

BOOK: Greenling  
AUTHOR: Levi Pinfold  
KEY STAGE: KS2



JUST IMAGINE  
TAKE ONE™  
BOOK

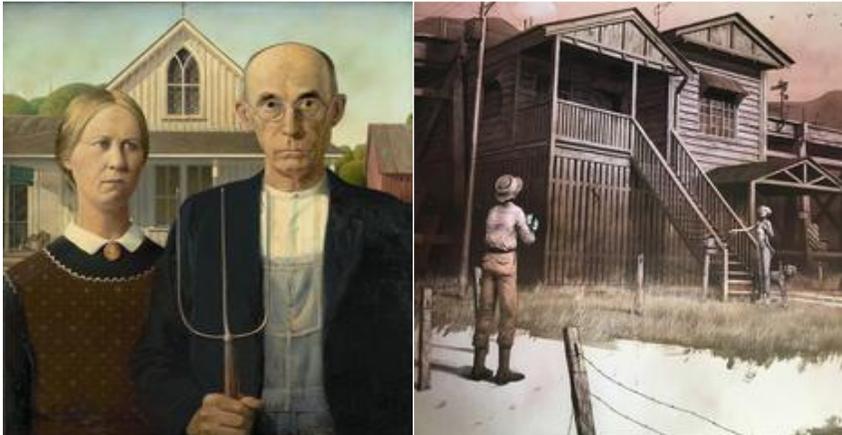
**Greenling**  
By Levi Pinfold

**About the Book**

Mr Barleycorn picks a green baby growing in his garden, letting loose the incredible power of nature. When courgettes flower in the kitchen and carrots sprout out of their television, his wife tells Mr Barleycorn that the Greenling has to go. But the bounty and beauty of nature has a strange power – the power to bring a whole community together.

**Reasons for Selection**

Levi Pinfold's stylised realistic and detailed paintings provide lots of opportunities for discussion. Set in Australia in the mid twentieth century, the atmosphere evokes the frontier stories of the American Midwest. Like David Grant's iconic painting, *American Gothic*, Pinfold's characters, a farmer and his wife, (the Barleycorns) are depicted against the backdrop of their outback farmhouse, inviting connections with Grant's painting and the many meanings that have been attributed to it.



**About the Author**

Levi Pinfold's debut picturebook *The Django*, won a Book Trust Early Years Award and was described by author-illustrator Michael Foreman as a 'virtuoso of real drawing'. He is also the creator of *Black Dog*, winner of the prestigious Kate Greenaway. Pinfold has illustrated books for other writers, notably David Almond's *The Dam* and A F Harrold's *The Song from Somewhere Else*.



**Suggested length of unit**

3-5 weeks.

**A note about 'lessons'**

Our lessons are organised as meaningful chunks of learning. Most of them will fit a standard 45minute to 60minute session. However, some of them are shorter sessions and others will run for a series of linked sessions. We have indicated this where appropriate.

It is anticipated that you will not teach all the lessons but will select those that suit the needs of your class.

**Note about page numbers**

This book does not have page numbers. For ease of reference we have numbered the pages starting with the double page spread, 'What is this growing on Barleycorn land?' Pages 1 & 2. You may want to lightly pencil in page numbers on a teacher copy.

Title	Skills and Teaching Strategies	Area of Learning
<b>Before Reading: Orientation</b>		
What's in a Title?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vocabulary: Morphological Strategies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vocabulary: Morphology, Suffixes</li> </ul>
What on Earth?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Questioning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Narrative Features: Setting</li> <li>• Visual Language: Colour, Line, Shape</li> <li>• Vocabulary: Semantic Field, Wasteland</li> </ul>
<b>During Reading: First Encounters</b>		
Taking Greenling Home	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read Aloud,</li> <li>• Think-Pair-Share</li> <li>• Discussion and Dialogue</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visual Language: Colour, Line, Shape</li> </ul>
Stranger Becomings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read Aloud</li> <li>• Readers Theatre</li> <li>• Choral Reading.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Language features: Idiom,</li> <li>• Visual language: Body Language, Gesture, Gaze</li> <li>• Visual Language: Colour, Line, Shape</li> </ul>
'We've Been Living in His All Along	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read Aloud</li> <li>• Text Marking</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inference Opportunities: Elaborative Inference</li> </ul>
'What will be growing on Barleycorn land?'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read Aloud</li> <li>• Questioning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Literary Language: Personification</li> </ul>
Taking Greenling Home	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read Aloud</li> <li>• Think-Pair-Share</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visual Language: Colour, Line, Shape</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion and Dialogue</li> </ul>	
<b>During Reading: Digging Deeper</b>		
The Barleycorns: Different Viewpoints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improvisation</li> <li>• Argumentation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Narrative Features: Point of View</li> </ul>
Positive and Negative Language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Language Study</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vocabulary: Positive and Negative Connotations</li> </ul>
Wild: Semantic Mapping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Semantic Mapping</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vocabulary: Tier 2 vocabulary</li> </ul>
The Language of Bees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Close Reading</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Literary Features: Metaphor</li> <li>• Vocabulary: Semantic Field: Bees</li> </ul>
<b>After Reading: Review and Reflect</b>		
Fable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Talking Points</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Genre: Fable</li> <li>• Themes: Sustainability</li> <li>• Themes: Nature and Manufacture</li> <li>• Literary features: Moral</li> </ul>
Do we Need Technology?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discussion and Dialogue</li> <li>• Close Reading</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Theme: Nature and Technology</li> </ul>
Mythology Connections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Making Connections</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Genre: Mythology</li> </ul>

## Writing Opportunities

Greenling's Arrival		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Writing Opportunities: Point of view</li></ul>
Should We Reduce Our Use of Technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Thinking Maps</li><li>• Think Pair Share</li><li>• Discussion and Dialogue</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Writing Opportunities: Argument</li></ul>

## Wider Learning Opportunities

John Barleycorn: Solve the Mystery		
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## Before Reading

### Orientation

#### What's in a Title?

Considering the meaning of the title.

**Pages:** Front cover

**Duration:** 20 minutes

#### **Purpose**

Although greenling is a word (a type of fish), Levi Pinfold is using it in this book as a **neologism** (new word). This introductory activity carried out before the children see the book, invites them to use their word building knowledge to conjecture what a greenling might be and what a story featuring a greenling could be about.

#### **Preparation**

- Write the word 'duckling' on the whiteboard
- List of words with the -ling suffix
- Paper and materials for drawing

#### **Process**

- Write the word 'duck' on the whiteboard.
- Ask for a definition.
- Use the slideshow to look at how other words with the -ling suffix mean a small or young version.

Now reveal the word 'greenling'. Imagine, what could a greenling be?

Ask the children to draw the image they have in their minds for the word greenling. Remind them to think about the suffix -ling and how that might be significant.

### **Final reflection**

When the children have had enough time, allow them to share their representations,

### **Key vocabulary**

-ling suffix words, neologism

## Where on Earth?

Establishing the context and setting for the story.

**Pages:** Title page and endpapers

**Duration:** 1 session

### **Purpose**

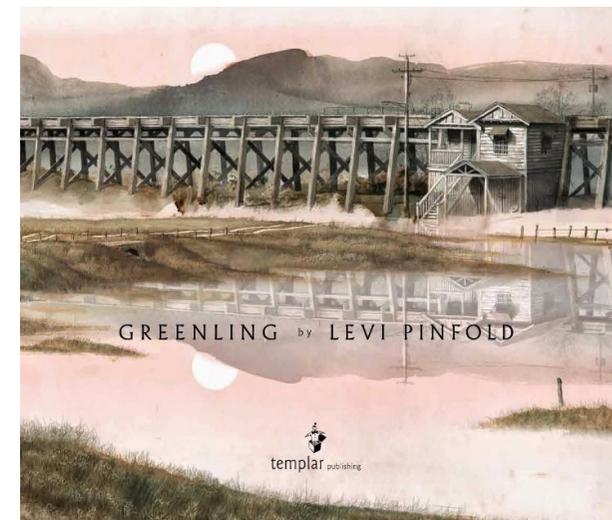
*Greenling* is a story of contrasts: barren and fertile landscapes, wild and tame, nature and technology. This introductory activity draws attention to the setting for the story, to the water-logged landscape in order to establish the context of the story. The preliminary discussion may support readers who are inclined to read quickly or ignore the importance of detail which is pertinent to the thematic content.

### **Preparation**

Make available the images of the title page showing the landscape depicting the railway line and the house. Preferably at least one between two.

If using the book, paper clip the pages and tell them not to read past these pages.

Alternatively, use a visualiser to project the page.



**Teacher's note:** the images show a vast unpopulated landscape. There's a single house built next to a raised wooden railway. A two-carriage train is travelling along the track to the farmhouse. The land appears to be poorly tended. The fences are broken. There isn't much growing just stumpy grass. The land is poorly drained and a road leading to the house crosses a large culvert, perhaps there has been a storm? The colour palette is sepia tones and a watery unsaturated pink, suggesting early evening. Could this be a reference to the old shepherd's rhyme, 'red sky at night, shepherd's delight.' We are given a clue that the sun is setting by comparing the endpaper with the title page. There is apparently some truth in the weather lore; red skies are more common after bad weather as a warm weather front approaches.

Although it is useful for you to analyse the text and it may help you identify prompts to support the discussion, avoid over explicating or imposing your interpretation as the children build their understanding.

### **Process**

Start with the endpapers. Ask an open question:

- What can you see?

Supplementary prompt:

- Where do you think this might be? Encourage speculation and using evidence from the images to support ideas, rather than seeking a definitive answer.

Now move to the title page. In pairs, ask the children to talk about what they see. Encourage them to pay attention to the details. Gather the class and share ideas. You could to annotate the image with the children's ideas.

Possible supplementary prompts:

- What questions do you have after looking at this picture?
- Which do you think came first, the house or the railway? Why do you think that?
- Where do you think the train has come from? Where do you think it is going?
- Who do you think lives in the house?
- What words can you use to describe the land?
- As you talk about the picture incidentally feed in words and friendly definitions from the additional vocabulary list.
- Add the words to your annotations along with others suggested by the children.
- If you lived here, what type of work do you imagine you would you do?

**Final reflection**

Review the annotations with the class and make explicit the point that by looking closely you can pick out lots of details, which may be relevant to the story.

**Key vocabulary**

barren, wasteland, parched, desolate, drainage, flooding, desert, dustbowl

## During Reading

### First Encounters

### Taking Greenling Home

**Pages:** 1 - 8

**Duration:** 1 session

**Purpose**

This session involves close reading. The children are encouraged to read actively, monitoring their own comprehension, to share confusions, puzzles and questions. It allows time for children to begin to develop their own understandings as a basis for extending their thinking.

**Preparation**

- Copies of *Greenling*, at least one between two. Use paperclips to secure the pages to prevent children from reading past page 8.

**Process**

Start by reading the story aloud to the class, while the children follow.

**Teacher's note: practise reading aloud to make sure you don't stumble on the irregular meter.**

Initial prompt:

- Did you find anything strange or puzzling about the story so far?

Record the children's ideas for future reference.

Now working in pairs or small groups: Ask the children to re-read the text and then share the pictures. Ask them to talk about the details that they notice.

### Spread 1

Gather the class together. Beginning with the first spread, invite the children to initiate the discussion by sharing what they have noticed.

Supplementary prompts could include, if needed:

- Who or what is Barleycorn? (Make sure the children understand this is the man in the picture. Point out the capital B to denote a proper noun, if necessary.)
- What do you notice sitting on the fence? (Introduce the word 'crow' which is referred to later in the story. You might also introduce the word 'carrion'. Crows are associated with death because they feed on carrion.)
- Where do you think the water has come from?
- What can you see, '*where once stood a tree?*' (Human actions such as cutting down trees to make use of land can lead to problems like flooding. You may or may not want to talk about this at this point. Alternatively, you can return to this in the Review and Reflect stage.)
- Introduce the term 'culvert' for the pipe.
- What do you notice about the dog's body language?

### Spread 2

Repeat the process, inviting the children to initiate the discussion with their observations. Supplementary prompts, if needed:

- What do you think Mrs Barleycorn means when she says, '*It belongs to the wild?*'
- What sort of response do you have to the picture of the Greenlings feet? What is familiar? What is unfamiliar?
- What do you imagine Mr Barleycorn is saying to his wife?
- How is the dog responding? Why do you think it is responding in this manner?
- What do you notice about the way that the house is built? Where is the front door? Why might it have been built in this way?

### Spread 3

As before invite the children to start the discussion and prompt where needed:

- What do you think is happening in the picture at the bottom of the left-hand page?
- What words tell us that Greenling is different from other babies?
- '*This is a different breed*' '*he has needs only trees understand.*' '*a vegetable hunger to feed.*'
- How are the Barleycorns attempting to meet Greenling's needs?
- How do you think all of the characters are feeling in this picture?

### Spread 4

Repeat as above

- Why does Barleycorn say, 'we can't leave him outside for the crows'?
- What evidence can you see that 'some of the outside is inside'?
- How many ways is the sun shown in the picture (shining through the window, clock poster)? Who is depicted in sunlight? What pattern does the sun make on Mrs Barleycorn? Does it remind you of anything?
- What word does Mrs Barleycorn use to describe the baby? Do you think it is an affectionate or hard-hearted word?

**Teacher's note: the children may observe that the shadow makes a pattern like prison bars. This motif is repeated in the image showing Mrs Barleycorn lying in bed. As before, avoid heavily directing the response but see what connections the children make when prompted.**

### **Final reflection**

Ask the children to summarise the story so far.

Briefly discuss what you think will happen next.

### **Key vocabulary**

barren, wasteland, drainage, flooding, derelict, neglected

### **Additional vocabulary**

crow, carrion, culvert,

## Stranger Becomings

Reading and discussing first responses to text and image

**Pages:** 1 - 18

**Duration:** 2 sessions

### **Purpose**

This sequence is structured to provide an opportunity for reading, re-reading and closer reading of text and image allowing time for the children to respond to details and build their own understanding prior to dialogic teaching to extend their thinking.

### Preparation

- Copies of *Greenling*, at least one between two.
- Download and print the Readers Theatre script enough for one each. This either has to be printed in colour, or the children have to print colour their copies following the example.

### Process

Continue reading the story.

Read from the beginning of the book repeating the text read previously and then continue up to ‘*Why now? Why here? Why me?*’ Re-reading allows the story to build in the children’s minds and avoids fragmentation.

Clarify any unfamiliar vocabulary. For example, gripe – complaint.

Distribute the Readers Theatre script. Read through while the children follow. Encourage them to think about how you are reading the passage and to look at how the punctuation aids our expression and pacing.

Invite feedback on the Barleycorn’s responses.

- What did you notice about the way I read that?
- What do we learn about Mrs Barleycorn from the way that I read her part?
- What do we learn about Mr Barleycorn from the way that I read his part?

Working in groups of three, have the children use the Readers Theatre strategy to re-read the story taking the parts of Mr Barleycorn, Mrs Barleycorn and the narrator.

Share one or two examples giving feedback to help the children improve their fluency. For example, by discussing stress patterns, emphasis, intonation as appropriate etc.

**Teacher’s note: The Readers Theatre can be returned be practised for a few minutes in each session across the week culminating in a Readers Theatre performance (see strategies for further information.)**

Returning to the text.

Next ask them to look at the illustrations and to make a note of one thing that they found most interesting in each picture.

Gather the class together and share ideas. Use some of the supplementary prompts, if needed:

- How do the colours **compare** to the colours on the previous pages?
- How do the colours on the sunflowers page **compare** to the page with Mrs Barleycorn in bed?

- What emotions do you experience when you look at these images?
- What do you notice about the light shining through the window in the picture of Mrs Barleycorn in bed? Does it remind you of an earlier page?
- What is happening to the technology (television, car, microwave cooker, telephone)? Is it a good thing or a bad thing?
- What is meant by '*the transport has taken to seed*'? There is a literal meaning (plants are growing inside) and a figurative meaning (past its best, no longer useful)
- What is Mrs Barleycorn concerned about?
- How are the different characters, including the dog, reacting to Greenling?
- What animals can you find in the pictures?

You may want to show the slide show, '*What can you find?*' Play find the animal. (All these animals pictured come from Australia, which is where the story is set.)



### Final reflection

- What effect is Greenling having on the Barleycorns?
- Do you have any thoughts about what Greenling is and where he has come from?
- What do you think will happen next?

**Teacher's note:** this session could be followed by *The Barleycorns - different viewpoints*

### Key vocabulary

gone to seed, gripe, compare, contrast



## 'We've been living in his all along!'

Using text marking to support close reading.

**Pages:** 19 - 21

**Duration:** 1 session

### **Purpose**

Text marking can be used to encourage close reading. Children reflect on parts of the text that they find puzzling as well as identify important ideas and interesting literary language. A text marking strategy is a useful skill to develop. Much of the process will be internalised as they gain experience, skills and confidence.

### **Preparation**

- Copies of *Greenling* at least one between two.
- Soft pencils, coloured pens or sticky notes or highlighting and annotation

### **Process**

Read aloud to the class from, 'A screech of brakes' to 'we've been living in his all along!' (pp 19 -21).

Working in pairs, ask the children to re-read the page, 'This cuckoo must go!' aloud to each other.

Gather the class and ask:

- What's the most important thing that has happened in this part of the story.
- Are you surprised by Mrs Barleycorn's reaction or were you expecting it? Why?

If text marking is new to the class, explain the process and model the strategy on the whiteboard. Tell the children that they can mark the words and the pictures if they want to. Use coloured pens or sticky notes to mark the text. A simple annotation key can be used.

For example:

'?' a question mark for something I find puzzling or don't understand

'O' a circle around a new word

'\*' a star next to something important or a main idea

'♥' a heart for a bit that I really liked

Gather the class together and work through some of their ideas together.

### Final reflection

Return to the text to consider the following, if they haven't already been covered in the feedback.

- Why do you think Mrs Barleycorn has changed her mind about Greenling?
- Mrs Barleycorn is turned away from the reader, facing the crowd. What expression do you imagine she has on her face?
- What do you think about the dog's response?
- Which characters in the crowd are most noticeable?
- What do you notice about the body language of different characters in the crowd? (Note man with the clenched fist and man pointing to the sky. Why do you think they are so aggressive?)
- How does Greenling react to what's going on?

Are there any words or phrases used that indicate the mood in this scene? (cuckoo, hurled, boiling over, bellows).

**Teacher's note: Mr Barleycorn's pose in this picture is reminiscent of renaissance and classical poses of the Madonna and Child. The crowd baying to get rid of Greenling might bear some allusion to the crucifixion. Or more generally it illustrates mob mentality and response to outsiders. Children should not be led to overtly analyse the picture in this way, but some of them may make connections.**



Consider how marking a text can help to focus reading, help us form opinions and back up our ideas with evidence from the text.

**Teacher's note: this session could be followed by 'The cuckoo must go!'**

### Key vocabulary

hurled, boiling bellows

## What will be growing on Barleycorn land?

**Pages:** whole book

**Duration:** 1 session

### **Purpose**

This session completes the read through of the story, followed by a discussion focussing on the changes that have taken place in the story. There is also an opportunity to review initial questions, confusions and predictions.

### **Preparation**

- Copies of *Greenling* at least copy between two.

### **Process**

Re-read the story all the way through from the beginning to the end. Ask an open question:

- Do you think this story has a message?

After reading share responses. Use the following prompts if needed:

- Why does Greenling leave the Barleycorns?
- Do you think things will return to the way they were before Greenling came?
- Has Mr Barleycorn changed?
- Has Mrs Barleycorn changed? (Notice the proximity of the characters at the end of the story. In the early parts of the story they are shown far apart rather than close together.)
- We can't see the expressions on their faces. Can you imagine what they look like?

Compare the final spread with the title page.

- They are almost the same, but what changes can you see?
- Why do you think those changes have been made?



Look again at the spread '*so a long summer began.*' In the second stanza:

*But all summer things must come to an end,  
When summer has grown a beard.*

- What do you think this means? Can summer really grow a beard?

Introduce the term 'personification' or revise if it is already familiar to the children.

### **Final reflection**

- Now that you have finished the story, have any of the things that you found puzzling at the beginning been resolved?

Review the notes that you made with the children in previous sessions.

- Do you have any further questions? (For example, where has Greenling gone?)
- Make the point that sometimes when we read, we are left with new questions and that not all of our questions will be answered.
- Is this the case with this story?

### **Key vocabulary**

personification

## During Reading

### Digging Deeper

#### The Barleycorns – Differing Viewpoints

Using role-play to explore the point of view of different characters.

**Pages:** Whole book

**Duration:** 1 session

#### **Purpose**

This session enables children to draw on their own experience and evidence in the text to present differing points of view. Through working in role, they present their arguments to persuade others to their point of view.

#### **Preparation**

- Blank T diagram for summarising main points.

#### **Process**

Working in pairs, ask the children to take on the roles of Mr and Mrs Barleycorn. Have them improvise a discussion where each explains their thoughts about the situation with Greenling.

Introduce the term **argumentation – using reasons to support your ideas**.

Make a distinction between **argumentation** and **arguing** (expressing different views but usually in an angry way).

- What will Mr Barleycorn say to try and persuade Mrs Barleycorn to his point of view?
- What will Mrs Barleycorn say to try and persuade Mr Barleycorn to her point of view?

Allow time for the children to improvise their arguments.

### **Final reflection**

Gather the class together.

Collect ideas supporting Mr Barleycorn's position.

Collect ideas supporting Mrs Barleycorn's position.

Use a T Diagram for summarising their points of view

Personal reflection:

- Do you have more sympathy with the views of Mr Barleycorn or Mrs Barleycorn? Would you be happy not to watch television, play internet games, listen to music?
- Do you think Levi Pinfold has more sympathy with the view of Mr Barleycorn or Mrs Barleycorn? What makes you think that?

**Teacher's note:** this could be followed by the diary writing session.

### **Key vocabulary**

argumentation, persuasion, persuade, persuasive

## Positive and Negative Language

Investigating positive and negative descriptions of Greenling and relating this to the wider world context.

**Pages:** Whole book

**Duration:** 1 session

### **Purpose**

Writers employ language that guides a reader's response. Language can reveal a positive or negative perspective on a character. In picturebooks this is done through both verbal and visual language.

## Preparation

- Copies of *Greenling*, at least one between two
- News headlines showing negative language. This article explains why negative news is more seductive than positive news  
<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2018/feb/17/steven-pinker-media-negative-news>

## Process

Read from the beginning of the story. Ask the children to raise a hand when they hear the Greenling referred to. Note, he may not be referred to by his proper name.

The first three mentions use the pronoun 'it'. The children may not pick this up:

*Is **it** intended for Barleycorn hands?*

*Where **it** came from*

*Back to the land **it** should go*

Read past unless they raise their hands, you can return to these mentions later.

Next mention is: *A **baby** is not like a hat.*

Consider if this is a positive or negative word. Usually people think of babies positively. It's a human instinct to want to protect a baby.

Next we have the pronoun 'him'

*We can't leave **him** outside for the crows.*

This is more positive than the 'it' used earlier. It gives more human qualities. If the children don't mention the pronouns, you can come back to them later.

Next is: *'Get rid of this **goblin** by morning.'*

Is this positive or negative?

Goblins have negative associations. In folklore they are cruel, malicious and ugly.

Is there a difference in the language used by Mr Barleycorn and Mrs Barleycorn?

In pairs, have the children find other words used to refer to Greenling.

- Cuckoo, vegetable, Greenling

Do these words have **positive** or **negative connotations** in the way that they are used in this story?

We can use language to describe things, people and places in positive or negative ways.

Newspapers often use negative language in headlines because it grabs more attention.

The words "bad," "worst," and "never" work 30 percent better at catching attention than positive ones like "always" or "best."

- Is that surprising?
- Why is bad news more likely to grab attention?

Here's an example: *Psychiatric bed cuts could lead to more murders.*

- How does the headline make you feel? Why?
- What do you think the journalist wants you to believe?

Have a look at some recent headlines in the papers. Ask the questions:

- How does the headline make you feel? Why?
- What do you think the journalist wants you to believe?

### **Final reflection**

Make explicit the point that it's good to be aware of when people use positive and negative language and the effect that it has on us.

### **Key vocabulary**

positive, negative, connotation

## Wild – Semantic Mapping

Developing depth of understanding of a high concept word.

**Duration:** 1 session

**Pages:** Whole book

### **Purpose**

One of the themes in the story is the contrasts between wild and tame or domestic. Greenling is a wild creature and the Barleycorn's dog is tame. Perhaps that is why he doesn't appear to trust Greenling? But what does 'wild' mean.

### **Preparation**

Large sheets of paper and marker pens.

### **Process**

- Write the word 'wild' on the whiteboard.
- Ask the class to suggest some words that they associate with the word 'wild'. Start a list.
- Make the point that these words are associations rather than synonyms. For example, you might associate 'weather' with the word 'wild' but weather is not a synonym for wild.

The list might start something like this:

mad  
weather  
nature

If the children's ideas are very similar and they are thinking along one line of thought, feed in some suggestions of your own to encourage divergent thinking. However, they must be able to explain how their suggestion is an association, if the links seem too tenuous.

Once the children have the idea, set a two-minute challenge for them to come up with as many associations as possible. Who can get the most words in two minutes?

Gather the class together.

Take suggestions and build a class list.

Now ask them which words on the list go together. For example, mad, angry, temper could be grouped together. Savage, untamed, beast could be another group. A word can be used in more than one group.

Use the connections to build a 'concept' or 'semantic' map

After completing the task, the children can compare their maps with an automatically generated one using [lexipedia.com](http://lexipedia.com). (Avoid taking a shortcut to Lexipedia as it is the *process* of creating the maps that deepens vocabulary knowledge.)

### Final reflection

When you have explored the different meanings of the word 'wild'. Ask the children which meanings seem to fit the story best.

- Do different definitions for 'wild' fit different parts of the story?
- Can you think of any words that might be used to express the opposite of wild? (e.g. tame, domesticated, pet).
- Are there any animals in the story that contrast with the wildness of Greenling and the Australian wildlife?

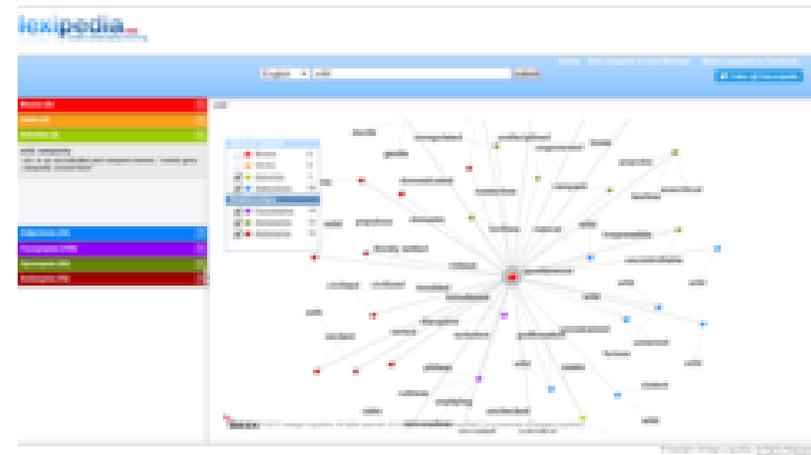
If appropriate, make explicit the point that writers often use contrasts in literature: light and dark, night and day, love and hate, wild and tame

### Key vocabulary

wild, tame, civilised, domesticated, cultivated, primitive

### Additional vocabulary

agrarian, neglected, overgrown



## The Language of Bees

Identifying references to bees and considering the word choice and effect.

**Pages:** 15 - 27

**Duration:** 1 session

### Purpose

Bees are essential for growing crops and in part this fable is a hymn to the bee. Levi Pinfold references the bee in text and image. A pivotal moment in the story takes place when Mrs Barleycorn defends Greenling. This act seems to unleash a special power. '*Suddenly flowering with all the attention*'. He utters a magic spell and it is at this point that we see the image of him surrounded by the bees. References in the text foreshadow this moment.

### Preparation

- Copies of *Greenling*, at least one between two.
- Projection of the book jacket onto the whiteboard.

### Process

Share the book jacket. In this large close-up Greenling shows bees collecting pollen from his sprouting branches and sitting on his hand

- Why has Levi Pinfold included bees in this picture?

Greenling doesn't seem disturbed by their presence.

- Are they important to the story?

Working in pairs, starting on the sunflower spread (p15) read to the page with the large close-up (p 27). Ask the children to find references to bees in the text and illustration.

Gather the class and take feedback. Write these examples on the board.

*We're already swimming in honey*

*'What are you? A bee?! You're beginning to buzz like a drone.*

*the humming upon the lines*

*A swarm of passengers bound for work*

Discuss the word choice.

- What is a drone?

Drone is a male bee. The children may be familiar with the term used to refer to an unmanned aerial vehicle.

And we also use the word droning on... speaking in a boring way

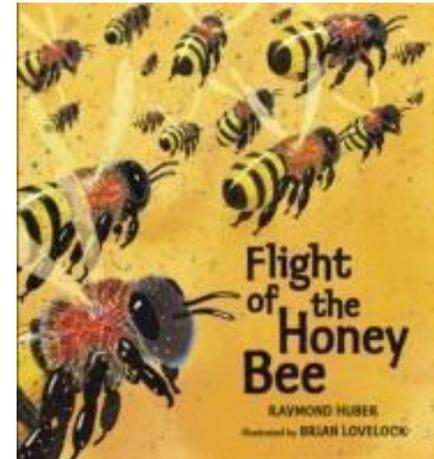
- Can you see any connection between the different definitions?
- What image is created by referring to the passengers as a 'swarm'?
- How would it have been different if Levi Pinfold had used the word 'crowd' instead?

### Final reflection

Writers often use patterns of language in literature (novels and poems). When they use patterned language, it can reveal something interesting about the text. In this case, it is the return of bees to the land which enables pollination and flowering that we can see in the final spread.

### Key vocabulary

drone, droning, swarm



## After Reading

### Review and Reflect

#### Fable

Finding the message.

**Pages:** Whole book

**Duration:** 1 session

#### **Purpose**

On one level *Greenling* could be read as an environmental fable. In this session the children consider whether *Greenling* has a moral message and what that message might be.

#### **Preparation**

- Copies of *Greenling*, at least one book between two.
- Story morals handout, one sheet between two.

#### **Process**

Ask:

- Do you know what a fable is?
- What fables have you read or heard?

The children may have heard of Aesop's fables e.g. *The Town Mouse and the Country Mouse*, *The Hare and the Tortoise*, *The Fox and the Stork* or *The Lion and the Mouse*.

A fable is a story which has a moral. It aims to teach us something. Briefly refresh the children's memories of fables.

Here's a link to a version of The Hare and the Tortoise

[http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/schoolradio/pdfs/aesop/the\\_hare\\_the\\_tortoise.pdf](http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/schoolradio/pdfs/aesop/the_hare_the_tortoise.pdf)

The moral of *The Hare and the Tortoise* is 'slow and steady wins the race'. The moral of *The Town Mouse and the Country Mouse* is live happily with little and be content, rather than live with riches but in fear all your life. The moral of *The Lion and the Mouse* is mercy brings its reward the very small can help the greater.

The moral of *Greenling* is more ambiguous than many of Aesop's fables. Distribute copies of the story morals sheet.

In pairs, ask the children to discuss which moral they think best fits *Greenling*. It is possible that more than one moral applies but they need to choose the best fit. Ask them to find 3 pieces of evidence to support their choice.

#### **Final reflection**

Gather the class. Find out which moral had the most votes. If there are two close choices invite the children to justify their choices to each other.

- Which was the most convincing evidence?

#### **Key vocabulary**

fable, moral

## Do We Need Technology?

Probing one of the key themes and posing a text to world question.

**Pages:** whole book

**Duration:** 1 session

#### **Purpose**

On the surface the message in *Greenling* appears to be an obvious one but look again and you might find more subtle nuances. This session provides an opportunity to probe one of the major themes in the story and to read against the dominant message. Is technology harmful?

Is nature always better than technology?

## Preparation

- Copies of *Greenling*, at least one between two.
- Sets of Yes, No cards, one for each child.

## Process

Scan the book and locate any references to technology. Mark them with a sticky note.

Use a T diagram to identify the differences in Mr and Mrs Barleycorn's responses to the way Greenling overpowers technology.

Cooking:

Mrs Barleycorn *'How will we cook breakfast today?'*

Mr Barleycorn *'Them melons look ripe'*

Television:

Mrs Barleycorn *'How will we watch telly tonight?'*

Mr Barleycorn *'Just look at him grow.'*

Transport:

Mrs Barleycorn *'Well there goes the shopping!'*

Mr Barleycorn *'Depends what you need...'*

Telephone:

Mrs Barleycorn *'I'm calling for help to fix up your brain.'*

- How would you feel if you couldn't use the technology in your house?
- Would you cope as well as Mr Barleycorn with the changes?

Distribute the sets of 'yes' and 'no' cards.

Explain to the children that you are going to ask a question and give them ten seconds to think about their answer without discussing it with anyone.

On a given signal they should show either the 'yes' or the 'no' card.

- Question: Is Mrs Barleycorn right to be upset by Greenlings actions?

Discuss the reasons the children made their choices. Encourage them to probe each other's responses.

Use dialogic talk to challenge the children. Make references to their lives to encourage authentic discussion. For example, 'so you would be happy to give up your phone' or 'without technology we would need to return to old methods of farming, are you saying that would be the best solution?' or 'should we only keep essential technology? We don't really need television, do we?' Explore as many viewpoints as possible.

At the end of the session replay the 'yes' 'no' game. Has anyone changed their mind?

### Final reflection

- Does the story suggest that technology is a problem? Find evidence in the book.
- Can it also be a solution? Can you find evidence in the book?

Notice the final spread.

- How has the landscape changed? (wind turbines, grain storage, the land seems to be less desolate, the meadow is in flower, there's a single bird).



**Teacher's note:** this could lead to writing an argument piece: **Do we need technology?**

**Key vocabulary** debate, argumentation, turbine

## Mythology Connections

Making connections with other stories.

**Pages:** whole book

**Duration:** 1 session

## Purpose

*Greenling* is a story which invites comparison with other works of literature, culture and art. The children may not be familiar with these connections. In this sequence some of the cultural and literary allusions are outlined and the children are then invited to consider what relevance they may have to the story. These references are introduced to develop an awareness of different cultural connections. The extent to which the children want to assimilate them into their own interpretations should be left as a matter of personal choice.

## Preparation

- A copy of *The Odyssey* by Gerldine McCaughrean (optional)
- The Lotus Eaters story. <https://www.heritage-history.com/index.php?c=read&author=langjean&book=odyssey&story=troyland>
- Mythology Connections slideshow.

## Process

- Start by giving an overview of *The Odyssey* and then tell the story of the lotus eaters (one of the challenges that Odysseus has to overcome on his voyage back from Troy to Ithaca).
- After reading ask the children to work in pairs to see if they can see any connections between the story of the Lotus Eaters and *Greenling*.
- Share ideas. (They may notice that the strange flower that grows in the culvert where *Greenling* is found resembles a lotus flower. They may notice that the travellers on the train seem to forget where they are going 'They ate up the fruit of the *Greenling*, fruit much too good to be true.' (p26)

## Ask:

- Is it possible to have too much of a good thing? Relate the story to children's own experiences. Can you have too much of your favourite food? Too much free time? Too much time playing video games?
- What are the potential consequences of having too much of a good thing?
- Can you enjoy leisure without experiencing work?
- Can you feel happy all the time?
- How do you know what happiness feels like if you have never felt sad?

Share the Mythology Connections slideshow which shows the prevalence of the lotus flower in different mythologies.

- Do you know any other stories that have travelled across cultures? Depending on the experience of the class, some may know that religious stories from Islamic, Judaism and Christian traditions have shared stories. The translation of traditional fairy tales into Disney film could also be considered travelling across different cultures.

### **Final reflection**

Do you think reading the story of the Lotus Eaters makes us think about *Greenling* in a different way?

Make the point that writers and artists often reference other stories in their work. Sometimes they do this intentionally. At other times it is unintentional, and they may not realise their influences until later.

When Levi Pinfold was asked about the idea for the story in Young Writers magazine he wrote:

A couple of things came together at once. I was renting a house with a backyard in at the time, and decided to grow some tomatoes from seed, just out of interest. If I were to make them grow and deliver fruit, I had to take care of them as if they were babies, and it got me thinking about how people relate to plants. Whilst I was becoming sentimental about nurturing my seed trays, my unattended back yard was becoming a monstrous jungle of grass and weeds. I soon burnt out an electric mower, a strimmer and even managed to break an old-fashioned reel mower trying to tame the 6 metre square patch! It's powerful stuff when left to its own devices and can overwhelm you very quickly. These two events started me thinking of a powerful green baby, who gets picked and brought into a home, despite not being fully understood.

There are lots of similar stories throughout history, like the infant Bacchus in Ovid or some of the themes in the song John Barleycorn Must Die. I tried to let go and work from my subconscious when planning the book but working in this manner means you find things you have enjoyed in the past creeping into the story. I thought I'd give a nod to these sources with names and imagery, but hopefully the story is different enough that it can be entertaining in its own right.

### **Key vocabulary**

Odyssey, lotus, mythology

## Writing Opportunities

### Save Australia's Wildlife: Fact Files

Creating a class book about Australian wildlife.

**Duration:** 1 - 3 sessions

#### **Purpose**

Levi Pinfold's artwork is very specific in referencing the Australian wildlife in the setting for the book. Children can identify and find out about each of these creatures and create a short fact file and present their findings to the rest of the class.

#### **Preparation**

- Copies of *Greenling*, one between two.
- Download the 'Can You Find? Slideshow.
- Bookmark the Australian Wildlife Conservancy promotional video.
- Download and print the Animal Fact File template

#### **Process**

First show the Can You Find? Slideshow Using the images in the slideshow. Ask the children if they can spot each animal in Levi Pinfold's illustrations.

Next play the Australian Wildlife Conservancy promotional video.

- What reasons are there for a conservancy programme in Australia? (The children might pick up the uniqueness of the wildlife, the threat from **feral** cats. The threat from **introduced species**.)

Clarify feral (in this case domesticated pets that have gone wild). Clarify **introduced species** (animals that are not **indigenous**. They were introduced by settlers).

Explain that the task is to produce a book about Australian wildlife to show a wider audience what could be lost if steps are not taken to protect the animals in the wild.

Choose one bird or animal to investigate and write a fact file using a range of sources including the internet. Agree with the class the sorts of facts that could be interesting. Use a range of sources

The Animal Fact File template can be used for reference but encourage the children to create their own as they may need different sized boxes. When the children have written their fact files, they can be bound into a book and placed in the school library for other children to read.

### **Final reflection**

Why do you think Levi Pinfold painted the animals in his illustrations for this book?

- Is there any evidence that the problems the Barleycorns experience with their land has been created by **settlers** (a term for humans who are not indigenous)?
- What role do you think the dog plays in Levi Pinfold's story? (In a sense the dog is also an introduced species, like the feral cats in the video. He is not feral, but he is not indigenous either).

### **Key vocabulary**

introduced species, feral, indigenous, settlers

### **Additional resources**

Australian Wildlife

<https://www.australianwildlife.org/wildlife/>

Promotion video for Australian Wildlife Conservancy with David Attenborough

<https://www.facebook.com/AWConservancy/videos/australian-wildlife-conservancy-fea-sir-david-attenborough-a/10157075678040203/>

### **Books**

*Animals in Danger in Australia* by Richard and Louise Spilsbury

This book introduces readers to a range of endangered animals found in Australia. Readers learn basic facts about each animal, and also why the animal's habitat is threatened. The book also considers what people can do to help, both at an international level and at the level of the readers themselves.

*A is for Australian Animals* by Frane Lessac

Discover thirty-eight of the weird and wonderful creatures of Down Under from the iconic kangaroo to the puzzling echidna; from the tiny crusader

bug to the enormous saltwater crocodile; from the adorable quokka to the terrifying Tasmanian devil. Did you know that lyrebirds can mimic almost any sound? Or that an oblong turtle has the longest neck of any turtle in the world? Vibrant paintings and fascinating facts introduce readers to a wide array of incredible animals in this vivid celebration of the fauna that makes Australia unique.

*Amazing Animal Atlas* by Nick Crumpton

From the great winding Ganges river in India to the thick conifer forests of northern Europe, travel across the globe to discover the rich variety of animals that share our blue planet. Written by zoologist Dr Nick Crumpton and fully illustrated throughout, this fascinating fact-filled book will be treasured for generations.

## Greenling's Arrival

Writing from a point of view.

**Duration:** 1 - 2 sessions

**Purpose** This lesson follows the earlier lesson about the Barleycorns' responses to the Greenling. It would be best to write directly after the session while the thoughts are still hot.

### **Process**

Following from the improvisation 'The Barleycorns: different points of view', write a personal piece about your feelings.

You could offer the choice of writing in role as either Mr Barleycorn, Mrs Barleycorn or even the dog. Writing could take the form of a personal diary or letter. The aim is for you to write a piece to express your personal feelings.

### Variation 1: The Summer we Found the Greenling

Alternatively, if you are writing this piece at the end of the unit, you could choose to write retrospectively about the summer the Greenling came. This could build on the points of view writing. It would include a reflection on the summer. The impact the Greenling had on everyone and then some afterthoughts about things that have changed since he went away. Have things changed for the better?

### Variation 2: The Greenling's Story

An alternative point of view to explore would be Greenling's.

- Who is he?
- Where does he come from?
- Why did he come to the Barleycorn's' property?
- Why did he leave?
- Where will he go next?

It would be good to conduct hotseating or interviews with the Greenling prior to writing.

### **Final reflection**

Share the children's writing using the author's chair to invite feedback.

- What helped you consider the story from. XXX point of view?
- Was it easy or difficult to put yourself in their shoes?

## Writing an Argument: Should we Reduce Our Use of Technology?

Considering the arguments for and against the use of technology.

**Duration:** 1 - 2 sessions

### **Purpose**

This writing lesson follows the session Do we Need Technology? Children use a branching map to construct an argument.

### **Preparation**

- Download and print copies of the Branching Map for constructing an argument.
- An enlarged version for modelling.
- Prepare the question on the board.
- 'Yes' No' signs displayed at opposite ends of the classroom.

### **Process**

Reveal the question:

- Should we reduce our use of technology?

Use the Think Pair Share strategy for children to share initial ideas. They will already have thought about this in relation to the story.

Invite some feedback and discuss briefly.

Now pose the question a second time and ask the children to move to one of the areas of the classroom displaying the 'Yes' 'No' signs.

Invite children to express their points of view and to challenge and extend each other's ideas.

Some prompts to deepen the discussion:

- What is technology? (Children may not think of printed books or simple eating implements being a kind of technology.)
- Should we develop technology for things like space exploration, or motor sports, even though we don't need them for survival?
- Should we develop expensive lifesaving equipment, if it only helps a few people?
- Are there technological solutions to modern problems?

After discussion, show the Argument Branching Map and show how to structure an argument.

Starting with the contention which is either, 'Yes, we should reduce our use of technology' or 'No, we should not reduce our use of technology'.

Then including the ideas that support the argument and the evidence. Followed by the objections to the argument and evidence.

Finally write a summary statement.

### **Final reflection**

Share the work and take feedback.

- What was the most convincing element in the argument?
- Did you change your mind about anything when you were writing?

### **Key vocabulary**

evidence, opinion, argument, contention

## Wider Learning Opportunities

### John Barleycorn – Solve the Mystery

Reading the lyrics of the Song John Barleycorn and using 'detective skills to work out the meaning of the song.

#### **Purpose**

This session introduces the folk song John Barleycorn, after which the Barleycorns are named.

#### **Preparation**

- Download the John Barleycorn slideshow
- Download and print copies of the traditional John Barleycorn lyrics (shortened version).
- You tube rendition of The Song <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NNqLqz89Z8>
- Versions of the song by Steeleye Span, John Renbourn Group and Fairport Convention can be found online (link in the slideshow)
- Coloured pens for text marking

#### **Process**

Tell the children that something terrible has happened to John Barleycorn and you need their help to solve the mystery. Explain that there are some difficult words, but you want them to use their detective skills to work out as much as possible. (You can talk about new words later.)

Distribute copies of the John Barleycorn lyrics (shortened version).

In pairs, ask them to mark anything that they think might be a clue to tell what has happened to John Barleycorn.  
Gather together and share ideas.

Clarify any unfamiliar vocabulary

solemn vow – serious promise  
plough – prepare soil for planting  
sow – to plant seeds  
harrow – break up soil, weeding  
clod – a big lump of earth  
scythe – sharp tool for cutting crops

Share the slide show and listen to the song.

**Final reflection**

- Why might Levi Pinfold have chosen Barleycorn as the name for his characters?

There's no definitive answer so accept suggestions that make sense.

**Key vocabulary**

solemn vow, plough, sow, harrow, clod, scythe

## Resource Links

### Books

#### *Black Dog* by Levi Pinfold

Another book by Levi Pinfold. Only Small, the youngest of the Hopes, has the courage to face the Black Dog that appears outside the family's home. When it chases her through the forest, she shows no fear, so it grows smaller and smaller.

#### *The Dam* by David Almond and Levi Pinfold

When a great dam was built by the Kielder Water in Northumberland, the valley below slowly filled with water. But just before this, when the villagers had been moved out, two musicians went back to the abandoned valley. They tore down the boards over the houses, stepped inside and started to play - for this would be the last time that music would be heard in this place.

#### *The Giving Tree* by Shel Silverstein

A book with an environmental message

*Once there was a little tree ... and she loved a little boy. So begins the classic bestseller, beautifully written and illustrated by the gifted and versatile Shel Silverstein. Every day the boy would come to the tree to eat her apples, swing from her branches, or slide down her trunk ... and the tree was happy. But as the boy grew older, he began to want more from the tree, and the tree gave and gave and gave.*

#### *The Rabbits* by John Marsden, Shaun Tan

A hard-hitting fable about settlers treatment of indigenous people an species.

The rabbits came many grandparents ago. They built houses, made roads, had children. They cut down trees.

#### *My Place* by Nadia Wheatley, Donna Rawlins,

Between 1788 and 1988, the little plot of Aboriginal land near Sydney has changed almost beyond recognition. As History shapes the new country of Australia – arrival of convict ships from England, the forging of political parties, world war, immigration, industrialization, centenary celebrations – so life on the piece of land changes from generation to generation. Families of every nationality, every walk of life, come and go, experiencing troubles and joys, births, deaths, prejudice, solidarity, wealth, poverty. But common to all is the sense of belonging to my place.

*Belonging* by Jeannie Baker

A story about regeneration. Observed through the window of a house, a city street gradually becomes a place to call home as the inhabitants begin to rescue their street by planting grass and trees in the empty spaces. Year by year, everything begins to blossom...

*Wild* by Emily Hughes

"You cannot tame something so happily wild." In this beautiful picture book by Hawaiian artist Emily Hughes, we meet a little girl who has known nothing but nature from birth--she was taught to talk by birds, to eat by bears, and to play by foxes. She is unashamedly, irrefutably, irrepressibly wild. That is, until she is snared by some very strange animals that look oddly like her, but they don't talk right, eat right, or play correctly.

*The Book of Bees* by Piotr Sorcha

How do bees communicate? What does a beekeeper do? Did you know that Napoleon loved bees? Who survived being stung by 2,443 bees? This book answers all these questions and many more, tracking the history of bees from the time of the dinosaurs to their current plight.

*The Bee Book* by Charlotte Milner

This dazzling celebration of bees is lavishly illustrated by the talented up-and-coming author and illustrator Charlotte Milner.

## Music

Versions of John Barleycorn

John Barleycorn Steeleye Span

John Barleycorn Fairport Convention

John Barleycorn John Renbourn