



## 2013 Annual Seminar

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Bookrapt's Annual Seminar was a great success, with around 60 people helping us to celebrate our 30th anniversary. None of the members of the original committee who attended the seminar this year ever imagined back in 1983 that Bookrapt would still be going strong today!

One of those present at the first meeting, and the elected first President, was Phyllis Johnston. It was with great delight that current President Lee Rowe announced Phyllis Johnston as the new Patron of Bookrapt.

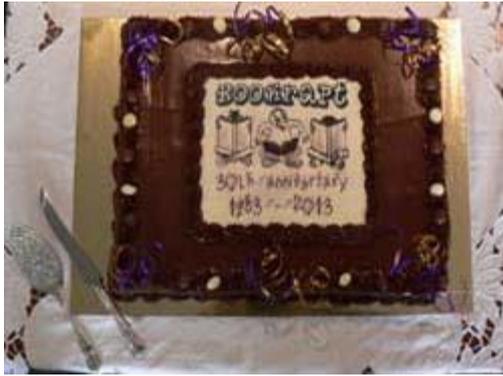


**Original Committee Members from 1983 and still members of Bookrapt today:**

*L-R: Sue Pharo, Phyllis Johnston, Pat Osman, Isabel Weenink, Pieta Meredith, Sherryl Jordan, Lynley Dodd, Jean Bennett and flowers for Phyllis*



*Chris Baskett from Books a Plenty and members of the audience*



Cutting of the cake with L-R Lee Rowe, Lynley Dodd, Phyllis Johnston, and Chris Gurney

Four parcels of books were kindly donated by publishers:

- [Scholastic NZ](#)
- [Gecko Press](#)
- [New Holland](#)
- [Penguin](#) (plus a cuddly Hairy Maclary)



GECKO PRESS



The raffle winners were delighted to receive their parcels of books. Bookrapt donated a raffle of the presentation pack of Margaret Mahy stamps. The youngest attendee (who, it turned out, was also celebrating her birthday) was pleased to win a spot prize of books donated by Chris Gurney. Plus, Bookrapt member Karolyn Timarkos donated two copies of her YA fantasy novel [Keeper of the Atlas](#).

## Chris Gurney

Chris delighted attendees with a reading of her children's picture book *Cindy and the Lost Jandal*, a Kiwi version of the classic Cinderella tale. She followed this up with a hilarious insight into how she felt about speaking at the seminar.

Chris Gurney from Auckland let out a sigh  
She had knots in her stomach and stress in her eye  
She'd Googled and Googled and gurgled for weeks  
Trying to figure out the best way to speak  
She nervously opened the door of the car  
And walked to her fate at Bookrapt seminar.

The end of last year, she was cackling quite hearty  
And waving a note that said "Come to our party"  
From Lee Rowe at Bookrapt, she shrieked with a thrill

There'll be Dame Lynley Dodd, also Maria Gill  
Chris wailed with excitement "Oh boy, this is NEAT!"  
Then fell back on her bed, white as a sheet.

She was just out of hospital, not quite herself  
Pumped up with drugs from the Good Stuff drug shelf  
With a cottonwool head and titanium knees  
It was perfectly clear, this would all be a breeze!  
Plus she had MONTHS in which to prepare  
By August she'd wow them with wit and with flair.

The day of the party arrived all too soon  
Chris hadn't slept since the middle of June  
Where was her Godmum with wand out to flick?  
It would have been great to transform in a tick  
It wouldn't be fair if she just ran away  
It looked like Chris Gurney would just have to stay!  
For though she's a sissy she knows to rejoice  
That the people at Bookrapt are utterly CHOICE!

As with every speaker Bookrapt has ever had at a seminar, Chris received lots of rejection letters in her journey to publication. Aside from "don't give up", which every previous speaker has also said is a key point to success, Chris had some great advice for writers of children's picture books, including:

- Rhyming must be done well and not forced.
- A great story is the key to success – rhyming should be an afterthought.
- Read your work aloud to others and ask for feedback.
- Picture books should be no more than 600 – 900 words. Make every word count.
- Alliteration is great for picture books.
- Onomatopoeia is also a popular tool for picture books.
- Write, revise, rewrite, revise, rewrite, revise, rewrite, revise, rewrite.

**WEBSITE:** [www.chris-gurney.com](http://www.chris-gurney.com)

## Maria Gill

Maria is best known for her great children's non-fiction books, such as *New Zealand Hall of Fame – 50 Remarkable Kiwis* and *Eruption – Discovering New Zealand Volcanoes*. Maria does a lot of educational writing, as the children's non-fiction market in New Zealand does not provide a viable option for a full time career. In 2008 there were 50 books published in this market; by 2010 this number was down to 20, and only 12 are scheduled for this year. The internet killed the kids' non-fiction book!

Chris could well have been talking about Maria when she said "Don't give up". Maria first had the idea for "NZ Hall of Fame" over 10 years ago. She puts the success of her published works down to planning – storyboards, brainstorming, mind maps, and flow charts are all

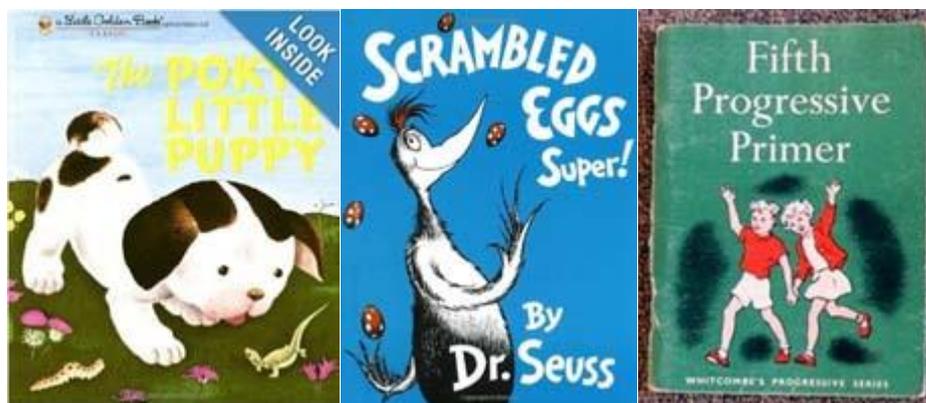
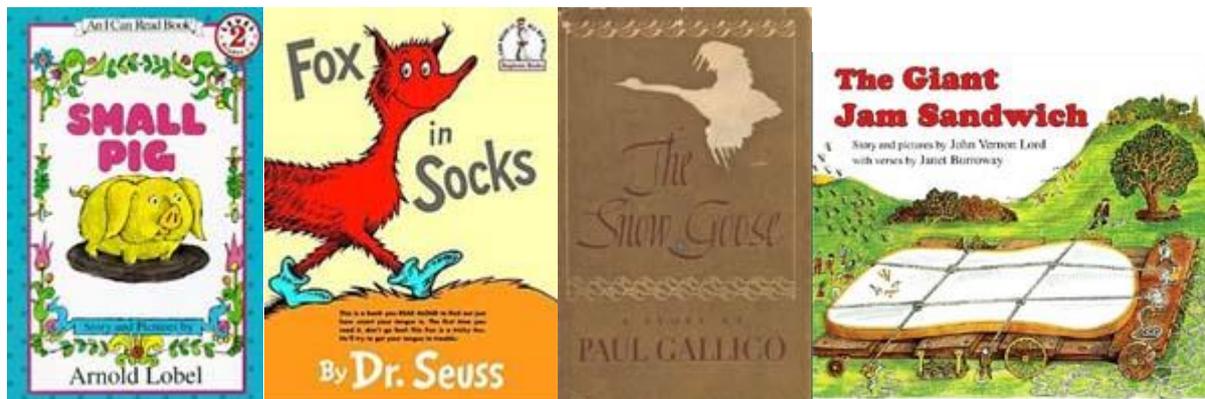
part of the process of creating a book for Maria. Research, obviously, plays a big part in producing a non-fiction book, as does proof-reading “20, 30, and 40 times”. *NZ Hall of Fame* took eight months of full-time work to write.

Maria is embracing the new technologies and opportunities that exist for the writing of children's non-fiction “books” today. In particular, she talked about the future of highly advanced e-books designed to be read on tablets and iPads. This highly interactive format allow the reader to zoom in or out of information they want to read, and offers the advantage of creating “layered’ images that the reader can build up, or break down. This is the future of children's non-fiction books.

WEBSITE: [www.mariagill.co.nz](http://www.mariagill.co.nz)

## Dame Lynley Dodd

With 2013 also being Hairy McLary's 30th birthday, and with Lynley having done the same round of interviews and talks for many months now, she decided to treat the Bookrapt Seminar to something different. Lynley took the audience on a trip down memory lane, with some of the most influential books of her childhood, including *Scrambled Eggs Super* by Dr Seuss, *Fifth Progressive Primer*, Grimm's Fairy Tales (in particular *Oh If I Could But Shiver*), *The Pokey Little Puppy*, and the works of Spike Milligan.



WEBSITE: [www.hairymaclary.com](http://www.hairymaclary.com)