

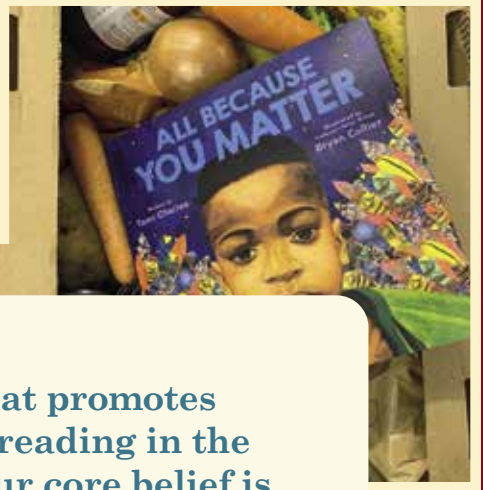


## Celebrating 10 years of Give a Book

# Annual Review 2021



Registered charity number 1149664



**Give a Book is a charity that promotes books and the pleasure of reading in the hardest to reach places. Our core belief is that to pass on a good read – to give a book – is a transaction of lasting worth. We work in prisons, schools and with disadvantaged children & young people throughout the UK.**

*'One in 11 (9.4%) children and young people said they do not have a book of their own at home, rising to one in eight (13.1%) children from disadvantaged backgrounds.'*<sup>1</sup>

*'Good family relationships are indispensable...prisoners who report improved family ties are significantly less likely to reoffend.'*

*Farmer Review – Ministry of Justice 2017*

*'I can be anywhere I want to be with a book, wouldn't have made it through lockdown without you.'*

*Reading Group member*

<sup>1</sup><https://literacytrust.org.uk/research-services/research-reports/book-ownership-and-reading-outcomes/>



# Give a Book in numbers

In 2021, despite the challenges of the last year, we were still able to give...



**250+** books for brand new school library supporting 119 pupils and their families



**300+** books sent for Drop Everything and Read project



**1100+** books provided for Family Days in 20 prisons



**3000+** books sent to all school projects



**6000+** dictionaries sent for Reading Ahead



**10000+** books sent to all prison projects



# Timeline



GAB and Prison Reading Groups (PRG) first collaborate.

**2012**



We create our first primary school library and start working with Book Clubs in Schools.

**2014**



We establish The Book Rooms at HMP Wormwood Scrubs.

**2015**

**2011**

Victoria Gray starts Give a Book (GAB) to give books to encourage reading for pleasure.



**2013**

We set up the first Breakfast Book Club.



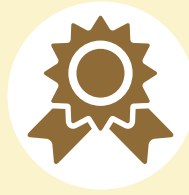
Books in the Nick supplies all 43 Metropolitan London custody suites. We launch a book club with Off the Record, a mental health support charity

**2016**



Making it Up begins. PRG and GAB provide over 2000 books for Family Days in prison.

**2018**



GAB adapts prison and school projects to run remotely and sends 1800+ books to schools operating as foodbanks.

**2020**

**2017**

PRG officially becomes part of GAB. We start Books for First Nighters in three prisons.



**2019**

GAB successfully runs The Big Give Christmas Challenge supported by the Dulverton Trust, raising over £20,000. PRG is awarded Longford Prize\*



**2021**

We launch The Pleasure of Reading Prize. Seven brand new Breakfast Book Clubs set up, Victoria Gray is made an honorary fellow of the Royal Society of Literature.



\*The Longford Prize for Outstanding Achievement in the Field of Prison Reform.

# Our year at Larkspur Primary

We began working with Larkspur Primary in the summer of 2020. Children had missed months of school and it felt more important than ever to reconnect them with books and the pleasure of reading.

Over the year we collaborated on many projects with Larkspur: book gifts at Christmas, a book group, author visits, a creative book cover design project and most importantly a brand new library space for the children to enjoy.

When we first spoke to the headteacher at Larkspur, in the summer of 2020, we discussed the power of books and what their presence in the school would mean to the children. Larkspur is in a place where there is little aspiration for further education or careers outside the local area. Books were not only the key to escape figuratively speaking, but

also something that would help the children look beyond the borders of their town and out into the world. We watched Larkspur grow into a reading school, putting books and the pleasure of reading at its heart.

**'...ever since I have got a book from you I have loved reading.'**

*Pupil*

**'They have given us the opportunity to find pleasure in reading again.'**

**The work they do for schools goes beyond simply the book.'**

*Kerry McEwan, Headteacher*



**'I love the smell of a new book.'**

*Pupil*





# Feeding hungry minds

**'We mostly find the little ones sharing books or the bigger children reading to another child.'**

*Staff*

Breakfast Book Clubs provide books for children in primary school, hungry in all sorts of ways. They have been our staple school project for nearly eight years, and we have created Breakfast Book Clubs in over 30 schools across the UK. We work with schools with a higher than average number of children on free school meals. Back in 2020 our crowdfunding campaign, 'Breakfast is fully BOOKED', exceeded our initial target for setting up 10 new Breakfast Book Clubs. Despite another challenging start to the year and the considerable hardships that schools have faced, we were delighted to set up Breakfast Book Clubs in Harwich, Folkestone, and Birmingham in the spring.

With the closure of libraries and bookshops at the start of the year, schools were the only place where some young children could access and explore the world of books.

Since spring, we have set up four more Breakfast Book Clubs, with more in progress to reach our crowdfunding target.



**'The children are loving having these books to read in the morning, they have really made a difference on settling them into the school day and it's been lovely hearing them chat about the stories which they wouldn't normally do.'**

*Staff*



**'Reading allows my mind to be free.'**

*Pupil*

# Birthday Messages

**'Happy 10th Anniversary to the fantastic Give a Book/Prison Reading Groups. The support you have given to HMP Kirklevington Grange has been invaluable.'**



**'A huge Happy Birthday to Give a Book: parent, big sister and above all the biggest best friend to PRG.'**

*Jenny Hartley*

**'Thank you so very much, 10 years, hope you're here forever.'**

*HMP Channings Wood*

**'Your friendliness and cheeriness are always appreciated as well – you are a very human organisation.'**

*HMP Erlestoke*

**'Give a Book is such an exceptional project and I'm delighted to see it celebrate a milestone birthday.'**

*Feed the Hill, foodbank*

**'We are very grateful for the help they have given us to reignite a love of reading in pupils who previously dismissed books as a 'boring' activity. Happy 10th Birthday to Give a Book.'**

*from all at The Rowans AP*

**'You have no idea of the ripple your staff have had in creating a reading buzz round our school and all the reading memories that have been created. Happy 10th Birthday!!!'**

*Abbey Catholic*

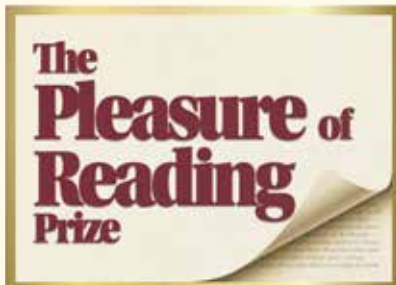


# Pleasure of Reading Prize

At a time when we were all reminded of the power of books to combat isolation and pleasure felt a long way off, Give a Book announced the Pleasure of Reading Prize. The prize was inspired by *The Pleasure of Reading*, edited by our patron, Antonia Fraser.

The Reading Prize is divided equally between an author 'who gives pleasure through their work' and a Give a Book project of their choice.

It is sponsored by Bloomsbury Publishing and generously supported by the Blavatnik Family Foundation.



**'She brings gravity to lightness and lightness to gravity as no other writer does. She is both a writer's writer and a reader's writer.'**

*Kamila Shamsie on Ali Smith*



**'Books are always an opened window in a locked room. And always a pleasure, what a pleasure there is in reading. What an endless meeting of minds, an endless friendship, a book in your hands.'**

*Ali Smith on winning the Pleasure of Reading Prize*



## Prison Reading Groups, ‘the biggest best friend’ to Give a Book, first collaborated in 2012 and officially joined us in 2017.

Before lockdown, Prison Reading Groups had 50 groups running in 40 prisons, facilitated by prison staff and often an external volunteer. When prisoners could no longer meet face to face, we found new ways for members to connect through books. PRG’s remote support came in the form of **Book Talk**, a monthly resource that provides suggested titles and notes for written responses that can be shared. Prison libraries were closed to prisoners for many months during the pandemic, so PRG created resources to help them choose books remotely. We commissioned **Finding a Good Read** videos that were broadcast on prison TV and we created a monthly column in Inside Time, the national prisoners’ newspaper.

Prisons are slowly opening up and the pleasures of face-to-face book talk shine through the feedback.

PRG’s annual Reading in Prison event went virtual this year. The theme, *Reading Lessons: Lockdown and Beyond*, kicked off with a powerful introduction from Gabriel Krauze, author of Booker Prize long-listed *Who They Was*, about how books connect us, ‘*Whatever you’re going through you can find it in books that make you realise you’re not alone.*’

Prisons are still only gradually returning to pre-pandemic life. PRG and Give a Book have also worked hard to keep prisoners connected to their children through books. We’ve provided them for video visits and mailouts and we will be supporting up to 20 Christmas Family Days with books, bags and volunteers. We are thrilled that some in-person reading groups have resumed and look forward to supporting the festive Family Days planned over Christmas

[www.prisonreadinggroups.org.uk](http://www.prisonreadinggroups.org.uk)

‘It has been so good for the members to have the book group through Covid, and I think that it’s kept us all connected until we can meet again.’

*Reading Group leader*



‘If I wasn’t in prison I’d be tweeting the author asking when she’s going to get round to finishing the book!’

*Prisoner*

# Books for First Nighters

Since it began in 2017, Books for First Nighters has provided books for those on their first night in custody with the aim of offering some comfort and mental release to the new arrivals. We hope that this facilitates the relationship between staff and inmates. We feel that the act of giving the new prisoner a book – or letting them choose a book – goes some way to ease the difficult and traumatic transition into prison life. The project is now running in over 32 prisons throughout the UK.



**'I believe that charities such as yours are fundamental. The positive impact perhaps not obvious to the majority, and subtle in its nature. The progress however, is immeasurable.'** *Prisoner*

**'...it makes a real difference to them that a) people on the outside are thinking of them, and b) that they have the opportunity to escape with a book.'** *Prison Librarian*

# Making it Up

We started Making it Up (MIU) in 2018 in HMP Wormwood Scrubs – connecting families through stories. With prison consultant David Kendall, we held workshops for prisoner parents to create storybooks for their children.

In 2020 we devised an in-cell version. David wrote a sympathetic set of instructions and we included pre-paid envelopes so that the finished storybooks could be sent home. These lockdown storybooks have been quite beautiful, clearly coming from a place of pride in the work and love. In summer 2021, we were able to put up an exhibition of MIU stories so far. Making it Up runs remotely in eight more prisons.



**'Brilliant idea and my little one will be over the moon with it.'**

*Prisoner mum*

**'They say things there they can't say anywhere else.'**

*Family Liaison Officer*

# Volunteering with Give a Book

We have a lot to thank our volunteers for this year. They are a group of like-minded individuals, passionate about books and reading and play a crucial role in many of our projects. This year our in-person volunteer opportunities, running reading groups and helping us pack and distribute books were still on pause. However, there were still lots of ways volunteers could help us spread the pleasure of reading, whilst developing new skills and using existing ones productively.

We created remote volunteer opportunities to produce resources for **Book Talk** and **Bookstuff** – a handout chat about books and we will continue with these and have been delighted by guest blogs on a variety of subjects.



'It's really exciting to be involved with PRG, to share the joy of books and reach out to people through the power of words. After reading Cathy Rentzenbrink's memoir *Dear Reader*, in which she talks about her work with literary charities and specifically working in prisons, I wanted to take action... and I was thrilled to find that I could do this remotely through PRG by helping to make materials.' *Katy Simpson, volunteer*

You can sign up to volunteer  
<http://giveabook.org.uk/join-us/>

From all at Give a Book, thank you to our invaluable volunteers, for your hard work and dedication to the charity.

Image: Artist Becky Peel teamed up with Print Social to nominate us as her charity to receive a portion of the profits from sales of the T-shirt she designed.



# A message from our Executive Director

Ten years: I could do the numbers. They are impressive and surprising, but really, I just want to remember a prisoner to whom we gave a wrapped-up book for Christmas-- he said it was the first present he had ever received. Or the child last year who took a book home to his family and got all of them reading. GAB is still all about the love of reading and books, of course, but most of all it's about the people we serve.

This year's highlights: The Pleasure of Reading Prize, Give a History book-bundles, another primary school library where it really counts, and much more.

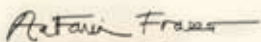
We were sad to say goodbye to our beloved Director of Projects, Adeela Khan, and to the incomparable Olivia Loveridge--but delighted to welcome Alison Palmer and Jade Greene to the team. Shamima Edye-Lindner has taken on new responsibilities with talent and gusto.

Heartfelt thanks are due to the numerous individuals and organisations without whom we could do nothing. Support comes in many forms-- from our wonderful trustees and advisory board, consultant David Kendall, the indefatigable Sarah Turvey of PRG, and our nonpareil Patron, Antonia Fraser. And it really is still just about that, the sharing--a simple premise, a simple act.

**Victoria Gray**

# A final word from our Patron

When I first heard the phrase Give a Book I was immediately thrilled. Generosity combined with literature: what could be more exciting? Ten years later I am enormously impressed by what Give a Book has achieved. As a lifelong addict of reading – very nearly, I read fluently at three years old, taught by a fierce mother – I cannot imagine a greater horror than being deprived of books. Conversely, I know myself that the discovery of books is one of the sheer pleasures in life. Give a Book, doing great work in prisons for example and also supplying disadvantaged children of all sorts, caters for both these situations and many more. So I was quite right to be thrilled by the phrase Give a Book ten years ago, although I had no idea at the time what a prodigious wonderful endeavour it would turn out to be.



**Lady Antonia Fraser**



## With thanks to our partners and supporters including....

### Arts Council

[www.artscouncil.org.uk](http://www.artscouncil.org.uk)

*For supporting Making it Up*



Supported using public funding by  
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### Blavatnik Family Foundation

[www.blavatnikfoundation.org](http://www.blavatnikfoundation.org)

*For generous support of the  
Pleasure of Reading prize*

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*For sponsoring the  
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*For their continuing partnership  
and support of reading in prisons*



### Siobhan Dowd Trust

[www.siobhandowdtrust.com](http://www.siobhandowdtrust.com)

*For their support of family  
reading in prison*









**Patron**

Lady Antonia Fraser, CH, DBE

**Trustees**

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Eleni Meleagrou

Sarah Moorehead (Chair)

Sarah Turvey

Caroline Waldegrave, OBE

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