

# Up!

JUNE 2023

RADIO &  
TELEVISION

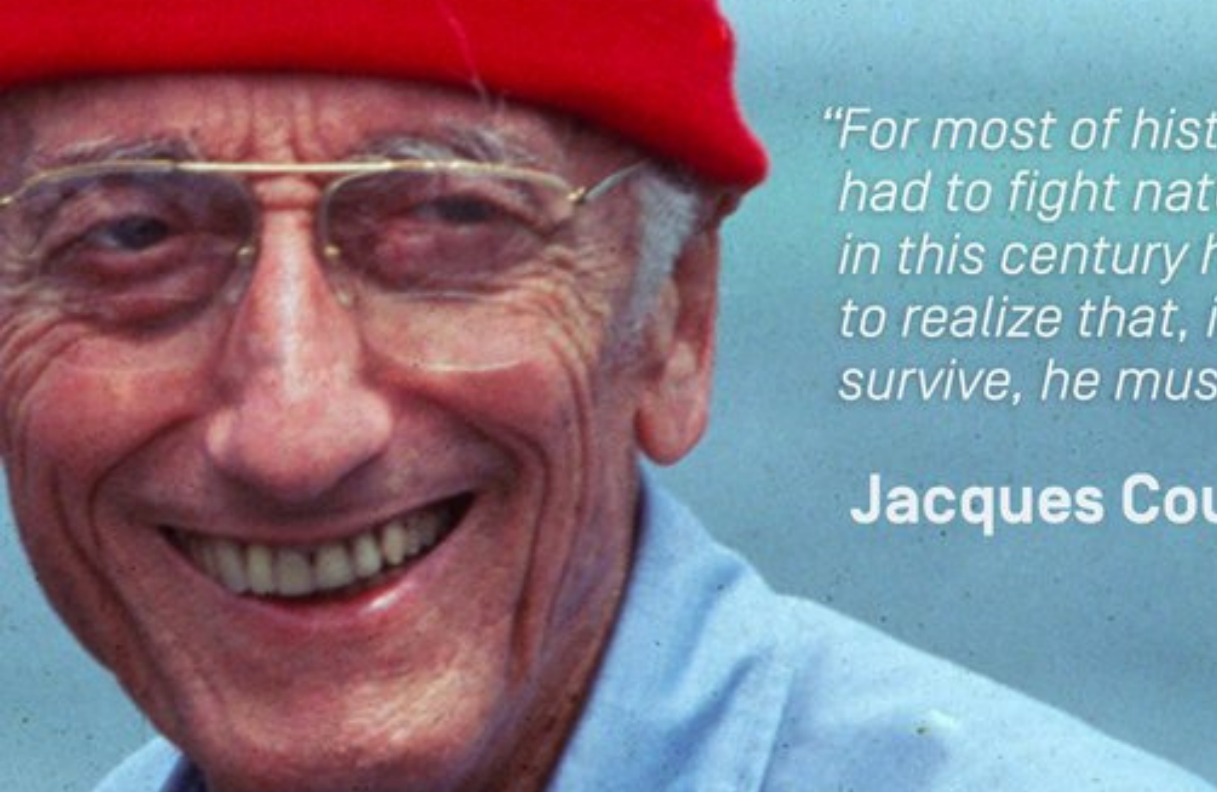


Making the world a better  
place - one page at a time

# Contents

<b>Up Front! <i>The Team</i></b>	<b>1</b>
Turn on, tune in and chill out	
<b>Snap Up! <i>Sirkka-Liisa Konttinen</i></b>	<b>2</b>
Focusing in on a veritable institution	
<b>Word Up! <i>Poetry Corner</i></b>	<b>7, 14</b>
Your poems on the theme of Radio & Television	<b>17 &amp; 21</b>
<b>Stand Up! <i>Kate Fox</i></b>	<b>8</b>
Telling it like it is	
<b>Play Up! <i>Danny Reed</i></b>	<b>11</b>
Music for the common good	
<b>Showing Up! <i>Jennifer C. Wilson</i></b>	<b>15</b>
The power of television	
<b>Keepy Up! <i>Paul Armstrong</i></b>	<b>18</b>
Behind the scenes at Match of the Day	
<b>Listen Up! <i>Steve Lowe</i></b>	<b>22</b>
Listen very carefully, I will say this only once!	
<b>Read Up! <i>Jenna Warren</i></b>	<b>25</b>
Young reads	
<b>Coming Up! <i>'Til Next Month</i></b>	<b>28</b>
Ready, Set, Go!	





*“For most of history, man has had to fight nature to survive; in this century he is beginning to realize that, in order to survive, he must protect it.”*

**Jacques Cousteau**

*Photo Save Our Seas @saveourseas*

# Up Front!

Hi everyone and welcome to summer!

Today we've had a typical English summer's day - soaring temperatures and a sudden thundery downpour! What more could you ask for? Well, for a start, how about TV and radio programmes as good as they used to be? Alright, alright, we're being flippant (or should that read 'getting old'?!)

Well while there's nothing on the TV, tune in to this month's edition of your favourite positive news magazine. What have we got for you this month? TV and radio greats, that's what! Not only that but we report from a brand new festival, driven by a fantastic cause, and an interview with a world-famous photographer to boot.

As always, settle in, pour yourself a dry martini on the rocks (or maybe a QC sherry) and enjoy the best value programme around ... it's all free!

See you on the other side.

Bridget & Harry x





# Snap Up!

SIRKKA-LIISA KONTTINEN

**When we heard about AmberSide, a jewel in Newcastle's cultural crown, being under threat, we got in touch with its world-famous co-founder**

**Can you give us a potted history of the Amber Film Collective and the Side gallery?**

Amber grew out of the meeting of likeminded film students at London's Regent Street Polytechnic in 1968. Driven by a desire to work in communities that had a strong sense of their own identity, and with some of our members already familiar with Tyneside, the core group moved to Newcastle upon Tyne in 1969. I came from my native Finland to study filmmaking in London and became involved in the 'Ideas Factory', the embryonic Amber collective which was forming around the visionary final-year student Murray Martin and soon after left with the group for Newcastle upon Tyne.

The vision of an egalitarian approach to governance and creativity rooted in the craft skills of our members and a commitment to a long-term engagement with working class and marginalised communities in the North of England became the foundation of the Amber Film and Photography Collective. Politically engaged, but never politically aligned, Amber has always eschewed dogma and instead made its work with the authentic voices of the local communities which it became part of.

The desire to celebrate working class culture came in part from a resentment some members from working class backgrounds felt about how education had separated them from their roots. As for me, initially a total outsider, I became witness to the ambiguities and uncertainties of huge social

changes affecting the communities I lived in, whilst drawn to celebrate the individual lives within them. One way or another, Amber members who stayed, have always had their own personal reasons for relating to these territories.



Side Gallery, established by Amber in 1977, was born out of the frustration of having nowhere in Newcastle to show our own photography or to see anyone else's. We dedicated Side to socially engaged documentary photography, which remains its unswerving passion.

Photographers were introduced to the communities Amber had already long-standing relationships with, where they found their own stories to tell and through the works acquired as part of Side's commissioning, exhibition and touring activity, the AmberSide Collection soon built up to include the international classic and contemporary documentary narratives that reflect its wider concerns and that are in dialogue with its own work.



# Snap Up!

SIRKKA-LIISA KONTTINEN

**We loved learning about the educational aspect of AmberSide. Tell us about how you're working with children to enable them to document their lives.**

The vision and the practice of AmberSide:

We are passionate about empowering children and young people to document their lives and community and express their perspectives through photography and film. Providing them with the tools and skills to capture their experiences and the cultural heritage of where they live encourages self-expression. It fosters critical thinking, creativity, and a deeper understanding of the world around them.

One of our key initiatives in working with children is our 'Primary Source' programme. Through this we collaborate with schools and community experts to offer a granular documentary photography and filmmaking training programme. The sessions are designed to be interactive, hands-on, and tailored to the age and skill level of the participants.

Furthermore, we foster a collaborative and supportive environment where children can exchange ideas, give feedback, and learn from one another. We believe in the power of inter-generational storytelling and the importance of amplifying diverse perspectives. Through showcasing and exhibitions, we provide opportunities for children to share their work with peers, families, and the wider community.

Through the projects, children get access to images from the AmberSide collection: a world-class and culturally relevant archive.



*SIDE gallery interior*

**If a visitor to earth arrived and viewed Amber's collection, what would it teach them about us?**

If a visitor to Earth arrived and viewed the AmberSide Collection, they would learn a great deal about humanity and our collective social history. Amber Film & Photography Collective is dedicated to documenting and preserving the cultural heritage and socio-political experiences of communities in the UK and beyond. Through the Collection, the visitor would witness stories of resilience, activism, and cultural heritage that might not be widely known or acknowledged.

Moreover, the visitor would gain insights into the power of visual storytelling. Photography and film have a unique ability to convey emotions, capture fleeting moments, and evoke a deep sense of connection. The collection would foster an appreciation for the diversity of cultures, the importance of empathy, and the collective effort required to shape a more inclusive and just society.

By documenting social history, we acknowledge the significance of individual experiences, community struggles, and societal transformations. It demonstrates our desire to learn from the past, understand our present, and shape a better future.

# Snap Up!

SIRKKA-LIISA KONTTINEN

AmberSide Collection counts as unique, a coherent archive of film and photographic works where more than 20,000 photographs and 100 films create their discreet but interlinked narratives. As a living archive, works from the Collection can be used in new relevant contexts and they are frequently exhibited at Side when they relate to, or address current issues. The Collection is now secured for all time in the region through the recently established AmberSide Collection Trust which also houses my photography and Amber's films, since 2011 inscribed in the UNESCO UK Memory of the World Register as "being of outstanding value and importance to the United Kingdom".



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization



The narrative created through  
Sirkka-Liisa Konttinen's photography and Amber's films  
Inscribed on the National Register in 2011  
Memory of the World

**Your own work documenting the lives of people in Byker has gained iconic status. Tell us how you came to be in Newcastle during such a period of social change.**

In 1969 on my arrival to Newcastle upon Tyne, Byker became my own first home and it was a home before it became a project. For seven years, until my street came down, I documented in words and photographs the close working-class community I grew to love, while it was facing wholesale redevelopment. The pictures formed an evolving exhibition in the window of my free portrait studio, a derelict hair-dressing salon in the main shopping street.

The prolonged social upheaval and the eventual doomed-to-fail attempt at rehousing the community

into Ralph Erskine's newly built Byker Wall Estate led to the next momentous social change in Byker.



*Young couple in a backyard on a summer's day, Byker 1975*



*Children with collected junk, Byker 1971*



*Girl on a Spacehopper, Byker 1971*

In 2003, twenty-five years after leaving my demolished Byker home, I was invited back with my camera to the architecturally visionary estate, now mobile and multi-cultural. Amongst the newcomers to Byker I found counterparts to my own experience



# Snap Up!

SIRKKA-LIISA KONTTINEN

forty years earlier when I arrived as a foreigner in an almost exclusively working-class community. Designated as a reception centre through the UK's policy of refugee dispersal, Byker was now speaking in 28 languages. I volunteered in the Byker refugee support group and followed any new introductions and encounters, getting to know individuals and small communities ready to instill the Byker Wall Estate with their own sense of who they are.

Over the following six years I invited the residents to imagine their lives in 'just one picture', as a way of introducing themselves to their neighbours and the wider world. Through the portraits and testimonies the resulting *Byker Revisited* attempts to draw together singular lives into a virtual community, in some ways continuing a dialogue with the community that was lost in the name of progress.



*Byker Revisited: Nancy-Jade, student from Burundi, 2004*

**What advice would you give anyone wanting to document change in their own lives and environments?**

A good starting point to documenting change is to

live it yourself, or to know it from close-by or to know someone who knows it from the inside. And to care about it enough to put yourself out there! A period of research has certainly helped my projects into being, but just as a starting point. The work itself then takes you on a journey, the destination and outcomes of which may not become clear to you for a long time yet. I am now working on projects I already published in the 1980s but only now see clearly what they are about, hence the revised editions, beginning with *Byker*.



*Byker Revisited: David McArdle with daughters, 2008*

To photograph one's fellow human beings it helps to be curious by nature and to enjoy random encounters. Knowing your own driving forces and how you would explain to yourself why and what you are doing, helps you to explain it to others and to remain comfortable in your skin when you occasionally get rejected. It's all part of the adventure.

What you may think of as being merely local can find counterparts across the globe. The dispersal of established communities through the destruction of housing, for whatever reason, is just one among the common stories. Since those years of documenting Byker the work has travelled from Europe to Mexico, and in 1980 it



# Snap Up!

SIRKKA-LIISA KONTTINEN

was the first photographic exhibition from Britain to be taken to China by the British Council after the Cultural Revolution.



Culture Awards to Amber, 2016

Sirkka as a Byker hero on Byker metro station, 2014



© Sirkka-Liisa Konttinen, courtesy L. Parker Stephenson Photographs, NY/AmberSide.



***On 9th April 2023, Side Gallery closed to the public due to critical funding cuts and the 'cost of living crisis'.***

***For over 45 years, Side has been a dedicated home to documentary film and photography. Side's mission is to be an agent for change through the commission, exhibition, and preservation of world-class visual stories that highlight social concerns and celebrate diverse lives & landscapes across the Northeast, UK, and the globe.***

***Now more than ever, we must protect this vital and freely accessible cultural resource so it can continue to provide an essential public platform for these important stories.***

***You can view the campaign film here and help save this essential space: <https://www.amber-online.com/side-gallery/>***

# Word Up!

YOUR POEMS ON THE THEME OF  
RADIO AND TELEVISION

## How we danced

Lads would lounge under lampposts, when mam was young,  
made music in the moonlight from mouth organs,  
paper and comb, two spoons knocking out  
the beat of Top Hat and Goodnight Sweetheart.

Mam waltzed me round the kitchen to Bing Crosby,  
we jitterbugged to Billy Cotton's Band,  
then Christmas sixty-four she gave me  
three Decca forty fives and a Dansette record player.

I danced alone in my bedroom to Radio  
Caroline rolling stones over the Channel.  
Luxembourg crackled the devil's songs  
we sang on the school bus next morning.

Mam was courted in the Majestic ballroom,  
you courted me with home-made cassettes,  
tunes bass as whales off Alaska,  
pirated tracks just for me and we danced without touching.

CDs kept company with us through sick-child nights,  
MP3s jogged through gyms and long car journeys.  
Now I download from the cloud of lost love songs,  
Dance With Me and Sweet Dreams Are Made of This.

*Jean Laurie*

## Tune in

There are channels and streams,  
podcasts and broadcasts,  
dramas and comedies,  
soap operas, the news.

You can view them in real time  
or watch at your leisure,  
listen again at an hour that suits,  
reboot the schedule whenever you wish.

But, treasure this:

Channels and streams run to  
rivers and lakes,  
Seed pods are broadcast to  
a soundtrack of birdsong.

The drama of autumn,  
the promise of spring,  
returning each year  
without fear of repeats.

These seasonal shows,  
nature's long-running series,  
are all free to view,  
no contracts or fees,  
and outside, every night,  
there's a strong guarantee  
of an all-star cast above you.

*Gerda Pickin*

Next month's theme is: **SPORT**

Feel free to interpret the theme as you see fit  
and send up to 3 poems  
(no more than 20 lines each please) to:  
[admin@positivelyup.co.uk](mailto:admin@positivelyup.co.uk)

Full submission details can be found on our  
website: [https://positivelyup.co.uk/poetry-  
submissions](https://positivelyup.co.uk/poetry-submissions)



# Stand Up!

KATE FOX

**Up! meets the poet, writer, performer and broadcaster regularly heard on national radio (when she's not gigging at Glastonbury that is!)**

**We'd love to know what got you started writing poetry? Did you enjoy writing at school?**

Sort of. I don't think I enjoyed the actual act of hand writing and I was quite bored in a lot of lessons but I loved when we were allowed to go off on one with a story and do our own thing. I remember writing a random funny story about Margaret Thatcher and the government imploding, inspired by Adrian Mole's Secret Diary when I was nine or ten. And a student teacher doing a session on Haiku with us. Plus I'd write funny poems at home - mostly to the disinterest of my Mum. Though I later learned she used to write funny rhyming poems to her Dad every birthday. English teachers tended to like me. And I'll always be grateful to Mr Burton, my English teacher at secondary school who let me use his classroom to put together a school magazine (The Moon : "You've read The Sun, eaten a Galaxy, now laugh at The Moon") and guarded me and the editorial team from being sent out into the freezing playground at break times.



Kate and Mr Burton



**Having seen you live several times, we can attest to the quality of your poetry. What also strikes us though, is how well you 'perform' your work. Is this something that comes naturally, or do you have to work at it?**

It's a mixture. I always loved "reading out loud" at school and would be picked to do that, but I've picked up and deployed a lot of performance skills over the years, particularly when doing stand up. Also I've done loads of gigs - and stage time is the work sometimes. Plus I really like observing performance - what works and doesn't work. Which is often intriguingly different in different contexts and with different audiences.

**Having started out as a radio journalist, you're clearly used to the medium, but how does reading poetry to an audience compare to reading out your work in a radio studio? Is one easier than the other?**

Well it's probably easier to read your work in a radio studio because there are no unpredictable factors but it's not as fun. For me performance is all about the buzz of audience reaction and



# Stand Up!

KATE FOX



energy. The chemical shifts in a room that happen - and that your words and the way you say them can help along. Probably a radio performance might be technically smoother with a more even

tone and better diction-but it's less likely to have a "spark" about it.

## Tell us about your favourite gig.

I've done thousands of performances - I don't think I have a favourite! Some have more magic than others. I'll never forget being on stage with a group of writers and performers from Hull (Women of Words) doing a show we'd devised for the City of Culture (2017) called "Queens of the North". They were so brave and brilliant. I wanted to cry through the whole show with a sort of pride.

Then, I performed a poem I'd written about a group of middle aged burlesque performers called the Ruby Reds who once made the semi finals of Britain's Got Talent - and ended the performance at the point where they stripped off, by baring my own bra that had nipple tassels with Philip Larkin's face on! That was a pretty memorable day in Hull all round. Topped off with a brilliant disco where Simon Armitage was the DJ. It sounds like a surreal dream I had but I swear it all happened!

## What's the best piece of writing/performing advice you've ever been given, and what advice would you pass on to aspiring writers/performers?

I think the advice I've needed to hear has been different at different times.

I'll always remember the late Newcastle-based poet Julia Darling saying that if you made a living as a writer you have to prioritise time to actually write or you'll end up teaching, doing admin, anything but the writing.



When I think back on it, a lot of performance and writing advice might apply to the person giving it - but not to everyone else. So my main advice would be to do as much performing and writing as you can in order to find what works for you.

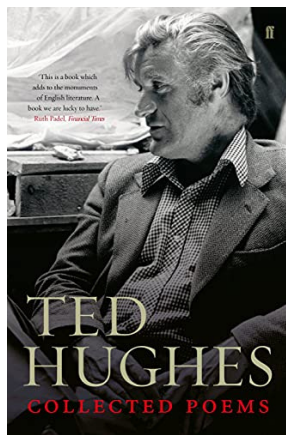
Though one performing tip I wish more people would take on, because I personally find it much easier to watch people doing it, is to be in the now. Be in the moment, in the room, with yourself and with the audience. Don't just stick to a script. The thing of saying "yes" to the now is more of a stand up comedy/improvisation approach and might mean, for example, if something happens in the room that you refer to it rather than ignore it. But it's also about being present with yourself - taking a deep breath and genuinely looking at and connecting to the audience who are there. Audiences can read who is present and who isn't.

# Stand Up!

KATE FOX

**You're sent to a desert island – whose poems will you be taking with you to keep you company?**

I've just judged the Forward poetry prizes which meant reading over 100 poetry collections and discovering some amazing new (to me) poets. I'd take the Forward Book of Poetry 2023 because it's so varied and I chose some of the poems in it!

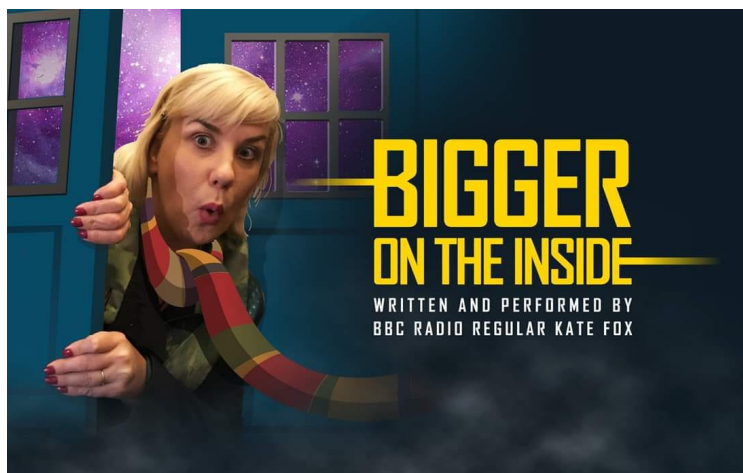


But if I'm on an island then I feel like Ted Hughes Collected would help give me a good view of nature. And the Czech poet Miroslav Holub and Polish poet Wislawa Szymborska would give a good perspective on history and isolation (and are both subtly funny). Then, if

I'm on an island I might as well meditate a lot on the nature of existence so I'd also take something from the brilliant Buddhist monk and writer Thich Nhat Han.

**What's coming up for you over the next few months?**

I'm hoping to get my spoken word show about neurodiversity and Dr Who back out there after it ground to a halt in the pandemic. It's called Bigger



on the Inside. There'll be a performance at Gosforth Civic Theatre at some point.

I'm writing a new collection for Smokestack next year that will also be neurodiversity inflected (and might be called "The Quirking Class Manifesto").

Also doing the final judging of the Forwards in October. And my book based on my show about Northern women "Where There's Muck There's Bras" (published by Harper North) is in, as they say, all good bookshops!



**LOST STORIES OF THE  
AMAZING WOMEN OF THE NORTH**

**KATE FOX**

'Kate Fox is funny, quirky and a wonderful writer'  
Sarah Millican

To follow Kate, check out any of the following links:

[katefox.co.uk](http://katefox.co.uk)

<https://www.facebook.com/kate.fox.906>

<https://www.instagram.com/katefoxwriter/>



# Play Up!

DANNY REED

In the wake of our previous encounter with The 3 Dads Walking and their campaign to highlight young people's mental health issues, we talk to a young man so determined to make a difference he single-handedly founded a folk festival

**Thanks for agreeing to talk to Up! Danny. So how did the festival go from your point of view?**

The festival was a huge success from the organisational point of view and also the enjoyment from all of the festival goers. The attendees had nothing but positive feedback from the get-go and the weekend went so much better than anybody imagined! The venues and charity all benefited from the activities and fundraising, and the village feels like it has been revitalised lately due to the hard work and commitment of myself and everybody around.



**Organising a folk festival is a massive undertaking! Where did the idea come from?**

The organisation was very difficult for me to do, due to mental and physical health issues I have been having. I am currently undergoing a referral for ADHD and also struggle with Severe Anxiety and Depression due to trauma, life events and being overwhelmed with a large amount of pressure and stress.



The idea for the festival came from me attending folk festivals with a local group of musicians called the Black Sheep Band and has been on my mind for many years,

thinking why can't our village / area do something like this while raising money for a charity that is close to mine and my family's heart? In 2018, we lost a family member (Russell) who was close to all of us and a pivotal part to village life and the community. This was a massive shock for all of us and this is where the great work from his close family and the business he worked for (Devereux's) comes in.

They decided to start a charity to help those who have been affected by suicide and offer therapy and support to children and adults alike who have been affected by the issue; this is the Headlight Project. I wanted to do my part to help the charity, and felt it was only right to use my skills to offer my support to something that affects so many of us in mental health.



The festival has been in my thoughts and the planning stages for almost 2 years now and in January 2023, I hit a mental health crisis that made me start to think about my own life and future. With



# Play Up!

DANNY REED

the help of my family, friends and my partner and the IAPT service from the NHS I was able to get back on the road to recovery and start to think that there is a future for myself, and I still feel it was a complete miracle that I managed to pull the festival off with the hard work and support of the local community - which are the reasons why it was such a success.

I am now back on track and taking positive steps regarding my own mental health, and this is all down to the people around me who have been so supportive and the IAPT service that the NHS offers, I would urge anybody to find the courage to talk about their thoughts and what's on their mind, as the relief you receive once you talk about it is staggering. Your life starts to piece together and there is support everywhere for anyone who undergoes any form of mental distress or health issues. There have been times where I felt like I couldn't go through with the festival due to stress, trauma and anxiety, which is why it took me so long to plan and organise, but without the help of everyone around me, the festival would not have happened and been such a success.



**We were struck by how supportive your wider community were towards the festival. How important was it that your local community were supportive of what you were trying to achieve with the festival?**

The local community has been absolutely fantastic in their support for the Hutton Rudby Folkfest, and the success over the weekend would not have been achieved without their help. There are numerous people and bodies who have assisted throughout the whole festival; they are the main reason why it will be continued for many years, supporting charities and the local community. The musicians who performed over the weekend were instrumental to the success of the folk festival, and I cannot thank everybody enough for their support.

**So ... are we to take it you're doing it all again next year?**

Oh absolutely! Hutton Rudby Folkfest will be back next year on the bank holiday weekend of 24-26th May 2024. You can get in touch via our Facebook page at [Hutton Rudby Folkfest](#) or using the contact details on our website at [hrfolkfest.co.uk](http://hrfolkfest.co.uk) with any queries or questions regarding accommodation, facilities and support. Our inbox is also open to anybody who just wants to have a chat about their mental health or anything else, the page and emails are manned by myself and all information is completely confidential and I will try my best to direct you to the right tools available that can help you get through any difficulties.



# Play Up!

HUTTON RUDBY FOLKFEST 2023



*A massive thank you to Hutton Rudby resident, Alex Bos,  
for allowing us to use his photos*



# Word Up!

## YOUR POEMS ON THE THEME OF RADIO AND TELEVISION

### **salvation by transistor radio**

a subject of the Shannon Empire\*  
an acolyte of the Bird\*\*  
i grew up listening  
to detroit/windsor radio  
a border city teenager  
feeding on american dreams  
finding release  
ending my pain  
three minutes at a time.

night radio became religion  
praying at the wall of sound  
listening to guitar gods  
baptized by their power chords  
redemption by transistor radio  
set free to be  
a morning poet  
and evening apostle  
where prophets  
sang psalms to me  
replenishing my vacant virtues  
in the deliverance of rock and roll

### **Joe Farina**

\*- Tommy Shannon dj at CKLW -The Big 8 Windsor /WXYZ -Detroit Sound

\*\* Robin Seymour dj at CKLW -The Big 8 Windsor /WXYZ -Detroit Sound

### **Sonya Bravia**

At twenty  
her picture was high definition,  
sharp contrast,  
clear natural colours.  
Dolby surround sound.  
He tuned in to her every night.

By forty  
she was showing repeats  
of old favourites.  
Her contrast needed a tweak,  
her colours weren't so sharp,  
her volume decreasing.  
He started exploring  
other channels.

By sixty  
her outlines were blurring,  
her colours faded  
to greyscale.  
Gradually, her pixels  
dropped.  
He shopped around.

At seventy  
on Market Street  
on a busy Friday lunch hour,  
she pushed him under a tram.  
No-one was watching.

### **Rachel Davies**



# Showing Up!

JENNIFER C. WILSON

**Up!'s resident marine biologist switches on her (doubtless rented from Rediffusion) TV**

I thought long and hard about what to write about this month. I know I've made a LOT of references to various marine-based films over the last few months, but now that's the actual theme, I didn't want to go too obvious...

As is so often the way, a random conversation sparked an idea. When it comes to my broad topic of marine / nature, and television especially, there are two names which simply cannot be ignored: Jacques Cousteau and David Attenborough.

Now, I know both have had their controversial moments (nobody's perfect), but both men, and especially Attenborough, have made such positive contributions to nature conservation, and mostly through the power of television.



From a purely marine perspective, Cousteau's work in co-creating the first successful SCUBA kit revolutionised camera crews' ability to film underwater, and his documentaries were world-changing;

*The Silent World* was one of the first films to show the underwater world in colour, and even won an Oscar in 1957. His two major series made specifically for television, *The Undersea World of Jacques Cousteau* and *The Cousteau Odyssey* gave many an insight into the marine world that they simply would never have experienced any other way.

That concept of showing people the relatively unknown was also part of *Zoo Quest's* appeal, Attenborough's first major contribution to television. Although the idea of delightfully showing the capture of animals from the wild to stock London Zoo would never be allowed now, at the time it was standard practice, and through the incorporation of footage showing the animals' habitats, as well as local cultures, it became one of the most popular TV series of the time.



Photo credit [here](#)

Speaking personally, the combined work of these two was instrumental in setting me on the path to my career. Having always loved the sea, a visit to the (sadly

doomed to failure, open only for three years, 1989-1992) Parc Océanique Cousteau in Paris really sparked things off for me. There was a life-sized blue whale model, which you could walk through, listening to its heartbeat, and she even had a baby in her womb. I remember being absolutely blown away by the size of it, as well as the science of the SCUBA kit on display. Then came Attenborough's 1993 documentary on killer whales, *The Wolves of the Sea*, which blew my mind. It might come across as a little blood-thirsty, but watching the mighty killer whale

# Showing Up!

JENNIFER C. WILSON

push up out of the surf and onto the beach in Patagonia was incredible. Even now, I get a thrill – and it was amazing when they returned to shoot the same sequence for Blue Planet. There’s a certain tone to the music on BBC documentaries when orca appear, and whenever I hear it, it still sends shivers down my spine.



Looking at the longevity of Attenborough’s career in particular, I’ve always hoped somebody would do a meta-study into his inspiration. Based on how many people I know who ended up in their conservation or environmental careers because of his programmes, and the number of interviews I’ve seen where people have credited him as the reason they’re interested in nature, the scale of species and habitat protection and conservation that he can indirectly claim credit for must be off the scale.

Even for those who never jumped into a career because of Attenborough’s documentaries, he’s been providing nature conservation education to the masses for decades, and the simplest act of inspiring somebody to recycle rather than throw something away can make a difference if done enough times.

A simple glance at the ‘Achievements, Awards and Recognition’ section of Attenborough’s Wikipedia page gives just a flavour of the respect he’s earned over the years. And even now, having just celebrated his 97th birthday, he isn’t shying away from shouting his message loud: nature conservation is vital for the survival of humanity, and the planet, and we all need to do our bit.

So, what’s the ‘Up’ message here? Film and television can be so frequently criticised, television especially today, often coming up against arguments of “what’s the point of this?” and claims that “it’s all reality shows these days.” In amongst it all though, there are still gems that can make us stop and think twice. Whether it’s for nature-lovers like me, an in-depth investigation that makes you reconsider your opinions on a



potentially controversial topic, or simply an impeccably filmed historical documentary that sparks (or keeps alive) an interest for you, television can still be a force for positivity. Even when all you’re doing is giving yourself a mental health break by binge-watching a murder-mystery series for a whole Sunday afternoon!

*As well as being a full-time marine biologist, Jennifer also writes historical fiction.*

**Facebook:** <https://www.facebook.com/jennifercwilsonwriter/>

**Twitter:** <https://twitter.com/inkjunkie1984/>

**Blog:** <https://jennifercwilsonwriter.wordpress.com/>



# Word Up!

## YOUR POEMS ON THE THEME OF RADIO AND TELEVISION

### **Lost and Remote**

Unabridged islands off Scotland  
skipped whole steps of hi-tech,  
like my mate Nick the lobster man,  
who jumped straight from LPs to CDs  
no TV to DVD  
by-passing the passing place littered  
with unravelled C60 tapes  
or Nick's neighbours' parents  
who went from eating Birds' eggs to Birdseye  
in Hebridean crofts never clad with TV paraphernalia  
- too distant to pick up broadcast signals -  
until satellites, equally spaced from us all  
added to the starry night sky and decorated the thatch with  
dishes.

Inside cottage walls  
hands slide down sofas  
finding library cards and old pennies,  
feathers and knitting needles,  
in search of the lost remote.

**Steve Harrison**

### **A Little Night Music**

Of course there are the sounds of nature,  
The other night was torrential rain,  
Every morning the dawn chorus.  
The sounds that were always there for us  
even if we did not notice  
when tv and radio and chatter filled the brain.

But in the silence of your passing  
there comes previously unheard noise.  
The minor and normally ignored sounds,  
The creaks of movement in our house,  
The whirring of the shower room fan,  
All convert to music and voice to fill the void.

**Peter A**

### **This is a Good Day**

The radio crackled into life.  
As the buzzing died down  
a melodious wave crept out  
from the cloud of static.  
It made us sway and swing  
first slowly  
then with gusto  
until we were laughing  
unashamedly and uncontrollably.  
You cupped your smooth hands  
around my roughly shaved cheeks  
and whispered  
"This is a good day!"

**Chris Husband**

# Keepy Up!

PAUL ARMSTRONG

**Kick off time with Match of the Day's long-running Producer**

**Give us a quick introduction to the role of a Match Of The Day producer.**

I recently worked out I worked on MOTD for a quarter of a century. And since I packed up in 2014 - the 50th anniversary of the show, and my 50th birthday - at that time I'd worked on it for half the show's history and half my lifetime! I was initially an assistant producer on the show - putting together analysis and montages, and pretty quickly moved on to producing match edits. Back then there were only two or three of those per show, ie games with multi-camera coverage and commentary, before things got more sophisticated and every game was covered that way.



**MATCH OF THE DAY**

To this day, each match has its own producer working in an edit suite to get the 90 minutes down to however many minutes the programme editor has allocated to it in the running order. By 2000, that programme editor was me, annoying fans up and down

the country by putting their game on last and not showing enough of it, while displaying disgraceful favouritism to whichever club they liked least. At least that's what the postbag, soon to be replaced by social media, invariably told me! On a live game, I was responsible for everything other than the important bit, the directing of the match. So, what to talk about, analyse, feature and who to talk to and for how long, pre-match, at half-time, and post-match.

**What's your favourite memory of working for the BBC?**

I always enjoyed MOTD programme days watching all the matches coming in, in the company of the ex-pros, and then working out how to link them together and fit it all into the allotted duration. The working week was more mundane: office-based planning, logistics and admin.

The biggest treat were the big events and tournaments, especially once the technology meant we could take the studio on the road to most events. The first three football tournaments I worked on were Italia '90, Euro '92, and USA '94, all from TV Centre, London. But then from Euro 96 until my final World Cup in Rio in 2014, I was in situ wherever it was being staged. Very hard work, sometimes in strange working environments and time zones, but an incredible privilege that I never took for granted.

Probably the most consistently good memory though was editing live programmes at the London Olympics in 2012. Looking back, it was probably my personal career high point, the BBC's all-time high point as a national and international broadcaster, and our country's modern high point, too. Especially the opening ceremony, when we briefly convinced the watching world that we were a sophisticated,



*Photo credit here*



# Keepy Up!

PAUL ARMSTRONG

witty, welcoming country of Shakespeare, Bond, the Beatles and myriad historical and sporting innovations and endeavours!

**Ever been tempted to come from the shadows and appear in front of the camera?**

Not if I could help it! Anonymity is a great asset when you're making decisions second-guessed and disputed by millions. I used to go to Middlesbrough matches in the halcyon period when they were in the Premier League season after season, and chuckle to myself if I overheard anyone moaning about the perceived MOTD bias against the club.



It got even better when Gary Lineker started a Twitter account and began answering all the running order and bias-related questions I'd previously had to plough through back in the office after every

programme. I still don't know he deals with that, and now the wider flak he gets from certain quarters. He has a temperament that meant he was never booked in his career, yet at the same time is totally unbullyable, but I've always been much happier keeping a lower profile.

I did get asked to make a few TV and radio appearances during the recent self-inflicted BBC management/MOTD furore, which I was happy to

do in the (frankly ridiculous) circumstances. Not working there anymore made it possible to speak freely, and point out the complete double standards that had been applied (or not applied) by government-appointed bosses to Lord Sugar, Andrew Neil and other BBC presenters who'd expressed some not at all impartial opinions.

**It must be a very pressurized environment to work in, choosing highlights and shaping the whole programme, only leaving after the games have finished ...**

It is, especially on midweek shows where games finish not long before you're on air. You get better at making everything fit as you get more experienced, but there are still times when, for example, analysis on some of the later games in the show gets squeezed. It's usually the fault of the editor's dodgy arithmetic, but the public tends to blame the pundits for giving their team short shrift!



*Paul relaxing with Alan Shearer and Gary Lineker*

What tends to surprise anyone who visits MOTD is that it pretty much always goes out live, even at a weekend. Firstly, it would be a nightmare to pre-record a show then discover that, say, a manager had been sacked during the evening without any reference in the show, and secondly, you usually get a better, more spontaneous performance out of the on-air team when it's live. You definitely get more adrenaline flowing behind and in front of the cameras that way!

# Keepy Up!

PAUL ARMSTRONG

Okay, time for a few quickfire questions:

## Favourite team?

Middlesbrough. I grew up in Teesside, so was given no choice in the matter.

## Favourite presenter?

Impossible to answer without offending someone, so I'll say Alan Partridge!



Photo credit [here](#)

## A game you regret not covering?

Either the 1970 or 2022 World Cup Finals.

## Funniest memory of MoTD?

Live at an FA Cup tie at Wolves when Alan Hansen somehow didn't know he was on the air. Or trying to stay on the air during the Steven Gerrard epic FA Cup

Final extra-time and penalties in 2006, while BBC One wanted to show Dr Who instead. Neither seemed all that funny at the time, but they work retrospectively as absurd stories in my book!

## Best game you ever saw?

Boro 4 Steaua Bucharest 2, (4-3 on aggregate from 0-3 down) 2006 UEFA Cup semi-final second leg.

## Best footballer?

Lionel Messi's the best I've seen in person. Juninho's my all-time favourite player, though. Most Boro fans would say the same, I think.

## Favourite TV programme, past or present?

Match of the Day for both, obviously! Or great comedy - anything from Cheers to The Day Today. And I was blessed to grow up in era when Laurel and Hardy were regularly shown on TV.



Photo credit [here](#)

## Did you mention something about having a book out? ...

Yes, *Why Are We Always On Last?* (foreword by Gary Lineker) has been out for a while and is intended to give a behind the scenes insight into Match of the Day and the other BBC programmes I worked on. I wrote another one during Covid



lockdown called *Why Are We Always Indoors?* (Unless We're Off to Barnard Castle) which was also published, for anyone who shares my dissatisfaction at how we were governed during the Covid crisis. Maybe one day I'll find a subject to complete the trilogy. *Why Are We Always on a Yacht in the Caribbean?* has a certain ring to it...!



# Word Up!

YOUR POEMS ON THE THEME OF  
RADIO AND TELEVISION

## Time Travel on Late Night TV

Tired, a little drunk, you sink down on the sofa,  
too exhausted to make it up the stairs.  
reach for the remote, flick through the channels,  
maybe pour one last drink.

No way are you expecting how the years will fall away.  
A ghostly face flickers on the plasma:  
a floppy-haired boy with a fawn's clear eyes  
whose finely cut features and catalogue of poses  
you once rehearsed by heart.

You dare not remember how long ago it was  
when he smouldered and crooned in black and white  
on your thirteen inch Murphy tv screen.

When he dropped his lower lip and snaked his narrow hips  
for the first time you felt something like free.

So you bought all his records and sang along  
when you played them on your Dansette record player

Only Halfway to Paradise and  
A Million Miles From Nowhere,  
Maybe Tomorrow would be  
A Wondrous Place.

*Abigail Ottley*



Photo credit [here](#)

# Listen Up!

STEVE LOWE

**Up!'s outdoors man has something to say**

Ah! Those balmy days of lockdown. Or barmy days of lockdown. I forget which!

The good old gogglebox and the tranny (I'm a DAB hand now) played their vital part in keeping us all informed about the latest thing to worry about, and the only other real news seemed to be confusing or irrelevant.

But we all found ways to get outside (legally) when we could and the wonders of our local area and its natural inhabitants became more precious than ever (in recent times). We discovered a love



for hedgerows, murmurations of starlings, foraging (yuk) and many of us

rediscovered places we were familiar with but found that they were more diverse and interesting than we could possibly have dreamt of.

All this was bolstered by a vast array of high-quality wildlife filming, just waiting at the click of a remote, for the times when we were properly restricted, by orders of HM government in their own "Trials of Life". I think this is the time when bingeing of boxsets became compulsory. There was (and remains) plenty of choice, some of which do not even go near David Attenborough (and obviously some that are purely entertainment). Anything to escape the news.

But TV wildlife documentaries are popular and with good reason. The opening episode of Planet Earth II drew in 9.2 million viewers, for instance.

Shilpa Ganatra recently stated, "The trends in the pandemic are clear: audiences wanted escapism – things with bright colours or the cosiness of shows such as The Repair Shop," he says. "Or they want escapism in the form of a complex narrative, such as twisty-turvy crime with heroes and villains. Natural history speaks to both those needs at the same time. It's a comfort, but it's also thrilling and distracting".



It's not a new thing, of course. I was captivated by Jacques Cousteau (and his red hat), inventor of the aqua-lung and intrepid explorer and guide to the

"Silent World". I laughed (and learned) during Johnny Morris' chats with all those zoo animals. I watched the very young Chris Packham, never imagining I would work alongside him one day. Or the amazing David Bellamy, who inspired my interest in peatlands and who acted as a tireless advocate of international conservation during his own life.

Yes, I also had to suffer a one-eyed lion (Daktari), a captive dolphin (Flipper), a "caring" bush kangaroo (Skippy) and tea adverts using "comically" dressed Chimpanzees (Mr Shifter). But I like to think that these early programmes formed strong ethics within the young me that manifest today in all the work that I engage in (although I



# Listen Up!

STEVE LOWE

still remember some of the catch phrases – sorry, call me old fashioned – but I do). Thankfully, animation has taken this beyond those monochrome days though!

I personally feel that one of the most interesting developments in this area, which started during lockdown, was the sudden rise of Podcasting. Wikipedia states (today) that a "Podcast" is a portmanteau of "iPod" and "broadcast". It is a program made available in digital format principally for download over the Internet.

One extremely fine example of this phenomenon is "The Nature Garden". Described as "a monthly trip down the garden and country lane with nature enthusiasts and gardeners chatting about the flowers and trees, and birds and bees and more".

<https://naturegarden.buzzsprout.com/>

I don't blame you for wanting to have a listen, because it sounds wholesome and delicious. And let me tell you – it is. I know because I'm often on it!

Yes, I too became a podcaster during lockdown. And I am really glad I did as I was able to share my working days with a wider audience. Unlike them, I was fortunate that my job allowed me to venture forth and sample the outdoors for longer than most, because I work in it.

Our "podgang" (made up word!) consists of three of the nimblest minds in the North East. And me.

Leader of the pack is Carl Stiansen, master of the decks and mixers (make mine a double) who is a professional broadcaster, musician and an all-round "good egg". He does all the clever stuff (and it's his fault if anything goes wrong).

Backing him up, trowel and dibber in hand, is the mercurial Tom Pattinson, a garden guru who certainly knows his onions. And he has the charm to go with it, that creamy voice lures you in, whether he's talking fruity or peas or tatties, daffs or petunias.

Tom Cadwallender, Northumberland's very own bird brain adds his vast avian knowhow. He has had



Coquet Island photo credit [here](#)

more birds in the hand than in the bush, as a bird ringer for the British Trust for Ornithology. A well-travelled birdwatcher, Tom is one of the very few people actually allowed onto Coquet Island and is a specialist on Roseate Terns, one of our rarest breeding birds. He knows a bit about other stuff too mind you, not just birds. He's got a canny voice too.

I bring up the rear, throwing in a variety of things that I find interesting, hoping others may do as well. Often recorded during my working day, they consist of interviews with some of the great people I am fortunate to meet. Normal people, just like all of us, but all adding to the character and life of the area, often un-noticed by the rest. This is one way to highlight them.



Incidentally, if you love eclectic music as well, best to listen to Lionheart Radio (Alnwick) which hosts *The Weekending Show*, that precedes

# Listen Up!

STEVE LOWE

the podcast. Carl does a fine job there. You'll find that most mobile phones allow you to record audio and give good quality results. It's now fairly common for me to stick my phone under someone chin and ask questions. I have enjoyed learning how to get the shyest of people to open up because a good story is just a chat. The clips are a maximum of 5 minutes, so it's easy enough.



I guess that Instagram and Tiktok allow for similar experiences to be captured, but with added video. So far, I haven't been a great fan as they are not really aimed at a similar purpose and are not

always productive or interesting, in my opinion. However, You Tube and similar platforms are different and can be extremely positive. There are

some excellent self-produced documentaries and programs available that I think are as good as some of the things on mainstream TV. Try these, for instance:

The Price of Fish, LegaSea NZ on [YouTube](#)  
Jack Perks Wildlife Media on [YouTube](#)

Both informative, the latter is almost unique. Give these a try and have a go for yourself.

Make the audio/visual world your oyster? Actually, I'd watch that.

*An experienced wildlife professional, Steve currently works freelance with Northumberland Rivers Trust as well as undertaking work with volunteers on local heritage and archaeology projects.*

*His hope is to leave the world a better place.*



# Write Up!

Come and join Bridget and Harry for a quick chat followed by a precious hour of your own creative time. There's nothing like being able to set aside a little time in the company of other creative people and seeing what you come up with!

These regular zoom sessions take place on the 3rd Thursday of the month, so the next one is **Thursday 20th July, 7pm - 8pm (GMT)** with joining instructions [here](#) and on the Up! facebook group page.





# Read Up!

JENNA WARREN

This month our resident book reviewer has younger readers in mind



With the school summer holidays rapidly approaching, I thought I would recommend some of my favourite new illustrated books for young readers.

There's a wonderful children's publisher called Barrington Stoke, who specialise in books for young dyslexic readers. Every book is printed on cream, glare-resistant paper in a clear, easy to read font, and the stories are age appropriate while taking a range of reading levels into account.



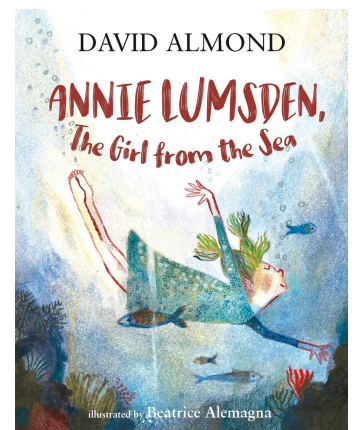
One of their most recent publications is *Nightjar* by Katya Balen, a beautiful book aimed at readers aged nine and above. *Nightjar* follows twelve-year-old Noah, who loves wildlife, particularly birds. He often rescues birds with the help of his best friend, Annie, and nurses them back to health in a homemade birdbox in his bedroom.

One day, Noah learns that his dad, who is separated from his mum and lives in New York, is coming over to visit and attend his Bar Mitzvah. Dad arrives a week early, keen to spend time with Noah, but Noah is convinced they have nothing in common. While out on a walk in the country, they find a sick nightjar lying on the ground. Noah insists on taking the bird home, while Dad says it would have been more responsible to leave it. This becomes a source of tension between them, but gradually Noah learns that he has more in common with his dad than he initially thought, and the incident ultimately brings them closer together. The story ends happily, for both Noah and the nightjar.

This is a beautiful story about family, nature, and growing up. The illustrations by Richard Johnson are delicate and dreamlike, but still realistic. Highly recommended for young nature lovers.

The latest book from acclaimed northern writer David Almond is *Annie Lumsden, the Girl from the Sea* (Walker Books), an illustrated modern fairy tale. Annie lives with her mam in a little wooden house on a beach inspired by the Northumberland coast. From an early age, Annie has found aspects of education difficult, so she has been home schooled. She also has 'falls', where she briefly passes out and imagines she's swimming under the sea. There seems to be no medical explanation.

Annie loves her mam's folktales, and when she's thirteen, she asks her mam for a new version of the story of where she came from. Her mam weaves a tale



# Read Up!

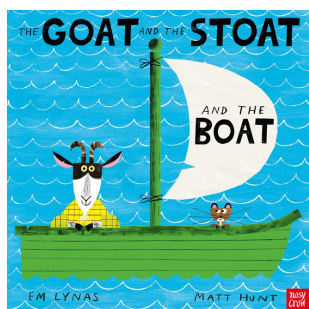
JENNA WARREN

about her meeting with a man from the sea, a 'very beautiful' man with a fin, who was Annie's real father. Annie discovers her true connection with the sea. This is a gentle and delicate tale about love and belonging, with a real 'northern' flavour. The evocative and playful illustrations, by Beatrice Alemagna, perfectly match the dreamlike quality of the story. This is an enchanting little book.



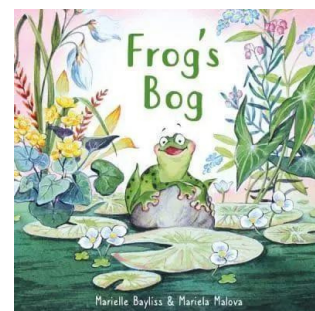
*Speak Up!* by Rebecca Burgess (HarperCollins) is a colourful, fun and moving graphic novel for young readers, written and illustrated by an autistic artist, and featuring an autistic main character. Twelve-year-old Mia dreads going to school, where she finds it impossible to talk. She's also bullied by other pupils in her class. However, Mia has a secret: her alter ego is singer Elle-Q, an internet music sensation. When one of the music videos created by Mia and her friend Charlie goes viral, her fans start begging her to make a live appearance. Charlie, who has written the music, wants her to enter a local talent show. To make things even more complicated, it seems that one of Mia's bullies is a huge Elle-Q fan. Mia has doubts about performing: what if she finds the experience overwhelming and has a meltdown? Will she be able to face her fears?

Mia's experiences are by no means glossed over: we see the effects of the bullying, and the pressure imposed by her (well-meaning) mum for her to behave more like other people. But we also see the real joy Mia finds in creating and performing music, and her friendship with Charlie. This graphic novel tells a relatable story in a sensitive and enjoyable way. Rebecca Burgess is a wonderful comic creator who deserves the widest possible readership.



I would also like to recommend some great picture books for younger readers. *The Goat and the Stoa and the Boat* by Em Lynas (Nosy Crow) is a fantastic and very funny rhyming picture book, with bright, stylish illustrations by Matt Hunt. Will the stoa share his boat with the 'goat in the colourful coat', or will things go horribly wrong? There's a lot of wit and detail in the illustrations, and the book is perfect to read aloud, with effective repetitions which will encourage children to join in.

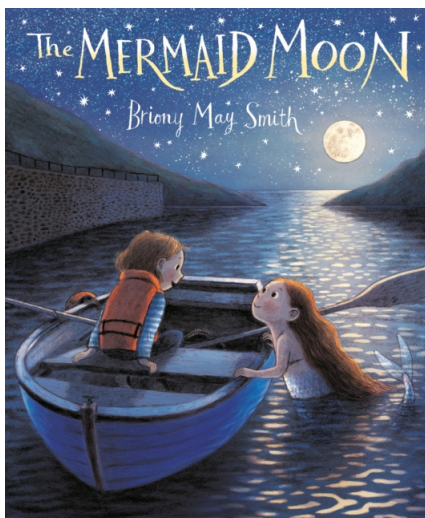
*Frog's Bog* (Graffeg) is a charming picture book written by Marielle Bayliss and illustrated by Mariela Malova. Frog just wants some peace and quiet, and something to eat. But the other wildlife seem intent on disturbing him. We follow him through various waterways as a fox soaks him, a dragonfly scares away his lunch, and a kingfisher tips over his boat. Finally, the other animals realise they've been selfish and collaborate to make frog's bog a great place to relax. This is a funny picture book with delicate watercolour illustrations. There are also definitions of the various waterways in the back of the book.





# Read Up!

JENNA WARREN



Finally, *The Mermaid Moon* (Walker Books) is a beautiful picture book for slightly older readers, written and illustrated by Bryony May Smith. Molly and Merrin are best friends. Molly is a human girl who lives in a cottage at the seaside, and Merrin is a mermaid who lives in the cove. The night of the Mermaid Moon is a chance for Merrin to step ashore and visit a special market with Molly. But she'll be stranded if she stays too long...The illustrations are stunning, especially those depicting realistic sea life. This book will have strong appeal to fans of *The Little Mermaid*.

Happy summer reading!

*Jenna Warren is a bookseller and writer from Teesside. She studied Theatre and later Creative Writing at university. She runs Book Corner, an independent bookshop in Saltburn-by-the-Sea. Her debut novel, *The Moon and Stars*, was published in 2022 by Fairlight Books.*



## Up Memory Lane!

Name the products from their 1970's TV ads ... (answers on our facebook group page next week!)

1. "Dad, do you know the piano's on my foot?"
2. "Lasts for up to 8 hours!"
3. "...just enough to give your kids a treat"
4. "I can't let Maggie go"
5. "And all because the lady loves ..."
6. "Full of Eastern promise."
7. "Ambassador, you spoil us!"
8. "Happiness is a cigar called ..."
9. "Yes, funny how you always remember right at the end."
10. "Henry loves ..."
11. "I'd like a 2nd class return to Nottingham please!"
12. "Graded grains make finer flour"
13. "Refreshes the parts other beers cannot reach"
14. "For hands that do dishes"
15. "Splash it all over"
16. "Nah, Luton airport!"

# Coming Up!

Inform, educate and entertain - sound familiar? ...

For those still in the dark, these were the three tasks given to the BBC on its inception in 1922. Well, a hundred and one years later, though we are tiny and they are mighty, we hope in some small way to do the same thing.

Next month, following on from June's Match of the Day feature, we focus on Sport. So pull on your pumps, dig out your gym shorts and ... have a nice cup of tea and a breather!

Meantime, do what we did as evidenced by our new photo below. Get yourself outside, soak up a few rays and spread the love among your fellow human beings.

Love  
Bridget & Harry xx



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