**Chair Report ahead of the Educational Writers Group (EWG) 2020 AGM**

There are currently 872 members of the Educational Writers Group. Overall, we gained 56 members and lost 62. The SoA’s current total membership is 11,347, so EWG represents 7.68%.

EWG Activities

Events

The 2019 EWG seminar day was held on 8 June at the Foundling Museum. Around 40 authors attended the day, which consisted of educational talks by **Hannah Tyreman, Tom O'Reilly** and **Cheryl Palin**. The sessions included a talk on how to create materials for Continuous Professional Development for Teachers, a discussion around an educational app and what writers can learn from developing a product, and a reflection on the educational writing process.

At the beginning of this year, the committee were in the process of planning an ambitious programme for the 2020 seminar day, to include a visit to the British Library, three sessions and several speakers (including educational publishers and authors). Unfortunately, Covid-19 restrictions prevented this from going ahead. The planned trip to Oxford University Press which was due to take place in March of this year was also cancelled. We hope to reschedule this once in-person events can take place again.

EWG contributed a session to the first SoA @ Home Festival, with a discussion on digital opportunities for Educational Publishing. The panel, hosted by me, was made up of **Ian Eagleton** from the [The Reading Realm](https://eur03.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fthereadingrealm.co.uk%2F&data=02%7C01%7Cfhowell%40societyofauthors.org%7C8a614e408cd741dd5af408d7e1d73bf6%7C847a6df2d2124118908182322693b1c5%7C1%7C0%7C637226186848089103&sdata=gcoB2zY6gAqXbdeY%2Fvf4u7SIknlvdcsIICAD5xSH2N0%3D&reserved=0), **Nikki Gamble** from [Just Imagine](https://eur03.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fjustimaginestorycentre.co.uk%2F&data=02%7C01%7Cfhowell%40societyofauthors.org%7C8a614e408cd741dd5af408d7e1d73bf6%7C847a6df2d2124118908182322693b1c5%7C1%7C0%7C637226186848089103&sdata=n47VUqnsPg72iKARboTXFi9iG8BrF%2Fi6L%2BcMWuOHoRA%3D&reserved=0) and **Helen Parker** from [Rising Stars](https://eur03.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.risingstars-uk.com%2F&data=02%7C01%7Cfhowell%40societyofauthors.org%7C8a614e408cd741dd5af408d7e1d73bf6%7C847a6df2d2124118908182322693b1c5%7C1%7C0%7C637226186848099094&sdata=5mbWjBiZZLcfNW6Xfr9G0q%2Fi3jqlxYyOBoXMv4lEX4U%3D&reserved=0)**.** We discussed how digital publishing can be used to enhance learning, and the unique functionality these platforms can offer. The session is available for catch up on the SoA’s [Vimeo](https://eur03.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fsocietyofauthors.us3.list-manage.com%2Ftrack%2Fclick%3Fu%3Dbf4ffc58974b0a8bdfbb14f2c%26id%3D391eda1cae%26e%3Da745f71e3b&data=02%7C01%7Cbhall%40societyofauthors.org%7Cf629ee4917c346ac5b5008d827d352ee%7C847a6df2d2124118908182322693b1c5%7C1%7C0%7C637303135885849031&sdata=JERGU6CYxMBCi%2BsPif9mb203W4XqreFj4PklFia7H54%3D&reserved=0) channel.

Group engagement

The EWG quarterly e-newsletter keeps members up to date with the Group’s activities and news. It includes blogs and interviews from members of the Group, allowing us all to gain an appreciation for the wider community of educational writers. The summer edition carried an interview with Ruben Rump, a representative of the Dutch equivalent of EWG. It was fascinating to hear about the issues facing our counterparts in the Netherlands - many of which we recognise from our own experience, including the struggle for fair payment and the impact of coronavirus.

The Group also has a dedicated, private discussion page on Facebook, open only to those who are currently members of the SoA.

If you would like to contribute to a future newsletter, or are interested in joining the Facebook group, please contact Group Secretary [Bryony Hall](mailto:bhall@societyofauthors.org).

Resources and industry engagement

*Five Tips for Educational Authors*, a blog which includes anecdotes and advice from the committee, is available on the [SoA’s website](https://societyofauthors.org/News/Blogs/SoA-Blog/July-2020-(1)/Five-tips-for-educational-authors). It highlights the importance of negotiating fair terms, and members are encouraged to share it with their networks (particularly those who may be new to educational writing).

We are currently drafting a guide for publishers commissioning educational materials which will set out the arguments for a fair share of revenues for creators. This will be launched in the coming weeks and we hope will be a valuable tool in your negotiations with publishers.

Stephen Lotinga of the Publishers Association met with the committee in February to discuss policy areas where our two organisations can collaborate.

Awards for educational writing

The 2019 ALCS Award for Educational Writing was given to Alastair Humphreys and illustrator Kevin Ward for *Alastair Humphreys' Great Adventurers: The Incredible Expeditions of 20 Explorers*, published by Big Picture Press. This award was set up to honour works of traditionally published non-fiction which enhance learning, and the 2019 prize recognised the 5-11 age group. Congratulations also to the authors of the shortlisted titles, which were as follows:

* *A* *History of Pictures for Children,* written by David Hockney and Martin Gayford, illustrated by Rose Blake (Thames & Hudson)
* *All Birds Have Anxiety,* writtenby Kathy Hoopman, designed by Adam Peacock (Jessica Kingsley Publishers)
* *Suffragettes and the Fight for the Vote* written by Sarah Ridley, designed and illustrated by Jeni Child (Franklin Watts)
* *Mr Shaha's Recipes for Wonder: Adventures in Science Round the Kitchen Table* written by Alom Shaha, illustrated by Emily Robertson (Scribble UK)
* *2019 Nature Month-by-Month: A Children's Almanac*, written by Anna Wilson, illustrated by Emily Jahnz (Nosy Crow)

We are grateful to the Authors’ Licensing and Collecting Society for their generous sponsorship.

The **EWG award for Editorial Best Practice,** launched in October 2018, gives the opportunity for members to publicly recognise those editors who have shown excellence in the way in which they have collaborated with their authors. Jenni Hall, product manager at Collins Learning, was nominated earlier this year for the award by author Peter Clarke for their work together on *Fluency in Times Tables* (published January 2020).

More details about the award, including how to nominate, can be found on the [EWG section](https://societyofauthors.org/Groups/Educational-Writers/Editorial-Best-Practice-Award) of the website.

Committee nominations

Thanks to all our committee members for their hard work over the last sixteen months. Special thanks go to Terry Freedman and Sarah Ackroyd, who step down from the committee at the AGM.

Our nominees to join the committee this year are Emily Guille-Marrett, Miles Hudson and Anita Loughrey. They join Philippa Gardom Hulme, Mark Griffiths, Sue Nicholson, Julie Pratten, Chitra Soundar and me. There were no alternative nominations, and we welcome them to the committee for a period of three years.

Thank you to all of you for your support this year.

**Ignaty Dyakov**

**Chair of the Educational Writers Group**

**September 2020**