

From The Chair...



It seems a long time since I have been able to say hello to all our members and supporters of the Toy Libraries but it is good to have the opportunity to do so. There is a feeling of fresh new beginnings in the air, of the nights drawing out, the birds busy with their nests and the bulbs coming up out of the ground and hopefully for us all, warmer weather is on the way.

It feels a bit like that for the toy library; we are planning quite a lot of events and fundraisers for the Charity and hopefully you will all be able to join in, in some way.

Merry Go Round and Carousel toy libraries continue to be very busy and we thank you all for supporting the sessions. We welcome anyone who would like to become more involved with our Charity, either on the committee or helping at events. We have a lot of fun along the way and of course you get to play with all our lovely toys.

Please see Fiona or Nicky at the toy libraries if you would like to know more about how you can get involved.

I would like to say a big thank you to our latest volunteer, Jacqueline Brooks, who has taken on the job of editing this newsletter. I hope you enjoy reading it, and I look forward to meeting lots of you during the coming months.

Pat Cusa (Chair)

Saving Money At Carousel Toy Library

Carousel Toy Library is the place to go if you want your children to discover different toys each week without paying a fortune. I have two children, Chloe aged six and Zachary aged three. Chloe enjoys dolls toys and crafty things whilst Zachary enjoys cars and construction toys. At the moment Zachary is doing puzzles really quickly as he finds them easy. Instead of buying lots of new ones and having loads in the house, I go to the toy library and borrow ones I think will challenge him. When he has solved them we go back and borrow some more!

I am expecting another child in August and am really looking forward to trying out the huge variety of baby toys. I have decided that I won't be buying any new ones as it is so much cheaper to hire them from the toy library and after a few months they won't be needed anymore anyway. Some toys can be borrowed for longer periods which still works out much cheaper than buying them, and you can even borrow toys if you are having a birthday party!

Helen Lander (member of Carousel)

Creative Play Without The Mess!

Tidy creativity? Here are two toys which make it possible - Tap Tap Art and the Sand Tray. My daughter Eden (3yrs) has hours of creative fun with them. We often do messy arty things and these sets provide additional creative time when I need to be washing up or cooking nearby (supervision is needed at this age). We seem to have doubled our creative time together without doubling the mess!

With Tap Tap Art the idea is to tap the pins through holes in the shapes onto the cork mat and make patterns, shapes or just enjoy playing. Eden took straight to it. Out came the paper shapes we use for sticking and on they went. Out came the elastic bands and more things became possible. String, ribbon and even fuzzy felts found their way on there. She found a new way to push the pins in with her thumb and making a new picture "for Daddy today" became a regular interest. When she wasn't in deep concentration, she was singing or talking to herself, obviously in her element.

Sand play - indoors? Yes, I am sane! The Sand Tray is a tidy way to do it, a bonus in wintertime when the sand-pit may be packed away. The idea is to pull the levelling tool across the sand so you have an even surface to draw into. Eden's enthusiasm for it is endless. The possibilities are also endless, and beautiful. I did need to put it on a large kitchen tray to catch the odd spill and do a quick stint with the dustpan and brush afterwards, but with a little gentle guidance she was fully engaged in her learning process and loving every minute. There is a saying, 'a good toy is 10% toy and 90% child'. These toys are creative, tidy, tactile and simple, allowing your child's natural creativity to blossom. And when she's happy, I'm happy - I even got a quiet sit down and a cup of tea into the bargain!

Jane Rae (member of Merry Go Round)



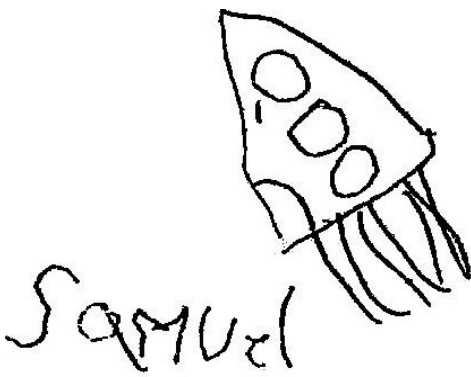
“We Love the Toy Library!”

My two year old daughter Kate and I love the toy library! It has loads of wonderful toys, games, books and puzzles. In fact there are so many toys it is difficult to see them all – the cupboards are stuffed full and piled high. But Fiona and Nicky the librarians are on hand and very happy to make suggestions and help find suitable toys that your little one will find fun and interesting.

My problem is that we always come home with probably too many toys to use in a week. Each visit I tell myself that we will just borrow one item and that any other toys we spy will be something to look forward to next week. But there is always something enticing on display and the small toys are only 30p (big ones £1) so we just can't help ourselves. Last week we borrowed a big garage/car park with cars, a noisy guitar and a tray puzzle. This week we've come home with a small but perfectly formed ELC cooker, some wooden fruit and another puzzle. We have found it great for trying out things we might want to buy – “how long will she really be interested in this?”. And great for trying out those noisy toys that we know we definitely don't want to buy! It was also very useful over Christmas when we had lots of toddlers round for mince pies – we borrowed some extra fun big toys to keep the children entertained while the adults enjoyed the mulled wine. We have friends with older children and when they visit I think we'll borrow some toys to keep them amused as well - we don't yet own any toys suitable for older ones. As I said, we love the toy library! The toys are clean and they all work. The visit to the toy library is a fun activity in itself for both of us and as a bonus we get to take toys home!



Fiona Willmott (member of Merry Go Round)



My name is Samuel Robinson, I am 4 years old and I really like coming to the Toy Library. My Mummy brings me every week and I love playing with all the toys before choosing something to take home.

I like to borrow different toys each week because when you get bored with them you can take them back and borrow something else. Sometimes we lose little bits and pieces from the toys but they always turn up somewhere - sometimes in very strange places!

I like cooking so I like to borrow the play food, like the pizza and the birthday cake. I also like the pirate ship that makes funny sounds. The first toy I ever borrowed was the marble maze. I have borrowed it lots

of times since. It is really good fun - even Mummy and Daddy like playing with it!

At the moment I am very keen on playing board games and there are lots of good ones at the Toy Library. My favourites are the 'Safari' game where you capture animals, 'Tummy Ache' when you make up meals and the Postman Pat 'Toppling Parcels' game. But my favourite toy to borrow is the space rocket. I never get bored with it - I even took it camping with me last summer!

Samuel Robinson (4 years old)

TOYS WANTED!

Good quality used toys, games and children's books wanted for Merry Go Round's fundraising Easter toy sale and coffee morning. Donations can be left by the toy library door outside of opening hours.

Many thanks for your support!

Dates for Your Diary

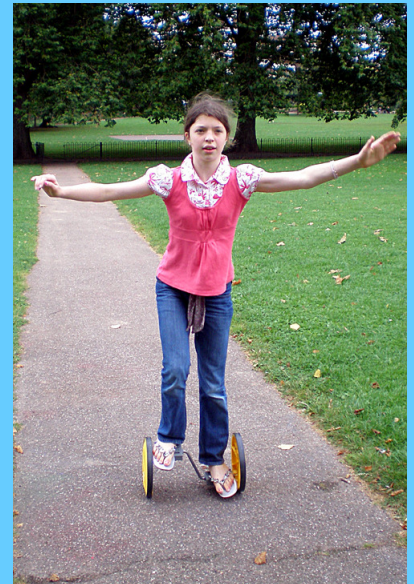
- Merry Go Round's Easter Toy Sale and Coffee morning – Belmont Hut, Belmont Park, Friday 9th April, 10am-1pm

The Toy Libraries will be out and about this summer!

You can find us at:

- Respect Playday, Belmont Park, Saturday 5th June 12 – 6pm
- St Thomas Playday, St Thomas Pleasure Ground Wednesday 4th August, 12-4pm
- Riverside Playday, Bromham Farm Playing Fields, Riverside Valley Park, 18th August 12-4pm

Following last year's successful Stay and Play sessions, we will be running more sessions this summer at Carousel in West Exe Children's Centre – dates to be confirmed.



Volunteers needed!

Offers to volunteer in assisting the work of the Toy Libraries are always greatly appreciated. Currently it would be helpful to have more volunteers to help with the following:

- Setting up, manning the stalls and serving teas/coffees at the Merry Go Round Easter Toy Sale and Coffee Morning, 9th April (see main advert on front page). Cakes also gratefully received!
- Collection box fundraising outside Morrisons in Beacon Heath, Exeter on Saturday 24th April. We are aiming to set up a rota with two people working each shift.
- Car boot sale at Matford Sunday 19th September – lots of people needed to help man this
- We are also seeking a new Treasurer with basic knowledge of accounts.

If you would like any further information on volunteering with the Toy Library, please contact Fiona during opening times or email fiona@mgrtoylibrary.org

Contact Information

Merry Go Round Toy Library

Exeter Scrapstore
Gordon Road
Exeter EX1 2DH

Opening hours

Tuesdays 1pm-4pm
Thursdays 10am-1pm
Tel 01392 436777



Carousel Toy Library

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

Opening hours

Thursdays 10am-1pm
Tel 01392 279361



Managed by the Community Development Foundation
Funded by the Office of the Third Sector

Full toy catalogue and further information can be found at www.mgrtoylibrary.org



Exeter City Council