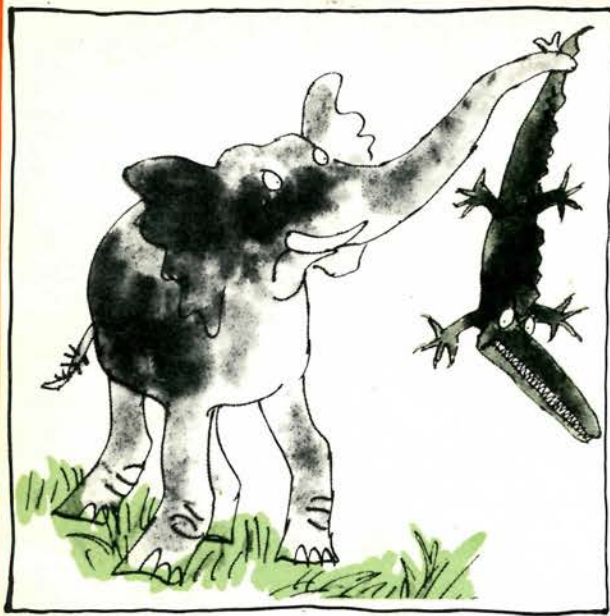


BOOKS FOR KEEPS

MARCH
1980 No.1
U.K. price 65p



Illustrations from THE ENORMOUS CROCODILE by Roald Dahl, pictures by Quentin Blake. Published by Jonathan Cape and Puffin Books.

A BRAND NEW MAGAZINE ABOUT CHILDREN AND BOOKS

PORTRAIT OF QUENTIN BLAKE

WHY TELL STORIES?

NEW DIRECTIONS FOR THE SBA

IS YOUR READING SCHEME REALLY NECESSARY?

Welcome!

Welcome to **Books for Keeps**, our brand new magazine about children and books.

During 1979 the SBA had a major rethink about its future. We decided that we wanted to reach out to many more people involved with children and books, whether in professional or private capacities, and try our best to provide lively, imaginative and helpful ideas and information about the enormous range of books available to today's children.

Books for Keeps, which replaces our old magazine, *School Bookshop News*, has been rethought editorially and redesigned visually to reflect this basic approach — the linchpin of our philosophy. We have assumed that you, our readership, are busy people committed to encouraging the reading habit amongst your children, not only in school but at home or on holiday too. Because there is so much available and so much new material being published, it is impossible to keep abreast of everything all the time. The thinking behind **Books for Keeps** is based therefore on the belief that book ideas, book opinion, book information and book news should be easy to digest, stimulating to read, and simple to select.

We want **Books for Keeps** to grow from this first edition into a book magazine that truly informs and excites all of you who in turn want children to know and experience the pleasures of reading books.

Pat Triggs and Richard Hill



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 Printed by: Surrey Fine Arts, Redhill, Surrey

Editorial correspondence:

Pat Triggs
 36 Ravenswood Road
 Bristol, Avon, BS6 6BW
 Tel: 0272 49048

Subscriptions and advertising:

Richard Hill
 1 Effingham Road
 Lee, London, SE12 8NZ
 Tel: 01-852 4953

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EDITOR'S PAGE

Pat Triggs,
Editor



Pat

Hello and welcome to **Books for Keeps** from me. Editors, especially new ones, should be prepared to explain their policy, so here goes. Helpful, practical, stimulating, informative, entertaining, sometimes provocative and always enjoyable to read - this is what we intend **Books for Keeps** should be. So it will contain

★ REVIEWING

From meeting and talking to you we know that what you feel most in need of is information about books. For this reason a large part of the magazine is given over to reviews of paperbacks and hardcovers. We are building up a panel of regular reviewers. Each reviewer will inevitably have a distinctive and personal approach to books but they will all be actively involved with *children* as well as with books. We hope you will enjoy getting to know their particular personalities, finding the ones to trust and the ones you love to hate. Whenever possible we will make use of experts for reviewing non-fiction.

★ AND ALSO

Features by and about book people, focus on current issues, news of what has happened, is happening and is going to happen in the world of books, advice and ideas on getting children and books together. Get them entering for our great Olympics 1980 Competition even if (as I write) the prospects for Moscow seem a little uncertain.

★ THE AUTHORGRAPH

will be a regular feature. We hope that it will give you ideas and information for getting children more interested and involved in the people who actually create books and the books they create. It's designed so that if you wish you can pull it out for pinning up in bookshop, library, classroom or at home.

Entertaining and enjoyable, yes. But don't expect us to be bland or uncritical.

★ TALKING POINT

will feature in the magazine when we think or you tell us there is something important or interesting to be discussed. A while ago I asked a random sample of teachers why they thought learning to read was important. A few referred to 'a necessary skill for doing a job', 'coping with everyday life', 'surviving in society'. The majority though used phrases like 'the pleasure of reading', 'enjoying literature', 'feeding the imagination', 'help in knowing yourself and the world', 'using books to find out what you want to know'. This all seems fine and many of us spend a lot of time and effort in libraries and bookshops as well as

classrooms trying to encourage children to see it this way. And yet sometimes it seems if we look at what happens in schools that when it comes to reading teachers are their own worst enemies. Look at *Talking Point* in this and the next issue to see if you agree - and then write to us. We want

★ **FEEDBACK** from you. Drop me a line - we want to know what you're doing and also what you think of us. My address is opposite.

Meeting Quentin Blake

We are delighted to have Quentin Blake as the subject of our first Authorgraph (perhaps we should have called it Artistgraph this time) and we very much enjoyed meeting him while compiling it. He is a thoughtful, gentle, extremely modest person with, as you would expect, a lovely sense of humour. His new book, *Mister Magnolia*, out this month (Cape, £3.50), is his first book for the very young. A simple, rhyming story, the language and the pictures are full of fun and life. Marvellous stuff for pre-schoolers and beginning readers. Work in progress includes a new Roald Dahl picture book, *The Twits* (there are some really gruesome characters), and a longer story about a boy who suffers from epilepsy which he is enjoying doing because it's not a funny book, rather a serious book with a humorous flavour. Future plans include a picture book for younger children, this time of Michael Rosen poems.



Coming in April, *The Twenty Elephant Restaurant* (Cape), the latest wild and funny fantasy by Russell Hoban and Quentin Blake.

Fans of Quentin Blake can see (and buy) his work, including the originals for *Mister Magnolia*, at an exhibition at Illustrators Art, 16a D'Arbury Street, London W1, from 13th March to 5th April, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. On 16th March Quentin Blake will be in the gallery to meet children from 2 till 4 p.m.

Double Masquerade

Kit Williams, artist and creator of this runaway best-seller, told a lovely story when he visited the Children's Book

Fair at the Cheltenham Literature Festival. A few days after the book was published, someone telephoned Cape and asked for the Publicity Department. He explained, in a northern accent, that he was ringing to say thank you for the beautiful jewel that he and his son had just dug up. It was a really lovely hare, just as lovely as they'd said it was on the telly and the radio and his family would cherish it and look after it. At Cape, a white and shaken publicity man had visions of thousands of unsold copies of *Masquerade*. After a pause, the voice went on. He realised that all this might be embarrassing, no buried treasure and all that. He was prepared to put the hare back and say nothing; but of course, his son would be very disappointed and... I don't know if they made a deal. Eventually the caller confessed - it was John Burningham, creator of *Mr Gumpy's Outing*, *Borka* and many other classic picture books.



Kit Williams holding his gold and jewelled hare, still buried in its clay pot (on the bench in the photo) somewhere in this country. You can discover exactly where by solving the riddles and puzzles in *Masquerade*.

Photograph: Tara Heinemann.

By the way, what do you think about *Masquerade*? The book has certainly drawn very different reactions. 'Rubbish', 'Not a children's book', 'Pretentious, wouldn't have it on the shelf', I overheard in Birmingham recently. The children in Cheltenham were enjoying solving the riddles, with the help of hints from Kit Williams (about everything except where to find the hare) and Rik McCoy's customers in Portishead, near Bristol (see *Be Our Guest*, page 21), seemed to like it. Any comments? ●

Understanding what stories mean to us strengthens our work with children and books.

Richard Hill invites you to reflect on

The Importance of Stories

Stories are to the spirit and the mind what food and exercise are to the body. They are nothing short of life-giving.

Stop and think about it. For the next ten minutes - the time it will take you to read this - stop and think about how stories play a part in your life. Not you as a label (teacher, parent, student, head, librarian, lecturer) but you as you, the person. The one with all the emotions and feelings (all those anxieties, depressions, rages, triumphs and laughter), the fantasizing, day-dreaming, night-dreaming one; and the logical, analysing, intellectual one too (with all those plans and decisions to make). Think of yourself as the changed and changing you - when once you were a student, now a teacher; when you were not married, now married, or vice versa; when you didn't have children, now have; when you were young, now older. Think of the times of growing and also of the times when nothing seemed to change; times of happiness, times of crisis and times in between.

For throughout all this stories have played their crucial role - both stories that we tell ourselves, and stories that come to us from others, especially from the storytellers amongst us in society. So why are stories important; how do they play the part they do in our lives; why do I claim for them the same life-giving importance as food; what has this to do with children? Why do we make such a fuss about making books available to our children?

To answer these questions, in particular why stories and story experience are so important, we have to tackle some fairly fundamental notions. Notion one is a basic one which involves our extraordinary ability to communicate, with ourselves and with each other. It's what makes us unique in the living universe at least as we know it. We know of no other species which communicates with itself in so many ways or at so many levels. Communicating, the giving and receiving of messages, involves memory, our ability to order and organize, and our natural liking for the social life whether in the family, the community or the wider world. Most of all though our communicating involves language - all our languages. There is that of the body with its huge repertoire of physical signals, verbal language with all its nuances and, of course, the whole range of visual and encoded language like pictures, music and words.

Communicating has as many purposes as it has means of expression. From the simple 'pass the salt' through to the world's highest arts (you can make your own decision about what you consider them to be), the intention is to convey a message. It's also important to remember that as much communicating goes on inside oneself, as goes out to people around one. Dreams, fantasizing, reflecting, meditating, thinking, working things out, are all forms of our internal communicating. We probably 'talk' to ourselves more than anybody else, and from the earliest age too.

It is here that we come to the crux. For what I am asking you to consider, as notion two, is that stories are much more than our conventional idea of them, for

example as fiction in books, or plays, or someone telling a story. Rather that stories are nothing less than the means by which we narrate, account and describe our lives, in play, in gossip, conversation and jokes, in painting, in drama, films, music, and in print. Apart from our own stories which are usually recounted in talk or thought, we get much of our story experience from especially gifted 'storytellers' - people like painters, musicians and writers. Their particular talent is to give form to and express precisely in words, pictures, action and sounds that we struggle to convey in our own stories. Each kind of story has its own power, its own characteristics.

Notion three is about the role of stories, the part they play in our lives. Given that stories can be widely defined, they can then the more easily be viewed as one of the most direct ways in which we put ourselves in touch with feelings and experience. They are the means by which we can identify and describe ourselves either in our own stories or in stories that we read, watch, see or hear.

Let me try to illustrate this with some examples. Remember the times you have fallen in, or out, of love. How readily then did you devour films, plays, books, music and art on the same theme? Also how much did you talk to others about your own feelings about the experience; how much time did you sit going over things

Richard Hill (born 1944) was appointed Director of the SBA in 1979; but this was in no way his first contact with schools, books or school bookshops. He was a pupil at Eltham Green School, one of the first big London comprehensives, and from there went on to get what he refers to as 'a fair to middling' history degree from the LSE. Teacher training at Avery Hill followed and then work in primary schools. In 1969 he joined Penguin as part of the late and still lamented Penguin Education and later was made marketing manager for Puffin books. In this job, he was responsible for some of the most imaginative attempts to get books to children of the past ten years, not least that travelling extravaganza, the Puffin Pageants that popped up in Leeds, Liverpool and Bristol and wowed literally thousands of children, their teachers and parents. It was at Penguin too that Richard became involved with the early days of the movement of school bookshops, and he helped set up the SBA in 1976. He has been a member of the board of directors ever since.

He likes: doing up his Victorian villa, grappling with an over-large garden, music of all sorts, promoting children's books, having good times with friends and reading stories.

He hates: talking in public (though he is getting used to it) and people being pompous and precious about books, especially children's books.

Richard is married to Angie (who took over as School Bookshop Officer from Belinda Hick) and they are expecting their first baby in June.

Moving into the second stage of its development, the SBA has at its head a person with considerable experience and enormous commitment and enthusiasm.



Richard in the SBA office with Prudence.

in your own mind recounting or rehearsing events?

Remember the times of deep personal crisis: how one's confidence disappears; how painful inner struggles can be; how difficult it is to tell other people just how you feel, or even how difficult it is to understand your own feelings. Sooner or later in times like this you begin to tell someone else what's wrong. Gradually you begin to tell the story of what happened, how you think it happened, and sometimes what you think you must do about it. Very often at the same time you may have come across a book, or seen a film or heard some music which said, better than you ever could, just how you felt. In this way stories and their communication help us redefine our perspectives, enable us to come to terms with whatever experience we are undergoing. It is only when we are in touch with what we feel and with what we think that we continue to grow, continue to live. When we are not in touch and when we don't communicate, we are generally in trouble.

The specific kind of stories we are most concerned with are the ones in books. I count both fiction and non-fiction as stories. When I was a student I studied history which was one old story after another and jolly good stories they were too. I also have no doubt that other disciplines are mostly stories too - sequential descriptions of how, why or what things were, are or will be. The theories of relativity, nuclear fission and black holes are complicated stories but still stories nevertheless. The plots and characters are a little hard to come by but when a good storyteller like Bronowski, Nigel Calder or Patrick Moore explains, I am as rivetted as if I were reading a good novel.

From here it's a small step to realize that story experience is the same for everyone including children. Not only is it the same but, given a wide definition of stories and their role in our lives, it is certain that all children, with the possible exception of the most severely mentally handicapped, possess a great deal of story experience long before, for example, they master the skill of reading. This is of the utmost importance because that story experience can be used as a very sound basis and as a tremendous opportunity in bringing children to know the pleasures and excitements to be had from the story experience of books. The uniqueness of book stories is of course the province of another article, though it is touched on in Jill Bennett's piece in *Talking Point* on page 17.

In order to capitalize on the story experience already possessed by children, it is essential, it seems to me, to understand the role and importance of stories in our own lives. The best place to start is with yourself and with your own story experience. If you come to understand that, you will come to understand equally well the importance of stories for children too. Stop and think about it. ●

Books for the 80's from Hamish Hamilton

Joan Solomon series

Kate's Party 241 89780 7

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News for Dad 241 10215 4

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Cheerful, multi-racial books for 3-7 year olds with full colour photographs and lively texts.

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An important series for teenagers which sets out to introduce political ideas as simply and fairly as possible.

"Impressive... lucid... particularly clear" *TES*

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A Closer Look at Minoans

Clearly written, lively information books, illustrated in full colour throughout for 9-14 year olds.

"A really outstanding series of information books" *ILEA Contact*

"Beautifully illustrated, clearly written and packed with information"

Auberon Waugh, Books and Bookmen

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Horses

Bears

Lions and Tigers

Birds

Whales

Dinosaurs

Eskimos

Elephants

Plains Indians

Simple information books for 6-8 year olds with full-colour illustrations throughout.

Gazelle Books

The Cherry Tree by Ruskin Bond

Dragon Water by Ann Ruffell

Two more titles in the redesigned Gazelle series for 5-8 year olds.

Antelope Books

Cam by Evelyn Davies

The Post Rider

by Elizabeth Renier

Two more titles in the Antelope series for children who have just begun to enjoy reading on their own.

REVIEWS

Reviews of paperback fiction are grouped for convenience under teaching range. Books and children being varied and adaptable, we suggest you look either side of your area. More detailed recommendation for use can be found within the reviews.

Nursery/Infant

Infant/Junior

Junior and Middle

Older readers



Teddybears abc
Susanna Gretz, Picture
Lion, 75p

The long awaited paperback companion to *Teddybears 1 to 10*, in which we join the lovable bears, plus friends, in a glorious romp through the alphabet from 'arriving in an aeroplane' (note the use of the hard and soft a), 'finding fleas in their fur', 'being x-rayed' and finally, 'zipping off to the zoo'. Tremendous fun, and the very large print is ideal for beginner readers. I know a great many infants who will want to own paperback copies of this old favourite. JB

idling



Cannonball Simp
John Burningham,
Picture Puffin, 70p

An early Burningham story about a dumpy dog who is abandoned by a rubbish pit, finds his way to a circus and is taken in by a clown. When his new friend is threatened with the sack, Simp decides to put some life into the act and all ends happily. Although it is good to have this well-loved story in paperback, I was disappointed with the way the book has reduced. The whole thing, but particularly the text, has a cramped appearance which may be off-putting to potential infant readers. However, I would

encourage parents to buy a copy to read to children. JB



Simp was what most people would call an ugly little dog. She was fat and small, and had only a stump for a tail. Her owner had found homes for her brothers and sisters but could not persuade anybody to take Simp. So, in order to get rid of her, he decided to leave her somewhere, hoping that somebody would find her and take her in.

In contrast,
Fox Eyes
Margaret Wise Brown/
Garth Williams, Picture
Lion, 75p

loses nothing in reduction; in fact the type size has been increased from the hardback.



"Whiskers!" the fox coughed. And the children knew the fox knew that they were not sleeping. All this the fox noted, and he went on his way.

A red fox travels the countryside with his all-seeing eyes, quietly destroying the serenity of its inhabitants. Nightfall brings a frenzy of activity from the observed, but fox is fast asleep and only he knows how soon he forgets. The whole feel of this book with its beautiful, atmospheric pictures and arresting cover exemplify high-quality paperback publishing. If you don't have a hardback, invest in a paperback now. JB

Squirrels
Brian Wildsmith, Oxford
University Press, £1.25

The habits of the red squirrel at different times of the year are presented in a series of

Reviewers in this issue



◀ **Jill Bennett**

Jill has a class of 4 - 7-year-olds in outer London. She is Literary Editor of *Child Education* and on the Board of the SBA.



▶ **Dinah Starkey**

Dinah teaches in Wiltshire (infants and juniors). She has written several books (collections of traditional tales) and has worked in radio.

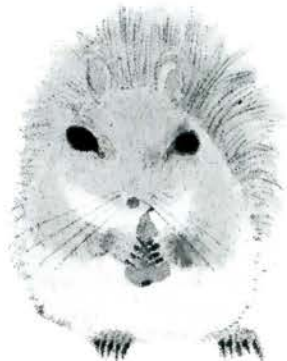


◀ **Steve Bowles**

Steve is a secondary teacher and was co-producer of *Reviewsheet* (reviews for teachers) until it ceased publication.

▶ **Pat Triggs**

Teaches in the Department of Education, Bristol Polytechnic. Past Chairman of the Federation of Children's Book Groups and on the Board of the SBA.



accurately observed portraits set against beautiful, detailed woodland backgrounds, and a short, simple text. The quality of this full-sized paperback amply justifies Oxford's decision not to sell the paperback rights to Wildsmith's picture books; his work would not be well served by reduction. Excellent value as is Wildsmith's *Circus*, the other recent large format paperback. JB

Dragons, Witches, Giants

Christopher Rawson and
Stephen Cartwright,
Usborne, 65p each
(Bound together in hard
covers, £2.95)

Short stories, traditional in

origin, presented in comic strip format and a text which is easy to read without being banal, and gradually increasing in length from two pages to a maximum of nine, plus snippets of information and the occasional puzzle - excellent fodder for the anti-literate whatever their age. JB

Happy Families
Puffin, 60p each; Kestrel
Books, £1.95 each

Mrs. Wobble the Waitress
Mr. Biff the Boxer
Allan Ahlberg and
Janet Ahlberg

Mrs. Plug the Plumber
Mr. Cosmo the Conjuror
Allan Ahlberg and Joe
Wright

Miss Jump the Jockey
Master Salt the Sailor's Son
Allan Ahlberg and Andre
Amstutz

Happy Families is a new series of easy-to-read stories for those just able to read on their own. With most of the books at this level originating in the States, it is good to see British publishers producing their own





Mrs Wobble was a waitress.
She liked her work.
The customers liked her.
The only trouble was - she wobbled.

material. All the stories are written by Allan Ahlberg whose seeming preoccupation with the supposed limitations of potential readers has resulted in a slightly stilted style: 'The children did not like to see their mother cry. It made them cry. It made their father cry too.' 'He will biff him,' said Betty Biff. 'Now I cannot ride in the race,' he said.' Throughout the series there is an undue avoidance of contractions which destroys the natural flow of the text and does NOT make for easier reading.

Of the six Mrs. Plug the Plumber, in which quick-witted Mrs. P. scares the pants off a would-be footpad and is rewarded with a trip round the world, Mr. Biff the Boxer who, thanks to the efforts of his family, ends up fighting fit for the charity match, and Mrs. Wobble the Waitress, whose clumsiness is turned to advantage, seem to me the best stories. Interestingly, the latter two are illustrated by Janet Ahlberg. The other three, in spite of lively, amusing illustrations (and a guest appearance of What-a-Mess, immediately spotted by my children), do not quite take off as real stories. Despite this, the length of the books (24 pages) and the cartoon-like pictures make them highly attractive to readers at the 'in-between' stage and well worth buying. JB



**Tim in Danger,
Tim to the Lighthouse**
Edward Ardizzone, Oxford University Press, £1.25 each
The stories of Tim and his seafaring friends have been loved by children for over forty years. Now with the publication of two of these classics as full-sized paperbacks, one hopes that a new generation of

readers will be introduced to the delights of Ardizzone. The very nature of the illustrations with their powerful seascapes and bubble talk, and the spirited adventures, presented in large print, mean that these books can be offered to older, less advanced readers in the junior school as well as being read aloud to infants. JB



Tim was worried, so he went to wake his father. 'Dad the boy!' said his father. 'Go back to bed Tim, and stop your nonsense.' But once back in bed Tim could not sleep. He lay awake and worried more than ever.

The Rocking Horse Secret

Rumer Godden, Puffin, 65p



Tibby has troubles. She lives in the big house where her mother is caretaker and, when the old lady who owns the house dies, her greedy nieces descend. The outlook is bleak but, with the help of the nursery rocking horse, the nieces are routed and all is well. The story is full of warmth and atmosphere and there is a wish-fulfilling happy end. At 89 pages it is short enough to be enjoyed by a child who is not yet a confident reader. DS

It's Too Frightening for Me

Shirley Hughes, Young Puffin, 70p



Poor Granny was quite worn out with all the work, and running up and down stairs. But worse was to come.

Mary and her granny look after Hardlock House for an absentee landlord who, on his return, threatens to throw them both out. The pictures, as you would expect from Shirley Hughes, are full of wit and vitality but the text, in contrast, is a little pedestrian and leans heavily on exclamation marks. It's a pity because with its large print and lavish illustrations, this is a book ideally suited to bridge the gap between reading scheme and full-length story and, heaven knows, there are few enough of those around. DS

The Little Girl and the Tiny Doll

Edward and Aingelda Ardizzone, Young Puffin, 65p

This one does cater for that market. The doll is abandoned in a supermarket deep-freeze and rescued, after many adventures, by a kind little girl. It's very short, very simple, and there's a picture on every page. Apparently it started life as a bedtime story and it certainly reads aloud well. This is a curious, charming little story with a flavour all of its own and should be very popular with girls of seven and upwards. DS



There was once a tiny doll who belonged to a girl who did not care for dolls so her life was very dull.



Fairy Tales

Alison Uttley, ed. Kathleen Lines, Young Puffin, 85p

Kathleen Lines has selected 13 fairy tales by Alison Uttley and very period they are, relying heavily on sailors with parrots, talking cuckoo clocks and old spice women. But the style is deliciously romantic and the pictures, by Ann Strugnell, all

mob caps and sun bonnets, nicely capture the mood. Good for reading aloud. DS

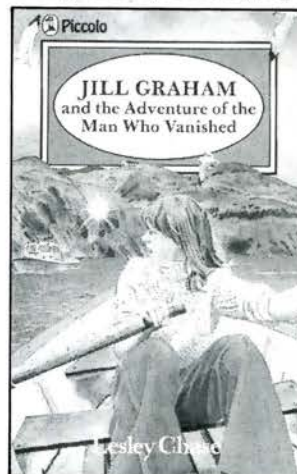


Jill Graham and the Secret of the Silent Pool

Lesley Chase, Piccolo, 75p

Jill Graham and the Adventure of the Man Who Vanished

Lesley Chase, Piccolo, 75p



Nancy Drew: The Clue in the Crumbling Wall

Carolyn Keene, Armada, 65p

The Hardy Boys: The Secret of the Old Mill

Franklin Dixon, Armada, 65p

Jill Graham is the latest in the recent spate of youthful detectives. Piccolo have resurrected these two books from obscurity and are threatening at least six more. Why? Is this publishing's equivalent of 'Back to Basics' in education - 'Back to Blyton'? Ignoring the stories' deficiencies (quality is hardly the point) they've been given dreary covers and their slimness is achieved by employing tiny, off-putting print. Series format and standard titles could help though.

The venerable Nancy Drew books have always caught some kids' interest - doubtless aided now by the telly programmes - so I compared one with Jill Graham. The Carolyn Keene factory won easily. In five pages, there'd been a rose-bush robbery and a bag snatch - Jill barely gets

through her breakfast in that space - and the non-stop action continued throughout. There's more dialogue too and less description while the high drama chapter endings - reminiscent of old Saturday Morning Picture serials - are an effective if crude device. There's also the usual American care with syntax.

Personally I 'like' the Hardy Boys less though they're manufactured to a similar blueprint. (These two seem even thicker than Nancy - it's in Jill Graham's favour that she isn't quite so stupid.) Again, though, there's a definite market for them and they've never been proved harmful to my knowledge. Best consumed at the earliest possible age, I'd say; perhaps one reason why Jill Graham's slightly greater 'realism' is a weakness? You should know your Hardy Boys/Three Investigators/Nancy Drew freaks by now; I'd only experiment cautiously with Jill Graham - if at all. SB

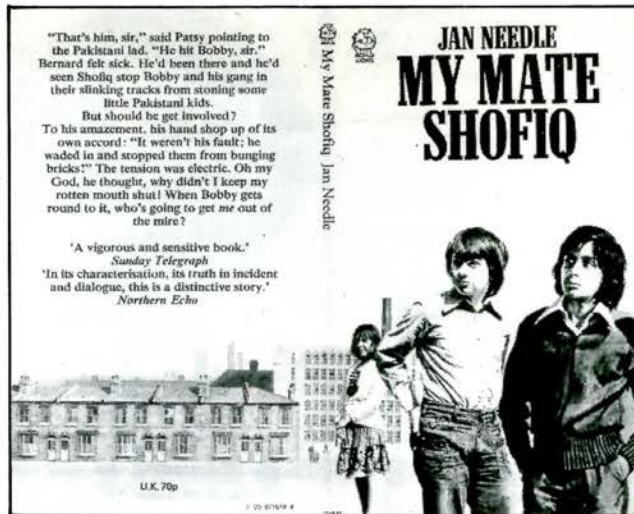
Penny's Way

Mary K. Harris, Puffin, 85p
Twelve-year-old Persephone has an inferiority complex. Penny, hopeless at sums and in the C-stream, is totally overshadowed by the brilliant Cordelia, Alexander and Joanna. But Penny muddles through and in the end her one talent earns her a place in the sun. Mary Harris has created an appealing heroine set in well-realized surroundings. DS



Conrad's War

Andrew Davies, Hippo, 65p
Andrew Davies always pitches directly at kids which makes it difficult for adults to appreciate his work. In this bizarre fantasy, the nauseating Conrad drags his obese 'great writer' father through a time-warp to bomb Nuremberg and then to escape from Colditz. He glimpses something of the reasons why his parents dislike his obsession with war - but there's no way he's going to end up a goody-goody. The comedy here will appeal to some kids - especially boys dreaming of revenge for paternal inadequacies - and the story moves swiftly throughout. Not worth its Guardian Award but one to try in school. SB



My Mate Shofiq

Jan Needle, Lions, 70p

If you've not got this yet, don't hesitate. Shofiq is a powerful, realistic story about friendship in the hostile environment of a Lancashire mill town. Bernard looks to Shofiq for protection from a gang whose 'Paki-bashing' rebounds on them but Shofiq has his own worries, trying to hold his family together as culture-clash pressures grow. A good opening, excellent dialogue, recognisable junior school settings and a sympathetic adoption of a child's viewpoint make this a memorable novel. Easier than Ashley, but a solid read with a cover that will appeal to kids even older than the protagonists. SB



Beware of this Shop

Carol Beach York, Piccolo, 70p

If run-of-the-mill British books reached the standard of unexceptional American titles there'd be much less to complain about in the kids' fiction scene. Piccolo's enterprising adoption of Carol Beach York's novels deserves success and this latest one is worth trying with girls. Hester discovers that the objects Mr Mordrian sells cast a malign influence over the purchasers' lives but how can she break his power? There's a historical setting, unfortunately, but it doesn't impinge noticeably and it's cleverly disguised by the attractive cover. A slowish

start, but mounting tension makes for an appealing undemanding read. SB

Philip Hall Likes Me.

I Reckon Maybe

Bette Greene, Puffin, 75p

Seven cosy stories, episodes in the life of the 11/12-year-old daughter of a black Arkansas turkey farmer. Some familiar ideas - no party invitation, catching the turkey thieves, making money - and some less common ones like an allergy ruling out pet puppies and picketing a store that sells shoddy goods. Connecting theme - will boy-next-door Philip continue liking Beth when she stops letting him be tops in everything? Sure enough is down-home in places but it's fluent, the cover's good and the character likeable. (Militant opponents of sexism/racism might not agree - remember Sounder?) Give it a go. SB



Stephen Grives as William Sedgwick in Southern Television's serialization of *The Ravelled Thread*.

The Ravelled Thread

John Lucarotti, Puffin, 65p

Here's another historical adventure, promoted up the publishing order because it's derived from a television serial. Abigail's father finds discrepancies in the ledgers but is framed and jailed before he blabs. Rich folk want Britain to aid the Confederacy in the American Civil War; Yankee spy helps Abigail and street-urchin friends to foil them. TV might help but don't

expect miracles. Self-conscious thieves' slang necessitates the incomplete glossary; short opening scenes don't develop a clear storyline. Dubious social history too. Minority stuff. SB

Earthquake

Andrew Salkey, Puffin, 80p

Salkey's Hurricane (Puffin) has the worst drawings of West Indians that I know but with *Earthquake* the problem is the lack of a story. The book is nearly over before anything dramatic happens and there's little in the first two-thirds to catch anyone's interest. Staying with grandparents in the country, three children play Desert Islands, experience very minor earth tremors and befriend a wandering Rastafarian. Finally Gran pa describes the great quake of 1907. Kids' fiction has improved since 1965; forget this one and try Everard Palmer in the unlikely event of a demand for books with rural Jamaican settings. SB

Grange Hill Rules OK?

Robert Leeson, Lions, 70p



Alan, Benny and Tucker in the BBC TV series *Grange Hill*. Photograph by Homer Sykes.

The BBC's *Grange Hill* Stories tended to focus on the affairs of individual characters in turn but this book develops the themes from the telly programmes and weaves them together. Thus Robert Leeson gives himself lots of scope for employing his mastery of kids' chat and the many conversations make this a much lighter book than Phil Redmond's. If fashion hasn't already moved on, this should attract a lot of attention in school bookshops and class libraries; for once a link with the box has been fruitful instead of directing kids towards mouldy-oldsies which few can read. SB

Charmed Life

Diana Wynne Jones, Puffin, 80p

Guardian Award winners are often disappointing and this is certainly no *Ogre Downstairs* but it might nevertheless appeal to some keen readers, especially fans of this author's earlier classic and other fantasies. It's set in an alternative world where witchcraft is commonplace. Cat, an orphan, is caught in a battle of wills and spells between his witch sister and their unapproachable guardian, Chrestomanci. At first it's comic and domestic but it climaxes in a more serious



Diana Wynne Jones.
Photograph courtesy
of Puffin Books.

struggle for power. Diana Wynne Jones' books are often Puffinized with terrible covers; this one is merely indifferent. Worth remembering but not a wow. SB



Keep Running

Margaret Storey, Puffin, 75p

Imogen Coleridge is kidnapped; but although confused and in some pain she has not lost her wits or her determination. An escape attempt nearly succeeds and Keen, her captor, has to find somewhere to keep her out of sight. As they go by car from hideout to hideout, Imogen's feelings about Keen, herself and her situation become complex and contradictory. A fast-moving thriller but with something extra for those (probably girls) beginning like Imogen to feel 'different from the person she always took herself for'. PT



Song for a Dark Queen

Rosemary Sutcliff,
Knight, 85p

Marvellous. Not to be missed. Read it aloud if they 'don't like history' or just aren't up to tackling it. This story of Boudicca, Queen of the Iceni, says more about life, love,

loyalty, courage and violence than a whole shelf of 'socially relevant teenage novels'. Joint winner of the Other Award 1978. PT

The Hitch-Hiker's Guide to the Galaxy

Douglas Adams, Pan 80p

If there are still some people around who have not yet discovered the delights of this extremely funny book, invite them to join the cult. The sheer invention blows the imagination - earth destroyed to make way for a new hyper-spatial express route (and that's only for starters) leaves Arthur Dent, lone surviving Earthman, and Ford Prefect, researcher for the invaluable Hitch-Hiker's Guide, roaming the Galaxy in the company of Vogons (third worst poets in the universe), Zaphod Beeblebrox, President of the Imperial Galactic Government and starship stealer, and Marvin, a depressed robot. It has the logic of lunacy and has transferred to book from radio without losing a laugh. Beware, though, at least one sixth-former got the giggles in Private Study. PT



New Patches for Old

Christobel Mattingley,
Puffin, 95p

Problem for Patricia when her family decide to emigrate to Australia; there's the pain of parting and the difficulties of settling into a new country. Some tears, setbacks at school, one nasty, several nices, super parents (Mum's zingy with a sewing machine), enter the love interest on page 158, and Patricia/Patches (beautiful, good-natured, kind, dog lover) triumphant at the happy ending: all add up to a jolly good read for a wet Sunday. Particularly recommended for those graduating from teenage romance comics. PT



What do four maths
books add up to?
Jan Denton sums up.

New Mathematics
L.C. Pascoe, Teach Yourself
Books, Hodder & Stoughton,
£1.25

I suppose it might be helpful for those wanting to brush up on some aspect of maths but, as an introductory text, it is unsuitable. I found it boring, unimaginative, obscure, poorly presented, not strong enough on the reasons why and, in any case, not really that new.

FINGERS X 9



Here is a way to use your fingers to multiply single numbers by nine.

First number the fingers from one to ten, from the left. Then fold down the finger numbered with the chosen number, and count the fingers remaining, left and right, for the answer.

Example 1: fold down 6
five fingers remain on the left and four on the right = 54

Example 2: fold down 4
three fingers remain on the left and six on the right = 36

Think of a Number

Johnny Ball, BBC, £2.95

After the very successful television series of the same name. It contains jokes, puzzles, information about numbers: where they came from, what early mathematicians discovered, how big really big numbers can be, as well as things to make you think. What makes an arrow fly? What makes a boomerang come back? The book is very entertaining, very readable and strongly conveys Johnny Ball's enthusiasm and sense of fun. It's a book to dip into and suitable for top juniors upwards. A slight criticism - there are so many separate bits and pieces that one often seems to be left 'dangling' with nowhere to go. I'd like to see a follow-up.

The Pocket Calculator

L.R. Carter and E. Huzan,
Teach Yourself Books,
Hodder & Stoughton, £1.25

Definitely a book for the minority. It could be of use only to the competent mathematician with little or no experience of a modern pocket calculator. If such people exist, they should buy this book now - it will date very quickly.

Jan Denton teaches Mathematics in a large Bristol comprehensive school.

Fun with Numbers

Michael Holt, Piccolo, 50p

It sets out to prove that numbers are fun and, in so far as a thin paperback can, I think it succeeds. It contains crosswords with numbers, magic squares, number patterns, missing number puzzles, shapes, curves, lines, etc., and the instructions are mostly clear and simple. It kept an interested 9-year-old absorbed for hours and could provide both junior- and early secondary-school teachers with a wealth of material to fill odd moments. At 50p no teacher should be without it.

25 Help Buster get out of the castle. He can only move through even numbers divisible by 3. The marked path shows one route. He can only move sideways or up-and-down, not slantwise.

Can you find another way?

2	5	2	3	15	12	11
1	2	36	24	9	15	7
2	9	1	12	30	18	5
3	6	9	4	7	6	8
9	18	6	36	16	12	44
15	12	39	27	30	36	3
21	30	17	33	18	8	9

Lifeclass

Jean Medawar, Hamish Hamilton, £4.50

There's a good and worthy idea behind this book - to inform children about what is happening to the environment world wide and to involve them in the fight to preserve it. It seems to assume, wrongly I think, that children have their heads in the sand along with most adults. 'Not many children think about it because up till now children have not been expected to understand.' The tone of the writing wavers uneasily between lecture and sermon, and the text is sprinkled haphazardly with some point-less black and white drawings which add nothing to the communication. There's a lot of information (nothing very new) but it's all conveyed in words. With good use of graphs, diagrams and illustration, what this book has to say could have been got across in half the space and twice as effectively. Jean Medawar keeps telling us that we cut down a forest of trees the size of Wales for the paper we need every year. Ironically her book spreads in large type over 78 pages of good quality (not recycled) paper. It's too late to save the trees; but you could save your money. PT



vised a halfway house between that and the real freedom of blank pieces of paper. Each page has a frame, an idea and a big space. Children (and adults) are invited to design a flag for a new planet, draw the worst nightmare you ever had, draw what these people are looking at, etc. Our copy has been well used - it might be a good thing to have on hand for a wet Easter if you've got 99p to spare. PT



Bored - Nothing to Do
Peter Spier, World's Work, £3.10

Two boys act on a harassed mum's order, 'Go and do something', and, having acquired all the necessary parts, embark on operation aeroplane. But as the pair are joyriding, the results of their labours are being discovered and - needless to say - their enterprise is not altogether appreciated. Marvellous entertainment - illustrations crammed with amusing detail, comic strip format, and a short, lively, easy-to-read text. A book with something for everyone from beginner readers up. Beware though, detailed specifications and plan are given at the end... JB

Grasshopper on the Road

Arnold Lobel, World's Work, £2.95

As a provider of easy-to-read literature, Arnold Lobel is an indisputable master. In his latest offering for the I Can Read series, we meet Grasshopper whose itinerary encounters with banner-carrying beetles, an apple-dwelling worm, a houseproud housefly, a ferryman mosquito, bored butterflies and dashing dragonflies, provide six short stories. These have an ageless, fable-like quality - beginners can enjoy them at face value, and more mature readers will

appreciate their profundity. As always, the text is punctuated with Lobel's delightful drawings. Don't miss this one. JB



There they lived
and were very happy
until one day Mrs Vinegar said:
"Mr Vinegar,
our bottle is looking dirty.
What it needs
is a good clean out."
So she got a broom
to sweep the inside
and Mr Vinegar
cleaned the outside
with a mop.



Mrs Vinegar
Simon Stern, Methuen, £3.50

Based, fairly loosely, on the English fairy tale, Simon Stern's rendering of the traditional Mrs. Vinegar is great fun. Bubble talk, strip cartoons and integration of text and illustrations are some of the ingredients of this imaginatively designed picture book. It works successfully as a class storybook, but individual readers will want to pore over and relish the delicious details found in each double page spread. JB

Come Back Stork
Patricia Gray, Blackie, £3.25

There seems to be a whole family of Stork stories from *Wheel on the School* onwards. Five-year-old Marieka watches the storks nest on the roof of her house and helps to rear a baby when it falls out. It's a gentle story, simply told and nicely illustrated. DS

Tex
S.E. Hinton, Gollancz, £3.95



Tex lives on a run-down ranch outside the city but otherwise it's the mixture as before from this amazingly popular teenage novelist. A fast-paced, stylish, first person narrative contrasts the reckless Tex with his more

responsible big brother. Trouble at school, with a well-heeled neighbour who sees Tex as a bad influence on his

kids, with a passing hood (Mark from *That Was Then*) - Tex shrugs it aside. But a final domestic bombshell sends him off the rails and into a flirtation with drug-pushing which nearly gets him killed. Happy ending, though, and a sure-fire success. SB



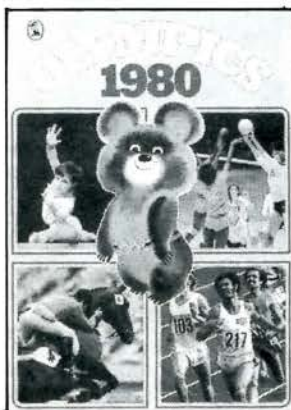
The Mother Goose Treasury

Raymond Briggs, Hamish Hamilton, £6.95

A welcome return on its third reprinting for this classic collection of rhymes. No home, nursery or primary school classroom should be without it. The wit and invention in words and pictures are enough to turn even a reluctant junior on to poetry. PT

Ramona and her Mother
Beverly Cleary, Hamish Hamilton, £3.75

The latest in this popular series about Ramona Quimby and her family. Ramona is now seven and a half but still in trouble, frequently perplexed by her life - and now convinced nobody loves her. The ups and downs of life with two working parents and an older sister are told from Ramona's viewpoint but the humour and acute observation mean that



Olympics 1980
Norman Barrett, Piccolo, £1

Now here's real value for money. History, facts, figures, rules and regulations, technical insight, records, personalities, coloured photographs and illustrations, clear layout and a reasonable index. What more could you ask? Nothing apparently - at least there wasn't a question a group of ten- and eleven-year-old sport fanatics could think of that it couldn't answer. No family or classroom should be without it this summer - that is assuming there will be someone in Moscow to play. PT

The Anti-Colouring Book

Susan Striker and Edward Kimmel, Hippo, 99p

Opposed to 'colouring in' because it 'kills creativity', the creators of this book have de-



this book like its predecessors will appeal to older readers and reading aloud adults. PT

A Nice Day Out
Dick Cate, Hamish
Hamilton Antelope, £1.95



You could call this a sort of English Ramona - only the viewpoint here is Billy's. With his mam, dad, sister Sandra, brother-in-law Steve, new niece Alice Margaret Julie - and Grandma, he's on a day trip to the seaside. Things don't go exactly smoothly but it gives Billy something to think about. The family is real enough (not a working-class stereotype in sight) and there's enough in 88 pages to give a stamina building reader a good run. PT

(A Funny Sort of Christmas about the same family - Gran ill, Alice Margaret Julie on the way - is now in Young Puffin, 65p)



The Fattest Dwarf of Nosegay
Paul Biegel, Blackie, £3.95

Paul Biegel is a marvellous storyteller. Thirty-one very short chapters string together in a story that begs to be read aloud.

Virgil, fattest of all the dwarfs, goes in search of a looking-glass to find out what he looks like. The quest takes him far from home and he meets a great variety of characters, animal and human, and falls in and out of adventures. A lot of humour and a lightly suggested moral. PT

(The Dwarfs of Nosegay, to which this is a sequel, is newly in Puffin.)

The Giant at the Ford
Ursula Synge, Bodley
Head, £4.50

Ursula Synge has a marvellous way with legends; it's a mystery why her superb retellings and reworkings haven't found their way into paperback yet. These fifteen tales of saints are told with great ease and humanity, accompanied where appropriate by touches of humour and poetry. Whether well-known like St. George or less familiar like St. Wulfric of Somerset or St. Mocha of Ireland, each saint has a story that reads aloud naturally. A godsend (that must be the right word) to all teachers. PT



A Skeleton in the Cupboard
Nicholas Tucker,
Puffin, 75p

Everyday expressions like 'a storm in a teacup' explained in a clever combination of words and pictures. Great fun (and educational!).

The Adventures of Badger's Set
Emil Pacholek, Hippo,
65p

Three long short stories about Badger (who likes to make up long words) and his friend in the forest. One's about Olympical Games. A good read aloud for younger listeners.

Penny and the Captain
Jane Breskin Zalben,
Lions, 65p

Five very short tales of Penny (the penguin first mate) and Captain Jenkins (the walrus) of The Silverfish. Lots of pictures, large print, short lines - for reading alone.

The Aardvark Who Wasn't Sure
Jill Tomlinson, Magnet,
70p

Mrs. Aardvark helps baby Pim to explore his world and dis-

cover what it means to be an aardvark. As in all Jill Tomlinson's stories, the young listeners will learn as much as Pim. Beautifully told.

Penny's Helicopter, Fred's Travelling Fair, Captain Jolly and his Boat, Farmer Joe's Farm

Illustrated by Colin and Moira Maclean, Out and About series, Piccolo Picture Books (originals), 45p each

These cheap, attractively illustrated paperbacks are best used as talkabouts for pre-schoolers and nursery classes when the rather limp texts can be ignored. It's a pity the words are not more exciting as the print itself is ideal for early readers. Good to see a girl as the pilot in Penny's helicopter.

The Runaway Serf
Geoffrey Trease,
Piccolo, 60p

Set after the Black Death when a severe shortage of labour transformed the feudal system. Large print and short sentences, but it would take an eight-year-old to cope with the language. Older children looking for a short story with lots of plot might enjoy it.

Bobby Brewster's Potato

H.E. Todd, Knight, 60p

In the title story a spud comes to life and gives our hero much useful advice about the cultivation of vegetables. Like all Bobby Brewster books, good-natured and undemanding.

The Night Watch
Jenny Overton, Puffin, 85p

Children performing a cycle of medieval mystery plays lie at the centre of a story full of characters and atmosphere described with detail and subtlety. Veronica, nervous, self-conscious, unconfident, is the pivot. One for the literate.

East of Midnight
Tanith Lee, Puffin, 80p

Intriguing fantasy of two simultaneously existing worlds (one ruled by women) and the movement between them of the master enchanter fleeing his fate and his double, the slave. Detailed descriptions, lots of action. Okay for top junior addicts of the genre and on up.

The Ghost Diviners
Elisabeth Mace, Magnet,
75p

An old iron toy whip lets Martin and sister Jackie back into two pasts - World War II and 1900. Jackie is drawn more and more into the past and a moment of dreadful violence. Powerful stuff in parts but piecing together the plot could be tedious for some.

Life with Lisa
Sybil Burr, Puffin, 70p

The 'diary' of 12-year-old Lisa in the late 1940s, complete with abbreviations and generous use of capital letters. Much enjoyed as a period piece by compulsive readers of the same age.

The Mist Lizard
Marc Alexander,
Piccolo, 75p

Newly awakened sleepers from a Time Pyramid; some zooming about in time cones for Susan, Roger and the Professor; a hostile power-mad robot. Dr Who appeal and a nice twist at the end.

The Fledglings
John Harris, Puffin, 95p

Another of those technically and historically accurate tales of flying in World War I. Detailed description of air battles and characters developed convincingly enough for the reader to feel the tragedy of their loss.



Dull Knife.

Wounded Knee
Dee Brown, Lions, 90p

Adaptation for more manageable reading from the classic, *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee* - the story of white imperialism over the American Indian. It comes horrifyingly alive in the words of those who lived it. Illustrated with black and white photographs.

Reissues

Daddy Long-Legs
Jean Webster, Knight, 65p

Still comes up fresh and appealing to girls after nearly 70 years. A nice blend of comedy and romance. The cover with a rather modern-looking young lady may need explaining.

The Good Master and The Singing Tree (its sequel)

Kate Seredy, Knight,
75p each

These splendidly readable tales of life on the Hungarian Plain before and during World War I are almost classics. The Singing Tree gives an interesting perspective on the 1914-18 war.

Authorgraph No.1

Quentin Blake

At home

Quentin Blake lives in London in an Edwardian block of flats with elaborate bay windows and decorated stone and brickwork. The white marble steps to the front door have the address set in them in black marble and inside red-carpeted stairs and corridors lead to each flat.

Quentin Blake works in a large white room with, at one end, a bay window looking down onto trees and grass in the gardens of the square outside. A pinboard, covered in letters and drawings from children, is propped on top of a cupboard. The mantelpiece is covered with things: a Japanese fan, a stone bird, some pebbles, wood blocks for printing Q in different styles - 'not really a collection'. Every surface is covered with books, magazines and drawings and some are in neat piles on the floor. In one corner, near the window, is a big drawing table covered with an organised clutter of pens, pencils, paint boxes, inks. There are two green plants, a couple of cushion-filled wicker chairs, a huge waste paper basket: it all adds up to a quiet working atmosphere.

'I qualified in drawing by always having done it'

Although Quentin Blake now teaches illustration, he has had hardly any formal training. (Just eighteen months at Chelsea College of Art, part-time, on the painting course 'to get some basic technique'.) At Sidcup Grammar School, after World War II, he was 'always drawing on my exercise books' but went on to Cambridge to study English Literature. 'It's hard before you've been to a university to know what it means almost; and, particularly then, not many boys from where I lived went to university.' His decision had a peculiar logic. 'I knew if I went to an art school I would never read English, whereas if I went to university I would still do art.' After national service and a year of teacher training 'I knew I was going to do drawing. I'd been doing jokes and sending them to *Punch* and getting work accepted so I thought now I must try and see whether I can make a living.'

'Cartoons are not really the way my mind works'

There was plenty of work: cartoons for magazines like *Punch* and the *Spectator*. The trouble was 'I found I was spending ages trying to think of funny things. When I had thought of the funny joke, it wasn't necessarily anything very interesting to draw and I was spending time thinking when I could be drawing.' For Quentin Blake, what is funny is the drawing not the joke; he decided, 'I don't want to do cartoons all my life.'

'I just want to draw and it tends to come out funny'

Quentin Blake is not often asked to do something serious. 'I'd be delighted if I was. But I suppose it's natural because that's the way it comes out. I just want to draw and it tends to come out funny.' But he won't do just any book. 'People offer you work and they think it must suit you because it's funny; sometimes it isn't the kind of humour you can relate to, so you have to say no.' What does Quentin Blake find funny? 'Things in life are funny - people's gestures, reactions, the way they do things. You don't have to fall over to be funny; maybe the way somebody doesn't fall over is funny. Even if you are doing stories that seem like complete fantasy, they are really about life. Russell Hoban's stories are about life - they are just got up to look different.'



Quentin Blake is a freelance artist and illustrator. He has illustrated over one hundred books for children and adults. He also draws for journals and magazines like the *Spectator*, the *Listener* and *New Society*. His latest picture book is *Mister Magnolia* (Cape). Three days each week he teaches at the Royal College of Art, where he is now Head of the Department of Illustration in the School of Graphic Arts.

What sort of a person is Quentin Blake?

He enjoys his work - both drawing and teaching - and he takes it seriously. He likes to work regular hours, 9 to 5, and occasionally into the evenings but sometimes, in the morning, he has to 'edge up to it'. His main other interest is the theatre. He's 'no good at any games at all' but enjoys 'sloshing about in mud' and 'wallowing in the sea'. His favourite kind of place is 'a sort of marsh - a flat place where there is sea' and he has a house at Hastings. He likes to eat lots of things but perhaps especially bacon sandwiches and fish when he has bought it fresh from the fishing boats in Hastings. From his childhood reading, he remembers *Treasure Island* and comics, especially American comics, which had a particular smell of their own. He would take Dickens to a desert island.

'Right,' said Captain Najork. 'Where is the sportive infant?' from *How Tom Beat Captain Najork and his Hired Sportsmen* by Russell Hoban (Picture Puffin).

Using the Authorgraph

Get children more involved with the people who create books and the books they create.

Quentin Blake is an artist whose work is instantly recognisable to a great number of children and appeals over a wide age range but about whom surprisingly little is written or known.

Here's an opportunity to introduce Quentin Blake. 'Knowing the author' certainly affects the way we relate to books (even if it shouldn't). For children 'meeting the author' can mean realising for the first time that books are written by real people (not machines); it can arouse curiosity and new interest. If you know something about how a thing is done, you look at it in a new way.

Look at Quentin Blake in a new way. Try:

- ★ looking at the eyes to spot the goodies and baddies
- ★ seeing how the pictures in *Mind Your Own Business* are drawn in a different way
- ★ comparing picture books with longer books
- ★ looking at how covers and books are designed
- ★ 'doing the roughs' for your own picture book, designing some covers

Try this out with Infants, Juniors, Secondary groups doing Art or English, students in teacher training, library borrowers, bookshop customers, children at home.

The Authorgraph is designed for pulling out and pinning up if you wish in bookshop, library, classroom or at home.

Authorgraph No.1

Quentin Blake

'Perhaps I could do that, perhaps the sense of humour would be appropriate.'



It was almost by accident that Quentin Blake became involved in children's books. He was mistaken for a children's illustrator because of some drawings he had done for a weekly. He thought 'perhaps I could do that, perhaps the sense of humour would be appropriate.'

Not being someone who leaves things to chance, he got a friend, John Yeoman, to write a book for him to illustrate and they offered it to Faber; it was published as *A Drink of Water*, eight short stories. After that there was quite a lot of work doing black and white line drawings in children's books. But Quentin Blake likes variety and, taking the initiative again, he created his first picture book, *Patrick*. 'I wrote it so that I could do a coloured book because nobody had commissioned me to do one.' It was published in 1969 by Cape, the first publisher who saw it.

Quentin Blake likes to illustrate different kinds of books.

Patrick, *Angelo*, *Jack and Nancy*, *Snuff* and *Mister Magnolia* (all Cape) are picture books for which Quentin Blake provided the story and the pictures. 'The pictures come first. It's not writing at all really - it's a picture and then making

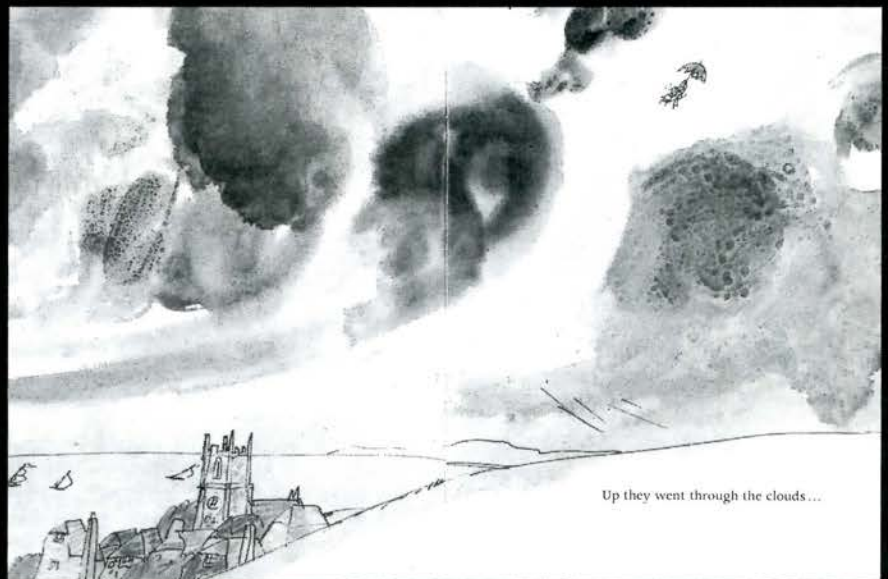
So they all went along the road together, until they met a tramp. The tramp had whiskers and a hat with a broken top where his hair poked through. He was smoking a pipe and every time he gave a puff sparks flew out of it.



Patrick (Cape and Picture Puffins)

a story out of a picture. You get the idea of a thing you would like to draw and the story is an extension of that.'

Making a picture book from someone else's story is different. 'Some illustrators really only like doing their own books. I like doing other people's stories because I don't know what is going to happen in them. You're given the script and you're given an opportunity to interpret it. I read the story and I start getting messages from it. It's like acting it or producing it.'

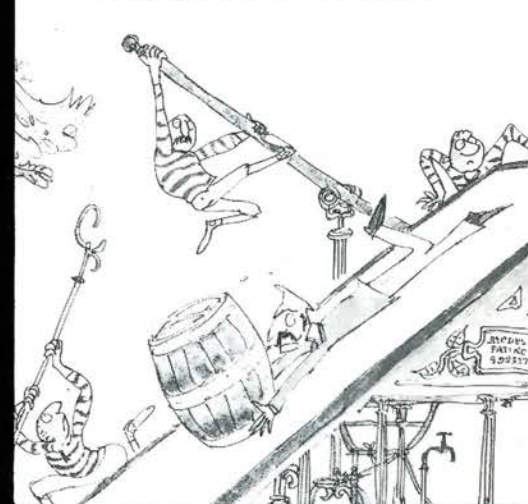


Jack and Nancy (Cape and Picture Puffins)

How Tom beat Captain Najork and his Hired Sportsmen

'Reading *Captain Najork* for the first time was very exciting. It really gave me a lift, a sense of surprise. I did the rough drawings for the whole book straight off. My editor suggested I might like to meet Russell Hoban. I felt I didn't need to; I thought it would be confusing. The script was all you needed - it was like a complete set of instructions. I thought what can he tell me that isn't already there. When I was doing *Sneeball* and the other games I thought they ought to look as though you could play them; but I didn't want the pictures to show exactly how you played them so I put the elements in and left a bit for the reader to guess.'

The hired sportsmen had first slide. Captain Najork himself harrelled, and he and his men played like demons. But Tom tonged the bobble in the same fooling-around way that he fished things out of rivers, and he quickly moved into the lead. Captain Najork sweated big drops, and he slid his barrel too hard so it hit the stop and slopped over. But Tom just fooled around, and when it was his slide he never spilled a drop.

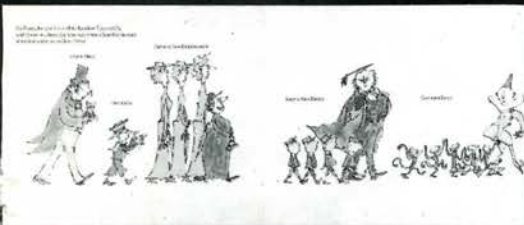


Playing *Sneeball*, from *How Tom Beat Captain Najork*

Up they went through the clouds...

Sixes and Sevens

'John Yeoman is a friend but he refused to tell me anything about it till it was finished. When I read it, I thought - it's all the same picture! Then I thought but that's what it's all about. The thing is to make all the pictures look different and you start thinking about different scenes, different weather, things going on.'



Sixes and Sevens (Blackie and Puffin)



and his Hired Sportsmen (Cape and Picture Puffins).

The Enormous Crocodile

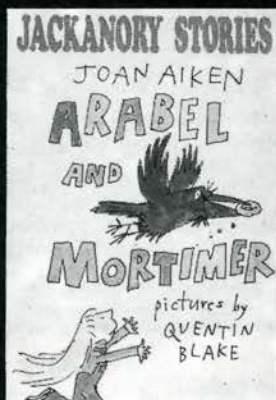
'In this story the characters are not so unexpected. It's more what becomes of them that is interesting. The thing that gets you is that crocodile and the story. That's what I liked about it - telling the story in the pictures, interpreting it. There are lots of ways of drawing a crocodile, depending what sort of crocodile it is. I had to decide how this crocodile, in this story, should look. How do you give the crocodile the right sort of character? How do you get it to do those sorts of things - some of which crocodiles just don't do?'

Longer books

'In a picture book you illustrate practically everything that happens. In a longer text you have to select the bits you illustrate. You're collaborating with the author in a different way. There are places where you don't give the whole story away. If there are too many pictures, it doesn't give the text a chance to take on a life of its own. I don't think the illustrator should take the book over - in longer



stories the text ought to win. You have to give the reader a chance to be alone with the text. You don't want the illustrator breathing down your neck every minute. The illustrator perhaps helps with an introduction to the text or with creating the atmosphere but there must be bits where you let the author get on with it.'



The cover for Joan Aiken's *Arabel and Mortimer* (Cape and BBC).

Covers

'These are almost the most difficult thing there is. You want to find a scene that represents the flavour of the novel but at the same time stands for it; but it mustn't totally give away the story. Then there's the problem of getting the balance between the typography and the drawing. It's very hard to do a good cover.'

Lester and Flap-eared Lorna are two of the characters Quentin Blake created for Jackanory where he drew and told stories simultaneously.

'It grew out of drawing for children in libraries. I thought it might work on TV and they said come along and try. I invented characters you could draw quickly. If you draw for children live, you draw something that changes as you go along. When you first meet Lorna, you don't know about the ears. I made it so the ears came last. You have to draw backwards. You have to think of visual jokes; things where you can't see what it is until you've drawn it.

Drawing for the camera is strange because it's not the way you're used to working. When you do a drawing, if you get it right, you're satisfied; if you get it wrong, you do it again. It might take an hour, it might take all day, or two days. You go on until you get it right. In *Jackanory* I rehearsed the drawing three times and then I did it, and the last one was it! It's very unnatural. But I liked working on *Jackanory* because you see someone else's craft. There are twenty other people doing their job and you're doing yours. It's very satisfying. When it's happened, it's finished, and the way that it's different from doing a book is interesting. I liked it as a change; I wouldn't want to do it all the time.'

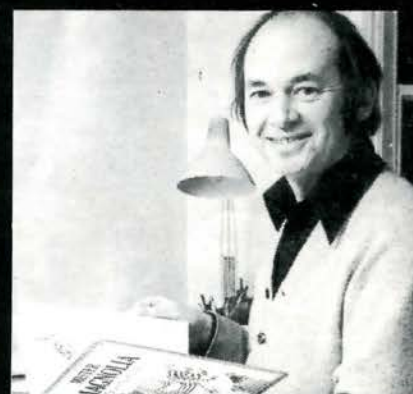
Creating a Book

'I was pleased to do the Michael Rosen poems (*Mind Your own Business, Wouldn't you like to know*, Collins/Lions) because they relate to everyday life in a way that, say, a book written by me wouldn't. So you draw it in a different way.'

For picture books, the outline comes first. 'After that, it's just colouring in' using watercolour pastels or paints. The important thing is the line. 'You have to "feel" the drawing so that it comes off the end of your pen. Sometimes I find myself making faces while I draw; I'm sort of being the characters.'

There's more to creating a picture book than just drawing the pictures. 'Doing the roughs means really designing the book, deciding where the text should go, giving the reader a surprise when the page is turned, matching the words and the pictures.' Above left is Quentin Blake with the roughs for a new Roald Dahl picture book, *The Twits*. When things are going well, the roughs for a book will take two or three days and the book itself about three months.

How to tell the goodies from the baddies: 'Eyes that are dots are usually good; dots in circles can be bad - not always but quite often. You see you can't give a character an evil expression, or make him peer around a corner with just a dot for an eye.'



'It's very satisfying to see a book finished and ready for its readers.' Quentin Blake with *Mister Magnolia*.



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Do some of the things done in schools, primary and secondary, actually discourage children from seeing books and reading in a positive way?

Jill Bennett asks

Is your reading scheme really necessary?

I teach a vertically grouped infant class in an outer London school and for ten years I have been helping children learn to read. Very early on I decided that reading schemes and 'reading books' had no place in what I was trying to achieve.

My chief aim as an infant teacher is to help children become readers who see books as an important part of their lives and who will continue to enjoy literature as they grow up. The best way to achieve this, I believe, is to teach them to read by using *real* books right from the start. As I see it reading is not about look-say, word-by-word decoding, phonic analysis or a progression from one boring non-story to another through a reading scheme whose controlled vocabulary must be slavishly followed. Reading is, first of all, a matter of getting meaning from print, and children must be made aware of this from the very beginning. The ability to read is developed through reading, and here I see *story* as the basis of everything. I expect my children to learn to read with real books and to enjoy doing so.

As adults we don't read at the same level and in the same way all the time; at one moment we may be tackling something really difficult and at another relaxing with something completely undemanding. Why should we expect the learner reader to be any different? And yet we often place severe restrictions on children's choice of reading material.



Jill Bennett in her classroom at Sparrow Farm Infants' School.

This is not the case in my classroom where for example comics, Mr Men and Scarry, as well as non-fiction titles, are available alongside the picture books which form the main reading diet of the children. The latter are arranged on a series of shelves with those of approximately the same level grouped together, and this arrangement is explained to newcomers.

At the same time, a selection of the whole range is displayed face out so that a five-year-old may select say *Burglar Bill*, which he cannot read for himself, and ask a more experienced friend to read it to him, or merely enjoy browsing through it himself. On the other hand, an older child may return to a well-loved simple story and read it on his own, or to one or two younger children.

I also have strong views about hearing children read, and each child reads to me every day. But this must not become a 'two pages a day' chore for teacher and child. So, when finding a book to read aloud to me, it is essential that the child chooses one that is within his capabilities, otherwise he will not get the meaning, reading becomes a senseless task and the enjoyment is lost. This approach provides a marvellous opportunity for a teacher to talk with a child about the book he is reading. 'Reading to teacher' then becomes a valuable shared experience rather than being something children do to 'get on to the next book', 'beat their friends' or 'please Miss'. ●

A fuller account of Jill Bennett's approach, together with an annotated list of over 100 books she uses in her classroom, can be found in *Learning to Read with Picture Books*, Jill Bennett, A Signal Booklist, £1.20 post free, from The Thimble Press, Lockwood, Station Road, South Woodchester, Stroud, Gloucestershire GL5 5EQ. The books listed in *Learning to Read with Picture Books* can be hired as exhibition from the National Book League (Telephone: 01-493 9001).



In the next issue Paddy Creber looks at what is happening in the junior and secondary school and asks 'What do books in school mean?'



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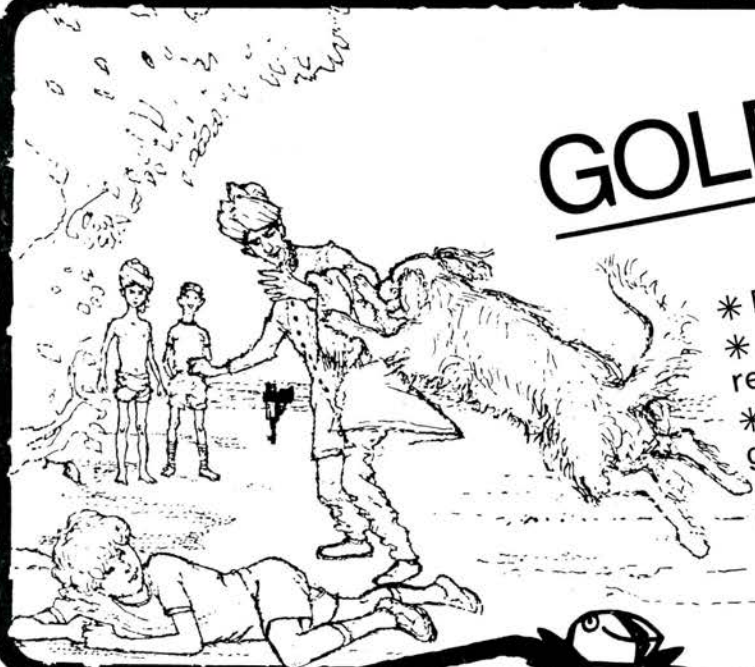
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HOW TO... *Keep the interest going!*

Getting started in a school bookshop is one thing; keeping going is quite another. What is the secret of the thriving bookshop? There's no one simple answer to that - but in this issue there are some clues.

A big event like Wyedean's (see page 22) gets everyone involved and excited (though it may leave the organiser temporarily exhausted and wondering if it was all worth while). Even a small event reminds everyone that the bookshop exists.

2nd April is Hans Andersen's birthday and International Children's Book Day. Why not have a party? Read some Andersen stories? Put up a special display of Stories Round the World? The first week in May is National Tell a Story Week. Invite a storyteller. Have a joke telling festival. (Details of NTSW from Federation of Children's Book Groups, 22 Beacon Brow, Bradford BD6 3DE.)

Or try a competition. We've got three for you here...

The Great Olympics 1980 Competition

30 copies of Piccolo's Olympics 1980 to be won

This competition is for children only. Olympics 1980 is



quite superb (see our review on page 11) and all we want adults to do is pass on the details of the competition to any children who might like to enter. It's easy, really...

First these questions must be answered:

1. In what town and country did the Olympic Games begin?
2. How often are the Olympic Games held?
3. In which stadium and in which city will the Olympic Games be held this year?
4. Which Soviet gymnast won the Gold Medal for floor exercises in 1976?
5. Which man has won the most medals for swimming?
6. Name two heavyweight boxers who went on to win the world professional heavyweight titles.

Then make up a suitable name for the symbol of this year's games - the Olympic Bear.

Now send the entries, complete with name, age, address and school, to:

Piccolo Olympics Competition
The School Bookshop
Association
1 Effingham Road
Lee
London SE12 8NZ

by 30th April 1980. No entries can be returned but winners will be notified by post, and the results will be published in the July issue of *Books for Keeps* - just in time for the Olympics themselves. Only one entry per person is allowed and the judges' decision is final.

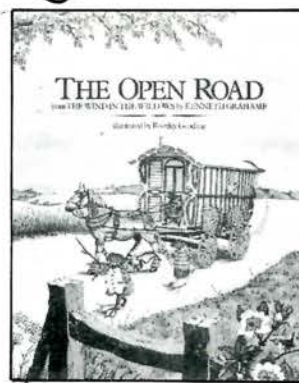
Or what about a Colouring Competition?

The second chapter of *The Wind in the Willows* has been illustrated by Beverley Gooding and issued as a picture book, *The Open Road*. Methuen have reproduced the jacket illustration in black and white and invited children to colour it in.

Prize: A copy of *The Open Road*

Closing dates: 31st March and 30th June

Copies of the picture (rules and instructions on the back) from the SBA or John Mason, Methuen Children's Books, 11 New Fetter Lane, London EC4.



Or Make a Dragon or Monster Costume or Mask

You can enter individually or as a class.

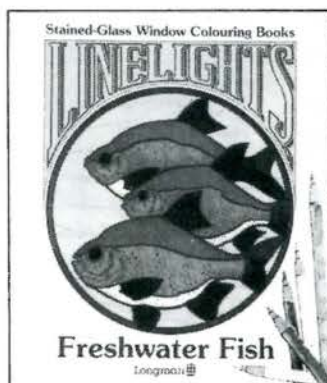
Prize: A visit to your school by Gail Haley for a special dressing up session, and signed copies of her books.

Details from: The Publicity Department, Magnet Books, Associated Book Publishers, North Way, Andover, Hampshire.

If you want some ideas for this competition, *Dress Up and Play* and *Dress Up and Have Fun* both by Gail Haley (Magnet, 65p) are highly recommended. They are full of genuinely simple, practical ways for children, teachers or parents to improvise costumes and make masks. A real invitation to let's pretend.

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- 2 **Charlie and the Chocolate Factory** Dahl Puffin
- 3 **Spooky Stories 2** Ireson Carousel
- 4 **Young Person's Guide to UFOs** Ball Dragon
- 5 **James and the Giant Peach** Dahl Puffin
- 6 **Charlotte's Web** White Puffin
- 7 **Worzel Gummidge and the Railway Scarecrow** Todd Target
- 8 **Little Ghost** Preussler Knight
- 9 **Little Mrs Pepperpot** Prøysen Puffin
- 10 **Spotter's Guide to the Night Sky** Henbest Usborne
- 11 **Burglar Bill** Ahlberg Armada
- 12 **Stig of the Dump** King Puffin
- 13 **Secret Garden** Burnett Puffin
- 14 **Born Free** Adamson Armada Lions
- 15 **Beaver Book of Horror** Farsons Beaver
- 16 **Wishing Chair Again** Blyton Beaver
- 17 **Blue Peter Storybook** Bond Armada
- 18 **Magic Finger** Dahl Puffin
- 19 **Mouse Looks for a Friend** Piers Magnet
- 20 **Guide to Racing Cars** Roebuck Piccolo

This list is taken from Books for Students' sales during the Christmas term.



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BE OUR GUEST...

TOP OF THE POPS IN AVON

What affects children's choice?
What was selling well last term?

CLAIRE BOWEN, WRINGTON PRIMARY SCHOOL

We are a village school, with 120 children, twelve miles from the city of Bristol on a pretty awful bus route. There is a newsagent in the village which, because of its size, is restricted in the number of books it carries. The school bookshop is therefore the village shop window for children's books. When selecting books, we try to achieve a constantly-changing display. The bookshop is run entirely by parents: we have a rota for selling and I have overall responsibility for selecting and obtaining stock, financial records, obtaining publicity material, organising competitions and authors' visits, and liaison with the school about projects. The shop opens once a week, on Friday afternoons, from 3.15 to 4.00 p.m., to enable both parents and children to visit. We also run a savings scheme.

TV programmes do not seem to have any effect on the books we sell. The fact that a book has been read in class is usually an indicator that it will be in great demand. The teachers tend to choose books from the bookshop and we hope that in this way we are helping to make it easier for our teachers to see a wide range of books. Best sellers for us are:

The Mr Men series, Roger Hargreaves, Thurman

The Asterix series, Goscinny and Uderzo, Knight

The Owl who was Afraid of the Dark, Jill Tomlinson, Puffin, 65p
Steadily popular, for reading aloud and reading alone, especially with those who share the little owl's fears.

George, Agnes Sligh Turnbull, Puffin, 50p

Another steady seller - perhaps because of its theme of getting help with learning things - and from a rather special rabbit.

A Pony in the Luggage, Gunnel Linde, Puffin, 40p

The most popular of all the horse books we have sold.

NORMA MACNEIL, SUMMERHILL INFANTS' SCHOOL, BRISTOL

Our bookshop opened in April 1979 with a meeting of parents and school staff. We invited someone to come and talk about books and reading and it was a very successful evening. We were frankly surprised and very delighted at the enthusiasm of the

From time to time, we shall be offering this page to guest contributors to survey some particular aspects of children's books.

Who better to start with than the people who actually run school bookshops? We asked three people - two teachers, one parent - from the Avon SBA to tell us about their bookshops.

parents and we became very hopeful for the success of the bookshop.

The school, which is near the centre of the city, has approximately 180 children from five to seven. The bookshop opens for book-buying between 2.30 and 3.00 p.m. every Friday afternoon. Parents are encouraged to come to school with other members of the family, collect pupils from the classroom and choose books with their children. After children are returned to their classrooms, the rest of the family can enjoy a cup of tea or coffee in the school hall until home time. There is no commercial bookshop in the area and to buy books families must travel into town, spending book-buying money on petrol or bus fares. Sales in the bookshop have stayed constantly and surprisingly high. A huge bonus is that the bookshop has happily provided us with family contact in a relationship other than teacher-parent-child, and with the opportunity to talk in a relaxed atmosphere about more general topics other than school.

Every Friday morning we collect bookshop savings and children can spend these in the bookshop either with their families or by themselves with parental permission. Our best sellers in the autumn term were:

Kevin the Kitten series, Terry Hall, Hart-Davis Educational

In school, we watch *Reading with Lenny* on TV. The size and layout of the books are excellent and the price is just right. This series has been a runaway success.

The Munch Bunch series, Giles Read, Studio Publications

The story line has great appeal and again size and price seem to be significant factors.

Robin Hood Adventures, Ladybird Books

Topsy and Tim Handy Books, Jean and Gareth Adamson, Blackie

These are in the pocket-money price range. Although they don't live in detached suburban houses, our children seem to identify with Topsy and Tim and again the book size appeals. The larger size Topsy and Tim books did not sell as well.

RIK MCCOY, PORTISHEAD COUNTY PRIMARY SCHOOL

The school has just over 200 pupils, infant and junior, from a wide variety of social backgrounds. The bookshop started in October 1977. We open once a week, on Friday, from half-an-hour before the end of school until about 5.30 p.m. The fourth-year juniors staff the bookshop on a rota. They are expected to keep the books tidy, take the money, give change and write receipts. I am there to help if

asked and generally keep an eye on things. Our bookshop is in a classroom and the majority of books are displayed laid out on desks. My assistants pack the books away at the end of the session. Occasionally, on parents' evenings for instance, the bookshop is mounted on trestle tables in the school hall.

I visit our supplier weekly to check on new publications, to collect orders for the children and parents, and to replenish stocks. One of the parents keeps a box file record of all new books and of books sold.

A significant factor affecting choice is a weekly 20/30-minute session which forms part of our junior assembly. I read extracts from two books and display new stock. Sometimes children contribute, reading extracts from stories, poems or jokes which they have enjoyed, or reading their own book reviews. In general, television adaptation of a book doesn't seem to lead to sales; friendships do. Sometimes a group of children develop a rapport with each other which finds expression in the shared enjoyment of a particular author. A good example of this was Gordon Boshell's *Captain Cobwebb* adventures (Fontana) which were taken up wholesale by a lively group of boys who loved talking about the stories and responded completely to this particular brand of humour.

Top of our steady sellers has been Roald Dahl (43 copies of various titles), followed by the Puffin *Crack-a-Joke Book*. When they first appeared in Collins Cubs, *Paddington* and *Little Grey Rabbit* stories sold well, as did the *Usborne Nature Trail* and *Know-How* books. Other good early sellers were *Asterix* and *Charlie Brown* books, with *Peanuts* and *Snoopy* (Hodder & Stoughton). Last term, sales of these and of Dahl dropped to almost nothing. Possibly they had sold so well initially that in a small school they couldn't keep selling. Books are being swapped around and handed down in families. I think also that perhaps they had been on regular display for so long that children had read them in the bookshop. I suppose that's really getting the bookshop habit.

Best sellers for us don't mean sales in hundreds. Last term's number one sold seven copies.

Follow That Bus, Pat Hutchins, Lions, 60p

This lively, amusing story took off after being read at assembly.

Masquerade, Kit Williams, Cape, £3.50

How to Eat Fried Worms, Thomas Rockwell, Piccolo, 60p ●

BOOKS FOR KEEPS

NEWS

Two schools thinking big



Last November a rather special book event took place. At Abbey Wood School in South London, fifteen hundred children, aged 9 to 13, met forty authors and artists in a day crowded with talk, activity and excitement. Everything

went with the smoothness that means months of careful planning and preparation. The children were from Abbey Wood and its ten feeder primary schools. Each class had chosen two authors and one illustrator for special study and the meeting with these on *the day* was the climax of three months of reading, talking, puppet- and model-making, painting and writing. The school was full of children's work which was much enjoyed by the famous visitors, among them Roald Dahl, Leon Garfield, Nina Bawden, and Barbara Sleigh. In addition, there were 'specialist activities': painting with Tony Hart, printing with Gail Haley, drama, chess, astronomy, music; films and a variety of exhibitions. The whole event was sponsored by twenty-four publishers. The bookshop and the book swap shop did fantastic trade and follow-up work is still going on. For all the children, it was a memorable day. Not only did they meet authors and artists who are world-famous but they shared with them in the joy of responding and creating.

There will be an exhibition based on the Book Bang at Woolwich Town Hall in May.



Roald Dahl at Abbey Wood Book Bang. Photo courtesy of the *Kentish Independent*.

A Castle of Books

Wydean School, near Chepstow, was also thinking big last November. With a great deal of imagination and a lot of scaffolding and hardboard, the pupils, led by Jeff Rees, created a book-filled castle in their drama hall, complete with dungeons, battlements and a built-in time warp which took you from the Middle Ages to the Space Age and back via a trip to the land of film and TV. There were jesters, princesses and monsters to guide you if you got lost, and a well-stocked bookshop waiting at the end of the tour. The whole show was on for six days and hundreds of children and adults visited it, some in coach-loads from quite a distance. It was sponsored by publishers and run in association with the Forest Bookshop in Coleford, which supplies Wydean School Bookshop.

You may not want to be as ambitious as Abbey Wood or

Wydean, but a book fair or a special book event before Christmas is not too hard to arrange, especially if you start NOW.

Why not do something for Children's Book Week 80 which is coming up on 4-11th October this year. It's still being planned at the moment. We'll keep you posted.



Hello Hippos

The latest arrivals in the paperback menagerie are Scholastic's Hippos. Launched in January with six titles, they promise four more this month, including Betsy Byars' *Summer of the Swans* and Christine Nostlinger's *Mister Bat's Great Invention*; then two new titles every two months. Free copies of *Hippo News* for your bookshop customers and details of how they can join

The Bible Retold in Pictures

The Bible Retold in Pictures

IN THE BEGINNING



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MAGNET BOOKS

Happy Birthday

Magnet Books, the paperback branch of Methuen, was one year old in January. They couldn't have had a better start to their second year than capturing Anna Holm's *I am David*, a book no child should miss reading or having read to it. A new venture is Jesters (first published in hard covers by Evans), 'a hilarious new spy series for the 8-11s'. We hope to review the first four titles in our next issue.



Double Century for Beaver

The 200th Beaver book is published this month. It's appropriate from an imprint that has given us some very

good poetry anthologies (in particular Raymond Wilson's *Time's Delights*) that it should be the *Beaver Book of Funny Rhymes* by Barbara Ireson.



Kaye Webb with *I Like This Poem*, one of the Puffins she has edited to aid children's charities. Photo courtesy of Penguin Books.

A great lady retires

Kaye Webb, the almost legendary editor of Puffins for the last twenty years, retired late last year. What she did for children's books during her long and glittering reign (and queen-like she undoubtedly was) ranks as one of the great publishing achievements. Besides her wit and style, she possessed a unique ability, which rarely left her, of knowing exactly what children liked and what they wanted. Kaye is continuing her work

with The Puffin Club. We wish her well.

Stepping into Kaye's shoes is Tony Lacey who started his publishing career in Penguin Education, then with Kestrel, the children's hardback imprint at Penguin. After a year at Granada, he was invited back to take on the most prestigious job in the children's book world there is. He told us that Kaye has left him a 1980 Puffin programme that's 'the best in three or four years'. Nevertheless he thinks the next few years are going to be extremely difficult for children's book publishers although Puffin, as the premier list, should weather most storms. He also thinks that with all the cuts the book-buying parent is even more crucial. We wish him luck - he'll probably need it after 1980.

New face at the NBL

Bev Mathias was appointed the National Book League's new Children's Book Officer back in September. She's Australian, very positive and full of ideas. More will follow about Bev and her ideas in the next issue.

SBA in the USA?

The Scarsdale Enquirer (Scarsdale, New York) reports on the opening of The Paperback Shack - a book store in Greenacres School Library.

The School Librarian at Greenacres (a primary school) is Lois Witt who was in England on study leave last year to find out about how we get parents, children, schools and books together in this country. Lois spent quite a lot of time with us and went back talking about setting up a bookshop. She is a very determined lady so we might have guessed - Congratulations anyway, Lois. Especially as the article says 'She has selected a variety of books for the store, many of which come from Great Britain and are not generally available in the United States.'



The amazing Puffinshow, including a maze, an enormous crocodile and competitions.

To be held this year at the New Kensington Town Hall from 8th to 19th April (closed Sunday), 10.30 a.m. to 5.30 p.m. Admission: Adults 50p, Children 30p, Badge-wearing Puffin Club members 25p.

For details of authors' appearances, activities, etc., ring the Puffin Club on 01-759 1984.

News continues overleaf ►

Books are for keeps, but how many of your children know how books become books? I'm Desmond the DINOSAUR, and I know because I publish lots of books and my latest is called *MAKING A BOOK* (60p) by Althea, with pictures by Tim Hunkin. Althea excels in explanation, Tim Hunkin's illustrations are models of clarity, and it's all fascinating! Write to me for a catalogue, Desmond the DINOSAUR, at Beechcroft House, Over, near Cambridge, CB4 5NE



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BOOKS FOR KEEPS

NEWS

Book Agency Suppliers - Official

You may have up to *three* named suppliers on your Book Agency Licence, the PA tells us. This means that if you are planning a book fair and want hardback books, and your usual supplier can't help, you *can* approach another book-seller to see if he will co-operate.

Books for Schools**That's that then?**

Issue of the Moment The NBL's Chairman, Simon Hornby, led a delegation to the Minister of State for Education and Science, the Baroness Young, to follow up the recommendations of the NBL's Books for Schools Report. The other members of the delegation were Michael Marland CBE, Headmaster of Woodberry Down School and Chairman of the NBL's Working Party; Martin Lightfoot, Vice-Chairman of the Working Party; and the Director. The Minister received them

sympathetically and promised to consider the points they raised on recommended school book provision levels, book selection and auxiliary staffing in relation to school libraries.

We can't leave it at that.

Recommended expenditure per child from capitation for 1979/80 is

Primary	Good	8.67
	Reasonable	7.23
Secondary	Good	13.33
	Reasonable	12.05

Find out how your LEA measures up to this and make sure everyone, especially parents, knows about it. If your authority is under-providing, pressure at local level is vital. Books in schools and libraries are easy victims in the search for something to cut.

Hans Andersen Awards

Organized by IBBY (International Board on Books for Young People). Member countries nominate authors and illustrators for an author's medal and an illustrator's medal. British nominations this year:

Philippa Pearce and John Burningham

Honours List:

The Gods in Winter - Patricia Miles

Each Peach Pear Plum -

illustrated by Janet Ahlberg

The Sea Lord - Alet Schouten,

translated by Patricia Crampton

The jury sits in April.

A one-day seminar on the awards, Children's Books for All the World, will take place on Thursday, 22nd May at the Assembly Rooms, Derby - approximate cost £7. All those nominated will attend. For further information, contact:

Mrs Judith Elkin,
26 Eggington Road,
Hall Green,
Birmingham B28 0LZ
(Telephone 021-744 1928).

**Lloyds Bank helps the SBA**

For the first time, the SBA is to have a commercial sponsor outside the publishing industry in the form of Lloyds Bank. Naturally we were delighted to receive support from an organisation which, it may surprise many to learn, already has an extensive involvement in children and books through its sponsorship of Children's Book Week (see page 22). We hope to carry more details about Lloyds' work in a later issue.

ICA Children's Cinema Club

Last December, London's Institute of Contemporary Arts established the ICA Children's Cinema Club, an original attempt to develop the range of films on show for children. Membership of the club is free when a ticket is bought for any performance, each Saturday and Sunday at 3.00 p.m., with additional items such as badges and calendar wallcharts on which members can make a note of future films. Each month there is a different season of films accompanied by specialist guests (writers, puppeteers, animators, etc.). Films based on children's books, cartoons, science fiction, trick films, 3-D - all may crop up. Coming in March, a very special season indeed - films made by the boys of Forest Hill Comprehensive School in South London, including film adaptations of Ray Bradbury's *Something Wicked This Way Comes* and *The Custard Boys*, from the novel by John Rae. Future programme details can be obtained from ICA Children's Cinema, The Mall, London SW1 (Telephone 01-930 3647). ●

BOOKS FOR KEEPS

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SOUND AND VISION

I say, I say, I say. What is a TV Tie-in?
I don't know. What is a TV Tie-in?
It's what you do to a reluctant viewer who'd rather read a book.

Seriously though, folks, links between books and TV are getting so many and varied it's difficult for us ordinary mortals to keep up. It wasn't so bad when the traffic was all one way; 'adapted from the book by...' was reasonably straightforward. But now it seems to be going both ways at once and arriving simultaneously on screen and in bookshop, with no clear indication of where it came from. If we are to give eager young book buyers good advice we need to know what we are dealing with.

A look back over the past few months illustrates some of the variety.



David Burke and Bobby as John Willie and Snuffy in BBC TV's *Our John Willie*.

Our John Willie by Catherine Cookson (Piccolo, 70p) was 'dramatised' by Valerie Georgeson - and very well she did it (even if Davy was too old). By episode two we were well into a straight adaptation of a good tale - and Catherine Cookson knows how to tell them. Going to the book from the serial, imagination equipped with the look of the period, you could involve yourself more deeply with the story and its relationships, which words reveal in greater complexity than pictures. Going to the serial from the book, you wouldn't be outraged.

Little House on the Prairie (ITV - Puffin, 70p) is quite another matter. How can publishers or booksellers suggest this series has anything to do with the Laura Ingalls Wilder stories? New readers or viewers should be warned.

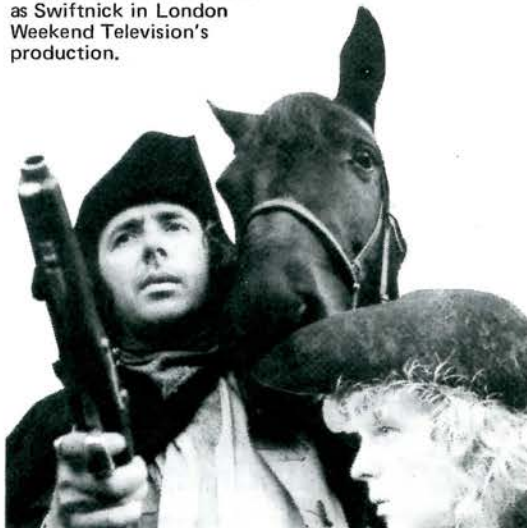
The 'classic' serial presents a different problem. If customers come rushing in asking for Dickens, Hardy and Jane Austen (Do they?), what then? The bookseller's knowledge of the customer is vital. Can he cope? Will he be put off forever? Is this the moment for 'edited for younger readers'?



More Television Adventures of Worzel Gummidge by Willis Hall and Keith Waterhouse (Puffin, 65p) is another animal.

'Based on the characters created by Barbara Euphan Todd.' But the title is honest and inside there is a clear reference to the forty-year-old originals. 'You may be surprised to discover that in those days Aunt Sally was Worzel's aunt instead of his sweetheart.' That's nothing to how surprised Earthy Mangold must be. She was his wife! Ah well, that's television! What we have is the book of the series. The stories stick very closely to the scripts and are full of the kind of slapstick that films well but seldom transfers successfully to the printed page. Reading them offers little more than an action replay of the television. I wonder how the transition to Barbara Euphan Todd is made, if it is.

Richard O'Sullivan as Dick Turpin and Michael Deeks as Swiftnick in London Weekend Television's production.



The action replay of course has great appeal - particularly if the original is exciting enough. **Turpin and Swiftnick** by Richard Carpenter (Armada, 70p) is a sequel to **Dick Turpin** and so has already proved its viewability and readability (100,000 sold). The book is full of action and incident, no hanging about for niceties like subtle characterisation. Short sentences, but long unfamiliar words which might make it

A new family serial in four episodes from a book that was wowing the stage-struck twenty-five years ago. It will be interesting to see how it travels (or is updated). Dinah Sheridan, mother from the film of *The Railway Children*, stars.

Black Jack - the film

Ken Loach's film of the powerful Leon Garfield story (Puffin, 60p) hasn't had a particularly easy passage to the screen. We hear it will be on limited release (late February, early March) in London and Yorkshire.



All Creatures Great and Small

The current series is based on **Vet in a Spin** and **Vets Might Fly** (both Pan, 80p). Fans will probably enjoy Christopher Timothy's **Vet Behind the Ears** (Pan, 80p), his account of acting the part of James Herriot in the series.

Bagthorpes in Summer?

Helen Cresswell's Bagthorpes are a family of geniuses, ranging from eight-year-old Rosie, mathematician, swimmer and portrait painter extraordinary, to the redoubtable Grandma. Only Jack is the odd one out and his efforts to get some attention for himself form the plot of the first story, **Ordinary Jack** (75p). Next comes **Absolute Zero** (75p), with everyone gone competition mad, and then **Bagthorpes Unlimited** (85p), with the family determined to get into the **Guinness Book of Records** (all in Puffin). In **Bagthorpes v. the World** (Faber, £4.50) they are into self-sufficiency. The Bagthorpes are eccentrics to a man and the stories are inventive, fast-moving and richly funny. They are due to reach the TV screen this summer. If they film half as well as they read, they should make compulsive viewing.

Gone but not forgotten

The **Book Tower** (smashing series) is over now but it's left us good ideas to pinch for school or bookshop. For this series Yorkshire TV produced a delightful little **Watcher's Guide** containing details of the books to be featured with columns (Good, Bad and Ace!) for individual rating. And how about emulating the Book Testers and getting kids to try out some practical books to see how good they are.

In view soon

Noah's Castle by John Rowe Townsend (Puffin, 75p)
Garfield's Apprentices, Book 4 (Tom Titmarsh's Devil, The Filthy Beast, The Enemy) now out in Piccolo, 75p. ●

It's not the book of the film; it's not the film of the book. Robert Leeson writes about creating a completely new relationship between books and TV.

Doing something with the Grange Hill Kids

When I was asked to consider writing a **Grange Hill** book, I was interested because of having seen, by chance, one or two episodes. (One of the benefits of working at home is that you can watch children's television.) I was struck by the dialogue and the actors - these were real comprehensive school kids, not the usual pale imitation often seen in TV school stories.

So, it was popular, with umpteen million viewers. But who trusts statistics? Still there was a way of finding out, since I often visit schools. Sure enough, one had only to mention **Grange Hill** to get immediate welcoming grins in almost any class.

Not always a welcome, though, for a number of heads and senior teachers said that this TV series was not school as they knew it. In a way they were right. For the **Grange Hill** series is above all school as the kids see it. Script-writer Phil Redmond, one time comprehensive school pupil himself, has the inside view.

But most interesting were the characters - Tucker, Trisha, Benny, Cathy, Penny, Justin and not least - Michael the schemer. Teachers, like Baxter the heavyweight sportsman, and of course the caretaker Mr Garfield, were well drawn, but the pupils were something else.

One day I sat and watched one **Grange Hill** episode after another. Time and again I thought - one could do something with kids like these.

Making a film from a book is a well-known process. Making a book from a film doesn't win any awards. A lot of film books are just written-up versions of the scripts - often worse than the original.

That way didn't interest me. The best way to make a film from a book is to catch the spirit of the book, its characters, its scene. That must be the best way to make a book out of a film - to catch its spirit.

So I tried to imagine the world of those characters - not just the part shown on the screen, but the other parts - the streets behind the shopping centre, a building site (where Tucker might long to go poking around), the inside of the local police station. And I thought of more scenes in the staff room, as well. Now the series worked instantly - with pictures. I had to do it with words but not be long-winded about it.

But with the help of those characters, all of whom had a life of their own, a whole series of new adventures began to work themselves out. There was Michael Doyle, plotting to demolish Tucker, and Tucker wondering what had hit him. Trisha at odds with Penny, Cathy in deep trouble on her own, but facing up to it, Justin with a strange secret and Benny in hot water (ably assisted by Tucker, of course!). And all of it working up to a grand finale with teachers, parents, police, all piling in.

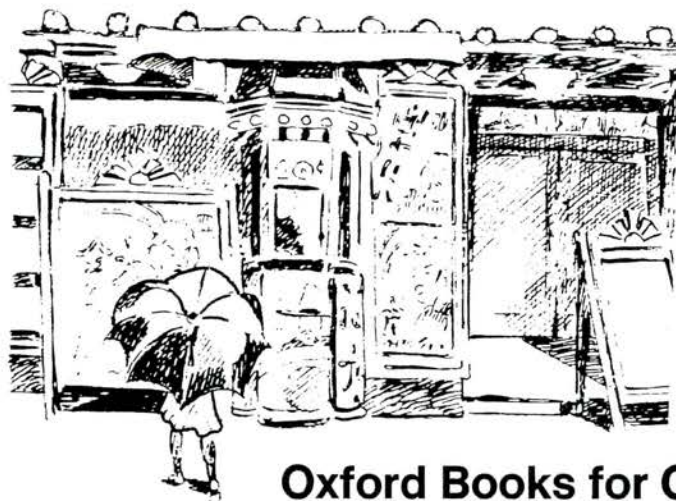
I won't say it wrote itself. It was hard work. But once it got going, it was great fun. ●

Fiction for Younger Children

The Lost Umbrella of Kim Chu

by Eleanor Estes

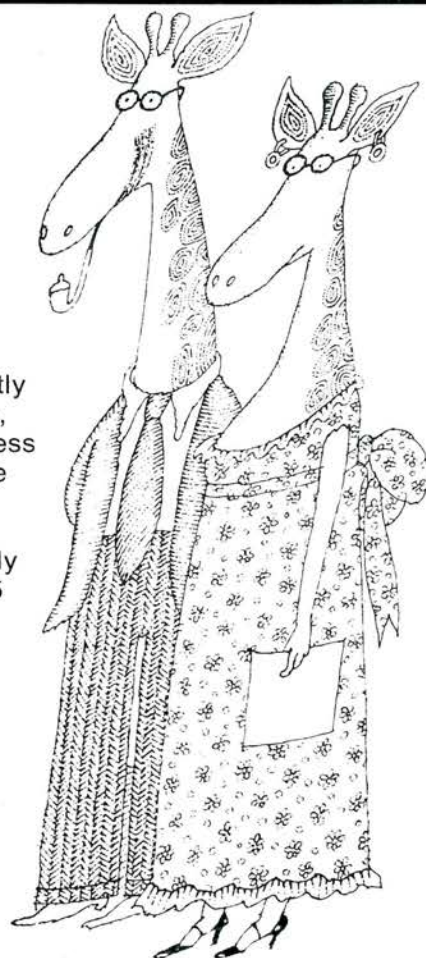
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THE SCHOOL BOOKSHOP ASSOCIATION REVAMPED

If you have read the inside front cover, you will have seen a reference to the SBA having a big think about its future. The head scratching went on for practically the whole year but at the end of it we had what we hope is an exciting and interesting programme.

The thinking went something like this: the SBA had done well in its first three years - the number of school bookshops had risen dramatically, and the idea had become respectable for many more people in education, publishing and bookselling. Nevertheless there was a feeling that we should be more active and wide-ranging in the promotion

of children's books. Also, that we should try to reach out to as many people as possible involved with children and books; not only school bookshoppers, but classroom teachers at all levels, librarians, students and, who knows, even some mums and dads. Most important of all, we wanted to do this in tune and in tempo with people like us: people who are serious and committed about their professional lives but who, after the working day, pick up private adult lives which include shopping, housework, watching television, mending the car, DIY, bringing up children, hobbies, being exhausted and just lying in bed on Sunday morn-

ings. We didn't think that the majority of teachers spent their out-of-school lives only reading children's books, and felt that they would appreciate some imaginative and practical help in coming to grips with the huge mass of children's publishing.

This attitude and approach enabled us to construct our programme for 1980 and beyond. These are some of the things which we decided:

Membership of the SBA

We felt that this was limiting our scope and unnecessary to teachers and PTAs setting up their own school bookshop. We have gradually phased it out.

Our magazine

School Bookshop News had done a great job during the five years of its existence.

BOOKS FOR KEEPS

has a different ethos and, we hope, a larger parish. You're reading it now and you will be the best judge of its success though we'd like you to hold off an assessment until we get properly into our stride. At any rate we want our new magazine to be an accurate and true expression of our restated philosophy; a philosophy which recognises the enormous demands in time and energy that all teachers have to grapple with. If you like or don't like what you're reading, write and tell us. Either way we want to know. And if writing is too much of a chore, phone us.



SERVICES AND PUBLICATIONS

Our intention is to build up gradually a range of items which help you help children come to books with interest and pleasure.

The SBA Handbook: The What, Why and How of School Bookshops

This needs updating and rewriting soon but it still continues to be the best short cut to setting up and running your own school bookshop. It's free from the SBA on application.

Badges and Bags

Badges seem to be ever-popular and our 55mm metal ones carry the **Books for Keeps** slogan as you can see in the illustration. They cost 10p each, including postage and packing, which we think is still pretty cheap these days. The paper bags are real Penguin ones which you quite often get when you buy books at your local bookseller. We charge £1.20 for 100 bags.



Poster Packs

Everybody loves posters and, of course, they're marvellous for brightening up and creating lively book atmospheres in book corners, libraries and school bookshops. We have two packs, one for primary, the other for secondary schools, made up of about ten publishers' posters. We charge 60p each which covers postage and an OAP's time in folding and packing. You could of course write to a dozen or so publishers and get your publicity free but when you add up the cost of the stamps and bear in mind that you may or may not get suitable posters, it's probably easier, quicker and cheaper to write for our packs.

School Bookshop Insurance

Commercial Union and the SBA have special insurance cover for most of the calamities that might befall the average school bookshop. If you want details, just write or phone us.

Advisory Service

We try to answer any question put to us about children's books. Apart from school bookshops themselves which we know quite a bit about, we like to think we're a good place to start with if you have a problem or a query. If we can't answer your

enquiry straight off the top of our heads, we'll put you in touch with someone who can.

In the pipeline:

We'd like to do a parents' guide about books from 0 to 18 years old for mums and dads keen to foster reading for pleasure at home. It's unlikely that this would see the light of day until 1981. We are investigating the possibility of the SBA publishing a lively book magazine for children themselves. It would have to be very cheap and full of interest and things to do. This is another project which is some way off yet but we're thinking hard about it. Lastly we'd like to mount thematic book promotions like, for instance, football, science fiction, high adventure, poetry, love stories, fantasy, various hobbies and interests, and music, especially something on rock-'n'-roll. It would involve posters, stickers, bookmarks, listings and so on. We would try to be enthusiastic and absorbing about the theme itself as our instinct is that if children have already hooked themselves into something, using books to further that interest comes much more naturally.

If you want any of the items mentioned in this brief resumé of the SBA and its works, just complete the order form on these pages and enclose a cheque or postal order made out to the SBA.

★ CAN YOU HELP?

During the next few months we have to rewrite the SBA Handbook called **The What, Why and How of School Bookshops**. We are looking for good ideas which work well in practice and which help the running of a school bookshop. If you think you have something which other teachers might find useful, we would be happy to receive detailed descriptions (and illustrations if necessary) of the following plus anything else you think is a good idea which we haven't mentioned.

Write to: Richard Hill, SBA, 1 Effingham Road, Lee, London SE12 8NZ.

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