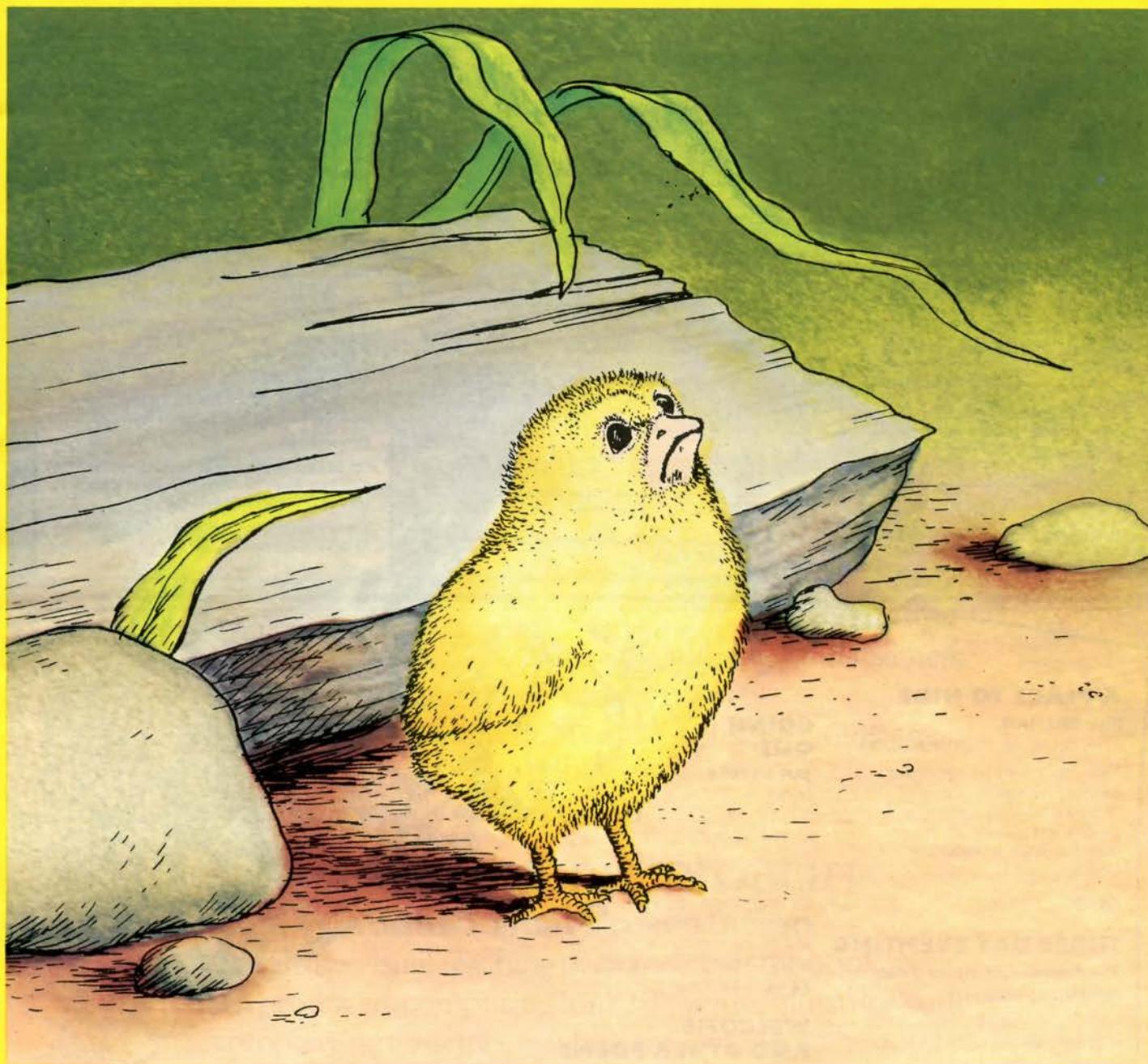


# BOOKS FOR KEEPS

MARCH 1983 No.19  
UK Price 95p



## SPECIAL PICTURE BOOK ISSUE

Michael Foreman \* Anthony Browne

Jeannie Baker \* Tony Ross

Errol le Cain \* Garth Williams

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#### Cover Book

On our cover this issue we feature **The Chicken Book** by Garth Williams. (See feature on p. 21 for details)

We are grateful to Patrick Hardy Books for help in using this picture.

### A PLACE TO HIDE

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Illustration from 'A Place to Hide'

**A Wide Range of Reading  
from André Deutsch** 

# Reviewers

in this issue



**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.



**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.



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



**Bill Boyle** teaches in Middle School in Wirral. He was Founding Deputy Editor of **Junior Education**.



**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.

## Book Character Costumes

Beverley Mathias at the Children's Book Centre (NBL) is in the process of compiling a list of all publishers' book character costumes which are available for use when you organise events. So if you think your next Book Fair could stand Fungus walking about in green and slimy splendour, or would benefit from a visit from one of the Mr Men (only two examples, there are many more) contact Beverley on 01 870 9055 and she'll let you know what's involved and how to go about it.

# EDITOR'S PAGE

The problem with moveable feasts is that you never know where they are going to turn up next. The timing of the Easter holidays this year means that most of you will get your March Books for Keeps at the beginning of April. We hope it doesn't find you feeling too much like the rather woebegone little chicken on our cover (more about him later). The summer term may well seem endless but look on the bright side; there will be three Books for Keeps to help you along and this Picture Books edition is specially bright, colourful and full of good ideas and things to cheer you up, like John Mason's first newsy despatch from the USA (see p. 23).

## Star Cast

Children's picture books in this country have what sports commentators refer to as strength in depth. There is a great deal of talent around and artists are constantly pushing out the boundaries and being genuinely innovative in content and techniques. The last twenty years has produced a dazzling sequence of picture books with exciting young artists arriving regularly. But it's easy to become blasé and still the dismissive 'It's only for children' dies hard on the lips of the ignorant. So we thought we'd take a closer look at the work of a few of our younger artists.

Anthony Browne and Jeannie Baker (see p. 4), Tony Ross and Errol le Cain (see p. 24) are all very different but they share an approach to children that refuses to patronise or make concessions. They pay children the compliment of taking them seriously as receivers of visual experiences. They deserve serious attention from us in return.

Michael Foreman (see Authorgraph p. 14) is someone else who believes that only the best is good enough for children. There is a lot of Foreman illustration around at the moment and more on the way. (Christmas Carol is going to solve a lot of Christmas present problems this year.) But there's not much early Foreman available - although Michael told us there are still some of the first edition of **The General** left; better get moving it could become a collectors' item. So it's good to see that the first four titles in Hodder and Stoughton's large-size picture paperback venture include **The Two Giants** (0 340 33197 6 £1.50) a gentle moral tale in collage, pen and bright water colour (no expanses of blue in sight!) Also in the series is **Black Dolly** (0 340 331992 2, £1.50) an early Charles Keeping story of a junk cart pony.

## Cover Story

While Hodder are branching out Evans are disappearing (see News p. 28) and the publishing merry-go-round continues. One new arrival which deserves everyone's support is Patrick Hardy Books (see p. 20). This new imprint is a demonstration of faith in good fiction and new writers, a beacon in the gloom of cuts and closures.

The chicken on our cover is from **The Chicken Book** by Garth Williams, Patrick Hardy's first picture book. The self help, on-your-bike moral of this little tale may increase its appeal as a fable for our time with some buyers. There is a certain similarity between the looming, brisk and bossy mother hen and the PM. Not that Garth Williams could have envisaged that when he did the book in 1946 (see p. 21). It is a jolly traditional counting rhyme, asking to be learned by heart, with delightfully amusing pictures, from a very talented artist.

## Guides to a Magic World

Moves like Patrick Hardy's are considered brave in the face of falling sales. The Dwindling Market Bogy stalks the book trade's dreams (see News p. 28). In fact they all know that there *is* a market out there; they are not sure how to reach it. The Book Marketing Council had a go at Easter at getting across to parents the idea that books are good value for money. The slogan 'Introduce your Child to the Magic World of Picture Books' was tied to the promotion of twenty titles with a maximum price of £2.50. It's an idea and a slogan that might well be borrowed for a Parents Evening. Which twenty titles would you pick to represent some of the best of contemporary picture books? And what would be your price limit?

That's one sort of promotion. The other end of the scale involves a steady, persistent attempt to make more people book conscious and better informed. That's where magazines like BfK come in. We look upon everyone working in this area as allies not competitors so we are delighted to welcome two new publications also dedicated to spreading the word. (Their originators write about them on p. 17.) **The Good Book Guide to Children's Books** is essentially a list of about 500 tried and tested titles. A third of them, very usefully, are non-fiction. It offers invaluable guidance for beginners in the area and is just the thing for a teacher to have on hand when giving advice to a parent. Full colour illustrations of the covers of all the books give essential information and make the guide look very attractive. Quentin Blake's drawings, a brief introduction about books and reading, and some useful addresses completes the package.

**The Signal Review** confines itself to a retrospective look at 1982's books. The layout and design are disastrous and it is easy to get lost; but don't let that put you off. Dive in and enjoy a varied range of ideas and opinions, many gathered from working teachers. In there somewhere is a thoughtful and thought-provoking piece by Margaret Meek which should give most teachers something to chew on until the next Review. There is also a brave attempt at covering non-fiction - nearly 100 books, just under a third of the whole - with negative inclusions to demonstrate general points. This is not a **Children's Books of the Year** - type selection. It is an interesting survey of a year's publishing, produced with admirable speed after its close.

## A Bood Gook?

Meanwhile back at our own ranch. Misprint of the BfK year so far had Robert Westall writing an award-winning gook in the last issue, and Anne Thwaite was quick to point out our R. L. Stevenson slip on the News page: 1883 is the centenary of the publication of **Treasure Island**, not its author's birth. Anne writes, 'I'm particularly aware of this as I've just finished a biography of Edmund Gosse who listened to the story (then called **The Sea Cook**) as it was being written chapter by chapter in the cold Scottish summer of 1881. Long after Stevenson's death Gosse used to hear his voice in his dreams.' As Anne comments, an appropriate thought for the Federation of Children's Book Groups' National Tell a Story Week which we were reporting on. It runs from May 7-14. Why not tingle a few spines yourselves that week me hearties?

*Pat*

# HOW DO YOU SEE?

## JEANNIE BAKER



Jeannie Baker has used collage for the five picture books she has so far had published: **Polar** (with a story by Elaine Moss), **Grandfather**, **Grandmother**, **Millicent** and **One Hungry Spider**. She was not the first to use this technique; during the seventies Eric Carle, Maureen Roffey and Rodney Peppé were all creating pictures for children from pieces of paper and fabric. They have moved on to making pictures in other ways, but Jeannie Baker following in their footsteps has moved the use of collage in picture books to a completely new level. Her pictures are full of realistic details and so three-dimensional that you want to reach into them to touch.

For me, her work is at its best in **Millicent**, created after a move from England to Australia where she now lives and works in Sydney. **Millicent**, published by André Deutsch in 1980, is about an old lady who feeds the pigeons in a park. After setting the scene and outlining the characters in an introductory page of text Jeannie Baker provides the story line in the form of comic strip bubbles of the old lady's thoughts as she walks through the park.

The real star of the book is not **Millicent** but the art work: the trees, the grass, the plants, the park furniture, the animals and the people are tiny, exquisitely detailed pieces which are assembled and photographed. The art work is made to the dimensions of the book, so each piece is the same size as the figures we see in the pictures. The trees are real pieces of foliage and the grass is a special, very fine-bladed variety; foliage and grass are dipped in a mixture of six chemicals to dry them out. As this process removes texture and colour the next stages involve soaking them in a mixture of acetone and glycerine to restore life and spraying with oil paint mixed with thinners to provide colour. The figures are drawn, traced onto card and cut out. Relief and details for limbs and faces are made by applications of Das clay which can be painted but does not need firing. Clothes are made from tiny scraps of material. **Millicent's** blue cardigan is knitted from strands of wool on fine needles.

When the art work for each page is completed there comes the important stage of getting the lighting and the photography right to capture an accurate image. Jeannie Baker takes an active interest in these technical processes and has become very aware of the complexities of colour printing and how precisely everything must be gauged to recreate her original work.

After the photographs have been taken the art work is exhibited and offered for sale in fine art or craft galleries. This is why so much trouble is taken in preparing the vegetation. It could not be exhibited or sold if the grass and trees withered and moulded. Each picture is roughly the size of the picture book page and varies in depth from one to four inches.

**Millicent** was not Jeannie Baker's first book. That was **Grandfather**, created while she was still working in England. André Deutsch appreciated her talents but in 1974 were reluctant to take a risk with an unknown illustrator's picture book about an old man who lives in a junk shop. Instead they launched her with her second book, **Polar**. **Polar** is about a bear, a more traditional topic for a children's picture book. The

story was written by Elaine Moss, a famous name for a new illustrator. The art work is closer to the work of other collage illustrators — figures set against a flat plain background — but the characteristic Jeannie Baker touch can be seen in the details of the figures. **Polar** wears a knitted suit in bold primary colours; the whole book is full of bright colours. It is a witty and entertaining story which children under five enjoy.

Then it was time for **Grandfather**, published like the next two books in a period when the idea of what constitutes a children's picture book was being well and truly tested.

But even now in 1983 there are lots of adults who think that children's picture books should divert and entertain only; their role is not to explore serious relationships or potentially disturbing situations. I have known teachers reject **Millicent**, **Grandfather** and **Grandmother** because the central characters are old people. It seems a shame to deny children the opportunity to share in the affectionate relationship that a small girl has with her grandparents. Most young children have grandparents and respond well to reading about them, especially when the collage illustrations are so absorbing and visually rewarding. **Grandfather's** junk shop is untidy, disorganised and full of old clothes, old photographs, broken furniture and clocks and televisions which don't work properly — a treasure trove for a small girl to explore. **Grandmother** has lots of cats and a house full of mementos to be examined. Both grandparents are pleased to be helped and offer patient explanations.

Her most recently published book, **One Hungry Spider**, took Jeannie Baker less time to complete than the others because the art work was not made for permanent exhibition; it was assembled, photographed and dismantled. **One Hungry Spider** is a counting book which also provides a lot of information about a day in the life of a spider. The web is made from thread and attached to the familiar Jeannie Baker foliage. The background changes from the pale light of dawn, lighting up the dew drops in the newly-made web, to blue sky, clouds and bright sunshine, to evening and finally the dark of night when the remains of the day's web have to be rebuilt into a new one for the next day. The counting element, which includes addition and subtraction, is in the insects that escape the web or are caught and eaten. At the end of the book there is more information about spiders for older children or parents.

Jeannie Baker's newest book was conceived and created in New York when she was there for nine months on an Australian Visual Arts Board bursary. It is to be called **City in the Sky** and is about life on the roof top of a tall building in New York where a young black man keeps pigeons. Publishing details are still being negotiated. If all goes well it should be available in England, Australia and the U.S.A. in 18 months. Like her other books it has an urban setting and like them it also contains a strong feeling for nature.

The audience for Jeannie Baker's books is wide: pre-school children enjoy her unambiguous pictures; her themes provide stimulating talking points for infant and junior school children who, along with older children and adults really relish the ingenuity and fine details of her collages. To explore the textures, the varied materials so subtly used and combined to complement and extend the story is a delightful lesson in how to see.

Barbara Jones looks at the work of two young artists whose picture books offer exciting and mind-opening experiences to everyone who is finding out how to read pictures.

## ANTHONY BROWNE



Anthony Browne's most valuable and distinctive contribution to children's picture books is to make the ordinary extraordinary, and the extraordinary ordinary. He introduces an element of surrealism into stories which are witty and full of visual jokes but deal with important and serious themes.

Anthony Browne lives and works in a small village in Kent. He studied graphic design at art school in Leeds and then worked in Manchester as a medical artist, drawing and painting specimens, operations and post-mortems. Perhaps this training accounts for his multi-layered, three-dimensional illustrations which are full of textured details. His first freelance work was designing children's greetings cards for Gordon Fraser. This led to creating picture books for children and Hamish Hamilton published his first book, *Through the Magic Mirror*, in 1976.

*Through the Magic Mirror* is about a small boy who is bored and fed up until he looks into a mirror and sees, not his front view as expected, but himself from behind. He reaches out to touch the mirror and ends up walking through it into a different and strange version of his own world; a cat is chased by a gang of mice, an invisible man walks past, and trains and boats have appeared on the main road. Children enjoy spotting the absurdities and adults who know the work of surrealist painters like Magritte and De Chirico will appreciate the quotations from their work — like the scene in which it is raining choir boys. The small boy gratefully escapes back through the mirror to the safety of his own house.

*A Walk in the Park* is about two pairs of parents and children from opposite social backgrounds who take their dogs for a walk in the same park. The dogs make friends immediately, the two children make contact eventually but the two adults remain isolated. *Look What I've Got* also takes place in the open air. Jeremy is a boy who has everything and boasts about it to his less well off friend Sam. After a series of mishaps, caused by Jeremy overreaching himself through showing off, it is Sam who is the lucky one: he is happy while Jeremy is still trying to find happiness. These relationships are expressed in Anthony Browne's distinctive graphic style — sharply outlined and brilliantly coloured pictures which are fully of witty details. The park benches are wearing shoes (odd shoes); a man is playing golf with a fish instead of a golf club; a washing line includes Y fronts, X fronts and Z fronts; a tomato is being taken for a walk on a lead; and the trees are a topiarist's dream. Each double-page spread contains lots of visual puns which children relish. His pictures offer a wealth of accurate fine details to relish and encourage children to be observant. They have an almost three-dimensional effect, created by superimposing three scenes one upon another — background, middle distance and foreground.

Anthony Browne has produced two smaller picture books about a small white bear, *Bear Hunt* and *Bear Goes to Town*. Bear has a particularly magical skill — he can draw his way out of trouble. In *Bear Hunt* he draws his way out of capture by the hunters. The jungle foliage contains lots of surprises: fingers masquerading as plants and leaves which are really little fishes. In *Bear Goes to Town*, Bear rescues himself and a group of animal friends from the clutches of a group of humans who are vivisectionists; the animals then escape from the crowded cruel city to

the peace and tranquility of the countryside. The device of Bear being able to wield a magic pencil works well in *Bear Hunt*. This is a story in which the humour is slapstick and Bear and the humans have the simple outlines of cartoon characters. *Bear Goes to Town* contains some humour but it is more serious and even rather sinister. The humans are photo-realist with unmistakably Nazi uniforms and habits.

To illustrate *Hansel and Gretel* Anthony Browne changed to a more aptly sombre and gloomy range of colours and a visually pun-free, serious style. This time the innovation is a modern setting. The two children live in a neglected house where the wallpaper is peeling off the walls, the television has been wedged on the sideboard, the ironing board is out, the table-cloth is grubby and the stepmother sits in the only armchair. The stepmother has obviously spent the down-at-heel balding father's money on a showy imitation leopard skin coat and not on food or bedclothes for the children. There are some stunning images seen within the frames of mirrors or through the windows which presage Hansel's incarceration in a cage and the witch getting her come-uppance as she is pushed into her own oven. Throughout the book there are sinister triangular black shadows reminiscent of the witch's hat. There is a distinct resemblance between the faces of the stepmother and the witch. It is a memorably effective book and it is to be hoped that perhaps in the future Anthony Browne will be equally inspired by other fairy tales.

*Gorilla*, Anthony Browne's next book is due out in April. His central human character is a little girl whose father is too busy to play with her or take her to the zoo to see her favourite animals, the gorillas. Instead she is given a small toy gorilla as a birthday present. She is disappointed by the toy until suddenly in the middle of the night it turns into a large real gorilla who takes her off on adventures.

Anthony Browne is currently working on a book about a small boy, walking through a wood, who falls prey to fantasies about Little Red Riding Hood and other fairy tales — a treat in store for the growing band of Anthony Browne fans.

### The Books

#### Jeannie Baker

All published by André Deutsch

*Grandfather*, 0 233 96864 4, £3.50

*Grandmother*, 0 233 96975 6, £3.95

*Millicent*, 0 233 97201 3, £3.95

*Polar* (by Elaine Moss), 0 233 96695 1, £3.95

*One Hungry Spider*, 0 233 97429 6, £4.95

#### Anthony Browne

*Through the Magic Mirror*, Hamish Hamilton, 0 241 89307 0, £4.25

*A Walk in the Park*, HH, 0 241 89397 6, £4.50

*Bear Hunt*, HH, 0 241 89921 4, £3.95

*Bear Goes to Town*, HH, 0 241 10817 9, £4.50

*Look What I've Got!*, Julia MacRae Books, 0 86203 004 8, £4.95

*Gorilla*, Julia MacRae Books, 0 86203 104 4, £4.95 approx. (April 1983)

# REVIEWS

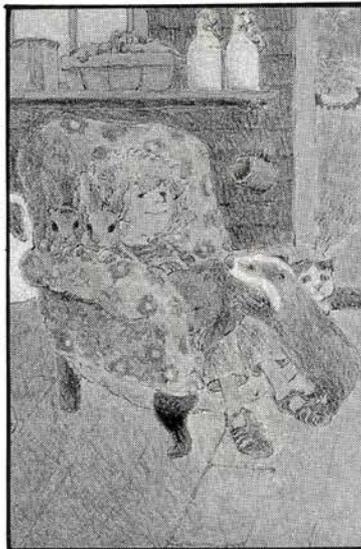
## Nursery/Infant

### Sunshine

Jan Ormerod, Picture Puffin, 0 14 050.362 5, £1.10

Using a technique not unlike freeze-frame photography, Jan Ormerod realistically portrays, in a series of wordless sequences, the first waking hour of a little girl and her mum and dad. The illustrations: waking, washing, breakfasting and dressing and the inevitable panic at the prospect of being late, are realistically rendered in warm colours. This is a story which all young children can read for themselves and interpret in their own way; very strongly recommended.

JB



in the shed; but she is not alone: she has to share her refuge with an assortment of animals until, with the arrival of a tiny fieldmouse, the chair tips over tumbling everyone

### Hilda's Restful Chair

Iris Schweitzer, Picture Lions, 0 00 662088 4, £1.00

After a hard morning's work, Hilda wants a little cool and quiet in her restful old armchair

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.

onto the floor. The cosy conversational style text and generous full page pictures have an appealing freshness and bring something of the relaxed atmosphere and sunshine of Australia to the reader or listener.

JB

### A Mouse's Diary

Michelle Cartlidge, Picture Lions, 0 00 662083 3, £1.00

A fortnight from the diary of a little girl mouse written 'at school'; the entries describing for example dressing up, a nature walk, a dancing class and a pillow fight are just the sort of thing a child of about six might well write. A wealth of detail is packed into the neatly executed precise illustrations. In my experience a book which appeals particularly strongly to little girls of five or six.

JB

From A Mouse's Diary



### Peepo!

Janet and Allan Ahlberg, Picture Puffin, 0 14 050.384 6, £1.50

The Ahlbergs' books always have something new to discover at each reading and with Peepo! this is especially true. Comprising seven four page sequences with a rhyming text, the book shows the busy day of a 40s wartime family through the eyes of a baby — and the peepholes cut in the pages. There is a wealth of detail to spot both in the main spreads and in the corners of the borders which frame the other pages. The text highlights much of this detail and draws the reader into the pictures encouraging further close scrutiny. Together they add up to a delicious and satisfying treat for child and adult alike.

JB

## Infant/Junior

### The Buttercup

Buskers Rainy Day Chris Callery and Margaret Chamberlain, Piccolo Picture Books, 0 330 28076 7, 95p

With its jolly illustrations and relatively short text about a Father Christmas like character, Snowy, and his mobile menagerie of small pets, this book looks, at first glance, like a good bet for learner readers. However, I must confess that the story didn't really inspire me and I found some of the line breaks in the text enough to disconcert even an adult reader. I imagine the success of the book will depend on how well received is the ITV series featuring the same characters.

JB



Cover illustration from Arrow to the Sun

welcome paperback; Gerald McDermott is, in my view, under exposed in this country: what about a paperback edition of his Anansi the Spider, now sadly out of print in hardcover.

JB

**Basil Brush Takes Off**  
Peter Firmin, Fontana Young Lions, 0 00 672132 X, 95p

The busy fox and his sidekick Harry the Mole "At the Seaside" and "In the Jungle". I like the 'Young Lions' format of two self-contained stories in one book. Ardent fans of the TV hero will stick with these, and the text-picture links are good. The plots are stretched though — and the sixes and sevens who read this for me were not as impressed as with other books in the excellent 'Young Lions' list.

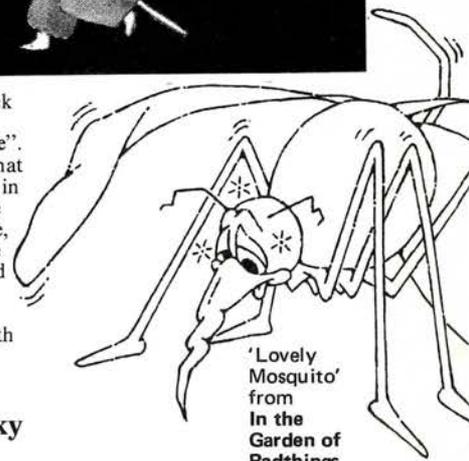
### Party Time for Nicky

Annabelle Prager, ill. Tomie de Paola, Fontana Young Lions, 0 00 672143 5, 95p

Two separate stories (The Surprise Party and The Spooky Halloween Party) in an attractive format just right for six to eights ready for an independent read. Wry, literate fun which encourages reading "between the lines". The young reader learns that all is not what it seems in stories! Nicky persuades all his friends to give him a "surprise" party which backfires; Albert goes to the wrong Halloween party and cannot figure out the disguises.

Clever division into readable chapters — and de Paola's pictures are characteristically vigorous and witty. Highly recommended.

CM



'Lovely Mosquito' from In the Garden of Badthings

### In the Garden of Badthings

Doug MacLeod, Puffin, 0 14 050.412 5, £1.10

Amazing nonsense poems by Doug MacLeod, zany illustrated by Peter Thomson, the whole making marvellous entertainment. From the sounds of 'A Swamp Romp', to the infant 'protest song' of 'Screaming', through the cheerful spooks of the title poem, the book begs to be read aloud. Some of the humour is irreverent, which perhaps makes it an unusual gamble for Picture Puffin, but it is one for which they should be applauded as I found this one of the liveliest poetry books for lower Juniors that I have read for some time.

BB

### Arrow to the Sun

Gerald McDermott, Picture Puffin, 0 14 050.211 4, £1.25

This American award-winning book is adapted from a Pueblo Indian myth and is brilliantly illustrated in gouache and ink, the stylised geometric pictures radiating with solar warmth and lights. This powerful story is one that could well provoke thoughtful discussion with junior children who are also likely to be fascinated with the illustrative technique. A most

# Junior/Middle



The 'Kuia'

## The Kuia and the Spider

Patricia Grace, ill.  
Robyn Kahukiwa, Picture  
Puffin, 0 14 050.387 0,  
£1.25

An argument between a Maori grandmother and a grandfather spider about their weaving skills is unresolved even when both agree to let their grandchildren decide who is the better, for of course, the types of weaving of the protagonists are worlds apart.

Many young readers will find the meaning of this strange tale somewhat elusive but it offers older children, and indeed adults, much food for thought. The story employs a number of Maori words (*kuia* of the title means old woman) and there is a glossary giving their English equivalents. The illustrations are naive in style and have a peculiar fascination.

JB

## Cam Jansen and the Mystery of the Dinosaur Bones

David A. Adler, ill.  
Susanna Natti, Hippo,  
0 590 70162 2, 75p

I found many eight to tens who liked the snappy, fast-moving, writing in the two previous 'Cam' books (*Mysteries of the Stolen Diamonds* . . . and the U.F.O.). This one should appeal just as well. The likeable heroine with the photographic memory and her friend Eric track down the thief of the *Coelophysis*' bones from the local museum. A good chase, chirpy word-play, and some natural history thrown in. A brisk plot, ripe for class serialisation.

CM

## Jeffy the Burglar's Cat

Ursula Moray Williams, ill. David McKee, Puffin,  
0 14 03 1493 8, 95p

A witty, absorbing story for eight-ups from one of our best writers. Jeffy is conscience-stricken by the antics of his mistress, Miss Amity and her

accomplice, Little Lew. Beautifully-crafted humour, the root of which is often the incongruous (the lovely old lady is really a criminal on the prowl). The stowaway trip to a tropical island is cleverly managed and there are some superb minor characters, including an overwhelmed Bishop.

McKee's cover and pictures are a bonus, matching gloriously Miss Moray Williams' ironic, understated fun. One for the class storytime — and you'll need some for the bookshop. (*Gobolino* and *The Little Wooden Horse* from the same writer are still in Young Puffin).

CM

## The Gumby Gang on Holiday

Pamela Oldfield, Knight,  
0 340 28561 3, 95p

Devotees will enjoy this latest group of stories in which the Gang spend a holiday with Steve's Gran. Lively, knockabout humour, good interplay between the characters, nice, unpatronising treatment of the adults.

I've used the earlier stories with eight and nines to spark off their own thinking and writing about friendship and the nature of gangs. Solid, uncomplicated writing, from which children can be led to say, Phillipa Pearce's *Elm Street* stories, or to Bernard Ashley.

CM

## The Little Water Sprite

Otfried Preussler,  
translated by Anthea Bell, Knight,  
0 340 28643 1, £1.25

A gentle, poetic story, superbly translated. It tells of the Water Sprite's exploration of his world, gently guided by his parents. He gradually discovers people — and the world outside his pond.

Some lucid, beautiful writing which will lead to lively discussion about "seeing things afresh". The sevens and eights who read this loved the passage where the central character sees people swimming " . . . some like frogs . . . he could see them floundering overhead like clumsy shadows". A lovely find which I'll use a lot. Rich, complementary pictures from Winnie Gayler.

CM

## Jonny Briggs and the Galloping Wedding

Joan Eadington, ill.  
William Marshall, BBC/  
Knight, 0 340 33022 8,  
£1.25

The 'Jonny Briggs' stories' origins on 'Jackanory' make them ideal for reading aloud.

This one centres upon sister Pat's wedding and there are some lively pictures of school life and domestic banter in the five linked episodes. As an adult reader I find the fun unrelenting and the characters rather stereotyped and one-dimensional. Joan Eadington has obvious talent, but I don't feel that we get to *know* the children or the adults well enough.

Try one or two copies in the bookshop, if only to get older juniors testing out their judgements on the 'realistic' story.

Smashing cover and pictures.

CM

## Dog Days and Cat Naps

Gene Kemp, Puffin,  
0 14 03 1419 9, 95p

A welcome issue in paperback for this superb collection of ten stories. Each is a very personal retelling. Sometimes the author is the storyteller; sometimes a child. Animals figure strongly in them — and the tales are rich in the goodwill, anguish, fear and humour that animals touch in humans. To read these and to talk about them with children from eight upwards is to see how a gifted writer for the young can *show* the really significant events of childhood. There's no earnest seriousness about Gene Kemp's writing; but an unfussy care for children and language comes through the pages.

Readers and listeners will find their own favourites in the collection. I love *The Grey Invader*, a spellbinding piece of English village life in wartime and *The Plagues*, where the fantastic and the fabulous lie within the ordinary family holiday jaunt. *The Long Crawl* catches the competitive hilarity of School Sports Day and *Joe's Cat* shows how a writer who is in tune with her audience can deal with grief without ever being sentimental. Rich, vital reading.

CM

## Alone at Pine Street

Mabel Esther Allan,  
Abelard, 0 200 72801 6,  
£1.50

Samantha Padgett, the heroine of 'Alone at Pine Street', is guaranteed to encourage even the most charitable of readers to put this book down for ever. Can you think of anything more nauseating than 'a clever nine year old' who has 'lost her rightful place at the top of the class'. A bit dated, or has Mr. Boyson managed to reinstate league tables back into the Primary classroom? Some of the detail sounds dated too — do boys wear sandals any more?

Peripheral comments are all that can be made, because the plot never begins and certainly never arrives, and the book just stops after a hundred and

twelve pages. The publishers claim that the writer 'writes sensitively about contemporary children in urban environments . . .', to me she seems sadly lacking in contact with real children, their dialogue, their thoughts and their activities.

BB

## Shining Rivers

Ruth Dallas, Magnet,  
0 416 27620 2, £1.25

**Mouse in the Attic**  
Gloria Gibson, Magnet,  
0 416 27680 6, £1.25

Two books from New Zealand which make pleasant reading for children of around nine.

*Shining Rivers* tells of a boy who arrives in New Zealand as an assisted immigrant. His father has died on the voyage and he and his mother must separate to find work. Desperate to save enough to buy land and carry out his father's intentions for the family he gives up a job as a baker's boy and goes to find his fortune on the goldfields. The earlier part of the story is surprisingly cosy, lacking the feel of pioneering spirit and struggle. This sense is captured to some extent on the goldfields and the reader experiences the greed, cruelty and ruthlessness of wealth-hungry men. But it is not as exciting as it might be and there is a certain 'and then . . . and then . . .' inevitability about the story that leaves the reader waiting for something to happen and never quite discovering what.

*Mouse in the Attic* is set in the New Zealand countryside of the 1920's. Mouse (Rachel) is the daughter of a country schoolteacher. Each chapter relates another adventure for this girl, reluctant to conform to the family expectations and consequently always in trouble. Read aloud in bits or as a whole. An enjoyable period piece with enough humour and excitement to keep a young reader going.

CL

## Uncle Cleans Up

J.P. Martin, Sparrow,  
0 09 929450 8, £1.25

*Uncle, J. P. Martin's* first book appeared in paperback last year. It was acclaimed as 'a classic' by the *Observer*, as having 'just the necessary pinch of genius' by the *Guardian*. Now *Uncle Cleans Up* is described on its cover as 'spellbinding', this remark being attributed to the *Times Literary Supplement*. I have tried hard but I cannot find the stories gripping or amusing although I do enjoy Quentin Blake's illustrations.

Nevertheless the stories are well written with a true storytelling, rather than storywriting tone; and in the right hands (not mine) could well hold a class.

CL

# Hardback Picture Books

Our pick of the new picture books published so far this year.



*Howdy!*

'Bruno the Kid'  
from *Crazy Bear*

## Crazy Bear

Colin McNaughton,  
Heinemann,  
0 434 94992 2, £4.95

Football Crazy introduced us to Bruno, a most welcome and original addition to that long line of literary bears. He's back again in not one but four smashing picture stories:

**Cowboy Crazy, Snow Crazy, Pirate Crazy and Rock and Roll Crazy.** Bruno, in the classic tradition, is really a furry child and Colin

McNaughton recalls exactly how it was – and essentially still is. Back from Saturday morning pictures Bruno becomes Bruno the Kid. In town he leaves his horse (bike) on Main Street and goes looking for trouble. After many adventures and 'days and days of hard riding across deserts and over mountains' he arrives 'back at the ranch' to find himself faced (in a full length mirror) with a shoot out with his worst enemy, Black Jack McDraw. A double spread of the duel, Bruno getting shot (Arghh! He got me!) and dying dramatically over eight frames ('eeiiiiee!', 'aarrrrr!', 'oofa!') shows

McNaughton at his funny and talented best. For combining pictures, picture strip, text and speech bubbles, there's no-one like him. *Crazy Bear* has appeal across a wide age range. (Try it with older slow readers.) Not to be missed.

## Spot's Birthday Party

Eric Hill, Heinemann,  
0 434 94287 1, £4.50

All the old friends from *Where's Spot* turn up to play hide-and-peek at *Spot's Birthday Party*. This is even better (if you can imagine it) than that first smash hit of a book. The young reader (or looker) can join Spot in his search for hidden friends as they are all kind enough to leave clues sticking out from their hiding places. A very high standard of production makes for visual appeal, readability and durability – essential when the flaps are going to be lifted as many times as these. An 'again and again' book for young children and new readers.

(Note. *Where's Spot* and *Spot's First Walk* will be out in Puffin this autumn and there are lots more hardback Spots on the way.)

## Cornelius

Leo Lionni, Andersen Press, 0 86264 038 5,  
£4.50

In classic picture books like *Frederick* and *Fish is Fish*, Leo Lionni has shown that it is possible to deal with quite difficult ideas like the role of the artist in society and the value of coming to terms with who and what you are in a

way that young children find enjoyable and accessible. The hero of his latest fable is Cornelius, a crocodile who is born walking upright and so can see things 'no other crocodile had ever seen before.' What's more he likes to learn new things. The response of all the other crocodiles is 'So what?' – at least until they think Cornelius isn't looking. No need to spell out the meaning – read it and let it lie. Collage pictures with strong expressive shapes.



## You'll Soon Grow Into Them, Titch

Pat Hutchins, Bodley Head, 0 370 30960 X,  
£4.50

Pat Hutchins does it again. In the foreground (literally) Titch is offered over-sized hand-me-downs by his older brother and sister with the cheerful advice, 'You'll soon grow into them.' In the background Mum and Dad are watching, the seasons pass and Mum grows more visibly pregnant (unmentioned in the text). Eventually Titch gets new clothes that fit, the new baby comes home and it's Titch's turn to pass on trousers, sweater and socks and utter the famous phrase, 'He'll soon grow into them.' Great for looking, reading and talking.

## Across the Stream

Mirra Ginsburg, pictures by Nancy Tafuri, Julia MacRae Books,  
0 86203 113 3, £4.95

A strong, simple story of a hen and three chicks escaping, in a bad dream, from a fox with the help of a duck and three ducklings. Good for early reading and learning. Bold, well-designed pictures which support and extend the text.

## King Rollo's Playroom, and other stories

David McKee,  
Andersen Press,  
0 86264 036 9, £3.95

To tidy, or not to tidy your playroom. That is the question for King Rollo in one of the four stories in this new collection. In the other three he makes breakfast in bed for Cook, thinks about keeping a dog, and has fun with masks. McKee's four frames per page pictures are packed with details and jokes: a visual running commentary on the action is carried by what must be the most delightfully funny and expressive cat in the business. Legions of King Rollo fans, old and young, will be queuing up for this one.

## Captain Pugwash: The Quest of the Golden Hardshake

John Ryan, Bodley Head, 0 370 30956 1,  
£4.95

The Briggs effect (in the footsteps of Hergé, Goscinny and Uderzo) is making itself felt. On this page already we've had cartoon-influenced Colin McNaughton and David McKee, now John Ryan returns to the original strip cartoon form for his latest Captain Pugwash adventure in book form. It's the highly entertaining mixture as before with Pugwash bumbling and boasting, Cut-throat Jake trying to have his evil underhand way, and Tom the cabin boy sorting it all out. Do they find the lost treasure of the Stinkas? That would be telling!

## I Din Do Nuttin, and other poems

John Agard, ill. Susanna Gretz, Bodley Head,  
0 370 30459 4, £3.50

Twenty-three poems about West Indian children by the Guyanese poet, John Agard. Some poems are in dialect, some have local references – sucking sugar cane, eating snow cones, playing three-hole (a sort of marbles). But most are about more universal childhood preoccupations – buying new shoes, birthdays, pets, parents. A lively collection to show that wherever and whoever you are things are different and the same.

# Middle/Secondary

**Roar to Victory**  
Michael Hardcastle,  
Magnet,  
0 416 300070 7, £1.00

I gave this to a slow but reliable reader of twelve. He is also a motor-bike lover and highly approved the story of Lee and the schoolboy Motorbike Club. Lee does win the grand prize in the end against all odds and over all possible champions including the boy with the ruthless father, and his own elder brother. Cheering him to victory on the sidelines is his favourite female cousin. As with all good stories for the struggling reader it is stuffed to the last page with predictable, recognizable happenings. Sometimes I feel that with these books we are settling children into a rut rather than showing them the way forward; but the responses of children who want to read but find much material difficult counteract my misgivings and I shall find a place for Lee and Darren and Greg and Joanne and . . . in the library as well as the bookshop. CL

**Murphy & Co.**  
Anthony Masters, Puffin  
Plus, 0 14 03.1591 8,  
£1.25

A further adventure of the Dunmore United Junior Supporters Club made famous in the original television series of *Murphy's Mob*. The football club is still struggling for funds, and Mac Murphy, the manager and the Mob's mentor, is desperate to sign new players, so the injection of half a million pounds surely cannot be refused. However, the source is dubious enough to make club chairman Rasputin Jones (the poor man's Elton John) refuse the cash. The reasons why and the subsequent developments provide sufficient incident to involve the young reader — and there are plenty of substrata of relationship entanglements to stretch even the memories of a 'Mob' addict. BB

**Linda Craig: The Mystery in Mexico**  
Ann Sheldon, Armada,  
0 00 692154 X, £0.95

**Linda Craig: The Ghost Town Treasure**  
Ann Sheldon, Armada,  
0 00 692155 8, £0.95

The Linda Craig mysteries may be eighteen years old, but they are still as cornily amusing as when they first appeared. 'If you like Nancy Drew, you'll love Linda Craig' states the blurb. Impossibly believable adventures, chasing saboteurs in Mexico, or searching for a stolen horse in the American West, all lent

'credibility' by the provision of a glossary to factual terms used in each book. Examples: Lariat = Lasso. Cinch = Girth. The glossary is as superbly irrelevant to fact, as the stories are to any semblance of real-life action or characterisation. For those who can't get enough of a good thing, there are six titles available in this Linda Craig re-issue series. BB

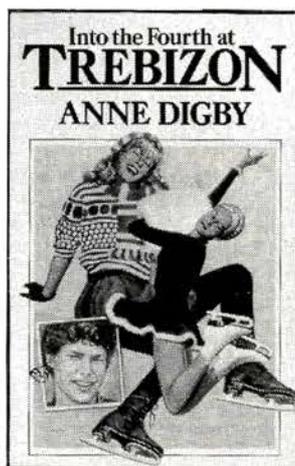
**The Case of the Wild River Ride**

Elizabeth Levy, Knight  
Books, 0 340 32793 6,  
£0.95

**The Case of the Mile High Race**

Elizabeth Levy, Knight  
Books, 0 340 32812 6,  
£0.95

The fourth and fifth titles in the 'Jody and Jake' Mystery series continue the ingredients of the previous books. The bionic duo are engaged in one 'exciting' episode after another, or even two episodes simultaneously. These breathtaking episodes either 'explode into nightmares' or involve the intrepid couple risking their lives, usually while engaging in the type of dialogue that the Bobbsey twins made famous. However, Elizabeth Levy lets us know that it's really all tongue-in-cheek, with her coded chapter headings; 'The toe and the jacuzzi' can't be for real, while 'Jake does something stupid' should be the sub-title for the series. BB



**Into the Fourth at Trebizon**  
Anne Digby, Granada,  
0 583 30555 5, 95p

'You've read this?' I said to my daughter. 'Yes, but I'm not reading it again, not even for you. It's boring.' The death of the most avid of Trebizon fans. Well, it is the eighth in the series and she has been hooked since the beginning. There will be many more to

take her place for Anne Digby has a loyal and constantly growing following for her stories. Copies in the bookshop will be bought.

To Trebizon in this one comes Ingrid, an icy Swede. She is tall and beautiful, immaculately dressed with a coil of the fairest hair. She teaches Rebecca to skate but also sets out to steal her boyfriend and undermine secure friendships. Trebizon is a happier place when Ingrid departs! The old-style boarding school story mix as before — girls of eleven to fourteen or somewhere in between. CL

**The Armourer's House**

Rosemary Sutcliff,  
Magnet, 0 416 25160 9,  
£1.25

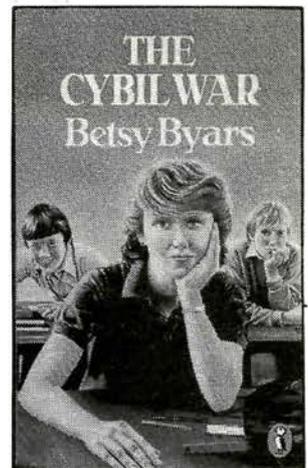
Like uncorking a good wine to find it has even improved with age, it was a pleasant surprise to discover Magnet's paperback edition of Rosemary Sutcliff's Tudor novel, *'The Armourer's House'*, originally written in 1951. Henry VIII's London comes alive in a kaleidoscope of period detail — all the hustle and noise and colour of the growing, thriving seaport and centre of trade, is brought vividly to the page. Both as an invaluable background reader to school projects on the Tudor period, and as an enthralling and sensitive tale of a sea-loving country girl's transition to life in town, the book is well worth re-discovering. BB

**The Cybil War**  
Betsy Byars, Puffin,  
0 1403 1458 X, £1.00

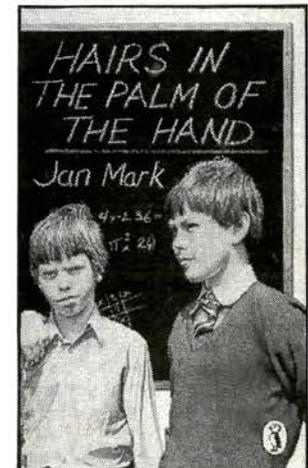
'Well, it's about this boy who fancies this girl, Cybil, and his friend does too.' That 13 year old was reluctant to agree with me that it was one of the funniest books I have read lately (I suspect he took the whole thing a little more seriously!) but he did admit that once you started reading you couldn't stop and that it really was 'a great book'.

Betsy Byars has a gift for noting the meaning in the slightest flicker of a child's face and writing it into exactly the right incident. The class nutrition play when the choice of parts ranges from a dill pickle to a carton of cottage cheese; the pet show in which a poodle appears dressed as a baby and soils its diaper: Simon is well aware of how awful these events are and agonises over them as he agonises over his ecologically minded father who has left home for the 'good life' or self sufficiency.

The humour is unspoken. It arises from the awful reality of life, the agony of not wanting to grow up, the realisation that



all is not fair in love and war and that your best friend can betray you. Cybil remains sane and sensible throughout; Simon recognises the one-sidedness of his friendship with Toni Angotti and begins to see the twosidedness of his parents' failure. He stops posing as the woebegone and abandoned and enters the real world. Encourage all intelligent twelve year olds to read this and then suggest they read it again six months later. CL



**Hairs in the Palm of the Hand**  
Jan Mark, Puffin,  
0 14 03.1441 5, 95p

The title refers of course to the first signs of madness, well-known to all school children and an apt title for these two wickedly funny school stories.

In *Time and the Hour* a group of boys run a time and motion study on the time wasted each day by both teachers and children. When a 'book' is opened and bets placed on the final result chaos mounts.

*Chutzpah*, the second story, also tells of disruption in school.

There is more than a hint of truth about schools and those therein in both these tales. Each story is a quick satisfying read and both are good for reading aloud. CL

## The Boy who Won the Pools

Gerard Macdonald,  
Lions, 0 00 672062 5,  
£1.00

I made a point of watching the first episode of the serial that spawned this — and noticed that Gerard Macdonald had added bits! No wonder the whole thing stretched to 180+ pages. It would have been better to cut rather than expand all those short scenes. The idea of having three quarters of a million to spend and becoming involved in the pop/video business is an attractive fantasy and humour is always in demand. Once again, we're in no position to pick and choose. Try it — even if it is much more successful on the screen. SB

## The Gruesome Book

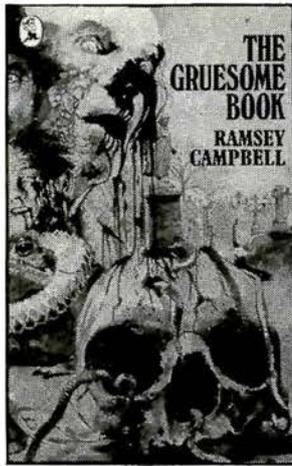
ed. Ramsey Campbell,  
Piccolo, 0 330 26910 0,  
£1.00

## Peter Davison's Book of Alien Planets

Sparrow, 0 09 930880 0,  
95p

## Ghosts that Haunt You

ed. Aidan Chambers,  
Puffin, 0 14 03.1428 8,  
£1.35



## Haunting Tales

ed. Kathleen Lines,  
Beaver, 0 600 20588 6,  
£1.25

The new collection of nasties from Piccolo will be widely read. Some are gruesome — and some adults would say gratuitously so. Kids won't worry though and its cover, slimmness and effective illustrations will pull them in. Teachers should check out Nigel Kneale's *The Pond*, Bloch's *Hobo*, Brian Lumley's *The Deep-Sea Conch* and Matheson's *Long Distance*. Call for reasons of style or form. Kids always enjoy Kuttner's *Graveyard Rats* and

the editor's own story plus the original 3.47 AM from David Langford will be popular, too — though all horror stories make few linguistic concessions and some are over-flashy, as if to compensate for their other crudities.

Peter Davison's (?) new collection is a more conventional collection for a kids' book list. Two originals — from Stephen David and Mary Gentle — are OK but not exceptional and the six others are standard stuff for SF anthologies, with a couple from Clarke and a less-well-known Bradbury. Presumably the Davison appeal is to top juniors and lower secondary kids but these stories are only for the sophisticated among them, or for older kids — who might prefer a different package. Less appropriate than Davison's *Alien Monsters*; one hopes that any future anthologies in this series are given a little more thought — young kids like action, not ideas.

Aidan Chambers' collection is much worse. Anyone who knows anything about ghost stories could put together a better one in an hour — maybe thirty minutes. Apart from two from his own *Ghosts 2* (Topliner) there are dreary old standards from Agatha Christie, Bradbury (*The Emissary*, again, Chetwynd-

Hayes, M.R. James (*Lost Hearts*, totally unsuitable for children), Manly Wade Wellman and, worst of all, the openers from August Derleth and Pamela Hansford Johnson. By comparison, an Armitage story from Joan Aiken is a relief! Poor illustrations, quite good cover; ignore unless you're desperate.

**Haunting Tales (The Haunted and the Haunters in Bodley Head hardback)** is another one to avoid. Beaver push out a lot of these collections so presumably they must sell despite the fact that most kids would be bored to tears by what they offer. This has the usual names — M.R. James, de la Mare, Blackwood — plus some less common, but no more readable, offerings. Older kids who can cope with slow, literary style and who dip into it here and there might enjoy parts — provided they're not too suave for a book with this kind of cover. SB



# Older Readers

## The Girl who Wanted a Boy

Paul Zindel, Puffin Plus,  
0 14 03.1455 5, £1.25

Sibella Cametta does well in school, has a fat bank balance from building shelves, fixing cars and wiring in light fittings — but she wants a boy. Then she sees him in the paper; goes out to get him. Transpires he's a typical Zindel victim — but young enough to stand a chance when Sibella buys him the possibility of a future. Not the best way into Zindel — but a possible extra title for those who know and like his books already. It's slim — and that's a plus even if the boy on the front won't fit the *Sweet Dreams* of the fifth form. SB

## S.W.A.L.K.

Paula Milne, Thames  
Methuen,  
0 423 00490 5, £1.25

Strange book, with its oddity — one charitably assumes — resulting from attempts to deal with the telly serial's multifarious images. It's about a girl who's too influenced by teenage magazines — the "Get -Yourself-A-Fella" voice providing a Fiend's counterpoint to scenes of Girls' Rights at school, her sister's enforced wedding and tower block start in life, her parents' dismal marriage and a first

date's unglamorous realities. The shifting point-of-view doesn't make it easy to create a smooth read but slipping into a peculiar buttonhole-the-reader narration doesn't help much. I'm desperate enough to try it but I don't hold out much hope — it's too ponderous and too fragmentary. SB

## Going Out

Jan Needle, Lions,  
0 00 672135 4, £1.00

Unspectacular but thoroughly professional transfer of Phil Redmond's excellent TV series into novel form. As far as I can remember, it sticks closely to the programmes, detailing the various scrapes of four lads and two girls hanging about between unsatisfactory visits to the Job Centre. Such changing focus is inevitably more suited to the screen than to print but this is definitely one of the better products of box-book collusion. There's a good deal more realism than you usually find, though, conversely, the sense of start-to-finish plot development to keep you going is restricted. Should rekindle some memories and maybe prod some people into asking questions. SB

## The Fortunate Few

Tim Kennemore, Puffin  
Plus, 0 14 03.1520 9,  
95p

One of the most original novels to hit the teenage market for a long time. Jodie Bell is a fourteen year old gymnastics star in a future where professional leap and balance has become a spectator sport with clubs, leagues and raving fans. A smart operator like Jodie can expect to make a lot of money — and she does, though some of her team mates are fighting the ruthless exploitation that the clubs practise. Less than ninety fast-moving pages (joy!) with striking characters and only a little clumsy satire/humour to feel uneasy about. Read it yourself and push it hard.

(P.S. My copy has a typographical error at a crucial point between penultimate and final pages. Check yours. There are an unacceptable number of such errors creeping into books again after a relatively good spell. Some people obviously aren't doing their jobs.) SB

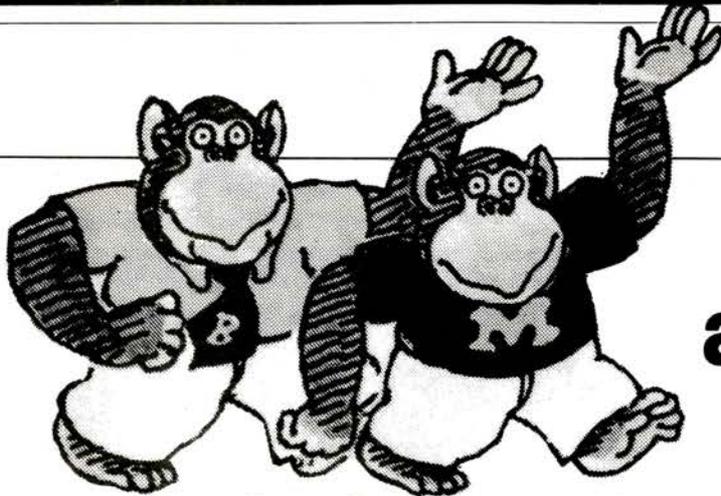
## Gangsters Ghosts & Dragonflies

Brian Patten, Piccolo,  
0 330 26955 0, £1.50

Sadly neglected on its first appearance, as an Allen & Unwin hardback in 1981, Brian Patten's superb collection of contemporary 'longer' poems makes a welcome re-appearance in paperback from Piccolo. Freshness and invention were

the aims of the anthologist, and his selection succeeds admirably in reaching those targets. A comprehensive range of the talents of many of the finest of our living poets is exhibited, making available lively, funny, exciting and often eccentric material, all with the common denominator of accessibility to youngsters. Contributors include Ted Hughes, Vernon Scannell, Kit Wright, Roger McGough, Roald Dahl and Charles Causley among others, plus several of Patten's own poems. All the stale 'old chestnuts' are avoided, and the anthology demonstrates the quality of relevant material that is available for children, especially when the selection is made by one who is sensitive to the taste of the audience. Thoroughly recommended, a random 'dip' will enliven the dulllest of poetry lessons, and possibly even whet the appetite for tackling more abstruse longer poems later. BB





Longman 

**When they  
are learning  
to read...**

**...make it more fun with these  
lovable favourites**

***\*Bangers and Mash\****

**The Bangers and Mash  
ABC Book**

Paul Groves and Jennifer Bromley.  
Pictures by Edward McLachlan

With a page for every letter, and 'ch', 'sh'  
and 'th'. Lots to talk about plus an ABC  
game in the middle of the book.

0 582 39099 0 £3.50

***\*Thin King\****

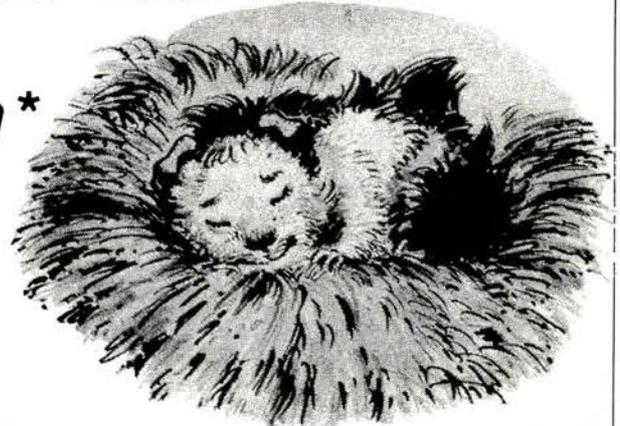
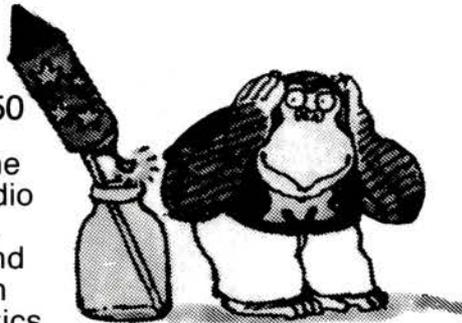
**The First Big  
Radio Thin King**

Derek Farmer  
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Bookworm help children  
with those tricky phonetics.



***\*Olga da Polga\****

**The First Big Olga da Polga Book**

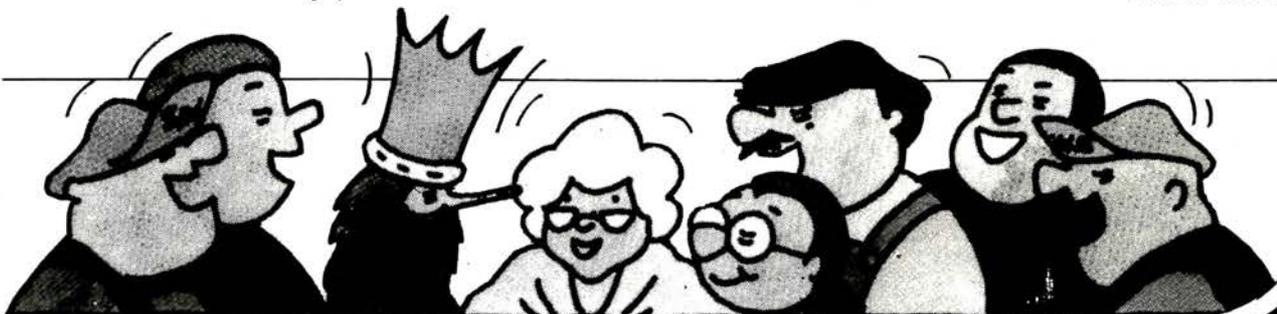
Michael Bond 0 582 25063 3 £2.95

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Four carefully graded stories in each  
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## Lifeline Two

Judith Elkin continues her series on Multi-cultural Books

## NO.2 Picture Books

In the last issue of *Books For Keeps*, I tried to show the importance of children's books which reflect, naturally and unselfconsciously the richness of cultures existing in Britain today. I believe that such books should be readily available in all schools regardless of the ethnic mix of the children within that school, for after all we are educating children for their future in a multi-cultural Britain.

Children's attitudes develop rapidly from a young age and their image of the world around them begins to form quite early. Thus, a multi-cultural breadth of vision is just as important when we are dealing with younger children, as with older children, and needs to be reflected in picture books.

### What should we be looking for in picture books?

I want children to have access to stories about black children as well as white. Picture books can help to normalise the existence of black people in our society and help the black child to acquire a positive self-image.

I want children to be able to see in picture books, images of people from a variety of different cultural and religious backgrounds and the existence of different forms of dress, language, food and customs as a normal part of everyday life.

Books can support children of minority ethnic groups by presenting them to themselves as positive, dignified people whose domestic lives, families and festivals are worth recording in books, and make children more aware of the ethnic mix in our society.

I also want children to have picture book versions of folk tales and legends from many different sources, not merely stories of European origin. By drawing attention to traditional folk tales from other cultures, we can give recognition to the cultural roots of many of our children and introduce all children to a much wider literary heritage.

Some of the books I looked at in the last issue, like *Mother Goose Comes to Cable Street* and *The Baby's Catalogue*, with their attractive illustrations, and the *Strands* series, the *Terraced House* books and Joan Solomon's stories, with their skilful use of photographs, show clearly that children of different colours and cultural groups are a normal part of everyday life in Britain today. These can be used very successfully alongside the picture books mentioned below.

Ezra Jack Keats' picture books, which originated in America, were amongst the first books published here which featured a black child in an urban environment. In *Peter's Chair*, Peter decides to run away with his dog, Willie, when his father paints everything pink for the new baby. He saves his favourite little chair from this indignity only to find it no longer fits him! This title is also available in a Gujarati/English and Turkish/English edition. The same endearing child, Peter, also appears in *The Snowy Day*, *Whistle for Willie*, *A Letter to Amy*, *Hi, Cat!*, all dealing humourously with everyday situations. The books with their simple texts and attractive collage illustrations, continue to have great appeal to nursery and infant school children.

The first picture book which tried to do a similar thing here, was *Petronella Breinburg's My Brother Sean*. Sean goes to nursery school for the first time, and cries! A familiar situation for many parents and children but it is very refreshing to find such a homely, appealing story with a black child as the main character. Sean also appears in *Doctor Sean* and *Sean's Red Bike*. The warm, relaxed illustrations are by

Errol Lloyd who more recently has begun writing his own stories.

*Nini at Carnival* is one of them. It is a simple story about a small girl who finds herself without a costume at carnival time, but is rescued by her "fairy godmother". This charmingly illustrated and colourful story makes a valuable contribution to multi-cultural picture books, as it shows an event of Caribbean origin taking place in London, and captures the hustle and bustle of carnival time. *Nini on Time* is a slightly longer story about Nini and her friends getting to the zoo along crowded inner-city streets, peopled by groups of many ethnic origins.

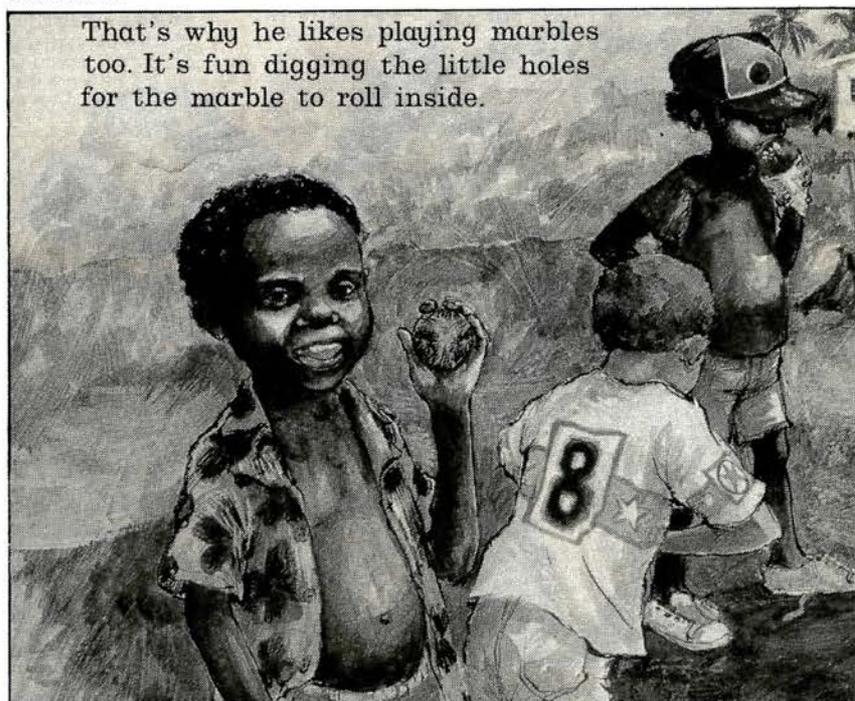
*Maybe it's a Tiger* has a similar, but American urban setting. The local children collect animals which resemble the pictures in their wild animal book, to start their own private zoo. So the tabby cat becomes a tiger, the puppy a bear, the gerbil a kangaroo. It is a humourously imaginative and repetitive story with real animals lurking in the background. Children of 5+ will appreciate the humour and detail of the busy illustrations. A useful story for reading aloud.

*Dig Away Two-hole Tim*, told in a gentle colloquial style, is a charming story by John Agard set in Guyana about a mischievous small boy who is fascinated by holes of any description, in clothes, in roads, anywhere! This good-humoured naughtiness appeals to young children and is well captured in Jennifer Northway's colourful, vibrant illustrations.

*Jafta*, written in clear, simple prose by white South African, Hugh Lewin, is a delightful portrait of a small black child living in Africa. Jafta talks about himself in a jokey way: "When I'm happy, I purr like a lioncub . . . But when I get cross, I stamp like an elephant and grumble like a warthog." Lisa Kopper's two-tone illustrations are full of vigour and humour and carefully capture Jafta's emotions to create a picture of a very real little boy and his family. There are now eight titles in the series, but Jafta remains the most accessible. In *Jafta — My Mother*, Jafta talks about the strength and security he gains from his mother and in *Jafta — My Father*, the sadness he feels when his father goes away to work (gently understated).

In the two newest titles, *Jafta — the Journey* and *Jafta — the Town*, Jafta and his mother go (on foot, by cart and by bus) to spend an all-too-brief few days with his father.

*Tusk Tusk* is a more overt exploration of racial tolerance but approached in a very humorous way by talented illustrator, David McKee. Two herds of elephants, one black, one white, love all creatures except each other. The peace-loving elephants go into the jungle while the others kill each other off. The peace-loving elephants eventually emerge grey, but at the end of the story, the big-eared elephants are regarding the little-eared elephants with growing suspicion. The message is about differences of all kinds, suggesting that life will be very boring if everyone ends up the same. As with many of David McKee's books, there is



That's why he likes playing marbles too. It's fun digging the little holes for the marble to roll inside.

From *Dig Away Two-Hole Tim*



'I squeezed between Father's legs for safety.' From *Jafta — The Town*

a great deal of substance behind an apparently simple picture book.

### Folk Tales in Picture Book Form

**Hanuman** is a simple retelling of the story of Hanuman, the Monkey God's early life, from the Indian epic tale, the Ramayana. The brightly coloured, stylised illustrations use Indian art conventions and add significantly to the story. This is a splendid attempt to make a well-known legend accessible to younger children.

**Rum Pum Pum** is also an Indian folk tale, riotously illustrated by Jose Aruego and Ariane Dewey. Blackbird prepares to make war on the king who has stolen his wife. Armed with a sharp thorn, a half-walnut shell helmet and a frogskin shield, he beats on his drum and marches to fight the king. He is joined by further aggrieved creatures, cat, ant, stick and river who all hide in the blackbird's ear ready to take revenge on the king. This is a fairly long story but the repetition and predictable element of the story mean that it can be enjoyed by children of about 5+.



Blackbird, from *Rum Pum Pum*

**The Monkey and the Crocodile** is a traditional Jataka tale from India about the cunning monkey who outwits the crocodile. Colourfully and amusingly illustrated by **Paul Galdone**, this version of a familiar tale reads aloud well to children from 5 to 11.

**The Elephants and the Mice** is my favourite title amongst the many paperbacks published by the **Children's Book Trust of New Delhi** and available here through many specialist bookshops. It is a retelling from the Panchatantra about a colony of mice, living in great splendour in a deserted Indian city, who help a herd of elephants. The delicate pictures of mice dressed in saris and turbans are full of humorous details.

Stories about Anansi the tricky spider-man, are always popular with children. **A Story, A Story** is a single Anansi story, beautifully illustrated in pastel colours and delightfully retold by **Gail Haley**. The story of how Anansi fulfills the task set him by Nyame the Sky-God and brings stories down to earth, reads aloud extremely well and can be used with a wide variety of ages from infant to lower secondary.

**Tortoise's Dream** is a charmingly repetitive, cumulative tale from Africa, illustrated by **Joanna Troughton** in bright, iridescent colours. Tortoise dreams of a tree which contains all the fruits of the earth. All the animals try to find the tree but only the plodding, determined tortoise succeeds. Again ideal for reading aloud for children of about 4+.

#### Details of books mentioned

Ezra Jack Keats (Bodley Head)

**The Snowy Day**, 0 370 00776 X, £3.95  
**Whistle for Willie**, 0 370 00760 3, £3.50  
**Peter's Chair**, 0 370 00790 5, £3.95  
**A Letter to Amy**, 0 370 01510 X, £3.95  
**Hi, Cat!**, 0 370 01546 0, £3.95

Petronella Breinburg (Bodley Head)

**My Brother Sean**, 0 370 02025 1, £2.95  
**Doctor Sean**, 0 370 02029 4, £3.50  
**Sean's Red Bike**, 0 370 10781 0, £1.85

Errol Lloyd (Bodley Head)

**Nini at Carnival**, 0 370 30023 8, £3.95  
**Nini on Time**, 0 370 30301 6, £4.50  
**Nandy's Bedtime**, 0 370 30395 4, £3.50

Kathleen Hersom

**Maybe It's a Tiger**, Macmillan, 0 333 32382 3, £3.95; Picturemacs, 0 333 35166 5, £1.95 (May 1983)

John Agard

**Dig Away Two-Hole Tim**, Bodley Head, 0 370 30421 7, £3.95

Hugh Lewin

**Jafta**, Evans, 0 237 45543 5, £2.95; Dinosaur,

0 85122 267 6, 85p

**Jafta — My Father**, Evans, 0 237 45545 5, £2.95  
**Jafta — My Mother**, Evans, 0 237 45544 7, £2.95; Dinosaur, 0 85122 268 4, 85p

David McKee

**Tusk Tusk**, Andersen Press, 0 905478 27 4, £3.50; Sparrow, 0 09 930650 6, £1.50

A. Ramachandran

**Hanuman**, A. & C. Black, 0 7136 1923 6, £3.50

Maggie Duff

**Rum Pum Pum**, Kestrel, 0 7226 5543 6, £4.95

Paul Galdone

**The Monkey and the Crocodile**, World's Work, 0 437 42503 7, £3.50

Marilyn Hirsh

**The Elephants and the Mice**, Children's Book Trust — New Delhi, 95p (Available from Soma Books, 38 Kennington Lane, London SE11)

Gail Haley

**A Story, A Story**, Methuen, 0 416 75190 3, £4.50; 0 416 86520 8, £1.95 pb

Joanna Troughton

**Tortoise's Dream**, Blackie, 0 216 90886 8, £4.50

# Authorgraph No. 19

Michael Foreman

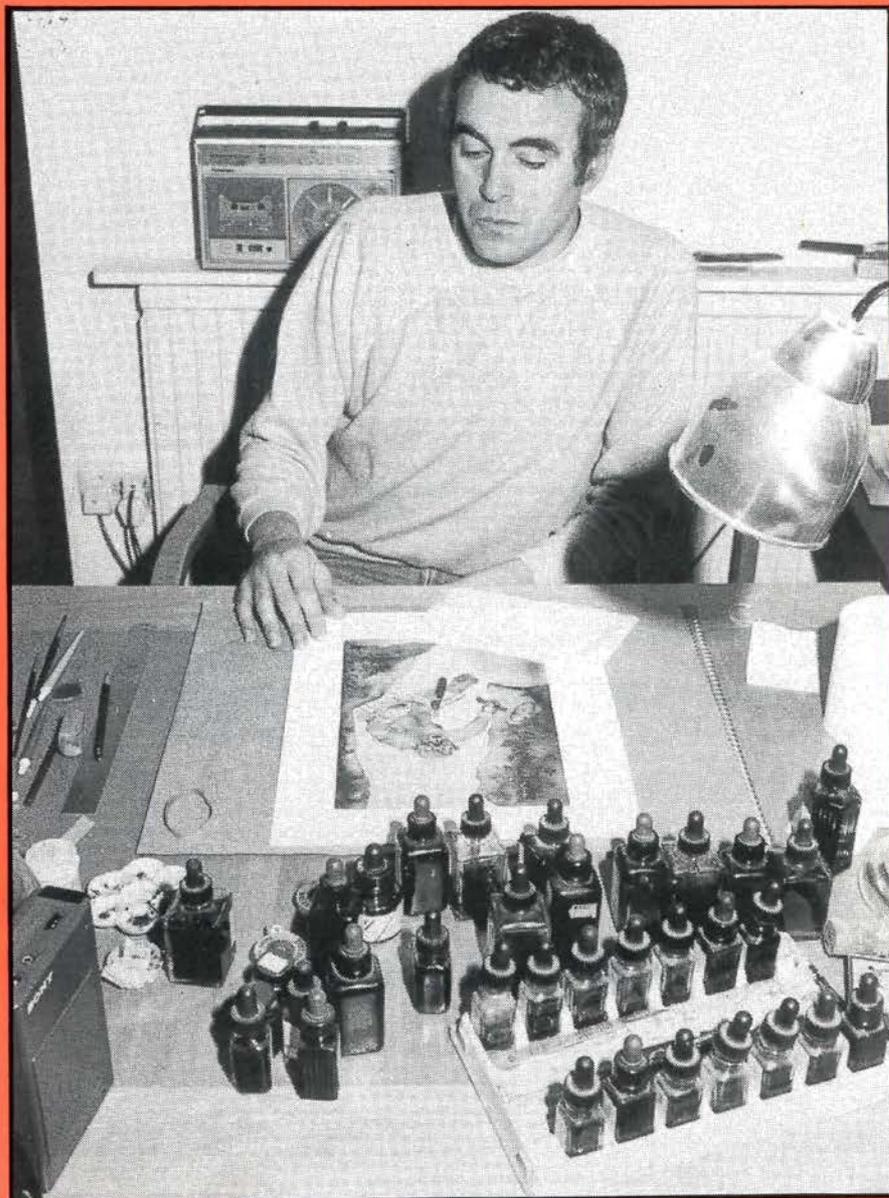
Michael Foreman is one of the most talented, successful, respected and sought-after artists working in children's books. He gets more offers of work than he can cope with, has the next four years more than mapped out. Yet as he sat on the edge of the fireplace in his vast studio living room, flanked by two stone angels ('the previous owner left them; she said she was an interior decorator') he talked about himself like someone who can still hardly believe his luck. It's an understandable feeling when you discover that but for the chance appearance of two people in his life he might never have found out what he could do.

Both of these people lived in Suffolk where Michael Foreman was born in the seaside village of Pakefield. His mother kept the village shop. Growing up in the war had its advantages for a boy whose father had died a month before he was born. 'The other boys' fathers were away and that helped me; not having a father didn't seem unusual'. The village shop delivered Sunday newspapers and magazines. 'The magazines arrived on Wednesday so from Wednesday till Sunday I had the run of all the magazines and comics. My favourite was **John Bull** because it always had a drawn cover. One of the artists used to draw scenes with hundreds and hundreds of people in them.' Michael, who drew all the time, was influenced. 'The soldiers billeted in the village were all Scottish, so I drew scenes of hundreds and hundreds of people in kilts.'

He also delivered the papers. One of the houses on the round belonged to a teacher at the Art School in Lowestoft. 'He wanted to start sculpture classes and he asked if I and my friends would like to dig clay for him from the cliffs. Later he started a Saturday morning class for kids and invited me to come.' That was the start. 'He encouraged mum to ask at school if I could go to the Art School for one afternoon a week.' On comes the second significant person. The headmaster of Michael Foreman's secondary modern school was Michael Duane (later of Risinghill). 'He said I wasn't to go for one afternoon a week. I should go for two.'

When Michael left school at fifteen it was automatically assumed that he would go to the art school full-time. 'I had no academic qualifications so when I got there I was lumped with the apprentices on day release. After a few days the teacher from the village saw me. He said, 'You shouldn't be here', and took me into another room where there was a big pink nude woman. I thought, 'I'm an artist!' But it didn't last. 'The principal was horrified. She thought I was too young, or too dumb and put me back.' The next year the grammar school entry arrived and with them Michael officially joined the Fine Artists. Had he got his 'O' Levels now? 'Well, no. But I had to be 'doing them' at night school.' Somehow it seems they never got 'done'.

At the end of the course he was all set for National Service; but his two older brothers wouldn't hear of it. So Michael persuaded officialdom that a year doing commercial art at St Martin's School of Art in London



would equip him to do a proper job so he wouldn't be a burden on society. During that year National Service ended; Michael Foreman got married and started to look for work as a freelance. Out of this, almost by chance, came his first picture book, **The General**, a story about how even the military can discover that there are better things to do than make war. 'I had nothing to show to get work so I made up a theme and drew some pictures.' Herbert Read who was active in the CNL saw it and liked the idea so Janet (my first wife) wrote the story and it was published. That was 1961. It was six years before the next book appeared.

There followed a year at the Royal College of Art (ostensibly doing the Graphics course but in fact going his own way with painting and drawing) and a travel scholarship to the USA. Back in England, 'It didn't seem possible to be just an illustrator,' so he set up a Design Group with two friends. 'We did things like covers for Penguin.' Then it was back to the USA as Art Director on **Playboy** magazine. 'I stayed four months. The first two months were terrific. After that

it was the same package every time. I got a job back here as Art Director on the new magazine **King** which was trying to be a British **Playboy**. They agreed to hire our group provided I did every drawing, including cartoons, in different styles and signed with different names. It was good fun. Like being the manager of a Fourth Division football team trying to do good things with no resources. **Playboy** was trying to do predictable things with endless amounts of money.' But working on **Playboy** had shown him what he wanted to do. 'My job there was to commission illustration for the fiction pages. I decided I wanted to be the one who was being asked.'

The idea of tight deadlines didn't appeal so advertising and the press were out. 'With books you get time and you can live anywhere.' But the money isn't good. 'I had to do enough of the rest to buy three months off to do a book. If the royalties came in I could take another month off.' That way **The Perfect Present** and **The Two Giants** got done. But an artist needs a lot of books in print (or one huge seller) to make a living.

Michael Foreman was getting there slowly. His early picture books with their political and moral themes — pacifism, inequality, conservation — were not always well received. ('Communist tract for infants,' shrieked one American reviewer.) On the credit side in 1971 he was given the Francis Williams prize (awarded every five years and much valued because it is given for illustration to artists by artists) for *Horatio*. He won it again in 1977 for *War and Peas*. They made him a judge the next time!

'The ideas come from inside me. There are often three or four lying around. Which one becomes most pressing and gets done often depends on what is happening outside. If my more recent books are different it's because I've travelled a great deal and collected images I want to use. *The Land of Dreams* for instance is more to do with my experience than with events.' It arose from a visit to the Himalayas. 'The place had a tremendous effect on me. I did lots of watercolours and an idea I had had years before suddenly made sense transposed to the mountains.' Not that all the books turn out as originally envisaged. 'Things happen on the paper and you can go with it. That's the nice thing about not answering a brief. I usually have three books going at once. My own book is the antidote to the ones I'm doing for other people.'

Increasingly since the success of his illustrations of Andersen, Grimm, Peter Dickinson's Old Testament retelling, *City of Gold*, Alan Garner's *Stone Book Quartet* and others he is much in demand. 'I was fortunate to be asked to do Andersen by Joanne Goldsworthy at Gollancz. I'd done no work to suggest that was something I could do. The material is so rich and each story is so different. It was a tremendous opportunity and a challenge. You know your work is going to be put up alongside earlier versions and you want it to be your own interpretation. The text is already a classic and the pictures need to last.'

'I think I did Andersen before I should have done. It was the first classic I did. I'd much prefer to be doing it now. I had too much to find out that was not connected with the material in the stories. I was frightened by the practical problems. I know now how I think Andersen should be done and I'd like a chance to do another.'

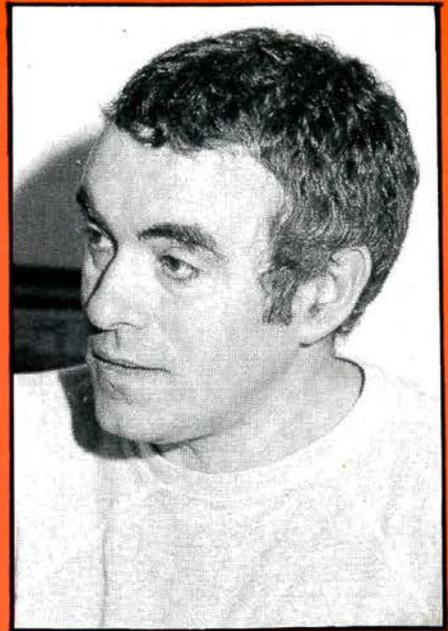
Michael Foreman is not easily satisfied. 'You really need a break from the pictures, to see them fresh and be able to do bits again. But you never get it. In my own books I'd like to change things. I think the idea often deserved better than it got. Perhaps if I live long enough everyone will have forgotten and I can do them again.' At the moment he is squaring up to the challenge of Shakespeare. 'I think that is coming before I'm up to it too. Leon Garfield who is writing the stories is having problems — I can't think of anything more daunting for somebody who reveres Shakespeare to the extent that Garfield does. It's like having a go at the Sistine Chapel. Everytime the project is put back I breath a sigh of relief.' But there is also a sense of urgency. 'Rackham did his best things when he was young, and Dulac. Kay Nielsen died penniless in Hollywood. They didn't get another go.' He's done some samples. 'They were really first preconceptions. You have to get the obvious ones out of the way. You have to dig a bit deeper.' The real work starts this year and the book is now due for Christmas 1984.

Christmas 1983 will see another Foreman classic, *Christmas Carol*. 'It was a tremendous thing to be asked to do Dickens.' He has just finished work on it and the illustrations are stunning. 'I'm consciously trying to change with every book I do now. Sometimes I worry about my style. Sometimes I think at least my work doesn't look like anyone else's. It's evolving I know. In *Christmas Carol* partly under orders from Joanne (Goldsworthy), I've been trying to get

away from blue!' In progress is another book with Terry Jones to follow the very successful *Fairy Tales* written for Terry's daughter, Sally. 'This one is for his five year old son. He's demanded one big story about Vikings — all blood and thunder. It's like Saturday morning pictures, a cliff hanger in every chapter. I'm enjoying it because the book is being born as we go along.'

By the summer there should be a space for 'one of my own books'. He has just bought a house in St Ives, Cornwall where he plans to spend a lot of time with Louise, his second wife, and Ben, their new baby. 'I save the books that don't need much research for Cornwall. I'm doing black and white illustrations for three poetry books for Kestrel over the next three years. I'll be able to sit in the garden and do them. Usually I save the black and whites for the evening and do colour in the day.' If that makes Michael Foreman sound like a workaholic it's not far wrong. 'I have to be drawing otherwise I'm wasting my time. I love writing but it has to be done in situations where I couldn't possibly be doing anything else — on planes, or waiting for people. I work all day, every day.'

At least he did before young Ben came on the scene. 'It's now rare for me to do more than two hours without interruption. I take Ben to the shops, the park.' But there is compensation not only in the obvious joy Ben brings but in the ideas he is generating in his father. 'That's why I'm trying to leave a few gaps. I turn down at least one book a month. And I'm conscious of doing too many; but there are very few of those I do accept that I could even begin to consider not doing. I turn down ones there doesn't



Photographs by Richard Mewton

seem much point in doing. The story may be nice enough but it's not telling you anything. There are lots of books around I can't see why people have done them. They are just occupying another space rather prettily.'

For Michael Foreman to whom time is precious, who looks on his work as a privilege and who has a great respect for the children who are on the receiving end of books, that is just not good enough. ●

### Some of the Books

#### Moose

Puffin, 0 14 050.0731 1, 90p

#### Dinosaurs and all that Rubbish

Hamish Hamilton, 0 241 02234 7, £3.95  
Puffin, 0 14 050.098 7, 95p

#### War and Peas

Hamish Hamilton, 0 241 89013 6, £2.95

#### Land of Dreams

Andersen Press, 0 86264 022 9, £4.50

#### Hans Andersen: His Classic Fairy Tales

Translated by Erik Haugaard,  
Gollancz, 0 575 02188 8, £6.00

#### The Brothers Grimm: Popular Folk Tales

Translated by Brian Alderson  
Gollancz, 0 575 02446 1, £6.00

#### City of Gold

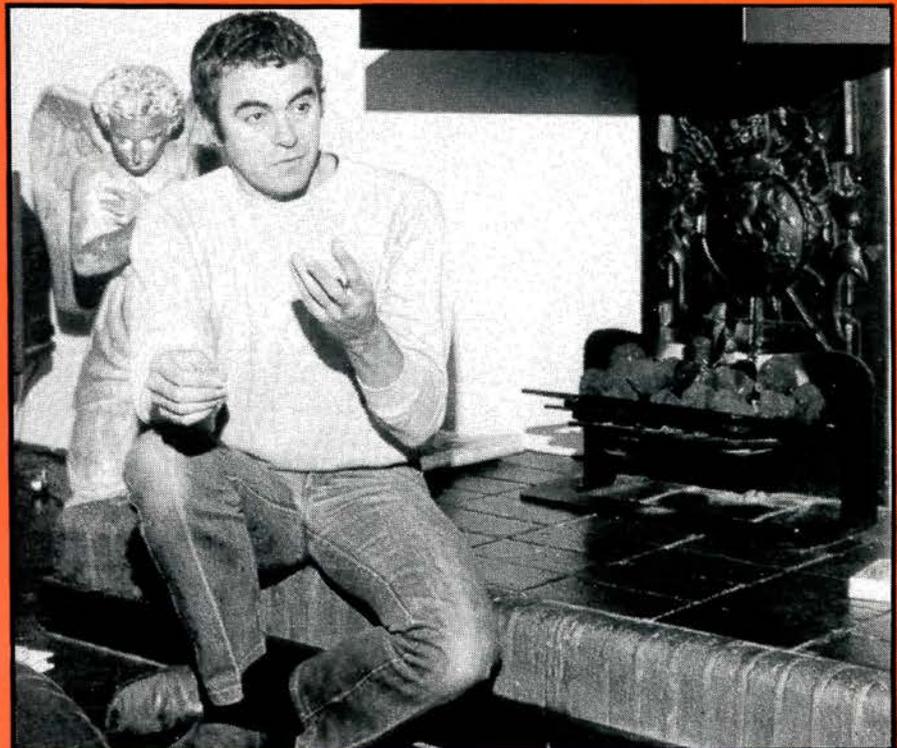
Peter Dickinson  
Gollancz, 0 575 02883 1, £6.95

#### Sleeping Beauty and other Favourite Fairy Tales

Translated by Angela Carter  
Gollancz, 0 575 03194 8, £6.95

#### Fairy Tales

Terry Jones  
Pavilion, 0 907516 03 3, £6.95



# Blackie & Abelard

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**GRAN GLIDING**  
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Andrew Davies

Everyone knows Marmalade Atkins: she's the Worst Girl in the World! Expelled from countless schools, convents and detention centres, she persists in mucking about – much to the chagrin of the exasperated Mrs Allgood of the Helping Professions, well on her way to a nervous breakdown.

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They're back! Second in this popular series of endearing picture books about a small girl called Maria and her large friend Victor, the bear. Nothing quite goes as planned when they're around...

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From the author of the hilarious *Daggie Dogfoot*, *The Mouse Butcher* etc. 'A winner every time' —

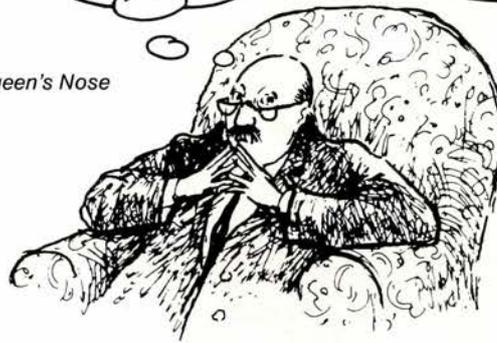
**Mother Magazine**  
0 575 03228 6  
£4.95 8-10yrs

### BROWN COW John Branfield

Set in post-war Yorkshire, 'a completely absorbing book....a very good read' —

**Woman and Home**  
0 575 03223 5  
£5.95 12+

from  
*The Queen's Nose*



### A FORMAL FEELING Zibby Oneal

A perceptive novel about a teenage girl's mourning and slow recovery after her mother's death.

0 575 03267 7  
£5.95 12+

### EASY CONNECTIONS Liz Berry

In the face of convention, a gifted young painter struggles to retain her independence.

0 575 03245 6  
£5.95 Young Adult

**Gollancz**

## Two New Departures

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

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

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

### Nancy Chambers, editor of the Signal Review writes

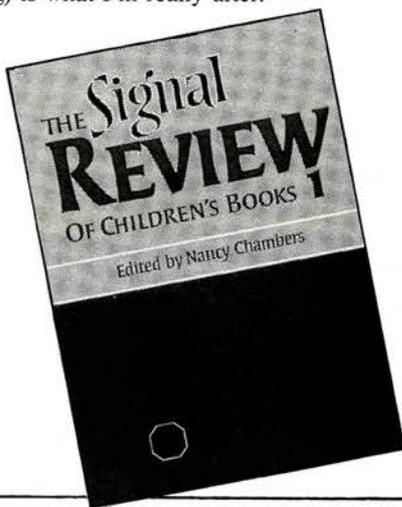
For several years we have wanted to find a way to deal with new books in *Signal*. We tried a correspondence feature on fiction for a while, but that didn't prove to be as useful as we'd hoped. It seemed to us that the only other manageable way to cover a lot of new books was to produce an annual survey.

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

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

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

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



**The Signal Review of Children's Books 1**  
 Edited by Nancy Chambers, The Thimble Press,  
 0 903355 12 4, £3.95. From Lockwood, Station Road,  
 South Woodchester, Stroud, Glos.

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

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

### They explain

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

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

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

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

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



# HOW TO... link Reading and Writing

We report on two projects which last summer brought books, children, teachers, writers and illustrators together in a creative partnership.

## Bob Cattell describes the Bookstop Project

For two hours, one morning a week for five weeks last summer three playcentres in south-east London became a Bookstop. The Greenwich Bookbus, already well-stocked with books, took on extra equipment in the form of typewriters, tape recorders, polaroid cameras and all the materials for making books, and arrived each week staffed by groups of student teachers from Thames Polytechnic. For the first two weeks authors Leila Berg and Bernard Ashley and illustrator Caroline Holden were aboard to launch us on this reading and writing project.

### The first question must be why did we do it?

First, there is a well-documented body of evidence that children's reading and writing skills regress considerably during the long summer holiday and we were interested in the ways a project like 'Bookstop' could combat this. But mainly we hoped to demonstrate to children the thrill to be derived from writing and discovering the ideas that lie tucked away within themselves. In making it possible for children to meet authors and illustrators and produce their own work without any of the pressures and formal restraints of school, there was a possibility that the project could kindle an interest in reading and writing which otherwise might remain latent. Children would be involved in voluntarily creating and producing their own books, bringing continuity and personal involvement to a literary development project.

In broad outline we anticipated that we would introduce ourselves to all the children involved through storyreading, tales and demonstrations by the authors and illustrator and then settle them into small groups with the students to help them get the hang of all the equipment. We anticipated a broad range of age (5-11 years), interest and talent and the Bookbus workers would always be on hand to help children who just wanted to sit in a corner and read or ask about books or help with the mechanical processes of book production without actually writing their own books.

All the Bookstop workers were provided with special 'T' shirts and we produced 'Bookstop' badges to give away to children and help them identify with the scheme. The number of children involved slightly exceeded our expectations and we estimate that over 300 children came into contact with it during the summer.

Each of the three locations presented its own particular problems in terms of space — in one of them we couldn't get the bus into the playground! But some things were common.

As expected we were working with a vast range of ability as well as interest levels. Sometimes a child was happy to sit down and start writing but "getting started" was the main problem. Often a conversation with one of the authors provided a dynamic beginning to a story but most of the time it was the efforts of the students — coaxing, sometimes acting as a scribe to begin with to get the child's initial words on paper, sometimes sidestepping and getting the child to start with an illustration. We did not have time to use tape recorders as much as we had hoped to get the children to explore ideas for a story — but when used this approach was quite successful.

It became obvious that our resources were going to be stretched to cope with the numbers and the diverse demands of the children and clear that we could have used far larger numbers of adults to work with the children as well as "ancillary workers" to get on with the job of helping to produce

the books. Nevertheless the ratio of children to adults was far, far lower than would be experienced in a normal classroom. Although children were involved in every stage of the production of their own books and used the typewriter, guillotines (slide type), staplers glue etc., it was necessary to speed up the process with adult helpers and a full-time, overworked typist who typed as the stories were read back by the children.

Often the children changed stories at the typing stage, replaced illustrations with better ones or decided to use photographs instead. Some children preferred to work and help out with the more mechanical jobs like cutting and mounting books for other children; sometimes they worked together "like a real author and illustrator"; sometimes they just read books or copied out stories from them. At the end of the summer, we had jointly produced about 60 finished books and hundreds of pages of stories which, for one reason or another, didn't quite reach the finished stage.

Some experiences recounted by our student helpers give a flavour of the whole enterprise.

"The first day I had a Nigerian girl called Yemi. She was very reluctant to write — I don't think she'd really intended to; I think she was just passing — and very sure she had nothing anyone wanted to know about, and that nothing had ever happened to her. I had to coax her to talk, getting only monosyllables from her at first; but I began to write down what she was saying and what evolved was really fascinating and exciting . . . a rabbit and a snake . . . and she shaped off the end with a natural storyteller's skill . . . And at the end of the story, this child who had been so withdrawn was so joyous and proud — the difference in the way she looked was amazing."

"One child came along with the name of a character, 'Thomas James Jinks' who he wanted in his story. But he had no idea of the story. So, talking to him, using the tape recorder, a polaroid camera and a friend who could draw, we managed to pull together three short chapters, drawn entirely from his personal experience. He was undoubtedly one of the more demanding children and could have been a nuisance to the other children trying to work. But once he got the attention he required his involvement and industry was remarkable."

### What did it all add up to?

Well there was not a dissenting voice when it was suggested that we repeat the scheme next year, funds and volunteers permitting.

As for the results, it is virtually impossible to assess whether the scheme provided all or any of the children with a stimulus for reading which will have a lasting effect. There is always the nagging doubt that the child will go back to an environment where there is no feeling for books or stories and the experience of a pleasant couple of mornings will be forgotten.

However, we all felt that one of the very positive points about 'Bookstop' was that it worked on so many levels. There was so much that could be done: reading and buying books, drawing, writing, cutting; measuring; glueing; typing and talking. Virtually all the children found an activity that appealed to them. Inevitably out of all this came an element of organised chaos; but also out of it, we think came a large number of children who had discovered something in themselves which produced a sense of achievement and pleasure. It was this awakening of their interest in their own story that most of us saw to be the main contribution of the visits.



ing

## David Tinsley asks Why not run a Book Camp?

In our school bookshop and library we try all the usual things to 'sell' books and reading: book assemblies, book competitions and challenges, visits from authors etc., etc., and these seem to have the usual varying amounts of success. We decided we needed something exciting, eye-catching, unusual and (if possible) unique to create the feeling towards books we wanted. So the first Methwold Book Camp was dreamed up: three days and two nights away from home at an outdoor activity centre, where everything was to be focussed on reading and books and the potential pleasure to be found in both.

So it was that last summer a string of minibuses containing 35 eight and nine year olds left school heading for our first all-important en route stop, Neil's Bookshop in Swaffham. Of the £6 camp fee, £1 had been put aside for spending in the bookshop (we had given the owner advance warning that we were coming). Choosing and buying a book which could be read at odd moments during the camp was, we reasoned, the best possible way of starting an activity devoted to books. For twenty of the thirty-five children it was their first visit to a real bookshop, and the excitement was tremendous and very infectious. Much browsing took place without any encouragement needed, and teachers joined in to discuss titles, authors and suitability. Forty minutes later everyone left the shop satisfied with their purchase — only I was worrying a little over one eight year old's insistence on choosing and buying a 'Saint' book.

The camp site was a disused Norfolk school which has been made available for outdoor activities. A river runs through the site and the children made straight for it on arrival. We decided that our choice of Water as the theme for the camp was probably a good one. Later that day our first visitor arrived.

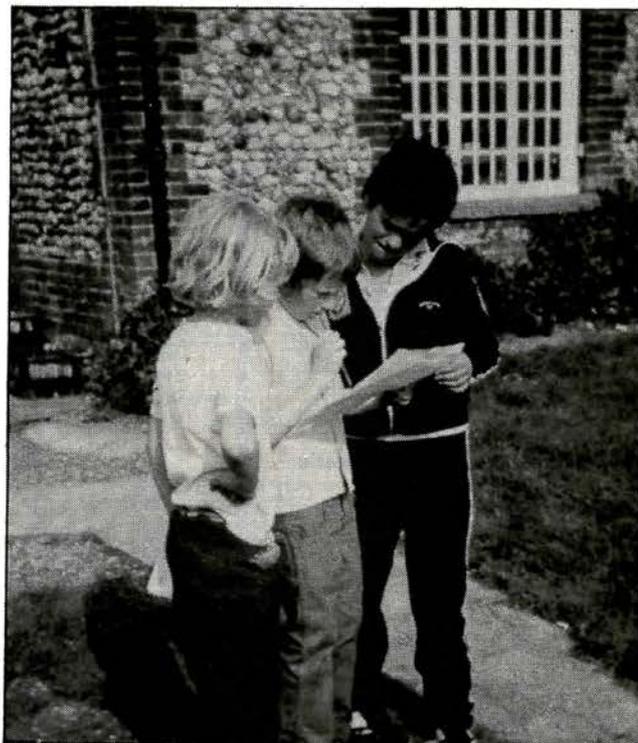
He was John Gordon, author of *The Giant Under the Snow*, *The House on the Brink* and *The Ghost on the Hill*, who came under the auspices of the Eastern Arts Association's Writers in Schools scheme. His brief was: tell us about your books, how you plan and write them, and then finish with a workshop where children are motivated to write their own stories using the theme of water. The children's imaginations were quickly captured as John Gordon told of his house on the sea cliff where in the night he often gets up to let his mind become free and to write, and of his conscious decision and determination to become a writer. The children felt his disappointment as he told of rejected manuscripts and of the publishing house which informed him that his style was too similar to one of their established authors.

He told of his childhood in Wisbech and of the museum where the ideas came from for his first novel, *The Giant Under the Snow*, and of how this story was finally accepted for publication. Many children were interested in the practical details of publication, copies, manuscripts, errors, printing etc. and when the time came for the workshop to start most children, I'm sure, saw themselves as budding authors just waiting for the publishers to say 'Yes'. The children's enthusiasm to write was maintained by John Gordon who read their stories, giving advice and offering helpful criticism and encouragement so that their ideas grew and were developed.

This session seemed well worthwhile with enjoyment on both sides. So much so that John Gordon stayed late and came with us on our walk to a nearby watermill for a paddle and, as it was very hot, a swim in the mill stream. The mill visit led into a story session before supper where I read Philippa Pearce's short story, *At the River Gates*. I had read this story often before, but on this occasion the visit to the mill seemed to make the telling more real to me and the children.

That evening we played games. The first involved the telling of a story with the children involved in races, and the second, of course, had to be Charades with book titles.

Day Two began with a visit to the coast for a boat trip to look for seals at Seal Island, and to provide first hand experience of water for their own stories. Back at camp this highly stimulating visit led into another short story session where I read *Through the Tunnel*, by Doris Lessing.



Our second visitor, illustrator Derek Steele, arrived after lunch to show how the work of an author is complemented by the work of the illustrator. He began by showing work of various illustrators: Sendak, Heath Robinson, Quentin Blake etc. and went on to tell of his recent commissioning by the BBC to illustrate *Gobbolino the Witches Cat* for Jackanory. To show how he works he read us a piece from *Gobbolino* and asked the children to picture in their minds a 'moment in time' he had chosen and showed the various trial sketches he had made and worked on until he produced the ones chosen for the programme. This again showed the idea that pictures, like stories, have to be developed, enlarged and refined before they are completed. As on the previous day a workshop completed the session. This time children were asked to illustrate their own story using pen, pencil, crayon, paint or chalk and, as with John Gordon, the communication between a very patient illustrator and some highly enthusiastic children was excellent as first attempts were discussed and retried.

That evening we organised a treasure hunt with clues hidden in a story. An end of camp barbecue brought the second day, and the camp, to an end. The following day it was packed up and home to show stories and books to mum and dad.

Now we can admit that we were apprehensive about the camp; but it went better than we had dared hope. For two days, talk and thoughts were about books; even if this had been the only positive thing to emerge from the camp the time would not have been wasted. However, there was more. The maturity of the children's conversation about many things, their new books, books read previously and recalled, favourite authors, books they planned to read, all made the camp a tremendous success and a venture we can recommend to other schools seeking to promote a real interest in books, reading and writing. ●

Bob Cattell is the proprietor of the Bookboat bookshop in Greenwich. He co-ordinated the Bookstop Project which was funded by a grant from Wates Foundation. Bob is willing to offer advice to anyone contemplating a similar scheme. Write to BookBus, PO Box 347, Cutty Sark Gardens, Greenwich, London SE 10.

David Tinsley is the Head of the Duchy of Lancaster School in Norfolk.



## VICTOR AMBRUS

Born in Hungary, Victor Ambrus came to Britain in 1956 and studied engraving and lithography at the Royal College of Art; he was a 'Royal Scholar' in 1958. He is now a freelance artist and also teaches illustration and drawing.

In 1963 he was a runner-up for the Kate Greenaway Medal for his illustrations for **Time of Trial** and **The Royal Navy**, and in 1964 for all his work but especially for **The British Army**. In 1965 he was awarded the Medal itself for all his work but especially for **The Three Poor Tailors**. In 1975 he was awarded the Medal for a second time for **Mishka** and **Horses in Battle**. In 1977 he was elected fellow of the Royal Society of Arts.

Since 1980 Victor Ambrus has changed his style to show the more humorous side of his nature in **Dracula**, **Dracula's Bedtime Storybook** and **Blackbeard the Pirate**



Victor Ambrus is author/  
illustrator of

**Brave Soldier Janosh**  
**The Little Cockerel**  
**The Seven Skinny Goats**  
**The Sultan's Bath**  
**The Three Poor Tailors**  
**Horses in Battle**  
**Mishka**  
**Under the Double Eagle**  
**Dracula: Everything you always  
wanted to know but were too  
afraid to ask**  
**The Valiant Little Tailor**  
**Dracula's Bedtime Storybook**  
**Blackbeard the Pirate**

Oxford Books  
for Children

# Hardy Perennial

## Tony Bradman talks to the man behind a new imprint in children's publishing

It seems to be an inauspicious time to start any new business, let alone a new hardback children's list. But that is exactly what **Patrick Hardy** has done and the first five titles from Patrick Hardy Books are published this month (March).

Why take such a gamble? There's no doubt that Patrick Hardy has all the knowledge and experience essential for such a venture. He has been in children's publishing for many years; he was an editor at Constable Young Books under Grace Hogarth and publisher at Longman Young Books. But he's probably best known for his work at Penguin where he created the Kestrel hardback list before being, in his own words, 'elevated' to a position which carried with it the grandiloquent title of Publisher for the Children's Books Division. He left Penguin last April in search of more involvement with books and authors.

'At Penguin I felt I was in a position which was too far away from authors and real editing. I was dealing with contracts, the husbanding of money and the writing of all the letters which were less easy to write. I came to the point in my own life of asking myself whether I wanted to get more and more involved in administration or to do more work with authors.

'I decided that it was time to leave Penguin and do something much more editorial. I didn't set out to start my own list, but simply to look for a publishing job.'

He describes his course over the succeeding months as 'meandering'. After talking to several firms which didn't already have children's lists, he eventually found himself working for a packaging company, producing a list. The backers pulled out, and Patrick — together with Hugh Tempest Radford, an old friend — decided to find some more investors and launch out on their own. And so a new children's list was born.

'I'd never really decided to start my own company — it just happened that way. I know it's a time of gloom and doom in business, but I think that applies whether you're in a big company or a small one which has just started.

'If you look at it in those terms, there's never a good time to start a new company — you'd wait forever. I feel that the right time is when you need to do it, and I needed to. Circumstances conspired, and here I am working for myself, and working very hard.'

He has taken a fairly uncompromising line with his list, too. 'We made a general decision to search out a list balanced between picture books and fiction, and we'll probably do 16 or 17 titles a year. We'll also do one or two one-off special non-fiction titles with adults in mind.

'I think I *should* be publishing fiction, although I know other companies have been whittling away at it or even giving it up altogether because of the problems of selling it. Customers can pick up a picture book in a shop and read it in a few minutes so they know what they are going to get for their money. You can't do that with a novel.'

The books in the first Patrick Hardy Books catalogue are 'all very different'. There's a general interest book for all ages called **Feasts and Festivals** by Catherine Storr, illustrated in colour by Jenny Rhodes. There's a picture book by Robert Kraus called **Boris Bad Enough** (due in May) and illustrated by that ubiquitous pair, Jose Aruego and Ariane Dewey. This one is something of a first too. It may well be the



Patrick Hardy

first children's picture book which has a psychiatrist as a central character.

Patrick Hardy hopes readers will find his list 'sometimes controversial'. One title which may well cause a few eyebrows to be raised is a teenage novel by Rosemary Manning, **Down by the Riverside** (due in September) which has a lesbian relationship as a sub plot. Other well-known names in the list are Barbara Willard, John Astrop, and John Gordon whose **The House on the Brink** is reissued in March along with a new novel, **The Edge of the World**. ●

# Cover Story

The chicken on our cover and the mother hen casting a beady eye over this page are the work of **Garth Williams** one of America's foremost illustrators.

You can become better acquainted with them in *The Chicken Book*, a picture book based on a traditional counting rhyme which Garth Williams has invested with wit and humour and a delightful line in bewildered, disconsolate-looking chickens.

*The Chicken Book* is one of the first titles in Patrick Hardy's new list; but it has been a long time making the journey from the other side of the Atlantic. It was first published in 1946, soon after the start of Garth Williams' career as an illustrator of children's books. That began in 1945 when he did the illustrations for E.B. White's first book, *Stuart Little*. Since then his expressive black and white drawings have become an essential part of the pleasure to be found in now classic favourites like *Charlotte's Web* and Laura Ingalls Wilder's *Little House* books.

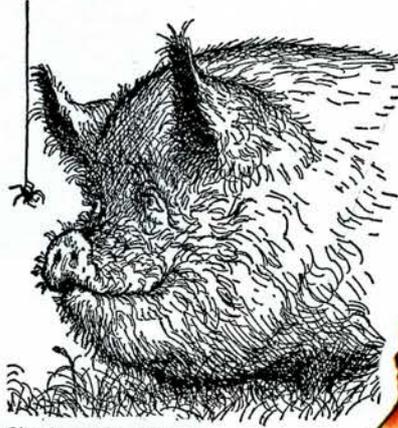


'My name,' said the spider, 'is Charlotte.' Wilbur the pig finds **Charlotte's Web**

Although he was born in New York (in 1912) and is an American citizen, Garth Williams' parents were British. He was educated in London and studied at Westminster Art School winning a Painting Scholarship from there to the Royal College of Art. Studies in theatrical design, mural painting, prizes and awards for sculpture indicated a great range of possible careers.

Then came World War II and Garth Williams became a stretcher-bearer in London for the British Red Cross. Injured by a bomb in 1941 and refused as a volunteer by the US forces he had to return to the USA and went to work for the New Yorker magazine.

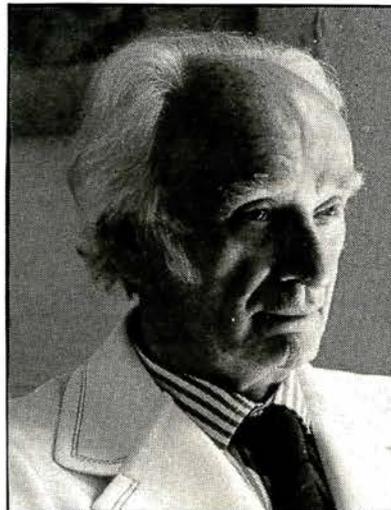
The success of *Stuart Little* established Garth Williams as an illustrator of children's books and 38 years later he has an impressive list of over 70 books to his credit. He has given definitive shape to the characters of E.B. White and Laura Ingalls Wilder and it would be difficult to imagine



Charlotte, in turn, meets Uncle with his 'most unattractive personality'

Margery Sharp's *Miss Bianca* or George Selden's *Chester Cricket* and his friends *Tucker Mouse* and *Harry Cat* (who made their first appearance in *The Cricket in Times Square*) except as Garth Williams has drawn them. The delicate and atmospheric monochrome illustration of picture books like *Fox Eyes* (with a story by Margaret Wise Brown) and Garth Williams' own story *The Rabbits' Wedding* (translated into over 40 languages) show another side of his talent.

Garth Williams is now seventy years old and 'interested in everything, especially living and surviving if possible.' Last year two new George Selden books about *Chester Cricket* were published in the USA with his drawings. He claims 'I still have to illustrate more books to avoid the old folks home as inflation and taxes have sorely reduced my living. Fortunately I begin life all over again at least every ten years, and that has kept me young and in excellent health. Several of my aunts and uncles passed 90 which I also hope to do. I have planned to live 150 years. How? By doing nothing different.' ●



Garth Williams, photo by Laura Acosta, Mexico



'When I'm calling youuuuuuuuu . . .'  
from *The Cricket in Times Square*

**The Chicken Book**, Patrick Hardy Books, 0 7444 0010 4, £4.95

**The Rabbits' Wedding**, Picture Lions, 0 00 660643 1, 90p

**Fox Eyes**, Picture Lions, 0 00 661605 4, 90p

**Charlotte's Web**, *The Little House* books, and *The Cricket in Times Square* are all available in Puffin.

# SOUND & VISION

## More to life than teenage magazines and Sweet Dreams?

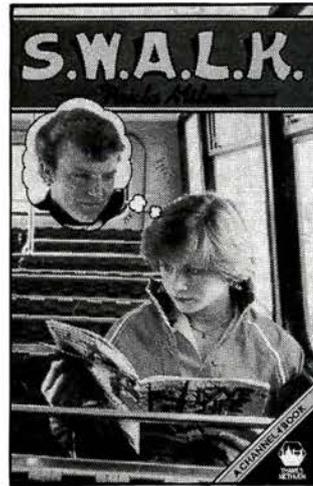
Amanda is 13 and lives her life like one of the teenage magazines she reads. Her private imaginary agony aunt gives her sound advice about leaving homework to others, that her role in life is to love, be loved and have lots of babies... S.W.A.L.K. starts on April 18th, 9.30-10.00pm on Channel 4, starring Nicola Cowper as Amanda and the brilliant Prunella Scales as the larger-than-life agony columnist, Patti. Thames Methuen publish the Channel 4 book, also called S.W.A.L.K., written by Paula Milne.

Paula Milne is one of 7 playwrights involved in another new series starting on the same day, April 18th, at 4.45, on ITV. It's a collection of plays by leading authors, linked by a theme of The Supernatural. Ms Milne's play is accompanied by works from Leon Garfield, Alan Garner, Jane Hollowood (Piccolo's founding editor), R Chetwynd Hayes, David Hopkins and Maggie Wadey (who dramatised Stig). The cast is as impressive as the list of authors, with Nicholas Ball, Wilfred Brambell, Colin Jeevons, Faith Brook and Tim Woodward appearing over the seven weeks.

### The Mob rules again, OK?

Murphy's mob are back on screen in a new series which is well into its stride. They all look very happy here; but is all quite as it appears? Is Dunmore United being taken over? Will Mac Murphy (Ken Hutchinson) get the chance to win promotion for the club? Is Sheila (Mandy Mealins, on the left) about to ditch Gerry (Wayne Norman) for the club's new star player? Where do the loyalties of pretty newcomer Becky Marsh (Mandy France, on the right) really lie? With Boxer and the mob or with revolting Bernie Russell with whom she spends so much time? Will Gonk (Gary Beadle, extreme left) and Wurzel (Lewis Stevens, extreme right) be able to save guard dog Barney from being put down?

If you (or anyone you know) can't stand the suspense you could always cheat and get the book, *Murphy and Co*, Anthony Masters, Puffin Plus, 0 14 03.1591 8, £1.25.



**MURPHY'S MOB** (below) Gonk, Prof, Gerry, Mac Murphy, Boxer, Wurzel, Sheila, Jenny and Becky Marsh



### Beans for Breakfast on TVAM

Richard Fowler's bouncing Beans start off TVAM's children's programme, Rub-a-Dub-Tub, at 7.00 am on Sundays, finish it at 8.00 and scurry across the screen in between times linking short films. 7.00 on Sunday mornings is a little early for most people, but wakeful small children will be entertained by the hour of cartoons, information and humour. (Bean fans will find more about these characters in books from Longman, £3.75.)

Those who can manage to stay awake past the opening sequence will encounter *Curious George*, an inquisitive monkey who finds answers to all kinds of important questions. If George looks a little familiar it may be because you know him better as *Zozo*. When H.A. Rey's series came to this country from America in the 1940's his name was diplomatically changed just in case it might cause offence to

### Meet Gran

Gran started cheering up BBC 1's See-Saw viewers on February 17th at 1.45 and will continue to romp through life, involving her grandson Jim in her impulsive decisions, for 13 weeks.



Blackie publish four Gran books by Michael and Joanne Cole (£2.50 each). Proving that you (literally) can't keep a good gran down, she goes hang gliding in *Gran Gliding* (0 216 91274 1). Certainly a series to add to the growing list of books about lively and enterprising 'senior citizens'.

## ANITA DESAI

### The Village by the Sea

winner of the  
1982 Guardian Award  
for Children's Fiction

"City and village, travel and social change, topography and monsoon: in Indian literature none have ever had such fine observation or rich description lavished on them."

*Times Educational Supplement*

"A sympathetic tale, vividly told."

*Mail on Sunday*

"Limpid in style, piercing in feeling, veracious in detail."

*Sunday Times*

"A tale of abject poverty is turned into a life-enhancing experience."

*Sunday Telegraph*

434 93436 4 Heinemann £5.50

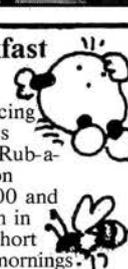
the then King, George VI. TVAM have bought 104 episodes so we, or at least our early waking infants, could be seeing a lot of George/Zozo in the weeks to come.

The *Zozo* books are currently published by Bodley Head.

There are plans to involve children's books further in Rub-a-Dub-Tub (the producer is Anne Wood formerly of Yorkshire's Book Tower). Watch out for more details as plans are formalised. There is also the possibility of seeing authors and news of the latest books on Saturdays from 8.40 till 9.15, on Data Run.

### Andy Robson returns

A second series of *Andy Robson* (Tyne Tees) is due to start in April and run for 13 weeks. Tom Davidson and Stevie-Lee Pattinson re-create the parts of the two boys which they played in the first very successful serial. The script 'inspired by' Frederick Grice's highly readable story *The Courage of Andy Robson* (Puffin 85p) is by Ted Childs.





## New York Diary

### John Mason reports on Children's Book Publishing in the USA

In children's book publishing offices up and down the Manhattan avenues, tensions mount in early January as the American Library Association's 'Midwinter' Conference draws near, the one at which the winners of the annual Newbery and Caldecott Awards are announced. These awards, the equivalent of the British Carnegie and Kate Greenaway Medals, are the only two out of all the plethora of book awards in the U.S. that are guaranteed to have a substantial impact on sales, since thousands of libraries, and many bookshops, automatically stock the winning books. They are, as one children's marketing director said to me, "the big banana". Publicity staff who think they have a strong contender for the awards are poised beforehand with books, press releases and glossy photos all ready to send out at a moment's notice. Authors and artists sit at home biting their nails, waiting for the fateful phone call.

In the event, this year's Newbery Medal went to *Dacey's Song* by Cynthia Voigt, a story of four lonely, abandoned children and their grandmother in the Chesapeake Bay area. It's a sequel to Voigt's first novel *Homecoming*, and is published by Atheneum. The Caldecott Medal was awarded to *Shadow* by Marcia Brown, who has won it twice before, in 1955 and 1962. *Shadow* is a translation of a French poem "The Sorcerer" about the fearful imaginary world of African storytelling traditions, powerfully illustrated with collages. It's published by Scribner's. Neither book is yet published in England, but I understand *Homecoming* is in the works at Collins, so watch out for this and, perhaps in due course, *Dacey's Song*.

#### On the map

Amid a merry-go-round of corporate mergers and take-overs some small independent publishers continue to flourish here all on their own. A few years ago, hardly anyone had heard of Schocken, an erudite publisher of high-brow literary works of mainly Jewish interest. But then they published *Masquerade*, after it had been turned down by some twenty top U.S. publishers much to Jonathan Cape's dismay. They went on to sell 400,000 copies, with an imaginative competition in which the winner was promised a round-trip to England on British Airways, and a spade to start digging with when he got there! *Masquerade* really put Schocken on the map as a trade publisher that could successfully promote unusual/controversial picture books. Now they have continued in this vein with *When the Wind Blows*, turned down by both major U.S. publishers of Raymond Briggs (25,000 sold to date), and with Terry Jones's book of *Fairy Tales* (10,500 sold).

#### Language

Of course, one of the problems of selling a book like *When the Wind Blows* in the U.S. is that so many of the little details in the book are unfamiliar to American readers – place names, local authority officials, and so on, which the English reader takes for granted. Even the language is strange – "Crumbs!" used as an expression of dismay sounds even more comical over here than Briggs intended it to be. Fortunately, Schocken recognized the overall integrity of the book and did not attempt to "translate" it, but many other American children's book editors go through agonies trying to remove all traces of "Britishisms" from British

books to make them palatable to American kids. Sometimes this is simply a matter of substituting American vocabulary – gas for petrol, tub for bath, yard for garden – but other times whole expressions or sentences are altered and nuances of meaning lost. For example, at the end of *Spot's First Walk* (Eric Hill), when Spot gets back from his various misadventures and is asked by his mother what he's been up to, in the British version he replies nonchalantly "Not a lot." Since this expression is never used in America, his American editors substituted the much more unambiguous "Nothing", which doesn't quite convey the same subtle humour.

#### Stetson

Not that any of this seems to bother Eric Hill, who has plans to take up permanent residence in Tucson, Arizona, this spring. Perhaps in the next book Spot will be wearing a stetson hat as he rides around the ranch!

#### Banned

What do *The Catcher in the Rye*, *In the Night Kitchen*, *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, *The Diary of Anne Frank*, *The Grapes of Wrath*, *The Wizard of Oz*, *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*, *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, *Huckleberry Finn* and *Webster's Collegiate Dictionary* have in common? The answer is that they're all books that have recently been banned somewhere in America. The American Booksellers Association's campaign against censorship reached a high point last autumn with "National Banned Books Week". The idea originated with a dramatic display of banned books in a padlocked cage at last year's ABA annual convention which attracted much attention. Many people said that if such displays could be prominently mounted in bookshop windows all across the country during one particular week, it would attract media coverage and heighten the public's awareness of the censorship issue. The campaign was coordinated by ABA head office which mailed out to booksellers a poster, press release and list of banned books. Using this material, booksellers put on all sorts of ingenious displays of the banned books, featuring such things as padlocks and chains, prison bars, mock fires, brown paper wrappings, warning signs and flashing lights. Even in very conservative communities, "members of the public expressed shock and dismay at finding recognized and cherished books in the display," reported one Midwest bookseller, and overall the Week certainly succeeded in generating lots of publicity.

#### Blank

The Moral Majority recently circulated its own list of "the top ten books we would like to see banned" – the list was a blank sheet of paper, to dramatize the message that the Moral Majority does not advocate book censorship at all. Mm. That may be their official position – in theory. But it doesn't explain why they marched into a public library in Virginia last year and demanded to see the names of people who had borrowed certain books. I call that totalitarianism. The library did too – and refused. ●

#### Footnote

John Mason worked for Penguin and Methuen before moving to New York where he is now Promotion and Publicity Manager at Putnam.

This is the first of a new series in which John will be sending us news of children's books from 'across the pond'.

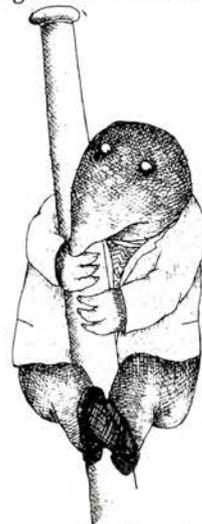
## New from Dent

### Demonic, Dangerous and Deadly

An anthology by  
HELEN HOKE

A brilliant new collection of horror stories, calculated both to terrify and delight the reader, by such distinguished authors as Winston Churchill, Robert Bloch and Roald Dahl.

Ages 11+ 24 March £6.50



A Mole  
up a Pole

### A Pocketbook of Painful Puns and Poems

Written and illustrated by  
JONATHAN ALLEN

Following the success of *A Bad Case of Animal Nonsense*, Jonathan Allen has invented some more delightfully mad humour, using puns, misspellings and wickedly wry poems. An irresistibly amusing book of nonsense for all ages.

28 April £3.95

Available again

### The Great Piratical Rumbustification and The Librarian and the Robbers

MARGARET MAHY

Illustrated in black and white  
by QUENTIN BLAKE

'This hugely funny story... Quentin Blake's pictures bubble effervescently throughout' Elaine Moss, *Children's Books of the Year 1978*.

'a joyous romp from start to finish.' *Book Window*

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# Fairy Tale Visions

Tony Bradman considers the work of two artists, Tony Ross and Errolle Cain, who offer children excitingly different versions of traditional tales.

What do John Lennon, fairy tales and mice have in common? Baffled? The answer is Tony Ross, one of Britain's best known illustrators of children's books.

The mice star in the books Tony has done with Bernard Stone, like *The Charge of the Mouse Brigade* and *The Tale of Admiral Mouse*. And lovers of good picture books will know that a large part of the Ross oeuvre is formed of up-dated fairy tales. I'll come back to these in a minute — but I suppose you're all dying to know where John Lennon fits in.

Liverpool School of Art is the connection, for Tony Ross studied there at about the same time as the late lamented Lennon. Not that there was much contact between the two. 'He wasn't a mate or anything,' says Tony. 'In fact he was quite a hard man, and I didn't like him all that much. I suppose he was a bit frightening, really.'

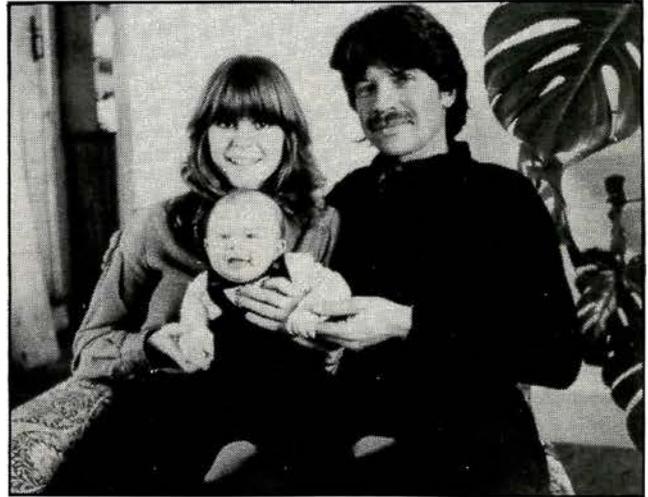
But if the 60s were years of influence for Lennon, they were formative times for Tony Ross. After art school he went into advertising as a graphic designer, and it was to stop himself 'going mad' that he began to draw cartoons for newspapers and magazines. 'I drifted into doing kids' books partly because I was fed up with working in black and white all the time. I got a yen to see my work in colour. I discovered to my pleasure that it wasn't too arduous, and soon I was hooked.'

I said the 60s were formative years for Tony Ross because there's an element of that decade's characteristic cartoon style in his work. The Hugo books — *Hugo and the Man who Stole Colours*, *Hugo and the Ministry of Holidays* and *Hugo and Oddsock* — for example, are the adventures of a mouse who meets all sorts of strange characters. The graphic style, the rough, almost scratchy colour cartoons are redolent of the 60s. Looking at these picture books I was also strongly reminded of *Yellow Submarine*, the 60s cartoon par excellence. What could be more 'psychedelic' than the story of an old man who's going round stealing colours?

But there's more to it than that. The 60s was a time of opening doors, broadening people's awareness, a time when fairy tale — in the shape of the modern pop song, particularly some of the Beatles' later work — came back into its own in a popular way. Even Tony Ross's 'non fairy tale' picture books like Hugo have an element of fairy tale in them. What else is a story in which a home made hobby horse flies you off through the window to Lostsockland but a fairy tale?

*Naughty Nigel*, the tale of a little boy who mishears on purpose everything said to him has the same magic. He finds himself in Nightland, at the mercy of a little old man who does the same thing to him. So when Nigel asks the man (who can grant wishes) for a Golden Rose, he gets a Golden Nose. Of course, Nigel is cured of his fault forever, as children often are in fairy tales. Tony Ross creates a world of fantasy where anything can happen, where a story unfolds with its own bizarre logic, and the end is fitting.

When he has turned to traditional tales — as he has done in books like *The Pied Piper of Hamelin*, *The Enchanted Pig*, *The Greedy Little*



Tony Ross and family

*Cobbler, Jack and the Beanstalk*, *Puss in Boots* and *Goldilocks and the Three Bears* — the same strengths are apparent. Those are quite simple; a bold, flamboyant use of colour in pictures which tell a story very simply, but idiosyncratically; well written texts which sometimes seem almost transparent, and work well with the pictures; and good design, a quality which can ruin the experience of a picture book for a child if it's missing.

'I've always been interested in fairy tales,' says Tony. 'I suppose it's because they've been told to children for generations, and it's nice to do them again for our times. It's a case of knowing the story and putting it down in an unsentimental way. I do them as I remember them, but I sometimes go back to the original sources to check on a name if there's a glaring gap in my memory. I couldn't remember the name of the marquis in *Puss in Boots*, for example — the Marquis of Carabas.'

And then there's what looks at first like a completely different side to Tony's work — the books he's done with Bernard Stone, or *Hare and Badger*, a story on which he collaborated with Naomi Lewis. The pictures in these are finely detailed, more like miniature paintings than the bizarre cartoons of his other work.

'That's a bit of self-indulgence, really. I draw very quickly usually, so it's nice to take a little bit of trouble over things sometimes. Perhaps it's a subconscious wish to be a real painter, or something.'

I have to add that when he said that, Tony Ross was laughing — and that brings me to the last point about his books. They're full of humour.

Most recently he's been directing his comic vision on *The Three Pigs*. The result of all that, a delightfully funny Tony Ross updating of the traditional story, is due out in April.





You only have to look through a bibliography of Errol Le Cain's to discover his main interest. Titles like *King Arthur*, *Sir Orfeo*, *The King's White Elephant* and *Aladdin and the Wonderful Lamp* give the game away immediately. Errol Le Cain is interested in myths, legends and fairy tales, and the stories he has illustrated come from all over the world.

He was born in Singapore in 1941, and spent his childhood in the Far East. He spent some time in Japan, Hong Kong and Saigon and lived for five years in India. His interest in myths and legends took root in those rich and exotic years, and later on it became extended to the legends and fairy tales of the West.

One other formative influence was an interest in animated films. He began making his own at the age of 14, and this was the skill which eventually landed him a job with an advertising studio in London. His first book — *King Arthur* — in fact began its existence as an idea for a film which Errol Le Cain would still like to make.

That book featured intricate and finely detailed illustrative borders which have since become a major feature of some of his other books, and it's those words — intricate and detailed — which seem to sum up his approach. Take *Thorn Rose*, for example, the Brothers Grimm story more popularly known as *Sleeping Beauty*. Each spread features one whole page illustration on one side, faced by the text suspended in white space and surrounded by one of those gorgeous borders.

The pictures in *Thorn Rose* are, for want of a better word, painterly — and also based foursquare on a medieval tradition of art. There's no perspective, and the figures are placed in symbolic relationships. That's a big phrase, but what it really means is that Errol Le Cain has used the style of the middle ages to restore a time and place to a story which has been told so often it is now diluted. There are no two ways about it; his mastery of technique is superb. In the hands of other artists, using the style of the 14th century (suitably updated) could lead to static figures on a backcloth, however beautiful. Errol Le Cain gives life to stories.

And he's well aware of how all this technique translates into good picture books for kids, too. In a biographical note he prepared for his publisher, Faber, he says: 'I feel you shouldn't be dogmatic when talking about picture books. The range available to children should be as wide as possible, and the traditional classics should have their place with contemporary works.'

'Backstreet slums and fairy tale castles must all be there. It's too easy to impose your own opinions, thus narrowing and limiting a child's imagination.'

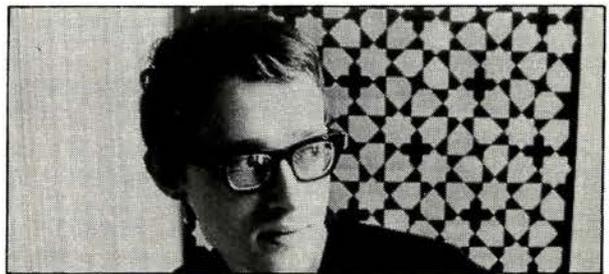
Errol Le Cain can only be accused of widening children's imaginations. He's re-interpreted *Cinderella* and *Beauty and the Beast*, he's resurrected other Brothers Grimm stories like *The Twelve Dancing*

*Princesses*, which is as rich and detailed as *Thorn Rose* — the two best books in the Le Cain canon as far as I'm concerned.

He's also done those 'eastern' books, like *Aladdin* and *The Little Dog of Fo* and *The Child in the Bamboo Grove*. Again, it's a case of the style of the pictures growing organically out of a text. *Aladdin*, for example, features its own illustrative borders, but this time they're round the main pictures and not the text. And would I be right in saying that this then helps the illustrations to look like Persian or Arabic miniatures of the middle ages? At any rate, Errol Le Cain hits exactly the right middle eastern style for this perennial story — and gives it a real pictorial shot in the arm.

He has this to say on the subject of how pictures and text should work together: 'I think the first task of an illustrator is to be in full sympathy with the writer. No matter how splendid and exciting the drawings may be, if they work against the mood of the story the picture book is a failure. I'm all for illustrations with a lot of relevant detail so that a child can discover fresh things with every look. And I like 'simple', bold pictures which are humorous or dramatic, subtly underlining and extending the story, giving the young imagination something to feed on. My idea of a perfect picture book is one with an imaginative text, simply told, and where the words and drawings belong to each other inseparably.'

Humour plays a part in both pictures and text in the superb *Molly Whuppie*, Errol Le Cain's latest picture book. It's an old story, in a version by Walter de la Mare. It's got everything you could want in a traditional tale — giants, magic, kings and princes, castles and chasms and dull-witted villains. If you want to taste Errol Le Cain's work — and once you get into it there's more variety than is at first apparent — try this one for size.



Errol le Cain,  
photo Jenny Bayer

Errol le Cain's books are published by Faber and Faber

*Molly Whuppie*, retold by Walter de la Mare, illustrated by Errol le Cain, 0 571 11942 5, £4.95

Tony Ross's books are published by Andersen Press.

*Naughty Nigel*, 0 86264 027 X, £3.95

*The Three Pigs*, 0 86264 039 3, £3.95

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# EXTRA EXTRA!

## Competition Winners

Signed copies of the Fungus the Bogeyman Plop Up Book and The BFG are already safely in the hands of (almost) all the winners of the competitions in November's Extra.

### Slimericks

Our young verse makers demonstrated a remarkably fine talent for nastiness and it was a close run thing deciding on the most fungoid.

Here they are.

There was an old Bogey called Grime  
All covered in muck, sludge and slime  
He fell in a bog  
Came out green as a frog  
So they sprayed him all over with pine

Frances Lewis, 8, Thorpe Hall School, Walthamstow, London



Frances Lewis  
Terence Gallagher

A filthy old hag called Snot  
She ate slimy old sarnies of grot  
She drank mildewed wine  
Burped and belched all the time  
That grotty old hag called Snot

Terence Gallagher, 12, Halewood Comprehensive, Merseyside.

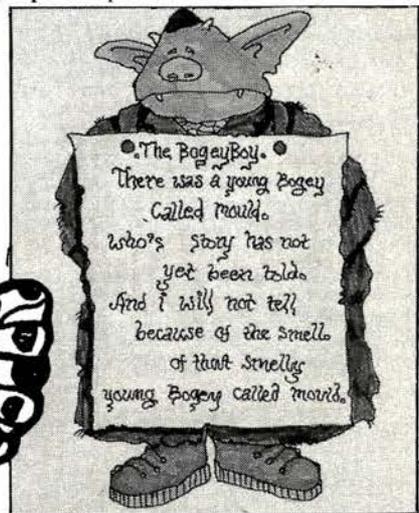
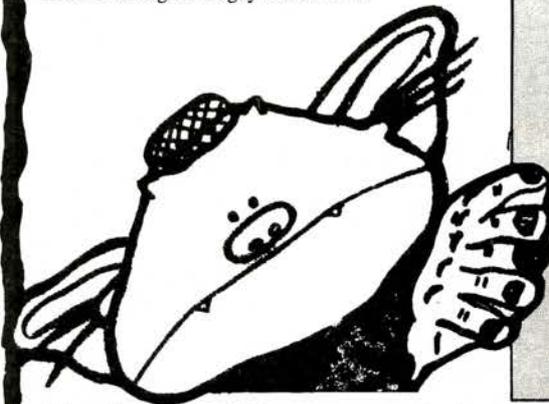


Our third winner sent no address.

**BOZ GRODEN, AGED 7, WHERE ARE YOU?**

We would like to know where to send your Plop Up Book prize for this Slimerick.

There was a young bogey called Snot  
Who ate squashed flies quite a lot  
He sucked slimey slugs  
And nibbled stink bugs  
That revolting fat bogey called Snot



A fine bit of art work from runner-up, Stephen Lewis, 11, Frodsham, Cheshire. And a special mention for Barnleigh Huggins for his 'slime-textured kilt'.

### Phizzwizards

We read some wild and wonderful dreams: fast rides on bikes and in cars, winning World Ice-Skating Championships in pink and white satin, flying like a bird, being strong enough to lift a house. Some dreams of being a superstar or a pop idol turned into nightmares of being mobbed, crushed and pursued. As Roald Dahl might have predicted, a good crop of Phizzwizards featured food — a land of crisps, grass made of French Fries, trousers stuffed full of sweets, magic apples that taste of whatever you want.

BFG winners were:  
Lorraine Willcox, 9, Spalding, Lincs  
Stuart Wilmer, 11, Ramsey, Cambridgeshire  
Lisa Pollard, 11, Fairham, Nottingham

Congratulations to all of you





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### **MONEY – THE FACTS OF LIFE**

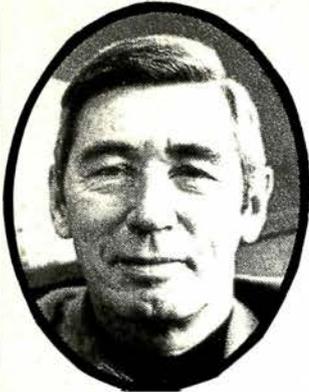
#### **Audio-Visual Presentation**

An audio-visual teaching pack based on the book has 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.**

## Tintin's Creator



Georges Remi, better known as Hergé, who died early in March aged 75 was the creator of Tintin. On the continent where they regard the art form of the 'picture strip' more seriously than we in this country (at least so far) his work has the status of classics.

The character of the bright and resourceful young reporter with his distinctive ginger quiff and faithful dog first appeared in 1929. The strip soon became an international success and Tintin appeared in editions all over the world. Georges Remi, a Belgian, who was born and died in his beloved Brussels, took his characters from all over Europe. The English contributed most notably that marvellous stereotype Captain (Blistering Barnacles) Haddock.

Hergé was a perfectionist and to ensure authenticity in every detail he researched the books extensively. Later this year Methuen, Hergé's English publisher, will issue **The Making of Tintin** (0 416 29300 X, £6.95) the unabridged stories **The Secret of the Unicorn** and **Red Rackham's Treasure**, plus an illustrated section on the background research which shows how the stories took shape. A previously untranslated adventure, **The Blue Lotus** (0 416 44460 1, £3.50) is also due in the summer. (The most recently published adventure was **Tintin and the Picaros** in 1976). These were planned to mark the 25th anniversary of the first English translation of Tintin. Sadly they will now also stand as tributes to an artist whose work will surely endure and be enjoyed and appreciated by children (and adults) for many years to come.

### Watch out for Walker

The end of May sees the launch of Walker Books, previously published under the joint Methuen-Walker imprint. The first Walker Books

catalogue looks interesting. It is particularly strong on titles for toddlers and infants, with names like Helen Oxenbury, John Burningham and Russell Hoban offering series.

### The Future of Children's Books

There has been a decline in sales of children's books over the past few years. Fewer children, educational cutbacks, The Recession, Video: possible reasons abound. Could it be even that there is something wrong with the product? To try to make some sense out of all this 160 publishers, booksellers, teachers and librarians met in February to discuss the question 'Are we really facing a dwindling market?'

A panel of speakers to get things going was drawn from all groups connected with children's books. Naturally much that was said concerned children and schools and we report a brief synopsis of some of it here.

Vicki Lee (Deputy Head of Steeple Bumpstead school, Suffolk) referred to the widespread lowering of morale among teachers at present and urged publishers and booksellers to give them the fullest support by helping to stimulate an interest in books generally among the public and more directly among children in school. More children could be brought into contact with books if booksellers supported school bookshops, went into schools on a regular basis organised special evening events and generally didn't just wait for their customers to walk into their shops.

She was also concerned about the poor quality of many non-fiction titles which do not 'back-up' learning, are frequently badly designed and often contain inaccuracies. Vivien Griffiths (Head of Services to Young

### Bologna Prize

Each year at the famous Bologna Children's Book Fair an international jury awards a graphic prize. This year (the 20th) it was won by Gollancz for Roy Gerrard's **The Favershams**.

### Bestsellers of 1982

The Centre for Children's Books is the source of data showing the books with the highest sales (from High Street bookshops) during 1982. They are:

1. **The Twits** Roald Dahl (Puffin 95p)
2. **The Ha Ha Bonk Book** Janet and Alan Ahlberg (Puffin 85p)
3. **HRH The Princess of Wales** Brenda Ralph Lewis (Ladybird 50p)
4. **Robot** Jan Pienkowski (Heinemann £5.95)
5. **Revolting Rhymes** Roald Dahl (Jonathan Cape £3.95)
6. **You Can Do the Cube** Patrick Bossert (Puffin 80p)
7. **The Secret of Nimh** Robert C. O'Brien (Puffin £1.10)
8. **Asterix and the Black Gold** Goscinny & Uderzo (Hodder & Stoughton £2.50)
9. **Up with Skool!** compiled by children (Puffin 80p)
10. **Spot's First Walk** Eric Hill (Heinemann £3.95)

Any surprises? We would be interested to see any school top ten lists. If you keep a note of your bestsellers, send it to the News Page and we'll publish a School Bookshop Favourite Books list from time to time.

People, Birmingham Central Library) was also concerned about books, particularly the lack of exciting, original stories and the over supply of too-sophisticated imported picture books. Booksellers should pay more attention to 'quality' children's books.

Ron Ulliyat from W. H. Smith said that he had no obligation to sell these 'quality' books when Enid Blyton was obviously what children wanted to read. Better to read Blyton than nothing at all. 'The future of all publishing and bookselling, not just children's is in paperbacks and real care should be given to this part of the market' he added.

The consensus was that steps could be taken to ensure a successful future: children's books should be treated as seriously as their adult rivals for publishers' resources, especially publicity; teachers need support, help and better information; schools need better non-fiction and more titles in under-published areas; booksellers should make books easier to find in their shops, and actively go out and find business, especially in schools.

The Children's Book Circle and the Children's Bookselling Group of the Booksellers' Association who organised the conference are sending out a questionnaire and will produce a report. They hope that that, plus the points brought out in the conference, will help to produce what everyone wants - fewer, better, more popular books and satisfied, literate enthusiastic children.

**What do Books for Keeps readers think of all this? Write and tell us what your views are on the dwindling market.**

BOOKS FOR KEEPS  
**NEWS**

### Going Wild with Glyndebourne

After his success with the designs for **The Love of Three Oranges** at Glyndebourne last year Maurice Sendak is back working with the Glyndebourne Festival Company on an opera version of **Where the Wild Things Are** with music by Oliver Knussen. The show will open at the National Theatre in London on December 31st. It will be followed later in 1984 by another opera based on **Higglety, Pigglety, Pop**. Both productions will be televised by the BBC.

### Evans Move Out

Evans Brothers Ltd. has sold its UK publishing list: educational, adult and children's titles, including Pepper Press, and its English Language teaching titles, to Bell and Hyman. For information contact Elizabeth Sitch, Denmark House, 37-39 Queen Elizabeth Street, London SE1. 01 407 0709.

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