

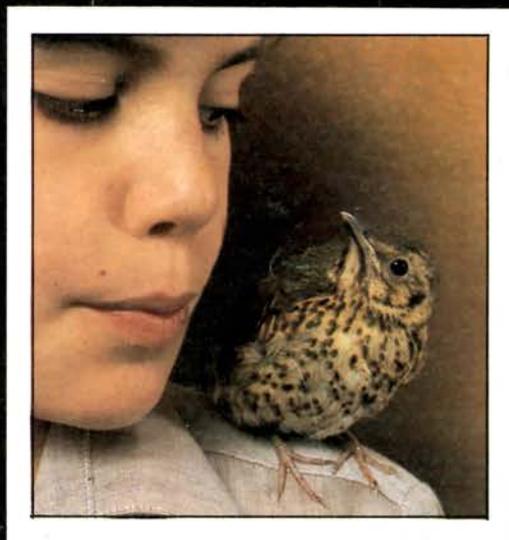
BOOKS FOR KEEPS

MAY 1983 No.20
UK Price 95p



**The Awards
Business**

**Special
Feature on
Information
Books**



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Cover Book

The Photographs on our cover are by Camilla Jessel and are taken from **Learner Bird** (Methuen, 0 416 22460 1, £3.95)
We are grateful to Methuen for making it possible to use these illustrations.

How did you see? Not very correctly in our last issue we are afraid.

In the two features on Picture Books the photographs of Anthony Browne and Tony Ross were incorrectly associated with the illustrations and wrongly identified. This is what should have appeared.

We offer our apologies to Anthony Browne and his family, to Tony Ross and to their respective publishers, Julia MacRae Books and Andersen Press.

We would not wish in any way to mislead or confuse our readers about two such talented writer/artists or two such excellent and original books as **Gorilla** and **Naughty Nigel**.



From **Naughty Nigel**, Andersen Press, 0 86264 027 X, £3.95



Tony Ross



Anthony Browne and Family

From **Gorilla**, Julia MacRae Books, 0 86203 104 4, £4.95

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.



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



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



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.



Pat Triggs teaches in the Department of Education, Bristol Polytechnic. Past Chairman of the Federation of Children's Book Groups and on the Board of the SBA, she has been Editor of 'Books for Keeps' since its inception.

EDITOR'S PAGE

We've put together two special four-page features for you in this issue, on Awards and on Non-Fiction.

Spring and early summer is peak time for Children's Book Awards. As I write we await news of the Carnegie and Greenaway awards. (A difficult year for the Carnegie and with no outstanding hot tip. Will they perhaps not make an award this year? The last time that happened was in 1967. Or will they really go out on a limb and give it to **When the Wind Blows**? We shall see.) But the Guardian, the Mother Goose and the Children's Book Award are all safely in (see p. 6-9). A good time we thought for The World of Children's Books to do a survey of The Awards Business (see p. 4)

Information Please

Few awards for non-fiction, but books continue to pour off the presses in great variety of size, shape and form. Nice, for example, to see the potential of pop-ups being used for non-fiction. Eric Carle showed the way with **The Honeybee and the Robber** (Julia MacRae). My favourite among its successors is **Frogs** (0 434 98017 X, £2.95) in the Heinemann/Quixote series of Natural Pop-Ups. I've been using it with Top Infants; they love to see the 'frog's spawn' literally rise to the surface of the water, and the tadpole grow legs and lose its tail. A rather special addition to 'information as story' books was Susan Williams' **Lambing at Sheepfold Farm**. This month sees a sequel, **Summer at Sheepfold Farm** (Gollancz, 0 575 03262 6, £4.95) with Polly and Tim helping out with shearing, dipping, taking the lambs to market and unmasking a gang of sheep rustlers. Again Susan Williams' line drawings are a beautiful accompaniment to the text.

We've been thinking for some time about ways to cover non-fiction. **Information Please** is a new series which looks at non-fiction in a thematic way. We start with **People at Work and at Home** - a topic for all age-ranges. Pace-setters in 1977 were Anita Harper and Christine Roche's **How we Live and How we Work** (Kestrel and Picture Puffin), perhaps the first books for young children to reflect accurately a whole range of life and work styles. Last year, in an imaginative move, Dinosaur got together with the Industrial Society to produce a Middle School Project pack with three of their titles - **A Visit to the Factory**, **What is a Union** and **The Stock Exchange** - and a set of notes for teachers.

For **Information Please** we asked Rosemary Last of Herefordshire Libraries to give us some guidelines for selection in this area. Chris Fairclough gives us a glimpse of what it's like behind the camera which takes the photographs which illustrates so many non-fiction books, and Jill Coleman talks about the thinking behind the **Beans** series (p. 20-25).

Cover Story

An Authorgraph featuring a non-fiction writer was long overdue and in an issue which focusses on People Camilla Jessel is a natural choice. The stunning photograph on the cover of this issue is only one of an amazing sequence from **Learner Bird**. Camilla Jessel's latest book from Methuen (0 416 22460 1, £3.95). The photographs, together with a simple but very informative text, tell the story of how Jem rescued a baby thrush, looked after it and finally returned it to the wild. They show caring and concern without a trace of sentimentality. Camilla Jessel's books offer images that remain in the mind, that from a basis of 'fact' move the reader to understanding.

Tea for 200?

Adults who like that sort of think have for years been able to rub shoulders with book world luminaries at literary lunches. Now children can get in on the act - at a price. If you can get to London's Inter-continental Hotel and can spare £10 a head you can meet children's authors, dance to a Disco and have a 'super tea'. The organisers, Bookworm Teas, report that two hundred people came to their first party - Paul Daniels appeared. A different charity benefits each time, nominated by a special guest.

For those who would rather spend £30 on a classful of children, the NBL's **Authors and Illustrators List** gives details of writers and artists willing to talk to children and how to contact them. If you are planning an author visit, contact your Regional Arts Association for details of the Writers in Schools scheme - you could get some financial help. And don't forget the SBA handbook (**How to Set Up and Run a School Bookshop**) which has a whole section on Author's Visits. An opportunity not to be missed, we'd think, came in a message from Sparrow Books which asks us to tell Books for Keeps readers that Colin West, author of the delightfully absurd collection of nonsense verse **Not to be Taken Seriously** (0 09 930640 9, £1) would be pleased to visit schools if his expenses were paid. (Contact Diana Colbert, 01 387 2811). And Chris Fairclough tells us he also enjoys visiting schools and talking to children about his books. (Contact Chris in Guildford on 0483 69289)

Use Your Loaf

A message of a quite different kind came to us from LOAF (Libraries Open and Free) which fears 'an all-out attack on the principle of a free library service'. At national level, LOAF claims, the DES' Office of Arts and Libraries has commissioned a project to investigate the income-raising potential of the public library service and ways of circumventing the legal requirements of the Public Libraries and Museum Act (1964) which makes it a statutory duty of local councils to provide 'a comprehensive and efficient library service' at 'no charge', apart from certain exceptions. It's these exceptions, says LOAF, that are being used to undermine the principle of free libraries. Hertfordshire local authority has already introduced overdue fines for children and OAP's of up to £2 per item and is charging for the loan of spoken word recordings. To give or get information, LOAF is at 4 Woodland Way, Welwyn, Herts.

A Little Treasure

What would solve everyone's problems is a spot of instant Magic as practised in **Treethorn's Treasure** (Kestrel, 0 7226 5827 3, £3.95). The many fans of Florence Parry Heide's **The Shrinking of Treethorn** will be delighted to find Treethorn in excellent adult-enduring form again. He does try to tell them that money really is growing on trees, but as usual they are too busy to listen. A little treasure for all of us was the recent animated version of **The Shrinking** on Peter Tabern's **Middle Pages** slot in Thames TV's **Middle English** series (Tuesdays and Thursdays this term). Roll on the repeat. It's far too good for just one showing.

Treasure of course was the theme for the FCBG's Tell a Story Week at the launch of which Dahl received his first award in this country. Which is where we came in. Just turn over and start reading.

Good wishes,

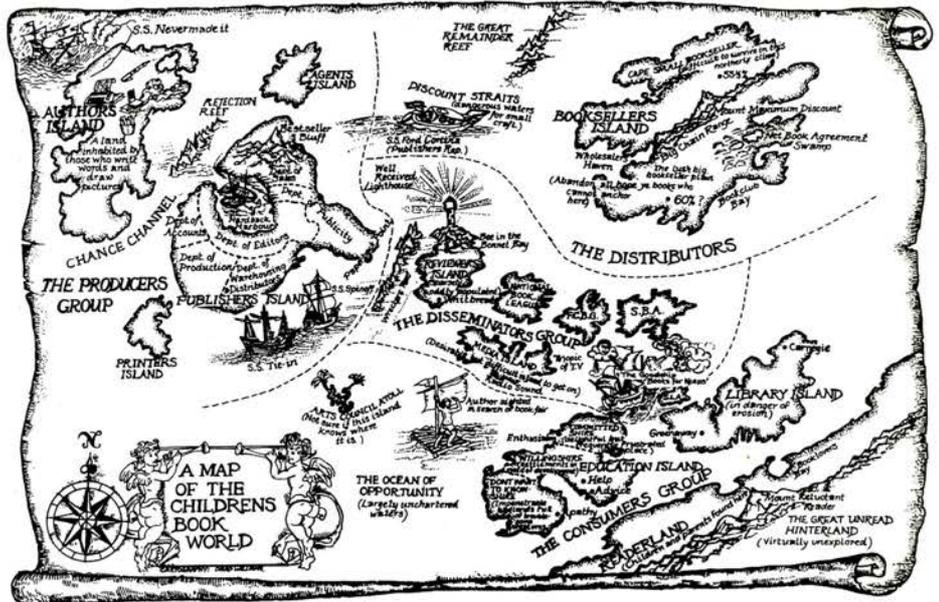
Pat

THE WORLD OF CHILDREN'S BOOKS

PART 6

We pause in our exploration to look at

THE AWARDS BUSINESS



From time to time throughout the year there are excited stirrings and celebrations in various parts of the Children's Book World. It's prize-giving time. From Carnegie and Greenaway on Library Island, after long deliberations, comes an announcement each Spring about 'a children's book of outstanding merit' and 'the most distinguished work in illustration' from the previous year. In other parts of the world decisions are being made about The Other Award (for non-biased books of literary merit), the Mother Goose Award (for the most exciting newcomer to children's book illustration), the Signal Poetry Award, the Whitbread Award, the Kurt Maschler Emil. On Media Island, *The Guardian*, the *Times Educational Supplement* and the *Observer* are busy with their particular prizes.

A lot of activity. What does it all add up to?

As luggage on this voyage around the World of Children's Books we carry a bag packed with questions and this trip is no exception.

What are awards for? How are they decided? What effect do they have on authors, publishers, booksellers, librarians, teachers, parents? What does all this awards business mean for the children of Readerland for whom the books were presumably created?

There is only one award in this country in which children have a say — the Children's Book Award, given by the members of the Federation of Children's Book Groups and their families. The children have the last word in deciding which book wins, but the adults (parents, teachers and librarians) are closely involved, deciding which books from all those published in any year are read aloud or offered to children for comment, collecting and reporting on responses, giving their own views too. For the other awards we have mentioned the judges are always adults. They are also mostly, some would say exclusively, 'insiders'. That is they are inhabitants of the various islands of the world of children's books, not natives from the vast and uncharted interior of that most legendary of all places, Readerland. They are children's librarians, booksellers, publishers, authors, reviewers, and some names crop up regularly on more than one jury.

In the context of award-giving that's not so unusual. Oscars, for example are not given by the people who go to cinemas; they are given by the Film Academy, a body made up of people from the trade itself. Some would say this is the essence of an award: it is a tribute by those in the know to someone who has achieved a standard of excellence inside a trade or profession, the identification of a bench mark against which all practitioners can measure their work.

The remarks of the judges for the new Kurt Maschler Award and the Mother Goose award, for example, have recently been very pointed about the standard of design and the quality of reproduction in illustrated books. If they have been heard and heeded by editors and production departments standards should rise all round. In some years judges do not make an award and that makes its own point. In much the same way the creation of an award can focus attention on a particular area which needs attention. The Other Award has made people look at the content of children's books in quite a new way. Kathleen Gribble, Assistant Borough Librarian (Children and Schools) in Newham, who, as past chairman of the Youth Libraries Group, has been in charge of the Carnegie and Greenaway committees says, 'Giving awards makes us all think more carefully about kids books. The TES non-fiction award has certainly done some good. Before it started the standard of illustration in information books was appalling; but it has improved a lot, although there is still a long way to go.'

Many of the awards in children's books could be looked at in this way. But awards are there for other purposes too. One is to encourage publicity — and more publicity it is hoped means more sales — and the other is to encourage new talent. The Mother Goose aims to do just this as does the new Kathleen Fidler Award for a first novel for 8-12 year olds:

Do awards boost sales? Liz Attenborough is an editor at Kestrel whose children's list has scooped many awards of all sorts over the years. In her

opinion an award has very little effect either way on the sales of a children's book.

'Awards don't make that much difference to how many copies of a book are sold. Each *Peach Pear Plum* by the Ahlbergs had already sold 10,000 copies in nine months by the time it was awarded the Greenaway. It sold an extra eight or nine hundred copies at the time of the award, but I don't think it contributed greatly to the way the book sold after that. What it does tend to mean is that a book will last longer, stay in print for a longer time. If an award goes to a bad book it won't help it sell, and it won't help it last.'

Strangely awards have more impact sometimes outside this country than in it. 'The Japanese for example are wild about awards. When one of our books gets an award we get letters from publishers all over the world about foreign editions. And when *Sunshine* won the Mother Goose award the Australian publisher ordered an instant reprint of 5,000. That would never happen here.'

Awards usually go to hardback books. Winning an award may help a book to make the transition to paperback and therefore to a much bigger potential audience. Barry Cunningham, who is in charge of children's marketing at Penguin Books, feels that an award's primary influence on a book is that it gains it more publicity. 'An award doesn't really sell any more copies of a paperback, but it does get a book talked about. That's sometimes because it stirs up controversy. When Robert Westall won the Carnegie last year for *The Scarecrows*, a lot of people said it wasn't even really a children's book — and the controversy around an award gives a book that much more profile when it comes to publicity.'

The right sort of publicity certainly sells books. After a long period of semi-obscurity the Booker prize (for adult fiction) has in the past few years established itself as a public event to such an extent that *Ladbroke's* quotes odds on which book will win, and last year the presentation was shown live on BBC television. *Schindler's Ark*, Thomas Kenally's winning book, is still in the best-sellers list for hardback fiction. Children's books don't get that sort of coverage. Although the Whitbread Awards, one of which is for children's books (the biggest prize in children's books in money terms) also got on TV last year. Even when the award is given by a newspaper like *The Guardian*, the *TES* or the *Young Observer* the fanfares are faint and easy to miss. Only those with their ears already pricked, usually the insiders most closely involved and interested, are certain to hear. Some try to pass on the news. Paperback publishers always byline an award on a cover, even when it's an award that the general public may not have heard of. The Library Association offers Greenaway Medal stickers which can be put on the covers of winning hardback picture books; but publishers have to pay for these and many don't take up the idea. In general the Youth Libraries Group is somewhat disappointed by the reluctance of publishers to get behind the Carnegie and Greenaway Awards. In the United States a publisher's publicity staff who think they may have a winner are ready poised with press releases, photographs, books, waiting tensely for the announcement of the Newbery and Caldecott Awards (the American equivalent of our Carnegie and Greenaway). An award usually means an instant reprint of at least 10,000 copies. But, say British publishers, in the States these awards mean guaranteed sales to thousands of libraries as well as bookshops. Here they can't even be sure that librarians will buy the books their own Association has chosen to honour. It's a classic chicken and egg situation.

The reasons some librarians are not buying those books may also have to do with something else Barry Cunningham had to say about the 'closed circle of the children's book world.'

'I've got the greatest respect for award winners, but I feel there's a growing tendency to give awards to books which could be classed as 'Kid lit', rather than books which are genuinely popular with kids. It seems to me that there's a small body of established writers and artists who get shortlisted for awards every year with monotonous regularity. In a way you get the feeling that it's a self-perpetuating system with little reference to the outside world.'

In this context it's more than interesting to note that Roald Dahl, one of Britain's most popular writers of children's books — and one who sells extremely well — had never won an award until this year, when *The BFG* scooped The Federation of Children's Books Groups' award. Barry was quick to point out that Dahl was given his award by *consumers* — i.e. kids and their parents, the inhabitants of Readerland. 'With the other awards, it's adults making judgements on writing for kids with very little relation to what children actually read or buy.'

Others would agree with part of this — but go on to say that it's an inevitable part of making an award. Stephanie Nettell, for instance, the children's books editor of *The Guardian*, who administers the *Guardian's* fiction award.

'I think it's true that an award winning book is almost by definition one not likely to be read by kids. It's inevitable in a way. I think that what we're doing with an award like ours is picking out a book which is breaking new ground. Obviously that means the vast bulk of readers won't go for it.

'But I hope I would never allow *The Guardian* award to go to a book which I felt was inaccessible. I try to make sure that I and the judges have a normal, bright child in mind when we're looking at books. It's difficult, but in a way it's like reviewing. You need experience of children's books, knowledge of children, too. You have to be careful.

'*The Sentinels* by Peter Carter, for example, and *Conrad's War* by Andrew Davies are intelligent books with a good story. But I don't think you'd get a mass readership for them. Books like these are on the limits of a child's world, but will stretch them too.'

She also added that winning an award has an 'intangible, knock-on effect' on a writer's later career. It meant that his next book would be reviewed more widely than it would otherwise have been, and therefore helps to build his reputation as a writer to be looked at seriously.

Beverley Mathias of the National Book League, has a fairly acerbic opinion about some awards.

'Some are a complete waste of time, and there are some years where even the ones which are worth something are given to the wrong books. For example, Jane Gardam's small book for 8-10 year olds, *Bridget and William* (a Julia MacRae Blackbird) is a good piece of literature. It's a great book for the age range at which it's aimed. But the Carnegie committee didn't have the courage to give the award to a book which is for the under tens — they seem to think that an award for writing should go to something written for the over tens every year.

'It took a lot of courage to give the Greenaway to *Haunted House*. Committees need more of that sort of courage. There's another point, the Greenaway is for *illustration*, not just for a picture book. But it rarely goes to a non-fiction book, (and there are some superb non-fiction illustrations) and it never goes to a book for older children which is illustrated. It's time the committees took a closer look at the criteria on which they give awards.'

Kathleen Gribble has been on the committee of judges for both the Greenaway and the Carnegie, as well as the Mother Goose.

'The judging process is very difficult, not easy at all. I'm hampered by my own awareness of children's books to a certain extent, but I think that doing it has made me read and look at illustration more critically, more closely. It's also very hard work. I knew it would be, but it turned out to be harder than I thought it was going to be. It involves a large number of books — 35/40 books in each category for the Carnegie — a lot of thinking and a lot of talking to other people.'

And they, like other juries, do worry about criteria and categories. 'We have suggested that the Carnegie and the Greenaway be divided into age ranges. But that presents even more problems. What we're going for is quality above all else.'

The search for that 'quality book' begins for Carnegie and Greenaway in the regions, with the Youth Libraries Group committees which nominate books for consideration by the final panel. For other awards what gets considered is often dependant on what publishers decide to submit. Liz Attenborough paints a picture of publishers wracking their brains to find potential winners. 'This one has got to win it; it's got ingredient X. Except that we can't always decide exactly what ingredient X is. Or what the judges are looking for. Occasionally we are surprised when certain of our books win!' Some publishers don't submit books by default perhaps or misunderstanding about the terms of the award.

What about the people on Author Island where all these books begin? Alan Garner is reported to have said (jokingly?) that he was very disparaging about children's book awards until he got one; then he wanted every one that was going. Michael Foreman, who has won lots, values most the Frances Williams Award for Illustration — given every five years — because it is judged by his fellow professionals. Most agree that it is reassuring and pleasing to be a winner. But it does have its drawbacks. After Penelope Lively won the Carnegie Medal for *The*

Ghost of Thomas Kempe she was 'turned overnight into a kid lit buff' and was asked to give talks all over the place. 'In the end I had to give up because it was interfering with my writing.' For Michelle Magorian winning the *Guardian* Award for *Goodnight Mr Tom*, her first novel, was encouraging. 'But it's an awful lot to live up to.'

Awards touch on all shores of the World of Children's books. A sail around to look at the Awards Business from all points of view reveals many of the issues that perennially pre-occupy its inhabitants: how children's books are produced, judged, publicised, sold.

'You've got to be realistic,' says Kathleen Gribble. 'How many children are bothered about what awards are made? Very few indeed. Awards are about publicity, and they are about adults, and really they are for adults.' Beverley Mathias agrees and adds, 'Awards are useful in that they help to bring more books to the attention of adults who don't know about kids books.'

Let's end where we began, in Readerland with the children, and give Beverley Mathias the last word. 'Children don't buy or read a book because it has won an award. A children's book still needs to be sold to a child, whether it has won an award or not. It has to be presented in the right way, as a good book which is worth reading.' ●

CHILDREN'S BOOKS AWARDS an alphabetical round-up

The Carnegie Medal presented by the Library Association for a book of outstanding merit in English, first published in the UK in the preceding year.

First awarded in 1937. (*Pigeon Post*, Arthur Ransome)

The Children's Book Award chosen by members of the Federation of Children's Book Groups and lots of children. The prize is a scrap book of the children's responses in words and pictures.

First awarded in 1981. (*Mr Magnolia*)

The Kathleen Fidler Award given in memory of Kathleen Fidler by Blackie and the Scottish FCBG for a first novel for 8-12 year olds.

Inaugurated 1981. First winner, Allan Baillie for *Adrift* (published this year)

The Kate Greenaway Medal presented by the Library Association for the most distinguished work in the illustration of children's books first published in the UK in the preceding year.

Established 1956 (no award)

The Guardian Award for Children's Fiction given for an outstanding work on fiction for children first published in the UK during the preceding year.

First awarded 1967 (*Devil-in-the-Fog*, Leon Garfield)

The Kurt Maschler Award for a work of imagination in which text and illustration enhance and balance each other. The prize includes a bronze statuette of Emil, Erich Kastner and Walter Trier's famous boy detective.

First awarded 1982 (*The Sleeping Beauty* and other favourite fairy tales, Angela Carter and Michael Foreman)

The Mother Goose Award for the most exciting newcomer to children's book illustration. Prize includes a bronze egg.

First awarded 1979.

The Other Award presented by the Children's Rights Workshop, for non-biased books of literary merit. Includes paperbacks and books by non-British authors. Number of books selected at the discretion of the judges.

First awarded 1975.

The Signal Poetry Award presented by Signal magazine for an outstanding book of poetry for children. Inaugurated to advance the cause of poetry for children. Award withheld frequently in recent years.

Previous winners, Ted Hughes and last year Michael Rosen and Quentin Blake (*You Can't Catch Me*, Deutsch)

The TES Information Book Award for distinction in content and presentation in non-fiction books published in the UK or Commonwealth.

First awarded 1972. Since 1973 awarded in two categories: Junior (up to 9) Senior (10-16)

Whitbread Awards for a book published in the UK and written by someone who has lived in the UK or Ireland for five years. Administered by the Booksellers Association. Prize £3,000. Children's Books first added as a category, 1972.

Frances Williams Award made every five years to encourage and advance the art of book illustration. Judged by a panel of artists.

Young Observer/Rank Teenage Fiction Award to encourage writing for young people.

First awarded 1981

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

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Our complete children's catalogue is available from the Publicity Dept., Ref BFK, J.M. Dent & Sons Ltd., 33 Welbeck Street, London W1M 8LX.

AWARDS AWARDS AWARDS AWARDS AWARDS

The Children's Book Award

A Giant Success for Roald Dahl and The BFG

The third Children's Book Award, given by the Federation of Children's Book Groups, goes to **The BFG** by Roald Dahl (Cape, 0 224 02040, 4, £6.50).

The award, for a work of fiction for children under fourteen, is unusual in that children play a part in deciding which book shall be the winner. Members of the Federation all over the country try out books with children in families, playgroups, schools and libraries and collect their responses. The children have the last word when it comes to choosing the winner.

Pat Thomson, award co-ordinator reports.

"Something very tall and very black and very thin" steals Sophie away one night. Fortunately the something is the Big Friendly Giant, quite unlike the horrible 'human bean'-eating giants that threaten the world. Between them Sophie and the BFG devise a plan to persuade the Queen herself to mobilise the armed forces, and the dangerous giants are defeated.

The BFG has a particular language of his own and the children enjoyed the amazing vocabulary and the giant lore. The personal habits of the giant exercised considerable fascination! The Queen behaves with commendable sang froid and the raid on the giants satisfied the more vigorous spirits.

The BFG combines many of the features that make a book work for children: an exciting beginning, humour at their level, and striking, memorable characters. A book to enjoy.

The 'Top Ten' runners-up are:

The Baby's Catalogue
Janet and Allan Ahlberg, Kestrel, 0 7226 5777 3, £4.95

This year's best baby book. Talked about and enjoyed by all. 0+

Alfie's Feet
Shirley Hughes, Bodley Head, 0 370 304160, £4.25

New wellies are the subject of Alfie's concentrated attention. Pictures packed with accurate observation and homey details. 3+

Ernest and Celestine
Gabrielle Vincent, Julia MacRae Books, 0 86203 072 2, £3.50
Tender tale of a mouse and a protective bear in pictures that are consistently interesting and elegant. 4+

Pelican
Brian Wildsmith, Oxford, 0 19 279764 6, £4.95

The brilliant glowing colours draw the child. 5+

The Sea People
Jorg Muller and Jorg Steiner, Gollancz, 0 575 03088 7, £5.95

Consistently well received. A firm, plain tale of two contrasted island peoples. Illustrated by pictures which have the fascination of maps. 6+

Horse
Jane Gardam, Julia MacRae Books, 0 86203 066 8, £2.95

Short read-it-yourself book of the highest quality. The village joins forces to preserve the white horse. Enjoyed by urban and rural children alike. 7+

Magnus Powermouse
Dick King-Smith, Gollancz, 0 575 03116 6, £5.50

Best young novel in our top ten which ran **The BFG** very close. Skilfully written, excellent plot and characterisation. Very funny. 9+

The Dark Behind the Curtain
Gillian Cross, Oxford, 0 19 271457 0, £5.95

The menacing characters in the school play threaten to overwhelm the actors, A real thriller. 11+

Zed
Rosemary Harris, Faber, 0 571 11947 6, £5.95

Tense, always involving. Zed relives the hours spent as a hostage, seeing them with a more mature eye. 13+

The Wave
Morton Rhue, Kestrel, 0 7226 5810 9, £4.95 and Puffin Plus, 0 14 031522 5, £1.25

The class cannot understand the power of Nazism so the history master tries an experiment. Excellent. 14+ ●

Roald Dahl receives his award from Pat Thomson. With him are his granddaughters; Sophie (the original of the one in the story) holds a copy of the book.



Photo, M. Craig

RDS AWARDS AWARDS AWARDS AWARDS AWARDS AWARDS AWARDS

The Guardian Award

Winner: *The Village by the Sea* by Anita Desai

The Village by the Sea tells the story of thirteen-year-old Lila and twelve-year-old Hari who with a desperately ill mother and a drunken father assume the responsibility of keeping the family, including two younger sisters, going. The village is Thul, on the west coast of India, a place where the developed world makes itself felt in the threat/promise of industrial development, the entrepreneurial ambitions (half comic, half heroic) of a local fisherman, and the regular visits of a rich Bombay family to their summer cottage. Hari seeking work in Bombay meets that world head on and, with luck and help, learns to survive, as does the whole family.

Stephanie Nettell, Children's Books Editor of the *Guardian*, reporting on the award comments

'It is indeed her delicate balance of locality and universality, of the concerns of the Third World which yet emerge as the concerns of all the world that makes Anita Desai's book so special.

Despite the simple action and classically pure style – though Desai has warmed her cool, spare adult prose with unashamed affection – this is a book for older children,

if only because of the intricate pattern of all its layers and levels. *The Village by the Sea* is a tender work of art, born of a marriage of intellect and passion, conceived by a love not only of the children of Thul but of children everywhere.'

The Village by the Sea (Heinemann, 0 434 93436 4, £5.50) is Anita Desai's second children's book. She grew up in Delhi, the daughter of a Bengali father and a German mother, and now lives in Bombay with her husband and four children. She is also well-known for her adult novels and was shortlisted for the Booker Prize in 1980 for *Clear Light of Day*.

The runner-up for the Award is *Ring-Rise, Ring-Set* by **Monica Hughes** (Julia MacRae Books, 0 86203 069 2, £5.95).

Scientists looking for a way to save the high-tech civilisation of future Earth from a new ice age find a solution which threatens the survival of a 'tribe of savages' and their simpler culture. Lisa who identifies with both groups is at the centre of the dilemma.

'Monica Hughes offers no comforting answers, but her novel is both a good fun read for teenagers and a stimulant for deeper thought.'



Anita Desai, courtesy of Heinemann

The Guardian Award is presented annually for an outstanding contribution to imaginative literature for children. The judges this year were Andrew Davies, Penelope Lively, Michael Rosen, Geoffrey Trease and Stephanie Nettell. ●

Mr Fox

by **Gavin Bishop**

'One day Mr Fox found a fat juicy bumblebee and popped it in his bag.' On his way he finds more and more to put in his bag, and then he feels hungry . . .

A racey, spectacular version of an old English folk tale.

32 pages of full colour. Laminated hardback
0 19 558089 3 **£4.50**



Poor Esmé

Victoria Chess

Poor Esmé. Everyone is too busy to play with her. So she goes to the library and takes out a book on making wishes. Her wish for a friend finally comes true . . . but it's not what she expects.

32 pages of full colour. Laminated hardback
0 19 279781 6 **£4.50**

The Sparrow's Story

Judith Crabtree

'Why choose me to get the story to the King?' said the sparrow. But there was no-one else. The journey was long and full of danger, so dangerous that the sparrow was attacked and the story destroyed. What could the sparrow do now?

32 pages of beautifully decorated colour.
Laminated hardback
0 19 554359 9 **£4.50**

Oxford Books for Children

AWARDS AWARDS AWARDS AWARDS AWARDS

Chris Powling, one of the judges, gives a personal view of what happened when

MOTHER GOOSE MEETS ANGRY ARTHUR

... or, to be accurate, Satoshi Kitamura. Each year we Mother Goose judges remind ourselves that the Award — with its bronze egg and its £200 cash prize — goes to an illustrator not to a book. It's even on our notepaper: for the most exciting *newcomer* to British children's book illustration. We jog our own memories about three other snags which crop up annually, too. The first is that a newcomer is someone making a debut, not necessarily a novice; the second is that a first-time published illustrator is unlikely to carry much clout with the design-and-production department; and the third is that any accompanying text is *not* up for our assessment but is merely the peg on which the pictures are hung.

If all this seems easy and obvious enough then you're either a lot brighter or a lot dafter than we are. Consider, for example, the relative weight that should be given such factors with reference to 1983's runners-up alone. How much of the credit for Chris Winn's casually elegant *Outlawed Inventions* should go to his designer at Pepper Press, Nick Thirkell? And in the case of *Trouble for Trumpets* (Benn), were our doubts about the static quality of Peter Cross's outrageously accomplished pictures in part a product of a text that, surely, was added afterwards? The simplest query to resolve concerned John Prater's warmly accessible *On Friday Something Funny Happened* (Bodley Head) — we soon decided that the occasional weaknesses in draughtsmanship here were consistent with a promise yet to be fulfilled and were more than offset by counter-balancing strengths. But all these were runners-up, remember. Already, in a year so rich in entries that at least six other illustrators were strongly fancied, sheer quality had brought Winn and Cross and Prater to the top of the pile.

Hence the astonishing achievement of Satoshi Kitamura. He took the lead pretty nearly from the beginning, always odds-on however much the starting-prices of other favourites fluctuated during our meetings. In the end he romped home, scooping up egg, cash and cachet in the process. Yet here is a young artist whose work, before *Angry Arthur*, had been turned down by about a dozen British publishers — who was ready to give up any idea of being an illustrator and return to Tokyo which he'd left in 1979 to study at the Byam Shaw School of Art. Now, at the age of 27, he's arrived well and truly. Already he has a second book, called *Ned and the Joybaloo*, scheduled for publication in the Autumn. For this, too, he must thank Andersen's Klaus Flugge who gave him a flying start in the form of Hiawyn Oram's superb two-hundred-word text (about a quarter of the length of this piece) and then followed this up with a flying finish by making sure the design and book production of *Angry Arthur* were first-rate. Both advantages, needless to say, were duly allowed for by the time beady-eyed judges had reached their decision.

Not that Satoshi Kitamura didn't deserve such luck. His artwork for *Angry Arthur* is simply sensational. Page-by-page the illustrations plot Arthur's expanding tantrum without any apparent fuss yet with a stunningly detailed and sophisticated draughtsmanship that keeps the overall message clearly in view. Even the marvellous freedom of the colour washes depicting air and water somehow back up, by contrast, the destructive grip of Arthur's rage. Chaos looms even larger with each spread and Arthur's white, tight face is



Photo courtesy of TV Times

always at the centre of it. But it's also a hilarious book. As Arthur's Universe dissolves so does the reader — with laughter at the sheer, pointless extravagance of it all. What we've got here is not just a worthy winner of the 1983 Mother Goose Award but a picture-book that bears comparison with *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*, with *Mr Gumpy's Motor Car*, with *Where the Wild Things Are*, with *Dogger*, with *Tricker-Tracker* . . . just name your classic.

Is it really that good?

Of course it is . . . in my opinion. My fellow judges may, or may not, go quite so far in their approval. For me *Angry Arthur* makes the crucial moral point that there's almost always a total mis-match between the intensity of a tantrum and the importance of what caused it. I've read the book to umpteen children and they've all understood this very clearly while greatly relishing Arthur's bolshiness because it reminds them of what they've already begun to perceive: *that it's possible to be your own worst enemy*. Instead of cosily placating the younger reader *Angry Arthur* takes the bold step of helping youngsters come to terms with their bad feelings by making them funny. Isn't this a vital part of growing up? Yet there's no preaching, no patronage. Enlightenment is brought about by entertainment alone — the teaming of a deft text with dazzling illustration. What more can we ask of a picture book? ●

The runners-up for this year's award were:

Peter Cross for *Trouble for Trumpets*, Benn, 0 510 00122 X, £5.95

John Prater for *On Friday Something Funny Happened*, Bodley Head, 0 370 30449 7, £4.50

Chris Winn for *Outlawed Inventions*, Pepper Press, 0 237 45616 8, £3.95

Tony Blundell received an honourable mention for his black and white illustrations for Roger McGough's *The Great Smile Robbery*, Kestrel, 0 7226 5758 7, £4.95.

The Way of the Stars

Greek Legends of the Constellations

Ghislaine Vautier

Adapted by

Kenneth McLeish



How did the Milky Way get its name? What is the story behind the constellation which snakes and coils across the heavens called the dragon?

This delightful book, illustrated in full colour, tells

clearly and simply the

stories which gave names to

some of the best-known constellations

in the sky. In addition, there

are star maps and instructions

for making a star show

at home.

£5.25

net



Legends of the Sun and Moon

Eric and Tessa Hadley

Illustrated by Jan Nesbitt

Beautifully illustrated in full colour, this book for eight to twelve year olds brings together legends of the sun and moon that have grown up in a wide variety of cultures, from Mexican, Polynesian and Indian through to Nigerian and North American Indian. The book recounts stories which these people told to explain the creation of the sun and moon, the mysteries of the sun's journeying across the sky and the moon's waxing and waning.

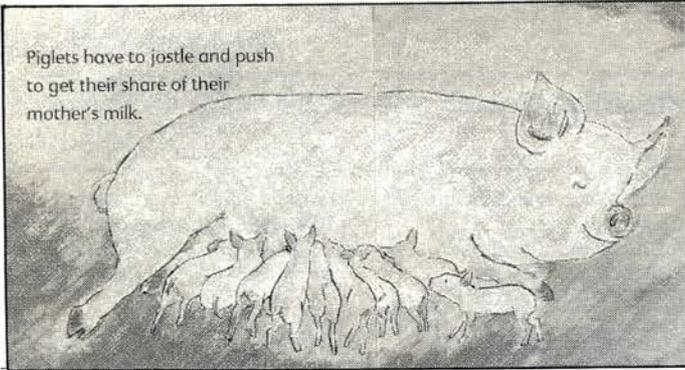
£5.25 net

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

REVIEWS

Nursery/Infants

Piglets have to jostle and push to get their share of their mother's milk.



Feeding Babies
Chiyoko Nakatani,
Picture Puffin,
0 14 050.381 1, £1.10

A factual account of how various young mammals, including cats, dogs, pigs, hippos (who feed under water) and humans, are suckled. The large pictures rendered in chalk and crayon on a textured background and the brief text in big clear type, make the information accessible for a young audience. Worthwhile non-fiction books for the very young are still few and far between so it is good to see one of the best available in paperback. JB

My Naughty Little Sister at the Fair
Dorothy Edwards, ill.
Shirley Hughes, Magnet,
0 416 44570 5, £1.25

My Naughty Little Sister is a favourite character who is now associated almost as much with the illustrator Shirley Hughes as with her creator, Dorothy Edwards. This full colour picturebook version of a 'lost and found' episode will perhaps be the way into the longer collections of stories for those who have enjoyed listening to them and are now ready to begin reading them independently. JB

When My Naughty Little Sister Was Good

0 416 21950 0

My Naughty Little Sister and Bad Harry

0 416 21990 X

Dorothy Edwards, ill.
Shirley Hughes, Magnet,
95p

Paperback rights in these collections have now reverted from Puffin to Methuen, publishers of the original hardbacks. These two Magnets are attractively presented with new full colour covers by Shirley Hughes. **Was Good** has three fewer stories than the Young Puffin edition but its large, clear type makes it suitable for reading alone by older children who are getting going, as well as for reading aloud to the youngest. Dorothy Edwards' reminiscences of her naughty little sister first appeared in print in 1952. As the years pass the stories increasingly become period pieces (picking stalks out of currants, sending Dad's shirts to the Washing Lady) providing lots of opportunities for talk. Although the style makes many adults cringe **My Naughty Little Sister** remains a firm favourite and reads aloud very successfully. PT

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.

Gran's Good News

0 216 91281 4

Gran's Old Bones

0 216 91277 6

Michael and Joanne
Cole, Blackie, 75p each

Gran is a new character from the creators of *Bod*, and has her own TV series (which I haven't seen). Seemingly she is a somewhat grumpy old lady with a grandson, Jim, whose timely visits always manage to lead to exciting happenings such as a television appearance for Gran or the discovery of dinosaur bones in the garden. I do not know how closely the stories follow the scripts but the fact that the illustrations are paintings rather than TV stills means that these pleasant little books for sharing with preschoolers can stand in their own right; though doubtless their popularity will depend to some extent on the success, or otherwise, of the television series.

(Those who follow the TV adventures of *SuperTed* will do best to ignore the books from the series (Muller): flat, brash pictures and dull, present-tense prose cripple any excitement which the storyline may carry). JB

Oh Abigail

Moira Miller, Magnet,
0 416 23840 8, 95p

Ten everyday stories of cosy family life. Abigail (who is a direct descendant of *My Naughty Little Sister*, Helen Morgan's *Mary Kate*, and Joan Robinson's *Mary Mary*) lives with Mum, Dad, older brother Paul, and favourite cuddly toy, Hot Dog, in a village/small town/suburb (difficult to tell, except it's not inner city). Events of a preschool daily life depicted with some nice child's eye view touches. PT

From *Oh Abigail!*

The Bear Family

0 7232 3084 6

The Bears' Picnic

0 7232 3085 4

The Bears' Nursery School

0 7232 3086 2

The Naughty Little Bear

0 7232 3088 9

The Bears' Christmas

0 7232 3089 7

Mitzi in Hospital

0 7232 3087 0

Sara Ball, Frederick
Warne, 45p each

Half a dozen pocket-sized books featuring Mitzi and her family and friends: though the prose is somewhat pedestrian, the illustrations encapsulate the cosy and cuddlesome qualities of teddybears and should help endear the characters to very young children. At this price it is probably worth trying a title or two - *The Naughty Little Bear* should certainly be popular. JB



Infant/Junior

The Shopping Basket
John Burningham,
Picture Lions,
0 00 662148 1, £1

Having complied with his mother's request: 'Pop down to the shop for me . . . and buy six eggs, five bananas, four apples, three oranges for the baby, two doughnuts and a packet of crisps for your tea . . .', young Steven encounters a series of intimidators on his

way home, each of whom demands one of the items from his basket. Undeterred by their threats, the bespectacled hero efficiently dispenses with each would-be assailant, arriving home safe and sound albeit without a few of his purchases. The straightforward delivery of the prose is brilliantly counterbalanced by Burningham's hilarious portrayal of the incidents. Don't on any account miss this one. JB

Jafta — My Father

0 85122 397 4

Jafta — The Wedding

0 85122 398 2

Hugh Lewin, ill. Lisa
Kopper, Dinosaur, 95p
each

Two very welcome new Jafta paperbacks, Jafta being a South African boy who lives in a village and whose father lives and works in the city. Despite

the very specific setting, the feelings - love, loneliness and joy - are universal, so that these are books which one hopes will reach a very wide audience. In case you do not know this excellent series, Lisa Kopper's sepia pictures are fine examples of the illustrator's art and provide a superb complement to the episodes which the author presents from Jafta's viewpoint. JB

A Dark Dark TaleRuth Brown, Hippo,
0 590 70163 0, £1.25

A splendidly creepy picturebook based on the favourite traditional rhyme, but there is a twist in the tale as readers who follow the cat on its prow through the wood and castle-like mansion may suspect. Although it is ideal for beginners, this book has already proved to be a great hit with readers of all ages at all stages. JB

But No ElephantsJerry Smath, Hippo,
0 590 70141 X, £1.25

I must admit I was slightly dismissive of this book when it first appeared in hardcover but it has, in my experience, been a huge success with fives to nines reading it for themselves. They seem to find the exploits of bespectacled Grandma Tildy – a dotty, kind-hearted lady who wears trainers and has a soft spot for animals and an inability to say 'no' to the travelling salesman – enormously appealing. JB

Cousin Blodwyn's VisitA. Vesey, Magnet,
0 416 24800 4, £1.25

Cousin Blodwyn has a 'very forceful personality' and when she decides that her messy relative, Witch Capillariss, needs taking in hand there is no stopping her. Kitchen, bedroom, house, garden, cats: all are re-ordered to Cousin Blodwyn's satisfaction. But when she turns her attention to tidying up Capillariss that long-suffering witch decides she must act. JB

Amanda Vesey did both words and pictures for this cheerful little story which was a runner-up for the Mother Goose Award in 1981. PT

Gumdrop Finds a GhostVal Biro, Picture Puffin,
0 14 050.390 0, £1.10

Fans of Gumdrop, who are legion, will be pleased to have this jolly adventure in paperback. Visiting Mildew Manor, the stately home of Sir Marmaduke Ricketty-Cobwebb, Mr. Oldcastle and his grandson, Dan, find a ghost and a Ghost. Bright, lively pictures and plenty of action. PT

Paddington on ScreenMichael Bond, Young
Lions, 0 00 672044 7,
£1.00

Seven stories of the famous accident-prone bear which appeared first in the Blue Peter annuals of the seventies. References to Valerie Singleton, John, Peter and Lesley, Uri Geller etc. may mystify today's young audience but, suitably updated these still make short, funny read alouds

for young juniors who will enjoy the chaos and mayhem and the wordplay that result from Paddington's innocent, well-intentioned encounters with the Beeb. PT

Once in a WoodEve Rice, Young Lions,
0 00 672090 0, 95p

Ten of Aesop's fables simply told and presented with black and white pictures and in clear, large print. The poorer quality paper in this paperback means that the clarity and satisfying black and white contrasts of the Bodley Head hardback are not so evident; but the humour of Eve Rice's illustration remains complementing the fables and bringing out the fun in them. Good value for infant and junior classrooms. PT

The Tale of Georgie GrubJeanne Willis, ill.
Margaret Chamberlain,
Hippo, 0 590 70164 9,
£1.25

Jeanne Willis's thoroughly modern cautionary tale in the tradition of Belloc and Hoffmann, told in rhyming couplets, and hilariously depicted by Margaret Chamberlain; (the 'pong' of the protagonist exudes from every illustration). Georgie's aversion to soap and water, his descent into filth and his demise (in the dustbin) will be relished by the young and possibly shock those adults who have forgotten the delight with which they read the exploits of Harriet, Suck-a-thumb, Jim, Matilda and the like. JB

The Roundabout HorseH. E. Todd, ill. Val Biro,
Hodder & Stoughton,
0 340 33198 4, £1.50

I have never been a fan of Bobby Brewster though I know his exploits do appeal to a large number of young readers and listeners; this large format paperback version of one such tells what happens when Bobby enters a spotted merry-go-round horse in a country show. Val Biro's pictures of rural scenes (do I recognise the fair in Thame High Street?) are full of bustle and bounce, and he gives character to animals and people alike. JB

The Princess Well-I-MayPamela Oldfield, ill.
Glenys Ambrus, Hodder
& Stoughton,
0 340 33200 X, £1.50

Indecisiveness proves to be the downfall of the princess who issues (in rhyme) a series of tasks to the shepherd boy who wishes to marry her, for, having satisfied all her whims and wishes, her suitor finds his

'The Crow and the Water-Jug' from **Once in a Wood**

true love in an ordinary country girl who knows her own mind. The telling is nothing out of the ordinary but Glenys Ambrus's fresh, detailed pictures give a touch of zest and humour to the book. JB

The Berenstain's B Book

0 00 171287 X

Bears on WheelsStan and Jan Berenstain,
0 00 171289 6**I'll Teach my Dog 100 Words**Michael Frith, ill.
P. D. Eastman,
0 00 171277 2**The Eye Book**Theo LeSieg, ill. Roy
McKie, 0 00 171288 8**The Bike Lesson**Stan and Jan Berenstain,
0 00 171327 2**My Book about Me**Dr Seuss & Roy McKie,
0 00 171401 5
Collins, £1.25 each

The Cat in the Hat books now have distinctive red or yellow spines and borders, the yellow (Bright and Early Books) generally being easier to read, and shorter – 32 pages as opposed to 64 in the red (Beginner Books). My pick of the latest batch are: **The Berenstain's B Book** – hilarious phrases with all words beginning with the letter b; **Bears on Wheels** wherein zany pictures provide perfect context cues for the single line per page of text; and **The Bike Lesson**, a rhyming story in which Father Bear demonstrates how NOT to ride. JB

Frog and Toad are Friends

0 14 03.1564 0

Frog and Toad TogetherArnold Lobel,
0 14 03.1565 9**Little Bear**

0 14 03.1568 3

Father Bear Comes Home0 14 03.1569 1
Else Holmelund Minarik,
ill. Maurice Sendak**Danny and the Dinosaur**

0 14 03.1608 6

Grizzwold0 14 03.1609 4
Syd Hoff, I Can Read,
Young Puffin, £1.25 each

I have sung the praises of the I Can Read series in both hard- and paperback, on numerous occasions and in many places. Now Penguin have chosen six of the best to go into Young Puffin and one hopes that this will help them to reach the widest possible readership: **The Frog and Toad** stories and those about **Little Bear** should be part of every child's literary experience. JB

Little
Bear

Junior/Middle

The Happy Prince
Oscar Wilde, ill. Jane Bottomley, Piccolo Picture Classics, 0 330 26995 X, £1.00

Thumbelina
Hans Andersen, ill. Anna Dzierzek, Piccolo Picture Classics, 0 330 26957 7, £1.00

Both of these retellings are by Shirley Greenaway to a formula of 24 pages and plenty of colourful illustrations, of which Jane Bottomley's in **The Happy Prince** are undoubtedly the best and most striking. Those in **Thumbelina** by Anna Dzierzek savour of the pictures in cheaper picture comics and look rather characterless, added to which, our heroine emerges in spring to a pastoral scene abundant with autumnal berries and fruit. I've always liked Wilde's sometimes pious tales and **The Happy Prince** along with **The Selfish Giant** are compulsory viewing in our house when they are screened, besides turning up for bedtime reading from time to time. This edition

does sufficient justice to the original and would earn its place in any collection, though I do wonder why the original is in need of retelling. As for seasonally-confused **Thumbelina**, I don't doubt that there are better versions; nowadays fairy stories rely heavily on their illustrators for their impact and this one could be bettered. DB

The Ghost and Bertie Boggin
Catherine Sefton, Puffin, 0 14 03.1363 X, 85p

Splendid to have this in paperback at last; it's one of the most successful stories of recent years for young juniors. Only Bertie, youngest of the Boggins, can see the ghost that has come to live in the coalshed. Put upon by older brother and sister, Bertie finds a strong ally in the ghost and together they have a great time. The ghost, a Victorian gentleman, driven from haunting the Spectre's Arms by the noise of the Haunted Cellar Disco, is a most engaging character and the book is full of gentle fun. Grab some copies while you can. PT

A Book of Cats & Creatures
Ruth Manning-Sanders, Magnet, 0 416 27060 3, £1.25

This represents number eleven in a sort of production-line of story collections by the same author, whose direct style and distinctive narrative tone makes for some very successful read aloud sessions with younger children.

There are 18 stories here, culled from around the world, many concerning a feline of one sort or another, like the water cat in 'The Golden Knucklebone' and the cleverly manipulative, doomed black cat in 'Pussy Cat Twinkle', but there are also deceiving crocodiles, bewitched mice and rats and more, which added together make for a useful starting point from which to explore the wealth of folk and fairy tale that is available to us. DB



'“Yaaarrrpp!” went the big dog, in fright, as something ghostlike and very brave came crashing down on its head, and started pulling its ears.'

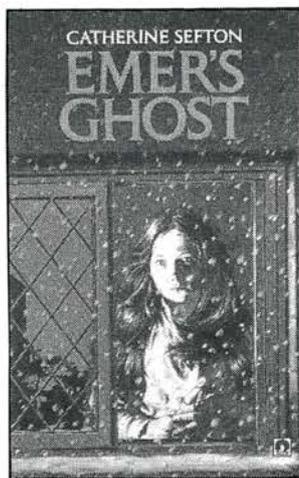
From **The Ghost and Bertie Boggins**

Middle/Secondary

Emer's Ghost
0 416 26510 3, 95p

The Sleepers on the Hill
0 416 26500 6, £1.10
Catherine Sefton, Magnet

Two spine-tingling 'ghost' stories set in Northern Ireland and told with the Irish Brogue strongly evident (which could make reading them aloud difficult for some). My favourite was **Emer's Ghost**, a fast-moving tale concerning Emer who never seems quite in touch with the reality of the classroom and frequently incurs the icy wrath of Sister Consuelo. By contrast it is Sister Bonaventure's gentle prodding towards real thinking in the classroom that eventually inspires Emer to solve the mystery of the ancient doll she has found and the shadowy ghost who seems to haunt only her. A hint of real history lies behind the story which takes its reader back to a Viking massacre of the monks and the lay inhabitants of the Christian community which existed on the isolated headland where Emer's family now live. **The Sleepers on the Hill** is a longer more complex story of a remote cottage settlement threatened by the forces of the past and the encroaching developers of the present.



Caught in between are Tom Connor who tells the story, his sister Kathleen, and waif-like Kate. The ancient bracelet found by Kate has disturbing forces which seem to be drawn from **Sleepers on the Hill**. The relationship between the bracelet and Old Mrs. Cooney's cottage are eventually solved and the plans of the developers put aside for at least another generation. Both stories are highly readable. **The Sleepers on the Hill** being more complicated in style and plot is probably more accessible to the older middle school child. **Emer's Ghost** should be enjoyed at all levels. CL

The Long Secret
Louise Fitzhugh, Lions, 0 00 672145 1, £1.25

Harriet (of **Harriet the Spy**) is the over-confident, bossy daughter of surprisingly sensible parents. In this sequel to the earlier book her 'best friend' is timid Beth Ellen, in the charge of a wealthy invalid grandmother while her flighty mother with a series of escorts idles her life away in expensive European resorts. The peace of Watermill, where both children spend each summer in holiday homes 'at the beach', is disturbed by a secret leaver of notes, notes which quote from the bible and Shakespeare and are cruelly apt in their message for each recipient. Harriet is determined to solve the mystery and frustrated by Beth Ellen's apparent lack of interest. Then Beth Ellen's thoroughly awful mother returns and Harriet's curiosity is gratified in more ways than one. This is a funny and a curious book. I found myself initially put off by the strongly American tone but increasingly absorbed by the way Louise Fitzhugh depicts shifting relationships and developing personalities while keeping the narrative moving. A book to recommend to intelligent readers of twelve plus. CL

The Baker Street Boys
Brian Ball, BBC Knight, 0340 33300 6, 95p

Plot is everything in this T.V. spin-off, which presents two stories based on the recent serial. There's a statutory reference to Sherlock Holmes every other page or so, since this motley ragamuffin band of 6 boys (and girls!) are his unofficial investigators. Of the two melodramatic tales I think I marginally preferred the latter - assassins with foreign names and accents, gelignite under railway bridges intended for visiting Archdukes etc. etc. However, there's not much to choose between them, neither plot can't be found elsewhere and characterisation does not rise above the stereotyped. DB

Goodnight Mister Tom
Michelle Magorian, Puffin, 0 14 03.1541 1, £1.50

Nearly three hundred pages of pure sentiment about an evacuee who is extremely withdrawn as a result of horrendous treatment by his Mum. He's put with old Tom Oakley, grumpy and unsociable since his wife's death forty years earlier. Guess the rest.

It's episodic and simply written in the main so could perhaps be read to top juniors. The length, slowish start and nostalgic cover probably limit individual appeal to book fiends over ten who don't mind an old-fashioned novel. Or to adults (like the Guardian prize judges) who enjoy a weepie with gentle humour and larger-than-life characters.

SB

How Green You Are! Berlie Doherty, Lions, 0 00 672210 5, £1

A Cheshire coast town forms the background for ten inter-linked stories. Some unconventional topics – a rabid monkey, a strike, a political refugee – jostle more common ideas like a ghost, old lady/young boy friendship and older siblings' wedding. The book feels a touch dated (author harking back to own childhood?) but several slightly flat endings and occasionally self-conscious narration worry me more. However, such books are still fairly rare; don't sniff till we've dozens better. Useful for promoting anecdote sessions, perhaps. Read with 10–13s in mind, especially **Weird George** whose literary 'relatives' include Tyke Tiler's **Danny** and Chris Powling's **Mad Eric**.

SB

Jamie Steve Bowles, Lions, 0 00 672057 9, £1

Eight stories concerning the everyday life of an everyday boy. Read them all and you build up a picture of a likeable,

plausible rogue, the sort that makes for the back row of every secondary classroom. And that's the kind of pupil who will more than likely find in this book something with which to identify and which will appeal.

My funny bone was tickled by 'Mum's Birthday', where Jamie plots to bake his mother a cake and in desperation must use Indigestion powder as a vital ingredient – 'Hey John, this stuff's got bicarb in it. Look 95%. It's nearly all bicarb.' The peppermint taste to the chocolate cake was overlooked by all! I enjoyed all the stories, though I must admit to niggling qualms about the implications of **Car Thieves**, where knocked-off goods are O.K. if you can get them. Jamie is 12 years old but the author does not emphasise the fact so these stories are likely to find an appreciative audience throughout the secondary school and deservedly so.

DB

The Revenge of Samuel Stokes Penelope Lively, Puffin, 0 14 03.1504 7, £1.10

Most of Penelope Lively's books for children involve a time slip in one form or another. This one is no exception. When a new housing estate is built on the site of Charstock Park, the 18th century landscape gardener Samuel Stokes is infuriated by the disturbance of his original design and more particularly by the finicky, unimaginative efforts of the modern gardener.

He takes revenge in the most appropriate fashion. Around the estate plants, walls, wafting smells of the past appear, to infuriate house owners and perplex the builders and town council. Eventually the ornamental lake reappears and residents must take to boats!

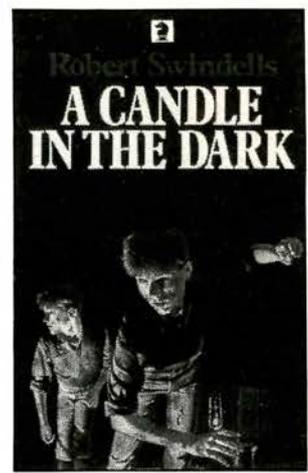
Tim and his sleep-happy friend and neighbour, Jane, with Tim's grandad as mediator, make contact with Samuel and eventually, during an 18th century feast in Grandad's garden, persuade him to cease his revenge.

This is a delightfully funny story, full of superb character portrayals and in particular most perceptive comment on a child's view of adult behaviour. It is a must for every library and a perfect book to read aloud to children of ten and eleven. Many children will have enjoyed the recent Jackanory telling of the story and this should boost bookshop sales.

CL

A Candle in the Dark Robert Swindells, Knight, 0 340 32098 2, £1.25

A fast-moving plot makes this exciting and involving reading and over-shadows the issue of child labour reform in the mines and factories of the last century, which lies at the core of the intrigue and action. Two Bradford pit-brats, Trapper Joe and Workhouse Jimmy, discover the cruel secret of the crumbling, closed shaft and put themselves in mortal peril at the hands of the



fierce collier Padgett, the unscrupulous owner Rawdon and a host of other fortune-hunting heavies. Their only source of aid could be Mr. Croft, the reformer, but they have never seen him and to reach him they must endure intense physical suffering and deprivation on their desperate journey to London. A very worthwhile book for any reader who condemns any read with even a shred of sentimentality.

DB

Secondary

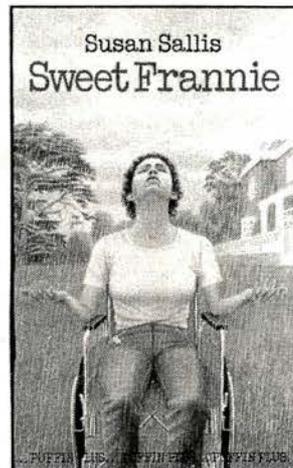
'Maroon Boy 0 00 672097 8

Bess 0 00 672218 0 Both Robert Leeson, Lions, £1.25

These date from '74 and '75 respectively and paperbackers' reluctance to try them is understandable – better historical novels have foundered (no, I *don't* mean Rosemary Sutcliffe) and, if these don't, then Grange Hill will have had much to do with it. Set in late sixteenth/early seventeenth centuries, they've conventional baggy structures, large casts and long time spans. 'Maroon Boy' deals – eventually – with a slaving voyage in which preacher's son Matthew frees the prisoners and lives with them awhile in the New World. The voyage's profit would have been dowry for his love to wed a poor nobleman; was Matthew prompted by conscience or spite? **Bess** features Matthew's fiery half-sister. They finally meet after her perilous travels, memory-shorn and disguised as a boy, to the Panama coast.

There, later, she tries to found a colony, having freed her fortune with a marriage of convenience which eventually brings disasters. Though not 'mould-breakers' as some have suggested, they do deal with seldom mentioned facets of history and Bess is an unusually active female character. Yet, long, historical and slow to develop, they're unlikely to appeal to many, despite Lions' attractive covers.

SB



Sweet Frannie Susan Sallis, Puffin Plus, 0 14 03.1570 5, £1.25

On second reading, I quite enjoyed this though it *is* sentimental and *does* strain to make its point about the humanity of the disabled. Frannie, a 16 year old paraplegic, disturbs Thornton Hall's calm with her tricks, blunt speech and disregard for routine. Thrusting doctor and nurse together, she then initiates a tough telephone campaign to break a new arrival's despair. Love must follow – but Frannie knows she hasn't long to live. The large cast mixes stereotypes with some hard-to-retain makeweights but also some effective cameos. Quite short, good cover, direct first-person narrative with some neat twists towards the end. Definitely worth trying.

SB

The Scarecrows Robert Westall, Puffin, 0 14 03.1465 2, £1.25

Robert Westall's second Carnegie Medal winner returns to familiar territory with events from the past haunting,

entwining and influencing the present. Simon is not yet fully recovered from the death of his military father, for whom he has a near fanatical regard. The boy's sense of betrayal wells up into rage, bewilderment and hysteria when his mother decides to marry Joe Moreton, a famous cartoonist and the direct opposite to the father. He is forced to pass the summer holidays in Cheshire where the solace that he seeks in a derelict mill is shattered too, for his emotionally-charged state contributes to a sinister re-emergence of the past as three oddly familiar scarecrows move menacingly from the mill towards the house intent upon evil in a dramatic, tense climax. The novel has repaid re-reading for it does possess extra-ordinary powers of tension and suspense, which raises it above the humdrum and places its author in the forefront of writers of intelligent and challenging ghost stories for young people.

DB

Authorgraph No. 20

Camilla Jessel's face is alert and alive. Her expression quizzical, humorous. She radiates freshness and directness, a feeling of being in contact with life. The qualities which clearly inform the photographs and books in which she so sensitively chronicled Mark's *Wheelchair Adventures*, *Paul in Hospital*, *The Joy of Birth* and, most recently, the relationship between a boy and a bird in *Lerner Bird*, are immediately evident.

The beautiful 19th century house where she lives with her husband, composer Andrzej Panufnik, and their two teenage children is full of contrasts. A shiny copper violin with broken strings lies on the kitchen dresser like a misplaced piece of cubist sculpture. (It does work, it just needs new strings. Yehudi Menuhin has played it, though it sounds rather tinny.) A harp stands in the centre of another light filled room; it belongs to 15 year old Roxy who is 'passionate about music'. Rooms off the hall with its sweeping curved staircase seem to contain a similar mixture, the stuff of everyday life alongside objects of extraordinary beauty. And yet it's quite obviously a lived-in family house.

Upstairs outside Camilla Jessel's study lies Saffy, the large Labrador whose progress is recorded in *The Puppy Book*. Inside is a wonderful den of ongoing thoughts and projects. Heaps of books, proofs, posters, photographs, drawings by 13 year old Jem whose ambition is to be a political cartoonist. On the wall is an old boot, sole towards you, somehow stuck onto a block of wood. It's a bizarre image. 'It's called "A Kick in the Face of Adversity"', Camilla says. 'No-one else likes it!'

The quality of quiet background involvement which comes across in the photographs is very evident in Camilla Jessel herself. She gets up at 6 a.m. to work, ('I usually have three or four projects on the go at once.') and cooks three meals a day. Despite the 17 books to her credit ('Not a claim to fame, just a way of life') she is far more ambitious for her husband's work than her own and she acts as his business manager, keeping the world at bay. 'I'm not actually very career minded. But I think it's a good thing that I don't just do books. If I was only giving out and not absorbing the world and finding out more and more things I'd soon stop having something to say. Besides I could never get cocky about my work living with someone like Andrzej. He goes off to the end of the garden each day' — there's an old stable where he works — 'and comes in with all these small notes on the page. Then we go off to Boston or Chicago and hear these colossal symphonies coming out. So just writing children's books compared to a whole symphony . . .'

So how did it all begin? 'At school I was a complete rebel. I entered for the scholarship exam because it meant we had three days off for revision. I wanted to do three days roller skating and I accidentally got a scholarship . . . I completely wasted my educational time but I knew I didn't want to be an academic.' Her teens and early twenties she depicts as a kind of whirl where opportunities just presented themselves, things 'just happened', just as things 'began falling into place' a little later with her involvement with music and meeting and marrying Andrzej at the age of 25. She talks about her catalogue of experiences with casual wonder almost as if she were a static element in the midst of this whirl. Yet there is an underlying grit and determination which show through.

She lived for a year in India (her father was a naval officer who thought travel a better education than university for girls) then went to America with £30, working her way across the country doing 26 jobs in 6 cities in a year. When she returned to London it was World Refugee Year; she wanted above all to go to Morocco to work with Algerian refugees. She had always loved children and was 'prepared to do anything'. Despite her lack of qualifications she persuaded someone to take her along as their secretary. 'They said they'd leave me behind when I found a niche to work.' But she got frustrated by not being able to speak French, and with typical resoluteness took herself off to Paris and got an extra-mural degree in French literature at the Sorbonne. (She's still studying languages: it's Polish at the moment. Linguaphone tapes in traffic jams. 'After 20 years of being married to a Pole I thought it's about time to learn!')



Photographs up to this point were what she calls 'happy snaps'; but on her return to London she found some people had a higher opinion of them. The Press Officer at the Save the Children Fund asked her to do some more. Her immediate response was 'I'm not a photographer.' But the Press Officer said, 'Well actually, I think you are', and told her to go away and learn about the technical bits. 'So I found this rather crummy wedding photographer and paid him to teach me . . . and I made a sort of flap over the bath and darkened in the windows.' Work began to come from the Times Educational Supplement: regular articles with photographs, always about children, education, and handicapped children and music. Music is a passion for her too. 'Music is like food to me. I can't live without it.' She began writing because she felt she had 'something more to say than just captions.'



Then came the books. 'I'd been in South America when my husband was conducting. When we got back I freelanced some of my work around. On the strength of one of my photographs of Peru which appeared in *The Guardian*, Methuen Children's Books asked if I'd like to contribute to their *Children Everywhere* series.' Here began her 'very equal and enjoyable partnership' with Methuen.

Privilege and truth are two key words to an understanding of the way in which Camilla Jessel approaches her subjects. About *The Joy of Birth* especially she feels, 'It's a great privilege to have seen so many babies born.' It was in the making of that book, too, that trust between photographer and subject became of particular importance. 'If people don't trust you you're never going to get natural pictures anyway.' She found it 'extraordinary and very touching' that women allowed her to photograph them in labour. Only two out of 20 refused, and in those cases it was the husband who objected. The resulting photographs were then 'sifted like mad'. 'I think that some of the pictures go fairly close to the edge but I had to photograph over 20 births before I had the ones to show to children. There's no real mess shown in *The Joy of Birth* but I felt there was no point in doing it unless I

showed the truth.' Black and white photographs also help to give 'a sense of documentary, of being told the truth.' Truth in *Mark's Wheelchair Adventures* meant being true to the speech of spina bifida boy, Mark. The lack of grammatical correctness was criticized by one reviewer. 'I was furious,' said Camilla. 'It's just straight Mark.' Honesty bypasses sentimentality, though compassion and a sense of humour shared with her subjects are evident in abundance.

There are no short cuts either. She spent a year going round different kinds of schools researching attitudes to the handicapped. 'I went into classrooms with total strangers and had these amazing discussions.' She found that time and time again children 'couldn't separate handicapped children from old people.' There, perhaps, is the origin of the strength and potency of the image of Mark and the old man, both with their useless legs, confronting each other in their wheelchairs. It jolts. One feels that she and her subject have never really been 'total strangers'. There is a real kinship in the photographs. The impact of images, like the wheelchair image of old and young, or the image of jealousy in *The New Baby*, fascinates Camilla Jessel. She would like to do a book about it, about those images 'linked in people's subconscious, that spark off thoughts.' They are often connected with subjects 'that you can't discuss.' But, she adds, 'you can throw the image at people. Maybe I should take time off and get academic over it all . . .' She laughs, 'I'm not sure I can be blowed. I'm an instinctive person, not an academic, really.'

New projects are constantly bubbling in her mind, although she says that if Methuen 'didn't keep holding these lovely projects under my nose I mightn't lift a finger. Quite often they give me an idea and I say 'I can't!' One takes all this with a very large pinch of salt. There's the feeling that what she calls her 'very own childlike curiosity' will always win through. Childlike it may be, but together with her modesty and appetite for learning, it's a powerful quantity. 'I'm really always finding out . . . Perhaps it's a good thing that I'm not very well educated.'

Her work for the packagers, Dorling Kindersley she sees as the 'glossier, hardselling' end of commercial photography. But she also sees it positively. 'I'm forced to improve all the time. I don't want to get into a rut. I love doing *Chatterbooks* but I don't want only to do books for 2 year olds; it would get slick.' She considers the idea. 'I don't think I'm ever going to be the cool professional. I don't want to be!'

About the *Chatterbooks* she is quite specific. 'Using colour is vital. Young children relate to the realism of colour photographs better than anyone's drawings . . . I don't think children want much fantasy until they are older; until their imaginations can cope and indulge and enjoy.' She always tries out her books with children. 'I invite the child to explore with me.' Some two year olds felt so close to the children in the *Chatterbooks* that they actually stroked their skin. The books go well in schools with five year olds too. 'They feel they have conquered their baby fears and enjoy scorning the child who is now finding things frightening. It's something they can relate back to.' Her feeling for the book as a whole is crucial. 'In my books it's not photographs illustrating text and it's not text describing photographs. Text is equal: a complement rather than an accompaniment.'

Creating that partnership is something that Camilla Jessel does with consummate skill. She delights in the richness and continuity of life, looking both beauty and adversity in the face; the result is books of great originality, sensitivity and warmth which are informed by the values which pervade her own life. Her photographs, whether of dancers or the handicapped, being born or growing old,



homes or hospitals, animals or humans, emphasises always the strength of unity, the companionship of relationships and the supreme importance of the sense of 'family'. ●



Camilla Jessel's Books

(all published by Methuen)

The Joy of Birth
0 416 89970 6, £5.95.

The Puppy Book
0 416 87430 4, £3.50.

Life at the Royal Ballet School
0 416 86320 5, £5.50.

Mark's Wheelchair Adventures
0 416 80670 8, £4.50.

Paul in Hospital
(with Dr Hugh Jolly)
0 416 20210 1, £3.95.

Learner Bird
0 416 22460 1, £3.95 (to be published in June).

Chatterbooks

Moving House
0 416 88880 1, £1.50.

The New Baby
0 416 88860 7, £1.50.

Going to the Doctor
0 416 88890 9, £1.50.

Away for the Night
0 416 88870 4, £1.50.

Going to Hospital
0 416 25990 1, £1.50.

At Playgroup
0 416 26000 4, £1.50.

Lost and Found
0 416 26010 1, £1.50.

The Baby-sitter
0 416 26020 9, £1.50.

(The last four titles will be published in September.)

Lifeline Two

No. 3 Traditional Tales in a Multi-Cultural Society

Judith Elkin chooses legends, folk and fairy tales

Legends, Folk and Fairy Tales have fascinated children (and adults) down the ages. A story which has lived for hundreds, if not thousands, of years must possess a vitality which is imperishable and immutable. They have the quality of magic, of unexpectedness, of somehow being right and inevitable. They stimulate the imagination and the senses, introduce new feelings and emotions, make telling observations on human behaviour.

Bruno Bettelheim in his inspirational *Uses of Enchantment: the meaning and importance of fairy tales* states that: 'fairy tales reassure because they demonstrate that others have the same kind of fantasies; children possess an inner world of fantasy which is irrational, emotional, subjective, sensual, violent and often frightening. Fairy tales can bring order to a child's inner life by offering symbolic solutions to his difficulties . . . Fairy Tales confront the child squarely with the basic human predicaments.'

Today, we are increasingly aware that we live in a multi-cultural society. The tales we tell and make available to our children must not ignore this. People have come to Britain from many countries, all of them rich in tradition. There are children here from countries with an Islamic, Hindu or Buddhist culture, from Africa and from lands further East and West. Children from these backgrounds have a special right to their stories and children who know English and European folk tales can recognize and enjoy the parallels, as well as being enthralled by the richness of unfamiliar tales and themes.

We are blessed with many lovely versions of British, European and Russian folk tales, suitable for children at different levels of ability and understanding. Most libraries and schools will be fairly well stocked with well-known tales, from Andersen and Grimm, and with Greek and Norse Legends. But how many libraries and schools can offer an equally impressive range of tales and legends from other cultures: tales from the Indian sub-continent, the Far East, Africa and the Caribbean?

By drawing attention to traditional folk tales from other countries, we can give recognition to the many varied cultural roots of our children and open up for all children a much wider literary heritage. Perhaps folk tales are our most hopeful means of becoming truly multi-cultural. What better medium is there for toleration, hope and understanding than the inherent honesty, goodness and abiding faith in humanity? As Mahatma Gandhi once said: 'Folk Tales are the best ambassadors between East and West.'



Two illustrations from *Listen to This Story*



● General Collections

Surprisingly few general collections of folk and fairy tales venture beyond Europe for their stories. Even books with titles like 'Stories From Everywhere' concentrate heavily on the West. Here are four books which do take a commendably wide perspective in their choice of material.

The Story Spirits is a delightful and varied collection of folk tales from the Far East, Africa and the Caribbean, gathered together by experienced storyteller, Amabel Williams-Ellis. She has deliberately chosen these tales to reflect the cultural heritage of children growing up here, so that they can share 'the traditional stories their parents and grandparents would have heard'. Written in a chatty, intimate style but varying sufficiently to reflect the different cultures concerned, this is a fine mixture of stories reflecting a wide spectrum of cultures: there are simple tales from the Jatakas (Buddhist birth-stories) and other longer titles of magic and enchantment, suitable for older children. Many of the stories have a familiar ring

about them: 'The Lion and the Hare' has strong parallels with 'Henny Penny' and 'Mr Chang and the Fox Fairy' with the Scottish tale, 'The Selkie Wife'.

A World of Folk Tales is also a lovely, rich collection of tales from all over the world. This collection has been chosen by folk tale collector, James Riordan, and deliberately only includes tales which seem 'typical of their country of origin and its culture . . . tales as diverse as the people that nurtured them.' There are tales from Aboriginal legends and Maori mythology, tales from Japan, Africa, India, Mongolia, China, Vietnam as well as Europe. This is a lively introduction to the wealth and variety of tales available, ranging from the humour of Ananse to a hauntingly beautiful Welsh story and a delightful legend of the Blackfeet Indians with some interesting juxtapositions like the light-hearted Ananse story followed by a sombre Spanish folk tale about death. Ten different illustrators are used in this lavish production.

Fox Tales is a much slighter collection and suitable for younger children, for reading aloud or for early reading. It is a selection of 16 short tales about wily, tricky foxes, taken from many parts of the world, from Africa, India, Egypt, Turkey, Nova Scotia and Finland. Again, the collector is an experienced storyteller, Ruth Manning-Sanders.

Gods and Men. Although strictly speaking a culture's myths are of a different order from its folk tales they are often the source of its legends; so this seems the right place to include this splendid collection of myths and legends from the world's religions, centred on creation myths, the conflict between good and evil and on legends of heroes, prophets and holy men. The 30 stories are taken from Greek, Norse, African, Sumerian, Polynesian, Indian, Chinese and American Indian sources. This is a fascinating look at how different cultures have interpreted the creation, particularly in terms of their own geographical areas, and an encouragement to young people to compare ancient and modern religious beliefs.

● Tales from Asia

India, that vast treasure-house of story, has probably contributed more to the folk tales of the world than any other country. Many scholars believe that India was the cradle of the world's folk tales and certainly there are enormous similarities and parallels between the tales of East and West. India is rich in myth, legend and fable, many of the stories appearing in the great Hindu epics, The Mahabharata and The Ramayana and the Buddhist birth-stories, The Jatakas.

The Story of Prince Rama is a beautifully produced and lavishly illustrated story from the Ramayana of the struggle between the forces of good and evil, showing the heroism of Prince Rama, the loyalty of his half-brother, Lakshmana and the love of his wife, Sita, as they are exiled together for 14 years. The climax of the story is the violent battle against Ravana, king of all the

demons. Brian Thompson retells the story in a simple style which is dramatically complemented and enhanced by the illustrations. These are Indian paintings, which were originally painted over three hundred years ago to illustrate a manuscript version of the Ramayana. To these have been added 6 paintings by modern-day artist Jeroo Roy. This is a valuable book both for its attempts to make this story readily accessible to all children and for its superb demonstration of Indian art. It won 1982 Racial Harmony Award, established last year by the Asian News Weekly, Garavi Gujarat.

In **The Ivory City**, Marcus Crouch retells 27 stories from India and Pakistan in colloquial modern English, in an attempt to make the stories 'accessible to Western children to help them understand something of the Indian tradition and to second-generation English-born Indians to help them to retain or recover some part of their cultural heritage'. It is a lively collection of tales, retold in an economic style ideal for reading aloud and skilfully managing to retain much of the original flavour and vigour of the tales. There are animal tales, tales of princesses, rajas, fakirs and ghosts, the unknown and the vaguely familiar. 'Swalu the Matchmaker' bears a strong resemblance to 'Puss-in-Boots' and 'The Brave Potter' to Grimm's 'Brave Little Tailor'. There is a short glossary of unfamiliar terms and an interesting, brief essay, 'Notes for Parents', on the origin of the tales but no note on where individual stories come from.

Indian Fairy Tales by Joseph Jacobs is still available in the unabridged and unaltered version, first published in 1892. Inevitably looking and sounding dated it is still a useful source book for material which does not occur elsewhere. The extensive notes and references about the individual tales at the end are particularly interesting.

Folk Tales from Asia is a 6-volume collection of Asian folk tales, published under the impressive and imaginative Asian Copublication Programme, carried out in co-operation with UNESCO. The books contain some 48 folktales from 18 countries, all selected, retold and illustrated by writers and artists of the individual nations concerned. The stories vary considerably, but manage successfully to retain an authentic local flavour and demonstrate yet again the wealth of material in existence, much of this not previously recorded.

In **Tales and Legends from India**, Ruskin Bond has collected many tales and retold them in a rich and atmospheric style, suitable more for individual reading than reading aloud, and likely to be popular with older children. Ruskin Bond had a British father but grew up in India where he was steeped in Indian folklore. He sees his familiarity with the literature of East and West as being a 'double inheritance'. Apart

from the tales from the Mahabharata and the Jatakas, Ruskin Bond has included many regional tales, either told to him as a child or heard more recently and not generally found in other collections. He is particularly effective when retelling the longer romantic stories: 'Savitri' and 'The Ugly Prince and The Heartless Princess' are very moving. Useful notes on sources and backgrounds of the tales.

● Tales from the Caribbean and Africa

West Indian folk tales come from a people with a long tradition of oral storytelling. Only in recent years have the tales begun to be transformed into print. Some of the most familiar and most popular are the Anansi stories. When things go well, Anansi is a man, but when he is in great danger, he becomes a spider, safe in his web high up in the ceiling and often called 'Ceiling Thomas'. Brer Anansi usually manages to triumph over the bigger and stronger animals by using his wits. The stories poke fun at human failings such as greed, selfishness and vanity and at the very individual characters of the animals themselves. During slavery times, the Anansi stories were as much part of the ethics of life as the control of the masters, showing the weak and small out-manoeuvring the mighty so that the flame of hope was constantly rekindled in the slaves against society.

As a child growing up in Jamaica, Philip Sherlock loved listening to these tales, often in the evening as the sun went down. Since then he has made a significant contribution to Caribbean folklore by recording many of them in print for the first time. Here are 3 of his collections:

Anansi the Spider Man contains 15 Anansi stories, full of humour and wit and retold in a concise manner, ideal for reading aloud. I particularly like 'From Tiger to Anansi' (available in a longer version in **West Indian Folk Tales**).

West Indian Folk Tales contains 21 tales retold in a rich but rather more wordy style than Philip Sherlock's other collections and more suitable for older children of about 10+ and for individual reading. This is an interesting mixture of early tales from the Arawak and Carib people, the original inhabitants of the Caribbean, and Anansi stories.

Crick Crack stories like the Anansi stories, are mainly about animals that speak and think like humans and originate in the countries of West Africa. If it is a Crick

Crack story, it must begin in the right way. The storyteller begins by saying 'Crick Crack' and those who listen must reply 'Break my back'. At the end the storyteller says 'Wire bend' and all who listen reply, 'Story end'.

The Iguana's Tail is a delightful sequence of 7 Crick Crack tales woven together into a simple continuous story. During a particularly heavy drought, the animals in the forest decide to move away to find food and drink. Each night after a day's marching, they gather together to listen as one of the animals tells a story. Each night Hacka Tiger gets closer and closer to Iguana until on the last night, after the last story, he pounces on her but only gets her tail, hence the title. The stories are richly and vividly retold and read aloud well. They could be used individually or as an on-going sequence of stories. A companion volume, **Ears & Tails & Common Sense**, is now sadly out of print (but still available in libraries).

Listen to this Story. Grace Hallworth, herself a gifted storyteller, has rewritten 10 Anancy stories remembered from her own childhood in Trinidad. The style is simple but full of vitality and wit, ideal for reading aloud to younger children. Grace Hallworth successfully uses localized speech patterns and dialect where they add humour and colour to the stories.

David Makhanlall from Guyana has produced six collections of **Brer Anansi** stories featuring Brer Anansi, Brer Rabbit and Brer Bear and their constant rivalry. The stories are written in a crisp, humorous tone which brings out well the tricky, deceitful natures of the individual animals. Children of about 9+ will enjoy reading the tales for themselves.

Fables from Africa is an admirable collection of fables from all parts of Africa, showing the great variety of races and cultures in the continent. Mostly, the fables are populated with animals, with their own individual characters. Many of them are very humorous but with a strong moral message. There are Muslim tales from North Africa, tales from East Africa and tales from lesser known regions of Cameroon, Nubia and Mali.

In **Why the Hyena Does Not Care for Fish, Tales of an Ashanti Father and The Pineapple Child**, Peggy Appiah has collected together Ashanti tales from the oral tradition of Ghana and retold them in a concise, witty style suitable for reading aloud. Many of the tales are about Kwaku Ananse and demonstrate clearly the close link with Caribbean folk tales. In **Why the Hyena Does Not Care for Fish**, Peggy Appiah skilfully combines two important aspects of Ghanaian culture: storytelling and the development of the gold weight as a trading measure. The tales are mainly very short, often mere proverbs but each one is related to its own gold weight. ●

Details of Books Mentioned

Amabel Williams-Ellis **The Story Spirits**, Heinemann, 0 434 97256 8, £4.50, Piccolo paperback, 0 330 26856 2, £1.00

James Riordan **A World of Folk Tales**, Hamlyn, 0 600 33745 6, £5.80

Ruth Manning-Sanders **Fox Tales**, Methuen Magnet paperback, 0 416 87550 5, 65p

John Bailey **Gods & Men**, Oxford, 0 19 278020 4, £5.95

Brian Thompson **The Story of Prince Rama**, Kestrel, 0 7226 5684 X, £7.95

Marcus Crouch **The Ivory City**, Pelham Books, 0 7207 11886, £4.95, Dragon Books paperback, 0 583 30483 4, 95p

Joseph Jacobs **Indian Fairy Tales**, Dover paperback, 0 486 21828 7, £2.60

Folk Tales from Asia for Children Everywhere, Weatherill/UNESCO, Book 1: 0 8348 1032 8, £2.95; Book 2: 0 8348 1033 6, £2.95; Book 3: 0 8348 1034 4, £3.50; Book 4: 08348 1035 2, £3.50; Book 5: 0 8348 1036 0, £3.95; Book 6: 0 8348 1037 9, £3.95

Philip Sherlock **The Iguana's Tail**, Nelson paperback, 0 17 566281 9, £1.05

Anansi the Spider Man, Macmillan paperback, 0 333 35326 9, £2.50

West Indian Folk Tales, Oxford, 0 19 274116 0, £4.95

Grace Hallworth **Listen to this Story**, Methuen, 0 416 83220 2, £3.50

David P. Makhanlall **The Best of Brer Anansi**, Blackie, 0 216 89547 2, £3.95

Brer Anansi Strikes Again, Blackie, 0 216 90005 0, £3.25

Brer Anansi's Bag of Tricks, Blackie, 0 216 90534 6, £3.25

Further Adventures of Brer Anansi, Blackie, 0 216 90910 4, £3.95

The Invincible Brer Anansi, Blackie, 0 216 89821 8, £3.95

Long Live Brer Anansi, Blackie, 0 216 90724 1, £3.95

Jan Knappert **Fables from Africa**, Evans, 0 237 44985 4, £4.75, paperback, 0 237 50670 X, 95p

Peggy Appiah **Why the Hyena Does Not Care for Fish**, Deutsch, 0 233 96903 9, £2.95

The Pineapple Child, Deutsch, 0 233 95875 4, £2.95

Tales of an Ashanti Father, Deutsch, 0 233 95927 0, £2.50

Getting out and about on School Trips and Summer Projects? What you need is **A BOOK TO HAND**

We've chosen some recently published titles which could be immediately useful and will earn their keep long-term on the library shelf.

If you are intending to take an interest in meadows, trees and hedges this summer (or even if you weren't but could be tempted) take a look at

Hedgerow

Eric Thomas and John T White, Dorling Kindersley, 0 86318 009 4, £4.95

The pictures ravish the eye. The hedge in summer is a stunning foldout four page spread, a tangle of flowers, birds and insects. And the other seasons get similar treatment. But this is not just a pretty book. Each picture carries a key to species identification and the text is very informative, tracing the development of the hedge from Saxon times, evoking each period through the people who lived and worked on and around it. Here is history — social, economic, and natural — folklore, and ecology, alive and for the taking. That is provided someone hasn't grubbed up your nearest hedges in the name of agricultural efficiency or sprayed them out of existence — the book covers that stage too.

The Meadow Year

Irmgard Lucht, A and C Black, 0 7316 2305 5, £3.95

'Lie on your stomach at the edge of a meadow in summer' is the opening sentence of another beautifully illustrated book. By the time you've spent some time with it you'll probably want to do just that, and you'll certainly be well equipped to cope with what you find. Useful for beginners in that, for instance, in six pages you will find clearly illustrated every flower, grass, insect or small animal you are likely to find in a meadow in May, June and July. The text, translated from the German, is relatively simple and friendly in tone. Junior+.

Oak and Company

Richard Mabey, ill. Clare Roberts, Kestrel, 0 7226 5102 3, £4.50

Two hundred and eighty-three years in the life of an oak tree. An excellent text but the pictures, though beautiful, are not always as helpful or informative as they might be. Lots of close-up detail — great on leaves and bark and textures — and general views; but I longed to see 'our' oak clearly identifiable in its surroundings, and perhaps with some clues to help me get to grips with time passing. Could be a good starting point for lots of enquiry and imagination especially if you can provide additional pictures or adapt the text to suit your own oak!

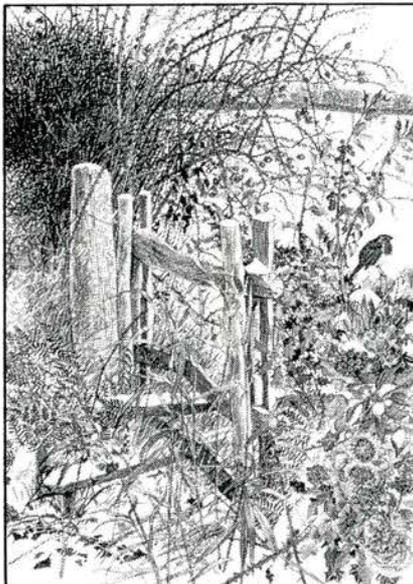
The Easy Way to Tree Recognition

John Kilbracken, Kingfisher, 0 86272 040 0, £3.50

An excellent companion to *The Easy Way to Bird Recognition* which won the TES Senior Information Book Award. It follows the same format: asking key questions the answers to which lead you by a logical process of elimination to the information you want. It's a beautifully simple idea and it works. According to most identification guides I have tried I keep finding rare unrecorded plants! Knowing that can't be the case leaves me feeling inadequate and frustrated. Lord Kilbracken treats me kindly and leads me by the hand.

'Is the bark very soft and spongy? Answer 'Yes' if the bark, which is reddish brown, is so soft that you can punch it quite hard with your clenched fist and it doesn't hurt.

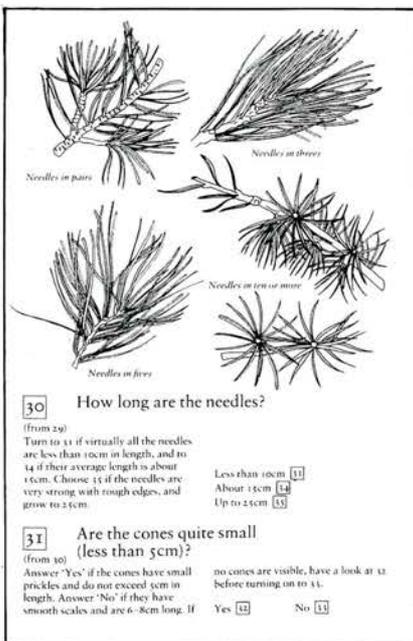
Otherwise answer 'No.' If you see lots of people punching trees this summer you'll know which book they have got hold of.



From *Hedgerow*



Grasses from *The Meadow Year*



A page from *The Easy Way to Tree Recognition*

If you are bound for the London museums and haven't yet discovered the Scala/Philip Wilson series of books about the great museums don't delay any longer

The British Museum — Natural History
Peter Whitehead and Colin Keates, Scala/Philip Wilson, 0 85667 108 8 (paperback), £4.95

Not a catalogue, (although many of the exhibits are referred to and illustrated) a marvellously interesting account of the museum, its background, history, development and work. Invaluable for any teacher planning how to get the most out of a class visit. Lots of colour photographs.

Also available, books on the National Maritime Museum (85667 130 4, £4.95) and the National Gallery (0 85667 156 8, £4.95).

The famous display of dinosaurs is first stop for most visitors to the Natural History Museum. Older children who get hooked on the subject will be glad to have on hand

Collins Guide to Dinosaurs

Compiled by David Lambert (aided by a host of international consultants and advisers), Collins, 0 00 195387 7, £6.95

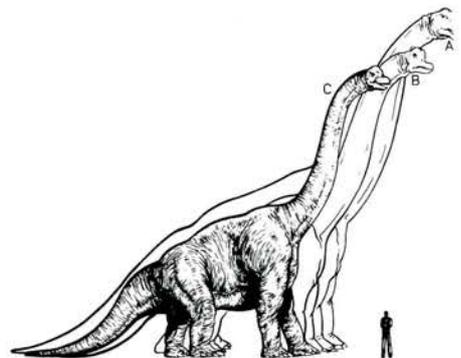
A comprehensive and well laid out volume which must contain 'all you want to know' about dinosaurs. Lots of maps, drawings, diagrams; good index and bibliography.

A visit to the Science Museum might well create a need for

Lasers and Holograms

John Griffiths, Macmillan, 0 333 32511 7, £3.95

One of the Exploration and Discovery series intended to introduce young seekers after information to recent developments in different scientific areas. Good photographs and diagrams help to illustrate and explain some fairly complex ideas and processes. Answers to 'What is a laser?' and explanations of 'How a laser works' may be a bit daunting without help, but sections on uses and applications (the majority of the book) are clear and accessible. The author is curator at the Science Museum in London. ●



'Giants among giants' from *Collins Guide to Dinosaurs*

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Longman

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INFORMATION PLEASE

The first of a new series of special features about non-fiction books.

In this issue we focus on books about **People – at work and at home.**

Rosemary Last discusses choosing books about people at work in this country and abroad.

It is important to accept that a book is a flexible learning medium. If it is written and produced with flair the young reader will enjoy it and gain from the contact. The author will leave his mark, possibly indelibly. The skilful teacher can quite easily pick up a mediocre book and transform it into a useful tool but books that may be used by children without teacher guidance should be chosen with the utmost care. In some topic areas there are so many books available that making a selection is often difficult and daunting. A list of guideline questions (some of which apply to all non-fiction books) can be a useful starting point.

- ★ What do you know or what can you find out about the background and qualifications of the author and illustrator? (Remember their credentials may not always be immediately obvious.)
- ★ What are the objectives of the author?
- ★ Are they fulfilled?
- ★ Has the subject been treated appropriately for the children you have in mind – is it too detailed or too superficial?
- ★ Are the contents accurate and up-to-date?
- ★ Are facts clearly distinguishable from opinions? Bias and propaganda in a multi-cultural situation are hazards to recognise.
- ★ If the contents pass muster, does the book tempt the child to open it?
- ★ How effective is the cover in signalling what is inside?
- ★ Does the shape and format succeed?
- ★ Does the design and lay-out encourage or dishearten an enquiring mind?
- ★ Is the information readily accessible?
- ★ Is there a contents table, appropriate index, illustrations and diagrams which aid understanding, and a suitable annotated bibliography? (Since covers rarely make clear the author's objectives, and it is a hit or miss exercise as to whether the child picks a book best suited to his need, it's vital to encourage the use of contents tables and indices at the earliest possible age.)
- ★ How much information is to be found in the pictures or are they included just for impact or because they are superficially attractive? Is the medium used the most appropriate for conveying information?

- ★ Does the text read easily and fluently?
- ★ Is there a proper strategy for introducing new vocabulary and concepts, or is the book overloaded with strange new words which will put off your readers?
- ★ Is the author projecting his enthusiasm so that it can be shared by the reader?
- ★ Are children encouraged to ask questions?
- ★ Are the author's attitudes to the subject acceptable? The avid child reader is highly impressionable.
- ★ What is the level of presentation? Over-simplification often distorts meaning.

When choosing books remember one book alone will not suffice to satisfy a child's curiosity in one subject. It is therefore important to offer as wide a range as possible.

Browsing is a source of enjoyment and learning in itself and can be used as a tool to fashion experience in the art of choice. Publications are available that can assist in the choice of material, for instance Angela Davey's **Ballet Shoes or Building Sites?** which highlights the role of books, reading and libraries in the encouragement of girls to take up careers in engineering (Birmingham Library School Cooperative, 1981, 0 906945 02 X).

The best books, so much more than communicating facts, encourage children to speculate and enquire further. Selecting these from the mountains that are published is not an exact science; rather is it a skill that improves with practice. Finally, do not underestimate a child's tenacity to read, understand and get value from any book if his interest is engaged!

To illustrate the range of materials on **People at Work** Rosemary Last looks at a dozen titles published in 1982.

Nursery

I am a Vet

Dick Swayne and Peter Savage, Dent, I am . . . series, 0 460 06088 0, £3.50

An extension of play, as in each book in the series a child acts out the job in a series of colour photographs. First-person narrative in large bold type.

Infant and Lower Junior

Work

Alistair Ross, Macdonald Educational, My First Encyclopedia series, 0 356 07821 3, £3.25

Each double page spread tackles a new facet within four main subject areas. The text asks questions as a way of involving the reader, and there is both a cross reference system and an index, the use of which is explained on the back of the title page. Photographs and drawings, often with a humorous touch, complete part five of this encyclopedia. The tenth volume in the series contains an index to all the titles.

Junior

I Really Want to Dance

Richard Glasstone and David Hodgson, Thames/Methuen, 0 423 00370 4, £4.95

A beautiful version of the TV documentary telling the story of four pupils, two boys and two girls, at the Royal Ballet Lower School in Richmond Park. It shows their ordinary lessons as well as their dance training and conveys their feelings about their yearning to become dancers.

Middle/Secondary

We Live in Denmark

Ulla Andersen, Wayland, Living Here series, 0 85078 339 9, £4.95

Danish people from various walks of life describe their work. Each double page spread feature is illustrated by colour photographs showing the worker and his work place. Detailed contents page and index.

Working Life

Olivia Bennett, Save the Children Fund/Macmillan Educational/Commonwealth Institute, Patterns of Living series, 0 333 31196 5, £3.95

The theme of work is explained through various examples from several countries with prominence being given to developing countries such as Malaysia and Kenya, but the tendency to generalise has been mainly avoided. The text is illustrated by both drawings and colour photographs, and questions have been included to help the child relate the information to his own experience. There is a brief index.

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Mr Kofi is a Doctor

Richard Devenish, Young Library, People Who Help Us series, 0 946 00301 7, £3.50

A title which offers information at two levels with each double page spread split into two, the right hand side offering a life story in large print and the left hand contributing background information. It has the appearance of two books in one and a feeling of unity is lost. However, it does reflect our multi-racial society and, used as a focal point for discussion, could prove interesting.

A Day with a Shopkeeper

Dorothy Turner and Tim Humphrey, Wayland, A Day with . . . series, 0 85340 967 6, £3.25

A companion to the award-winning *A Day with a Miner*, using the same format of black and white photographs accompanied by a simple caption and a block of slightly more difficult text per page. In this title insight is gained into the life of Mr Khan, a Brighton shopkeeper originally from Pakistan, and the text and the photographs reflect our multi-cultural community.

Marks and Spencer

Graeme Kent, Wayland, In the High Street series, 0 85340 932 3, £4.25

A look at the day to day running of this well-known store. The scope is then widened with each double page spread introducing new aspects. It investigates the reasons why 'Marks and Sparks' has become such a successful business both here and abroad. This series looks at well-known High Street establishments and their contribution to the country's economy. The distorted photographs on the cover catch the eye!

Working in a Hospital

S. D. Storr, Wayland, People at Work series, 0 8534 926 9, £4.95

A book which highlights 12 people talking about their jobs at Huddersfield Royal Infirmary. This approach is able to show the wide range of occupations within one work place. Numerous black and white photographs illustrate aspects of day to day life in a busy modern district hospital. The text is well spaced and the information can be retrieved easily by means of an index. This series now extends to more than 10 titles and has proved of use to older non-academic children.

Secondary

Farming Today

Vickie Crabtree, Muller, 0 584 10412 X, £6.95

Whether for project work or for those considering a career in farming this book will prove a useful source. The mixture of maps and diagrams extend the informative and readable text. A realistic and unsensational look at agriculture today.

Working on a Farm

Alan A. Mister, Batsford, Careers series, 0 7134 3962 9, £5.95

A typical careers book! It is packed with information concerning working in the many and varied jobs in the farming world here and abroad, but only a serious enquirer would persevere as the presentation is dull with dense text and a collection of eight pages of black and white photographs with their captions printed more than 60 pages away!

Work and Leisure

Vincent O'Mara, Batsford, Living Today series, 0 7134 3576 3, £5.95

One important function of schools is to prepare students for future work and leisure,



Examining a patient in the surgery in *I am a Vet* (Dent)



Kurt Dirschen a kindergarten teacher with the children from the Drosselbro Day Care Centre in Copenhagen. From *We Live in Denmark* (Wayland)

and the purpose of this book is to raise some of the important issues concerned. The whole concept of work and freedom from work in Britain today is examined. It is put into historical perspective and questions such as why people work are discussed. Both the sections on women and ethnic minorities at work are relevant and thought provoking. The black and white photographs, prints, line drawings and table ably support

the text. There is a short, rather unnecessary glossary together with a very useful bibliography of books and audio-visual material. A fuller index would have been useful. This series aims to provide background material for Social Studies at CSE and O level. ●

Rosemary Last is a librarian and works with the schools' service in Hertfordshire.

Chris Fairclough, who took the photographs for the award-winning **Day with a Miner**, records some thoughts on making books about **Other People's Jobs**

A few months ago I received a letter. It was from a boy in North Wales. 'Dear Chris' it began, 'I am writing to tell you that I have read a book that you have written. It is called "A Day with a Lorrydriver". I am very interested in lorries. Have you written any other books like it? If you have got any more books on lorries, please let me know. Happy Christmas and a Happy New Year. Best wishes from Graham.'

I replied immediately and told him that although I hadn't written any other books about lorries — had he seen the one about the soldier in Germany or the vicar in London or the fisherman in Cornwall? All in the same series by Wayland.

Back came his reply a few days later. 'Thankyou for your letter. I don't like anything as much as lorries, but I do like Madness — they're a pop group. I never told you how old I was. I am fourteen and go to a residential school for children who need special help with their schoolwork. I will draw you another lorry so you can put it on your wall. Best wishes, Graham.'

Graham's lorry is stapled above my desk, along with another cherished and oft gazed upon drawing of me, complete with camera, lying in a box that looks remarkably like a coffin. It was drawn by a five year old girl from Brentford after a visit to her class last year while working on ideas for a text book for Macmillan. The picture I'm sure is much more exciting than the book will be!

In both these cases it is the response to my work by others that produces the magic for me. Not the photographs or the text, not the printed page, but the response to them. In the one instance, the warmth of realising that the result of long hours spent trundling across Europe with a truck load of beef, brought delight to the eyes of a remedial fourteen year old; in the other that my simply turning up one morning in the midst of a class full of five year olds, and giving them all a tum with the camera, should make at least one of them respond with a picture of me in a coffin! Another crayoned me with twelve foot long arms embracing the whole class, but Melissa drew a sad picture of herself and wrote underneath it, 'I wasn't in any of the photos because I went to the loo'.

How can a teacher ever be bored with such delight?

In 1970 when my headmaster said, 'Well, Fairclough, what are you going to do with your life if you fail your A levels?' (I think he must have known I'd fail the lot!), I replied that I'd have a go at as many jobs as possible before I was thirty and probably thumb my way around the world. By my twenty-fifth birthday I had managed forty-nine, most of them in New Zealand or Australia. Who needs a university education when you can gut fish, sort timber, fry potato sticks or sell lawn aerators?

My self education however only began to pay the rent after I had spent three years at West Surrey College of Art and Design. There I met two great men. One was Thurston Hopkins, photographer on **Picture Post** in the fifties. The other was Ivor Ashmore, a photographer who seems to have had a go at most things during his career. Together they helped to direct my

determination to 'get into photojournalism'. To be fair, they both said I hadn't a chance, in the sure knowledge that I would prove them wrong!

I went freelance in the second year at college and undercut everybody to get the work. From that time in 1976 until just recently I took photographs for Mary Glasgow Publications on their E.F.L. magazine list. It is because of that work and its association with teaching that I have chosen to work exclusively on children's books.

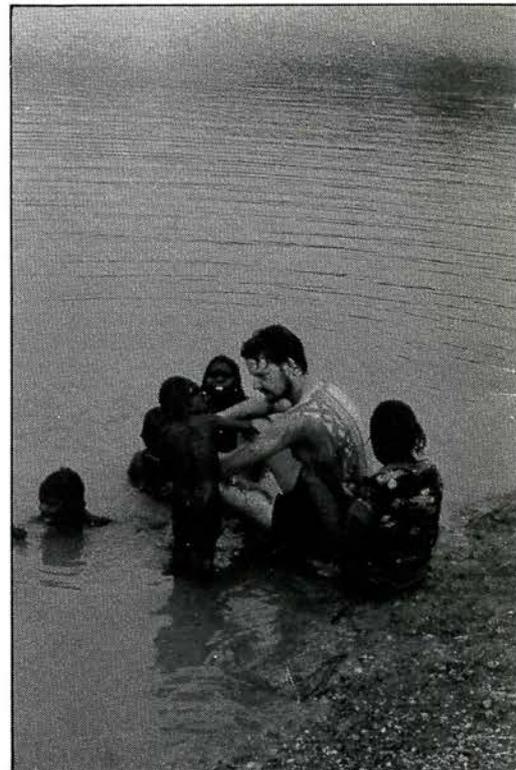
But in one way, although I hold a camera and carry a tape recorder I'm still adding to my list of jobs (and perhaps continuing to get at my old headmaster).

When I go down a coalmine, to the 'Bible black' and the dust and the danger, it is not as a photographer I go, but as a miner. A miner, who, for a few days, is allowed the luxury of shorter shifts and companions at all times. But a miner all the same. And when I went to the Northern Territory last year for A & C Black, illustrating a book in the **Beans** series about the life of an Aborigine girl, for a few weeks I lived their life of bush tucker, of Corroboree and goanna hunts. (Goanna lizard tastes a bit like old chicken — only more chewy.)

And now I am planning to spend three days hanging out of a helicopter over the North sea, with the occasional brief stop on an oil rig for a few shots and a five course breakfast. The book is to be about the career opportunities in the oil industry and the important part it could play in the future of many schoolleavers. My job will be to take eight photographs each of twelve employees of that company. In so doing we build up an overall picture of what life is like as a driller, a rig worker, a helicopter pilot, a geologist and a manager.

Some assignments are much easier to set up than others. Shooting a vet in Derbyshire is somewhat simpler than a mountaineer half way up Mt. Cook in New Zealand, but I've done both in the last year. The date for the oil job is set in mid May, when the weather will be at its kindest and I have a few clean pages in my diary. I'll drive up over night, arriving in Aberdeen about 8.30 am — just in time for a cup of coffee and a handshake. Off to the heliport and on with the orange exposure suit and life jackets. A quick last minute camera check: enough film for 2000 shots, three cameras, spare motorwind, spare flash unit, lenses, filters, tripod, batteries, cables — I feel like an overloaded Christmas tree with all the gear on some of these jobs! Then it's on board the helicopter out into the blue. (Last year I worked on A & C Black's **Oil Rig Worker**, so this is not new!)

On some commissions I write the text as well, for others I collaborate with an author. Some have a very clear idea of what they want in the way of photographs to illustrate their text. Others seem to care little and know less. I like to meet somewhere in the middle. There is nothing worse for me than the writer who shouts, 'Come on then, we need a shot of her over there', when I'm casually chatting to our poor subject in an attempt to make her feel at ease. On the other hand I worked with a writer once who an hour before I'd finished his list of



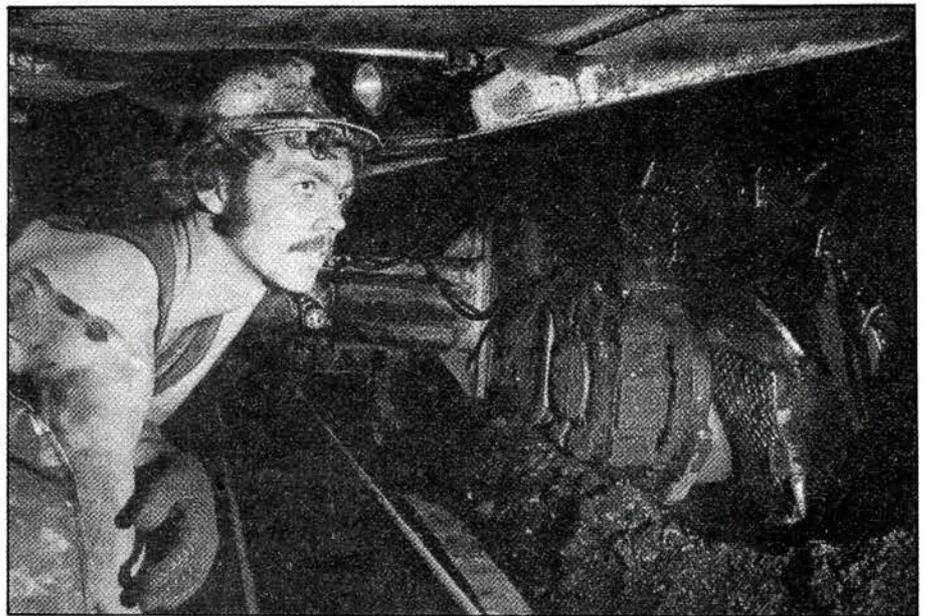
Above: Chris Fairclough getting to know his subjects for **Aboriginal Family**
Below: Bringing home the goanna.
Shots from Chris Fairclough's personal photograph album.

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'required shots' was on his third pint in the local pub. At least with that character I could put my own interpretation on the subject.

It can take thirty seconds to get someone's portrait, or it can take the whole morning. Both methods have their advantages and their drawbacks. It's possible to learn a great deal about somebody in thirty seconds and absolutely nothing about another in a morning. It's this gleaning of information that goes to make a passable or a successful shot. And it's this free exchange between two people that makes my job ever more interesting. For a day I'm a busdriver or a fireman or a company executive — for a day they are a star.

Even though the hurried changing of lenses and setting of flash units may be complete, the job is never over. When I'm in the UK film is processed at home or at a nearby lab. When I'm away it's not such a simple task. Last year in Australia I nearly came unstuck. I had completed the shots for *Aboriginal Family* and had to get the film developed by Kodak in Melbourne, a mere 2000 miles south. Christmas was approaching and we were running out of time (and money!) so I posted the films from a remote outback post office. 'She'll be right mate — there by t'morra, this is Australia ya know, not pommiland!' The following



Steve Manfield, Nottinghamshire miner, at the coal face in *A Day with a Miner*

Drill in smoke and first aid — all part of the job for *The Fireman* (Hamish Hamilton's 'Cherrystones')

I strongly believe there is a place for the photographer in the layout and design of the book. Recently I have taken a much more active role in this and I find it increasingly more interesting. I'm about to be set free with a complete series for one publisher, and I'm pleased to say that most publishers at least ask my opinion as to design before going to press.

Every bit as important as layout is reproductive quality. Imagine spending hours crawling along 2ft 6in coal face, coping with the delights of choking dust, foul water and faulty NCB flash units to emerge clutching three rolls of film and a dripping Nikon. Expectations are high — there wasn't a rock fall and you are once more in the fresh air. The film is lovingly processed — an image is nurtured from the emulsion. Yes the facial expressions are just right, the detail has held in the shadows and the glint in the miner's eyes will bring the whole story to life. Bright prints are made at length — the contrast contained to pick out the very dust and sweat. They are packaged and sealed and sent to the editor.

Six months later a book drops through the letter box. The pictures look as if they have been dragged through the same coalmine as their creator and the paper that they are 'printed' on is not worthy of the gents toilet at Waterloo station. It seems a crime to me that in 1983, with our modern processes and equipment, that corners are cut to save a few pence. It's a shame too that teachers and readers alike do not write to complain about the poor reproduction. Books are usually the result of many months of hard work, of research, editing and late nights. They should not be spoiled by indiscriminate printers. Unlike newspapers and magazines, books are not thrown away after they have been read. They remain on our shelves as a token of the hard graft that has gone to make them. Books are for keeps. ●

Chris Fairclough's photographs appear in non-fiction series by several publishers. For Wayland he has contributed to the *Day with . . .* series (notably *A Day with a Miner*, 0 85340 900 5, £3.50, with a text by Phillipa Aston, which won the TES Junior Information Book Award) for some titles doing pictures and text. For A and C Black he has worked on the Beans series, and with Ann Stewart on the first four titles in Hamish Hamilton's new *Cherrystones* series: *The Milkman* (0 241 10934 5), *The Policewoman* (0 241 10935 3), *The Fireman* (0 241 10936 1), *The Farmer* (0 241 10937 X), £3.25 each.



morning's radio broadcast brought news of a countrywide postal strike. I got my pictures eventually but the film I later discovered had sat for three weeks at Alice Springs in 130°F. It says a lot for Kodak who recommend that the film I was using be refrigerated at all times before and after use! I'll never post film in Aussie again.

When I first started working for publishers I let the editor have all the photographs. Inevitably they would choose the very shot I hated or worse still one that was out of focus

or badly exposed. Now I go through all the shots and toss out all the rubbish before I send them off; or I simply send prints without the contacts. All the photographs not immediately used are filed for future retrieval. I've collected over 70,000 black and white negs. and 10,000 colour transparencies in the last four years. They're expensive to store and cataloguing them is a continual chore. Maybe I should put them all on computer before they snow me under with paper!

The BEANS series

EDITOR, JILL COLEMAN, WRITES ABOUT THE THINKING BEHIND THE BOOKS

BEANS is a series of information books for 8–13 years olds, which look at ordinary people and the way they live. The books are about real people and are illustrated mainly with photographs.

The idea of the series grew from our dissatisfaction with the kind of information book which tries to summarize all the known facts about a country in a limited number of words and a few maps. We felt that there was an important place for books which looked at a small area, or group of people, in greater depth. The kind of individual case study apparently provided in some information books by other publishers was often not a real case study, but a compilation of photographs from different sources and geographical areas, linked together by a text which was intended to describe a 'typical' family or place. We wanted to show real life — which is never typical.

From our experience with the STRANDS series, we knew that it was possible to make books about real families, and we wanted to do the same kind of studies about families living overseas. We also wanted to do something similar with studies of places and people in history as well as contemporary studies of people at work.

The people in BEANS books are real. They have ideas and opinions of their own. In 'Sakina in India', for instance, Sakina says: 'Asharap looks after the chicken. That's an easy job. The goat is always giving me trouble'.

We often choose a child as the central character so that children can identify with him, or her, and compare their own experiences with those of the child in the book. Children seem to find this approach more interesting than general facts and figures. Some of the BEANS books are read over and over again for pleasure, as a story might be. Portraying real people with attitudes and opinions, we hope will also help the children to respect ways of life which may be very different from their own.

Occasionally, someone comes to A&C Black with a project which is exactly right for the BEANS series, such as 'Pakistani Village' by Ailsa and Alan Scarsbrook. The Scarsbrooks had visited Pakistan to find out more about the background of the Pakistani children in the school where Ailsa taught. They stayed with many of the children's relations, took photographs and collected information to show the children back at school. Their material was just right for the BEANS series.

But generally, we need to commission an author or photographer specially for each book, or at least brief them before they start. The ideal author is someone who already has a close relationship with the family he, or she, wants to write about. Rollo Browne, the author of 'Aboriginal family', was the



The cover photograph of **Aboriginal Family** showing eleven year old Lynette Joshua and baby Rosemary

children's teacher and lived in their community for several years. Sometimes, an author finds a family which he, or she, has never met before, through friends and contacts. Then they need to spend some time getting to know the family before they start work.

Discussing the book with the author beforehand has other advantages. The text and pictures in BEANS books are closely linked to each other. It is important for the author and photographer to work together so that nothing is missed out. The author won't be able to describe what a child's

school is like, for instance, if the photographer has only taken pictures of fishing boats in the sunset.

The kind of family is important, too. We don't try to portray 'typical' families because they don't exist. But we often try to show families which children can compare with people who are familiar to them. For example, the father in 'French Family', is a postman and the book shows him in the post office and making his rounds.

As the series has developed, we have tried to choose titles which reflect the

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case study approach — 'Village in Egypt', 'Oil Rig Worker' and so on. When we first started the series, many of the books were called by the name of the country in which they were set — 'Sri Lanka', or 'Mexico' — and we received some angry letters from people who thought they were buying broadly based information books.

But although the books are not designed to summarize every fact about a particular country, a great deal of information and food for thought or discussion is given in the narrative. This is an example from 'Aboriginal Family'.

'Once, my Auntie Rosie was very ill during the Wet Season. The roads were flooded and no-one could fetch the doctor from the airstrip. Auntie Rosie had to swim two streams and walk a long way through the mud to meet the plane. The doctor took her to the hospital in Katherine.'

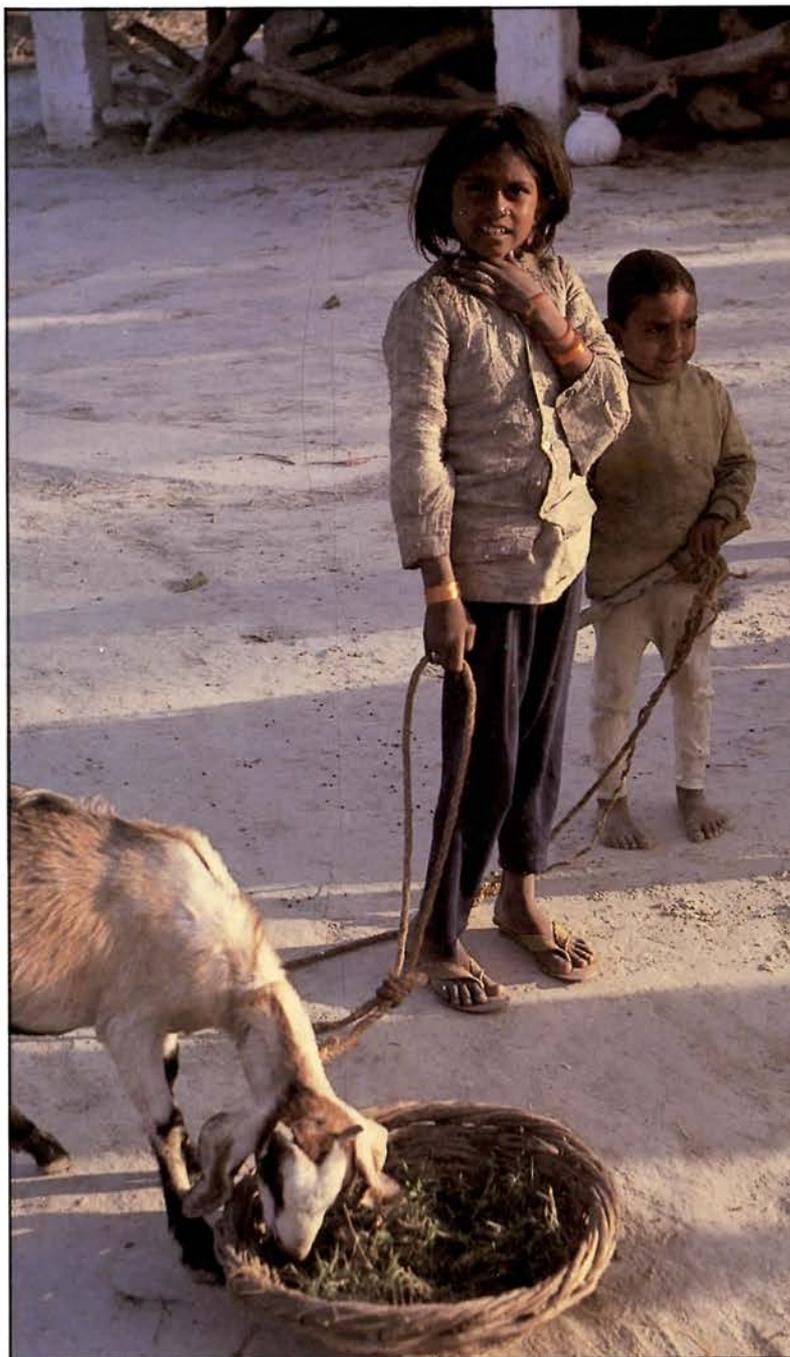
I feel this will say more to children than a bald statement about isolated communities, rainfall and so on.

Background information is also included where it fits into the narrative and all the books include maps, diagrams and illustrations where they can help to give relevant information.

The photographs themselves are also an important source of information. We feel that using photographs, rather than illustrations, helps to make the books more like 'real life' and less like story books.

If the books are used together, topics such as 'food', 'games' or 'lessons' can be explored by comparing different families. It's interesting that the same children's games for instance, crop up over and over again in slightly different forms and with different names.

The most important thing which we hope that children will gain from the BEANS books is respect for and interest in people who live in different ways from themselves and, of course, a desire to find out more. None of the books would be possible without the cooperation of the families portrayed and we are very grateful for their help.●



Sakina and the goat which is always giving her trouble in Sakina in India

A list of titles in the 'Beans' series, all at £2.95

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The postman father in French Family making another collection

Peter Carter

Of Anglo-Irish descent, Peter Carter considers himself a 'realistic' writer. Fantasy has no particular appeal for him, although this is merely temperamental and is not meant to be a criticism. Most of all he admires the resilience, humour and irony with which ordinary men and women face their daily lives.

In his books he tries not to blink at the roughness of life. However, like many other authors, he is prepared to let his books speak for themselves.

Books by Peter Carter:

- | | |
|------------------------------|-------|
| 0 19 271356 6 | |
| The Black Lamp | £3.25 |
| 0 19 271367 1 | |
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| 0 19 271359 0 | |
| Madatan | £4.25 |
| 0 19 271438 4 | |
| The Sentinels | £4.75 |
| 0 19 271405 8 | |
| Under Goliath | £3.75 |
| 0 19 274529 8 | |
| Grimms' Fairy Tales | £7.95 |

His latest novel, **Children of the Book**, published 2 December 1982, prompted the following:

"The Siege of Vienna by the Turks, in 1683, is the subject of Peter Carter's ambitious and scintillating new novel. "... a book which deeply rewards the effort it asks of its readers."

The Times Educational Supplement
14 January 1983

Children of the Book
0 19 271456 2 £6.95

**Oxford Books
for Children**

SOUND & VISION

The Adventures of Niko

When the **Adventures of Niko** were first shown in 1981, Elkan Allan of *The Times* reported: "beautifully shot, with high production values . . . and a charm, freshness, and quality of confidence which makes it stand out above the usual fare offered to children". In fact, this series of six half-hour films, shot on location in Greece with English-speaking Greek actors, has won 4 major international awards but has had very little exposure on TV.

Jonathan Rumbold, writer, director and co-producer of the series (and author of Granada Paperback's **The Adventures of Niko**) had some very big problems to overcome on returning to Britain with the rough-cuts of his films - no TV company would back him so that he could finish them. ITV and the BBC turned him down and only Thames and ATV even gave the project any consideration. Eventually, Talbot TV, an independent distributor (previously involved with **Black Beauty**) came to Mr Rumbold's assistance and Niko appeared in several ITV regions. It has just finished its six-week run on Granada TV and has now been bought for screening by Anglia, Tyne Tees, Yorkshire, TV South West, Channel, TV South, Grampian and HTV at some stage in the future. Try not to miss it.

Benjamin Ferullo (aged 12 and on the children's jury at the Festival of Giffoni, which awarded the 'Grifone di Bronzo' to the series) explained: "the **Adventures of Niko** is the best film of the Festival because Niko is a boy like us."

The Foreword to the book of **The Adventures of Niko** (Granada, 0 583 30563 6, £1.25) makes clear that the setting is not modern day Crete (it is actually set between the wars) but that should have no effect on the appeal of Niko to today's young readers. The mountain village, Niko's bad-tempered uncle, his spirited grandmother, his cousin Katerina, the bandits he joins after running away, the travelling theatre company, even the donkeys and mules, all combine in a fast-moving, exciting and frequently funny read. The short chapters, largish print and scattering of black and white illustrations are a bonus for the easily daunted.

Jackanory Stories

Three favourites will return to Jackanory this Summer (no firm dates as yet) shortly after new books are published by BBC publications: John Grant's **Littlenose** in his first book of adventures, written and illustrated by John Grant, published jointly with Knight books (£1.10), on May 16; Joan Aiken's hilarious adventures of Arabel and Mortimer on holiday in Ireland, and solving the mystery of a disappearing taxi appear in **Mortimer's Cross**, published jointly by Jonathan Cape for £5.50 on June 9th, and Joan Eadington's **Jonny Briggs** is published in a new paperback edition by BBC/Knight books on June 20th at £1.10.



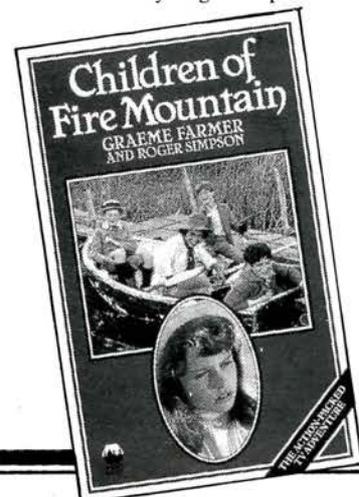
Nicholas Demetriou as Niko, in **The Adventures of Niko**

Anybody There?

A second series of **Everybody Here** - 10 programmes mixing contortionists with frogs and trampolining, teaching invaluable skills like Greek Dancing, how to run backwards and the art of putting your finger on your nose, plus stories, jokes, songs and games with children from all cultures. Michael Rosen has compiled Channel 4's programmes which go out at 5.00 starting on May 18th and the Bodley Head book of the same name (£3.95).

Children of Fire Mountain

This adventure takes place in New Zealand at the turn of the century, when Sarah Jane and her grandfather arrive from England and plan to build a hotel on sacred Maori land despite warnings from an eerie ancient Maori. It was originally made by South Pacific TV in thirteen parts and will be shown by Thames TV this year (no firm dates yet). The Thames Methuen book is written by Graeme Farmer from the television series by Roger Simpson. ●





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MONEY – THE FACTS OF LIFE 7th edition by **W. Reay Tolfree**

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

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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.

BOOKS FOR KEEPS NEWS



Eleanor Farjeon Award

The winner of the 1982 Eleanor Farjeon Award for a distinguished contribution to children and to children's books is the late Jean Russell whose sudden death in January we reported with great regret in an earlier issue of **Books for Keeps**.

Originally a children's librarian, in 1969 Jean joined the newly-formed Federation of Children's Book Groups where her energy, commitment and sense of fun played a large part in getting that infant parents' movement on its feet and moving in the right direction. She spent more than five years on the committee retiring after a year as Chairman in 1977. The twinkle in her eye, the raised eyebrow which said 'Why not?' and the mixture of gutsy determination and deep caring which was essentially Jean, worked together to inspire many people to attempt more than they would have dreamed and to succeed.

From 1977 she was co-editor with Anne Wood of the magazine **Books for your Children**, wrote about children's books for **Mother** magazine, lectured, broadcast, and edited two anthologies of original stories, **The Methuen Book of Strange Tales** and **The Methuen Book of Sinister Tales**.

Jean was completely committed to the cause of imagination in childhood and the special part books and stories have to play in it. She is a worthy companion for the distinguished previous winners of the award. If she could help it Jean never let disability and chronic asthma divert her from the all-important task of bringing children and good books together, so it is particularly appropriate that the prize money which accompanies the award will be donated to the Jean Russell Gift, a trust fund set up to honour her memory which will make a gift of books each year to a handicapped child.

Edinburgh Book Festival

The Edinburgh Book Festival is an enormous event, taking place under canvas at Charlotte Square Gardens from August 21st till September 3rd. The programme is packed with interesting visitors: besides a large number of adult authors (including John Updike, Malcolm Bradbury, William Trevor and the Liverpool Poets), the children's Festival has arranged visits from authors who must be on the Favourites list of most children - Jan Pienkowski, Leon Garfield, Michael Rosen, Tony Hart, Joan Lingard, Mollie Hunter, Douglas Hill, Roger McGough, Joe Austin, Lavinia Derwent, Shirley Hughes, John Ryan, Robert Crowther, and many more. The BBC's 'Sixty Years of Children's Broadcasting' exhibition will be there, and Puffin have sponsored a **Supergran** competition where the winner will be dressed as the best granny. Raymond Briggs' **Snowman** film will be shown and those brave enough can meet Fungus the Bogeyman in person. The Festival is open from 10 till 8 with an entry fee of £1 for adults and 50p for children, with reductions for school parties. (Contact Valerie Bierman, Edinburgh Book Festival Office, 62 George St., Edinburgh, tel. 031 556 3561 now for school bookings.) There will be over 45,000 books on display, all for sale, in what is undoubtedly the biggest book fair ever seen in Britain.

Children's Book Week is Alive and Kicking,

writes Dorothy Wood who is organising the event this year from the National Book League.

Plans are progressing at a cracking pace and the promotion material, which we modestly think is the best ever is already ready. The mailing list has been completely reorganised, and if your group or school is not already on it why not contact us at once with your name, the name of your school or organisation, and a full address.

The week will be launched in style on September 30th in Covent Garden, and we are hoping for national coverage - The **Guardian** has agreed to run a parents' competition the preceding week, and we are hoping for a spot on TV-AM on the Saturday morning before and after the Week. The national children's drawing competition will be **Design a Book Token**, and this year we have divided the competition into four age ranges to make the judging a little easier. There will also be local radio and press competitions - so keep your eyes open!

Following many discussions with the relevant people it has been decided that the arrangements for author visits will once more be handled by their publishers - the people who know them best!

If you want further information please do not hesitate to call me, Dorothy Wood, at the National Book League on 01 874 6361.

Last Children's Books of the Year Exhibition

This year's **Children's Books of the Year** exhibition will be the last, mainly because Julia MacRae Books have decided they cannot continue to publish the catalogue - another victim of rising costs. The first exhibition took place in 1970; Elaine Moss sifted through the year's output and chose what she considered to be the best fiction and non-fiction titles published. Three years ago Barbara Sherrard-Smith took over.

The exhibition will be at the National Book League from 1-13 August and, as usual, there will be visits from authors and illustrators, storytimes, competitions, and reading and drawing corners. Admission is free. If you would like a programme of events, contact Barbara Buckley at the NBL, Book House, East Hill, London SW18 2QZ. Tel. 01 870 9055. To hire the exhibition contact Andrew Patterson, also at the NBL.

The National Book League is sad to see the last Children's Books of the Year, but are determined to replace it with some sort of summer exhibition for children. Watch this page for details.

Another Bologna Prize

The Critici in Erba Award at the annual international Children's Books Fair in Bologna went this year to **Our Changing World**, a revolving picture book about nature, by Ingrid Selberg and Andrew Miller. Pull a tab, the picture revolves and the scene changes from winter to summer or night to day. Accurate, easily accessible information to back up the novelty (Collins, 0 00 183767 2, £4.95).

Watch out for

The Children's Summer Festival, June 8th-12th in Cheltenham with David Bellamy, Brian Cant, Musician John Williams, Atarah's Band, Michael Hardcastle, Peter Eldin, computers for children to use and lots of other events. Contact Douglas McLean, Forest Bookshop, Coleford, Glos. (0594 33858) for details.

Storyboat '83. Hertfordshire Libraries are taking to the canal again for a week of fun and storytelling which begins on July 25th. More about this in our next issue. Meanwhile contact Dina Thorpe, Schools Library Centre, Tolpits Lane, Watford (Watford 27937).

To obtain this year's **Children's Book Award** poster and a copy of **Pick of the Year**, an annotated booklist featuring the 'top eleven' plus thirty other recommended titles, send 25p and a self-addressed A4 envelope to Sue Cole, Aptonfields, Hounslow Green, Barnston, Near Dunmow, Essex.

The poster, in full colour, is designed by **Quentin Blake**, and features the **BFG** and lists the Top Ten.

