

Whole generations switched on to reading.

By Joy Court

‘Shadowing is the best thing in the book world, join in!’

So tweeted double Carnegie medal-winning author Patrick Ness in 2015. In this Medals anniversary year I think it entirely appropriate to celebrate the unique, but now often emulated, CILIP Carnegie and Kate Greenaway Medals Shadowing Scheme - and its intrinsic connection to the books that have won the medals over the past 80 years and in turn, whole generations of readers who are switched on to reading in response to these amazing books.



There has been strong recognition - ever since the publication of the landmark OECD report Reading for Change (2002)- of continuing research evidence that reading for pleasure has a positive impact on attainment and the life chances of every child. Reading for pleasure also has a dramatic impact on wellbeing, as evidenced most recently in an extensive study published by The Reading Agency (BOP Consulting, 2015). This study has demonstrated that in addition to educational advantage, reading for pleasure brings a range of benefits to individuals and society and can increase empathy, improve relationships with others, reduce the symptoms of depression and the risk of dementia, and improve wellbeing throughout life.



Since its origins in the early 90's, the Awards shadowing scheme has grown in size, scope, prestige and sheer effectiveness in engaging thousands of children and young people in the UK and abroad. The impact of these coveted medals reaches beyond the authors, illustrators and publishers or even individual readers, bringing far-reaching benefits for young people and society.

Find out about Shadowing activity in your area



Shadowing Champions



View more

What are Shadowing Champions?

Each year, our panel of judges is asked to choose one group from a list of the most web-active shadowers in their area. The chosen group is given the badge of 'shadowing champion' as an example of good practice in the area. This isn't a competition and we know that many groups do fabulous shadowing activity which is sometimes not charted on their group homepages. If you would like to contact a judge in your area please use [this email](#).

If you are new to shadowing, check out what is happening in your area. We would love you to [join in!](#)

The shadowing formula

In case anybody does not know the scheme, each year children and young people in reading groups based mainly in classrooms and libraries (shadowers) 'shadow' the judging process for the CILIP Carnegie and Kate Greenaway Medals. Led by a librarian or group leader, they read, discuss and review the books on each short list and engage in reading-related activity in their groups and online. Reading activity takes place from March to June – from the moment that the short lists are revealed until the final winners' announcement. Between 2010 and 2015 there has been a 20% increase in registered shadowing groups, with 5,516 registered groups as of January 2016. This growth is likely to have been supported by the key findings of the Open University (OU) research project led by Professors Cremin and Swan (Cremin, Swan and Mukherjee, 2012) which showed that participants display, amongst a whole range of factors:

- increased pleasure and enjoyment in reading
- an enhanced desire to read
- wider reading repertoires
- engagement with high-quality books

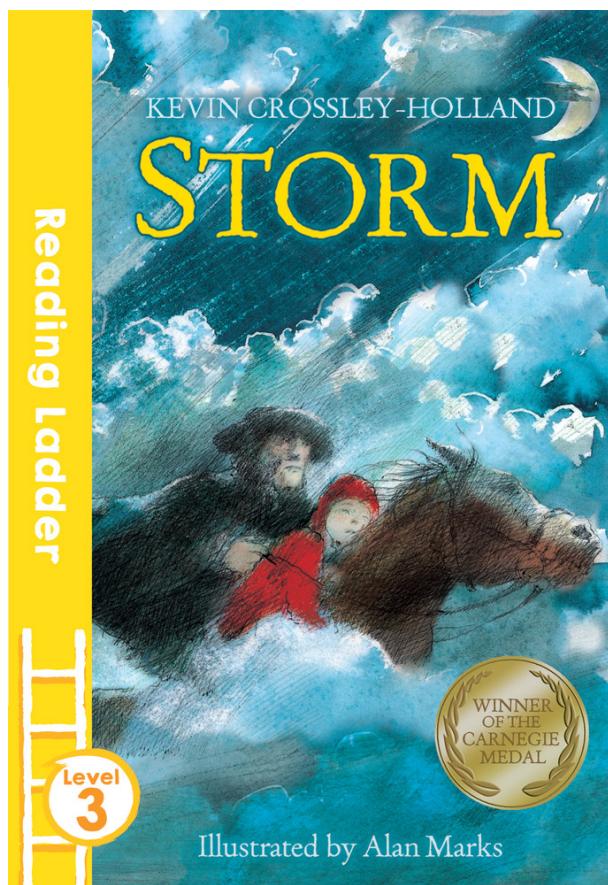
Reaching less able readers

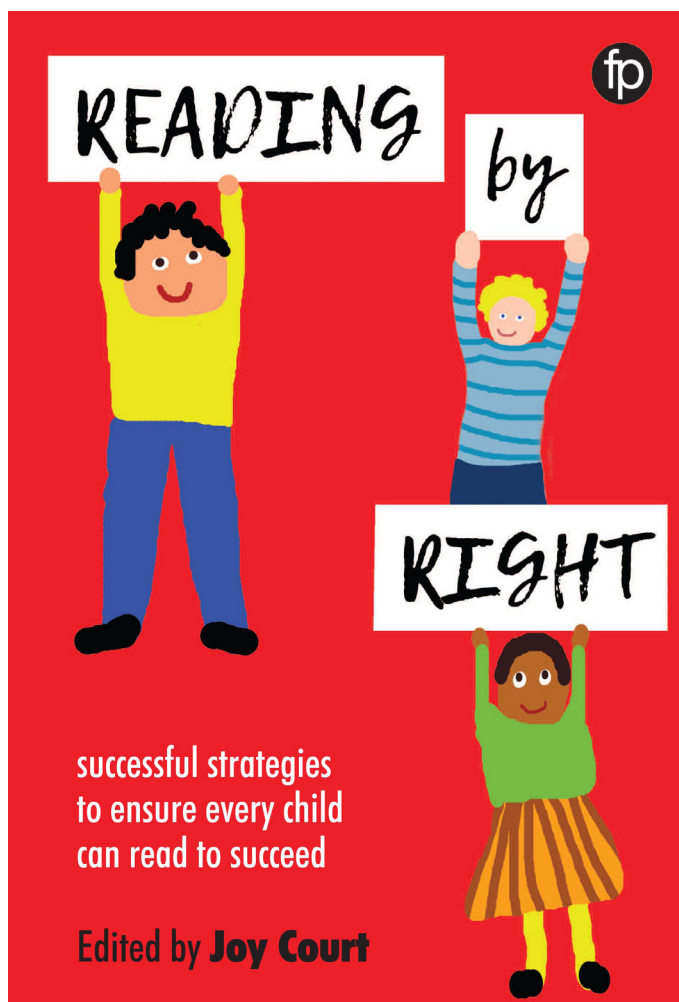
As well as celebrating the scheme more generally here, I also want to put paid to a few stereotypes. The OU study certainly 'support(s) a general perception that more "high-ability" readers tend to be selected, or are attracted to shadowing, particularly in the case of Carnegie'. People will also point out that since *Storm* by Kevin Crossley Holland won in 1985 there have not been any books that would be considered accessible to less able readers. Yet this same piece of research also demonstrates conclusively that 'CKG shadowing is highly flexible and adaptable, with the potential to work effectively across a range of settings and to be tailored to the preferred ways of working of group leaders and the interests, ages and abilities of diverse sets of young readers.'

PROMOTING A READING CULTURE

A recent poll of shadowers revealed:

- **89%** think Carnegie and Kate Greenaway shortlists introduce them to new books they otherwise might not have read
- **70%** talk to their librarian more when reading the shortlists
- **79%** say reading and discussing the books on the shortlists makes them think more about the books they read.
- **88%** tell us they read in their spare time and in the evenings.





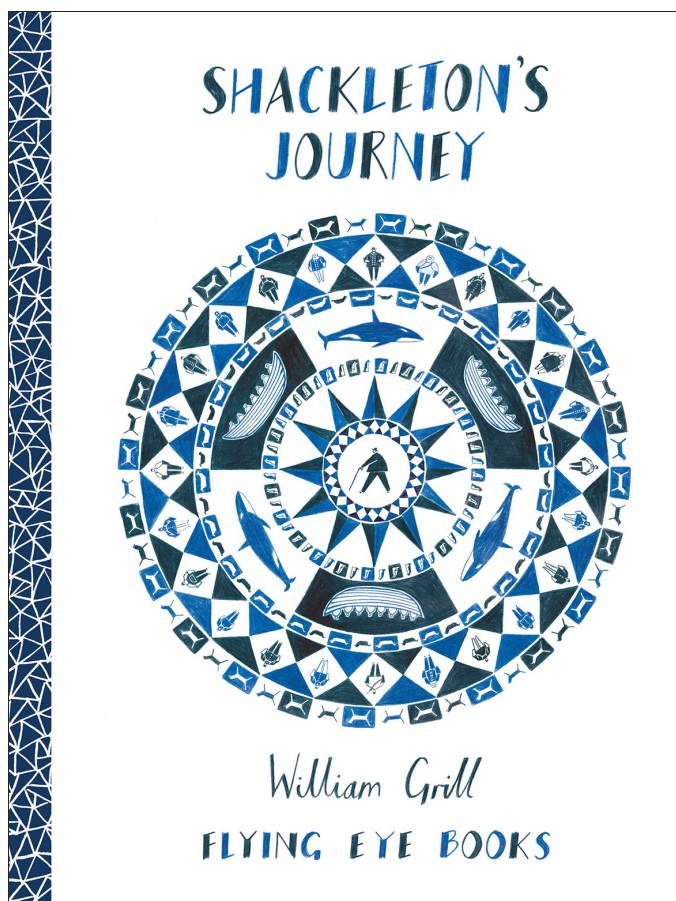
A right to read

Because I am so passionate about the vital necessity of every child being able to read, I have become increasingly concerned about those children who either cannot or will not read: the reluctant, the disengaged, the struggling, the hard-to-reach. So when Facet approached me about editing another book for them, it was these children and young people that came to mind and because I genuinely believe that, were you to cut me open, there would be CKG written right through me, I knew I wanted the book to include, amongst the good ideas from across the globe, the evidence that shadowing can be genuinely inclusive and a real tool for engaging potential readers. I also knew that I needed to recruit somebody who could tell it like it is, direct from the coal face and who better than Amy McKay, SLA 2016 School Librarian of the Year? Believe me, her fearless ideas for generating excited readers destroy quite a few librarian stereotypes as well!

So the book *Reading by Right* was born: the title echoing the CILIP campaign, My Library by Right. Every child has a right to read and we have a social responsibility, as parents, teachers, librarians, publishers, booksellers, campaigners and policy makers to ensure that they are able to exercise that right. But I really do not know how that can be achieved without every child having access to libraries. Literacy is not just for those who can afford to buy books.

Building strategies to motivate and engage reluctant readers

Literacy expert Prue Goodwin, whose ground-breaking research into reluctant readers is the basis of an early chapter, points out the pitfalls in school practice around the teaching of reading. Prue highlights her experience that every teacher needs the support of a librarian 'organising book related activities such as Greenaway/Carnegie shadowing' in order to have a chance of motivating these reluctant readers.

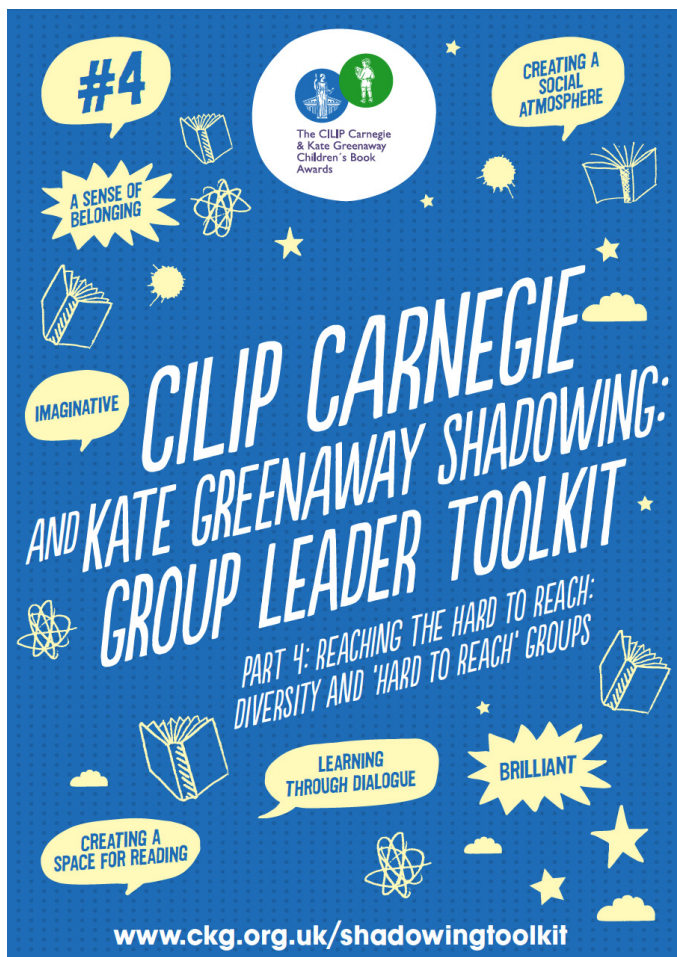


Education consultant Alison Brumwell, in her chapter on strategies school librarians can use to engage reluctant readers, features a case study from Kirklees. The Engage 400 visual literacy project was aimed at developing the reading enjoyment of the 8% of Year 6 pupils in the authority, who were *Working Toward*, but not *At* their age related reading level. It was based upon the twin premises that illustrated texts can effectively engage reluctant and less-able readers and that a school library should contain a wide range of such material – which can be based extensively on Kate Greenaway listed books and judging criteria.

The Engage 400 discussions really encouraged pupils to think about books and storytelling in a different way. For example, most pupils involved in the project associated non-fiction with the use of photographs, maps, graphs and charts - rather than artwork such as they found in William Grill's *Shackleton's Journey*. Following the pilot year, Kirklees now plan to increase the shadowing element of the project by running it on a 10-week cycle, like the normal school shadowing model, rather than in half day blocks and to extend the project to include secondary schools developing as a transition module for Year 7 pupils. Most excitingly of all they want to offer schools the opportunity to badge up the Engage project with entry-level Arts Award qualifications. The Arts Award activity is a bonus extension to shadowing that all shadowing groups can consider.

Motivating and inspiring readers

But Amy's chapter is where you can find most inspiration if you still have not given shadowing a go! She also has a whole section devoted to Greenaway shadowing. As she says '*Most reluctant readers have fallen out of love with reading, rather than never having loved it, so using picture books with older reluctant readers is a strategy for reminding them of a time when reading was something they enjoyed. Furthermore, the nature of a picture book is that there will be less text – making them an important tool in appealing to struggling readers and calming any reading anxieties*'. She even describes the power of working with feeder primaries so that shadowers can read to small groups of younger children giving them



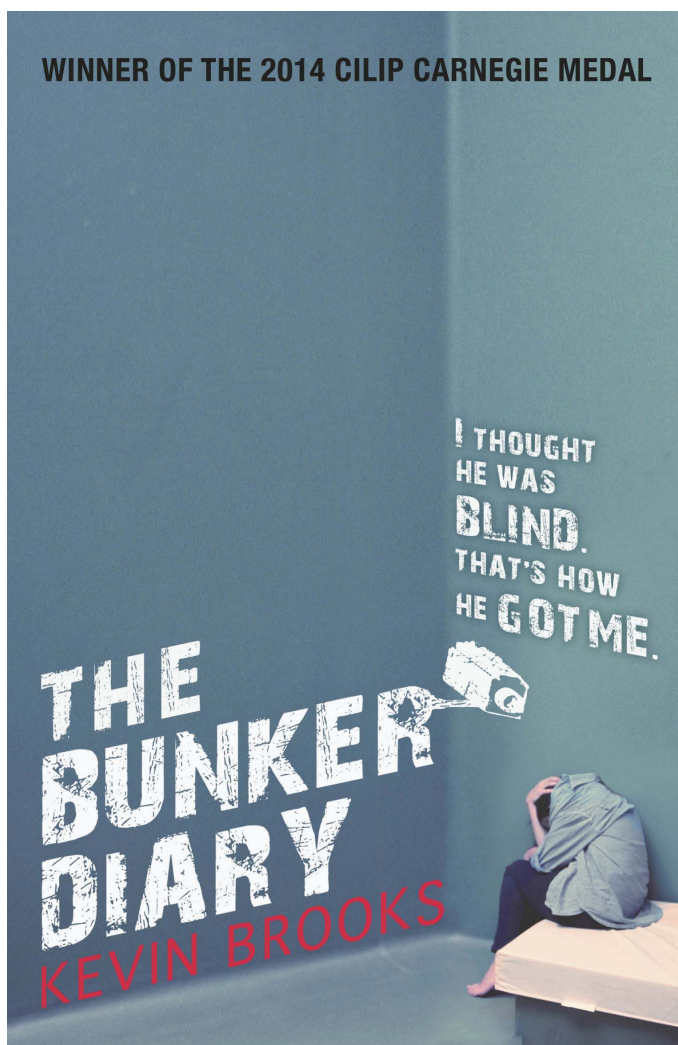
the empowering experience of being a reading role model. Amy works in Corby Business Academy a mixed-gender and mixed-ability comprehensive school in the East Midlands. The school includes students from different cultural backgrounds and has a relatively high number of students eligible for free school meals and so it would be fair to say that she has a challenging audience. Yet annual attitudinal surveys conducted at Corby Business Academy reveal that those students involved in shadowing show an improvement of 71% in their attitude to reading and are 58% more likely to continue to read for pleasure afterwards.

Headteacher Janet Duggan said: *‘Being involved in CKG shadowing has engaged many of our students; however the greatest testament to this exercise is how many reluctant readers have been inspired to come along to a variety of activities linked to CKG. This has resulted in many of them voluntarily picking a book and reading’*

Activities are key!

By way of explanation of her success Amy says: *“An essential tool in a successful CKG group leaders’ arsenal, when working with such young people, is quite simply, activities. Whilst the traditional book club model of sitting in a circle and discussing books will, no doubt, be attractive to capable, keen readers, it can be the stuff of nightmares for hard-to reach readers. So, shadowing group leaders must be both inventive and creative in their programmes if they are to appeal to these readers. Where polite discussion and debate doesn’t work, daft games and exciting activities just might”*. It is worth noting that the OU research project also led to the development of Shadowing Toolkits to help group leaders. In this context Toolkit 4: Reaching the hard to reach is most useful.

First and foremost, Amy tells us to make the most of the shadowing website and all the free resources provided there each year. There are author videos, the Greenaway gallery for creative types, dedicated reader development and visual literacy activities and, of course, downloadable membership cards,



certificates, door hangers and bookmarks. Creating your own dedicated web page can be a real hook for the tech-savvy generation since in the age of social media most, if not all, young people will be accustomed to creating and managing an online presence. There is even the opportunity to select shadowing web page managers – a perfect role for readers who may not feel inclined or able to contribute their own reviews initially but who will enjoy managing the contributions of others.

Corbin, 14, was selected as the Corby shadowing group's web page manager in 2015 and says: *'I didn't really like reading before I became a shadower, but I didn't mind joining the group because I was allowed control of the web page. I liked being in charge of what we put on our page and reading what everyone else wrote made me want to read When Mr Dog Bites. Now I read all the time.'*

Shadowing activities fall into two broad categories: those that can be repeated every year regardless of which books are short listed and those that are book specific. The former are easier for shadowing group leaders to plan in advance of the short list announcements, as the individual book details can be swiftly added once known. Examples of tried and tested activities that Amy suggests will engage hard-to-reach readers include creative activities like vlogging or making videos, creating music playlists and even cos play- creating costumes to match the books. A key strategy is exploiting popular culture like running a CKG X Factor which can run over several sessions or bookie versions of traditional games like Quingo (a quiz form of bingo) CKG Twister and even Pass the Parcel! Corby shadower Bradley, 13, says: *'Once we started at secondary school it was like we had to grow up and not have fun anymore, so I really like playing pass the parcel in book club every year. It's fun like we used to have at parties. I always try to know all the answer so I can have the sweet.'*



Give it a go

One lesson you soon learn from Amy is never to underestimate the motivating factor of edible treats! Many books refer to the favourite foods of characters or foods specific to the setting. Amy describes in 2015 a Carnegie short-list buffet she prepared which included: croissants (*Rooftoppers*), olives (*The Wall*), berries (*Ghost Hawk*), soda bread (*All the Truth that's in Me*), Jolly Rancher sweets (*Liar and Spy*), rice paper (*The Bunker Diary*) and chapattis (*The Child's Elephant*). Shadowers were challenged to match the foods to the books! Food features in a couple of the amazing book-specific activities that Amy shares, which highlight just how exciting shadowing can be. So we can follow the preparation of a 'cannibalistic' feast to make shadowers contemplate the dilemma that Liam faces at the end of *The Bunker Diary* and contemplate preparing highly unusual sandwiches to echo the talents of the eponymous Bear in *The Boy and a Bear in a Boat*. Corby's favourite combination turned out to be sweetcorn, whipped cream and beef paste!

Like me you may be wondering how on earth Amy comes up with these ideas and worry that you could never be as inventive. In her chapter you can read the details of the challenging conjoined activity related to Sarah Crossan's *One*, a version of the panel game *Would I Lie to You?* for *There Will Be Lies* by Nick Lake and a fiendish codebreaking activity for *Trash* by Andy Mulligan! But fear not, as a result of working on the chapter, Amy has established an informal working group of judges and group leaders to work on book specific activities for each shortlist and these will also be accessible every year from the resources link on the shadowing website.

I do hope I have been able to convince you that the high quality texts that have fought their way onto the CKG shortlists each year are the perfect stimulus to engage all sorts of readers. Sometimes the hard-to-reach readers don't just need the right book at the right time, they need to be persuaded to open the right book at the right time, and creative games and activities are a great persuasive tool. Shadowing is brilliant precisely because it is grounded in such brilliant materials and led by such enthusiastic librarians and that is certainly something to celebrate in anniversary year.

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Arts Award activity

<http://www.carnegiegreenaway.org.uk/downloads/Arts-Awards/CKG%20Arts%20Award.pdf>

Reaching the hard to reach

http://www.carnegiegreenaway.org.uk/shadowingsite/groupleaders/toolkits/Shadowing_Toolkit_4.pdf

Free Resources

<http://www.carnegiegreenaway.org.uk/group-leaders.php>

Reading by Right

<http://www.facetpublishing.co.uk/title.php?id=302093#.WS2XgcklF0s>



Reading by Right: Successful strategies to ensure every child can read to succeed edited by Joy Court is published by Facet Publishing and will be available in June. It provides a collection of chapters from international experts covering aspects of overcoming reading difficulties or reading reluctance in children and young people.

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