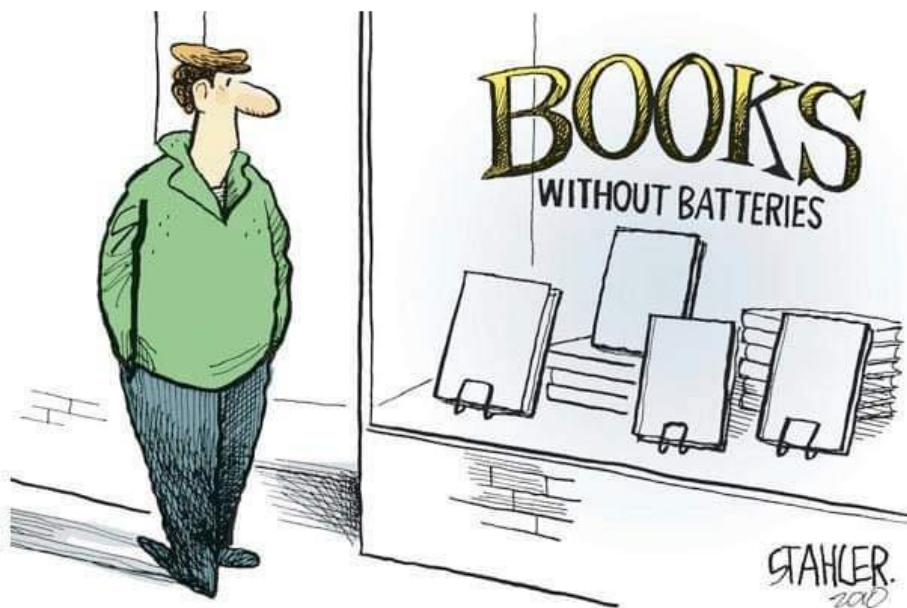
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And Finally....

For the eagle eyed amongst you, you may have spotted our new logo which appears for the first time on our newsletter. Officially adopted by the committee at their recent committee meeting, we hope you like it as much as we do and is another reminder that books still lie at the heart of what we do.

Alasdair Anderson, Chairman, The Friends of Brixham Library

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