

EO TEEN PAGES

Issue no 4 – December 2009

Contributions for the next issue must be received by the 20th January



Picture by Rebecca Mitchell

Welcome!

Hello! Welcome to the December issue of the *Teen Pages*. We hope you enjoy it! Thank you for all your contributions. And a warm welcome to our newest editor, James.

The editors for this issue were: Eloise, Leila and James.

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If you're interested in becoming part of the Teen Team, please contact the coordinator at teenteam@education-otherwise.org

We would love to have **your** feedback, suggestions and contributions. Please send them to: teenteam@education-otherwise.org

Contributions must be in by the 20th of December and all drawings/ artwork must be in **black and white**. Remember to include your full name, address and membership number.



Midwinter Celebrations

Christmas comes just after the middle of winter. The sun is strengthening and the days are beginning to grow longer. For people throughout history this has been a time of feasting and celebration.

Ancient people were hunters and spent most of their time outdoors. The seasons and weather played a very important part in their lives and because of this they had a great reverence for, and even worshipped, the sun. The Norsemen of Northern Europe saw the sun as a wheel that changed the seasons. It was from the word for this wheel, houl, that the word yule (another name for Christmas) is thought to have come. At Winter Solstice the Norsemen lit bonfires, told stories and drank sweet ale.

The Romans also held a festival to mark the Winter Solstice. Saturnalia (from the God Saturn) ran for seven days from 17th December. It was a time when the ordinary rules were turned upside down. Men dressed as women and masters dressed as servants. The festival also involved processions, decorating houses with greenery, lighting candles and giving presents.

Holly is one of the symbols most associated with Christmas. Its religious significance pre-dates Christianity. It was previously associated with the Sun God (Saturn) and was important in Pagan customs. Some ancient religions used holly for protection. They decorated doors and windows with it in the belief it would ward off evil spirits.

Before Christianity came to the British Isles the Winter Solstice was held on the shortest day of the year (21st December). The Druids (Celtic priests) would cut the mistletoe that grew on the oak tree and give it as a blessing. Oaks were seen as sacred and the winter fruit of the mistletoe was a symbol of life in the dark winter months.



Christmas Today



Today, only around 60 percent of people in the UK are Christian but Christmas remains the biggest holiday in the calendar. It is a largely secular holiday, with the main element being the exchange of gifts on Christmas day.

In previous centuries the Church worried about Pagan influence on the Christian festival, but today ethical considerations are focused on the over-commercialism of the holiday, with the average person in the UK spending hundreds of pounds on Christmas-related purchases (an average of £384 in 2007, according to a Halifax report).

Protests against consumerism have been made by Christians and non-Christians such as 'Buy Nothing Christmas', encouraging people to spend time with their families instead of spending money on them.

With carol concerts, Christmas trees, office parties, midnight mass, and television programmes, today's festival has elements of the Pagan, Christian and folk traditions.

Christmas remains a time to forget about the long dark days and celebrate with friends and family.



An important part of today's Christmas is the myth of Father Christmas (called Santa Claus in America). His origins are in Christian and European tradition. But the visual image of Father Christmas that we have today is the one popularised by American card-makers in the Victorian era.

Traditionally, Father Christmas visits houses at midnight on Christmas Eve, coming down the chimney to leave presents. Children hang up stockings - nowadays usually large socks with Christmas patterns knitted into them - for Father Christmas to fill with little toys and presents ('stocking fillers'). Some traditions surrounding Father Christmas pre-date Christianity. His

His sleigh, pulled by reindeer, is left over from Scandinavian mythology. The practice of leaving mince pies and a glass of milk or brandy for him on Christmas Eve may be a remnant of Pagan sacrifices made to mark the end of winter and the coming of spring.

The USA has the figure of Santa Claus, whose name comes from Saint Nicholas via the Dutch Sinterklaas. Saint Nicholas of Myra (a location in modern-day Turkey) is, among other things, the patron saint of sailors. A famous story has him anonymously delivering bags of gold coins to a man who could not afford dowry for his daughters to get married. Some versions of this story even have Saint Nick dropping the bags down the chimney.

In modern times the figures of Father Christmas and Santa Claus are indistinguishable.



Christmas Recipes

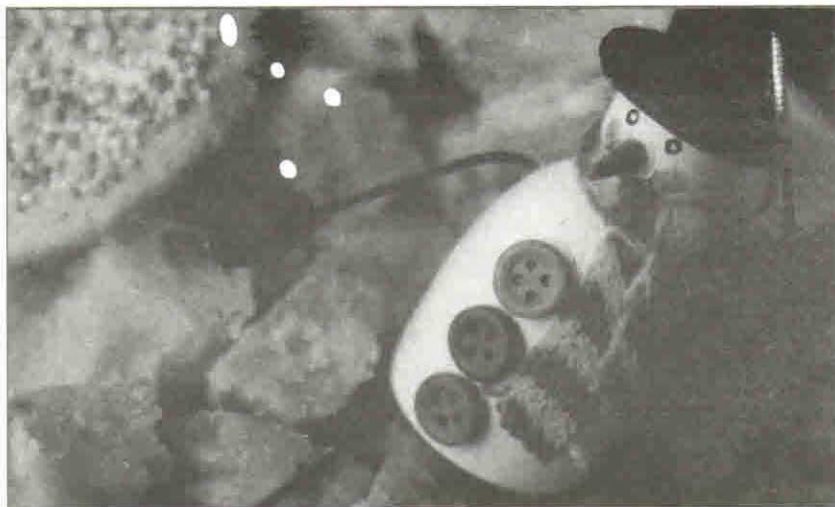


Vanilla & Nut Fudge

you'll need:

400g sugar
125ml milk
50g butter
100g chopped nuts
1/2 tsp vanilla essence
18cm square baking tin
sugar thermometer
large pan
wooden spoon or spatula

- 1 Mix the sugar, milk and butter in the pan and heat gently until sugar melts.
- 2 Put the thermometer in the pan and turn up the heat until the sugar syrup bubbles. Keep stirring until temperature gets to 115°C.
- 3 Take the pan off the heat and stir in the vanilla and chopped nuts. Leave to cool for 2 minutes.
- 4 Quickly stir the mixture until it goes thick and creamy. Pour into a greased baking tin.
- 5 As the fudge begins to set, score the surface into squares. When it has set, cut the squares and store in an airtight container.



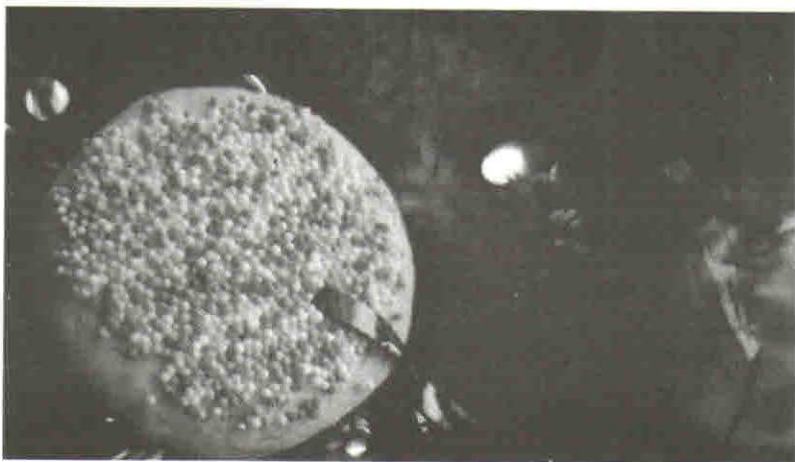


Christmas Biscuits

you'll need:

| | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| 175g softened butter | 400g plain flour |
| 300g caster sugar | 1 tbsp lemon juice |
| 1 egg and 1 egg yolk | 1 tbsp beaten egg white |
| 1 tsp vanilla essence | 115g icing sugar |
| grinded rind of 1 lemon | |
| pinch of salt | |

- 1 Mix the butter and sugar in a bowl until light and fluffy. Stir in the whole egg and egg yolk.
- 2 Add the vanilla, lemon rind and salt. Mix well. Sift in the flour and mix into a stiff dough. Roll into a ball, wrap in clingfilm and put in fridge for 30 minutes.
- 3 Make the icing by mixing the lemon juice and egg white in a clean bowl. Stir in the icing sugar until it is smooth and runny.
- 4 On a floured surface, roll out the dough to 1/2cm thick. Cut out the biscuits with a biscuit cutter and put them on a greased baking tray.
- 5 Put the tray in a preheated oven at 190C for 10 minutes. Transfer to a wire rack to cool and then decorate as you wish with icing.



Eloïse's Art Pages

Hello again readers! I am very excited to have received the first contributions for my art pages which, I have to say, were absolutely brilliant! Sadly, I didn't receive any entries for my art competition so, for this issue, I have published one of my favourite contributions on the front cover instead. This drawing of a little boy was sent in by Rebecca Mitchell and I thought it was amazing! I would love to see more of your wonderful artwork. Please email it in to teenteam@education-otherwise.org or send it to our new postal address: FAO Teen Team, PO Box 325, Kings Lynn, Norfolk, PE34 3XW.

Arts Advice and Tips

I have decided to try something a little bit different for this issue and give you some information on how to draw caricatures. No doubt you have seen some examples of caricatures in the past (of famous people etc) so you don't need me to tell you that caricature is the art of drawing a person's portrait by simplifying and exaggerating their features. Caricatures are usually humorous but can also be quite insulting (look at caricatures of politicians for example). A lot of people make a living drawing caricatures and it is a very popular art form. Every artist has their own style and caricatures can vary from grotesquely realistic exaggerations of how a person looks to very basic line drawings that are so simple they verge on becoming cartoons. A lot of people believe that caricaturing and cartooning are the same thing but, in fact, they are quite different. With cartooning, your creations are either from your imagination or inspired by something else. Caricaturing, on the other hand, requires you to draw from a real subject and, whilst still exaggerating and playing around with their features, capture a reasonable likeness of them. It is a big misconception that, to be a good caricature artist, you need to have had a lot of previous experience with drawing portraits. Although this extra knowledge is useful, it is not necessarily vital. All you really need is a good eye for detail. Anyone can draw anything they want if they put their mind to it! Over the next few pages, I am going to talk you through the basics of caricature and give you some simple exercises to try. I hope these will be a good introduction to the world of caricature for you!

The first important thing about drawing caricatures is the materials you use. There are no right or wrong materials but there are some that are more effective than others. All mediums have their pros and cons. Here is some information about the most popular:

- Pencil – This is probably one of the best mediums to use when starting out with caricature. For one, it's a lot easier to correct any mistakes you might make. The best type of pencil to use would be one with a soft lead (2B upwards). This way, it is easier to erase any details that you have got wrong and add more contrast to your picture. Pencil is one of my favourite mediums to use as you can do more shading and tonal work and your finished pictures have a softer and more realistic feel to them. One downfall of pencil work though, is that it does not reproduce that well if you want to print it (on cards etc). Pencil may not be as bold as, say, ink but I still find it a very rewarding medium. Even if you do not think it is for you, it is still an extremely useful medium for the planning stages of your artwork. For example: you can draw the outline of your caricature in pencil first (to make sure everything looks right) then go over it (in ink etc) and add in any final details. I always find this is the best way to do things if I want to draw in a medium that I can't rub out.
- Pen and ink – This is a very good medium for making bold drawings. There are many different types of pen, some more suitable for caricature than others. One that a lot of professional caricaturists recommend is a dip pen. As the pen's name suggests, before use, you have to dip its special nib in a pot of ink. One of the benefits of this medium is the flexibility you have when drawing. Although it is easy to catch the nib and make mistakes, you can vary your line's width quickly and easily which can add more life and expression to your drawings. There are countless other different types of pen which you can use to draw caricatures. I would suggest that you try out as many as you can to find the sort that best suits you.
- Brushes – A lot of advanced caricaturists use paintbrushes dipped in ink, instead of pens, to create their drawings. You can get some very good effects with these, however, I wouldn't recommend using paintbrushes when starting out as they are a lot harder to work with.

These are only a few of the hundreds of mediums which you can use when drawing caricatures. In fact, it is possible to create them professionally in anything from pastels to felt tips. I'm not going to tell you any medium is 'the best' because that would just be the medium that works best for me. If you really want to find out which medium is the most effective, then all you can do is experiment. Try as many different materials out as you can; even if you think they are not for you, sometimes you can surprise yourself. Remember, your style is personal to you so the medium you use should reflect this. Go for what you feel most comfortable using, but don't be afraid to try new things.

Once you have worked out what to draw **in**, you will have that age old dilemma of what to draw **from**. It is probably not sensible, at this early stage, to attempt drawing from life because everyone makes mistakes when starting out. I always find it best to work from photographs in this art form as you haven't got to worry about your subject moving or talking. Also if your drawing goes wrong when working from life, you will still have to show the finished result to your subject no matter how much you want to start over. If you are drawing from photos, you should try and get pictures of your subject from more than one angle; it is a lot easier to draw a caricature of them if you have at least on full face shot and one profile. If you can, try and obtain photos that are a good likeness of your subject and portray his or her personality well. There are far too many 'mug shots' of people with over-emphasised cheesy grins. These photos are not usually very flattering and give you absolutely no idea of the subject's real personality. Natural shots are far better and, in the end, you will probably get a far more realistic likeness working from these. One last thing on photos – make sure the picture you're using is a fair size. If you cannot see all the details in a photo of your subject then you may miss some important features that make them who they really are. (Sadly, due to the size of the Teen Pages, my examples aren't very big.)

Overleaf is an example caricature to have a go at. To start you off, I have picked a well known subject – Simon Cowell. The best photos of him I could obtain are the full face and three-quarter view shown below (sadly I was unable to obtain a good profile shot). It will be vital that you look at these photos a lot whilst drawing your caricature. That is, unless you want your finished picture to be an example of how you 'think' your subject looks, rather than an actual likeness of him. I may not be an expert, but this is the one rule I always follow if I want my drawings to look accurate. The basic steps which I have used to piece this drawing of Simon Cowell together can be used to help you create almost any caricature. I prefer not to think of a drawing as a huge impossible project, rather a lot of little pieces that need to be slotted together to form a bigger picture. When focusing on drawing individual features of the face (such as the eyes, nose and mouth) you should just think of them as a lot of shapes and lines. This way, it is a lot easier to get them looking right. Don't worry if your caricature doesn't turn out quite how you want it to the first time around – you can't expect your drawings to be perfect straight away. If you want to be good at anything then the only thing to do is practise. The more caricatures you draw, the better you will become and maybe, one day, you will even be able to make money selling your art work!

1) Now you're probably wondering where to start. After all, if you look closely at either of these photos,



the amount of detail is incredible. But that, of course, is the beauty of caricature – you can simplify things down as much as you want. It's a good idea at this point to choose which features of your subject you are going to exaggerate. A lot of people believe that caricaturists always give their subjects

big noses. This isn't true. I mean, what is the point of giving someone a big nose when another feature (for example their ears) may be far more prominent? Make sure to pay close attention to how the facial features naturally vary in size in comparison to each other. For example, if a person has big eyes make them the feature that stands out most in your drawing. For this picture of Simon Cowell, I have chosen to exaggerate his teeth, chin and cheeks (which go out a lot when he smiles). I have also noticed that, when he smiles, he scrunches his eyes up. So, I am going to exaggerate this further by making them appear small in relation to the rest of his head. Now that we've worked out what to do, its time to start drawing!

- 2) Don't start out with the complicated detail – you've plenty of time to do that once you've drawn the main outlines. I've started out with the bottom of the upper eyelid, the outline of the lower nose and the upper lip. Be careful when positioning these guidelines as they are vital for getting a good likeness of the person you're caricaturing. Even if the distance between the nose and mouth is **slightly** wrong, it could spell disaster for making a recognisable drawing of a person. I should point out now that these guidelines are going to be the main foundations of your caricature so it is important that you get them right above all else.
- 3) This is the stage where you will need to pencil in all of Simon's main facial features. Once you have done this, you will start to see your drawing take shape and assume the qualities of a real person staring back at you. I usually prefer to begin with the eyes and work outwards. However, it is completely up to you which feature you start with. It is possible to draw the eyes in just four simple stages (outline, iris, pupil, eyelid) and then add in any details (such as crow's feet) afterwards. If you think of the iris and pupil as two small circles then you can't go too far wrong. One mistake you can make when drawing eyes, however, is not positioning the irises and pupils evenly enough. If you don't get this right, your drawing will definitely be funny but for all the wrong reasons, as your subject will look a little bit boss-eyed! You shouldn't draw in the full outline of the nose as this makes it look rather strange. A couple of small lines on the bridge are more than enough to indicate shape. The outline of the mouth is pretty simple but pay close attention to your reference photos when drawing it as people's mouth shapes vary greatly (see the indent in Simon Cowell's bottom lip for example). Teeth aren't too hard to draw as long as you know what you're doing. You may be tempted to draw the lines between the teeth from the top to the bottom of the mouth but this isn't always a good idea as people can pay more attention to the lines than the actual teeth. Indicating the teeth is the best option and, I find, adds more style to the drawing. Be careful when drawing the eyebrows; although they may look unimportant they can portray a lot of your subject's personality. Pay close attention to the way the hair is laying in the photo and try to replicate this as best you can. Another important part of the face, that you may just bypass, are the wrinkles and smile lines. Make sure you get them right as they not only show personality but also age.
- 4) Now is a good time to add in the cheeks and chin. This process isn't too complicated but, especially when you're exaggerating them, it is important to get them right and not lose the likeness of your subject in the process. If you look at the full face photo of Simon, you can see that some of the deep lines in his face carry on until they meet the edge of his chin. The same can be said for the deep lines under his eyes that carry on to his cheeks. Once you have pinpointed these, it is a lot simpler to create and exaggerate the outlines of his face. Extend his chin down and make his cheeks a lot rounder to show that he is grinning. Your drawing will now look a bit like a cheshire cat and have a lot of personality!
- 5) You're now going to draw one of the features that Simon Cowell is most famous for – his hair. It has a rather, lets say, square shape and it is essential that you get this right to maintain the likeness of him. It will be a lot easier to get the shape of his hair in once you've drawn his ears. Thankfully, in the full face shot of Simon, you can't see very much of his ears so they're pretty simple to draw. Nothing more than the basic outline needs to be drawn at this stage. You can see in the photo that, from this angle, his ears are partially covered by hair. You can work up from here to get his hairstyle right. His hair is pretty straight all the way up, however, you will need to think about the shape a bit more where his hair meets his face. This really portrays his head shape and you can end up making him look overweight if you give him too little hair. The top of his hair may look strange and hard to draw, but it's only really two little bumps with a dip in the middle. His hairline is parallel to this too so, really, it's not

as complicated as it may seem. If you need some extra help getting the shape right, then you can see his hairstyle better in the three-quarter view photo. The outline of your caricature is nearly complete and now you just need to give Simon a neck so he no longer looks like he's floating!

- 6) There's no more complicated stuff now. All you really need to do is add in any extra detail and shading that you think would improve your caricature. This is a good time to make Simon's hair textured. You may have your own brilliant method of doing this but I've found that my favourite technique is to first shade the area which is going to be his hair, then add in the detail (with a darker pencil and putty rubber). So far, this has worked quite well for me. The other thing that will make your drawing look more professional is adding shading. Some of the best places to add this are on the nose (to give it more shape) and in the creases of the face. One thing I have learnt when experimenting with this art form though, is not to add too much shading. It is far too easy to ruin a picture you have worked hard on by overpowering it with shadows.



I hope this article has been helpful to you, **Please, please, please** send in any caricatures you've managed to create using the tips I have given you in this issue. Whether they're of famous people or friends and relatives, I will make sure I display them **all** in the next issue. Please also give me some feedback on what you'd like me to tell you about in the future. I could give you some more caricature exercises or information on something completely different. It's up to you!



Manga

Hello, welcome to the December issue of the Manga pages. I hope you enjoy it, remember that if you have a suggestion or contribution for this section, please send them in. =]

Maho Shojo

INTRO

Maho Shojo (Mahou Shojo) literally means Magical Girl in Japanese, and is a sub-category of the genre Shojo, which is aimed at teenage girls. The genre is very popular [I like a lot of Maho Shojo ^_^], but has a limited audience as the storylines, artwork etc... are created to appeal to teenage/ pre-teen girls. It is quite easy to recognise a Maho Shojo manga:

RECURRING EVENTS

- Magical Girl manga usually stars a perfectly ordinary girl of around 10-14, who gains super-powers by some way or another, and must use them to fight against an enemy. The stories tend to be upbeat and cheerful, occasionally throwing in some serious scenes, and often have morals, (ie: Shugo Chara's moral is something along the lines of "be yourself- and don't worry what others think of you"). The characters fight for idealistic causes such as love, peace, and hope— rarely for revenge. By forming teams, the heroines/ heroes learn the values of friendship and co-operation.
- Magical girls generally obtain their powers from some sort of enchanted object such as a pendant, a wand, or a ribbon. By concentrating on this object, and in some cases speaking a special phrase or command, a girl undergoes a complex transformation sequence (usually involving an excessive amount of prouetting) and changes into her fully powered form. A major theme of magical-girl stories involves learning to harness these powers and develop them fully.
- Magical Girls often have some sort of talking animal sidekick with magical powers of its own. These pets rarely participate in combat; instead, they offer advice and help train the girls in the use of their abilities. Or they just float around looking cute.
- Magical girls spend most of their time trying to keep their powers and their normal identities secret. The reasons for this vary: they may wish to avoid capture by the enemy, they may simply feel embarrassed, or sometimes even have received severe warnings not to let their friends and family know about their secret powers.
- Romance often plays a large part in Magical Girl manga. A common occurrence is the girl's love interest getting kidnapped, hypnotised, or taken over to the enemy's side. Then, the girl must choose between her love and fighting the enemy...

MAGICAL BOYS?

Whilst Magical Boy Shojo manga is generally rare, it is not unheard of. One well known example is D.N.Angel, in which a magical male protagonist transforms into his alter ego, some sort of fallen angel, every time he thinks romantically of a certain girl. Magical Boys often appear in Mahou Shojo. In Manga like Shugo Chara, Cardcaptor Sakura, Kamichama Karin and Mamotte! Lollipop, the main character's love interests are magical boys, and they play a relatively large role in the story. In others like Tokyo Mew Mew and Yume No Crayon Oukoku, the girls receive help from mysterious, magical boys.

some typical examples of Mahou Shojo can be seen on the next page



SHUGO CHARA



12 year-old Amu Hinamori is extremely popular at school, but for the wrong reasons. She has a reputation for being "cool" and "tough". The punk goth clothes her Mum makes her wear are partly to blame, along with the fact that Amu is extremely shy and often ignores people to hide this. Amu wishes for the courage to be herself, and three colourful eggs appear the next morning, which hatch into Amu's three Guardian Characters: Ran, Miki, and Su. Each Guardian character represents a different aspect of Amu's true character, and they help her to find the courage to be herself in front of others.

However, Amu is not the only one with Guardian Characters. The Seiyo Elementary's Guardians also have them, and they recruit Amu as part of their gang to search for X Eggs and X Characters: the corrupted forms of peoples' dreams.

Shugo Chara is still ongoing and currently consists of ten Manga Volumes and over 80 Anime episodes divided into 3 seasons. It has proved extremely popular in Japan. The Manga is available in English but the Anime is only available in Japanese.

MAMOTTE! LOLLIPOP

by Michiyo Kikuta



12 year-old Nina Yamada swallows a round "candy drop" that she finds on her plate. But it wasn't a "candy drop", it was the Crystal Pearl: the goal of a sorcery examination. Nina is now the new Crystal Pearl which is targeted by many probationer sorcerers. During this whole mix up, she meets two wizard boys named Zero and Ichi who both promise to protect her until a potion is made to remove the Crystal Pearl from her.

Whilst fleeing from other sorcerers who will stop at nothing to catch her, Nina develops strong feelings for both Ichi and Zero. Thus, the main problem presents itself: which one does she like best?

Both Mamotte! Lollipop Manga and Anime are available in English, the Anime under the title Save Me! Lollipop. The Manga spans out into seven Volumes. The story continues in its six Volume Manga sequel, Modotte! Mamotte! Lollipop, where three years later a fifteen year-old Nina swallows yet another Crystal Pearl (accidentally, of course).

KAMICHAMA KARIN

by Koge Donbo



Karin Hanazono is a perfectly average 14 year-old girl, although her grades aren't all that great at school and she lives with her bad-tempered aunt. Her parents died when she was younger, and all she has left of them is a ring given to her by her mother.

However, after meeting Kazune Kuyyou, a boy around her age who she thinks is very disagreeable, she finds that he has exactly the same ring as she has. What's more, both rings have magical powers, transforming them into "Gods". When merging with the Greek Goddess Athena's, spirit, Karin gains supernatural powers she uses to fight to protect her ring and Kazune's cousin Himeka from the evil forces of Kiro Karasuma...who has godly powers of his own.

This series is probably one of my favourite Mahou Shoujo, created by one of the greatest Shoujo mangaka, Koge Donbo. Although this series sounds a bit "fluffy", it has quite a complex plot, full of many weird twists not usually found in Mahou Shoujo such as reincarnations, curses and such (like many other of Koge Donbo's works). The seven Volume Manga is available to read in English, but the Anime is only available in Japanese. The seven Volume sequel, Kamichama Karin Chu, continues the story with slightly odder versions of Karin and Kazune.

Chibi

Chibi (also called "Big Head", SD Mode, CB, Super-Deformed etc.) is a style of manga art where the characters heads and other features are somewhat larger than proportionally correct.

Artists often super-deform characters in order to show an extreme or exaggerated emotion, which would be difficult to portray if expressed in a realistic face. Whether the feeling is anger, surprise, seriousness, embarrassment, feigned cuteness, terror, sadness or indifference, Chibi's are meant to be cute and are rarely used in serious situations. They are often used as humorous diversions or a punch line of a joke.

In most Anime/ Manga the Chibi-Mode only lasts a few seconds, however there are a fair number of Anime where the character designs are completely Chibi, very often in younger anime shows, and in parodies.

When drawing Chibi, the nose, mouth, and eyes are very exaggerated to, and can either be much smaller or larger than proportion, to create a comical effect.

To the left are some Chibi expression examples drawn (not very well) by yours truly. ^^

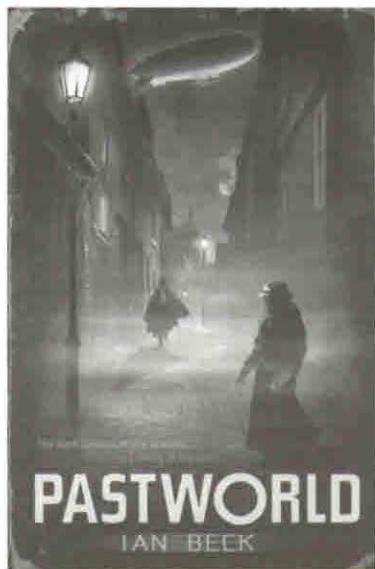


BOOK REVIEW

By Eloise Trett

Pastworld by Ian Beck

This novel is based in and around the city of London, but not as we know it. Nearly 40 years in the future, it has been converted into the greatest theme park ever devised – a living, breathing recreation of the Victorian era known to the public as Pastworld. Visitors pay tremendous amounts of money to experience life as it was in the past and escape the dull reality of a world full of rules and regulations. One such visitor is Caleb, a 17 year old boy visiting Pastworld on a 'business trip' with his father. Although at first he is taken away by the grittiness and adventure of Old London Town, he soon realises what a dangerous place it can be. After he finds himself at the scene of a murder holding the knife, he suddenly ends up on the run in a city with an antiquated justice system. His fate is linked to that of Eve, a young girl who is a resident of Pastworld. Having never been outside, she doesn't realise that she has been living in a simulation for her entire life. That is, until she is forced to flee her home and face the truth about the city and herself. And amidst all this turmoil a dark figure, who calls himself the Fantom, is stalking the city streets. As he claims victim after victim, Caleb and Eve find that they are more closely linked to his villainous plans than they could possibly have imagined...



There are some extremely clever ideas in this book; not the least of which is the exciting possibility of a world within a world. The way the author has seamlessly linked the past and the future together makes for a very original and innovative novel. I thought the plotline was fantastically written with lots of intrigue and surprising twists and turns that kept me guessing throughout and I loved how the story was constantly changing as we heard the different characters viewpoints.

The one thing that stopped this book being absolutely amazing, however, was the lack of character likeability. For me, they were just stereotypical and I couldn't really connect with them at all. I think the reason for this was the fact that their personalities weren't developed enough and any emotion they were feeling just wasn't believable. Maybe if the book had been longer I may have got to know them better and become more attached to them? I don't know. It is possible but, personally, I doubt it.

It is such a shame, because *Pastworld* could have been so great. There are flashes of brilliance in this story which show how amazing it might have been. Don't get me wrong, this may not have been the most jaw dropping novel that I have ever read but it certainly wasn't terrible. In fact, I enjoyed reading it quite a lot. It is outstanding for this author's first ever teen novel and I am definitely looking forward to seeing whether he will develop more in the future as he seems to have some incredible ideas. But, for me, this story just lacked something to make it shine.

Rating: 7/10

Game Review

Hi, my name's James. And today I will be reviewing *Star Wars Battlefront 2*

Star Wars Battlefront 2 is the sequel to *Star Wars Battlefront*, a third person shooter set in the *Star Wars* universe. It was released on October 31st 2005 for the PS2, PSP, PC, and Xbox.



In terms of gameplay there are a few different modes. There's instant action, which allows you to play all of the land and space battles as any of the 4 factions (The Empire; Rebellion, Republic, and CIS) without having to unlock anything first. Then there's the main campaign, and another non-linear campaign.

In the land battles you will find yourself running around a large variety of different places, such as beaches; forests, lava fields, on space ships, and even inside the Death Star itself! The aim is to either kill every enemy, or to capture all their command posts (glowing icons floating at some points of the map). You get to choose between a number of different character classes to achieve this, such as the storm trooper; rebel sniper, super battle droid, and a few special classes for each faction like wookies. Also when you get a certain number of points (by killing enemies and capturing command posts) you can choose to play as a special character, like Darth Maul, Luke Skywalker, or Boba Fett. You can also command many different vehicles, from the huge ATAT walker to tanks and speeder bikes.

In the space battles you can fly in a small variety of different ships for each faction, like the iconic X-Wing, Y-Wing and Tie-fighter. You win by being the first team to get a specific amount of points. You can do this by shooting down loads of enemy fighters, or by flying over to the enemy capital ship and destroying key points on its hull. Either by shooting them from your fighter, or by landing inside the ship and blowing them up with explosives.

The main campaign is basically a long string of these battles, with the story of the rise of the empire stuck in-between. Though through careful scripting of events, and the ability to finally be able to play out the famous *Star Wars* moments (like the battle of Hoth) as a normal soldier, this never became repetitive. Then there's the other campaign mode. In this you have an overview of part of the galaxy, and can decide which planet or fleet to attack when. You start off with just one troop type, but you can then purchase more troop types and bonuses to use. This didn't quite work for me, mainly because I never really got the hang of it I suppose, and also because I prefer just fighting battles in my favourite places again and again in different ways. But I'm sure there are other people who would enjoy this.

There is also an online multiplayer option, but (though I've heard it's very good) I sadly cannot comment on this as I never managed to get my PS2 connected to the internet.

The gameplay is very fun if you enjoy shooters and aren't expecting something with the realism of *Call of Duty*. I've been playing it for hours and hours at a time whenever I can for 2 years, and it's still not boring! There is also the option to play the entire main campaign and all of the instant action battles in splitscreen, great for when you've got a friend over. The controls are relatively easy to remember, and being able to play as a super-powerful Jedi brings in a different and very fun element. The only problems I really have with it

are that the AI isn't as good as it could be, and that you are restricted to just 16 AI troops per team! You don't really notice the small numbers in the land battles, but in space you really feel there should be at least a hundred fighters swooping around the map. Also it's quite an old game now (though not outdated) so I don't know how many people will still be using the online mode, if that's what you'd be playing it for (they've probably all moved onto *Call of Duty 4* and *5*).

In conclusion *star wars battlefront 2* is a fun shooter, with many things to keep you interested beyond its money's worth, especially since there's loads of second hand copies floating round by now. So give it a try!

CONTRIBUTIONS

Edited and illustrated by Eloise Trett



The Beccles Duck Trail



In September to early October ducks took over Beccles and part of the surrounding area.

20 huge plastic ducks were painted and hidden round the town, it was for the duck race, which was to take part on the 4th of October.

Some were in shops, churches or hotels.

Memorable ducks included one duck at the Waveney river centre in Burgh St Peter was set up next to a giant metal Pike called Eddie - who has his own blog.

One duck near The Three Horseshoes on the Lowestoft road in North Cove was painted with silhouettes of fairground attractions. Some ducks were very sneaky and in one case a thief. The duck in question is known as the art bandit stealing various famous paintings for his own feathers. Located in a church in Worlingham he obviously wasn't going to get far - as there was a police duck right behind him waiting to capture the art thief.

The artwork was quite good though for some I think they could have used a little more imagination - handprints being a favourite motif.

One duck sponsored and based in Twyford had to be locked behind gates because of children wanting to eat him- he was covered in chocolate goods.

Unfortunately we found only 18 out of the twenty ducks- one in a Bed and Breakfast that no one knew exactly where it was and the other at the church tower. Why didn't we see it then it being inside the tower you ask? Well it wasn't on the ground at all. In fact it was at the highest most point of the tower - the roof - and none of us were willing to climb it.

Though it would have been a sight seeing it being hurled up and down again. Criticisms I have to make were they were to far out in most cases and if you don't know where you're going you will get lost and probably end up somewhere completely different. It would have been better if they kept them all in the town. The hardest one and the furthest away at the Waveney river centre was not signposted at all from the main road.

This being the first time they've done it could mean there will be more events like

this. I know it's based on things like The Elephant trail in Norwich and The Hippos of North Walsham. I enjoyed both of these events and also the ducks but I found in the most part the medium size ducks were more cared for and more imagination for them- one duck someone had kindly knitted a jumper for it complete with buttons.

By Karis Youngman

MY BOOK

"I don't go to school" by George Osgerby
(lulu.com)

A while ago I published a short story (25 pages) for young children for around 5 year olds.

It's about a little boy called Charlie who likes to meet up with friends and have fun and who just so happens doesn't go to school!!

I wanted to do a book which actually has a character who is home schooled as there are not many about especially for that age group as I remember most of the books I read usually had the characters based around school.

Best wishes

George

