



Malvern's Reading for Pleasure Newsletter – January 2026

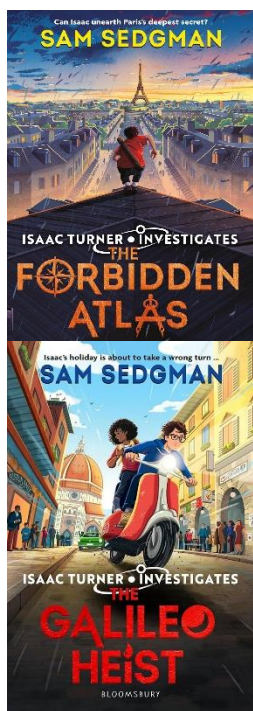
The National Year of Reading 2026

Welcome and a Happy New Year !

I hope that the Christmas holiday provided everybody with lots of interesting reading opportunities ! This year is **The National Year of Reading**. This is a campaign to address the steep decline in reading amongst children, young people and adults. It is a Department for Education initiative, in collaboration with the National Literacy Trust. The National Year of Reading will position reading as a powerful contemporary activity and will aim to engage new audiences in reading - and to change the national reading culture.

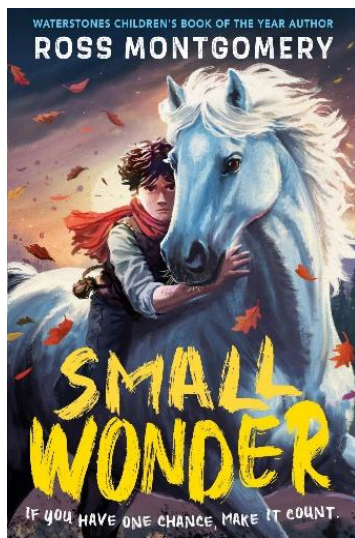


Reading supports success in school, work and in life – and boosts wellbeing, brings people together and increases empathy. There will be an exciting series of events for primary and secondary schools. These will aim to boost reading for pleasure and will include virtual assemblies with inspirational figures, webinars and resources for teachers.

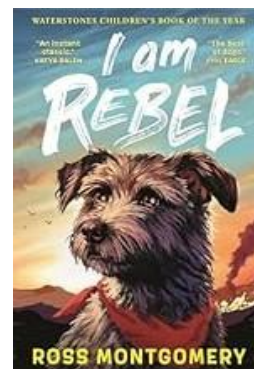


Christmas Holiday Reading: Over the festive season, I made limited inroads into the 'to read' pile of children's books. I really enjoyed the first of Sam Sedgman's *Isaac Turner Investigates* books: ***The Clockwork Conspiracy***. Aspiring inventor Isaac Turner lives with his dad, the horologist in charge of Big Ben. But when his father vanishes from the belfry on the night the clocks go back, leaving behind only a smashed pocket watch and a cryptic message, Isaac determines to find him. Hunting a trail of clues through London's landmarks, Isaac uncovers a sinister plot in the gears of government and embarks on a race against time to save his father - and time itself. The book revolves around the idea of the decimalization of time: one hundred minutes in an hour, ten hours in a day etc. It's a really engaging, fast-paced, page-turning thriller for children. *Artemis Fowl* author Eoin Colfer said that the book is: 'Clever, inventive and a cracking read.' The second book in this exciting series – ***The Forbidden Atlas*** – was published earlier on this year. And the third instalment – ***The Galileo Heist*** – will hit book shop shelves on February 12th.

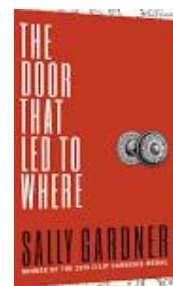
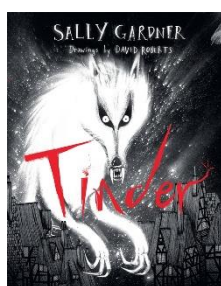
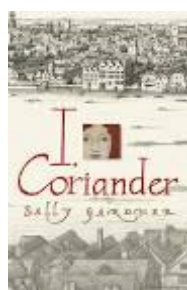
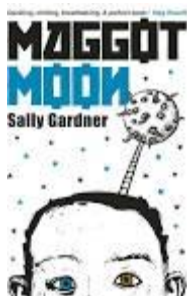
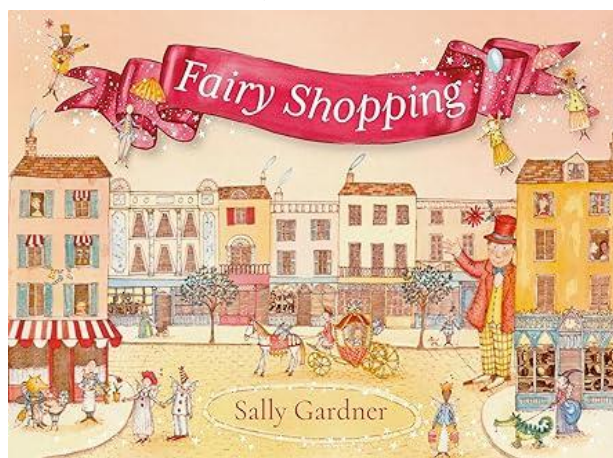




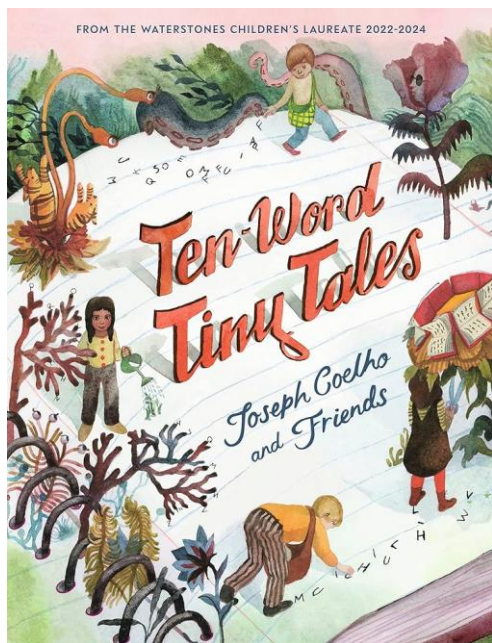
Ross Montgomery: Earlier this year, I read Ross Montgomery's *I Am Rebel* – a fab story that won the Waterstone's Children's Book of the Year Award. His latest novel – *Small Wonder* – is every bit as good. 'Small Wonder': that was what Tick's grandfather always called him. He taught Tick a lot of things: how to take care of himself; how to take care of his little brother, Leaf; how to take care of their horse, Pebble. But Grandfather is no longer around. So, when the family home is suddenly under threat, it's up to Tick to put everything he's learned into practice and protect his family - by taking them on a quest filled with danger. Because it's not just their home at risk; enemies are invading the whole land. He has only six moons to get to Kings' Keep and warn their ruler. Travelling through forests and mountains, encountering bandits and rogue knights along the way, the journey is not an easy one. But Tick is determined to honour his grandfather's last advice – *Make it count, Small Wonder*. . .



Fairy Shopping by Sally Gardner: This is an absolute visual feast of a book. In Silverbell Street the shops are always open - if you believe in fairies. You can buy a cloak of invisibility or a magic lamp, an umbrella that will transport you to the stars, eat flying fairy cakes at the Foxglove Restaurant, or join the fairies as they try on sparkly new dancing shoes and ball gowns and much more. Familiar giants, fairies and witches will encourage children to find characters hidden in the illustrations. I have read many of Sally Gardner's books for older children. These are all 'must reads'.....



Contributions Welcome: Our monthly reading for pleasure newsletter aims to inspire both children and adults to pick up a book and read – just for the sheer joy and pleasure that doing so brings. If you have any reading recommendations – or would like to contribute a review of a book that you have recently read – please email it to malvern@knowsley.gov.uk or send it to me directly. Previous editions of this newsletter can be found on the school website: www.malvernprimaryschool.co.uk



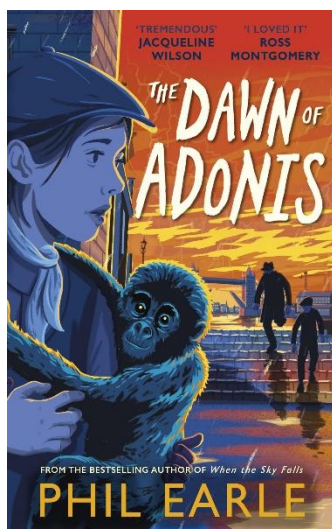
Ten-Word Tiny Tales: From the former Waterstone's Children's Laureate and winner of the Yoto Carnegie Medal for Writing - Joseph Coelho - comes a compendium featuring twenty brilliantly illustrated tiny tales, each only ten words long ! Is it possible to spin a tale using just ten words ? It most certainly is ! In this unique and magnificent compendium designed to spark the imagination, Joseph Coelho brings us stories of underwater worlds, demon hamsters, bears in outer space, and portals to places unknown ... all in just ten words ! Each tale has been paired with one of the finest illustrators working today – and, together, the words and pictures will create a space for creativity as young readers imagine how the story might unravel. They might even be inspired to pen a ten-word tiny tale of their own ! The book is prefaced by a note from Joseph Coelho - and with two creative writing challenges at the back, this is the perfect gift for all those ready to unleash their imaginations.

Help ! We Need a Story: A wonderful book about storytelling and the art of creativity - with an inspiring rhyming text from James Harris and beautiful, characterful illustrations from Mariajo Ilustrajo. It's a dull day in the jungle and Artie's friends are bored, bored, BORED ! (Artie is a macaque.) But with paper, pens and ink, a splash of inspiration, and a pinch of imagination, Artie creates something magical . . . a book ! Filled with hordes of zombie hens, a fire-breathing dragon and robot sharks (yikes!), Artie's newly created book busts the friends' boredom - and the next day they can't wait to do it all over again. With a clever book-inside-a-book concept, **Help ! We Need a Story** illustrates the power of imagination and will help to nurture kids' creative sides. This is the perfect tale for book lovers and any child who enjoys creating their own stories.



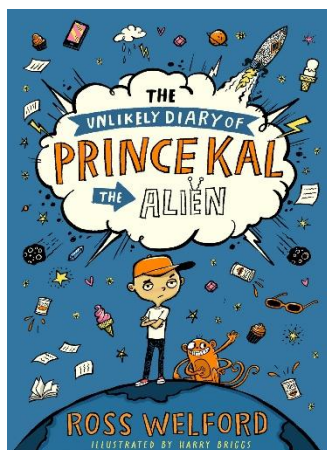
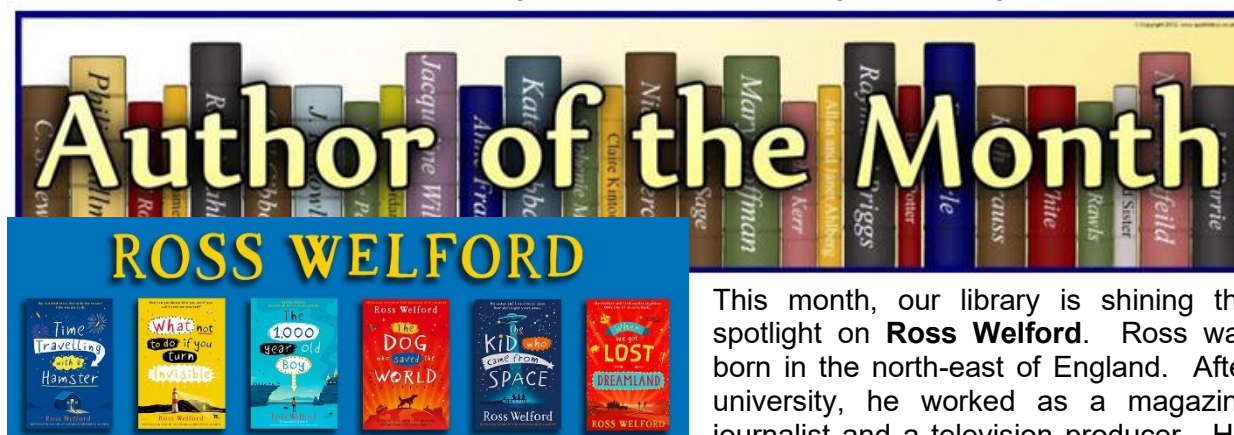
David Farr: The concluding book of David Farr's **The Book of Stolen Dreams** trilogy was published in September. The first two are excellent – and I can't wait to get stuck into this final instalment. After saving the world more times than she can count, things are finally starting to feel normal for Rachel Klein. But life is never normal for a Keeper of the Key. When a famous movie star returns, alive and well, to Krasnia after weeks lost in the desert, everyone is thrilled ! Everyone, except Rachel. Something about the actor doesn't feel quite right. Then Rachel realises the horrifying truth. With both their own lives and the fate of Krasnia at stake, Rachel and her brother Robert must return to the Hinterland, expose the truth and put an end to tyrant Charles Malstain's evil plans once and for all.





Phil Earle: Another Christmas read was Phil Earle's *The Dawn of Adonis* – the heart-wrenching story of a baby gorilla, born into captivity, and the twelve-year-old girl who risks everything to rescue him. In 1911, before the start of World War One, London's docks thrum with underhand deals, none so great as the arrival of a valuable, rare and exotic animal – a baby silverback gorilla. The baby gorilla stands to make one man very, very rich. Heaven help anyone who gets in his way. But then, one night, a twelve-year-old girl is unwittingly drawn into his criminal underworld. Can she find a way to escape and rescue the baby gorilla? *The Dawn of Adonis* is

the follow-up to Phil Earle's excellent *When the Sky Falls* – which is inspired by a true story. All of the Phil Earle books pictured are magnificent stories – exciting and moving in equal measure.



This month, our library is shining the spotlight on **Ross Welford**. Ross was born in the north-east of England. After university, he worked as a magazine journalist and a television producer. His first book – *Time Travelling With a Hamster* – was published in 2016. It was shortlisted for many noteworthy national book awards, including the Costa, Blue Peter and Waterstone's prizes. His most recent book – *The Unlikely Diary of Prince Kal the Alien* – was published in June of 2025. In his home world of *Imaginarium*, Prince Kal the Alien steps into the *Anywhere Cabinet* – a magical, inter-dimensional portal....and things do not go according to plan ! This is the first in a new diary format series of books.

'Books crowbar the world open for you.' (From 'Rooftoppers' by Katherine Rundell)

Paul Kynaston : Reading Advocate : Malvern Primary School : Liverpool : January 2026

I'm reading *The Unlikely Diary of Prince Kal the Alien* by Ross Welford.

Malvern Community Book Club's current book is *The Code of the Woosters* by P.G. Wodehouse.