



Sound & Vision - May 1982

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News about books on television, radio and in the cinema.

The Courage of Andy Robson

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Starting next month is a new six part serial 'inspired by' Frederick Grice's highly readable story **The Courage of Andy Robson**.

We can't tell you how good the television adaptation is because we haven't been able to see it yet. But we do know that it cost Tyne Tees £1 million to make and it was filmed entirely on location in the north-east. And if they have managed to capture something of the spirit of the original story it should make good viewing.

The book tells the story of Andy Robson who, to relieve the burden on the family when his father has a serious pit accident, leaves his Durham mining community and goes to live with his aunt and uncle in a village in Northumberland. He adapts to country life, makes new friends - and enemies, learns to wrestle - and knit: but most of all he becomes involved with his uncle the Park Ranger in caring for the herd of rare wild white cattle in the grounds of Lilburn Castle. (Lilburn is based on the real Chillingharn Park and its famous herd of cattle which has lived there for seven hundred years.)

Its a story with humour, excitement and tension and it is good to feel that if the television serial is a success, the book should not prove a disappointment or a problem for those who seek it out. And if through it they develop a taste for the north-east there is always Frederick Grice's excellent **Bonnie Pit Laddie** for them to move on to.

The Courage of Andy Robson starts on ITV on Wednesday. June 9th at 4.45.

The book is out this month in Puffin: 0 14 03.1528 4. 85p

Annie

The film of the musical of the comic strip, with Albert Finney as the outwardly intimidating, inwardly soft-centred billionaire Oliver Warbucks and yet another cute new child 'discovery' as Annie Orphan, will be on general release very soon now.

From Granada we've got the *book* of the musical of the comic strip, re-told by Thomas Meehan and sub-titled 'an old-fashioned story'. It's that all right and a good professional job to boot. Those who wallowed in the stage version or the film will find this slips down very easily. New readers may need a little help with the background - the American Depression, the New Deal, the Pinkerton Agency, the FBI - to get the full flavour.

What a pity it's available only in hardback. Good pulp is for the people, in paperback.

Annie, Thomas Meehan, Granada. 0 246 11735 4, £4.95

Noggin is back - in colour

How very much poorer we'd all be without the marvellously comic inventions of Oliver Postgate and Peter Firmin: Ivor the Engine, the Pogles, the Clangers, Bagpuss and Noggin the Nog.

They all started life as characters in animated films which quickly led to books in hardback and paperback. The films are created in Peter Firmin's barn in the village near Canterbury where both he and Oliver Postgate live with their families.

In **Books for Keeps 3** (July 1980) Peter Firmin wrote about these films: 'We've recently remade the Ivor the Engine films in colour for the BBC. We'd like to do the same with Noggin! It seems they got their wish for Noggin. gentle peace-loving King of the Nogs, Nooka his queen, Knut his little son, and his evil uncle Nogbad the Bad whose dastardly plans to usurp his nephew and rule the Northlands always come to naught, are now back on our screens to delight a new generation.

The original black and white films were made in the 1960s and repeated regularly until 1977. Fortunately the Noggin stories remained available in book form and two years ago Picture Lions scooped the BBC by asking Peter Firmin to re-illustrate two Noggin stories (**Noggin and the Flowers** and **Noggin and the Island**) in full colour. Both well worth getting. Five Noggin stories are also available from Kaye and Ward.

For enthusiasts of Ivor the Engine, there is a new hardback collection of the four stories available in Picture Lions: **Ivor the Engine Storybook**, Richard Drew Publishing, 0 904002 89 6. £4.95.

Takin' a Squint at the Print - Again

Mel Smith and Bob Goody are back in a re-run of their Thames TV series, **Smith and Goody**. The idea behind the programmes was to present reading as something ordinary people do for fun. They were aimed at '9-14s who don't habitually borrow, buy or have access to books', and used all the techniques of **Not the Nine O'Clock News** to get the message across. If you missed it the first time around try to catch it this time. It's very funny and has a lot to teach us. if we are bold enough to learn. ITV Mondays. May 10, 17, 24 and June 7, 21, 28 at 4.45. Booklist (yes they do mention books but not in quite the same way as **The Book Tower**) from Roger Gale. Thames Television, Television House, 306 Euston Road, London N W1 3RB.

Children's Video Books - the first of the many?

Determined to be front-runners in the video revolution which some people think (fear?) may spell doom for books. Hodder and Stoughton have joined up with Nutland Video to produce a series of one hour video cassettes. First on tape are the adventures of Val Biro's popular vintage car. **Gumdrop** and H.E. Todd's young hero. Bobby Brewster (who in print time is thirty years old this year).

We shall be reviewing these in our next issue and keeping you in touch with the video scene.

Inside Pages

News from producer, Janet Whitaker, of plans for the new series of her Schools Radio magazine programme about hooks. Five programmes in the Autumn term and five in the following Spring will feature a variety of hooks, fiction and non-fiction. Themes for the Autumn include Flying, Knights' Tales, A Dog's Life, Nonsense and New Books. The aim is to introduce 10 to 12-year-olds to books they may enjoy reading. To arouse their interest the programme includes readings, dramatisations, interviews with authors and readers.

The Teachers' Notes (which contain extensive annotated booklists) are available *now* from BBC Publications, 144 Bermondsey Street, London SE1 3TH. Orders must be received before July.

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