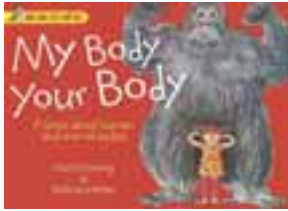


My Body Your Body

Written by Mick Manning and Britta Granström
Franklin Watts £6.99 ISBN: 978-1445128801



This is a jolly book, which compares animal and human bodies in a way a small child can

understand. We can look at our own tongue and compare it with a giraffe's or a toad's or an anteater's. We can compare our muscles with a monkey's and our sense of smell with a dog's. Imagine if our noses could suck up water and be an extra arm like an elephant's nose. The pictures are bright and funny and complement the text perfectly. This is a lovely book for sharing with a young child.

(3-5)

Pat Jenkins

Tigers

Written by Valerie Bodden
Franklin Watts *Animals are Amazing* £8.99
ISBN: 978-1445129563

The beautiful photographs in this book show tigers in all their glory. You can almost stroke their fur. We see them hunting, relaxing and with their cubs and we learn about their food



and where and how they live. The book touches lightly on their status as endangered animals. In addition, a fable from Asia tells us how tigers got their stripes.

(3-6)

Pat Jenkins

Tiny: the invisible world of microbes

Written by Nicola Davies Illustrated by Emily Sutton
Walker £11.99 ISBN: 978-1406341041



If you read the interview with Nicola Davies in an earlier *Carousel*, you will have seen that this book was looking promising even in proof. And it really is good! Nicola's gift is

to be able to communicate science to children and in this book she is giving quite complex

information to the youngest. She skilfully explains what microbes are and what they do. Size comparisons are entertaining, where they live intriguing (from volcanoes to "in your tummy"), and the importance of how they change is made clear and becomes visible through the illustrations. She is more than ably assisted by the illustrator, Emily Sutton, so that together they turn a learning experience into a delightful picture book. A gift to primary schools.

(5+)

Pat Thomson

Eddie's Kitchen

Written and illustrated by Sarah Garland.
Frances Lincoln £6.99 ISBN: 978-1847800039



Mum has forgotten that it is Granddad's birthday and the family are coming to tea. Luckily Eddie and little Lily are there to help. So begins a cooking marathon.

In spite of numerous interruptions from neighbours, the result is a tasty spread with spaghetti in tomato sauce, warm bread, a cheesy dip, baked apples and an orange drizzle birthday cake with a surprise ingredient supplied by Lily. We watch the cooking processes as they happen and all the recipes are at the end of the book. The dishes are all tasty and all easy for children to make with adult help. Apart from the recipes, this is an entertaining story with Sarah Garland's usual detailed and funny pictures of family life.

(5-7)

Pat Jenkins

You Can Overpower a Crocodile With an Elastic Band!

Written by Kay Barnham.
Wayland *Truth or Busted* £5.99

ISBN: 978-0750281577

If you are ever in a sticky situation, this is the book for you. Study it well in advance. If a grizzly bear is heading for you, or you find yourself swimming with piranhas, it will be too late to look up the appropriate page in the index. How to survive on a desert island, what to do in an earthquake or a tsunami, it is all here. Myths are exploded, like putting butter on a burn. Don't do it. And



don't stare at a bear. He will think you want to fight. There are some nasty bits, people who have amputated bits of themselves to save their lives, cannibalism and the results of frostbite. But we also learn how to make a shelter, light a fire, survive a house fire and find north. What about the crocodile and the elastic band? Read this thoroughly entertaining little book and find out.

(8+)

Pat Jenkins

I Love Horses and Ponies

Written by Nicola Jane Swinney
QED Publishing £8.99 ISBN: 978-1781715437



From the handsome Akhal-Teke, the favourite breed of Alexander the Great and Genghis Khan, to the Welsh Cob, we are introduced to over fifty horses and ponies. The

beautiful photographs and the brief and interesting text, make this a delightful book. We meet the "dancing" Lipizzaner from the Spanish Riding School in Vienna, the tiny Shetland pony and my favourite, the massive Shire horse. The spotted Appaloosa, the Selle Français and the sweet-natured Peruvian Paso are among the less familiar breeds pictured and described. A delightful book for anyone who loves and admires horses.

(8+)

Pat Jenkins

Polar Regions

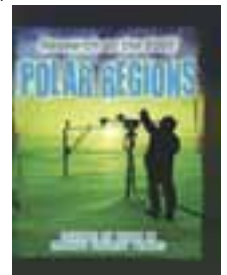
Written by Louise Spilsbury.
Wayland *Research on the Edge* £12.99

ISBN: 978-0750280167

Scientists from all over the world spend many months at a time working in laboratories in the Arctic and Antarctic. They study wildlife, especially how creatures and plants have adapted to life in the Polar Regions and how climate changes are affecting these regions and the implications for the rest of the world. It is interesting to read about the daily lives of the scientists: where they live, what they eat and drink and wear and how their equipment is designed to work in freezing conditions. This book gives us a brief glimpse into this vital work and the dangers the scientists meet.

(8+)

Pat Jenkins



Shackleton's Journey

Written by William Grill

Flying Eye Books £14.99 ISBN: 978-1909263109



This relatively new publisher is obviously aiming at exceptional artwork, whatever the subject.

Shackleton's journey to Antarctica was a gruelling battle with the ice and that ice

provides a background to figures, designs and patterns in deep colours. The many small figures recall a travel diary. The choice of content is also interesting. One rarely sees "Funding and Recruitment" in a children's book but it is an essential element. More expected is "The Dogs" where they have a section to themselves. Maps come where we need them. The ship itself, *Endurance*, is presented with good technical references and "Equipment and Supplies" are set out in pictures which can be 'read' in different ways. The book will adapt to children at different stages. What is most remembered about this expedition is that, despite great hazards, the crew returned and the rest of the book recounts in words and pictures, the destruction of the *Endurance*, survival on an ice floe, the 800 mile journey across the polar seas in a small boat, and the battered crew's safe return. That story is told in strong double spreads and pages filled with small details. This is a handsome book which reflects Shackleton's organisational skills and human courage in an absorbing and involving style.

(9+)

Pat Thomson

The Pilot and the Little Prince

Written and illustrated by Peter Sís

Pushkin £12.99

ISBN: 978-1782690597

The Little Prince is part of French consciousness, its mystery enhanced by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry's life. He was



born in 1900, just as aviation was also developing. He was determined to be a pilot, whatever his aristocratic family thought, and learned to fly. He joined one of the first mail delivery airlines and it was this experience which fuelled his adult novels. Sís shows the unreliability of the early planes, how pilots spent a lot of time on the ground, waiting to be rescued and, in Saint-Exupéry's case, often alone in remote places. He came to love the solitude and the stars. In a series of ingenious pictures, often 'aerial views', we trace the life. There are dramatic double spreads for the

outbreak of war in 1939. His escape to America when France fell is shown by an alligator-like map of New York which recalls the old maps of the city. It was there that he began *The Little Prince*, published in 1943, where a pilot, lost in the desert, meets a little Prince who has fallen from the stars. Saint-Exupéry disappeared on a mission from Corsica to France in 1944 and the final spread shows a deep blue skyscape, a child and a single star. No one knows what happened to him and the illustrations reflect both the life and that final mystery.

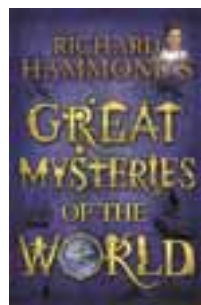
(10+)

Pat Thomson

Great Mysteries of the World

Written by Richard Hammond

Bodley Head £14.99 ISBN: 978-0370332376



This well-produced, stout book has 'gift' written all over it so if you have someone who likes working out puzzles, this may be useful. It examines a series of well-known mysteries which still niggle, such as the Mary Celeste. There

must be an answer! This time, you have to provide it yourself. The book sets the scene, lists the theories which have been presented in the past and then provides pages at the back of the book to help you arrive at and record your decision. The mysteries are collected into four groups: at sea, monstrous creatures, aliens and "Ancient Treasures". The presentation is amusing, with terrible jokes and puns, but there is also sensible information. The invitation to get involved and think is welcome because many of the mysteries are genuinely intriguing. The Nazca Lines in Peru, for example, are astonishing and not easily explained. The text makes sure archaeological theories are provided as well as the 'alien' explanations. The book is also even-handed when looking at "El Dorado". Both sides are presented. Most satisfactory is the construction which will take the reader from the mystery through the evidence to a personal record of the reader's opinion, having fun and being surprised along the way.

(10+)

Pat Thomson

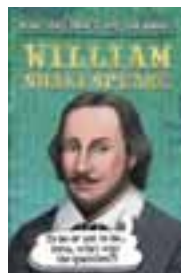
William Shakespeare

Written by Anita Ganeri

Wayland £5.99

ISBN: 978-0750281676

Although the subtitle is *What they DON'T tell you about Shakespeare*, as if it is all a bit larky, this is a lively but sound guide. "They" do tell you quite a lot of it but here useful



aspects are selected and they are arranged in manageable chapters. By the end of the book, the reader will be aware of Shakespeare's background and family, his life in London with the players and some of the complexities of presenting plays to a Tudor audience. There are interesting and informative 'extras': a list of contemporary props (Item: the City of Rome), a list of fines for actors (10 shillings for being drunk on stage), a page of words introduced by Shakespeare (buzzer: a tell-tale) and a large section showing how his influence is still with us, from opera to (apparently) Bard-a grams for St Valentine's Day. Add to this the synopsis of each major play, a list of significant dates and a guide to Shakespeare's contemporaries and you have a very good and inexpensive little handbook for all kinds of readers.

(10+)

Pat Thomson

Michael Morpurgo: War Child to War Horse

Written by Maggie Fergusson

HarperCollins £7.99

ISBN: 978-0007531769

A candid biography, following Michael Morpurgo from childhood to his enormous success with *War Horse*. This is different in that it also contains seven of his stories which are related



to episodes in his life. He says in his preface that he relies on memory rather than imagination and that memory is unreliable, leading towards and often becoming fiction. This is why it is not an autobiography. His early history seems painful. He was sent to a prep school at seven and his mother had an affair which resulted in the total absence of his father. Michael's lack of academic success led him to excel in other areas such as sport and the Cadet Corps, something which led him to Sandhurst, albeit briefly. He made several false starts which the support of his wife's fortune allowed him to correct and this has given him layers of varied experience which he has drawn upon in his writing. What is clear is that stories and story telling have run through his life. Perhaps his early history has left him vulnerable. It would explain the way his stories reflect a particular sensitivity to children. He also seems to need a 'worthwhile' theme and a moral cause. It does appear to the outsider that much of his life has leaked into his storytelling. The book itself is well written and researched. We learn the details of the Farms for City Children organisation and the genesis of the Children's Laureate but those who read Michael's books will be most interested in the nature of the writing and the formation of the deep well of human feeling from which they come.

(11+)

Pat Thomson