



Annual Report October 2009

Merry Go Round Toy & Leisure Library

Merry Go Round Toy & Leisure Library is a registered charity which runs two toy libraries. Our first toy library, Merry Go Round, opened 10 years ago and is based in Exeter Scrapstore on the edge of Belmont Park in Exeter. This proved to be so popular with families, carers and children that in November 2006 we opened another branch, Carousel Toy Library, in West Exe Children's Centre in St Thomas.



The toy libraries are open not only for families with children aged from a few months to early teens, but also for any groups or individuals involved in providing daycare for children. You may be a foster parent or childminder, or involved in a group activity such as afterschool club, playscheme or preschool. Anyone who looks after children is welcome to become a member!

Toy Libraries are exciting places to visit, like an Aladdin's cave full of things you want to take home; they are centres for lending the best toys and games which adults and children can enjoy together.

Many of our toys promote inclusion, with some specially designed for children with disabilities. We also have a wide range of resource books and multicultural toys.

We are happy to give advice about specific toys for individual children, or alternatively what resources would suit group play.

Registered charity no. no.1100532



Volunteers

Our volunteers and committee members come from a wide range of backgrounds, with different skills and abilities, many with that most important experience of being a parent.

We are always on the lookout for new volunteers for both toy libraries, whether to work with the children and families directly or to assist with fundraising or

committee work.

Tasks in the toy libraries include

- helping to set up
- checking toys which are returned
- cleaning toys
- helping keep tidy during the session
- welcoming customers
- occasional cataloguing etc.

To ensure that vulnerable children are protected, we carry out a vetting procedure which involves security checks by the Police, and character references.

Merry Go Round Toy Library

Merry Go Round Toy Library is based in Exeter Scrapstore. We are open twice a week throughout the year for families, groups and anyone who cares for children. During sessions, children can try out toys before hiring them.

We have a wide selection of good quality toys, games and resource books for hire, and are happy to offer help and advice about meeting the needs of individual children. We also have larger inclusive toys suitable for groups.



More toys can be borrowed for special events such as parties; you can also book toys if there is something you particularly want.

We make no charge for breakages, but do ask for toys to be returned in a clean condition.

Visit our website to view online catalogues to search for specific toys, look at the toy lists for ideas for older children, parties or for children with little or no sight, or come and see for yourself.



How Much Will It Cost?

- Family membership £3.50 per year
- Group membership £15 per year

There is a weekly fee for each item borrowed. Rates start at 30p per week. More expensive toys are £1 per week.

Returnable deposits are required for some toys.

Groups can borrow toys and play equipment by the half-term at reduced rates.



Opening Hours

Tuesdays: 1pm-4pm

Thursdays: 10am-1pm

Contact

Tel: 01392 436777

Email: fiona@mgrtoylibrary.org

Website: www.mgrtoylibrary.org

Visit us at

Exeter Scrapstore
Gordon Road
Exeter
EX1 2DH

Our Toys Include

Duplo, lego, sticklebricks, stilts, circus skills set, puzzles, board games, garages, toddler and baby toys, water toys, cars, dolls' houses, metal detector, pop-up tents, craft and cookery books, tunnel, sit-and-rides, marble run, multicultural toys and dressing up clothes, workbench and tools, small world play, oil wheel projector, glitter ball, road safety set, skittles, parachutes, table-top cricket, rounders, musical instruments, Poi, etc, etc !!!

Carousel Toy Library

Carousel Toy Library is a branch of Merry Go Round, based in St Thomas on the west side of the River Exe. We operate from a specially constructed space in the hall of West Exe Children's Centre.

Our co-ordinator is Fiona Daughton, who is helped by a management committee made up of members and volunteers.

We provide high quality toys for a nominal fee to children aged from a few months to early teens. Some toys are specially designed for children with disabilities, others aim to promote multicultural awareness. We also have a resource library of books for parents and carers.



Carousel is open mainly for families but groups or individuals involved in providing daycare for children are also welcome to join.

A wider range of toys suitable for groups can be found at our Merry Go Round branch.



How Much Will It Cost?

- Family membership £3.50 per year
- Group membership £15 per year

There is a weekly fee for each item borrowed. Rates start at 30p per week. More expensive toys are £1 per week.

Returnable deposits are required for some toys.

Groups can borrow toys and play equipment by the half-term at reduced rates.



Opening Hours

Thursdays 10am-1pm

Contact us

Tel: 01392 279361

Email:
fiona@mgrtoylibrary.org

Website:
www.mgrtoylibrary.org

Visit us at

West Exe Children's
Centre
Cowick Street
St Thomas
Exeter
EX4 1HL

Our Toys Include

Duplo, sticklebricks, juggling balls, spinning plates, puzzles, board games, inclusive toys, garages, tractors, multicultural toys, dolls, toddler and baby toys, water toys, cars, dolls'houses, tea sets, farm sets, pop-up tent and tunnel, loopies, sit-and-rides, marble run, small world play, skittles, small parachute, musical instruments, Poi, a variety of books on family matters, health, disability awareness, craft activities and cookery etc, etc !!!

Merry Go Round Toy and Leisure Library

Chair's Report for the 2009 AGM

The time has come for me to once again write my report and I am always delighted to do so.

It has been another year that has kept us on our toes during moments of joy and despair, particularly around, as always, our funding issues. The plus side about being part of this project is that those involved have half full glasses not half empty and this helps us through the difficult times. This is proved today because we are celebrating our 10th birthday and that says something about the Toy Library and the people that work and volunteer here. Our members are the most important part of this jigsaw and we hope that they are here to help us celebrate this special day. I do believe that the benefit of this project for the residents of Exeter is all about social interaction, educational advantage and a feeling of belonging to their resource. They play a big part in shaping what we do at the Toy Library and their enthusiasm helps us to continue providing the service.

Our project has been strengthened over the last few years with the Partnerships we have developed and these have certainly enhanced our project's profile. I would like to say special thanks to the following:

Exeter City Council

They have supported the toy library from the beginning, housing us, giving us grants and generally through their enthusiasm for the project. I believe they see Merry Go Round as a positive project that is available to its Citizens in terms of social and educational input and we thank them for this. We look forward to a long and fruitful partnership.

West Exe Children's Centre

Many thanks go to Sarah Baker, the Centre Manager, who has welcomed Carousel Toy Library as one of the many services on offer to families over the West side of the City. We have enjoyed and benefited from this partnership hugely and we certainly like it when Sarah is out and about singing our praises. Thanks to you all.

Flying Start Children's Centre

This is a virtual children's centre working in the Centre of Exeter which supports existing provision and grows new provision to meet the needs of families. We are fortunate to be part of this centre too, and thank Gention Curle, the Centre Manager, for all her support in enabling us to provide a service for even more families living in the middle of Exeter. Our membership has grown through our higher profile and we believe that this partnership will go from strength to strength.

There are ongoing developments around Exeter with regard to Children's Centres and I believe we are well placed to be part of this.

This project would not be where it is today without the experience of our staff and the commitment of our volunteers, both helping at sessions and behind the scenes, and my wonderful committee. I am very lucky to have such a great bunch of people who chip up on different occasions and muck in to do whatever and I think we all have fun too. Our dance at Stoke Hill School was a great success for the second year with Spin 2 working very hard on our behalf. We thank Liz Edwards for her hard work in making this fundraiser possible. Our grateful thanks go to the Headteacher, staff and families of the school who gave their support.

There has to be special mention for Fiona without whom we couldn't manage. She is special in so many ways for this project. Thank you.

Pat Cusa, Chair

Merry Go Round Toy & Leisure Library
Toy Library Co-ordinator's Report for AGM 10th October 2009

1. The toy libraries currently have a total number of 213 members, representing 1416 children who have access to our toys and play equipment. In our Merry Go Round Toy Library we have 124 families and 15 groups, whilst 73 families and 1 group belong to our Carousel branch.
2. This has been an extremely busy year for the toy libraries, with record numbers of visits between April 08 and March 09. A total of 1,106 visits were made to Merry Go Round by families and groups borrowing toys (a 48% rise compared to the previous year), with 631 visits to Carousel (a 9% rise). There were also record numbers of toys borrowed, up 46% in Merry Go Round with a rise of 14% in Carousel. Different services within West Exe Children's Centre also borrow toys and resources for use with the children and families they are working with, and often signpost families to us.
3. Earlier in the year we again tested toys for the Good Toy Guide, resulting in lots of lovely new toys for members to borrow. Many thanks to all the children and their parents or carers who helped test the toys.
4. We have been out and about over the summer taking publicity stalls and children's activities to different Playdays in the Park, which as always were very popular. The events are great for fundraising and letting the local community know about our services, as well as providing some fun things for children to do. I would like to thank all the volunteers who helped, and also everyone from West Exe Children's Centre which joined forces with us to advertise their services at St Thomas and Exwick.
5. Carousel Summer Stay & Play was very popular this year, with a great pirate theme! There is a separate report, which includes photos, if you would like to know more.
6. I would like to say a very big thank you to Nicky, our toy librarian at Merry Go Round, and all the other staff who help cover the toy libraries in the holidays, run the Stay & Plays, and fill in at short notice if we need cover. They have worked extremely hard over the last year, and I am sure all the children who borrow our toys really appreciate having the toy libraries open right through the year.
7. I would also like to say a big thank you to the committee and volunteers who have helped in so many ways both at fundraisers and in the toy libraries. A special thanks is due to Clare Dale for being an invaluable help at Carousel over the past year; she is moving on to do lots of interesting things now her children are at school. We wish you great success in the future!
8. Finally I would like to thank our chair, Pat Cusa, who not only supports the Merry Go Round toy libraries, but also regularly travels up to London in her role as Vice Chair for the National Association of Toy & Leisure Special Libraries as well as doing lots of other good work in the community. Earlier in the year she was awarded a certificate from Devon Community Foundation, in acknowledgement of her exceptional contribution to the community. Well done Pat, it was well deserved.

Fiona Daughton (Toy Library Co-ordinator)
October 2009

Merry Go Round Toy & Leisure Library
Treasurer's Report for AGM 10th October 2009

Financial statement

Merry Go Round Toy Library

As at 2nd October 2009:

£117.87	cash
£6355.77	bank
-£231.84	commitment to unpaid salaries
<u>-£850.16</u>	restricted funds (Devon Community Fund Grassroots Grant)
<u>£5391.64</u>	total

Carousel Toy Library

As at 2nd October 2009:

£106.67	cash
£9185.70	bank
<u>-£696.28</u>	commitment to unpaid salaries
<u>£8596.09</u>	total

Annual Accounts

The annual accounts for the period 6th April 2008 to 5th April 2009 were inspected by an independent examiner (Veronica Mathieson, Finance Manager for Exeter CVS) on 8th July 2009. The independent examiner stated that her examination showed proper accounting records had been kept and the accounts agreed with the accounting records.

A copy of the report and the statement of accounts are available for anyone who would like to look at it.

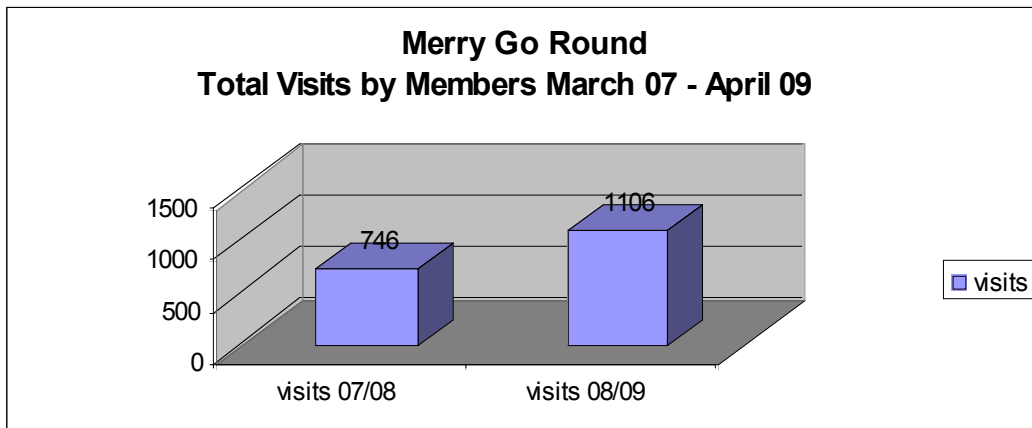
Grants and donations

We would like to offer a big thank you to the following for their financial support in this current financial year:

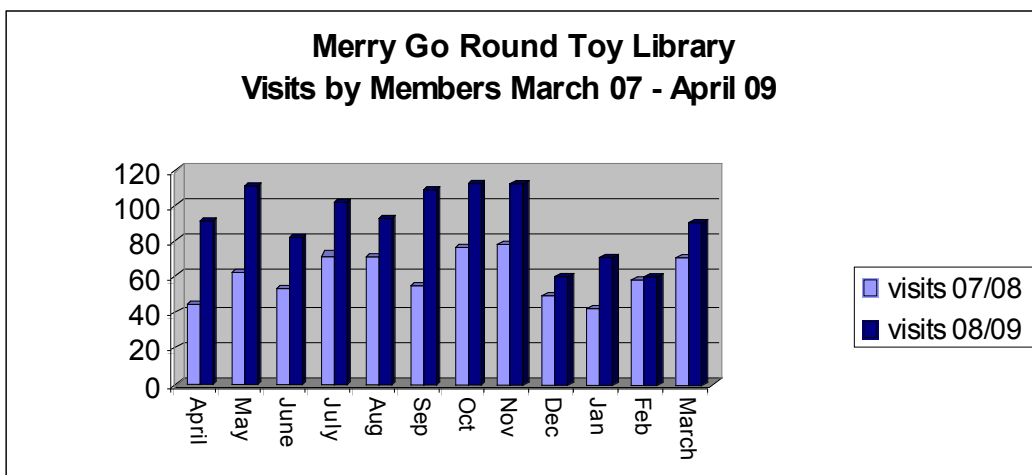
Exeter City Council
West Exe Children's Centre
Exeter Play Association
Devon Community Fund Grass Roots Grant
The Norman Family Charitable Trust
Flying Start Children's Centre

Sally Hobden (Treasurer)

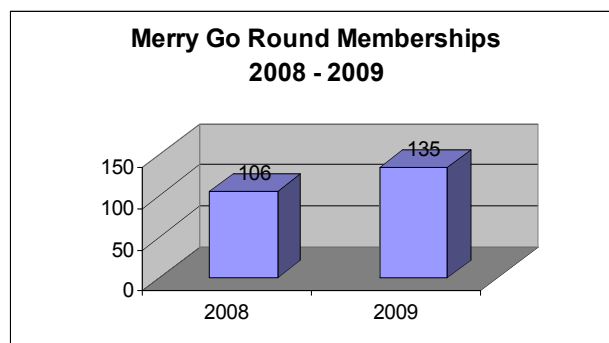
Merry Go Round Toy Library Statistics April 2007 - March 2009



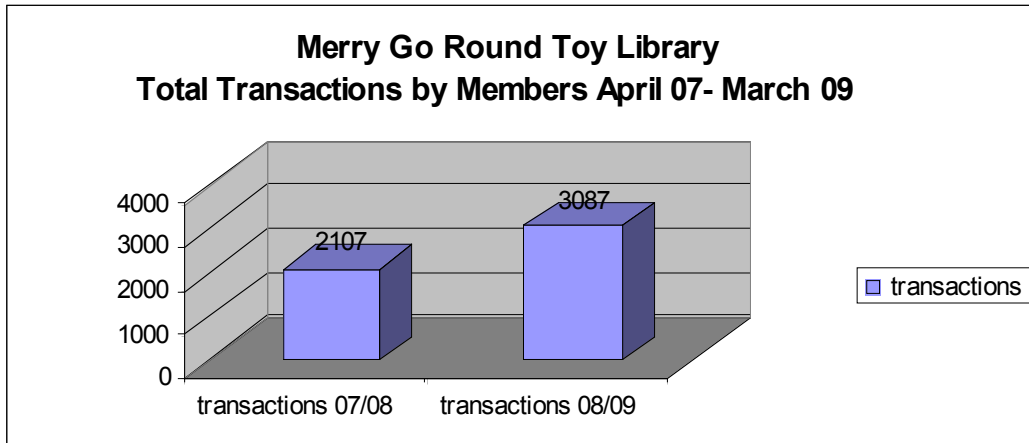
This has been an extremely busy year for Merry Go Round, with a record number of visits recorded over the last 12 months. A total of 1,106 visits were made to the toy library by families and groups, compared to 746 visits in the previous year, showing an increase of 48%. Numbers do not include visitors who just wanted information about the toy library or those just returning toys.



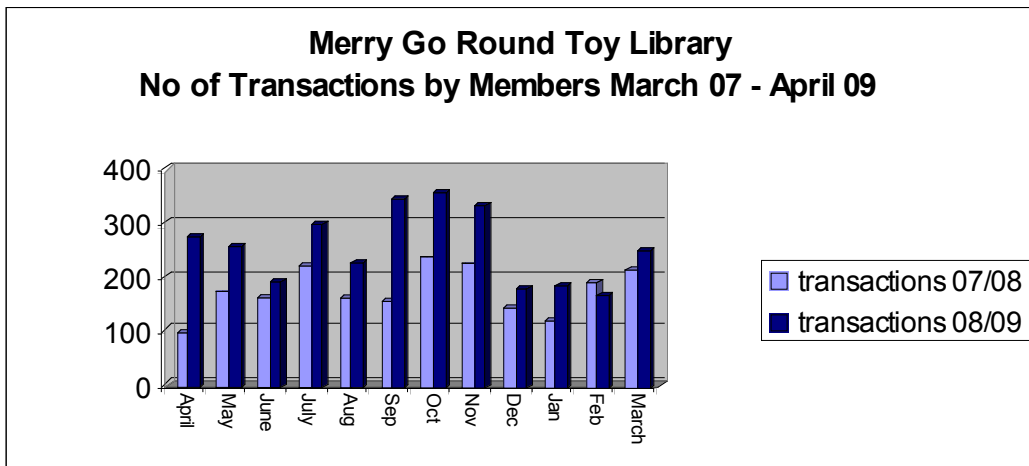
The increase has been consistent each month, as can be seen from the graph above. There are seasonal variations which annually follow the same pattern, with a slump in December and the early part of the year which is due to closures over the Christmas holidays.



The number of members (new members and renewals of memberships) has risen by 27% since April 2008, with a large increase in the number of families joining (up from 91 to 125 families in April 2009), but with a decrease in the number of child care groups (down from 16 to 10 groups).

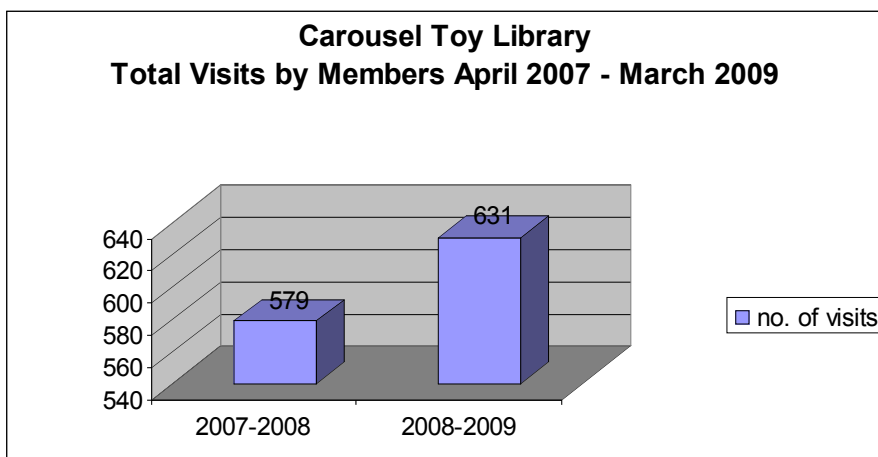


The number of transactions ((number of toys borrowed, deposits returned and overdue fees) was 3,087 in the financial year 2008 to 2009 compared to 2,107 in the previous year which shows a large increase (a 46% rise). This links in with the increase in visits by families and groups.

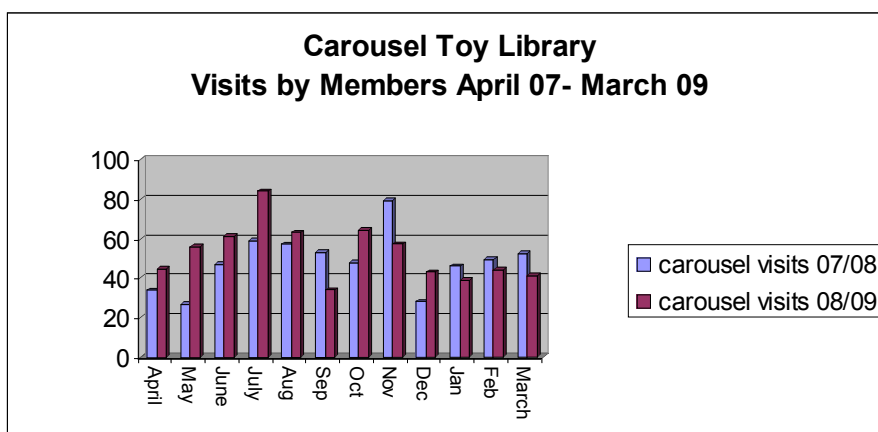


Over the past year we have had a high profile in the locality, due to publicity/activities at Exeter Playdays in the Park, articles and adverts in different publications including Flying Start Children's Centre and Sure Start Children Centre's newsletters and an increase in hits on our website (www.mgrtoylibrary.org). All of these have had a positive influence on our increasing popularity, as has word of mouth and recommendations by existing members

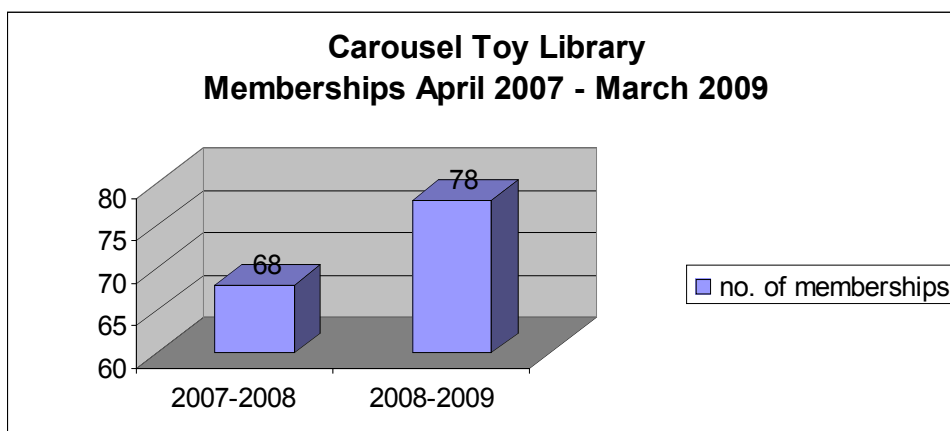
Carousel Toy Library April 2008 – March 2009



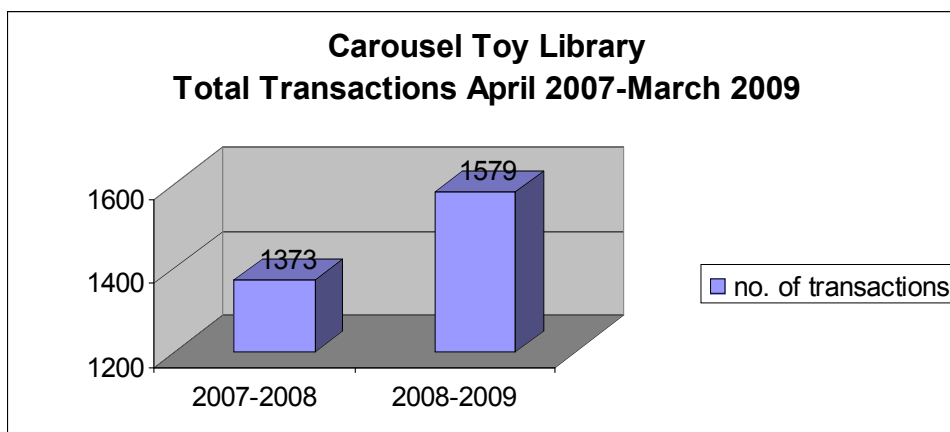
Over the last year there have been 631 visits to the toy library by families borrowing and returning toys compared to 579 visits in the previous year. This is an increase of 9% compared to the previous year (see graph above). In addition, we also held four Stay & Play sessions last summer which had an average attendance of 11 children plus parents each session.



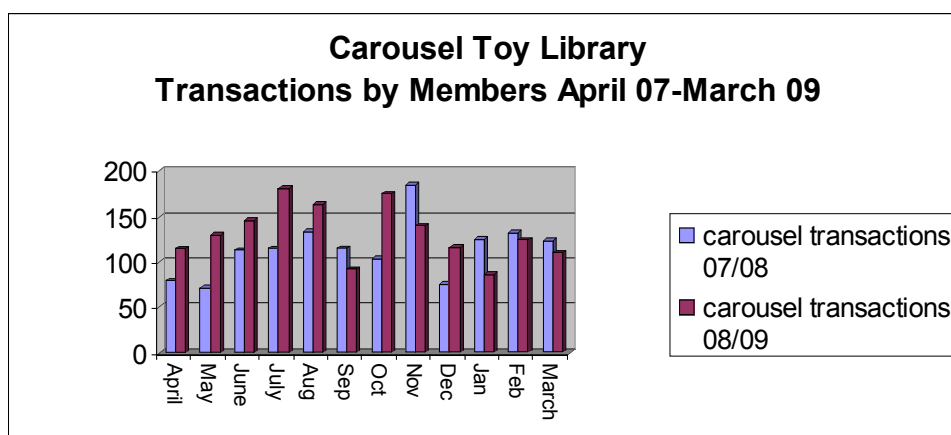
Both loans and visits have a seasonal variation, with dips over the Christmas period and New Year, also in September when we close for a week for our annual stock check.



There has been a 15% increase in families joining or rejoining Carousel Toy Library in the last 12 months (78 families and groups compared to 68 the previous year).



As can be seen on the graphs, the number of toys loaned to families also increased – up 14%, with a total of 1579 transactions compared to 1373 the previous year. Different services within West Exe Children’s Centre also borrow toys and resources for use with the children and families they are working with, and often signpost families to us.



Currently we are asking families and groups to test toys for the Good Toy Guide, an annual publication which this year will be published as a supplement in the Independent Newspaper.

We plan to run activities at some of Exeter’s Playdays and Fun4Free days in the parks, in conjunction with displays about the Children’s Centre. In the summer we will also be running Stay & Play sessions for family members, in addition to our normal toy library service.

Review of Carousel Stay & Play Sessions Summer 2009

The aim of the sessions was to provide a structured play setting within which parents/carers and their children could enjoy playing together using the resources of the toy library. Many preschools and toddler groups close during the summer holidays, and although there are playschemes for older children, there are not many opportunities for all the children in the family to spend some quality time playing with their parents in a group setting.



'My daughter really enjoyed all the craft activities on offer. During the summer her usual toddler groups and preschool stop so this was a good way to stimulate her outside of the house.'

'Logan loved painting for the first time and Lauren, although much older, has still enjoyed the activities and helping with the younger children.'

The theme for this year's activities was 'Under the Sea'

which proved very popular, producing some lovely art works and some fierce pirates! The art and craft activities were easily adapted for children of different abilities, with ages of children ranging from 5 weeks to 11 years.



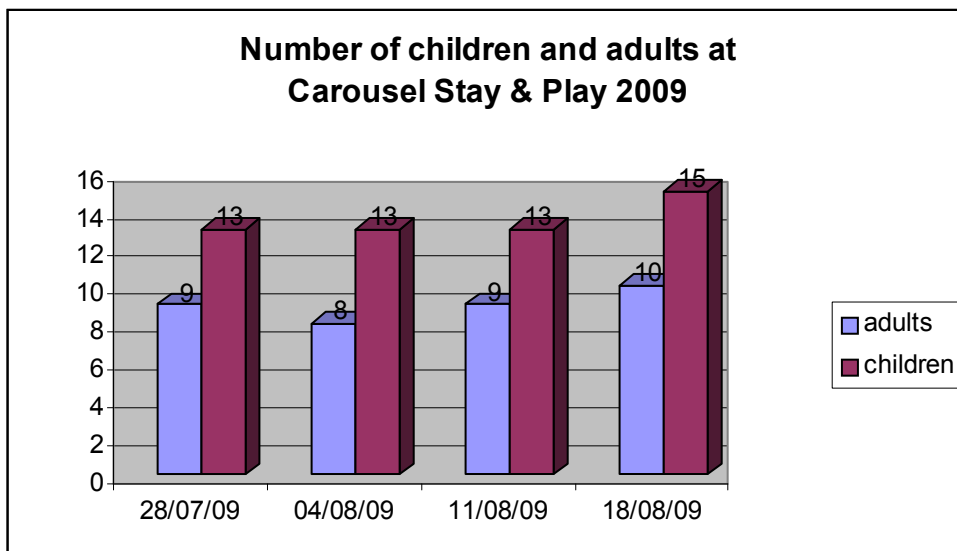
Sessions lasted for two hours and included time for freeplay, arts and crafts, healthy snack, physical play and storytime.



'It's been good fun this morning. Very relaxed but well structured and organised.'

'Excellent idea. Especially good for bad weather days.'

Each session offered places for 15 children plus their parents/carers and were bookable in advance. There was also a reserve list for families who were able to fill cancellations at short notice. This meant that even though some families were unable to make a particular session, most spare places were filled. The average number of children at each session was 13.5 (90% uptake) with 26 different children and 17 parent/carers attending in total.





Although there was a really good uptake, the average age of children was quite low and included several babies. This meant that there would have been enough space and resources to have catered for higher numbers, especially for arts and crafts. Future sessions could offer 20 places plus 5 reserves, with babies aged under 1 year not counting as filling a space.

Feedback forms at the end of sessions showed some very positive comments:

'There is lots of structure however the children still feel like they get to make a lot of their own choices of activities. The messy play and soft play sections are favourites and the choice of healthy snack is great.'

'Great for social skills and interaction with different groups and ages.'

'Overall very good. Art and craft activities excellent. Selection of toys good.'

Use of the garden for outside play was popular

'Outside play if weather allows'

but was only possible for some of the sessions due to heavy rain. Indoor soft play was set up in the hall as an alternative which children loved, but this did need careful monitoring because of the wide age range.

'Unfortunately due to weather have been unable to play outside. Indoor soft play not always appropriate for different ages of children.'

To overcome this, one end of the soft play area was set up specifically with babies in mind, using soft mats and baby toys. For safety reasons, one or two parents needed to be reminded that they were responsible for their children during set up of the soft play equipment, but this was a minor issue.

The Stay & Plays had a very full program which meant there was only enough time for singing at the end of one of the sessions.

'All good. Only suggestion would be more singing'

Both staff and parents thought extending future sessions to 2 1/2 hours would allow for a more relaxed ending with enough time for singing and circle time.

The majority of suggestions from parents were requests for more sessions, possibly over 5 weeks.

'If any thing it would be good if it was available more often.'

'More sessions please'

Overall both written and verbal feedback from parents was extremely positive:

'It's great as it is! Keep us updated with the next ones!'



Fiona Daughton (Toy Library Co-ordinator)

August 2009

STATEMENT OF ACCOUNT
MERRY GO ROUND TOY & LEISURE LIBRARY
For Period 6th April 2008 to 5th April 2009

Balances brought forward at 5th April 2008		£
Merry Go Round Toy Library		
Bank Account	3,514.66	
Cash Tin	<u>113.02</u>	
	<u>3,627.68</u>	
Carousel Toy Library		
Bank Account	7,525.63	
Cash Tin	<u>147.09</u>	
	<u>7,672.72</u>	
Total balance carried forward		<u>11,300.40</u>
 Income		
Merry Go Round Toy Library		
Toy Hire	1,933.55	
Membership Fees	596.50	
Fundraising/donations	379.09	
Tax refund	305.60	
Grants (note 1)	2,500.00	
Restricted Grant from Devon Community Foundation (DCF) Grassroots Grants	2,000.00	
Deposits in adjustments	3.45	
error correction	<u>1.90</u>	
	8,240.09	
 Carousel Toy Library		
Toy Hire	877.10	
Membership Fees	300.50	
Fundraising/Donations	96.80	
Grants (note 1)	5,484.00	
Deposits In	255.00	
error correction	<u>1.00</u>	
	7,014.40	
Total Income		<u>15,254.49</u>
closing blance at 5 april 2009		<u>26,554.89</u>
 Expenditure		
Merry Go Round Toy Library		
Deposits Out	483.00	
Salaries	7,236.44	
Equipment	265.41	
Consumables	124.65	
Publicity/Administration	374.31	
Miscellaneous (£58 memberships)	98.68	
Insurance	<u>215.00</u>	
	8,797.49	
 Carousel Toy Library		
Deposits Out	260.00	
Salaries to March 07 (note 2)	1,003.66	
Salaries	7,611.59	
Equipment	94.41	
Consumables	57.63	
Publicity/Administration	157.13	
Miscellaneous	141.90	
Insurance	210.00	
Adjustments	<u>3.60</u>	
	9,539.92	
Total Expenditure		<u>18,337.41</u>
Surplus/Deficit		<u>-3,082.92</u>
 Closing balance as at 5th April 2009		
Merry Go Round Toy Library		
Bank Account	3,238.97	
Less cheques raised not shown on statement	<u>341.42</u>	
	2,897.55	
Cash	<u>172.73</u>	
	3,070.28	
Carousel Toy Library		
Bank Account	5,782.59	
Less cheques raised not shown on statement	729.09	
	5,053.50	
Cash	<u>93.70</u>	
	5,147.20	
Total		<u>8,217.48</u>
		<u>26,554.89</u>

Notes:

1. See separate sheet for breakdown of grants
2. Salary payments from Carousel include £1003.66 from previous financial year

Signed

H. Hattisdon - Finance Manager - Exchequer
CVS

Dated

8/7/09.

Independent examiner's report on the accounts

Section A Independent Examiner's Report

Report to the trustees/ members of Merry Go Round Toy & Leisure Library

On accounts for the year ended 5 April 2009 **Charity no (if any)** 1100532

Set out on pages 1

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year (under section 43(2) of the Charities Act 1993 (the Act), as amended by s.28 of the Charities Act 2006) and that an independent examination is needed. It is my responsibility to:


- examine the accounts (under section 43 of the Act, as amended),
- to follow the procedures laid down in the General Directions given by the Charity Commission (under section 43(7)(b) of the Act, as amended), and
- to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of independent examiner's statement My examination was carried out in accordance with General Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from the trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently I do not express an audit opinion on the accounts.

Independent examiner's statement In the course of my examination, no matter has come to my attention which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in, any material respect, the trustees have not met the requirements to ensure that:

- proper accounting records are kept (in accordance with section 41 of the Act); and
- accounts are prepared which agree with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the Act; or

to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Signed:  **Date:** 8/7/09.

Name: Veronica Mathieson

Relevant professional qualification(s) or body (if any): Finance Manager

Address: Exeter CVS, Wat Tyler House, King William Street,
Exeter EX4 6PD