



The *Philippa Pearce* *Memorial Lecture*

celebrating excellence in writing for children

PHILIPPA PEARCE died at the end of 2006, but widespread respect and affection for her writing is as strong as it ever was. Such is the extraordinary quality of her work that it has not only been honoured by the literary establishment, but has also constantly inspired new young readers and writers. Our aim, therefore, is to encourage young readers and writers, as Philippa Pearce valued so much her engagement with them.

'We' are a small group of her friends, family and colleagues who are planning a series of five lectures, spread over five years, to be delivered by various distinguished speakers with an interest in children's books. Some of the speakers may be authors themselves; all, from their different perspectives, will provoke thought. In this way and in Philippa Pearce's honour, we seek to acknowledge and understand excellence in writing for children, and to emphasize its continuing vital importance.

In September 2008, at Homerton College - an institution with which she was always happy to be involved - the inaugural lecture will take the form of a direct tribute to Philippa Pearce's work. Subsequent lectures will range more widely, over the works of others, but will tend to reflect her own wide-ranging literary interests in, for example, the short story, the ghost story, the picture book and, of course, the novel.

In 2008, her own best loved novel, *Tom's Midnight Garden*, will have been in print for 50 years. Also in 2008 will come the publication of her very last story, *A Finder's Magic*, completed just before she died. Both will be widely celebrated by children, parents, grandparents, teachers, librarians and book lovers of every kind: a fitting context for the Memorial Lecture itself.

Each lecture will be followed by a wine reception, an opportunity for the audience to meet the guest speakers and enjoy a sociable occasion, remembering the much missed Philippa Pearce.

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Steering Committee: Laura Cecil; Sally Christie; Liz Cross; Gillian McClure; Margaret Meek; Ben Norland; Jill Paton Walsh; Nicky Potter; John Rowe Townsend; Caroline Royds; Morag Styles; Helen Taylor; Victor Watson; David Wood

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