



[Home](#) > [Would You Believe? two cyclists invented the aeroplane?! | ... in Mexico, people picnic at Granny's grave?! | ... bed testers get paid to sleep?! | ... Vatican City is a country?!](#)

Would You Believe? two cyclists invented the aeroplane?! | ... in Mexico, people picnic at Granny's grave?! | ... bed testers get paid to sleep?! | ... Vatican City is a country?!

Books Reviewed:

[Would You Believe? two cyclists invented the aeroplane?!](#) [1]

Books Reviewed:

[Would You Believe? in Mexico, people picnic at Granny's grave?!](#) [2]

Books Reviewed:

[Would You Believe? bed testers get paid to sleep?!](#) [3]

Books Reviewed:

[Would You Believe? Vatican City is a country?!](#) [4]

Issue:

[184](#) [5]

Reviewer:

[Margaret Mallett](#) [6]

Editorial Choice:

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

3

A first glimpse at the books in this series gave me a sense of déjà vu: they revisit familiar topics ? transport, families, work, and towns and cities ? and are organised in traditional double spreads. The approach to illustrations ? a mix of photographs, paintings and drawings ? is hardly innovative either. Is well covered territory simply repackaged here under lively, if sometimes puzzling, titles? In fact the books offer more than this as Richard Platt writes very much with his young readers? needs in mind. He attends to the ?big shapes? as well as the details of the subject of each book. So in the introduction to **Would You Believe... bed testers get paid to sleep?!** there is a splendid summary of what work was like for the world?s first people, how work and perceptions of it changed through the centuries and why it is important to know about all this today. Then the different sections of the book home in on such topics as work in free and slave societies, work in factories and child labour. The conversational style helps illuminate the issues explored and encourages discussion. And the speculative approach is welcome. In **Would You Believe... two cyclists invented the aeroplane?!** Platt comments ?Predicting the future of transport is as risky as jumping a red light?. Then, when imagining what future cities might be like, or should be like, at the end of **Would You Believe... Vatican City is a country?!** he introduces the interesting idea that town planners could learn something from shanty towns which use few resources. This kind of lateral thinking is likely to inspire young imaginations. Of course, as children reach the later

primary years and learn more about the world, difficult issues have to be faced. I found the section on 'Sons or Daughters' in **Would You Believe... in Mexico, people picnic at granny's grave?!** rather bleak. Looking globally, it is true that if the gender of children could be chosen 'there would be far more boys than girls' for all sorts of complicated social and historical reasons. But things are different today, at least in Western societies, as a later section 'Who's in Charge?' makes clear. The more challenging issues covered will call for quite a lot of teacher mediation. Perhaps these titles are best used as compact, single topic encyclopaedias to support lessons across the curriculum.

Running Order:

30

Source URL (retrieved on Jan '20): <http://savfkn.booksforkeeps.co.uk/issue/184/childrens-books/reviews/would-you-believe%E2%80%A6two-cyclists-invented-the-aeroplane-%C2%A6-in-mexico>

Links:

- [1] <http://savfkn.booksforkeeps.co.uk/childrens-books/would-you-believe?-two-cyclists-invented-the-aeroplane>
- [2] <http://savfkn.booksforkeeps.co.uk/childrens-books/would-you-believe?-in-mexico-people-picnic-at-grannys-grave>
- [3] <http://savfkn.booksforkeeps.co.uk/childrens-books/would-you-believe?-bed-testers-get-paid-to-sleep>
- [4] <http://savfkn.booksforkeeps.co.uk/childrens-books/would-you-believe?-vatican-city-is-a-country>
- [5] <http://savfkn.booksforkeeps.co.uk/issue/184>
- [6] <http://savfkn.booksforkeeps.co.uk/member/margaret-mallett>