

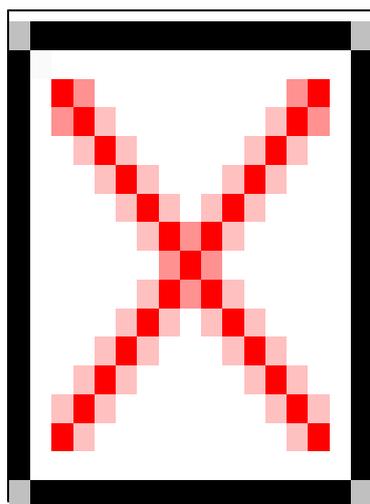


Books for Keeps Brilliant Bookshops: Urmston Bookshop

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Byline:

Welcome to Urmston



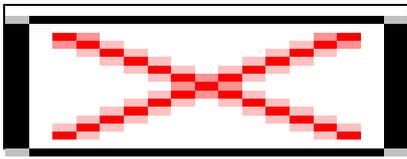
?This is a bookshop that cares and has a real personal touch.? ?They have brought life and variety to the town.?. ?They think carefully about their book selections and put a lot of effort into getting all ages enjoying them? ? just some of the customer comments on the website for the **Urmston Bookshop**. Owner Frances Hopkins explain why for her, and her husband Peter, running a bookshop is a dream come true.

When we announced that we were thinking of opening a bookshop in the middle of a recession most people thought we had finally lost our minds! Unperturbed we went ahead and **Urmston Bookshop** was born in October 2010. We spent ages trying to think of a witty name for the shop but finally realised that as we really wanted the shop to be part of the local community, and because we are very fond of our little part of Manchester, there was only one choice.

To own a bookshop has been a dream for as long as I can remember so I thought I'd better do it before I became too old and my husband thought he'd better get involved before I bankrupted us by buying nearly every book I'm offered!

Although we are a general bookshop, as a former teacher and children's librarian my heart secretly belongs with children's books especially picture books which I think are just amazing at the moment. I am a big fan of Catherine Rayner and her latest Abigail about a counting giraffe is just gorgeous. I also love Mini Gray's witty illustrations, the **Traction Man** series is a great favourite for children just beginning to read independently.

We try to catch children young with our weekly ?Books and Buggies? sessions which give parents of young babies the chance to meet each other and also to look at some of the books that will hopefully inspire their children to a life-long love of reading. It is quite amazing to see babies just a few weeks old totally focussed on a book and entranced by the illustration and the rhythm of the words.



We love hosting author events in the shop and recently launched Steve Hartley's third and latest Oliver Fibbs adventure, **Oliver Fibbs and the Abominable Snow Penguin**, although I'm not sure which was more popular Steve or the actual Snow Penguin who turned up and was rather abominable!

We have a weekly story time session for pre-school children and their parents, guardians and grandparents. We always use this as an opportunity to showcase new titles with much success. We try whenever possible to celebrate themed story times for children and have successfully had many occasions to do this, for example the Alien Who Loves Underpants and his visit to some of the local schools is still the talk of Urmston! We have hosted Maisie the Mouse and the Gruffalo who have also made special visits to some of the local schools. At Christmas we have a very special bedtime story time with the children arriving in their pyjamas.

One recent project that we were delighted to be involved with was the successful attempt to break the world record for the longest chain of paper dolls. Organised by Macmillan and based on the lovely book **Paper Dolls** by Julia Donaldson and Rebecca Cobb lots of our local schools got involved colouring thousands of paper dolls and so helping secure the record.

In school holidays we have a weekly story based craft sessions for younger children. For older children we provide a variety of activities ranging from book art and origami workshops or creative writing classes and again we like to feel that these sorts of extra activities help to secure our bookshop's place in the local community.

As well as inviting school classes to the shop we regularly visit schools to do book related assemblies and help the teachers to set up book clubs. We also offer a school library advisory service which has helped refurbish several school libraries and we usually combine this with an author visit to officially open the new libraries. Our junior Book Club meets once a month and I am constantly amazed at how carefully they think about the books ? ?we don't want to upset the author ?? We certainly wouldn't upset our latest author Aoife Walsh whose debut novel **Look After Me** was an unanimous hit.

A very important part of our business is arranging author visits to schools and we have had some wonderful experiences working with the likes of Frank Cottrell-Boyce, Tony Robinson, Dick and Dom and many others. Watching a room full of totally enraptured children is a delight and a privilege and is what makes this job so special.

Books we are recommending:

Oi Frog! by Kes Gray and Jim Field, Hodder Children's Books, 978-1444910858, £11.99 hbk

Amelia Jane Stories by Enid Blyton, Egmont

Farmer John's Tractor by Sally Sutton, illus Robyn Belton, Walker, 978-1406351873, £6.99 pbk

Hattie Peck by Emma Levey, Top That!, 978-1782444787, £6.99 pbk

Hog in the Fog by Julia Copus and Eunyoung Seo, Faber, 978-0571307210, £6.99 pbk

The Unbelievable Top Secret Diary of Pig by Emer Stamp, Scholastic, 978-1407136370, £8.99 hbk

Look after me by Aoife Walsh, Andersen Press, 978-1849397131 £6.99 pbk

A Boy Called Hope by Lara Williamson, Usborne, 978-1409570318, £6.99 pbk

The Odds by Adam Perrott, Stripes, 978-1847152510, £5.99

Oliver Fibbs and the Abominable Snow by Steve Hartley and Bernice Lum, Macmillan, 978-1447220282, £5.99 pbk

Oliver and the Seawigs by Philip Reeve and Sarah McIntyre, Oxford, 978-0192734556, £8.99 hbk

Weasels by Elys Dolan, Nosy Crow, 978-0857632005, £6.99

Infographics: Human Body by Peter Grundy, Templar, 978-1848776555, £9.99

Paper Dolls

by Julia Donaldson and Rebecca Cobb, Macmillan, 978-1447220145, £6.99 pbk

Harvey Drew and the Bin Men from Outer Space by Cas Lester, Hot Key Books, 978-1471402234, £6.99

House of Secrets by Chris Columbus and Ned Vizzini, HarperCollins Children's Books, 978-0007490158, £6.99 pbk

Line of Fire; Diary of an Unknown Soldier by Barroux, Phoenix Yard Books, 978-1907912399, £10.99

Urmston Bookshop

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