

# BOOKS FOR KEEPS

NOV. 1982 No. 17  
UK Price 85p



A ride! On Christmas Eve! Bear grabbed his scarf and mittens and ran through the deep snow to where a big sleigh sat waiting.

**PLUS EXTRA!**

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### Cover Stories

Our cover illustration is taken from **Wake Up, Bear . . . It's Christmas**, Stephen Gammell, Heinemann, 0 434 94010 0, £3.95.

We are most grateful to Heinemann for help in using this picture.

We are also indebted to Raymond Briggs and Hamish Hamilton for the cover of **Extra**.

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Reluctantly we have to announce an increase in the cost of your **Books for Keeps** subscription.

From January the new rate for six issues will be £5.70 (UK)

# SBA Services & Publications

## How to Set Up and Run a School Bookshop

Our handbook is full of practical advice and information on every aspect of school bookshops. Essential for beginners, useful for old-hands. If you already run a school bookshop, Part 5: 'How to Keep Going' is a much expanded section and may give you fresh ideas!

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# EDITOR'S PAGE



We wanted to do something different for our third 'Christmas' edition of **Books for Keeps**, so we dreamed up **Extra**. Lots of you have been telling us how you use bits of **Books for Keeps** with children in schools. This eight page supplement is designed principally with 7-13's in mind (though we hope our readers of all ages will enjoy it) and aims to stir a little interest and enthusiasm among those who don't habitually consider books as a very important part of their lives, as well as entertain and inform those who do. Thanks to the advance orders which came pouring in (We were quite bowled over by your faith in our ability to come up with something good) we have been able to print thousands of extra copies of **Extra**. So, if you would like additional copies (prices on the order form) just post your order or give us a ring and we'll send them off to you as fast as we can.

## Plop-up Partnership

Our very favourite book people at the moment are Raymond Briggs and Ron van der Meer. Fungus was first choice for **Extra** ('I'd buy anything with Fungus in it,' was a not untypical response when we were trying out a few ideas on the market.) But we didn't anticipate when we went to interview Raymond Briggs for the Authorgraph (page 17) that we would come back with the promise of a Raymond Briggs original for the cover of **Extra**. We couldn't have wished for anything better.

For anyone contemplating a PhD on the sources of Raymond Briggs' Bogey ideas we can offer at least a footnote on one bit of the **Plop-up Book**. Our researches took place in Raymond Briggs' (I'm sorry, I'll have to use the word) bathroom. Pinned to the wall beside the (brace yourselves, here we go again) lavatory is a letter from a lady in Phoenixville, Pennsylvania expressing her outrage at having bought **Father Christmas** for her children and finding in it a picture of that gentleman 'performing an act of personal hygiene.' Mr Briggs was accused of gross indecency and recommended to 'the power of positive thinking.' Those who can bring themselves to pull the toilet paper in the Bogey bathroom scene of the **Plop-up** will find a reference to this same 'act of personal hygiene' and an invitation, if offended, to write to the Fungus Complaints Department. (So far Hamish Hamilton have heard from no-one.)

The person responsible for the bit of paper engineering on that page which reveals Fungus' slimy long johns is Ron van der Meer. He and Raymond Briggs worked together on the **Plop-up**. Ron, who came to this country from Holland in 1969 to study at the Royal College of Art and has lived here ever since, really enjoys making pop-ups. 'The challenge is to get the maximum surprise effect for the lowest cost of production.' His latest, **The Pop-up Games Book** (Heinemann, 0 434 97103 0, £5.95) contains four games. A variation of tiddley winks in which you use the tail feathers of a goose to flip the button, and a 'pathway' game in which the players are given silly things to do are our favourites. Good family fun.

The van der Meer preoccupation with scissors, card and glue is having its effect at home. Not long ago one of Ron's young daughters delivered a mass of cut and stuck paper to his desk and said, 'Give that to the publisher.' For other would-be paper engineers he has written a book about how to do it which will be published next year. We are delighted to be given a taste of this in **Extra**. To explain how to make a paper mechanic in the space we allowed couldn't have been easy. Needless to say Ron solved

the problem splendidly — we are very grateful.

## Open Season on Ratty and Mole

In last November's issue Jan Needle revisited **Treasure Island** for us. In this issue John Rowe Townsend chooses **Wind in the Willows** as his favourite classic (page 14). The copyright in Kenneth Grahame's famous book expires at midnight on December 31st. Methuen are making the most of their last few months of exclusivity; but come January Kestrel/Puffin have a new edition with illustrations by John Burningham; Armada have a paperback with pictures by Hargreaves and Heinemann/Quixote Press are going one better (or worse, we shall have to see) with **A Fresh Wind In the Willows**, more adventures of Toad, Ratty, Mole and Badger by Dixon Scott. Watch out, too, for two TV versions coming soon.

## As one Lifeline ends

This issue also sees the conclusion of Elaine Moss's **Lifeline Library**: fifty books which together make a survival pack for any primary teacher wanting to get started with books. We know from the response of our readers how much the series has been appreciated. Suggestions for sure-fire additions to any section of this basic library are always welcome. Why not tell us what you would add?

Starting in January, Judith Elkin will be joining us with a six-part series on multi-cultural books. Something which we think will be seized as another lifeline by many of our readers. Proving her versatility, in this issue Judith writes about Mary Norton and the newly-published fifth book in the **Borrowers** series (page 21).

## Friendly Rivalry

Our comments about the enterprise of Hertfordshire libraries seems to have provoked some friendly rivalry. Bedfordshire were quick to tell us about their Children's Book Week in August. Polly Elder of Putnoe Library, Bedford, enlisted the help of the SBA in devising a Treasure Hunt based on our map of the World of Children's Books. Enlarged, it makes an ideal Treasure Map and encourages very close looking. Get in touch with us if you would like to know more. It seems to have been a very exciting, event-packed and successful week. Rather like Hertfordshire's canal trip during which they managed to do lots of things including losing one of Fat Puffins feet! Good to think that because of the efforts of librarians like these thousands of children had memorable and enjoyable meetings with books this summer.

## Christmas Picking

To Rich Pickings (page 18) I must add our cover book for this issue. **Wake Up, Bear . . . It's Christmas**. It's a delightfully simple story of a bear who sets his alarm to wake him for Christmas because he has heard it is a happy joyful time, and so far he has always slept through it. On Christmas Eve he wakes, gets his tree ready, and has a visitor with a long white beard and a red coat. Together they talk, sing (the bear plays a guitar) and enjoy each other's company. As he leaves the visitor invites the bear to join him for a sleigh ride. The bear's innocence, the reader's knowing and Stephen Gammell's charming pictures make this, for me, the best Christmassy book this season.



Picture books aside, the richest picking this Christmas must be **The Rattle Bag**, a splendidly varied anthology of poems edited by Seamus Heaney and Ted Hughes. (Faber, hardback 0 571 11966 2, £10; paperback 0 571 11976 X, £4.95.) It is intended, say the editors, for those who have 'awakened in themselves a need to widen and confirm their sense of poetry'; and there is nothing else quite like it for scope and range. Because it is arranged not thematically or chronologically but alphabetically by title you dip into it with an exciting sense of not knowing what will come up. It's a marvellous bran-tub of a book, full of riches and surprises. Except for a few translations, Heaney and Hughes have left themselves out, which seems a pity. The book seeks to 'amplify notions of what poetry is.' Their writing certainly does that; but then so, it proves, does their picking.

Happy Christmas

*Pat*



Pictures on this page are from **Wake Up, Bear . . . It's Christmas**.

Viewed in terms of his sales figures alone, Dahl himself is

# The big friendly GIANT...

**Chris Powling** assesses the books and the reputation of this country's best known, best selling, living writer for children.

Roald Dahl's latest book, published in October, is called **The BFG**. As any fan will tell you, this stands for Big Friendly Giant — once the player of a bit-part in **Danny, the Champion of the World**, now promoted to a starring role of his own. It's a book that's sure to get a varied response: wild yippies from the kids, sighs of relief from hard-pressed teachers, much sucking of teeth from higher-minded critics and librarians. But eclipsing every other sound will be the jingle of cash-registers. Viewed in terms of his sales figures, Dahl himself is the Big Friendly Giant.

Take **Charlie and the Chocolate Factory**, for example. According to Puffin's Barry Cunningham this still sells in excess of one hundred thousand copies a year — some eighteen years after it was first published. Other Dahl books on the Puffin list, Cunningham says, have a similar standing as 'permanent children's classics'. He expects the most recent, **The Twits**, to have sold two hundred thousand copies by the end of its first year in paperback. No other Puffin author can match this. Not merely is Dahl 'at the very top of Division One' there's what Cunningham calls 'a quantum difference' between him and his closest rivals. Dahl's hardback publisher sits just as pretty. Rupert Lancaster estimates that **Revolting Rhymes** has done 'a good twenty times better than any other Cape children's author published this year' and for a comparable bestseller to **The BFG** it's likely he'll have to look to the new John Fowles on Cape's adult list.

Which is quite enough to make the rest of us go gangrenous with envy. Personally, I'd love to be able to join ranks with the tooth-suckers mentioned above — to console myself with that handy standby for all impoverished writerly-types: a Big Sale must equal a Bad Book. Unfortunately, this formula has a couple of snags. Firstly, in the immortal words of Ira Gershwin, 'it ain't necessarily so'. Secondly, it implies a massive dim-wittedness on the part of Dahl's young readers — the sort of dim-wittedness normally to be found only amongst persons who are too clever by half, such as adult critics. Consider, for instance, Eleanor Cameron who some while ago wrote thus on the subject of **Charlie in Children's Literature in Education** 21:

'What I object to is the book's tastelessness, expressed through its phoniness, its hypocrisy, it's getting laughs through violent punishment... Dahl caters to the streak of sadism in children which they don't realise is there because they are not fully self-aware and are not experienced enough to know what sadism is.'

Mind you, Ms Cameron can still recognise a lost cause when she sees one. Resignedly, she sums up:

'we all know that children are going to get to **Charlie** eventually; why need we to make a special effort to bring it to their attention? For what purpose?'

Her own special efforts, she tells us, are made on behalf of books which bring 'enlargement and illumination' namely the works of Philippa Pearce, Alan Garner, C.S. Lewis, Joan Aiken, Lucy Boston, Mary Norton, Nina Bawden, John Rowe Townsend, K.M. Peyton, Mollie Hunter, William Mayne, Penelope Farmer, Leon Garfield and Penelope Lively.

Now all these authors, let it be said, have come up with good quality stuff in their time. Yet two facts about the list will be obvious at once to any practising primary teacher — that it's pitched at a discernibly older age group than **Charlie** and that it consists of writers who for the most part and for the great bulk of children *presuppose an established reading habit*. It will be news only to Ms Cameron that teachers direct children's attention to Dahl for the very good purpose that better than anyone else they know *he establishes that habit*.

What, though, of Ms Cameron's claim that Dahl's unique ability to get kids hooked on books comes at too high a price — that it actually stunts a child's development? Can it really be true that **Charlie** represents a threat to civilisation as we know it? 'A book that diminishes the human spirit', she insists, 'that emphasises all those Clockwork Orange qualities which are destroying the society that children are growing up in: callousness, lack of any emotion but the typed-up one of getting kicks out of the pain and misfortune of others and depicting all this as funny and delightful', etcetera, etcetera. She's referring, would you believe, to Augustus Gloop, Verucca Salt, Violet Beauregard and Mike Teavee . . . that is, to a greedy fat boy who becomes less so by way of a thin pipe; a spoilt little rich girl who ends up (along with her spoiling parents) amidst a load of old rubbish; a chewing gum vandal who goes permanently purple in the face; and a TV addict doomed to remain ten feet tall and 'sought after by every basketball team in the country'. All of which may well be a vast disappointment to seekers after enlargement and illumination but scarcely suggests the double-dyed Decadence Ms Cameron has led us to expect. So how come she's gone so plonkingly over the top?

There are two reasons, I think. Taken together they blind her not only to Dahl's exemplary success as a writer for children but also to why, by his

own highest standards, this maestro can so suddenly and strikingly flop.

For a start, there's her curious assumption that the Best Fiction must have a built-in betterment factor — a sort of star-rating on some scale of moral hygiene. Why? What's wrong with literature that's pitched squarely at *celebrating* the human condition? An obvious and apposite example would be Chaucer's **Miller's Tale**. This story for adults is much akin to Dahl's stories for children in that it's gloriously riotous, rollicking, rude . . . and highly unlikely to set any readers on the path to a Duke of Edinburgh Award. It's her second assumption that clinches the Cameron crassness, however: that writing for adults and children can be assessed in terms of the same model of excellence. What Dahl is so good at is exploiting the tastes he has in common with his young readers — for farce, for pantomime, for the sort of slapstick normally associated with circus and stage and cinema screen. These are seldom catered for on the printed page not because they can't be reproduced there but because doing so is usually regarded as being beneath writerly dignity. Hence the sheer daftness of wincing at the come-uppance dealt out to Gloop, Salt, Beauregard, Teavee and Company. These aren't fully-rounded human beings and were never intended as such. *They're 'bad' clowns*. To give vent to moral indignation on their behalf is about as sensible as blaming Tweety-Pie for duffing up Sylvester the Cat, or Stan Laurel for getting Oliver Hardy into yet another fine mess (and him supposed to be a friend, too). When Ms Cameron quotes with approval the critic who regards Charlie Bucket as 'a cipher . . . pushed right to the edge of mawkishness as he slowly starves' both she and the critics have missed the point by a mile. This is *melodrama*, lovely blood-and-thundering melodrama with a central character designed to touch us with two-dimensional pathos in the manner of that other infinitely greater and more varied Charlie with the cane and the bowler hat. To put it another way, once Charlie is seen as Cinderella, with Grandpa Joe as a senior-citizen Buttons and Mr Wonka as a Factory/Fairy-Godmother the appeal of the story becomes clear. What's mawkish is the attempt to extort a tear on behalf of the Ugly Sisters.





Any critique of Dahl, then, must first take account of his superb talent for enlisting and combining non-literary and pre-literary idioms from a ragbag of sources. These he brings smack up-to-date in the service of stories that from the outset are accessible, intelligible and *fun*. Simple enough? Alas, no. If it were we'd all be having a bash. There's so little of the literary show-off about Dahl that his skills and scope are revealed only when he's put alongside the one writer who can match him in popularity: Enid Blyton. What follows is a thumb-nail sketch only but in three obvious ways, it seems to me, Dahl demonstrates that he's in a different class.

**Storytelling.** Only a fool would deny the turn-over-the-page impetus Blyton builds up – a healthy reminder to all writers for children that if you've got this you don't need anything else. But who can recall her books afterwards? They merge and blur interchangeably. Dahl's stories, even at their weakest, have a sharpness and quirkiness that sticks in the memory.

**Style.** There's no better writer for the voice than Roald Dahl. Nobody ever fell asleep reading him aloud whereas with our Enid it's impossible after a while to stay awake. When, in *George's Marvellous Medicine* he describes Grandma as having 'a small puckered-up mouth like a dog's bottom' the description is at once hilarious, exact and quite beyond anything she could muster. Her prose is like gum that's lost its flavour though not quite enough to stop you chewing. In Dahl, children come across a prose and a verse that's as punchy and populist as a TV ad, yet out to sell only itself. The refreshingly lowfalutin' quality of his fee-fi-fo-fum rhetoric gets it across to the widest possible audience that words actually *matter*.

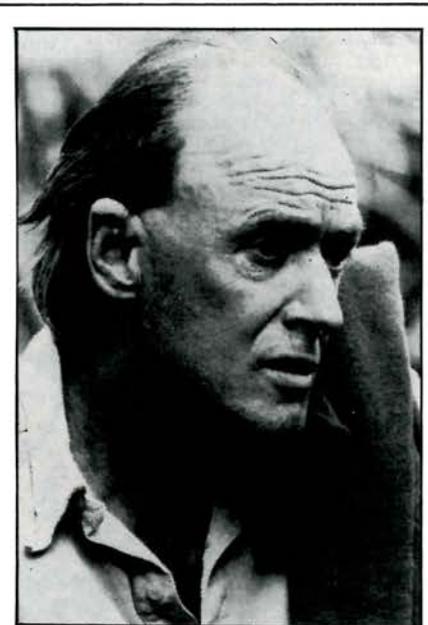
**Subversiveness.** Asked how he can communicate so readily with eight-year-olds Dahl once replied 'I am eight years old.' Exactly! He makes almost every other writer for kids – not least Miss B – look as if they're dressing down for the part. In form, content and manner his are the kind of books children would write for each other if they had the necessary stamina and language experience. They recognise at once that he shares their ketchup-and-candyfloss relish for sharp contrasts, their preference for laughing out loud – at themselves, at grown-ups, at stuffiness in all its aspects. No wonder so many adults find Dahl such a threat. He's a perpetual underminer of their status.

He has to work at it, of course. And even for him it's a risky business. Once in a while he trips himself up (as with the first-version Oompa Loompas for which he's never been forgiven by commentators who want to make this the only sort of issue that counts). Sometimes, too, the exuberance and inventiveness fail to get airborne (*Charlie and the Great Glass Elevator*) or, after a promising take-off, only just stay aloft (*The Twits*). Worse still, it's easy enough for the whole joy-ride to nosedive out of control (*George's Marvellous Medicine*). Even *The BFG*, in many respects a blessed return to vintage Dahl, smacks

a little of one of those self-intoxicated drama improvisations that go on a fraction too long. In my opinion, that is. Dahl himself won't care a fig for my opinion. He's the complete antithesis of the kind of children's author who tells you 'I only write for myself' meaning, all too often, for the critics. For Dahl it's the kids who are kingpin. In a recent newspaper interview he remarked: 'I suppose I could knock at the door of any house where there was a child – whether it was the US, Britain, Holland, West Germany, France – and say "My car's run out of petrol. Could you please give me a cup of tea?" And they'd know me. That *does* make me feel good.'

It should make us feel good, too. Also it should make us feel uneasy. Take another look at Ms Cameron's approved list of literary practitioners for the littlies. She includes several recipients of the industry's highest awards – deserving winners every one. But aren't they all just a little bit . . . well, *respectable*? Aren't these the very names you'd expect to conjure with if you wanted to win friends and influence people amongst those who like books a lot but aren't necessarily so keen on kids? Dahl, needless to say, hasn't won a Top Prize in his life. His situation reminds me of certain superstars in bygone Hollywood – the ones who could pack cinemas year after year but who watched the Oscars get handed out to classier performers thought to bring 'tone' to the movie business, to help it upgrade its own desperately insecure image of itself. A Children's Book World that was truly confident would have recognised and acknowledged Roald Dahl's achievement long ago.

For if the Big Friendly Giant didn't exist then those of us who care about books *for their own sake* and about children *as they are* would've been forced to invent him. Thank God he invented himself. ●



Roald Dahl's books are published in hardback by Cape and in paperback by Puffin. The most recent titles are:

**George's Marvellous Medicine**, Puffin, 0 14 03.1492 X, £1.00

**The BFG**, Cape, 0 224 02040 4, £6.50

# REVIEWS

## Nursery/Infant



### How Do I Eat It?

Shigeo Watanabe, ill.  
Yasuo Ohtomo, Picture  
Puffin, 0 14 050.366 8,  
£1.10

In a sequel to **How Do I Put It On?** that lovable baby bear shares another problem – how to cope with a meal – with the reader. His rather unorthodox methods result in a glorious mess but the young charmer is clearly thoroughly satisfied with himself as will be the beginner reader who shares in the fun. JB

### The Bad-Tempered Ladybird

Eric Carle, Picture Puffin,  
0 14 050.398 6, £1.50

Cut-away pages show the path of the sun at hourly intervals from rising to setting and the progress of the grouchy ladybird as it issues the challenge, 'Hey you . . . want to fight?' to a series of ever larger animals, both the pages and the print increasing in proportion to the proposed opponent. But the ladybird finally gets its come uppance when it takes on the whale who, with a flick of his tail, propels it back to the starting point thirteen hours later. In my view nothing Carle has done matches up to **The Very Hungry Caterpillar** but this book assuredly does appeal to the belligerent side of many young children. JB

### The Mystery of the Missing Red Mitten

0 552 52205 8

### The Mystery of the Magic Green Ball

0 552 52206 6

Steven Kellogg, Carousel,  
95p each

Annie fantasises about the possible whereabouts of her mitten as she hunts for it in the snow, but even she could not have imagined that it was providing the heart for the snowman.



Timmy's green ball is also put to unorthodox use by the gypsy fortune-teller, alias selfish Sara Bianco, whom the reader may suspect knew something about its initial disappearance. But with his friend Peggy's help and a trick of his own, Timmy manages to recover his prize possession.

Minimal colour is used with effect to enliven the black and white pictures and give emphasis to the lost objects in these two mystery stories both of which are told by child narrators. JB

### No Roses for Harry!

Gene Zion, ill. Margaret Bloy Graham, Picture Puffin, 0 14 050.016 2, £1.10

A very welcome re-issue. It is over twenty years since this book was first published in Britain and it has become established as a classic. The antics of Harry the black and white dog who is determined to dispose of his hateful flowery sweater are as fresh and entertaining as ever. JB



### The Adventures of King Rollo

David McKee, Sparrow Books, 0 09 929250 5, £1.35

A real bargain: four King Rollo stories: **The New Shoes**, **The Birthday**, **The Bread**, and **The Tree** in a single volume

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.

## Reviewers

in this issue



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3



4

**1. Jill Bennett** is in charge of a Reading Centre in Middlesex. She is the compiler of **Learning to Read with Picture Books** and of several anthologies of poetry for infants, Literary Editor of **Child Education** and on the Board of the SBA.

**2. David Bennett** (no relation to Jill) is a former librarian, and currently Head of English in a Nottinghamshire secondary school.

**3. Steve Bowles** teaches English in a secondary school in Essex. He was co-producer of **Reviewsheet** until it ceased publication and has several books for children in print.

**4. Cathy Lister** teaches in a middle school in Staffordshire, with responsibility for English and Language across the Curriculum.

**5. Colin Mills** is in the Division of Teaching Studies at Worcester College, where he helps run a Diploma in Children's Literature. He's taught in a comprehensive school, a primary school and worked in radio.

each being presented in strip format, four frames per page, so that the size of the original pictures and text is retained. For me and numerous children part of the charm of the originals was their small size: they slipped into pockets and other hiding places so easily – not always an advantage in the classroom – and this is lost in the new packaging. This is nevertheless a very welcome paperback; perhaps it won't go missing quite so often. JB

### Jenny's Baby Brother

Peter Smith, ill. Bob Graham, Picture Lions, 0 00 661881 2, 95p

### Pete and Roland

Bob Graham, Picture Lions, 0 00 661880 4, 95p

Despite his charm to others, Jenny finds her baby brother a real bore until one teatime he hits her SPLAT in the face with a well-aimed spoonful of custard. From then on he becomes more and more interesting – a real person in fact.

Pete is a small boy and Roland the name he gives to the blue budgie he finds in the garden early one morning. Roland's antics are a source of pleasure for both Pete and the reader who shares Pete's



He was getting to be more fun every day. He even did some things that she wasn't allowed to do. Like ripping up flowers and digging holes in the lawn.

sadness when Roland flies away.

There is a disarming reality in the portrayal of the children; the matter-of-fact way of telling and the humour of the freely drawn illustrations result in two beguiling books. JB

**Bad Bear**  
0 583 30470 2

**Rubber Rabbit**  
0 583 30472 9

**Silly Sheep**  
0 583 30468 0

**Poorly Pig**  
0 583 30471 0

**Double Ducks**  
0 583 30469 9

**Fast Frog**  
0 583 30467 2  
Allan Ahlberg, ill. Eric Hill, Granada Paperbacks, 85p each

It is disappointing to see Eric Hill and Allan Ahlberg wasting their talent on trying to squeeze their skills into an artificial package such as this series. There is no real story to any of the books, rather a collection of bitty episodes featuring one or other of the six animals: Frog, Rabbit, Pig, etc. in which the other characters have bit parts. The texts seem contrived and the pictures have none of the simple magic which makes the 'Spot' books such winners. The only really worthwhile part of the books is the sensible and helpful advice to parents on young children's reading and writing. JB

## The Berenstain Bears and the Spooky Old Tree

Stan and Jan Berenstain, Bright and Early Books, Collins, 0 00 171284 5, £1.25

A book that has all the right ingredients and which in my experience is one of the all time favourites in the Beginner Books series. It is good to see it among the latest six to appear in soft covers.

A superb book whose skilfully used repetition and repeated use of the question 'Do they dare?' really involves the

learner in the action and encourages anticipation of what is coming: 'Do they dare go into that spooky old tree?/Yes./They dare./Three little bears.../One with a light./One with a stick./One with a rope./A twisty old stair./Do they dare go up that twisty old stair?' It works with all ages and is a story to which fluent readers return with enormous pleasure, as well as an excellent one for beginners. JB

# Infant/Junior

Dog from You Can't Catch Me.



Who rolled in the mud behind the garage door?  
Who left footprints across the kitchen floor?

**You Can't Catch Me!**  
Michael Rosen, ill. Quentin Blake, Picture Puffin, 0 14 050.380 3, £1.10

Twenty-two poems: a mixture of new ones and younger children's favourites from the author of the two enormously popular books *Mind Your Own Business* and *Wouldn't You Like to Know*, illustrated in colour by Quentin Blake. Yes, it certainly does appeal to those who aren't quite able to cope with the longer books but addicts seem unable to resist it either. A worthy winner of this year's Signal Poetry Award and if by any chance you haven't yet come across this super book, rush out and buy a copy straightaway. JB

## The Sign on Rosie's Door

Maurice Sendak, Picture Puffin, 0 14 050.078 2, £1.25

Another long-awaited re-issue. 'If you want to know a secret, knock three times' says the sign. And the secret? Rose is now Alinda the lovely lady singer. Four enchanting chapters with hilarious illustrations of children in the real/fantasy world: an ideal book for new solo readers. JB

**What-a-Mess in Spring**  
0 552 52178 7

**What-a-Mess in Summer**  
0 552 52179 5

**What-a-Mess in Autumn**  
0 552 52176 0

**What-a-Mess in Winter**  
0 552 52177 9  
Frank Muir, ill. Joseph Wright, Carousel, 95p each

The endearing Afghan Hound (Prince Amir of Kinjan) appears in these four independent stories. In each he gets involved in seasonal silliness. Muir's particular appeal is the clever throwaway jokes, literate linguistic fun that appeals to 7-pluses and, of course, in the sloppy, accident-prone central character. I'll have some in the bookshop and share one or two aloud, especially with the around-8s who are off the younger stuff and ready to see how part of learning to read is being in touch with one of the sharpest wits around.

My favourite is... in *Summer*, when the Hound tries to get cool by hiding in the fridge and attempting to dig a hole to Australia to get some cold air!

Wright's pictures are riotous, full of quirky detail and super seasonal contrasts - look at the smashing Autumnal windfalls and the Christmas chaos. CM

**The Swampies Freeze Up!**  
0 340 28452 8

**The Rarest Egg**  
0 340 28449 8

**Double Cross!**  
0 340 28450 1

**In Trouble!**  
0 340 28454 4  
Gillian Osband, ill. Bobbie Spargo, Hodder, £1.50 each  
The Swampies live 'far away in a valley where life has remained unchanged for fifty million years'. These four story picture books tell of Ella the Elasmosaurus, P.T. the

Pterandodon, Rex the Tyrannosaurus, et al. Lots of daredevil action, largely concerned with outwitting Dr Croc from Crocodile Swamp. The appeal of prehistory is assured and I like the idea of combining the characters, rich for comic exploitation, with the use of space-age techniques.



The illustrator pulls out every trick in the book and the 8-year-olds I shared *Freeze Up!* with enjoyed the use of TV narrative, cartoon strip format, speech bubbles, etc. The storylines don't always reach the gripping standard of the pictures and my guess is that the appeal will be transitory. Try one or two copies in the bookshop, if only to show the various ways of telling stories and to help children build up their judgements about the 'novelty' book. CM

## Claire's Secret Ambition

Charlotte Firmin, Picture.nacs, 0 333 34181 3, £1.50

A worthy companion to *Hannah's Great Decision* by the same author/artist. Claire's mother dreams of her daughter becoming a famous film star; Claire dreams of becoming a vet. The world being what it is Claire endures stage school,



"Nuttysnaps are the nuttiest," Claire read.  
"Fantastic!" gasped her mother.  
"Super!" sighed the Director.  
And that is how Claire became the Nuttysnap Kid.

auditions and fame via TV commercial for mother's sake. Salvation comes in the shape of Mr Fasolini who understands and produces a fairy godfather solution. A delightful book with engaging and amusing pictures full of the detail of contemporary life. PT

'The cellar door opened and out came Alinda.'  
From *The Sign on Rosie's Door*.



# Junior/Middle



## Stanley Bagshaw and the Fourteen-Foot Wheel

Bob Wilson, Picture Puffin,  
0 14 050.388 9, £1.10

'In Huddersgate (famed for its tramlines) up north where it's boring and slow, Stanley Bagshaw resides with his Grandma at number 4 Prince Albert Row.' So begins this very funny tale of what happens when Stanley inadvertently manufactures a fourteen-foot bicycle wheel which gets loose in dull old Huddersgate. Written in the verse form of *The Lion and Albert* and told in a marvellously varied and inventive series of pictures, comic strip and bubbles. A real treat for juniors. PT

## Mr Browner and the Brain Sharpeners

Philip Curtis, Puffin,  
0 14 03.1526 8, 80p

Pencil sharpening is time wasting and some members of Mr Browner's class have perfected this art. How he wishes he could sharpen their brains instead! This is a zany science fiction story suitably embellished with the witty drawings of Tony Ross. Mr Browner's wish is granted when one foggy morning the Brain Sharpeners arrive. Class 8 members are brainwashed to become the perfect students. Only Michael is aware that they are about to be kidnapped and deported to a new planet. The Headmaster is not convinced of Michael's story

but eventually the class is saved. The disappearance of the H.M. is never explained but nobody seems too concerned! A satisfying read for children of ten years or so. Seventy-seven pages of excitement, well blended with humour. CL

## The Night Swimmers

Betsy Byars, Puffin,  
0 14 03.1409 1, £1.00

With parents struggling for Country and Western stardom, Retta always played surrogate mother for her little brothers and her role became even more important after her mother's death. But boys grow up and Johnny wants freedom from his 12-year-old sister's apron strings. His new friendship makes Retta jealous - and thence leads young Roy into danger. Like all Betsy Byars, it's a short, fast-moving read with few obstacles and attractive characterisation. There's no immediately obvious audience but the arresting cover could lure the perceptive girls who might best appreciate it. Given the current state of the market, it's an obvious buy for secondary schools. SB

## Octopus

Roy Brown, Lions,  
0 00 672010 2, £1.25

Good, fast mystery yarns are fairly thin on the ground but, despite the slightly confusing beginning, this one quickly gets into its stride and adequately fits the bill.

Events centre around the Paxton Carnival and the entry planned by a band of fearsome ex-wrestlers who call themselves 'The Brotherhood', not a bunch to tangle with. However, someone is daft enough to try when he steals the canvas octopus containing the gentlemen's charity collection which was to adorn their float on the big day. Its recovery by Dusty Wilkins, son of Heavy Harry Wilkins, especially after it has been strewn all over dockland in a crazy car chase involving the Mad Dane, makes exciting reading for upper junior/lower secondary boys and girls. DB

## Rosanna and the Wizard-Robot

Rachel Billington, ill. Kate Mellor, Magnet,  
0 416 26100 0, £1.25

A strange, challenging book which may appeal to nine-ups who are beginning to learn about entering the 'world' of a story and are willing to stick with a sometimes demanding narrative.

It's a simple-seeming surface: Rosanna is snatched from her rather cosy-appearing background into the company of the weird Wizard-Robot. There's lots of trans-world, pseudo-fantastic flight, an innocent kidnapped child, an alien race. At the core of the books are niggling ideas: characters and actions in the fantasy have their counterparts in the girl's real life. I can't say I enjoyed it, but it haunts me - and because of that I'll read it and talk about it with top juniors. CM

## The Magic Grandfather

Jay Williams, Puffin,  
0 14 03.1307 9, £1.00

Grandpa is known by the more respectable members of the community, including his daughter-in-law, as a lazy lay-about! Sam finds him a very satisfactory companion and dismisses the criticisms. Then one evening he walks in on a very strange scene and discovers that Grandpa is an enchanter. It would seem that no other member of the family has inherited this magic until Grandpa disappears and Sam puts all his energy into learning the skills that will bring him back.

The text is full of little messages about application, the dangers of too much television, and the evils of listening in on private conversations. Although it is an exciting story there is something smug about it and the highest praise from testers was 'very interesting'. Avid readers in middle schools will try it but I would be surprised if there was a rush for copies. CL

## The Treasure Hunters

Elisabeth Beresford,  
Magnet, 0 416 24600 1,  
95p

'Cuddy' Noakes is not looking forward to the summer holidays in Thorden, a town with Viking origins but now a place which Cuddy often feels moves at half speed. Despite this, when two young holiday-makers complain about the town Cuddy springs to its rescue and starts a rumour about treasure which is to be proved true. In my experience children respond willingly to reading Elisabeth Beresford. Surprisingly then I had the utmost difficulty persuading anyone to test this book. The cover photograph of a real live boy seemed to detract from the fantasy inside. Those who did get past the cover were happy enough about the story. It is a very comfortable read for lower middle school children but you may need to turn back the first few pages for them. CL:

## Fanny and the Monsters

Penelope Lively, Puffin,  
0 14 03.1501 2, 95p

Fanny Stanton does not know one end of a kitchen range from the other. Indeed her only acquaintance with one comes about when, weary of the Victorian nursery and yet another baby sister to take nanny's attentions, she leaves home. The local vicar takes her in as kitchen maid but by the time she has struggled to make his tea she is ready to return to the comforts of home.

Cushioned in respectability Fanny spends much of her energy trying to break out of such constraints. Her secret ambition to become a palaeontologist is a theme which runs through three stories told with Penelope Lively's customary skill in developing child characters who shine in contrast to the adults with whom they have to cope! Having met a real palaeontologist and seen the 'monsters' at the Crystal Palace, Fanny discovers a genuine prehistoric monster. Hints of the 'horrors' of Darwinism place the story in its true period. The three stories originally published separately by Heinemann make a good value paperback. (And an excellent classroom partner for *A Strong and Willing Girl*.) CL

# Middle/Secondary

## Frankenstein's Aunt

Allan Rune Petterson,  
Knight, 0 340 28045 X,  
£1.25

What better praise than an enthusiastic review from a child tester? 'I think this book is absolutely brilliant. I shall

most probably look for another by Allan Rune Petterson.' Aunt Frankenstein is involved in restoring her nephew's castle and salvaging the family name. There is a dead pan humour throughout that is readily recognised by children. Get in lots of copies! CL

## The Stonewalkers

Vivien Alcock, Fontana  
Lion, 0 00 671976 7,  
£1.00

Telling stories, or lies, as the adults prefer to describe them, is a habit that Poppy Brown finds impossible to break.

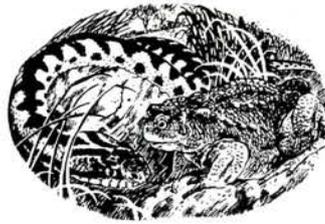
Constantly moved from one foster mother to another, from one school to the next, the fabrication of a personal history is one sure way to gain attention even if it is often of scathing disbelief.

When the statue in the garden comes to life who is to believe

Poppy? Then terrifyingly statues across the Yorkshire countryside come to life and seem set on avenging their silent and still years. Through the terror, however, Poppy finds a friend: Emma, too fat and too clever to win friends at school, believes and is prepared to help. In a scary day out the two girls discover each other's strengths. Their own hearts are softened as they work against the stony determination of the walkers on the moor. Finally too the stony relationship between Poppy and her mother is healed also.

An intriguing story but difficult to place with its combination of horror, fantasy and reality. A thought-provoking and satisfying read for girls of eleven and over but they may need to be persuaded to begin.

CL



### In the Grip of Winter

Colin Dann, Sparrow,  
0 09 929220 3, £1.00

The Animals of Farthing Wood are now at home in the White Deer Nature Reserve. However the first winter questions the safety of their new home for the weather is so severe that many are in danger.

The story flows easily and quickly. Animal lovers find the factual detail interesting and

are intrigued by the animal attitude to humans. The incidents are certainly detailed – the early hibernation of Adder, the difficulties Badger has in adjusting to wild life after a period in the warmth and safety of the warden's home, Toad's need to search out a mate at the first breath of Spring.

Boys around twelve years are particular fans of Colin Dann and there is no doubt that his style provides a pleasant, satisfying read.

CL

### The Sara Summer

Mary Downing Hahn,  
Lions, 0 00 672028 5, £1.00

Four chapters into this, I was getting angry – why hadn't any publisher snapped it up and done a hardback in 1979? It's

just right for early secondary girls who've devoured Judy Blume. As her 'friends' get heavily into boys on the path to carbon copying their awful bourgeois suburban mothers, lanky Emily becomes an outsider. Then Sara arrives. She's even taller than Emily and, compared to the natives, running wild. Friendship lifts the glooms for Emily – but brings conflict too. A lightly amusing, episodic short novel – and kids won't share my prejudices about its final message. One of the most useful books this year.

SB

## Older Readers

### Breaking Training

Sandy Welch, Lions,  
0 00 671933 3, £1.00

A paperback original containing six stories for teenagers, mainly girls – the kind of project to be welcomed. It doesn't entirely succeed – Sandy Welch's film background and her inexperience with print show through in a sometimes jerky, sometimes obliquely dense style – but, given an OK cover, it's worth a go in class libraries. S.W. also seems most comfy with the middle class, as in the story I enjoyed most where two teenagers meet their eldest, black-sheep sister, roaring home on her huge bike for the cringingly bourgeois *Marian's Wedding*. Flawed, then, but try it, and look out for next year's promised novel.

SB

### The Writing on the Wall

Lynne Reid Banks, Puffin Plus, 0 14 03.1479 2, £1.25

Personal distaste amongst editors meant Star publication for L.R.B.'s very popular *My Darling Villain*. This is even ghastlier but publishers are learning that kids, like adults, often enjoy junk. Tracy's Catholic parents dislike punk Kevin and veto their superficially-rebellious, post-fifth-form daughter's trip to Holland with him and a few mates. Older, responsible Michael talks them round. The party splits and it's will-she-won't-she? plus a skirt round Amsterdam's porn trade with Kev before Tracy finally discovers, in Michael, the suburban, semi-detached bliss to which all punks should aspire. But nasty Kev has one final trick up his sleeve. For 12+ girls – as a step to things worthwhile.

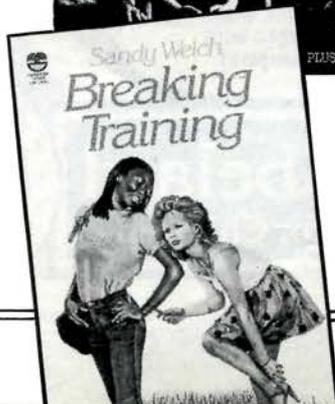
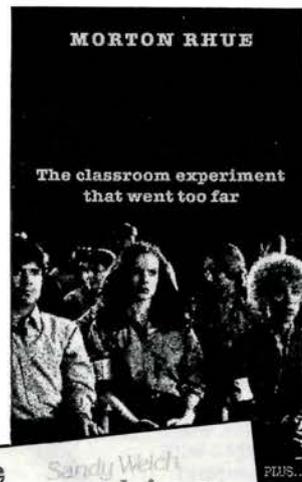
SB

### The Wave

Morton Rhue, Puffin Plus,  
0 14 03.1522 5, £1.25

Undoubtedly one of the best Puffin Plus titles yet, a fascinating, tautly-constructed novelisation of a true incident. A Californian high school teacher creates a movement based on discipline and community to show his history class how the Nazis could control all Germany. But *The Wave* proves *too* attractive; its mottoes and salutes quickly dominate the whole school; those who resist are pressured to back down. Can the teacher undo the mischief and channel the experience positively? 100 tense pages – start reading and it's difficult to stop. Some of the minor characters blur but that shouldn't be a major problem. OK cover. 14+. (Simultaneous Kestrel publication, 0 7226 5810 9, £4.95.)

SB



### Sweet Dreams for teachers?

David Bennett looks at a new series for teenagers

**P.S. I Love You**  
Barbara Conklin, Sweet Dreams, 0 553 20323 1, 65p

**The Popularity Plan**  
Rosemary Vernon, Sweet Dreams, 0 553 20325 8, 65p

and sixteen other titles

Mariah (yes, named after the wind) is coping tolerably well with her parents' separation and not ever having had a boyfriend, when her mother takes a holiday job in Palm Springs (*P.S.* of the title) looking after a rich couple's house. Other occupants are a handyman whose past experience induces mother to take father back and, you've guessed it, a BOY. His name is Paul Strobe (*P.S.*, got it?). Anyway, lest all should run too smoothly, he develops cancer so the ending becomes '*P.S. I Loved You*'.

Franny in *The Popularity Plan* is excruciatingly shy of boys so her very long-suffering pals decide on a day-by-day programme to get her into the social whirl of the school. It works so well that she is transformed into a social butterfly, whose heart's desire is now a cabbage of a boy named Ronnie. Fortunately, the two finally get it together and enjoy a picnic as their first date.

In this fast-growing series imported from Bantam in the States, the writing is at times as subtle as a concrete paving slab; the plots are predictable as is the vocabulary; the format is as tawdry as popular romantic novels; the whole adds up to extended versions of magazine stories. And they'll be sure-fire hits!!

I've been teaching adolescent girls for long enough to know

that most of them will welcome *Sweet Dreams* like the wave of the fairy godmother's wand. Reality to many teenagers is whether or not you are attractive to the opposite sex and in demand; whether you can present yourself in the right make-up, hair colour, clothes, etc., etc. It is light years away from the reproductive system of a rabbit, or the tonal effects achieved by Van Gogh in '*Sunflowers*'.

Whatever we purveyors of Lit-Crit might suppose these books reflect to young girls what life is really about... or perhaps what the media tell them it is about? Anyway, who is dating whom in the circus of school relationships far outweighs the subtle nuances of invective in the decidedly pre-historic scandal-mongering of Lady Sneerwell and Mrs Candour.

Look on the bright side, English Teachers. At least these are of novel length and so demand a stickability not normally required by their magazine counterparts; at least whilst *Sweet Dreams* are invading our shores most teenage girls will feel that there's something worthwhile at last to keep them reading. You've survived the aberration of Blyton all these years, you can survive the nightmare of *Sweet Dreams* too.

There's no doubt that given the right books most teenage girls will read and enjoy reading. If they don't progress beyond *Sweet Dreams*, it won't be their fault. With an appetite created we need more than the current meagre ration of Blume, Zindel, Hinton. It's *My Life* and other one-offs to sustain and nourish it. ●

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# JAN NEEDLE

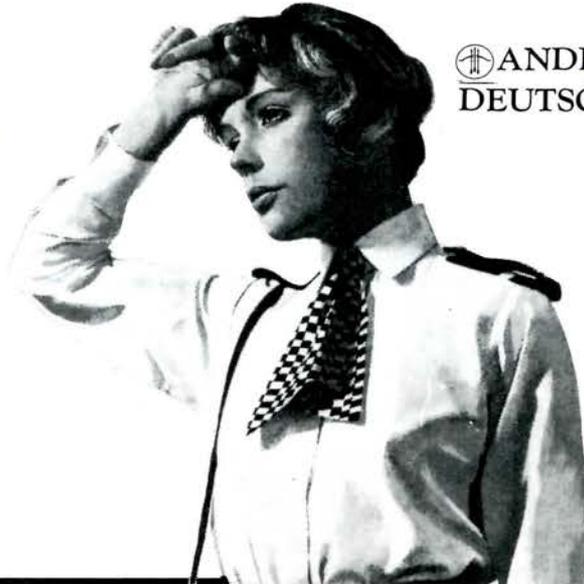
## Piggy in the Middle

When an elderly Asian is murdered and his son held without charge, Sandra, a young policewoman, and David, her radical journalist boyfriend, find themselves on opposite sides.

In an atmosphere of racial tension, David expresses doubts about police behaviour and Sandra finds herself torn between professional duties and personal loyalties.

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# LIFELINE LIBRARY

Elaine Moss concludes her five-part series

## PART 5: POETRY & TRADITIONAL TALES



Elaine Moss

This, the final instalment of the **Lifeline Library**, is in some respects the most important. All too often traditional tales and poetry are used to fill the odd minutes before playtime or dinner, without much thought or any follow-up. This is fine in a way. I am in favour of leaving great works to germinate in the minds of the young, of not questioning or expecting spin-off from every verse or story.

But this does not mean that a good teacher leaves everything to chance, lets the anthology fall open where it will, reads any old story without prior thought. Serendipity can only have a place – occasional, astonishing – in the midst of planning.

Your classes will get more out of traditional tales and poetry if you have chosen what you are going to read, know why you have chosen it, have read it before, and can read it well aloud.

That is why owning collections of Poetry and Traditional Tales, being familiar with their contents, is vital.

Poetry and Traditional Tales have much in common. Both are ancient in lineage; both are delights to the ear; both explore human emotions, often through story. But whereas traditional tales have lived and changed and travelled through place and time, acquiring local variations, different emphases on their journeys, poetry speaks directly to us in a voice that may be either from ages past or of today.

Traditional tales survive because they are about human nature and have much to tell us now about ourselves. Poetry captures the flying thought, the moment's joy, the vision, and pins it to the page – so that the reader can come along at any time, release it, be illumined by it. The place of both, from the beginning of school to the end, is at the heart of education.

For children, the art of listening to story and poem is vital, for their gift of 'creative picturing' can easily dwindle in the age of television. Traditional tales and poetry are for the ear and the imagination first, the reading eye later on.

### Traditional Tales

I had thought it would be easy to find a welter of delectable collections from which to choose a wide-ranging selection of traditional stories. To my astonishment it was not: many paperback editions (like Raymond Briggs's *Fairy Tale Treasury\**) are out of print. Other collections that I had hoped to find (Indian stories for instance) do not exist in paperback. Because I am determined that the selection *shall* be wide, I am breaking my own rule for your *Lifeline Library* and including one hardback, *Gods and Men* (see below).

#### Gods and Men: Myths and Legends from the World's Religions

retold by John Bailey, Kenneth McLeish and David Spearman, Oxford, 0 19 278020 4, £5.95

Every teacher today needs a book that explores the stories of dominant and minority cultures in Britain: this one retells creation myths from around the world (Genesis; the Aboriginal 'Rainbow Snake', the African 'Nyame and the Fire Children'), stories of good and evil (the Flood in many forms, Prometheus); stories of heroes and prophets (Rama, Beowulf, Arthur, David). It is unique. If you can possibly afford it you will find it invaluable.

#### Grimms' Fairy Tales

ill. George Cruikshank, Puffin, 0 14 03.0052 X, £1.25

It is exceedingly important to read fairy tales aloud from a version that is not just an accompaniment to pretty pictures (the fairy tale picture book has ruined the verbal impact of many a story). This Puffin Grimm, a nineteenth-century translation, is more formal than some modern versions, but good for reading aloud and accompanied by Cruikshank's famous illustrations that leave the listener's imagination free.

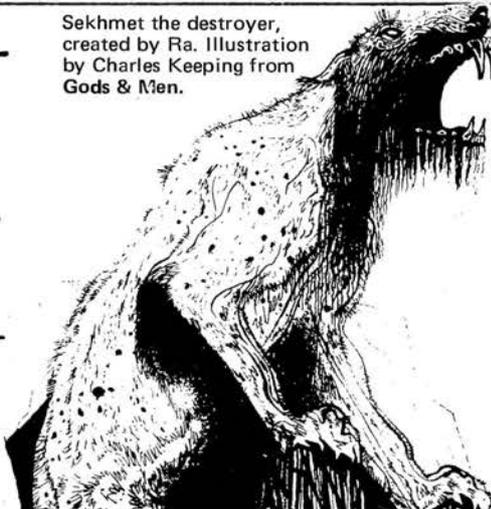
#### Hans Andersen's Fairy Tales

ed. Naomi Lewis, Puffin, 0 14 03.0333 2, 95p

Ten of the most famous, best loved Andersen stories (as well-known as any folk tale, yet conceived only in the last century) have been chosen and translated into vivid prose by Naomi Lewis – who adds to them two Andersen tales that are less well-known yet equally deserving of recognition.

\*Available in hardback from Hamish Hamilton

Sekhmet the destroyer, created by Ra. Illustration by Charles Keeping from *Gods & Men*.



#### A Book of Witches

Ruth Manning-Sanders, Magnet, 0 416 21910 1, 95p

Ruth Manning-Sanders is an author whose 'voice', when she writes is the voice of an oral storyteller – and whose folk and fairy tales from the world's vast store are therefore fabulous for reading aloud. This is just one of many volumes – picked for use at Hallowe'en (which comes every year and every year catches us unprepared!).

#### Listen to this Story: Tales from the West Indies

Grace Hallworth, Magnet, 0 416 58270 2, 55p

Grace Hallworth, a well-known librarian and storyteller from Trinidad, tells ten stories from the West Indies, most of them featuring Anansi, all of them packed full of mischief, cunning, humour and local colour.

### Poetry

In choosing only five poetry paperbacks I have tried to make a statement through them: that poetry is for delight, and that English poetry is a continuing tradition.

#### This Way Delight

sel. Herbert Read, Faber Fanfare, 0 571 18056 6, £1.50

Herbert Read sensibly places his essay on poetry as an Afterword – where children will

read it if they want to. His selection is of poems from the past and present whose authors see clearly, speak precisely, inspire delight. A first rate general anthology.

#### I Like This Poem

ed. Kaye Webb, Puffin, 0 14 03.1295 1, £1.50

Children *do* like poems; this amazing collection bears witness to that fact both in the wide selection sent in to Puffin by children (6 to 15) and in the wise, perceptive comments by the children on their favourite poems. This book has probably done more for poetry in schools than any other.

#### All Sorts of Poems

ed. Ann Thwaite, Magnet, 0 416 89570 0, £1.25

This collection is unusual in that all the poems are modern – written since 1970, few of them well-known. Together they invite the reader to explore familiar territory – snowman, pet-shop, garden, rainy afternoon – in the company of a perceptive, often witty, guide. A treasure trove of living poetry: Roy Fuller, Russell Hoban, Philip Larkin, Brian Lee, Vernon Scannell – but no Ted Hughes.

#### Figgie Hobbin

Charles Causley, Puffin, 0 14 03.1162 9, 75p

It is important, I think, to look in depth at the work of one poet, because only by doing so can you discover the universal significance and power of the single voice singing songs inspired by the life of a circumscribed community. Charles Causley is a Cornishman steeped in the lore of his native land: his poems – lyrical, humorous, wry, absurd – speak to all mankind of human passion, superstition, gaiety, deprivation. A traditional poet with a strong, clear, personal voice.

#### Mind Your Own Business

Michael Rosen, Lions, 0 00 670959 1, 95p

Not all comment on family life written from the worm's eye view in jagged lines is poetry! But Michael Rosen in *Mind Your Own Business* (and Roger McGough who joined forces with Rosen later in *You Tell Me* for an older audience) have shown that it can be. Humour, day-dreaming, resilience, originality: these attributes of childhood are part of the poet's vision, too. ●

Parts 1 (Picture Books), 2 (Learning and Listening 5–7), 3 (First Flings and Classics of Childhood) and 4 (The Novels 8–11) in this series appeared in *Books for Keeps* 13, 14, 15 and 16, respectively. All are available from the SBA, price 85p each including postage.

# SOUND & VISION *Special*

## Channel 4 is open and one programme at least is for **Everybody Here**

It is produced by Telekation International an independent British company set up by a group of ex-BBC award-winning programme makers.

**Mike Rosen** who has been involved with **Everybody Here** from the start talked to us about it.

I was approached by Susanna Capon from TKI because they wanted to put up an idea for a children's programme to Channel 4. She called it a programme for children with special needs. I started by asking, "What is the gap left by children's programmes that already exist?" The biggest gap I could see going round schools whether in Hackney where I live or anywhere else was that very few programmes actually deal with the children's lives as they experience them. There are Greek kids, Turkish kids, kids of Caribbean origin, Pakistani origin and all the rest of it. When do you actually see Greek kids talking to Greek kids on TV? When does TV ever show kids eating rice and peas? When does it ever show Vietnamese kids playing Vietnamese games? It never does. That is part of their experience but television never reflects it. It is as if the world of television was a fantasy place, somewhere else, never actually part of their lives. So we sat down and tried to conceive a programme that could actually reflect these things, reflect children's lives in the way they actually live and perceive them.

The first important thing we decided was that it would be a mistake to have presenters. A presenter reflects the identity of a programme, interprets things from a particular viewpoint. We wanted to get away from that. We didn't want anyone getting between the kids and what they saw. So the programme goes straight from one item to the next. Kids are used to watching the commercials; it doesn't bother them. It's adults who are used to having things 'framed' by the Parkinsons of this world.

For much the same reason we decided to dispense with a studio. Everything has been filmed on location, in streets, schools, playgrounds, homes: where the children really are. The unit worked in Belfast, Coventry, Newcastle and London.

**Michael Rosen** has also **Bodley Head** on a book **Everybody Here**. It is full of rhymes, songs, jokes, cartoons, photographs in full colour showing children at school, at work, at home. It could be the starting point for a series of activities. The ideas are

## In View Soon

**Johnny Ball's Think of a Number** which has just come to an end on BBC 1 will be followed by two more 'Think' series. **Think This Way** will be shown on five consecutive evenings from December 6-10. **Think Again**, a six part series, starts on Friday January 7th at 4.40.

All on BBC 1 and good news for Puffin's **Johnny Ball's Think Box**.

**For Christmas**. A 100 minute adaptation of Leon Garfield's **The Ghost Downstairs** (BBC 1, 'during Christmas week, around 7 pm') and an hour long dramatization of a Black Country ghost story, **Ghost in the Water**, new from Puffin. (December 29th, early evening)

**Coral Island**, Thames TV's serial (ten half hour episodes) of R M Ballantyne's 'classic' shipwreck story is now promised for early January. The Thames/Magnet tie-in has been available for some time, caught out by changes in programme scheduling. Both this edition and the one from Puffin are abridged 'for the children of today'.

**Also in January**, Tove Jansson's enduringly diverting **Moomins** will appear in 50 five minute animated films to be shown nightly for 10 weeks (Central). Puffin have a lot of re-issues ready for the rush.

**For older readers**, Channel 4 will be showing a series of six plays adapted from the short stories in Nadine Gordimer's **Six Feet of the Country**. These powerful stories about the human consequences of apartheid could well be of interest to fifth and sixth years. (Starts November 4th)

## Holiday Listening

George Layton will be reading selected stories from his own **The Fib** (Fontana Lions) on BBC Radio's Woman's Hour on December 23, 24, 27 and 28th.

## The Dark Crystal

Published on November 18th is the children's picture book of the 'major fantasy film' **The Dark Crystal**. (An adult novel and a book *about* the film come out at the same time!) The film, created by Jim Hanson (of the Muppets), Gary Kurtz (of Star Wars) and Brian Froud (The British illustrator, who did the designs) is being released in mid-February. More about all this in the January **Books for Keeps**.

**Going Out** — Jan Needle 0 00 672135 4, £1.00

Channel 4 are going to show Phil Redmond's **Going Out** previously broadcast by Southern TV about a year ago. It will now be shown on Mondays at 9.30 pm, starting on November 8th for six weeks. **Going Out**, based on the TV series, will be published by Fontana Lions in December.

The programme is very fast-moving — about ten items in 25 minutes. To help the children get to know the programme there are some items that recur in each one. There's always a story — traditional tales from different cultures or specially written stories by people like Roger McGough, Alex Pascall and Tunde Ikoli. There's always an item about food; there's always something we call "The Crazy Thing" where kids play a crazy game like forking peas or blowing the longest raspberry, and they like that. And we have games where instead of beating hell out of each other like they do in British Bulldog or something kids have to co-operate with each other to make them work. We've got quite a few of those. In "Cooking Machine" two rows of kids hold out their arms, meet each other in the middle and pass a kid along the line. One I like is "Head to Head". You get in pairs and the leader calls out "Finger to eyelash." I put my finger on your eyelash and you put your finger on mine. Then it's "bum to bum" or "elbow to elbow" or "nose to nose". And there's a character called Dr Smartypants, "the man who knows everything there is to know" and keeps having disasters. (That's Mike Rosen in disguise. Ed)

A lot of the material is drawn from immigrant cultures: West Indian, African, Indian, Chinese, Greek, Jewish and so on. We have songs, rhymes, jokes, dance, crafts and, of course, food. The programmes are also multi-lingual. For instance we've got a poem in Bengali about Petticoat Lane. You hear it first in Bengali and then in English with images of Petticoat Lane throughout. We know many British kids are bi-lingual. "In school" is the English bit of their lives. But that's just the tip of the iceberg. Underneath all sorts of things are going on. It's like working-class kids; some teachers think working-class kids have nothing at home and that all the important things happen at school. It's not so.

The person who made it all come to life is Leslie Pitt, the director. I knew him from my Play School days. He has a total belief in children. He believes they can do something and they do it. I would write out some kind of preliminary first draft of a programme; then we'd go through it together seeing how we could do it. It was Les's idea to get the kids to do pictures to illustrate some of the stories. He did all the filming.

I hope kids will enjoy watching something new, and that for many kids there will be the excitement of self-recognition. But beyond that there's something else. Kids are more openly curious than adults about what people do. Adult views and prejudices about other people are fairly fixed. With kids you can say, "Look, the world is very diverse and interesting. Didn't you know that?"

Everybody Here isn't going to abolish racism. Nothing on telly will ever do that. But with a bit of luck it will create a chance in classrooms and homes for people to ask questions about other cultures, maybe dispense other cultures a bit less. It might even affect attitudes to different abilities and ways of living that *all* people have — not just white to black. All this is *implicit* in the programme. We are just showing the face of British kids as they really are — in some ways the same, in other ways interestingly different. We are showing that Britain is made up of many different kinds of communities and that is something to celebrate and enjoy.

Everybody Here will return to Channel 4 for a second ten week series in the Spring. Another children's programme, compiled by David Wood, will follow it on Channel 4 this winter. ●

Everybody Here, Michael Rosen, Bodley Head, 0 370 30944 8, £3.95

been working with  
version of  
all of stories, games,  
rafts, and above all  
of people at  
, at play. In schools  
point for a huge range  
are there for the taking.

## NEWS

### Dorothy Edwards

It is with great sadness that we report the death of Dorothy Edwards, a much loved and much read writer for children.

Her best-known series is perhaps the 'My Naughty Little Sister' books; but her books cover a wide range, from stories for the very young to books for older children like 'A Strong and Willing Girl' which won The Other Award in 1982.

In addition to her writing, Dorothy Edwards visited almost every area of the UK to meet children, read to them and foster their enthusiasm for books. In particular, she campaigned against the "middle class" image and appeal of books: she believed in books for all children.

### Shrinking Piccolo

Sales of Piccolos dropped in 1981 and again this year. As a result they are reducing their output of new titles, particularly of originals. But, say Piccolo, 'It is not our intention to stop publishing children's books but we must restrict and then reconstruct the list in order that it should make a profitable contribution to Pan Books performance.' David Kewley who is taking over the children's list also adds, 'Please do get in touch if you have ideas about the sort of books you would like to see Piccolo publishing in future.'

### IBBY International Conference

The IBBY International Conference on Story in a Child's Changing World, held

in Cambridge in September was very successful in spite of the last minute withdrawal of Bruno Bettelheim, one of the major speakers. Papers given at the many seminars and plenary sessions were of wide-ranging interest and deserve a circulation beyond the inevitably limited number of people able to attend.

### Story Competition

The National Confederation of Parent Teacher Associations' seventh annual write-a-story competition is open to children in two age groups: up to 11, and 11+. The theme for this year is athletics. Closing date January 31st 1983.

Details from NCPTA, 43 Stonebridge Road, Northfleet, Gravesend, Kent.

### Ardizzone to Wales

Edward Ardizzone's original illustrations for Dylan Thomas's *A Child's Christmas in Wales* (Dent) have been purchased by the Welsh Centre for Children's Literature. An illustrated bilingual publication with essays on the illustrations and the text is available from the centre (£1.00 plus postage). Write to Menna Lloyd Williams, Castell Brychan, Aberystwyth, Dyfed.

### Learning to Read with Picture Books

A second revised and re-designed edition with many new titles of Jill Bennett's invaluable list is now available. (Signal Bookguide, £1.85.) Write to The Thimble Press, Lockwood, Station Road, South Woodchester, Stroud, Glos GL5 5EQ.

## THE BEST BARGAIN I EVER MADE

**The Wind in the Willows** was the first book **John Rowe Townsend** bought for himself. For us he undertook the difficult task of looking afresh at a book which for him has become part of the everyday furniture of the mind.

I first met **The Wind in the Willows** in primary school, when I was nine. Our teacher was a severe, yet kind and enlightened, maiden lady called Miss Annie Cox. Every Friday afternoon she used to read aloud to us from a children's classic. We had some say in her choice of book, for she would suggest a title and we could either approve or veto it. None of us had ever read any of the books beforehand – ours wasn't that kind of district – but we applied a simple test: did the title promise plenty of action? We firmly rejected *Little Women* and *A Little Princess*, which we were sure would be soppy, but we all voted in favour of *The Jungle Books* and *Treasure Island*.

When Miss Cox proposed **The Wind in the Willows**, there was a general groan. Not much excitement in that, we thought. She dropped the idea; but a few weeks later, when the choice of title came round again, she cunningly suggested reading to us from **The Adventures of Mr Toad**. We liked the sound of that much better, and assented happily. The result was a huge success; and I still recall that gasp that ran round the class when it was revealed to us at the end that we'd been listening to **The Wind in the Willows** after all.

I was so impressed that I saved my Saturday penny for weeks on end to buy a copy of my own. It was the first real book I ever owned, and I have it still; a slim, brown-backed volume in the Methuen Modern Classics series which cost, in those far-off, pre-inflationary days, one shilling and sixpence. It must be the best bargain I ever made.

A. A. Milne, who adapted **The Wind in the Willows** for the stage, described it as a Household Book: 'a book which everybody in the household loves and quotes continually ever afterwards.' That is what it became when I grew up and had children of my own. By now, I know it so well that it is hard to look at it critically. **The Wind in the Willows** isn't something to be weighed and assessed: it is simply **there**, a part of the everyday furniture of the mind.

Like most good fiction, it creates a world; and the world in this case is divided into three parts. There is the River Bank, which is a good place and is the home of the Water-Rat and Mole and Toad and Otter. There is the Wild Wood, inhabited mainly by untrustworthy animals such as weasels, stoats and foxes, and avoided by the River-Bankers. And beyond the Wild Wood is the Wide World, which, as Rat tells Mole, is 'something that doesn't matter, either to you or me. I've never been there and I'm never going, nor you either if you've got any sense at all.' Only Toad is silly enough to involve himself with the Wide World.

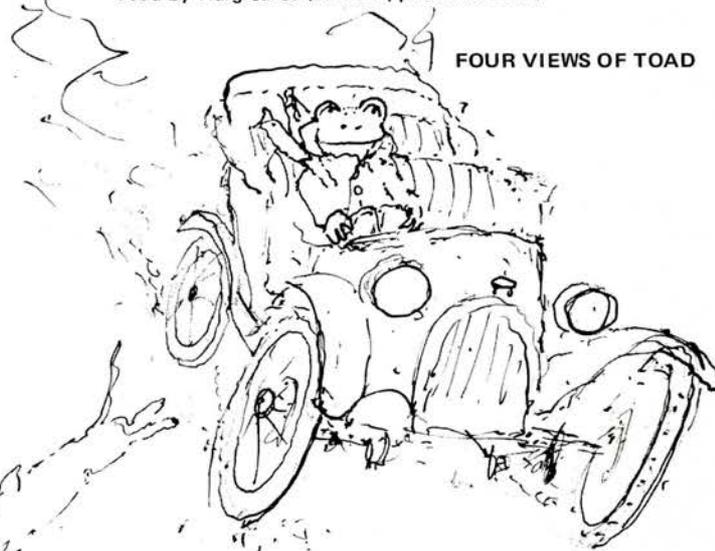
The book is loosely-structured, casually-balanced and easily-paced. In the early chapters the emphasis is mainly on the River Bank animals and their august friend, Mr Badger. The central character here is the Mole, who has given up his underground home to join with Rat in a life of good fellowship and 'messaging about in boats'. These are the chapters that set the idyllic tone of the book and suggest to a modern reader that atmosphere of endless golden afternoon which we (mistakenly) tend to think of as symbolizing Edwardian England.

The Toad theme enters in the second chapter, with the destruction of Toad's horse-drawn caravan and his infatuation with the motor-car that did the damage; but after that come three chapters with only a passing reference to Toad. Only in the latter part of the book does the Toad story gather pace, to end with the climax of the recapture of Toad Hall from the stoats and weasels.

The odyssey of Toad is what most children – and probably, if they are honest, most adults – like best. The triumph lies partly in the character of Toad himself: a grown-up, rich, irresponsible child, boastful and silly, softhearted and good-natured, ever ready to repent yet all too ready to break out afresh when the occasion arises. And the actual incidents are so memorable. Everyone who has ever read the book must remember Toad sitting among the wreckage of his caravan with a placid, satisfied expression and faintly murmuring 'Poop-poop!'



Toad by Hargreaves (Armada, published Jan.)



FOUR VIEWS OF TOAD

Toad by John Burningham (Kestrel, published Jan.)

Then there is Toad's trial, at which he's found guilty of stealing a car, driving dangerously, and (worst of all) cheeking the police, and is afterwards dragged away protesting to become 'a helpless prisoner in the remotest dungeon of the best-guarded keep of the stoutest castle in all the length and breadth of Merry England'. There's Toad escaping in the guise of a washerwoman and getting a lift on a steam train, only to be pursued by another engine, crowded with 'ancient warders, waving halberds, policemen in their helmets, wearing truncheons, and shabbily dressed men in pot hats, obvious and unmistakable plain-clothes detectives even at this distance, waving revolvers and walking-sticks; all waving, and all shouting the same thing: "Stop! stop! stop!"' There's Toad being flung into the canal by a barge-woman, making off with her horse and selling it to a gypsy for six shillings and sixpence and all the stew he can eat. There's Toad triumphant, planning the celebratory dinner: 'Speech . . . by Toad; Address . . . by Toad; Song . . . by Toad; Other Compositions . . . by Toad'. And there's Toad a reformed character at the end; but reformed, we may wonder, for how long?

There is yet a third strand to **The Wind in the Willows**, besides the nostalgia of the River Bank and the mock-heroic epic of Toad. This consists of the two highly-poetic chapters, 'The Piper at the Gates of Dawn' and 'Wayfarers All', which Graham apparently inserted into the book at a late stage. In the former of these, Otter's child Portly is missing, and is found by Mole and Rat safely asleep between the hooves of Pan, the great demigod who is the helper and healer of animals. This, one assumes from the exalted, mystical tone of the writing, was regarded by the author as the high point of the book. In 'Wayfarers All', the Water-Rat encounters an old sea-rat, and is tempted by vibrant descriptions of distant shores to leave his own home and voyage



The original Toad by E.H. Shepherd (from *Toad's Tale*, Methuen, £3.95 and *The Wind in the Willows Frieze*, Methuen, £2.57 plus VAT)



Toad by Michael Hague (from *The Wind in the Willows 1983 Calendar*, Methuen, £2.54 plus VAT)

south. Mole intervenes just in time, and holds Rat down until the fit has passed and the cure (that is the author's word) can begin. It is a strange and rather disturbing passage: is the call of the far horizons really so bad a thing, and did not Mole himself give up his former way of life for ever?

These two chapters, and to a somewhat less extent the River Bank ones, are charged with poetic diction of a kind which is now out of fashion. Sometimes it is well done; other times, even allowing for changing tastes, it is surely overdone, and sometimes it is both well done and overdone in the same paragraph:

At last, over the rim of the waiting earth the moon lifted with slow majesty, till it swung clear of the horizon and rode off, free of moorings; and once more they began to see surfaces — meadows widespread, and quiet gardens, and the river itself from bank to bank, all softly disclosed, all washed clean of mystery and terror, all radiant again as by day, but with a difference that was tremendous. Their old haunts greeted them again in other raiment, as if they had slipped away and put on this pure new apparel and come quietly back, smiling as they shyly waited to see if they would be recognised again under it.

More perhaps to children's taste, there is a good deal in *The Wind in the Willows* about feasting and fellowship. An interest in food is one of the things that make it, on balance, a genuine children's book. Children have a proper respect for their stomachs. Mole's first encounter with Rat results in a picnic, with a luncheon-basket containing cold chicken and also 'cold-tongue coldham coldbeef pickledgherkins salad frenchrolls cress-sandwiches pottedmeat gingerbeer lemonade sodawater . . .'. Badger's kitchen and Mole's rediscovered underground home are the scenes of hearty companionable suppers before roaring fires; when Toad is in prison the gaoler's daughter woos him first with fragrant bubble-and-squeak, then with 'a plate piled up with very hot buttered toast, cut thick, very brown on both sides, with the butter running through the holes in it in great golden drops, like honey from the honeycomb'.

It is not only their diet that reminds us that Grahame's characters, though supposed to be animals, are really people. (They have presented some problems of scale to successive illustrators: is Toad, for instance, the size of a toad or of a washerwoman?) Their animal characteristics are few. As a child I thought it only natural that such unlovable creatures as weasels, stoats and ferrets should be the baddies. It did not occur to me that the River Bankers were obviously a leisured class and that the Wild Wooders were the underprivileged, or that the

author might be unconsciously expressing a fear that the lower orders might get out of hand and dispossess their betters. These inferences have since been duly pointed out. Jan Needle's *Wild Wood*, which appeared last year, is a version of the same story told with a good deal of conviction from the point of view of the Wild Wood animals. To those interested in a detailed discussion of many aspects of Grahame's masterpiece, I would recommend Peter Green's biography, *Kenneth Grahame*, published in 1959.

Grahame died in 1932, and his books come out of copyright this year. I understand that several new editions are planned. I look forward to seeing them, but I don't think I shall be in the market to buy any. So far as I am concerned, *The Wind in the Willows* is still a slim brown battered book, thumbprinted and smeared and stained and read almost to pieces, but capable, I hope, of lasting out my lifetime. I wish for no other copy. ●



John Rowe Townsend was one of the first to identify the need for children's books with realistic contemporary urban settings. He also did something about it himself. *Gumble's Yard*, his first book for children, written out of his contacts with the poor and socially disadvantaged, appeared in 1961. Since then he has gradually given up journalism (he started work for the then *Manchester Guardian* in 1949) and concentrated on writing and lecturing.

Until 1978 he was children's books editor of the *Guardian* where he initiated the Guardian Award and achieved a coverage for his subject all too rare in the national press. His writing about children's books: *Written for Children* and *A Sounding of Storytellers*, is always stimulating and informative. His novels have a variety of themes and settings. *Hell's Edge* (1963), a runner-up for the Carnegie Medal, is set, like *Gumble's Yard*, in the industrial north, but its main characters are fifteen. *The Intruder* (1969), a powerful and disturbing book about identity, has won international awards and with *Noah's Castle* (1975) — a compelling and thought-provoking story of Britain a few years hence in the grip of economic disaster and food shortages — has been serialised on television.

Just out is *A Foreign Affair*, 'a Ruritanian extravaganza'. Kate, our heroine, bewitched (but not totally blinded) by the charms of Prince Rudi, gets embroiled in an amazing series of coups and counter-revolutions in the tiny country of Essenheim. 'The story has no message and no hidden meaning,' says the author. 'It's for fun.' Also this autumn comes *Clever Dick* whose anti-hero, says John, 'may be the most obnoxious boy in fiction'.

And next year? 'There's another serious one; it's about a child in search of a family and is called, at the moment, *Dan Alone*.' Look out too for *The Islanders*, published last year, which tells how the inhabitants of a remote island who live by a rigid code of law, react to the arrival of two shipwrecked young people from another island society. John Rowe Townsend thinks it has been under-noticed here (though it was chosen for *Children's Books of the Year*). 'Heaven knows the author is not always right, but my own belief is that it's one of my best. However I can well understand that nobody gets very excited about one's seventeenth book.'

#### Written for Children

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#### A Sounding of Storytellers

(An expanded and re-worked edition of *A Sense of Story*) Kestrel, 0 7226 5599 1, £4.95

#### Gumble's Yard

Puffin, 0 14 03.0299 9, 95p

#### Hell's Edge

Puffin, 0 14 03.0342 1, £1.10

#### The Intruder

Oxford University Press, 0 19 271304 3, £3.25  
Puffin Plus, 0 14 03.1373 7, £1.10

#### Noah's Castle

OUP, 0 19 271381 7, £3.25  
Puffin Plus, 0 14 03.1294 3, £1.25

#### A Foreign Affair

Kestrel, 0 7226 5780 3, £5.95

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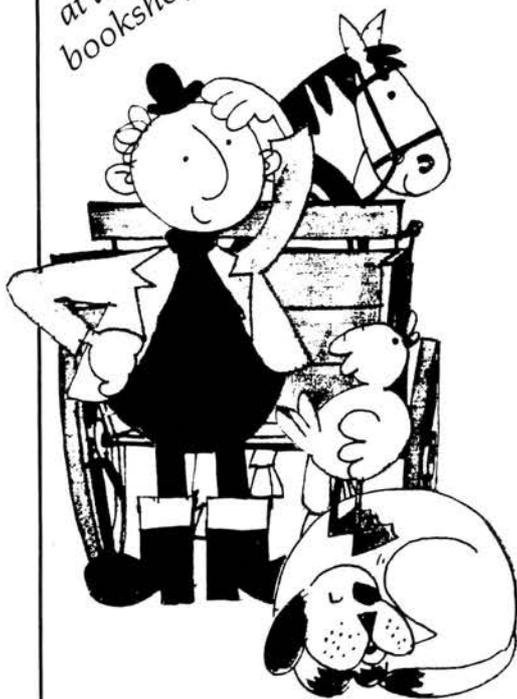
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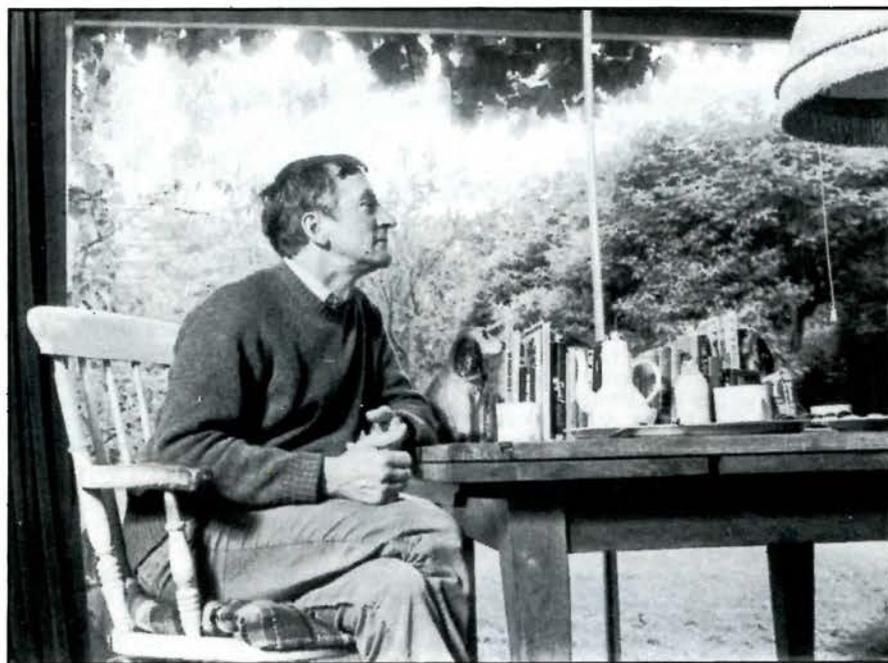


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# Authorgraph No. 17

## Raymond Briggs

In 1947, when he was thirteen, Raymond Briggs decided he wanted to be a cartoonist. But wanting perhaps then, as now one suspects, to do things thoroughly he decided he'd better learn to draw first and set his sights on art school. It took him thirty years to get back to 'some sort of cartooning'. When he did, with *Father Christmas*, it was the constraints of the conventional 32-page picture book that led him there. 'I found I needed to have more than one or two pictures per page. I couldn't do the detail I wanted without that. I was forced into strip cartoon by the space limitations.'



He seems to have become very good at creating excellence out of accepting the inevitable with a mixture of wry resignation and high quality pragmatism. Like most of his generation of artists he didn't set out to do children's books. At Wimbledon Art School he absorbed the prevailing ethic and decided he was going to be a painter. After a long and enthusiastic review by John Berger of one of his paintings he thought, 'I've arrived' but at the Slade where he studied after National Service it was a different story. 'I got nowhere. I was bottom of the league table. And they were right. That was what was so painful.' He tried portraits, got one or two into exhibitions and 'sat back and waited for the commissions to come rolling in from the English aristocracy. Nothing happened, so that was that.'

It was necessary to earn a living so he got together a folder of drawings and went out looking for 'commercial' work. Gradually more and more of what he was asked to do was for children's books. 'I was a bit horrified. I wanted to do book illustration but when I realised it meant kids' books it was rather a blow.' He had an interview at O.U.P. with the formidable Mabel George. 'She said, "How do you feel about fairies?" I thought, "Bloody Hell, has it come to this?" A so-called painter with ideas of joining Francis Bacon and that kind of world being asked what you feel about fairies.' It gave me a jolt. But not for long. 'She gave me a book of Cornish fairy stories by Ruth Manning-Sanders to illustrate. They are wonderful stories and it soon dawned on me that fairy stories and nursery rhymes are the best possible things for an illustrator.'

It was this unusual combination of an eye to the main chance and the pursuit of perfection that led Briggs into writing. He's always

been fascinated by words and illustrating. Antelopes for Hamish Hamilton he kept wanting to alter the texts. 'They were so awful I thought anyone can do better than this. So I wrote one for my own satisfaction and took it to the editor for advice about my writing. To my amazement he said he'd publish it. I thought well, that just shows the standard.' For a moment he was distracted. 'I thought if it's that easy to be a writer then I'll give up illustration and write. It's much better paid and much quicker.' But there was that lingering desire to excel. 'For every one who can illustrate well enough to get into print there's twenty who can write well enough. It's more difficult to get anywhere.' So he went back to picture books and nursery rhymes. *Ring-a-Ring o' Roses*, *The White Land* and *Fee Fi Fo Fum* went down well in America and his American editor said 'We are going to do the biggest, longest, fattest nursery rhyme book ever,' and in 1966 *The Mother Goose Treasury* appeared.

By now Raymond Briggs was becoming an established name in children's books. He did some picture books for other writers' texts (including that all-time favourite *The Elephant and the Bad Baby*) and then thought it was 'time to write my own picture books'. *Jim and the Beanstalk* added another slant to the marvellously varied collection of giants in his previous work. It turns the traditional tale on its head and applies to it the logic of contemporary realism with richly humorous results. 'The original story was all rather cruel. The giant hadn't done anything wrong but he was constantly being beaten up and robbed - like giants always are in these old stories. I thought it would be better to have a kindlier more NHS attitude to him.'

It was the same realistic gaze he turned on *Father Christmas*. 'I thought if he was really real he'd have to do all the things everyone does - get up, clean his teeth, go to the lavatory, have breakfast. I realised I was treading on hallowed ground, dealing with a holy, almost saint-like figure in too familiar a way.' He thinks Hamish Hamilton were very brave to take it on. 'I didn't think it would go down very well. And I'm amazed they did *Fungus* and *When the Wind Blows*. They were all very dangerous publishing ventures.'

*Father Christmas* is still his favourite book. 'It's very much my parents' house in Wimbledon Park where I lived for 25 years. And it's the last book I finished before my wife died.' In it he found his way back to the strip cartoon. In the design of the *Father Christmas* books, *The Snowman* (a wordless delight for the youngest), *Fungus*, *Gentleman Jim* and *When the Wind Blows* he has made a distinctive contribution to the history of the comic strip (which he rightly views as a minor art form). But he's not going to be stuck with it. Two years of inventing *Bogeydom* and assembling enough material for three more *Fungus* books which will probably never get written have sent him in another direction.

'It's made me want to do a novel. You haven't got the maddening limitation of the space. In *Fungus* I'd just about introduced the character and set the scene and I'd run out of paper. There was no time to tell the story of *Fungus*'s great dream of healing the breach between the Dry Cleaners and the Bogeys and the schemes he tried to bring this about.' He's now writing what he calls a 'long unillustrated text'. 'You can't call it a novel. It's more a fictional journal and it's not for children.' The words have captured him again.

*Fungus* already has a large adult audience. Raymond Briggs' latest book *When the Wind Blows* was published on the adult list. In it he looks with devastating logic at the nuclear issue and tells a bitterly ironic story that arouses laughter, anger and tears simultaneously. The book has struck a chord with adults, young people and older children. 'It all began in April 1981 after that Panorama programme. It was a bit of a knockout. The next day there was a TV crew here and we were talking about it. One of them said "There's your next book Raymond." I thought, "Yes, what a fantastic idea." In producing it he has become more involved in the issues it raises. After arguing about it for two years he has finally joined CND. 'I realise the real menace is the nuclear thing. Everything else - the East v. West thing - is a tiny detail, a mere nothing. I'm very pessimistic but I hardly dare say that to people, especially people with children.'

Raymond Briggs has the deep seriousness of the best humourists. He's a shy reticent man, not afraid of solitude but enjoying the contact that friends and a little teaching at Brighton brings him. He lives alone and works hard. But it would be a mistake to see him as a lugubrious semi-hermit. Serious he may be but he also has a great sense of fun. The three weeks of intensive work he did with Ron van der Meer on *The Plop-Up Book* were a small riot and he is smilingly aware of life's ironies and absurdities.

Happily for us he has not abandoned children's books entirely. A new picture book called at the moment *Unlucky Charlie* may be out next year. And it's not a comic strip. ●

# Rich Pickings

Rich Pickings – Picture Books for Christmas for all ages. The idea that picture books are for everyone from babies to adults is now well-established. **Pat Triggs** makes a personal choice from this season's offering.

## For the youngest

### The Baby's Catalogue

Janet and Allan Ahlberg, Kestrel, 0 7226 5777 3, £4.95

A peep into the lives of five families and their babies. Marvellously rich and varied with a host of things and situations for the youngest to greet with delighted recognition. A book which guarantees hours of warm sharing and talking.

### Novelty still rules

Pop-ups abound again this Christmas, and there are even paper sculptures like Faith Jaques' *Little Grey Rabbit's House* (Heinemann) – a delightful extension of reading – which aren't even books and so don't count here. I've chosen some of the simpler creations.

### Peek-a-Book – Nursery Rhymes

Eric Hill, Piccolo, 0 330 26876 7, £2.95

In the tradition of *Where's Spot?*: a question on one page in bold black type ('Hickory, dickory, dock, what ran up the clock?'); the answer and all the rhyme under a flap on the other. Bold bright colours and good ideas in this and the companion titles – *Animals* (0 330 26882 1), *Opposites* (0 330 26878 3) and *Who does what?* (0 330 26880 5).

### Home Sweet Home

Maureen Roffey, Bodley Head, 0 370 30481 0, £4.50

The same question and answer principle with a nice conversational tone to the text – 'Does a cat live in a kennel? No. A dog lives in a kennel, of course.' – and cut-outs of various sizes and shapes to vary the picture that is revealed as the pages turn. Lots to divert the young reader and create in him or her a pleasant feeling of superiority.

### Anno's Counting House

Mitsumasa Anno, Bodley Head, 0 370 30931 6, £4.95

As you might expect from Anno a counting book plus. Cut-out pages again but this time always the same five windows of a house through which we get glimpses of what is going on inside. As the pages turn we find two houses and ten children moving from one to the other. As one house empties the other fills and there are opportunities for endless looking and poring over detail. When the move is complete you simply go from back to front and put everyone back where they started. Richly conceived and immaculately designed.

### Inspector Smart Gets the Message

Richard Fowler, Worlds Work, 0 437 40400 5, £3.95

A new departure in novelties gives sevens and eights a chance to be their own detective with the aid of a red spy glass which reveals all manner of secrets when used to investigate the pages. Jolly cartoony drawings, strip frames and bubbles make for easy reading. I hope the spy glass will last the number of 'readings' this will encourage.

### Lavinia's Cottage

John S. Goodall, Macmillan, 0 333 33571 6, £3.95

A more traditional pop-up but done with great simplicity and the minimum of mechanics to go wrong. The story of how two little turn-of-the-century girls visit measles-afflicted Lavinia in her cottage is clearly 'told' in John Goodall's lovely nostalgic pictures. Flaps can be opened to reveal what lies inside cupboards, the dolls' house, sheds. Characters turn to reveal their other side and, unusually with pop-ups, the best effect is kept till last: a fully 3D paper sculpture of the cottage with Lavinia waving goodbye to her departing guests and the interior of the cottage fully illustrated and visible through the windows. A meticulously created delight.

### No moving parts in

#### If at First You Do Not See

Ruth Brown, Andersen Press, 0 86264 021 0, £4.50



But a series of now-you-see-it-now-you-don't pictures as the caterpillar goes in search of something more exciting and the reader follows the text literally around the edges of the page. With the book upside down the pictures look quite different – an experience in perception to intrigue old and young alike.

### Stories for juniors – and all those who appreciate good illustration.

#### Rumbelow's Dance

John Yeoman and Quentin Blake, Hamish Hamilton, 0 241 10815 2, £4.50

Yeoman and Blake have done it again: a cumulative, repetitive tale with rhyming song in the best folk tradition. Rumbelow, on his way to visit his grandparents (and a sprightly pair they turn out to be) gathers a motley assortment of fellow travellers who can't resist joining his dance. Quentin Blake's line is as carefree and expressive as ever.

On the right: 'Pray won't you join us? It's easy to learn.' From *Rumbelow's Dance*.



Nigel's 'huge golden nose.'

#### Naughty Nigel

Tony Ross, Andersen Press, 0 86264 027 X, £3.95

A moral tale for all those who habitually and deliberately mishear what is said to them. Nigel's 'mistakes' become more and more extravagant starting with Wash the Fishes (for 'wash the dishes') and moving to Bust the Bears (for 'dust the stairs') until he learns his lesson. Much funny wordplay and pictures which manage to be funny and just a bit frightening at the same time.

#### Land of Dreams

Michael Foreman, Andersen Press, 0 86264 022 9, £4.50

Michael Foreman seems to be everywhere you look this year – not that that's any bad thing. *Land of Dreams* is a visual and verbal evocation of the nature of dreams in which the pictures expand the text literally and imaginatively. We see the old man, the boy and a giant (who moans that he's been rationalised out of everyone's dreams) piecing together fragments of unfinished dreams on



that snowy mountain top and launching them back into the world. Michael Foreman's use of colour is such that when, as at the end of this book, warm golden tones break into the cool blues of the previous pages, the effect is unmistakable. Beautiful.

#### Going up the age range.

#### King Nimrod's Tower

Leon Garfield and Michael Bragg, Methuen, 0 416 24410 6, £3.95



A version of the Tower of Babel story. The arrogance and pride of King Nimrod are contrasted with the homely simplicity of a boy and his dog. Everyone gets his just deserts and God has the last word. The workmen look more out of Breughel than Babylon and God owes a fair bit to William Blake – but that's no bad thing for the pictures work beautifully.

#### The Church Mice in Action

Graham Oakley, Macmillan, 0 333 33635 6, £3.95

Humphrey and Arthur lead the Church Mice and Sampson the Church Cat in raising money for the church roof. Their plan to ensure that Sampson wins a heap of Best Groomed Cat prizes is not exactly 'British' but it does work. The only problem occurs when (unfounded) rumours of their great wealth lead to Sampson being kidnapped and held to ransom.

Humour and quality story-telling in words and pictures are as surely displayed as ever in this eighth 'Church Mice' story. Not to be missed.

#### The Sea People

Jörg Müller and Jörg Steiner, Gollancz, 0 575 03088 7, £5.95

Extra large pages give plenty of room for the beautiful imaginative and fascinatingly detailed pictures which accompany this tale of two islands, one big, one little. It's another highly moral tale about the consequences of greed, exploitation and the irresponsible use of power. But the ending is hopeful and offers much to talk about in homes and classrooms.

#### Grannies and uncles who like to 'play safe' with classic books have a good choice this year. Top of the list for me is

#### The Sleeping Beauty and other favourite fairy tales

Chosen and translated by Angela Carter, ill. Michael Foreman, Gollancz, 0 575 03194 8, £6.95

Another pedigree collection from the Gollancz stables. Angela Carter is an inspired choice for compiler/translator; she manages to achieve simplicity of language without losing the magic or the poetry or, where appropriate, the humour. A dozen stories are beautifully complemented by Michael Foreman's illustrations in colour and black and white. A genuine classic in every way.

Lovers of Kipling can have four of his **Just So Stories** individually presented, each by a different illustrator, in full colour.

#### The Butterfly that Stamped

ill. Alan Baker, 0 333 34137 6

#### The Beginning of the Armadillos

ill. Charles Keeping, 0 333 34138 4

#### The Crab that Played with the Sea

ill. Michael Foreman, 0 333 34134 1

#### The Cat that Walked by Himself

ill. William Stobbs, 0 333 34136 8  
All from Macmillan, £2.95 each.

My favourite is the Armadillos which I find is still a favourite read aloud. Keeping's pictures beautifully depict Painted Jaguar and the slow evolution of armadillo from tortoise and hedgehog.

*Much of today's folklore resides in children's playgrounds. Hurray for those, like the Opies, who have caught it as it flies. A small but marvellously illustrated collection is*

#### Inky Pinky Ponky

Collected by Mike Rosen and Susanna Steele, ill. Dan Jones, Granada, 0 246 11319 7, £4.95

In the same style as *Mother Goose Comes to Cable Street* and with the same stunning effect. Bound to be a wow in classrooms even outside the ILEA. Rich, irreverent and full of jokes visual and verbal.

*For information I've chosen four widely different books.*

#### One Hungry Spider

Jeannie Baker, Deutsch, 0 233 97429 6, £4.95

In one sense a counting book (1–10) but in another a story which tells you a lot of fascinating facts about spiders (more details for adults at the back). Jeannie Baker creates her pictures using string, leaves, pebbles, feathers, etc. and they are clear and unambiguous for young lookers.

#### The Joy of Birth

Camilla Jessel, Methuen, 0 416 89970 6, £5.95

This is subtitled 'a book for parents and children' and of course the family is the ideally appropriate place for sharing and discussing what is here. But I would hope that with parental support this book would find its way into classrooms to be mediated by a sensitive teacher.

Camilla Jessel has recorded with her camera all the stages of pregnancy, birth and the first few weeks of the baby's life in several different families. The photographs are excellent and the commentary conversational and matter-of-fact. Supplementary diagrams and a glossary fill out the technical information without intruding on what is a very human and beautiful book.

#### The Luttrell Village

Sheila Sancha, Collins, 0 00 195838 0, £5.95

Drawing on the Luttrell Psalter, a highly illustrated fourteenth-century prayer book which can be seen in the British Library, Sheila Sancha has recreated a year in the life of the medieval village of Gerneham in Lincolnshire owned by Sir Geoffrey Luttrell. Full of fascinating detail mostly contained in the pictures (black and white) which miraculously keep the balance between the atmospheric and the informative. The text is lucid and accessible. A model of its kind.

#### Just Imagine

Robert Cumming, Kestrel, 0 7226 5823 0, £5.95

A marvellous companion to *Just Look* (and if you haven't got that, don't delay a moment longer) in which Robert Cumming opened our eyes to techniques in painting.

Here he helps us to be aware of what paintings are saying or making us feel. To be guided through the more than fifty paintings reproduced here is a genuinely educational experience for older children or their gallery-visiting adult companions.

#### Pick of the Paperbacks

#### Goldilocks and the Three Bears

Tony Ross, Sparrow, 0 09 929850 3, £1.35

An up-to-date retelling with Goldilocks in jeans and sneakers – but the moral remains the same.

#### Peace at Last

Jill Murphy, Picturemags, 0 333 34185 6, £1.50



The expressions on Father Bear's face as he moves around house and garden trying to get to sleep are a joy. Simple repetitive story line. Good for new readers.

#### The Night Before Christmas

Tomie de Paola, Oxford, 0 19 272131 3, £1.95

This looks as good in paperback as it did when we put it on our cover a year ago. Rich, glowing colours and patterns in a nicely stylised version of Clement Moore's famous poem.

#### Shrewbettina's Birthday

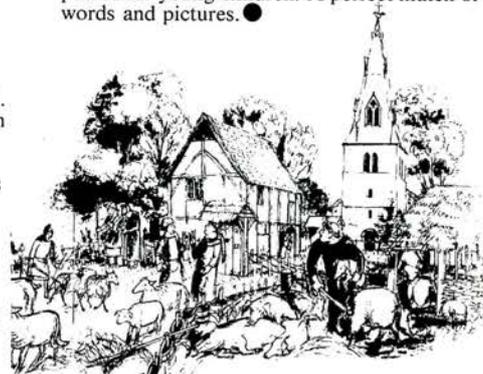
John S. Goodall, Picturemags, 0 333 34182 1, £1.25

Lovely to have two of John Goodall's wordless stories in paperback (*Creepy Castle* is also available). He uses the half-page illustration so skilfully to advance the story and the sense of scale – mouse and primroses about the same size – is beautifully maintained. The little shrew's birthday is certainly adventurous and ends in a jolly and lively party.

#### You Can't Catch Me!

Mike Rosen and Quentin Blake, Picture Puffin, 0 14 050.380 3, £1.10

Don't miss this Signal award winning book of poems for young children. A perfect match of words and pictures. ●



From *The Luttrell Village*.

# CHRISTMAS IS COMING

A selection of stories with a seasonal flavour to help you choose early for reading aloud

## Ruby the Donkey

Mirabel Cecil, ill. Christina Gascoigne, Methuen/Walker, 0 416 89190 X, £1.95

Lots of well-observed, accurate information about animals in winter is to be found in this picture book with its gentle story of Ruby and how she is chosen for the nativity play.

## Mrs Pepperpot's First Omnibus

Alf Prøysen, Hutchinson, 0 09 127770 1, £3.95

A value for money bind-up of three books of stories about the little old woman who regularly shrinks to the size of a pepperpot. Includes two Christmas tales. Guaranteed to captivate fours to sevens.

For a picture book version with Björn Berg's illustrations in full colour: **Mrs Pepperpot's Christmas** (Picture Puffin, 0 14 050.378 1, 95p) in which the indomitable and endlessly resourceful Mrs P. manages to get her husband to buy all the right things for Christmas in spite of having shrunk.

## Fair's Fair

Leon Garfield, ill. Margaret Chamberlain, Macdonald, 0 354 08126 8, £3.25

Victorian London, snow, two poor children, a huge black dog, a rich old gentleman: mix well and you have an old-fashioned tale of virtue tested and not found wanting. Here is mystery, suspense and a splendidly satisfying conclusion – don't be surprised if your listeners want it again.

## Mole's Christmas

Kenneth Grahame, ill. Beverley Gooding, Methuen, 0 416 25430 6, £3.95

A picture book of the Home Sweet Home chapter of **The Wind in the Willows**. In snowy December Ratty and Mole revisit Mole's old home; carol singing field-mice, a good feast and much cosiness.

## The Story of Holly and Ivy

Rumer Godden, ill. Adrienne Adams, Macmillan, 0 333 02851 1, £3.95

A lonely orphan (Ivy), an unbought doll in a toy shop (Holly) and a lady with a Christmas tree but no-one to share it, all come together to give this story a happy Christmassy ending. Girls especially love it.

## Christmas with Grandfather

Eva Bexell, trans. Joan Tate, ill. Gerald Rose, Bodley Head, 0 370 30210 9, £3.25

From Sweden, a set of stories about naughty Carl and Anton and the havoc they wreak at their grandparents'. (All is put right on Christmas Day.) A 'different' book, good for juniors.

## Warton's Christmas Eve Adventure

Russell Erickson, Knight, 0 340 28047 6, 95p

Everything is ready. Morton Toad is busy baking. Brother Warton can't wait for Christmas to come. To pass the time he goes ice-skating and meets Monroe Mole. They get trapped by a blizzard and take shelter in a cave. Unfortunately it's already occupied – by a bear. But Warton is determined not to miss the family Christmas and even bears can be affected by the season. Another engaging tale about this likeable couple.



One of the 'angels' from **The Best Christmas Pageant Ever**.

## The Best Christmas Pageant Ever (The Worst Kids in the World)

Barbara Robinson, Faber, 0 571 10593 9, £3.50; Beaver, 0 600 34526 2, 75p

The best Christmas read-aloud ever. As Elaine Moss said in the September issue of **Books for Keeps**, 'this is quite the funniest, most heartwarming story of a Christmas pageant in the making. A family of tearaways only go to Sunday School for the tea. But they grab the best parts in the Christmas pageant and by their unvarnished performance bring a deeper meaning to the Nativity play.'

## The Snow Kitten

Nina Warner Hooke, Puffin, 0 14 03.1142 4, 95p

It seemed that no-one in the village would give the stray kitten a home no matter how hard the children tried to find it one. But all is resolved on Christmas Eve. Listeners really feel the hardship and loneliness of the kitten. Breaks easily into five episodes.

## A Christmas Card

Hamish Hamilton, 0 241 10019 4, £4.50; Puffin 0 14 03.1235 8, 75p

## London Snow

Hamish Hamilton, 0 241 10450 5, £4.95; Puffin, 0 14 03.1442 3, £1.00



From Warton's **Christmas Eve Adventure**

See also **Books for Keeps No. 5 and No. 11** for more suggestions.



Illustration by Margery Gill from **A Single Star**

Two long short stories by Paul Theroux, illustrated by John Lawrence. Averagely competent 10+ readers won't get far with these books on their own. Read aloud well, they could make a real impact. **A Christmas Card** is an eerily mysterious, magical tale. **London Snow** is a miniature drama set in a London so cold the Thames has frozen over. Both are set at Christmas and finally affirm those things which are most simply and essentially associated with it. Five episodes for each.

## Stories for Christmas

Alison Uttley, chosen by Kathleen Lines, Faber, 0 571 11074 6, £3.95; Puffin, 0 14 03.1349 4, £1.00

Twelve stories which include magic, humour, old Christmas customs and a strong sense of Alison Uttley's beloved countryside.

## The Long Christmas

Ruth Sawyer, Bodley Head, 0 370 01068 X, £3.50

This collection which first appeared in 1964 is a real storyteller's standby. Thirteen stories from around the world – each preceded by a carol or rhyme – cover the 'long' Christmas season from St Thomas Day (21st December) to the blessing of the candles (2nd February).

## The Christmas Party

George Layton in **The Fib** and other stories Fontana Lion, 0 00 671808 6, 95p

One of George Layton's tales of a northern childhood. A very funny account of the school Christmas party.

## A Single Star

David Davis (ed.), ill. Margery Gill, Bodley Head, 0 370 01269 0, £3.50  
Puffin, 0 14 03.0876 8, 85p

A beautifully selected and extremely useful collection of poems for Christmas. ●

# The Borrowers Anew

If you are already committed followers of the Borrowers, then you will be delighted to know that, after a gap of 20 years, Mary Norton has written a fifth book, **The Borrowers Avenged.**

If you have missed them, now is the time to catch up. **Judith Elkin** went to talk to **Mary Norton** at her home in Devon.

Marcus Crouch has called the Borrowers: 'one of the few really original ideas in children's literature.' The idea of tiny people about 5" high, living under the floor, or behind the skirting board, who 'borrow' from 'human beans' all those small objects which keep disappearing, and put them to ingenious uses, is a very satisfying one. After all, where do all the drawing pins, safety pins, paperclips, matches and stamps go to? You know you keep buying them, but you can never find them when you want them. It is almost, as Roger Lancelyn Green once said, 'as if we always knew that the Borrowers were there but had forgotten the fact until Mary Norton reminded us of it.'

This is fantasy at its best. There is no magic and once the reader has accepted the possibility of the existence of these 'borrowers', everything else in the story follows quite logically, and perfectly calculated to scale. The stories depict a dwindling and precarious society through the characters of Pod, the brave, sensible, reliable father, Homily, the worrier, the inveterate housewife, and Arrietty, the bright-eyed daughter, the chronicler, the enthusiast. They are real characters with genuine family feelings and quaint, serious ethics.

The books are great favourites particularly with readers who like to get totally absorbed in what Mary Norton describes as 'the quiet of the book'. In the past 18 months alone, since Puffin reissued the paperback editions, 200,000 copies have been sold, with the original title *The Borrowers* continuing to sell 3,000 copies per month. They have been translated into 14 languages. Considering that her books have become classics in the children's book world, Mary Norton has a disarming lack of confidence in her own writing abilities, and is particularly anxious that children should like her new book.

For her, writing began as a necessity. Born in the early 1900s, she went on the stage at 18, married a shipping magnate and lived in Portugal for some years. In the 1931 slump, the company lost a fortune and Mary returned to England, where she began to write short stories for an American magazine, to support her four children. This was the age of the short story and she regards it as a wonderful training ground for her later writing.

Her first books, *The Magic Bed-Knob* (1945) and *Bonfire and Broomsticks*, later amalgamated into *Bedknob and Broomstick*

and made into a film, grew out of stories she told her own children. But *The Borrowers* was written from her own childhood. 'It's a period piece,' she says. 'It began as part of an early fantasy in my life as a very short-sighted child, before it was known that I needed glasses. I was an inveterate lingerer, a gazer into banks and hedgerows, a rapt investigator of shallow pools, a lie-down by stream-like teeming ditches.' As she concentrated on the roots of the trees, the branches, the minute details of flowers and small creatures, she began to wonder 'what it would be like, to live among such creatures - human oneself to all intents and purposes, but as small and vulnerable as they? What would you live on? What make your home? Which would be your enemies and which your friends?' So, her fertile imagination invented all kinds of ways in which these small people could survive, move around and use odd human 'borrowings'. But this fantasy world was forgotten during her boarding school years. 'It was only just before the 1940 war, when a change was creeping over the world, as we had known it, that one thought again of the Borrowers. There were human men and women who were forced to live (by stark and tragic necessity) the kind of lives a child had once envisaged for a race of mythical creatures.' But she says she prefers not to read other levels of meaning into her books, as some people have done. These are 'practical stories' for children, not theological or political ones.

She wrote *The Borrowers* for fun. She did not really think anyone would like it. It was not the kind of children's book being written in the early 1950s, when children's books tended to be about nice happy, cosy, safe things. Nobody wrote about the struggle for survival in an alien world. But this is what *The Borrowers* is about. Mary Norton sees the stories as being about 'human strife . . . of people being brave under adversity' in their perpetual struggle for existence. She also saw the original book as complete in itself. But she had planned without the public outcry which demanded to know how the Borrowers survived once they had left the old house and ventured out-of-doors. Even she herself was beginning to think of Arrietty, Pod and Homily as real people and she too wanted to know what happened to them. So she wrote *The Borrowers Afield*, these first two titles both being set in her family home in Leighton Buzzard, Bedfordshire. *The Borrowers Afloat* was written from a thatched cottage near

(continued overleaf)

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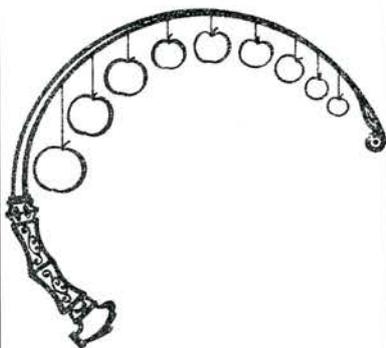


**Gollancz**

## Rosemary Sutcliff

Her first book was published twenty-two years ago. In 1959 her book *The Lantern Bearers* was awarded the Carnegie medal, and in 1975 she was awarded the OBE for her remarkable services to children's literature.

The following children's books by Rosemary Sutcliff are available from Oxford University Press



### The Armourer's House

New edition due

<b>Blood Feud</b>	£3.50
<b>Brother Dusty-Foot</b>	£3.95
<b>The Capricorn Bracelet</b>	£3.50
<b>The Eagle of the Ninth</b>	£2.25
<b>Frontier Wolf</b>	£4.75
<b>Knights' Fee</b>	New edition due
<b>The Lantern Bearers</b>	£1.80
<b>Outcast</b>	£2.25
<b>The Silver Branch</b>	£1.80
<b>Simon</b>	£4.25
<b>Three Legions</b>	£7.95
<b>Warrior Scarlet</b>	£2.25

Oxford Books  
for Children

Hartland Point in Devon: 'If you listen to the murmur of the streams, it's like people talking in very low voices. I used to walk a great deal and listen and look.' The fourth book, *The Borrowers Aloft* was written from an old farmhouse in East Anglia where she had a friend who was a free balloonist. The details of the Borrowers' escape in the contraption made out of a strawberry basket, balloon, fountain pen and household gas were immaculately worked out and it would have worked!

How did she come to write *The Borrowers Avenged*, after a 21-year gap? She found herself, for the first time for many years, living in a remote corner of Ireland, free from the stresses of house renovation, and felt that perhaps a final summing up of the Borrowers was required. She thought that the wicked Platters who had stolen Pod, Homly and Arrietty in the last book, 'had it coming to them'. She found that she could easily pick up the threads and was 'as interested as anyone to know what happened to them'. It took a long time. She normally rewrites her books about three times and is terribly anxious 'not to cheat' in her immaculate miniature world. She is determined to use 'the right word in the right place . . . if you've got a good enough story going, it does not matter if the child does not understand certain words, he will get the meaning.' She is not a prolific writer, in fact does not really see herself as a writer at all. 'I don't feel the day is ruined if I haven't written anything.'

*The Borrowers Avenged* is longer than the original four books and the opening which, as in the previous books, introduces the Borrowers through the brief glances that humans may have caught of them, is also longer. But the characters are absolutely in keeping with the earlier books and once again the atmosphere, the fine eye for detail in the description of their surroundings is beautifully sustained. There is even a charming new Borrower, Peagreen.

Mary Norton deliberately tried to write a story which will stand on its own without reference to previous titles and yet in which all the relevant details of previous adventures are carefully recalled or introduced in some subtle way. She has succeeded. But I'd still recommend reading the other four titles first; it is such a pity to miss the immense pleasure of the earlier books.

I believe in the Borrowers. I'm just sorry I've never met them! ●

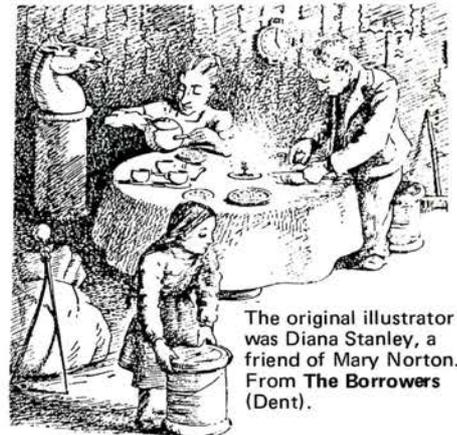


Mary Norton's son's house in Princes Risborough, on which the old Rectory in *The Borrowers Avenged* is largely based, is almost identical to this illustration, yet Pauline Baynes had never seen the house or a photograph: 'I couldn't believe it was so close.'

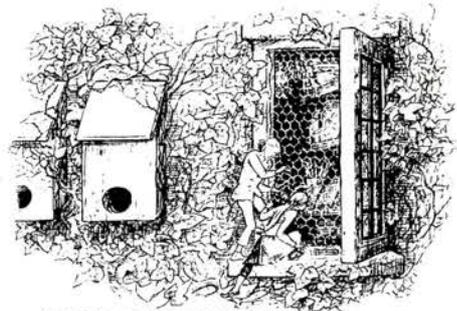
Judith Elkin was at one time Head of Services for Children and Young People in Birmingham Libraries. Her invaluable book list *Multiracial Books for the Classroom* (YLG Publications) is now in its third revised edition. Just published is *Nowhere to Play*, (A and C Black, 0 7136 2236 9, £3.95) a picture book about the children who live in the shacks of Caracas and their fight for a playground. It is based on a true incident but sadly the real children's battle did not have such a happy outcome as the one in the story. Judith Elkin has done an excellent English version of the original text by Kurusa. Monika Doppert's pictures give a delightful and informative view of the children and their community. There's a place for this in almost any classroom.



Mary Norton, photo by Tara Heinneman



The original illustrator was Diana Stanley, a friend of Mary Norton. From *The Borrowers* (Dent).



Arrietty and Peagreen from *The Borrowers Avenged*, by Pauline Baynes who illustrates the Puffin and Kestrel editions.

**The Borrowers** (1952) Dent,  
0 460 05104 0, £4.95; Puffin,  
0 14 03.0110 0, £1.00

**The Borrowers Afield** (1955) Puffin,  
0 14 03.0138 0, £1.10

**The Borrowers Aloft** (1959) Puffin,  
0 14 03.0458 4, £1.10

**The Borrowers Aloft** (1961) Puffin,  
0 14 03.0453 3, 95p

**The Borrowers Avenged** (1982) Kestrel,  
0 7226 5804 4, £4.95



# Lloyds Bank

## is pleased to support The School Bookshop Association

### MONEY – THE FACTS OF LIFE 6th edition by W. Reay Tolfree

As part of a continuing programme of educational sponsorship this book has been produced by the Bank, in association with the publishers, Woodhead-Faulkner Limited, 17 Market Street, Cambridge.

Written for those starting in regular employment for the first time, the book contains useful information such as how wages and salaries are paid, how to look after money and how to budget. Suitable for school-leavers, students, and teachers instructing in money matters.

Copies from booksellers or, in cases of difficulty, direct from the publishers.

**Price £1.**

### MONEY – THE FACTS OF LIFE Audio-Visual Presentation

A new audio-visual teaching pack based on the book has now been produced, comprising four 20-minute filmstrips with accompanying cassettes, teachers' notes, suggested projects and a copy of the book.

Specifically for classroom use, the filmstrips trace the early working lives of two cartoon characters, Zack and Zelda, through numerous drawings, photographs and charts, combined with a lively informative soundtrack.

**Each pack costs £30 plus VAT and is available under special preview offer from Public Relations Department (FS), Lloyds Bank Plc, 71 Lombard Street, London EC3P 3BS.**

# Awards

## The Other Award

Started in 1975, the Other Award commends books which make available to children 'a wider and more accurate representation of human experience and situation.' This year five books were commended by the judges, with the following comments:

**Into the Past: 1-4 (At Home in 1900, In the Street in 1900, At School in 1900** by Sallie Purkis; **In the Country in 1900** by Elizabeth Merson) Longman 65p each (pbk)

Four lively and well thought-out history project books that treat aspects of Edwardian working class life by portraying everyday activities and objects, reproducing contemporary documents and photographs and quoting the recollections of people over 70. An imaginative use of oral history for Junior classroom and project work.

**Black Lives White Worlds** by Keith Ajebo; Cambridge Educational (pbk) £1.75

A sensitive and skilful selection of extracts from 20th century Black American writing, which all tackle the relationship of Black people to white society, while also providing a record of changing Black consciousness. A powerful introduction for teenagers to some of the important Black American writers.

**Girls are Powerful** ed. Susan Hemmings; Sheba (pbk) £3.75

A collection of challenging pieces by young women from 7 to 22 (originally published in 'Spare Rib' and 'Shocking Pink') about being a girl today, taking in friends and

lovers, looks, school, work and home. A book of great impact and immediacy, a positive feminist antidote to all those teenage magazines.

**Welcome Home, Jellybean** by Marlene Fanta Shyer; Granada (pbk) 85p

A toughly realistic, sensitively told story about the pressures and frustrations that Neil's family faces when his active mentally handicapped older sister returns home for good. Love and understanding, but also misery and despair are recorded in this pioneering and unsentimental USA novel. For 10 year olds and upwards.

**When the Wind Blows** by Raymond Briggs; Hamish Hamilton (hbk) £3.95

A bitterly ironic tale, in cartoon strip, of a retired couple Jim and Hilda who trustingly follow County Council leaflets ('The Householder's Guide to Survival', etc) as they build their 'Inner Core or Refuge... as nuclear attack threatens. This searing anti-nuclear story makes devastating use of the cartoon strip format. For older readers (Younger readers may find the powerful and frank treatment of the nuclear issue in this book particularly frightening.)



When the Wind Blows

Two Awards appearing for the first time are:

## The Racial Harmony Awards

Instigated by the Asian News Weekly, Garavi Gujarat 'for any book which best promotes racial harmony in Britain's multi-racial society.'

The Major Award of £1,000 went to a book published in the Bodley Head New Adult paperback series, **Sumitra's Story** by Rukshana Smith (£3.50) which tells of a young Asian girl growing up in Britain.

The Children's Award of £100 went to **The Story of Prince Rama**, a simplified re-

telling of the Ramayana by Brian Thompson, illustrated with original Indian Manuscript painting and additional pictures by Jeroo Roy. (Kestrel, £7.95).

Also commended were **The Peacock Garden** by Anita Desai (Heinemann £2.75) and **Comeback** by Marjorie Darke (Kestrel £5.50).

and

## The Kurt Maschler Award

The award, £1,000 and a bronze Emil, is given in memory of Erich Kastner and Walter Trier (the author and illustrator of **Emil and the Detectives**).

## The Search for New Writers

### The Kathleen Fidler Award

Set up as a tribute to the late Kathleen Fidler, the award is for a first novel, by a Scottish or Scottish born writer, for eight to twelve year olds. It is made by Blackie Children's Books (Kathleen Fidler's publisher) and the Federation of Children's Book Groups (Scotland). The first winner is Allan Baillie, a Scottish born writer who has lived in Australia since he was seven. His story, **Adrift**, is about 'a boy who finds himself challenged, faced with responsibility and forced to survive not just in the face of physical hardship but also in the adult world.' It will be published by Blackie in April next year.

### The Hamish Hamilton/Beaver competition

Sadly this search for an adventure story for 8-12's has come to naught. The judges, Ann Parker, Pat Triggs, Fiona Waters and Frank Delaney felt that none of the entries were of a sufficiently high standard to merit winning the competition. More encouragingly some promising writers and ideas have been identified and these will be taken up by the two publishers sponsoring the competition.



The Kathleen Fidler Award, photographed by J.K. McGregor, Edinburgh

The judges, Elaine Moss, Fiona Waters (Of Heffers Children's Bookshop) and Tom Maschler (of Jonathan Cape) were looking for 'a work of imagination in the children's field in which text and illustration are of excellence and so presented that each enhances yet balances the other.' Books considered were published this year.

The winner is:

**Sleeping Beauty**, chosen and translated by Angela Carter, illustrated by Michael Foreman (Gollancz, £6.95).

Runners up are:

**The Church Mice in Action**, Graham Oakley (Macmillan, £3.95)

**Pelican**, Brian Wildsmith (OUP, £4.95)

**Rumbelow's Dance**, story by John Yeoman, pictures by Quentin Blake (Hamish Hamilton, £4.50).

Elaine Moss and Fiona Waters wanted to make special mention of **The BFG**, Roald Dahl, illustrated by Quentin Blake (Cape) which was not submitted as Tom Maschler felt unable to put forward books for a prize donated by his father.

## The Whitbread Awards

The details of the winners of the children's section of this year's Whitbread Awards were not available as we went to press. Taking a lead from the Booker McConnell prize, Whitbread are announcing the awards live on Channel 4 on November 9th.



Raymond Briggs  
Competitions  
Spike Milligan  
Jokes  
Johnny Ball  
Puzzles

BOOKS FOR KEEPS

Ron van der Meer  
Pop-ups  
Mike Rosen  
Bookboxes  
John Craven  
Information

# EXTRA!



# EXTRA!

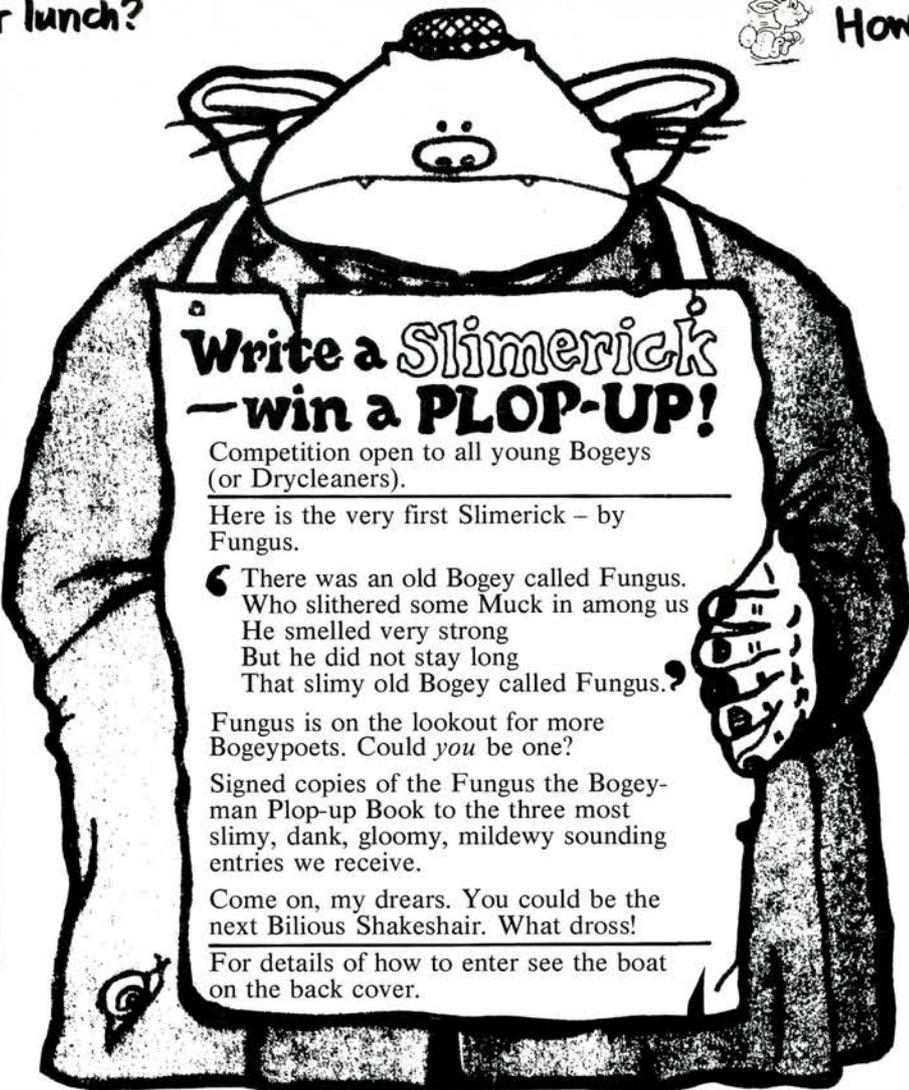
**Extra** is probably the best thing you'll get this week – unless your mum comes home with a videorecorder or you get invited to star in *Fame*. (That's a real golden phizwizzard. Look on page six if you want to know what that means.)

**Extra** is just the thing for reading under the desk, giving you something to do on wet Sundays, cutting up to stick on your walls (Who wouldn't want Fungus for a pin-up?) and helping you to decide what books you would like someone to give you. And when you have finished with it it makes good wrapping paper for presents or fish and chips.

**Extra** has got **Raymond Briggs** telling you about how he thought up Fungus, **Mike Rosen** revealing what he does all day, **Johnny Ball** teaching you a trick, and **Spike Milligan** getting Sticky. You can find out about polar bears from **John Craven**, make a pop-up with **Ron van der Meer**, giggle (or groan) at the jokes, and wrestle with the riddles. In the Bookboxes you'll meet people you might like to find out more about in books. And there are Competitions with PRIZES.

Everything and everybody in **Extra** has got something to do with BOOKS. You can find out about the books and how to enter our competitions in the boat on the back cover.

'What do cannibals play at parties?' Swallow my leader!



## Write a Slimerick — win a PLOP-UP!

Competition open to all young Bogeys (or Drycleaners).

Here is the very first Slimerick – by Fungus.

There was an old Bogey called Fungus.  
Who slithered some Muck in among us  
He smelled very strong  
But he did not stay long  
That slimy old Bogey called Fungus.

Fungus is on the lookout for more Bogeypoets. Could you be one?

Signed copies of the Fungus the Bogeyman Plop-up Book to the three most slimy, dank, gloomy, mildewy sounding entries we receive.

Come on, my drears. You could be the next Biliious Shakeshair. What dress!

For details of how to enter see the boat on the back cover.

## THINK BALL, THINK BOX



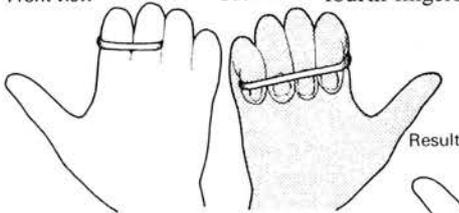
**Johnny Ball** amazes and intrigues us in his **Think Box** series on BBC 1.

He recommends this little trick to keep your friends and family guessing. All you need is a rubber band and a bit of practice.

The idea is to put an elastic band over the first and second fingers of one hand and make it jump magically to the third and fourth fingers. All you need to do is place the elastic band over the first two fingers and then close your hand into a loose fist. As you do this, you thread all four finger ends into the elastic band.

Front view

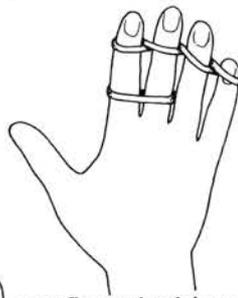
Back view



Result

You're now ready to astound some innocent member of the public.

Show your hand with the elastic band over the first two fingers. Straighten out your fingers and, hey presto, the elastic band jumps to the third and fourth fingers. Thread



your fingers back in again and the band will jump back again when you straighten out your hand.

To make this trick really impressive, take a second elastic band and thread it in and out of all four

fingers, effectively locking the first band on to two fingers.

Now surely, the trick is impossible? Try it and see. Even you will be amazed when you see that the band can still jump from one pair of fingers to the other. It's finger-jumping good!



### bookbox

## Naughty but Nice?

Marmalade Atkins specialises in being thrown out of schools and reducing adults to quivering wrecks. The books about her tell you how. If you only like stories about nice girls, don't bother with these. They are really for people like Marmalade who understand the art of mucking about.



If someone said to you, "What about growing horns?" what would you do? Billy went ahead and did it. How did his mum, his teacher and all his mates react? You'd be surprised. And I'd be surprised if you didn't laugh a lot reading about **The Boy who Sprouted Antlers**.



### bookbox

## UNCLE IS AN ELEPHANT!

... and what's more a millionaire elephant who wears a purple dressing gown and rides about on a traction engine. He lives at Homeward (think of about a hundred joined-up skyscrapers with a moat and drawbridge) and his biggest problem is the horrible Hatemens and all their gang in

Badfort. For you, if you like a really ridiculous funny story. Even teachers have been seen laughing aloud at this one.

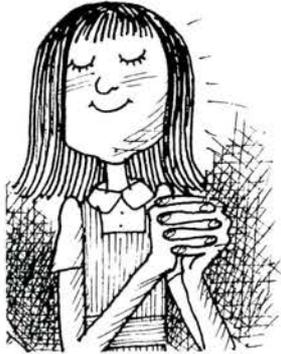


2 'I'm going to keep this skunk under my bed.' 'Oh, he'll just have to get used to it.' 'But what about the smell?'

you find a lost rabbit? Make a noise like a carrot.



We dare you



### THE VILE FILE

This is the appalling and repelling side of me. A chance to 'come clean' and tell the world just how awful I really am. I may not even tell the truth, I'm that bad.

I AM THE WORLD'S WORST

I SHALL PROBABLY END UP AS A

ALMOST EVERYONE IS BETTER THAN ME AT

MY PERSONAL APPEARANCE IS

THE WORST OF MY DREARY LOOKS IS MY

PEOPLE GASP WITH HORROR AT MY

MY BRAIN IS PEA-SIZE WHEN I HAVE TO

I'M A LOAD OF TROUBLE TO

I MAKE LIFE MORE DIFFICULT FOR



### THE CONCEIT SHEET

This is the absolute and unbelievable best of me. On these pages I can tell the world just how really great and talented I am.

I AM THE WORLD'S GREATEST

I WILL UNDOUBTEDLY BECOME

I AM UNBEATABLE AT

MY PERSONAL APPEARANCE IS

THE BEST OF MY GREAT BEAUTY IS MY

PEOPLE GASP WITH AMAZEMENT AT MY

MY KNOWLEDGE IS OUTSTANDING IN

I'M OVERWHELMINGLY HELPFUL TO

I MAKE LIFE MORE PLEASANT FOR

MY GREATEST ADMIRER IS

## MY SECRET FILE

A DO-IT-YOURSELF DOSSIER

Fill in this and find out the truth about yourself. Keep it secret or swop with a friend and see if you recognise each other!



MIKE ROSEN

## WHAT DO POETS DO?

Do they sit at home all day thinking up poems? Or do they walk about looking at things to write about? What do you think?

Well I don't know whether I'm like other poets or not but I'll tell you how I spend my time.

Some days I'm at home on my own with Eddie. Eddie isn't a dog. He's our two year old boy.

He's quite a fellow - I mean if you want pepper on your raisins - Eddie'll do it for you. (Actually it doesn't matter if you want it or not, he'll put it there anyway.) If you want tomato sauce all over the table; if you want the washing machine turned on with no washing in; if you want shreddies in your hairbrush, Eddie'll do all this for you.

I'm making up some new nursery rhymes for him, like:  
**Simple Simon met a pieman  
 going to the fair  
 Said Simple Simon to the Pieman  
 'What have you got there?'  
 Said the Pieman to Simple Simon  
 'I've got a load of pies'  
 Said Simple Simon to the Pieman,  
 'Ugh - they're all covered in flies!**

Sometimes we go for walks together, which means I have to buy him a bun and a drackylerly lolly - (Dracula to you).



Other days I go visiting schools. I love going by train. I buy up heaps of newspapers, stuff my bag full of apples and sandwiches and zoom off to Nottingham or Coventry or somewhere a bit nearer to my home in Hackney, London.

Sometimes I daydream on the train and then I write something.

Last journey I wrote about when I was 16 and me and my mates formed a band. There were six of us but only one of us could play a musical instrument. We only did one gig: Spare room, round at my place, March 8th 1962. I played nail-file, jammed in side of table. I hope it's going in my next book 'When did you last wash your feet?' (The poem I mean, not the nail-file).

When I get home I'll go for a run round Hackney Marshes. I dream I'm Sebastian Coe and I write my times up on the wall to see if I can break my record.

Around about bedtime I think of all the things I might have done. (Tomorrow night there'll be even more things I could have done.)

# BRIGGS in BBI

## Raymond Briggs

Lots of people in Britain look down on comics. Raymond Briggs has made them think again. If you'd like to know a bit more about what it's like to be the person who created Fungus, READ ON. Raymond Briggs will tell you.

'I first thought of being a cartoonist when I was thirteen; but, I did lots of other things like going to Art School, and earning a living doing drawings for magazines, newspapers and illustrating children's books, before I got back to cartooning with *Father Christmas*. I made it a comic strip because I needed lots of pictures to tell the story.

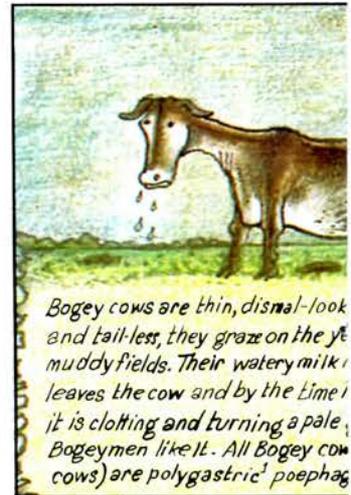
*Father Christmas*' house is based on my parents' house in Wimbledon Park where I lived for 25 years. Two of my other characters, Jim and his wife, are based on my mum and dad. Now I live in Sussex and when I'm not working I like gardening, reading and country walks.'



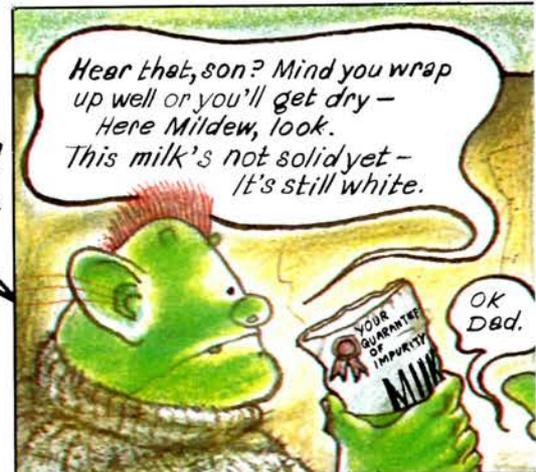
'I work at home. When I've done a "rough" sketch I show the publishers. That's the worst part is planning the story, the writing, then cut it up at twenty layout boards to see how it takes up and how much is left. With *When the Wind Blows* more ideas and having to re-add four frames meant re-arranging making them a bit smaller.

When it's all planned I start the page spread. I pencil in the drawing, do the lettering (using a map of the world for colouring (water colours and two years after the original) publishers the final artwork. The printers will make the book. It took me 20 hours, inking - 18 hours. And all that's after the ideas, writing and planning.'

## Bogey Br Briggs styl



THE FOLLOWING WARMTH WARNING WAS ISSUED BY THE BOGEYOLOGICAL OFFICE AT 0700 BMT TODAY - WARMTH FORCE 8 GUSTING TO FORCE 9...



# FK

# Blooming Books for Keeps!

sorted out my ideas straight off in pencil to the nice part. The face. I hand letter all and put it down on how much room it left for the pictures. I kept on having design the layout. To arranging all the others,

work on each double outlines, ink in lines, (magnifying glass) and the (crayon). It can be idea that I give the from which the I once kept a record pages. Pencilling – colouring – 25 months of getting

akfast ~  
e



'Fungus came from trying to do a book about all the petty nastinesses of everyday life. I thought of an alphabet book – S is for Snot. B is for Bottom. But that seemed a bit feeble. Bogeydom was a way of stringing all those things together. I began thinking about how Bogeys live, what they do. I always work from words so I started with two or three months just going through the dictionary from beginning to end making lists of words that fitted Bogeydom. They gave me ideas about Bogeys and Bogey words. Two years work is in this filing cabinet of Bogeyology – Bogey architecture, Bogey tourism, Bogey houses. A famous writer once said you have to know ten times more about your characters than you use. That's certainly true about me and Bogeys. I planned for three other books; Fungus was going to try to bring the Bogeys and the Drycleaners together by things like organising tourism to Bogeydom. They haven't happened. But there have been plans for Fungus films, Paul McCartney has written Bogey music and there's talk about putting Fungus on the stage in a musical.

Working with Ron van der Meer on the Plop-up was terrific fun. We wanted to have "scratch and sniff" bits with ghastly smells; but our publishers thought librarians and parents might not like it. My one bit of paper engineering never got into the book. I made Fungus' trousers come down. But – amazing coincidence – we found Pienkowski was doing that in *Robot*. So Ron worked out how Fungus could open his trousers, which is much ruder!'



'I've often thought of asking someone to translate the Japanese Fungus back into English so that I can see how they have managed the jokes – so many of them are based on words.'

# THE BFG

Who is the BFG? The Big Friendly Giant of course. He catches dreams (his enormous ears are so sensitive he can hear them flying about), stores them in jars and at night blows them into childrens bedrooms.

Here he's mixing up a real golden phizzwizard. (All the nasty trogglehumpers, bogthumpers and grobswitchers are kept safely stoppered up.) Watching him is Sophie. She's there because one night she saw the BFG and so he had to take her away. (Not that she minds very much - it's nicer with the BFG than in the orphanage.)

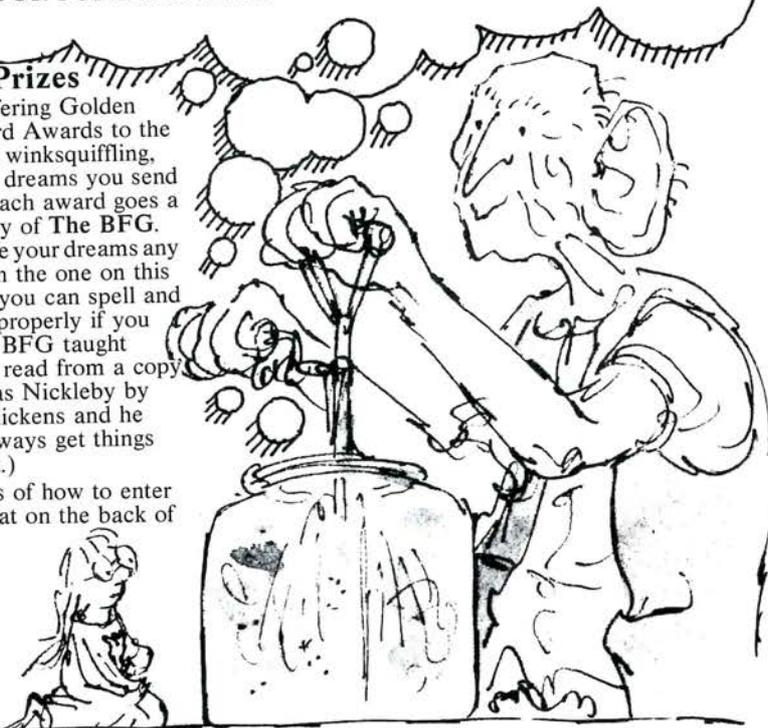
Dreams apart Sophie and the BFG have to save the world from people-eating giants like The Fleshlumeater. The plan they work out involves the Queen and the RAF and you'd never believe it unless you read it for yourselves. It's all in Roald Dahl's latest book.

I HAS RITTEN A BOOK AND IT IS SO EXCITING NOBODY CAN PUT IT DOWN. AS SOON AS YOU HAS RED THE FIRST LINE YOU IS SO HOOKED ON IT YOU CANNOT STOP UNTIL THE LAST PAGE. IN ALL THE CITIES PEEPLE IS WALKING IN THE STREETS BUMPING INTO EACH OTHER BECAUSE THEIR FACES IS BURIED IN MY BOOK AND DENTISTS IS READING IT AND TRYING TO FILL TEETHS AT THE SAME TIME BUT NOBODY MINDS BECAUSE THEY IS ALL READING IT TOO IN THE DENTIST'S CHAIR. DRIVERS IS READING IT WHILE DRIVING AND CARS IS CRASHING ALL OVER THE COUNTRY. BRAIN SURGEONS IS READING IT WHILE THEY IS OPERATING ON BRAINS AND AIRLINE PILOTS IS READING IT AND GOING TO TIMBUCTOO INSTEAD OF LONDON. FOOTBALL PLAYERS IS READING IT ON THE FIELD BECAUSE THEY CAN'T PUT IT DOWN AND SO IS OLIMPICK RUNNERS WHILE THEY IS RUNNING. EVERYBODY HAS TO SEE WHAT IS GOING TO HAPPEN NEXT IN MY BOOK AND WHEN I WAKE UP I IS STILL TINGLING WITH EXCITEMENT AT BEING THE GREATEST RITER THE WORLD HAS EVER KNOWN UNTIL MY MUMMY COMES IN AND SAYS I WAS LOOKING AT YOUR ENGLISH EXERCISE BOOK LAST NITE AND REALLY YOUR SPELLING IS ATROSHUS SO IS YOUR PUNTULASHON.

## Prizes Prizes

We are offering Golden Phizzizzard Awards to the three most winksquiffing, ringbellling dreams you send us. With each award goes a signed copy of *The BFG*. Don't make your dreams any longer than the one on this page. But you can spell and puntulate properly if you like. (The BFG taught himself to read from a copy of *Nicholas Nickleby* by Dahl's Chickens and he doesn't always get things quite right.)

For details of how to enter see the boat on the back of the cover.



## pop-up Person

Ron van der Meer loves making books which are full of surprises, like the *Fungus the Bogeyman Plop-up Book* which he made with Raymond Briggs.



Ron is Dutch but now lives in England with his wife, Atie, who has worked with him on lots of books, and his two daughters. At home he is always playing around with paper, scissors and glue. He says making pop-ups is easy if you know how. If you'd like to try your hand at paper engineering just LOOK RIGHT where Ron tells you what to do.

## bookbox

### Did you see Star Wars?

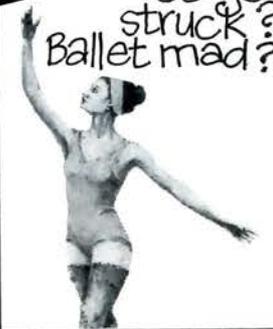
Do you like stories with lots of action where the forces of evil which threaten the galaxy? Then you need to know about Keill Randor, last legionary of the Planet of Moros. Through four books so exciting they take your breath away he pits his wits and strength against the powers of the

Galactic Warlord and the Deathwing army. You'll read them so fast you'll kick yourself when you've finished.



## bookbox

### Stage struck? Ballet mad?



Meet Moth Graham, she is too. Three books tell about Moth's years at ballet school. In the latest she faces her biggest test yet - an audition for the Royal Ballet School. Has she worked hard enough? Is she good enough? What if she fails? And what about O Levels? And Daniel, so wrapped up in his music he never seems to notice anything else, especially Moth.

## It's Milligan...

All fans of Silly Verse for Kids shout and sing and do daft things. There's another book out.

Guess what it's called.

It might have been *Knickers of a Kitten*  
It might have been *Doggy's Woolly Vest*

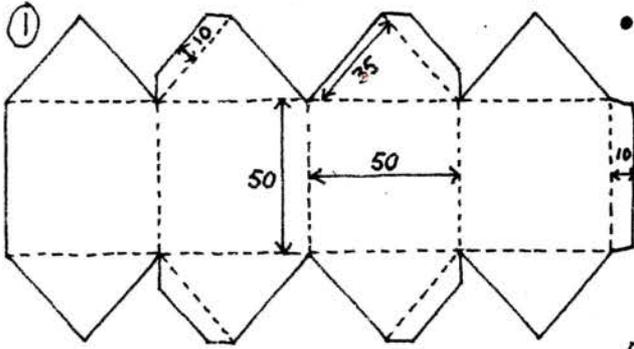


But  
**Unspun Socks from a Chicken's Laundry**

Is the title Spike likes the best. And here are two of the poems from it.



# THE JUMPING CHRISTMAS CARD



- WHAT YOU NEED IS: SCISSORS, PENCIL, ELASTIC BAND, RULER, COMPASS, PAPER GLUE, A SHEET OF PAPER (AS THICK AS 4 PAGES OF THIS MAGAZINE) OF APPROX: 12 CM X 25 CM.

← COPY THIS SHAPE ON YOUR PAPER.

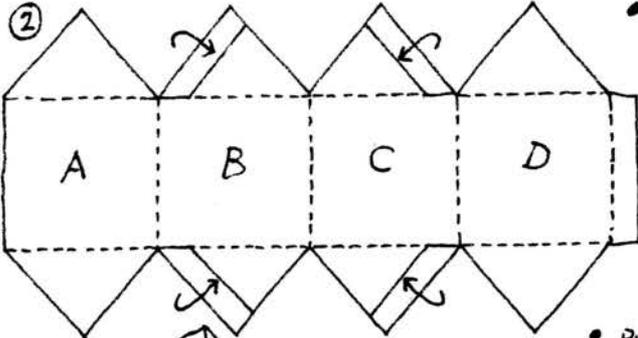
THE NUMBERS INDICATE MILLIMETRES

THE ARROWS INDICATE THE DISTANCE

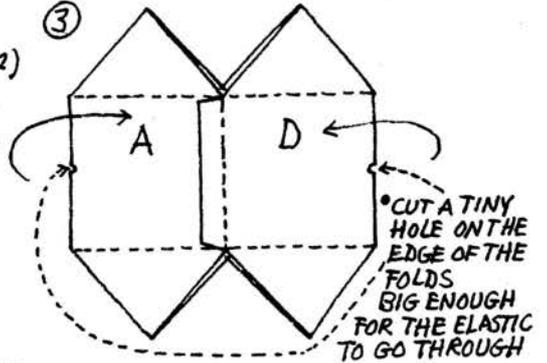
- USE A COMPASS TO MEASURE THE TRIANGULAR SHAPES.

- A SOLID LINE ——— IS A CUT LINE
- A DOTTED LINE - - - - IS A FOLD LINE

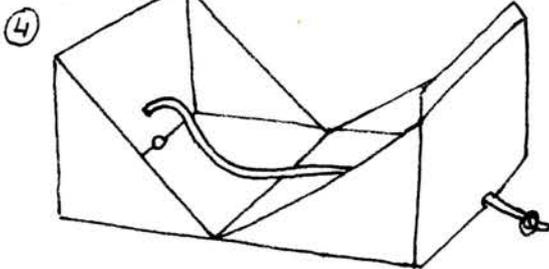
• THE DOTTED LINES ARE "DRAWN" WITH THE BLUNT EDGE OF YOUR SCISSORS ALONG A RULER (USE A LITTLE BIT OF PRESSURE, BUT DON'T GO THROUGH YOUR PAPER)



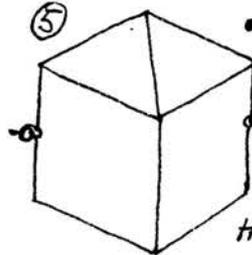
- FOLD OVER THE SMALL FLAPS OF B+C (SEE DRAWING 2)
- PUT GLUE ON THEM AND FOLD A ON TOP OF B AND D ON TOP OF C (SEE DRAWING 3)
- PRESS A+D DOWN FOR A WHILE TILL GLUE HAS DRIED



- CUT A TINY HOLE ON THE EDGE OF THE FOLDS BIG ENOUGH FOR THE ELASTIC TO GO THROUGH



- PUSH ONE END OF THE ELASTIC THROUGH ONE HOLE AND PUT A NICE BIG KNOT IN IT.
- DO THE SAME WITH THE OTHER HOLE, BUT MAKE SURE THE ELASTIC IS VERY TIGHT AND PULLS THE CUBE TOGETHER. (SEE DRAWING 5)



- PUT SEVERAL KNOTS ON TOP OF EACH OTHER TO MAKE SURE THEY ARE NOT PULLED BACK THROUGH THE HOLES.

• WHEN YOU FLATTEN THE CUBE AND TAKE YOUR HAND OFF QUICKLY, THE CUBE WILL JUMP UP AT LEAST HALF A FOOT (DEPENDING ON THE TIGHTNESS OF THE ELASTIC)

• NOW YOU CAN WRITE YOUR CHRISTMAS MESSAGES AND DRAWINGS ON ALL THE SIDES

- GLUE THE LONG TAB OF D ONTO A ON THE INSIDE (SEE DRAWING 3) MAKE SURE IT IS PRESSED DOWN TILL DRY.

- FOLD IT FLAT IN AN ENVELOPE AND SEND IT UP TO WHOEVER YOU LIKE

- ONCE YOU KNOW HOW TO MAKE ONE, YOU CAN MAKE MANY MORE AND OF DIFFERENT SIZES

• ONE THING YOU CAN BE SURE OF IS THAT NO ONE HAS EVER HAD A CARD LIKE THIS.

• DON'T TELL ANY ONE HOW YOU MADE IT KEEP IT A SECRET

Nelly Ninnis

There was a young girl called Nelly  
Who had a nylon belly  
The skin was so thin  
We could all see in  
It was full of Custard and Jelly

By Jane and dad on way back  
from Natural History Museum  
15 Oct. 1977

This is a stick-up!

The world seems full of sticky,  
It's everywhere I go,  
Underneath the table,  
And it's moving to and fro.

It follows me to school each day,  
It gets into my books,  
I swear that I don't put it there  
But that's the way it looks.

I've got sticky on my fingers,  
Sticky on my clothes,  
Sticky inside my pockets,  
Sticky up my nose.

My mother keeps on scrubbing  
To wash the stick away,  
The flannel just gets stuck to me,  
My stick is here to stay!

She's hidden all the treacle  
And all the sweets she can,  
She's locked up all the Syrup  
And every pot of Jam.

So why am I so sticky  
And nicknamed Sticky Sam?  
I really-really can't believe  
How stuck up I am.

Charlton  
Surrey 1979



by Jane Mulligan



Spike has made a record of Unspun Socks and there is a single of This is a stick-up! It's called Stickly.





What is the hardest part about milking a hamster? Getting a bucket under it!

## JC meets IS

**Ian Stirling** studies polar bears for the Canadian Wildlife Service. He spends 3 months every year in the Arctic wilderness learning more about these magnificent animals which have no enemy but man.

Research by people like Ian helps governments decide what should be done to safeguard the bears. In Canada, the law protects female bears with baby cubs. But when the cubs are about a year old — they and the mothers can be legally killed. Says Ian: 'We are trying to discover just how soon young cubs can hunt on their own. If a hunter is allowed to kill just one bear he will choose the mother. Her pelt will be worth more because it is bigger and thicker.'

Recent studies have shown that cubs which stay with their mothers for two and a half years will survive better.

Now, there's a new threat. The Arctic is being opened up by oil-men, with exploration and digging on a vast scale. Says Ian, 'As humans investigate and remove natural resources from

the sea bed, the local ecology may be upset.' There's always the chance of things going wrong — a major blow-out during drilling, or perhaps large amounts of oil being spilt from a tanker at sea.

'If polar bears were to get covered in oil, they would not be able to control their own body temperatures,' says Ian. 'Air trapped by the fur acts as insulation, helping to keep the bears warm. An oiled bear would quickly lose its heat and die.'

'Also, the bears would try to lick the oil off their hair, and they might eat seals which had been covered with oil. All this would harm the bears internally. And if the seals were killed, or forced away from the area, the polar bears would have no food. The same thing would happen if the seals' food, fish, were destroyed by oil.'

So what are the polar bears' chances of long-term survival? 'I'm optimistic, but at most, the female has only two cubs every three years. If a disaster happened it would take a long time to build up numbers again.'



## bookbox

### Are you a strong and willing girl?

If you lived in Queen Victoria's time and went into domestic service you had to be. There's a book of stories called that about being the oldest in the family and having to go out to work when you were only ten. It was hard but the girl who tells these stories enjoyed herself too. If you like books that let you feel what it might have been like to be someone else, try this one.



## bookbox

### Who



### is this man?

The whole country is talking about the Rectifier, the person who tracks down rich people who cheat by not paying their taxes. The Rectifier is Mog's hero. Who is Mog? Just the best gang leader around. But when Mog plans for the gang to

do its own spot of rectifying things get serious. Could you have kept your cool facing the sinister black-clad chauffeur, Mr Skin? How loyal would you be in a crisis? Find out how the gang managed in Mog and the Rectifier.

## TICKUP LIST

### Raymond Briggs' Books

**Father Christmas** (hbk £3.50, Puffin, pbk £1.25)  
**Father Christmas Goes on Holiday** (hbk £3.50, Puffin pbk £1.25)  
**The Snowman** (hbk £3.25, Puffin pbk £1.25)

**Fungus the Bogeyman** (hbk £3.75, pbk £1.95)  
**Fungus the Bogeyman Plop-up Book** (£5.95)  
**Gentleman Jim** (hbk £3.25, pbk £1.95)  
**When the Wind Blows** (For older readers, £5.95)  
 Except for the paperbacks by Puffin all Raymond Briggs' books are published by Hamish Hamilton

## Competitions

### How to enter

1. Please mark your entries *clearly* with your name, age and (school) address.
2. On the *outside* of the envelope in which you send your entry please write **SLIMERICK** or **PHIZZWIZARD** depending on which competition you are entering. If you are sending entries for *both* competitions write *both* words.
3. Send your envelope to the SBA, 1 Effingham Road, Lee, London SE12 8NZ.
4. The closing date for entries is January 21st 1983.
5. The winners will be notified in February, normally via their schools.
6. A complete list of the names of all winners will be published in the March issue of Books for Keeps.
7. No entries can be returned, so if you want to remember your entry take a copy before you send it in.
8. The SBA reserves the right to publish the winning entries if appropriate.
9. The judges decision is final and no correspondence can be entered into in connection with these competitions.

### Ron van der Meer's books

**The Pop-up Games Book** (Heinemann, £5.95)  
**Monster Island** (Hamish Hamilton £4.95)

### Mike Rosen's Books

**Mind Your Own Business** (Fontana Lion, 95p)  
**You Tell Me** (Puffin, 75p)  
 He did this one with Roger McGough.  
**Wouldn't You Like to Know** (Puffin, 90p)

### Spike Milligan's Books

**Unspun Socks from a Chicken's Laundry** (Puffin, 95p)  
**Silly Verse for Kids** (Puffin, 85p)  
**Sir Nobonk and the Terrible, Awful, Dreadful, Naughty, Nasty, Dragon.** A story with pictures by Carol Barker (Hobbs/Jospeh, £4.95)

**Johnny Ball's Think Box** (Puffin, 95p)  
**My Secret File, John Astrop** (Puffin, 95p)  
**John Craven's Wildlife Report** (Puffin, £1.00)  
**The BFG, Roald Dahl** (Cape, £6.50)

### Bookbox Books

**Marmalade Atkins' Dreadful Deeds** (Thames/Magnet, 95p)  
**Marmalade Atkins in Space** (Thames/Magnet, 95p) by Andrew Davies  
**The Boy who Sprouted Antlers** (Fontana Lions, 85p) by John Yeoman and Quentin Blake  
**Uncle** (Sparrow Books, £1.25) by J.P. Martin

### Keill Randor Stories

**Galactic Warlord** (Piccolo, 80p)  
**Deathwing Over Veynaa** (Piccolo, 95p)  
**The Day of the Starwind** (Piccolo £1.10)  
**Planet of the Warlord** (Piccolo, 95p)  
**Young Legionary** (Gollancz hbk, £4.95). Four adventures of the young Keill Randor before Moros was destroyed. All by Douglas Hill.

### Moth Graham Stories

**The First Step** (Knight, 75p)  
**Dancer in the Wings** (Knight, 95p)  
**One Foot on the Ground** (Knight, £1.10)  
 All by Jean Richardson

**A Strong and Willing Girl** (Magnet, 95p) by Dorothy Edwards.

**Mog and the Rectifier** (Knight, 95p) by Chris Powling.

### Jokes and Riddles

All the jokes and riddles in Extra are taken from Gyles Brandreth's **Big Book of Jokes** (Macdonald, £3.50), and there's much more in it than just jokes!

**LEAVE THIS FOR YOUR PARENTS TO SEE...**

THEY MAY TAKE THE HINT!



What happens when a frog's van breaks down?  
 He gets toad away.