



Two New Departures

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The Good Book Guide and **The Signal Review** introduced by their compilers.

March sees two new additions to the children's book scene. **The Signal Review of Children's Books** is a selective guide to books published in 1982. The first of what Signal hopes will become a regular annual survey.

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The Good Book Guide to Children's Books is a one-off Penguin designed principally to help parents choose books for and with their children.

We asked the people involved in creating these to tell us a little about them.

Nancy Chambers, editor of the Signal Review writes

For several years we have wanted to find a way to deal with new books in **Signal**. We tried a correspondence feature on fiction for a while, but that didn't prove to be as useful as we'd hoped. It seemed to us that the only other manageable way to cover a lot of new books was to produce an annual survey.

In the first **Signal Review** we have asked people who have written Signal Bookguides or articles for the magazine to contribute pieces on particular subjects: Valerie Willsher on board books; Jill Bennett on Picture Books for Learning to Read; Judy Taylor on her selection of new picture books; Elaine Moss on Picture Books for 9-13; Peggy Heeks on fiction for 7-9; Anne Wilson on folk tales and fairy stories; Lance Salway and Margaret Meek on fiction; Aidan Chambers on poetry and plays.

The picture books and fiction not covered in these feature articles are reviewed in separate notices. During 1982 a group of teachers and librarians read books for **The Signal Review**, reporting their own and children's responses to the books. These reports guided the selection of the books and are sometimes quoted in the reviews.

More than one quarter of **The Signal Review** is devoted to information books. Jennifer Wilson, a teacher with experience in both primary and secondary schools, has written about more than 120 of them.

The best part of putting this first **Signal Review** together has been the talking with teachers, librarians, and other contributors about books. In fact, finding a way to preserve and present the quality of that kind of thinking (it's carried on in both conversation and writing) is what I'm really after.

The Signal Review of Children's Books 1

Edited by Nancy Chambers, The Thimble Press, 0 903355 12 4, £3.95. From Lockwood, Station Road, South Woodchester, Stroud, Glos.

The Good Book Guide to Children's Books Penguin, 0 14 00.6756 6, £2.95

Four people: Peter Braithwaite and Bing Taylor (editors of the Good Book Guide) Elaine Moss (adviser on children's books to the Good Book Guide) and Jill Slotover (researcher) made up the editorial team for the **Good Book Guide to Children's Books**

They explain

There are approximately 35,000 children's books currently in print in the UK. How did we come to choose the 500 plus included in our guide?

We examined carefully every book we could find that might be of real value to children today. Over a period of nine months we considered many thousands of books put forward by publishers, reviewers and critics and identified by our own research, and we subjected them to the critical reactions of children in schools and at home.

Before making our selection, we grouped the books comparing each with other similar books and always searching for the clearest written, best illustrated, most exciting and most original. We had to reject a large number of books, some unregretfully - computer books that didn't mention micro- computers, books with over-complicated explanations and books that were clearly published simply to make use of a famous person's name - and others reluctantly because although good, better books were available.

Our aim was to provide a balanced selection of good books of different types from established and new writers with a good proportion of newly published books as well as classics and old favourites - books that stimulate children's imagination, increase their knowledge, develop their sense of humour and provide an essential part of growing up.

We have borne in mind constantly the needs and requirements of the family at home.

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