

●●● **ADULT NON-FICTION**  
VOLWASSE VAKLEKTUUR

**BOOTH, Martin**

**Gweilo: memories of a Hong Kong childhood.**- Doubleday, 2004.

When Martin Booth, author of adult and childrens' fiction as well as non-fiction, was dying of a brain tumour his children asked him to write the story of his childhood. This book is the result. In 1952 he sailed to Hong Kong with his parents, father Ken who held an administrative post in the Navy, and his more spirited mother, Joyce. He describes their life in Hong Kong, his attendance at various local schools and his wanderings through the streets, where he befriended all sorts of colourful characters. Witty and evocative, this is an entertaining read.

DH

**HORWOOD, William**

**The boy with no shoes: a memoir.**- Review, 2004.

An imaginative and poignant memoir of youth and coming of age by the author of the best-selling *Dunston Chronicles* series. He tells of his existence in 1950s seaside Kent as an unwanted child of a mother who rejects him and whose other children bully him. This causes him to become introverted and backward at school. Fortunately his grandmother arrives on the scene when he is close to death as result of diphtheria, and takes him under her wing. Now he receives the love and care he so desperately needs to help cure the hurt from within. Slowly Jimmy builds up his confidence and improves at school. But all this takes time and he does retain some hurt for a long time.

The local people take to Jimmy and give him a reason for existence, teaching him valuable life skills and an interest in nature and history. With many he develops meaningful relationships that are all-important for his own healing and growth.

The reader cannot help but identify and feel for Jimmy and the various people who enter into his life. All this provides a better understanding of the pattern of development of the author's future imaginative gift for prose.

It is certainly one of the best-written biographies seen recently, offering an inspiring and positive story of childhood loss, personal survival and self-affirmation, that will haunt the reader long afterwards.

EB

**NORDSTRÖM, Gunni**

**The invisible disease: the dangers of environmental illnesses caused by electromagnetic fields and chemical emissions.**- O Bks., 2004.

The author is an investigative journalist in Sweden. She writes about research, much of it carried out in Sweden, on environmental illnesses. Illnesses such as chronic fatigue syndrome, fibromyalgia, immune dysfunction syndrome, sick building syndrome and multiple chemical sensitivity have become common. Research is linking these and other health problems, such as light sensitivity, sensitive skin and Rosacea to electro-magnetic fields emitted from computer and television screens, mobile phones and masts, electric lights and other appliances. Apparently many new computers, notably IBM, emit dangerous chemicals. Case studies which link specific illnesses to EMFs are included. She indicates where evidence is conclusive and when not.

DH

**ROCCA, Tony**

**Catching fireflies.**- Century, 2004.

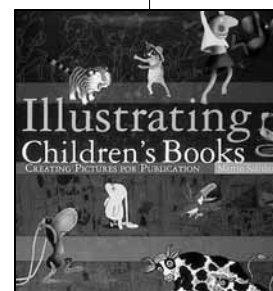
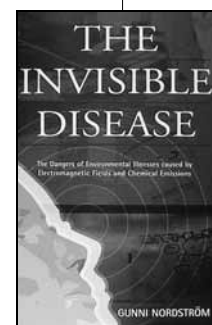
A retrenched Fleet Street journalist and his travel agent wife decide to buy a dilapidated farmhouse with a large vineyard in Tuscany. After ongoing problems with local authorities and Italian banks they finally succeed in opening Collelungo as an 'agriturismo' self-catering guesthouse. Later, they venture successfully into wine-making and after 12 years they find they have become part of the local community and have grown tremendously as people. This is another inspiring Italian adventure about the authentic restoration of Tuscan farm buildings and the conversion of run-down farmland into a thriving vineyard.

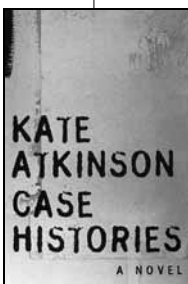
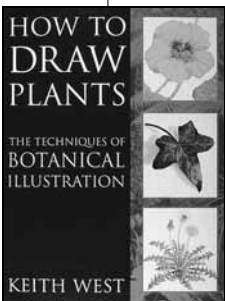
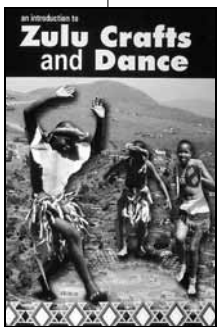
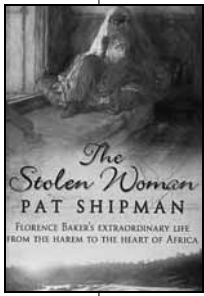
DH

**SALISBURY, Martin**

**Illustrating children's books: creating pictures for publication.**- A & C Black, 2004.

The author is a practicing book illustrator and also course director for the Master of Arts Degree in Children's Book Illustration at Anglia Polytechnic University. He provides an overview of the history of children's book illustration and looks at approaches to drawing humans, animals and aspects from nature. Techniques, the media available to illustrators and character representation of humans, animals and inanimate objects are covered. Picture-books for the younger child, for older children, educational books and finally typography and





getting published are discussed. Well-illustrated with many colour photographs this provides guidelines on the process. All levels should find it a source of inspiration and instruction.

DH

**SHIPMAN, Pat**

**The stolen woman: Florence Baker's extraordinary life from harem to the heart of Africa.**- Bantam, 2004.

By the mid-nineteenth century, African exploration had captured the attention of London society. Explorers were the celebrities of the time. So when 44-year-old Samuel Baker returned from five years in Africa looking for the sources of the Nile, it was inevitable that he would be talked about. But he had something extra to offer, namely a beautiful and thoroughly devoted young wife who had accompanied him on his perilous travels. This lady who became Florence Baker was Hungarian-born and had first met her husband-to-be at a slave auction in the Ottoman Empire. She was 15 years old at the time and was being auctioned as a slave. Baker rescued her and fled abroad, eventually arriving in Africa.

Most of the book is devoted to the couple's two gruelling trips up the Nile on a journey of more than 2 000 miles, much of it on foot.

This is a compelling tale of heroic adventure based on the Baker family legends with the author filling in the gaps where most appropriate. With his conversational writing style and sprinklings of fictional dialogue, Shipman certainly breathes life into this fascinating account of a remarkable life.

EB

**STEYN, Gill and STIPCICH, Jenny**

**An introduction to Zulu crafts and dance.**- Shuter & Shooter, 2004.

In KwaZulu-Natal traditional Zulu arts and crafts have been integrated into the school curriculum. This book is intended as an aid for teachers to give outcomes-based lessons in: Zulu beadwork, wirework, claywork, Zulu dancing, songs, shield and drum-making. Illustrated with colour and black and white illustrations. It is, however, of much wider interest and could be consulted for different purposes in a public library context. It could be referred to for instructions on Zulu beading techniques as well as the wirework and pottery techniques. Making a traditional shield or drum, or the Zulu song and dance techniques could be useful for reference purposes, particularly as there is nothing else in print on these topics.

DH

**WEST, Keith**

**How to draw plants: the techniques of botanical illustration.**- Herbert P., 2004.

This reprint of the 1983 edition provides guidelines on portraying plants with botanical accuracy. There is an overview of historical aspects, basic equipment and techniques. There are sections on the media available to botanical artists: pencil, scraper board, water colour and gouache, acrylics and photography. Preparing for the printer is also covered. This is a basic handbook, well presented, with easily readable text, illustrated with line drawings and some colour plates.

DH

●●● **ADULT FICTION**  
**VOLWASSE VERHALENDE**  
**LEKTUUR**

**ATKINSON, Kate**

**Case histories.**- Doubleday, 2004.

This is the fifth work of fiction from this Edinburgh author who won the Whitbread Prize for **Behind the scenes at the museum**, in 1996.

A number of case histories are presented and then several years down the line, ex-Cambridgeshire policeman, detective Jackson Brodie, is asked to investigate. He unravels the past as he investigates the disappearance of a baby sister in a dysfunctional family, the murder of a solicitor's beloved daughter, a nurse's niece who has disappeared and other cases. Suffering the aftermath of a painful divorce, Brodie becomes a friend to his clients as he investigates. This is a many-layered, witty and enjoyable crime novel which is many other things as well.

DH

**CONNELLY, Michael**

**The narrows.**- Orion, 2004.

The respected author of the *Harry Bosch* series of police procedurals widened his readership and increased his popularity with the 1996 publication of a stand-alone crime thriller, **The poet**. **The narrows** is a sequel to that. It seems that the Poet is back, and in this new book Connelly's different stories and different characters come together. Terry McCaleb's widow, Graciela, asks Bosch (who's now a PI and living in Vegas) to investigate Terry's death. Rachel Walling, the FBI agent involved with crime reporter Jack McEvoy in the original Poet investigation, has been side-lined by the FBI



(posted to the Dakotas); but the Poet wants her back and sends a package addressed to her at Quantico. The FBI investigate and find some bodies, and Rachel is recalled, but as an observer rather than an active agent. **The narrows** is an engrossing read - Connelly really is in top form. Both his Harry Bosch fans and those who have only read **The poet** will want to read this. Highly recommended.

SG

**HIGHMORE, Julie**

**Play it again?**- Review, 2004.

This third novel from the author of **Country loving** and **Pure fiction** is another contemporary rural comedy. As usual, she doesn't have one main character but concentrates on a few characters and their relationships with each other and with other people.

In this book the main characters are Fliss, her 18-year-old daughter, Ellie, their next-door neighbour, Dylan, and his parents. When a farmer decided to sell a pair of semi-detached farmworkers' cottages on his land, Dylan bought the one in worse condition. He had already started the extensive renovations needed, when Fliss bought the other one and moved in with her daughter. This new book is just as warm-hearted and entertaining as her others. Recommended.

SG

●●● **JUVENILE FICTION**  
JEUGLEKTUUR

**ERNST, Lisa Campbell**

**The three spinning fairies: a tale from the Brothers Grimm.**- Dutton, 2002.

A delightful reworking of a Grimm fairytale, this has amusing pastel-coloured illustrations with rounded figures and a strong message about the importance of hard work - if you are lazy, you will get your just deserts. Zelda is a vain foolish girl who thinks she is too good to work hard like her mother who is a baker in the royal kitchen. The queen, who hears that Zelda loves to work (a lie perpetuated by her mother in order to protect her daughter), gives her the opportunity to win the prince's hand by setting her the task of spinning three rooms full of wool. As in the story of Rumpelstilskin, the job is completed by the next day, with the help of three fairies whose physical deformities (an over-sized foot, thumb and a tongue

that sticks out permanently) are the result of their hard work. In exchange for their hard work, Zelda promises to invite them to the wedding as her family members. After the wedding ceremony, the prince implores his mother not to allow his new bride to spin anymore as he doesn't want her to change physically. The queen grants his wish and gives Zelda her mother's job as the royal baker of cakes. The strong story line, amusing illustrations and Zelda's come-uppance make for a hugely enjoyable picture book. Highly recommended.

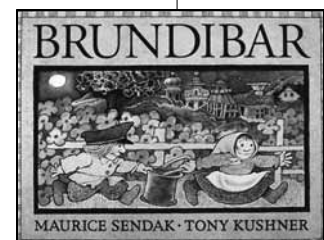
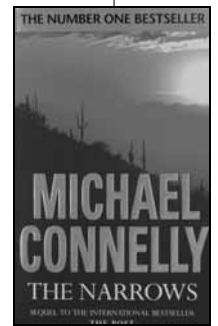
JdeB

**KUSHNER, Tony**

**Brundibar / illustrated by Maurice Sendak.**- Walker, 2003.

Kushner is an American Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright and Sendak is the award-winning picture book creator of many classics. They have taken the 1938 Czech opera, of the same name (libretto by Adolf Hoffmeister and music by Hans Krasa), and created a picture book for older children and adults. Siblings, Aninku and Pepicek, go to town with their bucket to get milk for their sick mother who is being tended by the doctor. They soon realise that they need money to buy milk, for they see rich townsfolk buying goods from the ice-cream seller, the baker, et cetera. But they have none and so decide to do what Brundibar, the hurdy-gurdy man, churning out tunes in the town square and raking in the money, is doing. But the bullying Brundibar in his military uniform and medal-encrusted chest won't stand for any competition and drowns them out. Forlorn and dispirited, they retire to a deserted alley, where several clever animals arrive to encourage them. With the help of the animals and over 300 children, they raise their voices and the necessary funds to buy the milk for their mother.

This story of children triumphing over evil is one that will find an audience with young people. But there is also much that adds depth and darkness to the tale, and this information is conveyed mostly in the illustrations and in the historical notes on the blurb. Poor starving children feature in some of the illustrations and there are several yellow stars identifying characters as Jewish in the central European setting. The book ends on a note that will leave readers in no doubt as to the fact that evil and dictatorship and oppression are not easily eradicated. Brundibar is run out of town, but the last page contains a postcard from him, to say that he will be back. The notes reveal that this opera was performed 55 times by the children in the Terezin



concentration camp in the Czech Republic and that Hoffmeister was himself a prisoner there and later killed at Auschwitz. As is to be expected in a book of Sendak's, there is his familiar iconographic images such as the baker who comes straight out of **In the night kitchen**, speech bubbles, the black crows, and many of the characters bear a physical resemblance to his characters in other books. This has got many good reviews in the American reviewing journals and its combination of light and dark, good and evil, hope and despair, make for a book that bears rereading and invites discussion.

JdeB

### LLEWELLYN, Sam

**Little Darlings.**- Puffin, 2004.

Llewellyn is perhaps best known for his adult novels and sailing thrillers, but he has written a few other books for children. In **Little Darlings** he entertains us with the adventures of the Darling children, Daisy, Cassian and Primrose. They are neglected, largely ignored, by their very rich father and his second wife, and the bane of nannies' lives. At the beginning of the story they are on their 19th nanny, and very soon manage to get rid of her; but it is when their father organises a new nanny that their adventures really begin. Although I think some of the humour may go over some children's heads, this is a very funny story. Adventure, humour and a bit of a mystery make this a most enjoyable read.

SG

### PRICE, Moe

**The reindeer Christmas / illustrated by Atsuko Morozumi.**- M. Price, 2002.

This large-format picture book will have a lot of Christmas appeal and is bound to be popular. It tells the story of how the reindeer came to pull Father Christmas's sleigh. The sleigh was made by the elves when the task of delivering all those gifts in one night became too big to manage on foot. But who was to pull it? Several animals tried out but none were suitable - the elephant went crashing through a roof, the huskies had a fear of heights and the kangaroos provided too bumpy a ride. When a reindeer falls into a gorge, the reindeer ask if they can use the sleigh as an ambulance to rescue him. In gratitude they say that they will pull the sleigh when Father Christmas performs his annual gift-delivering round. The warm illustrations have a Christmas-card glow and are very appealing. Highly recommended.

JdeB

### SIMMONDS, Posy

**Lavender.**- Red Fox, 2004.

Lavender is a shy retiring little rabbit. Her siblings are a rowdy boisterous lot who are far more adventurous than she is and so when a group of foxes arrive from the city with their ghetto blaster and picnic basket, they immediately move closer to investigate this happy party, ignoring Lavender's warnings about foxes being foxes and animals to be feared. But these foxes are a friendly lot and over a couple of weeks they invite more and more animals to enjoy their outdoor activities and the plentiful refreshments they bring along. Even though the foxes say that they only eat fast food, Lavender can't help being suspicious.

When the foxes invite the animals to join them at a party nearby, they jump at the opportunity for more fun and games. Despite initial protestation, Lavender joins them as she wants to prove that she is not a coward. But when they arrive at the engagement party, things are not what they expected - the dingy dirty surroundings make the animals nervous and they quietly slip away, until it is only Lavender who enters the party tent with the foxes.

The foxy in-laws are country folk and remain true to their animal instincts. One of them picks Lavender up with the intention of eating her. She unwittingly saves the day by setting off the fireworks and blowing up the tent, thus saving herself and the town foxes. Simmons makes use of cartoon strips in this enjoyable and successful picture book that cleverly juxtaposes the very real suspense and drama of the plot with the sweetest and dearest of bunny characters.

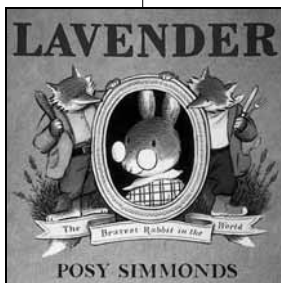
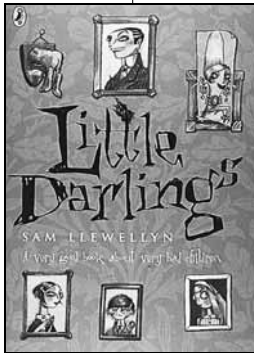
JdeB

*Note: At the time of going to press, some of these titles were still on order.*

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EB	Erich Buchhaus
JdeB	Johanna de Beer
SG	Sabrina Gosling
DH	Denise Harris

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2004