



BfK News - May 1984

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Article Category:

BfK Briefing

Byline:

News about what's happening in the children's book world.

Children's Choice

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The Book Marketing Council's latest idea for a promotion is to feature 24 books which have been chosen by children themselves from a total of 122 titles submitted by publishers. (All books had to have been published in the last ten years.) The children - 500 of them, aged between 7 and 11 - came from two schools, Ladyton Primary in Dumbarton, near Loch Lomond, and Keresley Grange Junior, on the outskirts of Coventry. They had the books in school for a month and were allowed to read, browse and borrow as they liked. Parents and teachers were specially asked not to say or do anything which might affect the children's selection. The books the children chose are listed here and will be the subject of a BMC promotion from July 16-28th.

Out of interest the BMC asked a group of parents and teachers to choose their own 'best 24'. Parents and teachers it turned out had much the same taste but it was a poor match with the children's. Teachers chose only nine of the same books as their pupils, parents only eight which matched their children's preferences. Parents picked **Paddington's Story Book**, **The Borrowers Avenged** and **The Famous Five and the Stately Homes Gang**, a Blyton clone - all a bit too traditional for the kids it seems. They preferred **Grange Hill**, **Marmalade Atkins**, **Supergran**, **Tintin**, and **The Twits** - all determinedly passed over by adults (though the teachers did go for Dahl's *The Witches*).

This bit of research, says the BMC 'makes it only too clear how great is the discrepancy between what adults think that children should read and what children actually choose for themselves'. In bookshops, this information suggests, adults are highly likely to buy books that children do not like. Yet another good argument for school bookshops? It's a rich ground for speculation all round. For more comment see the Editor's Page.

Children's Choice - the titles

The following, in alphabetical order, are the titles chosen by children which will be featured in the campaign. The editions given are those publishers wish to promote. There may be others as well.

Hardbacks

The Big Book for Greedy Cooks

Alison Leach and Deborah van der Beek, Macmillan, £4.95

Haunted House

Jan Pienkowski, Heinemann, £6.50

The Human Body

Jonathan Miller, Cape, £8.95

Life at the Royal Ballet School

Camilla Jessel, Methuen, £5.50

The Most Amazing Hide-And-Seek Alphabet Book

Robert Crowther, Kestrel, £6.50

Our Changing World

Ingrid Selberg, Collins, £4.95

Peter Pan, A Pop-Up Book

J. M. Barrie/Borje Svensson, Hodder, £5.95

The Pop-Up Book of Magic Tricks

Ron van der Meer, Heinemann, £6.95

Robot

Jan Pienkowski, Heinemann, £5.95

Robots

Robin Kerrod, Granada Guides series, £1.95

Tintin and the Picaros

Hergé, Methuen, £3.95

Paperbacks

The Beaver Book of School Verse

Jennifer Curry, Hamlyn, £1

Black Harvest

Ann Cheetham, Armada, 95p

Crazy Joke Book

Janet Rogers, Hamlyn, 85p

Discovering Life on Earth

David Attenborough, Collins, £4.95

Fungus the Bogeyman

Raymond Briggs, Hamish Hamilton, £1.95

Grange Hill Rules - OK?

Robert Leeson, Fontana Lions, £1

Marmalade Atkins' Dreadful Deeds

Andrew Davis, Thames Methuen, £1.25

The Mr Men Sports Day

Roger Hargreaves, Thurman, £1

Supergran

Forrest Wilson, Puffin, 95p

The Warlock of Firetop Mountain

Steve Jackson and Ian Livingstone, Puffin, £1.50

Hardback and paperback editions

Eric the Punk Cat

Adrian Henri and Roger W. Walker, Hodder, £5.50; Methuen, £ 1.50

Happy Families series

Allan Ahlberg, Kestrel, £2.50 each; Puffin, 95p each

The Twits

Roald Dahl, Cape, £4.95; Puffin, £ 1.10

Honour for Gene Kemp

Gene Kemp, author of **The Turbulent Term of Tyke Tiler** (winner of the Carnegie Medal and The Other Award) and many other popular stories has been awarded the Honorary Degree of Master of Arts by Exeter University. Mrs Kemp lives in Exeter and was a junior school teacher there before becoming a full-time writer. Her latest story of Cricklepit School, **Charlie Lewis Plays for Time**, Faber, 0 571 13248 0, £5.50, has just been published.

The Universe Prize

In its third year this prize, given by the Catholic Universe newspaper, concentrated on books published for children. The award was made to a book 'which made a real contribution to the Christian moral development of young people between 10 and 14'.

The winner was **A Parcel of Patterns** by Jill Paton Walsh, Kestrel, 0 7226 5898 2, £5.50.

The book is based on the famous story of the village of Eyam in Derbyshire which voluntarily cut itself off when the plague reached it from London.

The judges commented on 'the portrayal of community feeling, with its strengths and weaknesses, the sense of constancy, of relationships that were caring and made to last'.

Close runners-up were **Redemption Greenbank**, David Johnstone, Methuen, 0 416 45050 4, £5.95. 'A rollicking yarn', and **Seaward**, Susan Cooper, Bodley Head, 0 370 30995 2, £5.95. 'Imaginative and intriguing'.

Also recommended but outside the age-group under consideration were: **The First Christmas**, Rachel Billington and Barbara Brown, Collins, 0 00 195048 7, £4.95, and **The Writing on the Wall**, Leon Garfield and Michael Bragg, Methuen, 0 416 25830 1, £4.50.

A new face at Gollancz

Joanna Goldsworthy, for many years the innovative children's editor at Gollancz and creator of an enviably impressive list, is moving to adult books. She will be replaced on May 1st by Chris Kloet, for ten years young people's librarian for Tameside, and well-known as a reviewer, compiler of book lists, enthusiastic member of IBBY and organiser of imaginative and highly successful Book Weeks.

News from Wales

The Welsh National Centre for Children's Literature send us details of a new annual magazine, **Dragon's Tale**, which deals with Anglo-Welsh children's literature. It promises current information on books and authors, a guide to the best work and news of developments and events in the world of children's literature in Wales.

Price: £1.50 plus postage (£1.71).

Also, available in June, **Loughborough '83**, the proceedings of the 16th International Seminar on Children's Literature held last year in Aberystwyth. (It's called the Loughborough seminar wherever it is held, after the first venue. Ed)

The focus was on Welsh influences, particularly early Celtic myths and legends but matters of wider international interest and concern were discussed. Speakers included Alan Garner, Lloyd Alexander, Susan Cooper, Alison Morgan, Patricia Crampton, Elaine Moss, Peter Hunt and Charles Keeping.

Price £7.00, including post and packing.

Write to:

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