

BOOKS FOR KEEPS

SEPTEMBER 1983 No. 22
UK Price 95p

BOOKS & FILMS & BOOKS & COMPUTERS & BOOKS



'Once I was round a friend's place
and just as we were going out
he went over to the table
and picked up a hard lump of chewed-up
chewing gum with teeth marks in it
off the table top
and stuffed it in his mouth.
His gran was there and she said,
"You're not taking that filthy thing
with you, are you?"
And he said to me,

"QUICK-LET'S GET OUT OF HERE"

More hilarious poetry
from Michael Rosen
with drawings by
Quentin Blake.
£5.95 hardback



HOME BEFORE LONG

by Bill Gillham
For the 6-11's, a gripping story of two wartime evacuees
£4.95 b/w illustrations by Francis Mosley.

THE TRICK THAT WENT WRONG

or Fanny and Charles: A Regency Escapade
The fashionable town of Bath is the setting for this charming
and historically accurate glimpse of the 18th century.
Written and illustrated in colour and black and white
by Phillida Gili. £3.95 hardback



ANDRE DEUTSCH

105 Great Russell Street, London WC1

A unique concept in pop-ups

Search for the Rare Plumador

KEN KIRKWOOD and RAY MARSHALL

A dramatic island rises from a fold-out stage to reveal a dozen clues in the search for the missing Plumador — a rare and exotic bird. Part game, part book, the Plumador island will give hours of fun for all ages. 'An attractive idea and the details have been worked out with care.' *British Book News*
£4.95

From the winner of the 1982 Carnegie Medal
for *The Haunting*

The Pirates' Mixed-Up Voyage

Dark Doings in the Thousand Islands

MARGARET MAHY

Illustrated by MARGARET CHAMBERLAIN

The amazing adventures of a motley crew of pirates during their voyages in their ship-cum-teashop *The Sinful Sausage* make a brilliantly funny story from a popular author. Meet the handsome and hairy Lionel Wafer, a twinset-and-pearls witch and her husband, a wicked magician metamorphosed into a fire-drake and a host of other unlikely characters. 'Margaret Mahy's fertile imagination and exuberant vocabulary make an intoxicating combination.'
British Book News

Ages 8+
£5.95

DENT

33 Welbeck Street, London W1M 8LX.

The Hiroshima Story

Toshi Maruki
English story by Judith Elkin

Deeply moved by her personal experience in the burnt-out city of Hiroshima, Toshi Maruki, a Japanese artist and writer, painted a series of pictures and wrote this account of what happened to one family.

The result is this astounding and distinguished book.

'I can't imagine this story better told... a gentle, almost poetic book like this one makes them less frightening, by naming a set of undefined terrors.'
New York Magazine

£4.95

A & C Black

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.



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.



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



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

Contents

Editor's Page	3
News and Comment from the Editor	
Looking for a Teenage Audience	4
A review of two major book and film tie-ins.	
Reviews	7
Pocket Bears	8
The story behind a new picture paperback series	
Authorgraph No. 22	14
S. E. Hinton	
Information Please: Computers and Books	17
Peter Usborne explores the Micro Jungle	
Terry Downie reports on choosing which books to buy	
Neil Ardley discusses present problems and future prospects as a writer of Computer books	
Sound & Vision	23
News about books on TV and radio	
Lifeline Two: Stories in a Multi-Cultural Society	24
Part five of Judith Elkin's six part series	
May we Recommend . . .	26
Robert Swindells	
Pat Thomson introduces another writer we think should be better known	
News	28

Cover Book

The illustration on our cover is from the new paperback edition of S. E. Hinton's **The Outsiders** (Fontana Lions 0 00 671427 7, £1.00).

We are grateful to Fontana Lions for making it possible to use it.

BOOKS FOR KEEPS

- the magazine of the
School Bookshop Association

SEPTEMBER 1983 No. 22

ISSN: 0143-909X
Editor: Pat Triggs
Designer: Alec Davis
Typesetting by: Curtis Typesetting,
Gloucester
Printed by: Surrey Fine Arts, Redhill
Surrey

© School Bookshop Association 1983

BOOKS FOR KEEPS

can be obtained on subscription by sending a cheque or postal order to the Subscription Secretary, SBA, 1 Effingham Road, Lee, London SE12 8NZ.
Tel: 01-852 4953

Annual subscription for six issues:
£5.70 UK, £7.50 overseas.
Single copies direct from the SBA:
95p UK, £1.25 overseas.

Or use the Dial-a-Sub service on
01-852 4953.

EDITOR'S PAGE

We've been planning, and testing books for the second of our **Information Please** series for some time. Computer books are now rushing off the presses faster than a chip can calculate, and more and more publishers are moving into software packages. Deciding what to buy for home, school or library, or which titles to stock in the school bookshop gets more difficult every week. We hope our special feature on **Computers and Books** will help you find a way through what Peter Usborne, who knows the terrain better than most, describes as the micro jungle.

As we went to press we heard of yet another new move. In November Piccolo are bringing out **Computer Puzzle Story Books** — science fiction and mystery do-it-yourself adventures. Sit down at your keyboard for a good read: when you encounter a problem there's a computer program to help you solve it. Gone are the days, it seems, when all you needed to review a book were your eyes and a comfortable chair! When we've tried them out we'll let you know.

Cover Story

Two big new feature films released this August also had us abandoning our armchairs for a seat at the cinema. **The Outsiders** and **Wargames** are part of the film industry's bid to ensure its future by attracting a whole new young audience. With these two films, books and cinema make common cause in the attempt to ensure that reading and 'going to the pictures' have a place in teenage life alongside the competing attractions of records, video, video games and the like. Francis Ford Coppola based his film, **The Outsiders**, on S. E. Hinton's hugely successful teenage novel. Penguin hope that **Wargames**, the book of the film, will find readers in the wake of a hugely successful film.

Fontana put a new tie-in cover on their paperback of **The Outsiders**. We liked it so much we decided to put it on *our* cover. You can find out what we thought of the films and the books in our feature article (pages 4 and 5). And S. E. Hinton fans will be fascinated to find out more about this remarkable writer in this issue's **Authorgraph** (pages 14 and 15).

A Legacy

The makers of **Wargames** have linked the current fascination with computers and the awful possibility of a nuclear war to produce a timely adventure story. Equally timely, but no adventure, is the publication of a picture book, **The Hiroshima Story** (A and C Black, 0 7136 2357, £4.95) which deals with the awful actuality of that dreadful event. It is written and illustrated by Toshi Maruki, who went into Hiroshima soon after the A bomb explosion (what those who experienced it call **The Flash**) to help the wounded and bury the dead. She and her husband have been campaigning for peace and against nuclear weapons ever since. She is now 70. Childless, she calls this book 'my legacy to my grandchildren'. It is a legacy all nine plus children should share. The story of what happened to seven year old Mii-Chan and her family in **The Flash** is told in simple words and haunting pictures. It will disturb; it should be talked about, with honesty and feeling. The book has already won awards in Japan and America. The English version of the story is by Judith Elkin, whom we congratulate as one of the winners of this year's **Other Award for Nowhere to Play** (also A and C Black), a story of children in Venezuela for which she also produced the English story. For details of the other **Other Award** winners see page 28.



Toshi Maruki

Visions of the Future

Another writer to try to show the reality of the aftermath of a nuclear explosion is Robert Swindells, the featured author in the second of our **May We Recommend** series. Pat Thomson writes about **Brother in the Land** (see page 26). Right from his first novel, **When Darkness Comes** (written as an assignment on a teacher training course), Robert Swindells has produced challenging and 'different' books. It's good to see a new long novel from him and to hear that we shall have more of his work in paperback soon. He's also highly recommended as an **Author in School**. If you are thinking of asking him to visit, contact him direct at 86 Sappgate Lane, Thornton, Bradford BD13 3DY.

An equally uncompromising look at the future is found in Robert Westall's new novel, **Futuretrack 5** (Kestrel, 0 7226 5880 X, £5.95). Appropriately for this issue Westall has a computer at the heart of his 21st century Britain where the elite white-coated, clip-board carrying Techs keep the computers clicking smoothly for the Ests (who at 20 pass their E-Levels and graduate to 'cushy careers as archaeologists or astronomers, poets or racing yachtsmen. Gracious old houses. Book-lined studies with real log fires.') and the Uniems who live Beyond the Wire, and for whom the Labour Exchange offers one of six Tracks: Rock music, Fighting, Playing Pinball, Thieving, Motor Bike Racing, Prostitution. Tech-by-mistake, Henry Kitson (he got 100% in his E-Levels, too good to be an Est) goes through the Wire, meets Keri (she's a motor bike champion) and discovers more than he wants to know. Like the one in **Wargames** Westall's computer ends up learning, though with not such simple results.

Teenage Romance

There's a thread of a love story in **Futuretrack 5** which makes it a candidate for our list of alternatives to pulp romance. Lots of you have sent in suggestions after the article in our last issue. Many thanks for your very interesting letters. We'll be taking up the theme again — with a list — in our January issue. So there's still time to send in your suggestions.

Researching School Bookshops

Something that is not a matter of opinion is the growth of school bookshops in the London Borough of Newham. More than half the schools in Newham have a school bookshop, an amazing statistic for an area which in material terms is poor and disadvantaged. The Parents Centre in Newham, funded by Greater London Arts and The British Library, and helped and advised by, among others, the School Bookshop Association, has done a detailed survey of these school bookshops. The results make very interesting reading for all involved with selling books in schools. The SBA is publishing the report and you can get a copy from us for only £1.20 (see insert for details). Read about what your colleagues in the school bookshop movement are doing, or be inspired to try yourself.

Good wishes,

Pat

LOOKING FOR A

Books and Films have something in common. For both, winning a large teenage audience

Books and Films have to compete for teenage attention with records, television, video, video games and other attractions. The cinema's answer seems to be a new genre of 'young appeal' films. The latest of these *The Outsiders* and *Wargames* both have tie-in books.

Will they help us to get kids reading? We went to the cinema to find out.

WARGAMES

The Book of the Film

A teenage boy who almost starts World War III, a teenage girl who helps him stop it, a 'mad' professor, lots of computers, and the US Defence Department are the ingredients Laurence Lasker and Walter F. Parkes gave themselves for a film which everyone hoped would keep the box office ticker machines whirring. They couldn't have come up with a more promising list for a story for the eighties if they had tried market research, and director, John Badham (he also did *Saturday Night Fever* and *Blue Thunder*) has created from their screenplay a fast-moving, highly entertaining adventure with a very broad appeal. It's already a smash hit in the States and looks from its London reception as if it will do as well here when it goes on general release at the end of October.

The Story

David Lightman is seventeen, a low achiever at school, but nevertheless a whizz kid with computers. In his bedroom he keeps a stack of sophisticated equipment through which he can, among other things, key into the school's computer and change all his grades. Through a telephone link he explores the computer universe and, looking for the computer of a manufacturer of video games from whom he hopes to steal a program before it goes on sale, he finds himself in conversation with a computer which offers him a list of games to play. David chooses Global Thermonuclear War, decides to be Russia and starts to play.

What he does not know is that he has keyed himself into the biggest games program in the world — the Defence Department's War Games Computer, Joshua, designed to simulate every possible strategy and option for World War III and learn from its mistakes. Now for the first time Joshua thinks he has a real opponent. And he is programmed to want to win. David, when he realises what he has done has the problem of convincing the experts that they are not really being attacked. The only way is to find the man who taught Joshua to think, and David has just 27 hours and 59 minutes to do it in.

Everyone learns

David is at the centre of the film. 'When we meet him at the beginning of the movie,' says Walter Parkes, 'he is still a boy, playing with toys. By the end he has taken a giant step into the adult world. He has realised he has to take responsibility for

starting this thing.' And that goes for pretty well everyone else in the film too! Dr John McKittrick, in charge of the whole defence warning system, who thinks computers are the answer to everything; General Berringer, the nuke-the-commies officer in charge of defence; Dr Stephen Falken, the computer genius who created Joshua and then opted out when he discovered how they planned to use his invention; Jennifer, David's girlfriend who at the beginning of the film thinks the most important thing in life is aerobics, and even Joshua, the computer who has been programmed to think and learn. (He/it is the real star of the show.)

When the film is over you remember some dazzling computer graphics, some very watchable acting, but above all a very well-made suspense thriller which at its heart has a strong simple point to make about nuclear war. Go and see it.

A Good Read

And then read the book. David Bischoff has done a good job of turning *Wargames* into book form. At great expense and after a tense telephone auction, we are told, Penguin acquired the UK paperback rights from the American Company, Dell. They have brought out two editions: a Penguin at £1.75 and a Puffin Plus at £1.50. The Puffin, apart from being 25p cheaper, has had some of the more colourful language toned down and been given a cover which shows David and Jenny, heads together, looking worried. The Penguin cover has David alone, looking much younger and with an innocent, bewildered expression. An interesting demonstration of what publishers think sells books to different parts of the market?

What's inside is a good read for anyone from the early teens upwards. For less experienced readers the writer's concern to make clear all the implications of the film could be useful. Just one word of warning. The opening (based on the pre-credit sequence of the film, the significance of which becomes clear only later in the film) could be confusing; and the story has a rather slow build up (the main plot doesn't really get moving until about page 80). So warn potential readers and encourage them to keep going. They'll be glad they did.

War Games, David Bischoff, Puffin Plus, 0 14 13.1701 5, £1.50
Penguin, 0 14 00.7050 8, £1.75
Stills from *Wargames* on the right by courtesy of Penguin Books.



TEENAGE AUDIENCE

ce may be the way to avoid becoming a cultural backwater, a minority interest.

THE OUTSIDERS

The Film of the Book

At the end of *The Outsiders* a caption flashes on the screen.

'The film *The Outsiders* is dedicated to the people who first suggested that it be made — librarian Jo Ellen Misakian and the students of The Lone Star School in Fresno, California.'

That brief dedication marks the end of a long story which started back in 1972 when Jo Ellen Masakian, newly appointed to the school library, discovered that *The Outsiders* was a book the kids, and especially the boys, actually wanted to read. In Spring 1980 she and 104 twelve and thirteen year-olds signed a petition asking that their favourite book be made into a film. But which director should they send it to? By chance Mrs Misakian had just read a review of *The Black Stallion*, got Francis Ford Coppola's address from the reference library and sent off the petition with a letter, and a copy of the paperback because she knew he wouldn't go out and buy one.

Unlike most letters of the kind this one actually got through to be read by Mr Coppola. He is reputed to have said, 'I bet kids have a good idea of what should be a movie', and passed it over to his colleague, producer Fred Roos, to 'Check it out, if you want to'.

Mr Roos' first impression was not good. He dismissed the book because the jacket was 'tacky'. It looked, he said, as if the book had been published by some religious organization. (Publishers note!) But somehow the book got into his briefcase and weeks later, on a plane journey, he decided to give it ten pages. That was enough to keep him reading and convince him that the pupils of Lone Star School were right.

In the summer of 1980 he went to Tulsa to meet S. E. Hinton. *The Godfather* films and *Apocalypse Now*, Francis Ford Coppola's award-winning films, meant nothing to her; but she had seen *The Black Stallion* and felt that the people who made it could be trusted with young adult fiction.

Tough and Heroic

While setting up *The Outsiders*, Zoetrope, Coppola's production company, was struggling with another film, *One From the Heart*, going way beyond budget, and trying to stave off bankruptcy. For Coppola, directing *The Outsiders* — working with half a dozen kids in the country — was relief from his problems. It was also a project with which he identified. 'I wanted to make a movie about *youth* and about *belonging*, belonging to a group of people with whom you identified and where you felt real love.' He responded strongly to the book and to get that response on the screen decreed that the 'greasers' were to be portrayed heroically and they were to have dignity. And indeed they are and they do. So much so that some critics have disliked the film for being over-romantic, over-sentimental, even too 'beautiful'.



Too Gold?

The gorgeous Oklahoma sunsets are, says Coppola, the perfect metaphor for the film. 'Even as we look at a sunset we are aware that it is already starting to die. Youth, too, is like that: at its very moment of perfection you can already see the forces that are undoing it. *The Outsiders* takes place in an enchanted moment of time in the lives of all those boys. I wanted to catch that moment.'

He and his cameraman have captured those sunsets on the screen in all their golden glory. To reinforce the image Ponyboy quotes from Robert Frost's *Nothing Gold Can Stay*, and the theme song, sung by Stevie Wonder, is called *So Gold*. Over the top? Well, perhaps a little. But all this is really counterpoint to the narrative and background for the real focus of the film — the boys, and in particular Dallas, the tough guy with a heart of gold, little Johnny and Ponyboy.

The Story

Late at night, in retaliation for a supposed insult, Ponyboy and Johnny are attacked by a gang of drunken 'socs'. To save his friend from being drowned Johnny stabs and kills a 'soc'. With Dallas' help they hide out in an abandoned church in the country. When Dallas brings them news that Cherry, a 'soc' girl, will testify on their behalf, they decide to give themselves up. About to return, they see the church has caught fire and children on a school picnic who have climbed in to explore are trapped. The three rescue the children and are hailed as heroes; but Johnny is horribly burned and critically ill. At a final all-out rumble the greasers beat the 'socs'. As it ends news comes of Johnny's death. Dallas incoherent with anger and grief pulls an empty gun on the owner of

After the rumble: the victorious greasers watch helpless as the police close in on Dallas.

Below, Francis Coppola discusses a scene with three of his young stars.

Outsiders photos courtesy of Pony Boy Inc.



a grocery store and is dramatically gunned down in the street by the police. Ponyboy is left to tell the story.

Totally Involved

The film is faithful to the book. It was filmed on location in Tulsa with considerable concern for recreating sixties detail. S. E. Hinton, who thought the cast was excellent, comments, 'Even in places where I thought it might have been better to change the book, Francis stuck to it. He made the movie for the kids who liked the book.'

The kids who saw it with us certainly enjoyed it; in spite of the lyrical passages which they found a little slow. The action-packed bits, and even more the appeal of the characters were ample compensation. They were totally involved.

Filmgoers seeking the book, or book readers visiting the cinema will not be disappointed. ●

Reading is fun with Story Puzzle Books

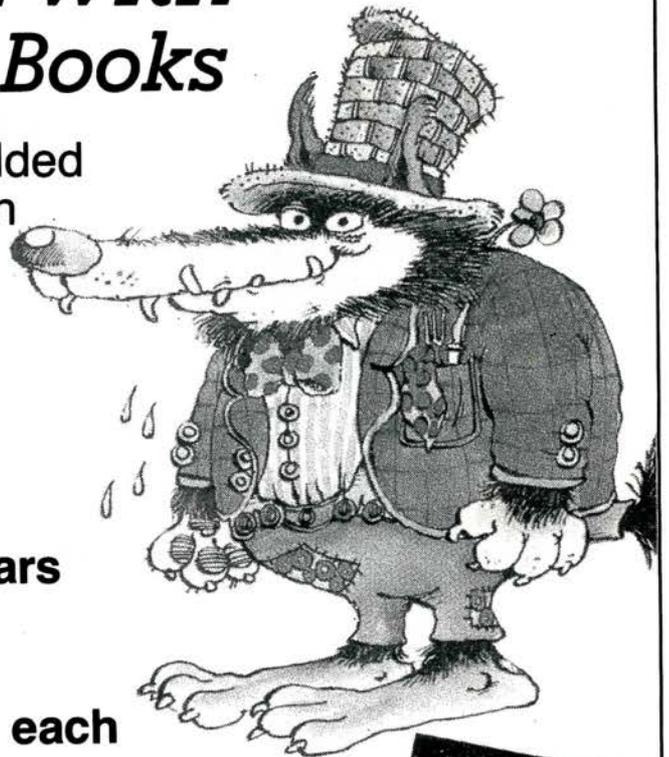
Four familiar stories with an added surprise — a puzzle to solve on every page!

The Three Billy Goats Gruff
0 582 39176 8

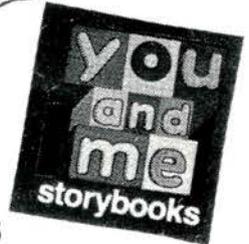
The Three Little Pigs
0 582 39177 6

Goldilocks and the Three Bears
0 582 39178 4

Little Red Riding Hood
0 582 39179 2 **85p each**



you and me storybooks



Six new stories in this popular series of handy little paperbacks, based on the scripts and pictures used in the BBC TV you and me programmes.

Ideal for reading aloud or for early readers to enjoy by themselves.



Market Mouse
0 582 39249 7

Maxine's Piano
0 582 39250 0

Felix the Fat Cat
0 582 39251 9

50p each
Published: September

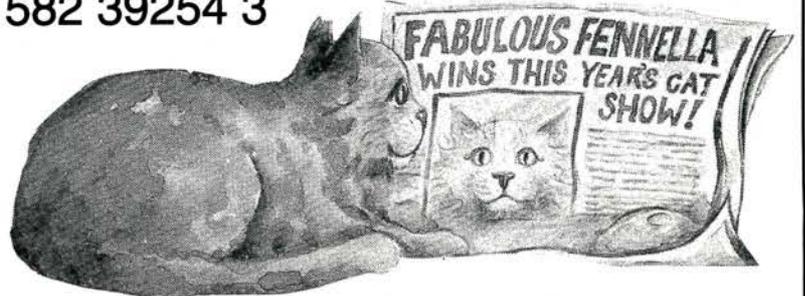
Dressing Up
0 582 39252 7

Playing Soldiers
0 582 39253 5

Fluff and Puff
0 582 39254 3

Available from all good bookshops but if in difficulty, write to Maggi Turfrey, Longman Group Ltd, Longman House, Burnt Mill, Harlow, Essex CM20 2JE

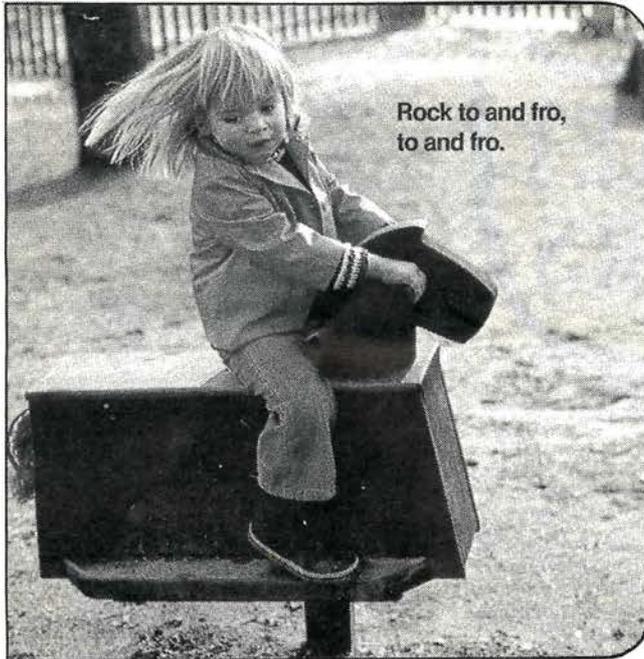
Longman 



REVIEWS

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

Nursery/Infants



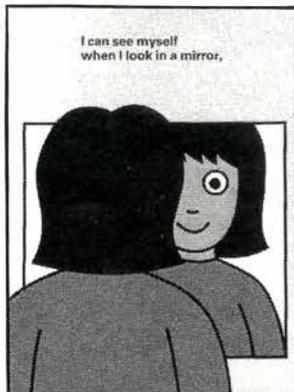
Rock to and fro,
to and fro.

Snowy Days
0 416 45590 5

Sunny Days
1 416 45610 3
Photographs by Lars
Wik, Methuen, £1.50
each

Two from a series of square, spirally bound board books originally from Scandinavia. High quality colour photographs appropriately captioned, provide interesting talking points as we see a little girl enjoying the seaside and country and sampling the delights of the snow. For sharing with babies and toddlers.

JB



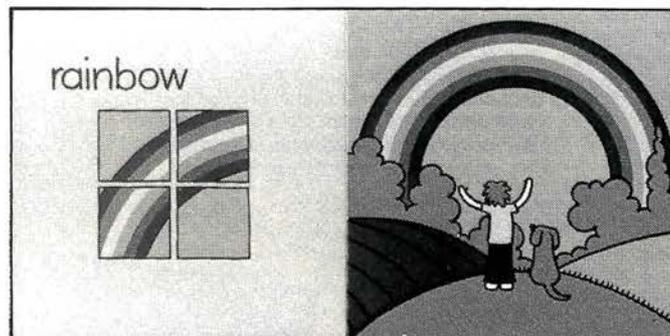
I Can See
0 00 662053 1

I Can Hear
0 00 662054 X
Peter Curry, Picture
Lions, £1.00 each

A page from 'Rainy Day'

For the very young: these aim to arouse a basic appreciation of the senses of sight and hearing by means of pictures with bright, bold colours and simple shapes outlined in thick black line. There is also a brief text. To help beginner readers, the latter uses some repetition but this is not to say that the text is dull — far from it — the language is interesting and should stimulate lively discussion.

JB



From 'Weather'

Rebekah and the Slide
Christine Parker, ill.
Lisa Kopper, Dinosaur,
0 85122 389 3, 85p
paperback

Christine Parker has written this story based on her own daughter's passion for slides and reluctance to go to playschool. Rebekah's feelings of frustration at going past all her favourite slides, and

Park Animals
0 7445 0020 6

Country Animals
0 7445 0019 2
Wendy Boase, ill.
Barbara Firth

Woodland Animals
0 7445 0021 4
Wendy Boase, ill. Peter
Visscher

Farm Animals
0 7445 0018 4
David Lloyd, ill. Carolyn
Bull, Hide-and-Seek
series, Zebra Books,
Walker, 75p each

Four small picture books aimed at preschoolers; three attempt to present animals in their natural surroundings. The quality of the illustrations is high — both flora and fauna being closely observed. It is a pity however that, in **Woodland Animals**, the impression is given that weasels and deer are nocturnal. Lots to look at and talk about; good value too. The fourth title, **Farm Animals**, is the odd one out. Though it employs the same novel illustrative technique: starting with a close-up and zooming out to reveal more and more of the same picture, this one shows chicks frolicking in sacks of corn and attempts to tell a story (in dull, present-tense language) rather than presenting farm animals behaving naturally.

JB

Numbers
0 14 050.406 0

Shapes
0 14 050.407 9

Sizes
0 14 050.408 7

Colours
0 14 050.404 4

Time
0 14 050.409 5

ABC
0 14 050.403 6

Homes
0 14 050.405 2

Weather
0 14 050.410 9

Jan Piñkowski, Picture
Puffin, 85p each

These bright, bold almost garishly coloured, captioned pictures — unmistakably Piñkowski — have already proved extremely popular with the under-fives, both in hardcover book form and as friezes, so it is good to see the whole lot in paperback particularly as the hardcover books had a tendency to fall apart rather rapidly. Well worth investing in a set of these.

JB

Three Little Pigs
0 7445 0016 8

Three Bears
0 7445 0014 1
Retold by Wendy Boase,
ill. Gillian Chapman

Red Riding Hood
0 7445 0015 X
Retold by Wendy Boase,
ill. Heather Philpott

Billy Goats Gruff
0 7445 0017 6
Retold by Wendy Boase,
ill. Carolyn Bull
First Fairytales, Zebra
Books, Walker, 75p each

Cheap and cheerful, and more attractively presented than the Ladybird versions, best sums up these four 'First Fairytales', hardbacks aimed mainly at parents with preschoolers. My advice as always with traditional tales is, if you don't like the choice of words in the text, substitute your own; and though the pictures are not to my taste — Paul Galdone's illustrations for these stories have yet to be bettered for the very young in my view — the rather chocolate-box style adopted here may appeal to some youngsters.

JB

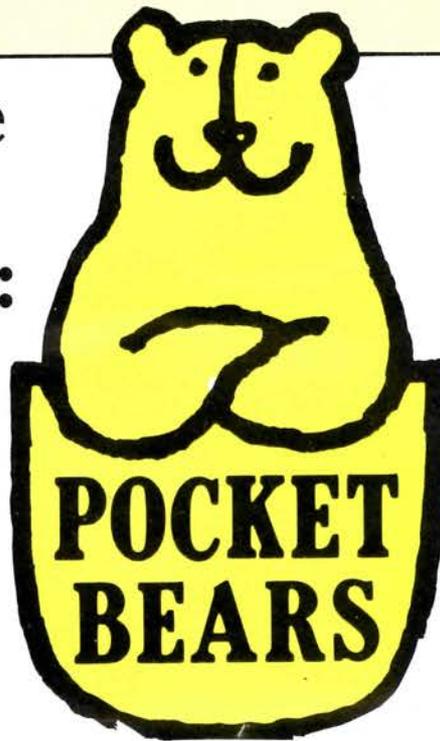
A new name in picture paperbacks:

Pat Triggs talks to Christine Baker, the editor of this new series

Christine Baker is French and married to an Englishman. She is also an enthusiastic champion of the best in children's books, particularly picture books. For some years she has been bringing the work of the best of continental illustrators to this country for Moonlight, her own publishing house, and taking the best of British and American illustrators to French children as editor of a paperback series for Gallimard. 'Artists like Rosemary Wells, Janet Ahlberg and Michael Foreman were instant bestsellers.' It is titles from the Gallimard series that form the basis of the new Pocket Bears — a joint Methuen Moonlight venture.

Pocket Bears are a different kind of picture paperback. Christine Baker explains. 'They are a new creation not just reduced or reproduced hardbacks. The books are a uniform size so we have had to design new layouts and in some cases even commission new art work from the illustrator. All the artists whose work we use are closely involved with the project and many have said how pleased and impressed they are with the result. I think the tighter format and the reduction intensifies the line and colour, sharpens the image, makes it more jewel-like.'

The choice of uniform size was a deliberate one. 'It's a nice size for small hands and as each title has a spine and stitched pages it looks and



feels like a real book. I think the earlier children can have the experience of real books the better. We also hope at that size that they will be very collectable!'

Many titles on the Gallimard list are already in paperback in this country and so, to Christine's regret, will not be crossing the channel. But with Colin McNaughton, Helen Oxenbury, Reg Cartwright and Tony Ross, to name but a few, Pocket Bears are looking exciting. (And at £1.50 very good value.)

The series has been launched with well-known names but Christine is keen to introduce us to new artists. She is particularly enthusiastic about Yvan Pommaux's books about Lola the Vole. 'They are really information books but done with great charm. I think they are enchanting. I'm looking forward to finding out what people think of them.'

I asked Christine about the pages at the end of some books which contain a short biography of the artist and often factual information related to the subject of the story. 'It may be my French background that makes me so interested in combining stories and information. Because we haven't made the books a fixed number of pages we are sometimes left with some blank pages! I thought this was a good way to use them up.'

Children like to know that writers and artists are real people, and I added the information to help the grown-up who is sharing the book with the child. I shall wait to see how people here react.'

Jill Bennett reviews the books

Bill and Stanley
by Helen Oxenbury, 0 907144 32 2

There's a Nightmare in My Cupboard
by Mercer Mayer, 0 907144 33 0, £1.35 each

King Nonn the Wiser
by Colin McNaughton, 0 907144 34 9

Mr Potter's Pigeon
ill. by Reg Cartwright, text by Patrick Kinmonth, 0 907144 37 3

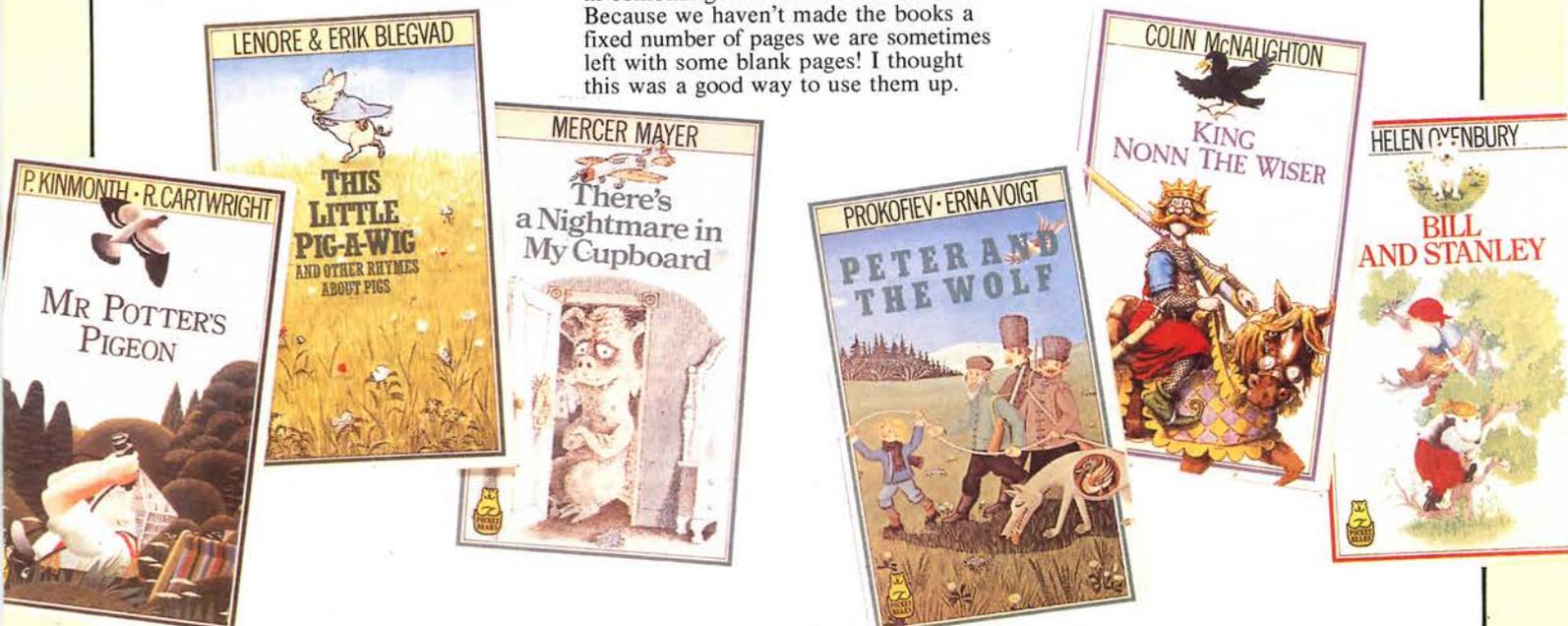
Peter and the Wolf
Sergei Prokofiev, ill. by Erna Voigt, 0 907144 31 4

This Little Pig-a-Wig
Lenore and Eric Blegvad, 0 907144 30 6, £1.50 each

Pocket Bears are an entirely new concept; they are not merely paperback editions of hardcover picturebooks but, in most cases have been carefully redesigned to fit the small (175 x 110mm) format. The paper used is excellent quality and the books are stitched and have a spine thus giving the appearance of 'real' books. This could well mean that the readership will be wider than that of the original picturebooks: I can see these appealing to less confident 8s to 10s who wouldn't perhaps want to be seen reading picturebooks (despite Elaine Moss's crusade).

The choice of titles for the first six is interesting: a little known Helen Oxenbury story being the only one not considerably smaller than the original; a very witty tale from Colin McNaughton; the award-winning *Mr Potter's Pigeon*; an American favourite by Mercer Mayer; the Prokofiev classic; and to my mind the one that works least well in this format, Lenore and Eric Blegvad's book of 'pig' rhymes. I am slightly prejudiced here because I am particularly fond of the original and its companion volumes with their satisfying shape, ample margins beyond the frames and charming vignettes; but perhaps it is unfair to make comparisons. Rather, these should be viewed as new books in their own right.

A promising and innovative venture: I wish it success. ●



Timothy Goes to School

Rosemary Wells, Picture Puffin, 0 14 050.363 3, £1.25

Sporting his brand new sunsuit, Timothy proudly sets out for his first day at school; but he quickly discovers — thanks to the obnoxious Claude — that school has its pains as well as its pleasures. However, just when things are getting just too much, Timothy finds that he has a soul mate and then life

begins to look a whole lot better. Again, Rosemary Wells's furry creatures are a delight; she has great skill in portraying small animals in familiar human situations. Don't miss this one.

JB

A Pet for Mrs Arbuckle

Gwenda Smyth, ill. Ann James, Hippo, 0 590 70296 3, 95p

Plump, jolly middle-aged Mrs Arbuckle advertises for a pet at the suggestion of the gingernut cat from down the street, and the eleven responses take her (and the cat) on a world tour to interview the prospective candidates. Mrs Arbuckle seems satisfied with each in

turn but puss points out the shortcomings of an aardvark, a llama, a whale, and a butterfly to name a few. Finally, on her return home, Mrs A. realises that her ideal pet has been with her all along. The humorous water colour pictures have a delightfully freeflowing style and the longish text, which they subtly extend, reads aloud well. I thoroughly enjoyed this one and at under £1 for a full-sized picture paperback it is excellent value.

JB

Infant/Junior



From *Molly Moves Out*

Molly Moves Out

Susan Pearson, ill. Steven Kellogg, Hippo, 0 590 70240 8, £1.25

Fed up with her overcrowded home, not to mention her interfering brothers and sisters, Molly Rabbit decides to go it alone. However, the delights of solo living soon begin to pale and just when Molly is feeling at her lowest, her spirits are revived by neighbour Martha (mouse) and finally a house-warming party from her family makes her realise how much she enjoys having them around. Originally one of the Bodley Beginner series for new solo readers, it is good to see this delightful book in paperback, with a much brighter cover too.

JB

Mike and Spike

Lydia Warwick, Dinosaur, 0 85122 346 X, 85p paperback

Wordless strip sequences depict a series of incidents in the everyday life of a small boy, Mike, and his ginger cat, Spike. Though the artist is fifteen, her unsophisticated style resembles that of a 7-year-old and this book is not unlike many I've seen children of that age make for their younger classmates and could well inspire others to do it themselves.

JB

Oliver Button is a Sissy

Tomie de Paola, Magnet, 0 416 24540 4, £1.25

Individuality rules is the theme of this story wherein 'unsporty' Oliver is sent to dancing school 'for the exercise' his father insists. There he discovers the delights of tap dancing to the disgust of the other boys who tease him relentlessly. Undaunted, Oliver enters a talent contest and though he doesn't win first prize he does succeed in winning the respect of his classmates. Charming three-colour illustrations amplify the text.

JB



Miss Hardbroom, from *A Bad Spell for a Worst Witch*

A Bad Spell for the Worst Witch

Jill Murphy, Young Puffin, 0 14 03.1446 6, £1.00

Devotees of Mildred Hubble — and I know a good many — will welcome this, the third of her chaotic adventures at Miss Cackle's Academy wherein she endeavours to redeem her bad reputation, but to no avail. Fun for reading aloud to the 6 to 8s; and, with its nice big print and lots of charmingly humorous illustrations, this book is also ideal for less experienced solo readers.

JB

Tigger is Unbounced

0 416 43110 0

Pooh Invents a New Game

0 416 43120 8

A House is Built at Pooh Corner for Eeyore

0 416 42900 9
A.A. Milne, ill. Ernest Shepard, Magnet, 95p each

Continuing their policy to get as much mileage as possible out of Pooh and his friends (they have just published a set of board books) Methuen have issued three more single stories with Shepard illustrations in paperback. These are worth including in class libraries and school bookshops, not as substitutes for the full length books, but as appetisers.

JB

Mrs. Pepperpot Again

Alf Prøysen, ill. Bjorn Berg, Sparrow, 0 09 931800 8, 95p

The long standing popularity of Mrs P. lies I think in Prøysen's delicate, involving style and in the ironic fun that derives from the shrinking lady and her bossy spouse. Good stories here in which she minds an uncontrollable baby, catches her husband stealing the bramble jelly . . . and Mr P. has a story all to himself.

Berg's pictures are complementary, clear, characterful miniatures, superbly reproduced here. Good for reading aloud or alone, on both counts a valuable collection.

CM

Arlo the Dandy Lion

Morris Lurie, Young Puffin, 0 14 03.1579 9, 80p

Engaging and witty story about an eccentric lion who was too vain for his own good. Being 'the best dressed lion in Africa' (his attire includes a real velvet suit and a silver-handled walking stick) means

he's captured by one Alexander Poppelhoop and transported to London Zoo, where his style is very cramped!

This writer has a delightfully low-key sense of humour and the shape of the tale, the deflation of pomposity and the sibling rivalry make it just right for six to nines. Lovely, bold pictures (by Brett Colquhoun) help the reader along. Catch the same author's *Toby's Millions* and *The 27th Annual African Hippopotamus Race*, both in Puffin.

CM

The String Family in Summer

Patricia Cleveland Peck, ill. Jacqueline Sinclair, Piccolo, 0 330 269119, 95p

I enjoyed the first *The String Family* a lot and have read it successfully with several groups of infants and lower juniors. The new one has many of the same characters and Sally, the little girl who can 'see' the Strings (Hemp, Flax and baby, Skein) is still central. Shortish, slowly-unfolded episodes sustain and extend the author's inventions, reminiscent of *The Borrowers*, yet more earth-bound, with their own quirky individuality.

The writer's skill is such that when the characters leave Aunt Floribunda's cottage the spell still holds. Lovely surreal pictures and the cover (by Barbara Siedlecka) is enchanting. Do try this.

CM



Mr & Mrs String



The Squirrel
0 00 662099 X,
Margaret Lane, ill.
Kenneth Lilly, Picture
Lions, £1.25 each

The Frog
0 00 662098 1
Margaret Lane, ill.
Grahame Corbett

Excellent artwork and direct, friendly prose style that imparts a great deal of information are the hallmarks of both these natural history books. Few children will fail to look more sympathetically at the frog for instance, having read Margaret Lane's account of its life style and the increasing threat to its habitat. If only more information books for the younger age group were of this standard. JB

Animal Camouflage
Ljiljana Rylands,
Dinosaur,
0 85122 387 7, 85p
paperback

An imaginative introduction to the subject using animals from all over the world; illustrations of the tiger, leaf insects, a moth, the chameleon, woodcock and many others are presented on white backgrounds so that their body patterns are apparent whilst on opposite pages the animals are shown merging into their natural surroundings, and the reader is invited to spot the camouflaged

animal. Other information such as that despite their appearance, Polar bears are very fast runners, is also given in the concise text. This book maintains the high standard that Dinosaur have already achieved in their natural history books. JB

Junior/Middle

The Great Ice Cream Crime
Hazel Townson, Beaver,
0 600 20708 0, 85p

Racy story of intrepid boys engaged in thief-catching and derring-do has added bonus of a visiting princess with more than a passing resemblance to . . . An enterprising paperbacking by Beaver from Andersen's Young Readers series — always worth watching — this has a good, cliff-hanging storytelling style, though the storyline thins out a bit towards the end. Sevens to nines liked the clear, uncluttered plot. Some good character-drawing of children and adults; I sense that this writer could give us stronger stuff. CM

The Steel Band
Wendy Green, ill.
Jennifer Northway,
Beaver, 0 600 20723 4,
85p

A super idea for a story: diverse and sometimes boisterous primary class are drawn together by their successful steel band. The classroom scenes ring true and the plot moves briskly. I'd have liked to have got to know the children more though. Their lives outside sounded one-dimensional at times; but perhaps that's asking too much for a story this length (it was originally a Hamish Hamilton Antelope).



A writer who can catch the voices of a lively London class of juniors is rare, and I hope to hear much more of her. Well worth a try with middle to top juniors. CM

Odd to the Rescue
James Roose-Evans, ill.
Brian Robb, Magnet,
0 416 45170 5, £1.25

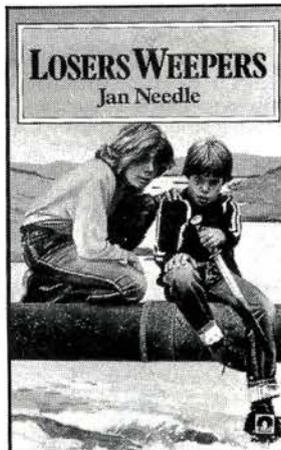
I've long been a fan of Odd, the eccentric bear and his friend, Elsewhere, the circus clown. In this story, Odd is to the fore: Elsewhere, Hallelujah and Collender Moll play minor parts. Holidaying in Wales, Odd comes up against a vaguely Arthurian adventure involving the rescue of his acquaintance, Giant Bear and the defeat of Malevil.

In my experience, Roose-Evans appeal to sevens to eevens is in breadth and scope: his plots move (like T.V. episodes) from London to the Welsh valley, from circus adventure to real hints of magic and sorcery. This one is strong on domestic fun, too. Superb, literate fun — Robb's cover and pictures are integral now. CM

Mr Browser and the Comet Crisis
Philip Curtis, Puffin,
0 14 03.1527 6, 95p

Jason, the extra-terrestrial marbles champion, bursts dramatically into the life of Chivvy Chase Junior school in this, the third 'Mr Browser' sci-fi adventure. A very gentle and amusing tale of the chaos that ensues when a family of aliens arrive from Halley's Comet on a reconnaissance mission for a possible invasion of earth. Philip Curtis' style makes easy reading for the nine plus age group and the insertion of character cameos enlivens reading aloud considerably. I loved the wry acknowledgement of the changing educational trends inserted through the character of Mr Morton, HMI, who wanted to see how well the children knew their tables and spellings. 'Times change and Mr Morton was one of the first to change with them.'

Unlike some of the practitioners of the genre, Curtis is able to laugh at the pretentiousness and mystique of his subject, and the book is the better for it. BB



Losers Weepers
Jan Needle, Magnet,
0 416 30170 3, £1.25

The Bee Rustlers
Jan Needle, Magnet,
0 416 29310 7, 95p

Not vintage Needle, but quite acceptable nevertheless as better than much of the 'short novels for young readers' material on the market. Both 'adventures' feature Carol and Tony (and family) and are set in the Pennines. In *Losers Weepers* (originally in the Methuen Pied Piper series) they find a very old sword on the moors and in *The Bee Rustlers* (originally from Collins Young Fiction) they save Mum's bees from being stolen. Some originality of approach and telling as we've come to expect from Needle although Carol and Tony aren't his most rounded characters. There's also I think some unnecessary stereotyping.

'Ask them, not me . . . I know nowt about it . . . Search me', is a representative sample of 'Mum's' articulations when asked for any kind of reasoning response, and the use of 'shut yer gob', 'crikey' (when did you last hear a child say that?) and (oh no!) 'summat to tell you', presumably add up to what London publishers think of as 'realistic Northern' dialogue. BB

Arthur v. the Rest
Alan Coren, ill. John
Astrop, Puffin,
0 14 03.1361 3, 95p

The schoolboy detective is still going strong. Coren's sense of fun and smashing way with words will endear this to the many older juniors I know who love this character.

Here, he visits the sleepy village of Lower Stoatmumbling and decides to liven the place up with a cricket match. One of the players is to be Dr Grace himself! As in all these books, the young reader is willingly made an accomplice to the joke at the centre. It's good to see a gifted comic writer directing his energies to the young. Super pictures, too. CM

What Difference Does it Make, Danny?
Helen Young, ill.
Quentin Blake, Young
Fontana Lions,
0 00 672219 9, £1.00

This book treads the delicate territory around 'bibliotherapy' and produces a brave, unsentimental, absorbing story. The central character has epileptic fits. Woven into the plot (without too much preaching) is the child's courage, other children's apprehensions and some adult fear and uncertainty.

Miss North from *What Difference Does it Make, Danny?*



There's a genuine storyteller's concern for the action, too, which lifts it above the 'courage wins through' school — the courage does though, and it's moving. I mean no disrespect to the author when I say that it's a good example of a not-great book being enhanced by the pictures. Blake's cover and illustrations, sometimes generous page spreads, are to be 'read' and enjoyed as part of the telling.

Worth reading and talking about with *any* age group from seven-up. CM

The Prodigal Son

0 416 43030 9,
ill. Gavin Rowe

Miracles by the Sea

0 416 43020 1,
ill. Chris Molan

Jonah and the Whale

0 416 42990 4,
ill. Barry Wilkinson

Adam and Eve

0 416 42960 2,
ill. Jim Russell
Retold by Catherine Storr, Methuen, £1.50 each

We are always in need of accessible re-tellings (and showings) of some of the finest stories in our culture and, with some quibbles, I'd say these have a place in the classroom and the bookshop.

I think my reservations revolve around a worry about the 'form' of the books. The themes and feelings of the stories lie not just in their 'content', but in the 'way of telling', in the poetry, the musicality of the originals. Catherine Storr is a fine narrator but she plays down the poetry in a concern to tell the story. I think that the language of the Authorised version, or of a re-telling like Peter Dickinson's *City of Gold*, is vital to catch the numinous nature of, say, *The Fall*.

Similarly, where the artists are simply 'lifelike' (like Russell) they are not nearly so effective in giving children a sense of the wonder and imagery of the stories: compare again Foreman in *City of Gold*. Molan is better with the raging blue-grey storms and the solitary figure of Jesus alone in the mountains; Wilkinson come closest to imaginative artistry in his quite unearthly tempest. Storr seems more at ease too with the faster-moving action of *Jonah and the Miracles by the Sea*. I'll definitely want to look carefully and talk about them with discriminating top juniors this term. CM

Middle/Secondary

The Time of the Witch

Mary Downing Hahn, Lions, 0 00 672177 X, £1.25

If Laura could be granted just one wish, it would be that her parents should be reconciled and their marriage saved. When the local eccentric/mad old witch/crone demonstrates a readiness to fulfil Laura's desires by magic then it is a chance too good to be missed. Unfortunately Old Maude has deeper revengeful motives for her apparent good offices and a chain of fearful events is set in motion, which might fulfil Laura's wishes but at a very high price indeed.

The story has a predictability and a rather too neat ending which might irritate experienced readers but it's worth stocking a library copy. DB

Harry Pay the Pirate

Robert Nye, Knight, 0 340 32096 6, £1.25

This is a colourfully packaged, far-fetched, swashbuckling yarn. I read it, appropriately enough, on a deserted sandy beach but I reckon it would make a good read aloud book for Top Junior/Lower Middles in their land-locked classrooms. It has a wealth of incident which ensures a lively pace and a succession of colourful characters who should command attention, most notably the sinister Mr Shadow, who guides, we are never too sure how selflessly, the lively, slightly naive young hero of the title. A useful book to keep them listening. DB

Traveller

Anne de Roo, Puffin, 0 14 03.1311 7, £1.35

Yet another one man and his trusted dog story; this time based on facts from the 1850's pioneering days in New

Zealand. The historical detail rather than the characters (including the dog) dominate the book and for some older readers could prove its most interesting dimension. The main protagonist, clergyman's youngest son Tom Farrell, is drawn with slowly emerging courage and strength of character but I doubt whether many young readers would find anything in him with which to make an immediate and easy identification. Even the dogs and their deeds aren't all that engaging. The most memorable character is the baddie, an escaped murderer, who stands out because he behaves so extraordinarily, unlike everyone else. DB

The Black Stallion's Challenge

Walter Farley, Knight, 0 340 32993 9, £1.25

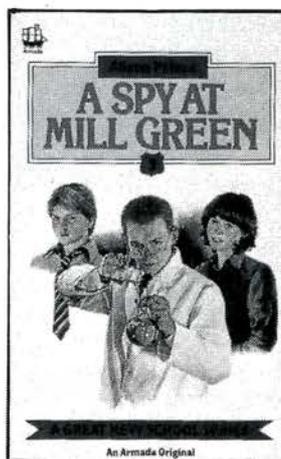
This makes the series up to eleven, which delights at least one young teenager who begged to borrow my copy for 'They are all exciting and different... really exciting things happen in them'. I'm afraid I just don't warm to the fanatical over statement of every horse's twitch, flaring of nostrils and canter and the reverential attention to the details of equestrian equipment. Why are the humans so secondary to the wretched creatures?

Anyway, for the umpteen devotees everywhere, in this one a young man, Steve Duncan, produces a red stallion to challenge the Black, plunging all previous certainties into doubt. Naturally it all turns out well for the legendary super horse... he's got to keep going for a few more books after all, hasn't he? DB

A Spy at Mill Green

Alison Prince, Armada, 0 00 691974 X, 95p

The third of Alison Prince's stories about life at Mill Green



school has got to be recommended, despite some failures in the dialogue. There are such a lot of positives in the pace, observation and description, that the storyline holds together well and sustains interest throughout the one hundred and twenty-three pages. As the science lab blazes chaotically around their investigations into the components of crude oil, the philosophical interjection of, 'I suppose they think you remember it better if you actually do it' provides an apt conclusion to the lesson. A book for teachers to savour as well! BB

Gregory's Girl

Gerald Cole, Lions, 0 00 672254 7, £1.25

If the rude words have scared you from C.U.P.'s play version, then try this — those 'problems' have been tidied up and you're left with a neat and faithful novelisation. Many of the film's best gags were purely visual of course, so they've been lost but a book gives more insight into the characters than kids could get from the movie and unsatisfactorily puzzling ambiguities are smoothed away. We're also spared the embarrassment of the film's

action sequences. I don't find many film/TV tie-ins very successful with my classes but this is one of the best I've met and it's well worth trying. SB

The Right Hand Man

K. M. Peyton, Magnet, 0 416 28620 8, £1.50

I don't know how Magnet manage to keep going on the things they publish. This has Peyton's name, true, but the market for a two hundred page historical in a dreary cover must be rather restricted.

When consumptive Lord Ironminster loses an arm, Ned Rowlands is the only driver who'll do for the coach-mad nobleman who's determined to win a bet by driving to London in record time. Follows a Regency tale of skulduggery (villainous cousins!), prize-fighting, romance and courtroom intrigue. Competently-written, escapist stuff for a very small minority. SB

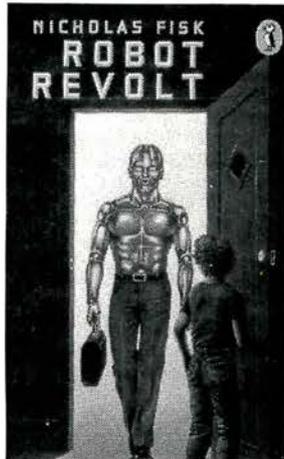
Falling Angels

K. M. Peyton, Magnet, 0 416 27450 1, £1.25

Another Peyton about Pennington, though its central figure is Marion (12). After Penn's charity concert for the church's roof and medieval wooden angels, Marion prays for a rich American miracle. Enter celebrated Yank violinist who, with Penn as accompanist, undertakes fund-raising. A projected US trip means more strain on Penn's marriage to Ruth — and Marion has a young widower father. She must pray again. Though it'll need hard-selling (it appeals through character more than plot and the cover's dull), there's more pace than in many comparable efforts. Given *your* prayers, horsey types might follow Ruth from *Fly By Night/The Team* (Sparrow) — but don't bank on it. SB

The Taste of FearVera Boyle, Hippo,
0 590 70159 2, 95p

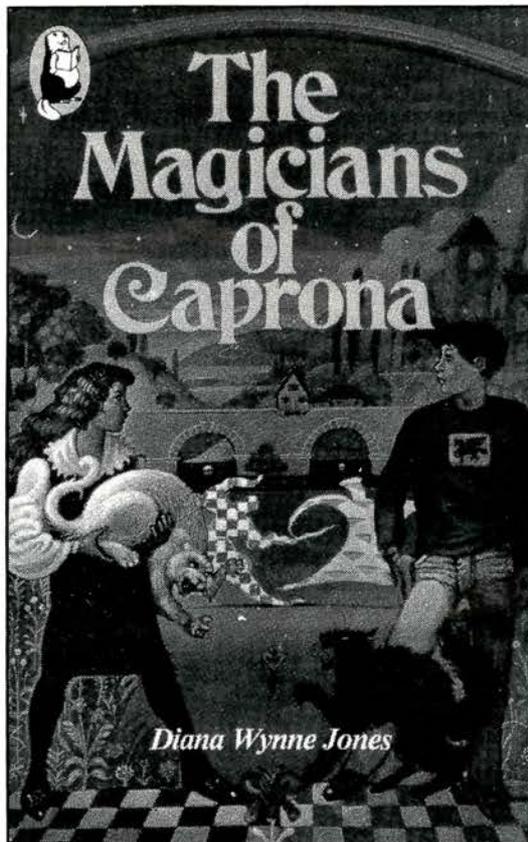
A strange and ultimately unsatisfactory novel about an ambassador's son holed up in a British Embassy during a civil war in some unspecified country. The short chapters sketch a picture of increasing hardship and danger although the cool narration and Toby's detachment keep everything peculiarly distanced. I can see that such a situation might feel *exactly* like this but the lack of excitement and the bitty story don't make for a good kids' novel. The ending is very unusual, too — not conclusive enough for many kids. Short and relatively easy to read but I'll be surprised if many finish it. SB

**Robot Revolt**Nicholas Fisk, Puffin,
0 14 03.1551 9, £1.00

A good cover pulls a higher-than-usual audience for this Fisk among my classes. Revolting robots are classed as an SF cliché but one searches in vain for a simple, exciting kids' novel on the theme. A pity, then, that this one is muddled by a superficial sketch of small town religious fervour and that its resolution relies on an incredible coincidence. The idea of Hez and Abi using the new robot to murder their tyrannical pastor-father is great. Had Fisk developed it as a straightforward, carefully-worked thriller, kids might have finished it as often as they've taken it home. SB

The Magicians of CapronaDiana Wynne Jones,
Beaver, 0 600 20694 7,
£1.25

Set in the magic-controlled alternative world used in some of the author's earlier novels, this tells of two rival families of spell-makers whose enmity is used by an evil enchantress to undermine the defences of Caprona, a small but previously unconquerable Dukedom. Her last-minute defeat, of course, comes from an alliance of the younger, apparently untalented



magicians. It's long and multi-charactered — the barrage of names will deter some — but it's also stylish and well-crafted. Bright fantasy fans of 10-13 could well enjoy it once they're past the slow start. SB

The Hammerhead LightColin Thiele, Puffin,
0 14 03.1578 0, £1.10

Wish I'd pound — an Australian dollar even — for every book like this I've read. The Adelaide guys want to demolish this ancient, crumbling lighthouse but old Axel moves in with a one-legged whimbrel and saves Tessa's family by relighting the lamp when their boat's in trouble and the automatic beacon's been vandalised. (Only the bird gets killed.) The lighthouse collapses next day, Axel is hurt and Tessa 'learns the meaning of change and the pain of growing up', to quote the blurb. The climax has a reasonable momentum and the ending's tougher than most but, overall, despite being a mere 120 pages, the book's as tedious as it looks. SB

The Hollow LandJane Gardam, Puffin,
0 14 03.1552 7, £1.10

Accuse me of levelling or indigestion or what you will, I still don't think much of this. There's little to find exception with — but nothing to rave over either. I wouldn't rate any of the nine stories very highly for classroom use — there's more effective stuff in Gardam's *Few Fair Days*.

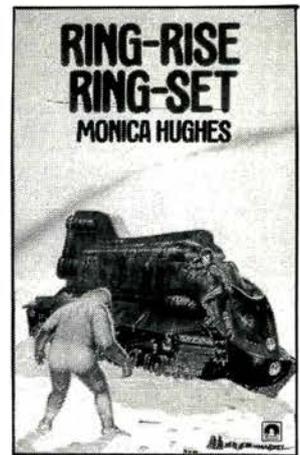
The tales cover two families — one native, one 'incomer' — who are neighbours on the Cumbrian Fells. Low key adventures over a period of years (the last story is set in a post-oil 1999) show the continuity of the country life and celebrate the local characters. Minority interest. SB

Constellationsed. Malcolm Edwards,
Puffin Plus,
0 14 03.1582 9, £1.25

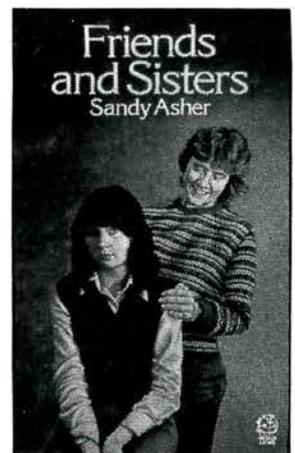
Having complained in his intro of SF anthology covers depicting 'a variety of vast and improbable machinery', Malcolm Edwards must be well pleased with Puffin. (Or was it Penguin? You can buy their edition for £1.50 if you wish.) Still, he shouldn't complain too much — a children's paperback publisher which paid more attention to detail would very likely have ignored his collection altogether since it's not one to reach beyond the narrow circle of the already converted. It's the usual Clarke, Vonnegut, Ballard, Sheckley stuff — a few good things if you like SF and are bright/mature enough to cope. For selected class libraries. SB

Ring-Rise, Ring-Set
Monica Hughes, Magnet,
0 416 22930 1, £1.25

I'm irritated by writers who set up their characters as headstrong and thoughtless then make these qualities land their protagonists in trouble. *Ring-Rise* starts poorly and conventionally in this vein.



Rebelling against the (unconvincing) sexism of her scientific community, Liza strands herself in Arctic wasteland. (It's a future when a cosmic accident is causing a new Ice Age.) She is saved by Eskimo descendants, but the scientists' catastrophic moves against the ice force a return to the Tech society of her birth. The novel improves as it progresses though it's short on incident and dodges sex. A few older kids might try it, especially fans of Hughes' better Isis novels (Magnet). SB

**Friends and Sisters**
Sandy Asher, Lions,
0 00 672071 4, £1.25

This wraps a difficult and potentially heavy topic (family guilt about surviving the Holocaust) in a basic storyline of a new friendship. Bubbly but concerned Denise has the happy home-life which helps Ruthie Morganthau cope — though it's the insubstantial Rabbi Davis who finally guides Ruthie towards her healing bat mitzvah. The everyday conflicts are reasonably effective but the central issue is handled in sufficient detail to prevent too much slickness. A slight awkwardness results from the blend and the shortfall in panache might restrict take-up a little. Nevertheless, attractive paperbacks of such books are *essential*, possible for girls who've kicked Romance series and who've devoured the first rank of popular alternatives. SB

A School Bookshop scheme that's in a class of its own.

You've only got to learn that it's backed by W.H. Smith to realise that this book scheme is top of the pile.

It's a no-risk, no-outlay, no-hassle scheme, tailor made to suit your school's needs by the people who know books best - W.H. Smith.

Here's why it's so good.

- * You can pick up the books you want from your nearest branch of W.H. Smith on a sale-or-return basis. Nothing to pay in advance!
- * You get a 10% discount on the cover price of every book you sell.
- * The back-up service includes free newsletters, free paper bags, low-cost book marks, competitions for young readers, and even help with special events such as Parent Evenings, Open Days etc.

All in all, it adds up to a scheme that's ideal for your school or college - and with the backing of W.H. Smith, it really does put it in a class of its own!

For further details contact whoever is nearer you:

Mr. J. A. Cattermull, Book Department, W.H. Smith & Son Ltd., Strand House, 10, New Fetter Lane, London, EC4A 1AD.	Mrs. Y. B. White, W.H. Smith School Book Agencies, "Grestan", Bagby, Nr. Thirsk, N. Yorkshire, YO7 2PH.
---	--

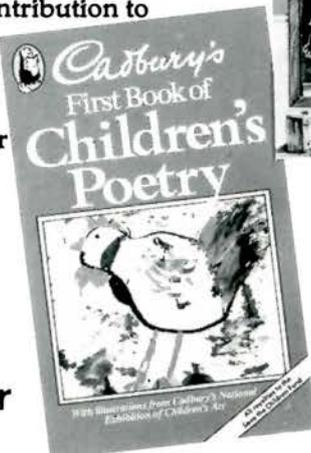
WHSMITH

PICK OF THE PAPERBACKS

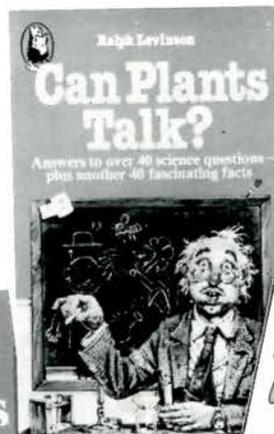
Cadbury's First Book of Children's Poetry

A selection of the best entries from the poetry section of the Cadbury's National Exhibition of Children's Art, original poems written by children on a wide variety of subjects that are important to them. Fresh, innovative and exciting, it is a unique contribution to children's literature.

£1.25
September



Beaver Books



Can Plants Talk?

A lively and entertaining book for all the reluctant scientists in your midst! Forty fascinating scientific questions are answered including 'How can diamonds be made from pencils' and 'Did the ancient Egyptians have electric lighting?'. £1.00 September



The Beaver Book of Revolting Rhymes

A marvellous—or horrible—collection of disgusting verse from writers like Ogden Nash, Roald Dahl, Spike Milligan, Lewis Carroll and Hillaire Belloc. Guaranteed to appeal to the worst possible sense of humour!

£1.00 August

Authorgraph No. 22

S.E. Hinton



Every year new teachers, librarians and readers discover S.E. Hinton and every year they express the same surprised disbelief when they discover that S.E. Hinton is Susan Eloise and that *The Outsiders* was published when she was a seventeen-year-old student at Will Rogers High School in Tulsa, Oklahoma. It was the late Velma Varner, S.E. Hinton's first editor, who suggested she use just her initials. 'She figured that if reviewers saw that a girl had written a story about a boys' gang, they wouldn't take it seriously. And we fooled the first reviewers,' reports the author obviously enjoying the joke.

The Outsiders has been firmly on the list of sure-fire hits for teenage readers almost from the day it was published in this country in 1970. *That Was Then, This Is Now*, *Rumblefish*, and *Tex* which followed proved equally successful and there is now a sizeable following for S.E. Hinton among British teenagers which is growing all the time. Recently made films of three of her books should introduce her to an even wider audience.

S.E. Hinton lives in Tulsa, Oklahoma, where she was born, went to school and wrote *The Outsiders*. Tulsa was, and is a thriving, oil-affluent city where people are defined not so much by race, religion or ethnic origin, as by money. They live on the 'right' or 'wrong' sides of the legendary tracks. In the sixties boys banded together for pride, safety and self-image on the basis of class. Against this background S.E. Hinton wrote *The Outsiders*. Ignoring the middle, she took for her story the two extremes of Tulsa's 'haves' and 'have nots' — the 'greasers' and the 'socs'.

She explains the term 'socs' (pronounced 'soshes'). 'People were called 'socials' in junior high but by high school they were known as 'socs'. They were the real popular people, the 'in' crowd, and usually from the upper middle class.' Then as now groups defined themselves by possessions, looks and clothes. The greasers with their elaborate, slicked hairstyles; the 'socs' with their cars, madras cotton jackets and fluffy sweaters. *The Outsiders* sums it up in a confrontation between Bob, a 'soc' and Ponyboy, the greaser who tells the story.

"'You know what a greaser is? White trash with long hair' . . . 'You know what a 'soc' is? White trash with Mustangs and madras.'"

In all of this S.E. Hinton was in the middle. 'I grew up in a borderline neighbourhood. I played with the greasers but I got put in classes with the 'socs'.' She understood and had insight into both groups but essentially her sympathies lie with the greasers.

The book had its origins in real incidents — a friend being beaten up, a boy (like the character Dallas Winston) being shot and killed by the police for having stolen a car.

In 1965 S.E. Hinton started to write *The Outsiders*, she now says for three reasons. 'I like to write, I needed something to read. I was angry about the 'socs' and the greasers — the case of injustice.' It began as a short story which quickly grew to forty pages as she shared her work in progress with others in the class. When she got stuck they'd make suggestions like 'Why don't you burn the church down'. Slowly over a year and a half it became a novel; begun when she was fifteen and written mostly in her sixteenth year.

The 'liking to write' had begun while she was in grade school and she had already completed two novels which she had never shown to anyone. This story, she felt, was something different and she gave it to a friend of the family who was a writer. She passed it to someone else who was also enthusiastic and supplied the name of a good New York literary agent. The agent agreed that it was good and sold it to the second publisher that read it. It was an instant success and a landmark in 'young adult fiction'.

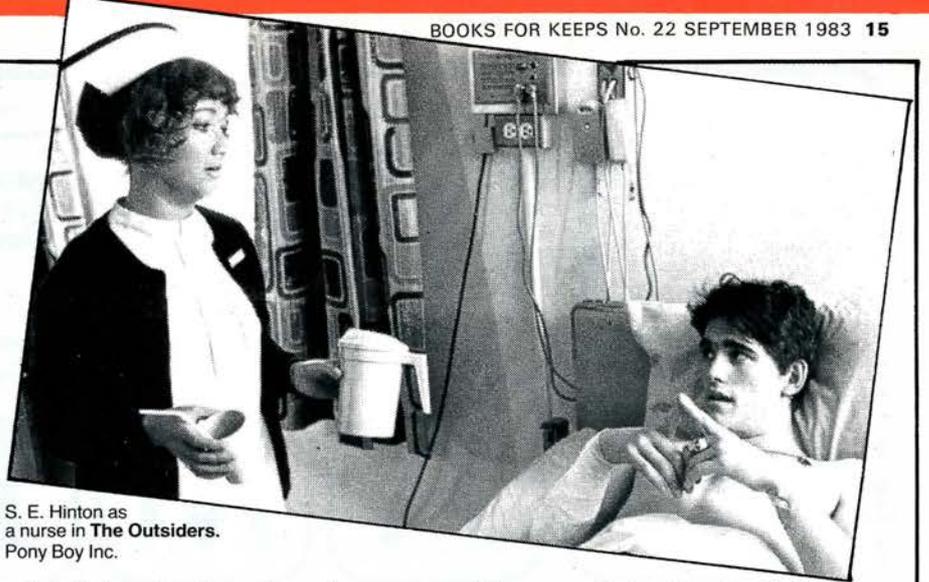
The success enabled her to go to the University of Tulsa where she graduated with a major in education. The 'landmark' may well have precipitated a classic case of 'writer's block', for S. E. Hinton wrote nothing for the next four years. 'I just felt completely paralysed and couldn't write. It wasn't

as though I didn't want to write. I think the success of *The Outsiders* had a lot to do with it. Everyone's watching for your next book, expecting a masterpiece and I knew I didn't have a masterpiece in me.' It was a fellow student, David Inhofe, who later became her husband, who broke through the block. 'He was so sick of seeing me in such a bad mood that he refused to take me out unless I wrote two pages a day. Most people start writing again because they want to be published. I just wanted to go out with David.'

That was Then, This is Now was published in 1971. Susan Hinton and David Inhofe graduated, married and moved to Southern Spain where they bought seven acres on the side of a mountain. When David decided to take a master's degree in Mathematics they moved to California where *Rumblefish* was written. In 1979 when *Tex* appeared they had moved back to Tulsa where they live still with three dogs, one cat and a horse. About her life there S. E. Hinton has said, 'I've never been a joiner. In Tulsa I have a reputation for being slightly eccentric. Even my close friends think I'm a little nutty.' She likes horses, hunting and football. This summer the Inhofes have been awaiting the birth of their first baby, an anticipated event which along with the filming of her books has delayed the writing of the fifth novel. 'I started a new book after we wrapped up the movie version of *Tex* and even got the first chapter done. But it was interrupted by the filming of *The Outsiders* and *Rumblefish*. And then I got pregnant and stopped wanting to think about teenagers; I wanted to think about babies. I'll be glad to get back to it though.'

S. E. Hinton likes teenagers, 'scruffy ones especially'. She writes with power and tenderness about poor, tough kids, growing up without families in a stark, violent, dangerous world. In the books there is a double struggle, first to survive and also, for her first person heroes, to understand themselves and their world. Friendship, loyalty, duty, heroism, hero-worship, love; all feature vividly and often tragically. The publication of *The Outsiders* set a new standard for realism in teenage fiction. Yet she says, 'I never set out to be a ground breaker or to be controversial. I just wanted to tell the truth about teenage life and to tell it the way it really is. Most adults don't remember, or don't want to remember the emotional intensity and the idealism of being a teenager. That's what makes my work different. Mostly I just remember real well what it was like to be a teenager. The letters I get today are just like the ones I got 15 years ago. Some of the problems change, but the feelings don't.'

Her memories are in no way limited to the female viewpoint. In fact girls get very sketchy treatment in a Hinton novel. Her central characters are all boys. 'My close friends were all guys', she says. 'I couldn't understand what girls were talking about most of the time; but I was a real good football player and a pretty good fighter. I identified with the boys and I was more comfortable writing from the guy's



S. E. Hinton as a nurse in *The Outsiders*. Pony Boy Inc.

point of view. In all my characters there is some aspect of myself. Ponyboy is a lot of the way I felt at fourteen.' Her characters are always her starting point. 'I have to begin with people. I always know my characters, exactly what they look like, their birthdays, what they like for breakfast. It doesn't matter whether these things appear in the book. I still have to know them.' The strong involvement with character makes her impatient of being labelled a writer of 'problem books'. 'Just being a teenager is problem enough for anybody! When I started there was no realistic fiction being written for teenagers. I wrote my first one to have something to read that dealt realistically with teenage life; but I think the genre has gone overboard in the other direction. It's like, "I'm going to write about suicide", "I'm going to write about drugs," I'm going to write about people.'

It pleases S. E. Hinton that it was her teenage readers who got the film-makers interested in her books. Matt Dillon (Dallas Winston in *The Outsiders*) a young actor for whom she now has a special affection was one of the many teenagers who recommended her books to director, Tim Hunter when he was looking for subjects to film which would capture a new young audience for the cinema.

Mr Hunter put up *Tex*, a story of two brothers with an absentee father, struggling to make a life and find a future, as a project to Disney Productions. Disney was keen. S. E. Hinton was hesitant. 'I thought they'd really sugar it up, take out all the sex, drugs and violence and leave nothing but a story of a boy and his horse.' But she was persuaded and reassured and there was a special condition that her horse would be cast as Negrito, *Tex*'s horse (renamed Rowdy for the film).

Almost simultaneously she was being approached by Zoetrope studios for the film rights to *The Outsiders*. By chance she had just seen and been impressed by Zoetrope's film adaptation of *The Black Stallion* and felt happy to trust them with a book she knew meant a lot to millions of teenagers and which she had refused to sell before.

Suddenly a writer who had never thought her books had to be turned into films had concluded two deals within a week — and as a result committed the next two years to an increasing involvement with film-making. Both

films were shot on location in Tulsa and she found herself acting as a consultant for both. 'I had heard that with movies the first thing they do is ask the writer to drop off the face of the earth. The first thing Tim Hunter asked me to do was hang around the set.' And hang around she did, finding locations, selecting actors and re-writing dialogue.

For *The Outsiders* she was even more closely involved and on the set every day, even making a brief appearance as a nurse in a scene with Matt Dillon. Halfway through the filming Francis Ford Coppola, the Director, asked her if she'd written anything else. She told him about *Rumblefish*; he read it and liked it enough to suggest they collaborate on a screenplay. They did, working on their Sundays off from *The Outsiders* — and making the film straight after.

S. E. Hinton discovered a talent for writing screen dialogue and a liking for working in the film industry. 'When you're making a movie you feel like an outlaw. Traffic stops for you and you don't keep the same hours that anybody else keeps. I like that outlaw feeling. And there's another nice thing, there's always somebody else to blame. With a novel you have to take all the blame yourself.'

So, with three of her novels now on film and the fourth optioned is she thinking of a permanent transfer? 'I might do more films one day, but I still think of myself as a novelist and with the next book I'm writing I'm doing everything I can to make it unfilmable.'

What about writing for adults?

'If I can ever find any adults who are as interesting as the kids I like, maybe I'll write about adults some day.' But you can tell she doesn't think that's very likely. ●

The Books

The Outsiders

Gollancz, 0 575 00515 7, £5.95
Fontana Lions, 0 00 671427 7, £1.00

That was Then, This is Now

Gollancz, 0 575 00796 6, £5.95
Fontana Lions, 0 00 671399 8, £1.00

Rumble Fish

Fontana Lions, 0 00 671210 X, £1.00

Tex

Gollancz, 0 575 02710 X, £5.95
Fontana Lions, 0 00 671763 2, £1.00

M I C R O G A M E S

Patrick Bossert (Author of *You Can Do The Cube*)
and Philippa Dickinson

An electrifying selection of easily programmable, original games for
BBC (models A and B), RML (380Z and 480Z), ZX Spectrum, and ZX 81

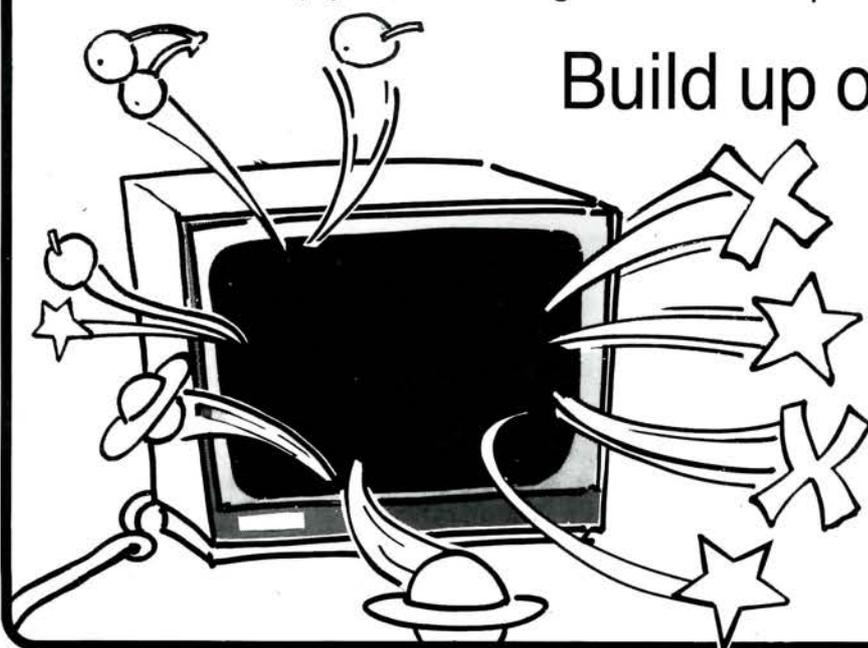
0 14 03.1667 1 144 pages £1.50 (illustrated)

Starting 1 September – A micro competition with macro prizes

PUFFIN YOUNG PROGRAMMERS OF THE YEAR

in conjunction with Sinclair Research and
the National Association of Youth Clubs

- * Three age ranges
- * 9 Sinclair ZX Spectrum or equivalent software to be won
- * 50 runner-up prizes of Penguin micro computer books in each section



Build up on your BASIC
now...the
search is on!



Entry forms: Children's Marketing Dept.,
(Sincomp), Penguin Books Ltd,
536 King's Road, London SW10 0UH.

The second of our new series of special features about non-fiction books looks at

BOOKS AND COMPUTERS

Peter Usborne, one of the first to venture into Computer books for children, offers an insider's view of publishing in **The Micro Jungle**

The arrival of a completely new subject is a rare and delightful event in the world of children's book publishing. Microcomputing makes a welcome change from dinosaurs, birds, and aeroplanes, but it is a field changing so quickly that publishing for it sometimes seems like sailing through a hurricane after the calm waters of the old, timeless subjects.

It is only a few years since computers began to evolve from machines designed for the use of trained experts into everyday tools of entertainment and instruction for amateurs. The first Apple microcomputer, as it was called, was put together in America some eight or so years ago by an absurdly young entrepreneur in his garage in California. Within two or three years, he was a tycoon; and by now Apple Computer is a massive corporation.

The American micro boom was founded on sales at fairly high prices to small businesses and computer hobbyists with a fair amount of money to spend. Surprisingly enough, it was the tired old British who pioneered the really cheap computer for the home, at a quarter or less of the price of the established American makes. Within a couple of years of the launch of Clive Sinclair's astonishing ZX computers, Britain had, for a brief moment of history, gained both a technological and a commercial lead over the rest of the world. Someone recently estimated that there are perhaps twice as many home computers in Britain per head as in America, and one and a half times as many as in Japan. A few months ago, an American computer journalist wrote that the U.S. was 'at least a year and a half behind Britain in the home micro field'.

Americans and Europeans, as well as we ourselves find it hard to understand how and why our notoriously sluggish economy responded with such speed to the home computer. It is perhaps easier to understand once one realises that these machines are merely another form of communication. We have, of course, for centuries, been the world's no. 1 communications-addicts — from novels, poetry and newspapers to colour television and video recorders, all of which sold fastest first in Britain.

It seems highly unlikely, however, that the euphoric British micro lead will last much longer. Partly in response to the arrival, or impending arrival, of our low priced computers, a savage price war broke out in the U.S. around the beginning of this year, and has now spread back to us. Computers which a few months ago seemed merely

cheap are now practically free. Some computer manufacturers — the darlings of the stock market less than a year ago — are in desperate financial trouble, and stories of disaster are becoming more common than good news in the computer industry. Summer '83 seems to have been particularly grim.

Added to which, there is, I believe, a cloud of disillusionment with the micro gathering on the horizon. Whatever the advertisements may claim, most microcomputers are still extremely difficult to use, and of very little use in the home apart from playing games. The fantastic computing ability of even the cheapest home computer is something for which very few homes have any imaginable need. Computer programming as a hobby does occasionally have a strong appeal, but only to a very limited number of people with a Times-crossword mentality and a great deal of leisure. Parents who bought home computers for their children in the hope of providing educational advancement and intellectual stimulation are discovering without enthusiasm that children are more interested in the computer's ability to simulate space wars than solve problems. And even the attraction of space wars seems to fade. My own children, much envied testers of home microcomputers and software, seldom touch our machine now in spite of an expensive mountain of attractively packaged software by the TV set. Both children sometimes resent the way their micros compete with them for the attention of their friends. And the excitement of having a home computer is beginning to fade as computers become commonplace in both homes and schools.

Nevertheless, although suffering at the moment from absurdly-inflated reputations, microcomputers have come to stay, they are fairly important, and they will change our children's lives and our own, although less, as a computer journalist aptly put it, than the bulldozer; or, for that matter, the car, the printing press or television.

It seems to me that computers are by and large far too well publicised, and far too badly explained. When we first started publishing books about computers two years ago, computer books and manuals were still written almost exclusively by experts, mainly for other experts. Although many of them were supposedly also suitable for beginners, as works of explanation they tended to be horrifyingly incompetent. The average computer or software manual contained (as many still do) impenetrable jargon, crucial misprints, and impossible

exercises without answers. It seems clear that in the early days of the micro gold rush, excellence and care in the writing and editing of manuals had low priority.

The Usborne books of computing were so far as we are aware the world's first full-colour computing books of their kind. We set out to explain a sophisticated range of information (including subjects, such as Machine Code programming, that almost everyone, except us, thinks are far too advanced) to absolute beginners, using the complete armoury of visual editorial techniques developed by us for more traditional subjects. Our first titles received tremendous critical acclaim, actually being reviewed twice within a few weeks in the Times Educational Supplement; our Guide to Computers was 'quite simply the best introduction I have ever seen' according to Personal Computer World.

This autumn we are publishing several new, ambitious and (I think) marvellously produced computer titles, including two new titles on Basic Programming, Inside the Chip, Computer Graphics, Practical Things to do with your Micro (there are some), Write Your Own Adventure Programs, and two books indirectly concerned with computers: Robotics (with instructions for building your own computer-controlled robot) and The Information Revolution.

Whether our computer books survive the war now developing in the blood-spattered computer jungle remains to be seen. But at least we're having fun among the bugs and the bytes.

If it doesn't work, there must still be a few new ways left of tackling dinosaurs again. ●

Information about new books published by Usborne.

Practise Your Basic, 0 86020 744 7 (hb), 0 86020 743 9 (pb)

Better Basic, 0 86020 734 X (hb), 0 86020 733 1 (pb)

Inside the Chip, 0 86020 730 7 (hb), 0 86020 729 3 (pb), November 1983

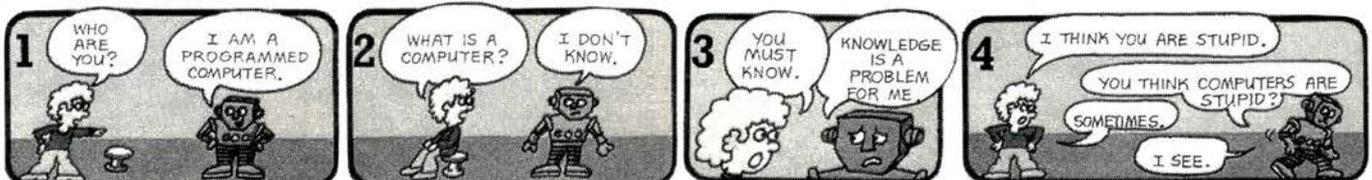
Practical Things to Do with Your Micro, 0 86020 732 3 (hb), 0 86020 731 5 (pb)

Write Your Own Adventure Program, 0 86020 742 0 (hb), 0 86020 741 2 (pb)

Robotics, 0 86020 725 0 (hb), 0 86020 724 2 (pb)

Information Revolution, 0 86020 727 7 (hb), 0 86020 726 9 (pb)

All hardbacks £3.95 each; all paperbacks £1.99 each.



Choosing What Books to Buy

Books about computers are roughly of three sorts.

- **General background books** about how computers have developed, how they work, what they can do etc. These books may try to cover all topics or concentrate on one or two.
- **Guides to how to use/get more out of computers or a particular computer.** More and more of these user books are being published for children and adults — possibly because the manuals the manufacturers produce are in the main not as easy to use as they could be, especially for younger readers.

Two recent 'machine specific' books are **First Steps with Your Spectrum**, Carolyn Hughes (Armada, 0 00 692240 6, £1.25) and **A Child's Guide to the BBC Micro**, John Dewhurst (Cambridge Educational, in a Schools Edition, 0 521 27731 0, and a Family Edition, 0 521 27730 2, both £3.95 paperback). Both combine lots of jolly cartoon drawings with activities at the keyboard to introduce the machine and what it can do (including graphics and making music). They also deal with writing simple programs. Both are written in an admirably clear style and the well thought out, step-by-step sequencing of activities should build confidence and engage interest. **The Guide to the BBC Micro** is particularly well-designed as a self-teaching text.

- **Books about Programming.** How-to-do-it books, like Usborne's **Introduction to Computer Programming** (0 86020 674 2, £1.65), or collections of already written programs — most popularly of games — for the user to put onto the computer, with suggestions for alterations and adaptations and hints on writing your own program.

Usborne's **Computer Battlegames** (0 86020 685 8, £1.95) and **Computer Spacegames** (0 86020 683 1, £1.99) and Puffin's new **Micro Games** (0 14 03.1667 1, £1.50) are aimed at the users of most of the popular micros and so the programs have to include all the variations which the idiosyncracies of different machines make necessary — a problem for design and layout and even more for the reader if it isn't solved successfully. Puffin's **Micro Games** separates instructions for different computers clearly and cleanly. The Usborne books, perhaps because they are dealing with a more ambitious list of micros, have a more cramped and complicated layout which involves following symbols indicating the lines needed for different machines. (Fontana is one publisher avoiding the problem by producing machine specific books. **Better Programming for Your Spectrum and ZX81**, 0 00 636610 4, £2.95, is the first of a new series.) Both Usborne and Puffin books explain how the programs work.

In this area too, some publishers are beginning to produce software packages, programs on cassette to accompany their books.

What to buy will depend, as always, on what you need. User books obviously are no use in homes and classrooms which as yet have no microcomputer! But most book collections will need at least one general book about computers.



From *A Child's Guide to the BBC Micro*

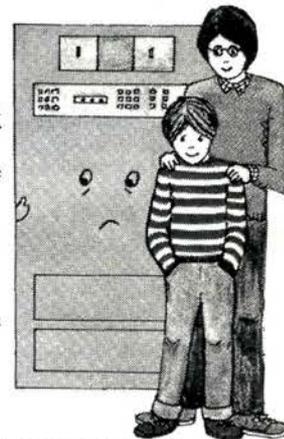
We asked a group of teacher librarians to review and test out some recent publications.

Terry Downie reports her and their findings.

Sam's System (1982) Rosemary Court, ill. Patricia Calderhead, Dent 0 460 06121 6, £3.95

A Guide to Computers aimed, to judge from its 'story' treatment at Juniors. (Programmer Pete introduces Sam to Tak the Terminal, Pandora the Processor, the Bits, Sid Software etc. Finally Zip the Chip presents Sam with his own microcomputer.) Large print, lively, jokey text and colour drawings. It's a praiseworthy attempt to inform through fiction and on the whole it works. (The device falters when the author attempts to explain binary code through dialogue between Sam and 8 Bits!) The carefully graded language reads well; it's interesting and involving. BUT it needs to be read sequentially and demands a long attention span which will limit its use by children alone. Those already familiar with computers are unlikely to need the fictional format — any novice can appreciate Tak the Terminal by pressing a few buttons — so it will probably be most useful in schools as yet without a micro. Could be read aloud.

We wished it had been done as an animated film or video.



From *Sam's System*

The Computer Revolution (1983) David Jeremiah, Macmillan, Exploration and Discovery series, 0 333 32512 5, £3.95

A general look at computers and electronics (omitting language, code and programming) for juniors. Large illustrations and photographs, mostly in full colour. It caters for the age range by cutting down on detail so the depth of information is not great which would be no bad thing if the book was successful in what it did attempt. Unfortunately in striving for simple language it fails to make clear some rather fundamental points, like how a computer works. We wondered why they hadn't made more use of simple diagrams. The glossary provides a good example of how 'simplification' doesn't work.

Electronics: The study of the movement of electrons

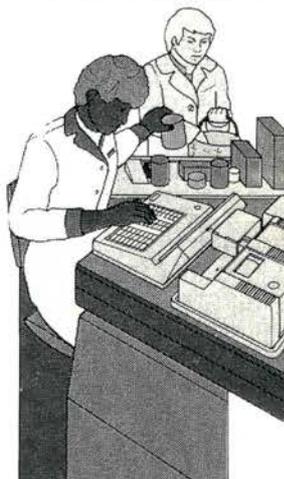
Transistor: A small piece of electronics

Nice to think of computers being full of little bits of the study of something; but not very helpful if you are struggling with the basic concept.

There are better books available.

Computer Ian Graham, Collins, The Inside Story series, 0 00195102 5, £3.50

Junior-Lower Secondary. How a computer works and what it can be used for explained clearly, simply and attractively with a great many informative colourful diagrams and drawings. Well-judged level of detail for the interested beginner, enjoyable for dipping into. The book starts from where computers are now (no history) and deals quite well with how they work; the last two thirds concentrates on a wide range of applications. The author touches on limitations and possible abuses but in the main is enthusiastic. A straight, 'serious' approach to explanation. Good glossary. A useful book.



From Ian Graham's *Computer*

EASE INFORMATION PLEASE INFORMATION PLEASE INFORMATION PLEASE

Usborne's Guide to Computers (1981)
Brian Reffin Smith, 0 86020 542 8, £1.85

A great deal of information — broad rather than deep — presented in Usborne's usual busy style. Visually lively with masses of bright colour drawings. The clear text, mostly captions, involves the reader by frequent use of 'you'. We thought that at times the book went too far in striving to get to 'kids' level. ('What is a computer? ... a machine which "does things to stuff"') and we weren't entirely happy about the fantasy drawing illustrating the parts of a computer as mini robots scampering through tunnels with bits of paper. But perhaps that is nit picking. Here is interesting browsing and dipping for Juniors and Lower Secondary — activities, games and puzzles are featured throughout — plus a good glossary, a short bibliography and a chronology of 'computer firsts'. One of the first titles in this area and still good value in classrooms and libraries.

Usborne's Guide to Understanding the Micro (1982) Judy Tatchell and Bill Bennett, 0 86020 637 8, £1.65

Mainly a manual with similar attractions and drawbacks to those described above. Informative, colourful, interesting; but the busy layout occasionally creates confusion for readers. Very practical, step-by-step instructions and sound general information for the beginner. It's a general book so sprinkled with provisos and exceptions: 'Not all micros have these keys.' 'These programs will not work on all micros.'

The second part explains computer components and chips, machine code and processing. There's some history and an account of uses. The book ends with a useful buyers guide (lots of sensible advice) and a large glossary.

Recommended to all beginners. Excellent value.

Computers — How they work and what they do (1982) Patricia Fara, Pelham, 0 7207 1343 9, £4.95

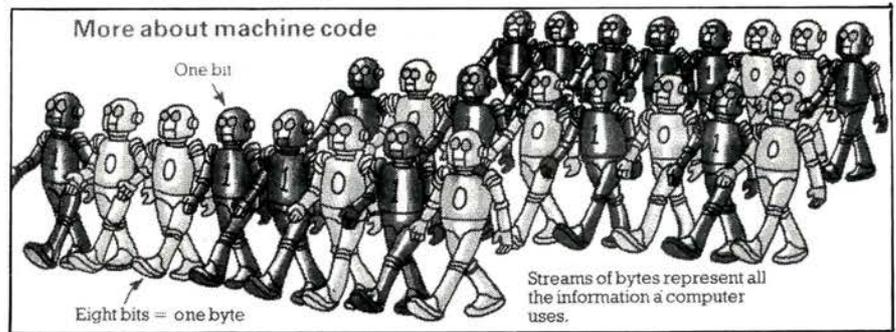
This one has rather an old-fashioned look; something to do with the choice of colours, layout, long italicised captions. Small print and some grey photographs reduce visual appeal. However text and illustration convey quite detailed information. History, components and processes, programming and uses are all covered. Each section is given a double spread so the book can be dipped into or read sequentially. Should give top juniors and secondary pupils a sound basic grasp but without much excitement.

Suitable for the library; but livelier and cheaper books will replace it.

Computers and Mathematics (1982) Carol Gourlay, Macdonald Educational, Visual Science series, 0 356 07112 X, £4.95

The two title topics are of course related; but the book isn't quite clear how to deal with the links. Information is made interesting; each topic has a large double spread with lots of quite attractive drawing and photography, mostly colour. It demands a lot of reading, but repays the effort.

Some sections on mathematics seem unrelated to those on computers. For instance a section on probability and statistics — 'What's the Betting?' — makes no mention of computers although it follows the section on computer hardware. This kind of jumping interferes with sequential reading. Other maths topics covered are graphs, sets, percentages. On computers we get programming, applications and a look at the future. A large glossary, a chronology, bibliography and list of computer facts and feats.



Could be useful in the library at the middle school range for kids who are prepared to read rather than scan; but a better editing job might have arranged the two elements of the book more appropriately.

Computers (1983) Neil Ardley, Kingfisher, 0 86272 052 4, £4.95 Secondary, possibly top junior. A well-conceived account which explains well. We like the arrangement of information. Sections on hardware, then software, with plenty of detail but very carefully worded to communicate the technicalities clearly; then chapters on the history and the impact of computers and finally how the computer works. This seems odd at first but in the event placing the most difficult concepts — the electronics — separately is very sensible. The clarity of explanation is maintained in this section.

Good glossary; short bibliography. Illustrations mainly colour with some rather dull black and white photographs. Diagrams clear and useful.

This is a lengthy text which, though well sub-divided demands and rewards willingness to read continuously rather than browse. Good solid information book for libraries.

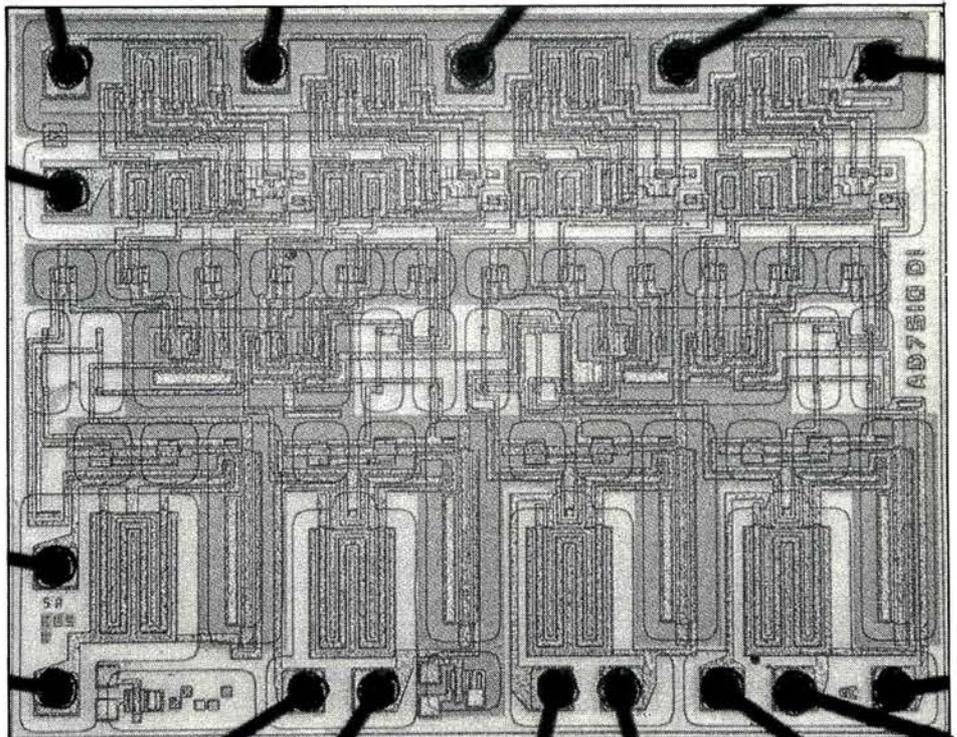
From **Usborne's Guide to Understanding the Micro**

with integrated circuits then computer language, components and operations. The second half looks at uses present and future, including robotics, with references to R2D2 and Marvin the paranoid android.

Language level is well judged for top juniors and lower secondary but the whole is patchy. Kids will be drawn to more colourful productions and probably learn more from them.

Computers (1982) Tom Fry, Granada Guides, 0 246 11895 4, £1.95. Starts with brief account of history and components; ends with brief section on uses and chips. The focus of the book is on machine code, operations and programming. Here the language is wordy, technical and requires the reader to cope with a lot of figures within the text and in diagrams. Not comfortable reading.

A silicon chip greatly magnified, from **Computers** by Neil Ardley



Chips, Computers and Robots (1982) Judy Allen, Pepper Press, 0 237 45627 3, £4.25 Overpriced. Looks as if it was designed to sell cheaply but doesn't. Quite short (54 pages) and only black and white. Illustrations are bold but opportunities to make clear by drawings are missed. Strange when so much care obviously went into designing the book.

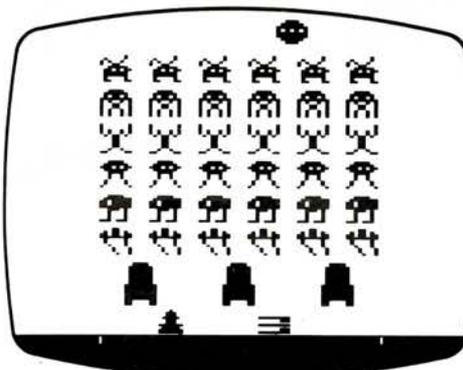
The focus is on microelectronics, beginning

Large print, subheadings and frequent (but not particularly useful) illustrations; the overall impression is of being crammed. The technical sections are off-putting for the general reader; other parts too basic for the interested. Cheap, though.

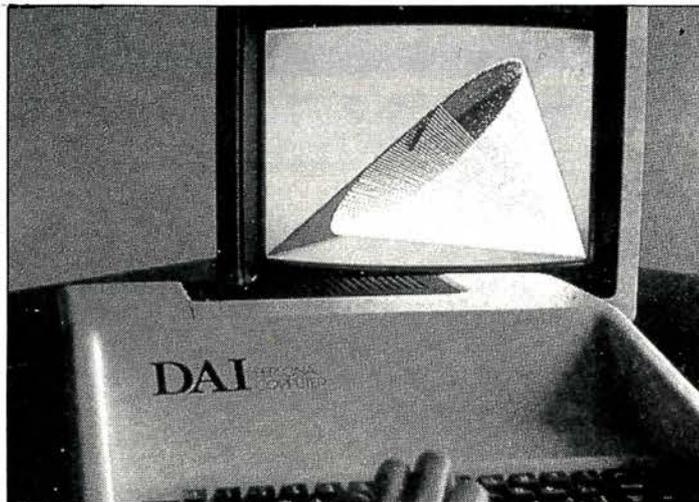
INFORMATION PLEASE INFORMATION PLEASE INFORMATION PLEASE

Discovering Computers (1982) Mark Frank, Longman, 0 582 39061 3, £6.95. Secondary. A detailed account, with lengthy text and captions accompanying good photographs and drawings. It covers hard and software with considerable technical detail, looks at computer uses and considers social and technological implications. Each of the 43 sections has a large double spread with attractive layout and large print. Information is clear and thorough. A valuable library book for the pupil who is already using computers and wishes to read a sound account of their processes and functions. Expensive but worth it.

Microprocessors Today (1982) Robin Webster, Kaye and Ward, 0 7182 0463 8, £4.95. Secondary. There is a chapter on 'the anatomy of a computer' which is clear and succinct; but the book's main purpose is to



A Space Invaders Game, from **Microprocessors Today**



A small computer programmed to draw pictures on the screen of an ordinary television, from **Discovering Computers** by Mark Frank

describe the significance of computers in the information and communications revolution and to query the social and technological implications. It does this most interestingly. There is a demanding level of language and thought but the use of short paragraphs gives an effective punchy style.

It ranges widely in reference looking at the effects of Gutenberg, the Turing Test of machine intelligence, George Eliot's essay, 'Shadows of the Coming Race' which debates human fears of 'the subtly refined power of machines'. A stimulating and challenging book. Recommended for libraries. Reading, thinking pupils who are already involved with computers or those who, like many people, are nervous of them will appreciate the issues raised here.

Glossary. Black and white illustration.

Kids and Computers (1983) Eugene Galanter, Kingfisher, 0 86272 049 4, £5.95

The author is the founder and director of The Children's Computer School in New York and enthusiastically and totally committed to the idea that teaching children to programme is valuable. The book is a useful and interesting guide for parents or teachers who are or would like to be involved with children and computers. The style is conversational so it reads well but the content is often detailed and technical so it's demanding for all that.

Explains how micro computers work, advises on buying. Covers the need for and nature of computer education very thoroughly (the book is written for a British audience) and including an extensive section on programming for, by, and with children. Lengthy glossary and list of basic terms. One for the staff library?

Right, the spacious layout of a full page spread in **Computers - How They Work**, by Nigel Hawkes.



Below, a robot arm being guided through paint spraying movements, from **Computer World** by Jacquetta Megarry.

Computers - How They Work, (1983) The Electronic Revolution Series, Nigel Hawkes, Franklin Watts, 0 86313 0593, £4.25.

A book which sets out to give a simple explanation of what a computer is, how it works and what it can do - and succeeds. Jargon (input, output, processing, RAM, ROM etc.) is carefully explained along with information about different sorts of computers. In the central section Machine Code, the binary system, 'bits', 'bytes', computer logic are dealt with in a series of page spreads which need to be read sequentially for full understanding. The ideas here are complex and demanding but the spacious layout and large type make the book look 'easy' and readable. The language is carefully judged for a newcomer to computers and the friendly tone makes understanding seem eminently possible.

Sections in graphics, talking computers and 'Linking up', via networks, modems and satellites demonstrate present trends and future possibilities. Only 24 pages of text which seems a lot for £4.25; but it's worth having the quality of the explanations. Many books with more words, pictures and pages end up only confusing the reader.

Junior/Lower Secondary.

Computer World (1983), Jacquetta Megarry, Kingfisher Factbook (hardback) 0 86272 070 2, £2.95. Piccolo Factbook (paperback) 0 330 26980 1, £1.50.

As the title suggests this book tries to get everything about computers into ninety closely-packed pages. It opens with a useful section, Can Computers Think? and moves on through Enter the Microchip. Inside the Computer. How does it Work?. Computers in Life and Microfuture. Diagrams, photographs, drawings, graphs, charts - even a program. (Hunt the Hurkle) appear frequently and in full colour. Somehow the page is so busy with illustrations and captions it's difficult to concentrate on the text. The last 20 pages are Further Facts (!) (no colour in this bit) including Computer Firsts, More Programming, Binary puzzles, Computer puzzles, careers in computing, etc., etc. Language is more Secondary than Junior (except for junior computer freaks) but there is an excellent device of putting all unfamiliar words in bold type and explaining them in an extensive and good glossary. Useful index too.

It's all a bit crowded but good value if you calculate ideas and information per penny. ●

The parts of a computer

Inside a computer, there are a number of different electronic circuits, each designed to perform a different task. These circuits are built into the surface of tiny pieces of a material called silicon. They are called silicon "chips" and can be smaller than the nail of your little finger. Some chips act as the computer's storage units, others process the data given to the computer. Computer processors have two types of storage circuit. One keeps a permanent record of data that the computer needs in order to work properly. The other can be given different data each time the computer is used.

Working together
Computers need other circuits to make sure that everything works in the right order. For example, data from storage must arrive at the processing unit just when it's needed, not before or after. Computers have a control unit and a "clock" that make sure that all the circuits work together.

The basic elements of a computer
All computers have the basic parts shown in the diagram.

Input/Output
This is the part of the computer that links to the outside world. Data both enters and leaves the computer and is processed by the computer and sent to output devices.

Processing Unit
This is where the "work" of the computer is done. Some may be received, or two sets of data may be compared. The processing unit performs thousands of calculations every second.

Control
This is in fact part of the processing unit. It controls the flow of data from the storage units to the processing unit and vice versa within the computer.

Clock
The clock controls the speed and timing of the computer's operations. It "beats" the rhythm of a circuit 100,000 times per second.

Random Access Memory (RAM)
The memory can be thought of as a "notebook". You can open it up any page for "read" the data stored there, or you can write any data that is no longer of use and "erase" it. Here data from a disk is sent when the computer is started or

Read Only Memory (ROM)
This type of memory is used to store the "instructions" for the computer. You cannot change the data stored here, like a book that has been "printed" by the computer. It is the memory that the computer uses to perform its basic operations.

10 11

Present Challenges – Future Prospects

Neil Ardley, the author of three computer books published this autumn, talks to **Richard Hill**

RH. You have three books about Computers published this year, Neil. All different, and each with a particular age of reader in mind. How did your approach to them vary?

NA. Let's start with *Computers*, which I did for Kingfisher. What I wanted to do with that book was to give anyone from about 13 upwards who is moderately interested in computers a good background on how they work and what they can do. It's a sort of computers without tears. To me that means trying to avoid jargon, and trying to explain concepts very simply; not necessarily by using analogies which I think can put people wrong, but by saying as clearly and concisely as I can what goes on, in a way that age of reader will understand.

RH. What sort of problems did you encounter?

NA. Funnily enough my biggest problems came from the experts who were advising me. We had two very good consultants and they would come up with a lot of improvements and ideas; but they had a very professional approach to computing and it is difficult putting that into ordinary terms that people can understand. I get worried about words like 'digitize' and 'data' and even 'information' which can be very ambiguous.

RH. This wasn't your first computer book.

NA. Oh no. I'd been over some of the problems already in an eight book series I did with Franklin Watts called *The World of Tomorrow*. We were looking at the way our lives might be in the future and of course computers came into a lot of that. The series was for slightly younger readers than *Computers* but I knew how I would present the ideas. The material in *Computers* that I had never handled before for children was the last section on what goes on inside a computer, the electronics. That was the part I enjoyed most. It was a very interesting problem.

RH. Your other newest computer books are also for Franklin Watts.

NA. Yes. Following *The World of Tomorrow* we started a series called *Action Science*, practical science books for 8-11's. It seemed obvious to me that one should be about the computer.

RH. Now this is something different from a general background book like *Computers*.

NA. Quite different. It's called *Using the Computer* and basically it's about how to programme a computer. To write it I sat down with a computer — a Sinclair ZX81 because I knew most children wouldn't have anything more sophisticated than that — and wrote a series of simple programs, tested them and came up with the basis for the book.

RH. So it's what some publishers call a user book. I've heard another phrase — Machine Specific.

NA. This book is not machine specific. Because it's a first book for young children it restricts itself to the more simple commands that are found on *all* micros, and you can use it with any computer. I tried out all the programs on other computers — like the BBC micro — to make sure they were compatible.

RH. When you've got the programs what are the problems connected with putting together a how-to-use-it book.

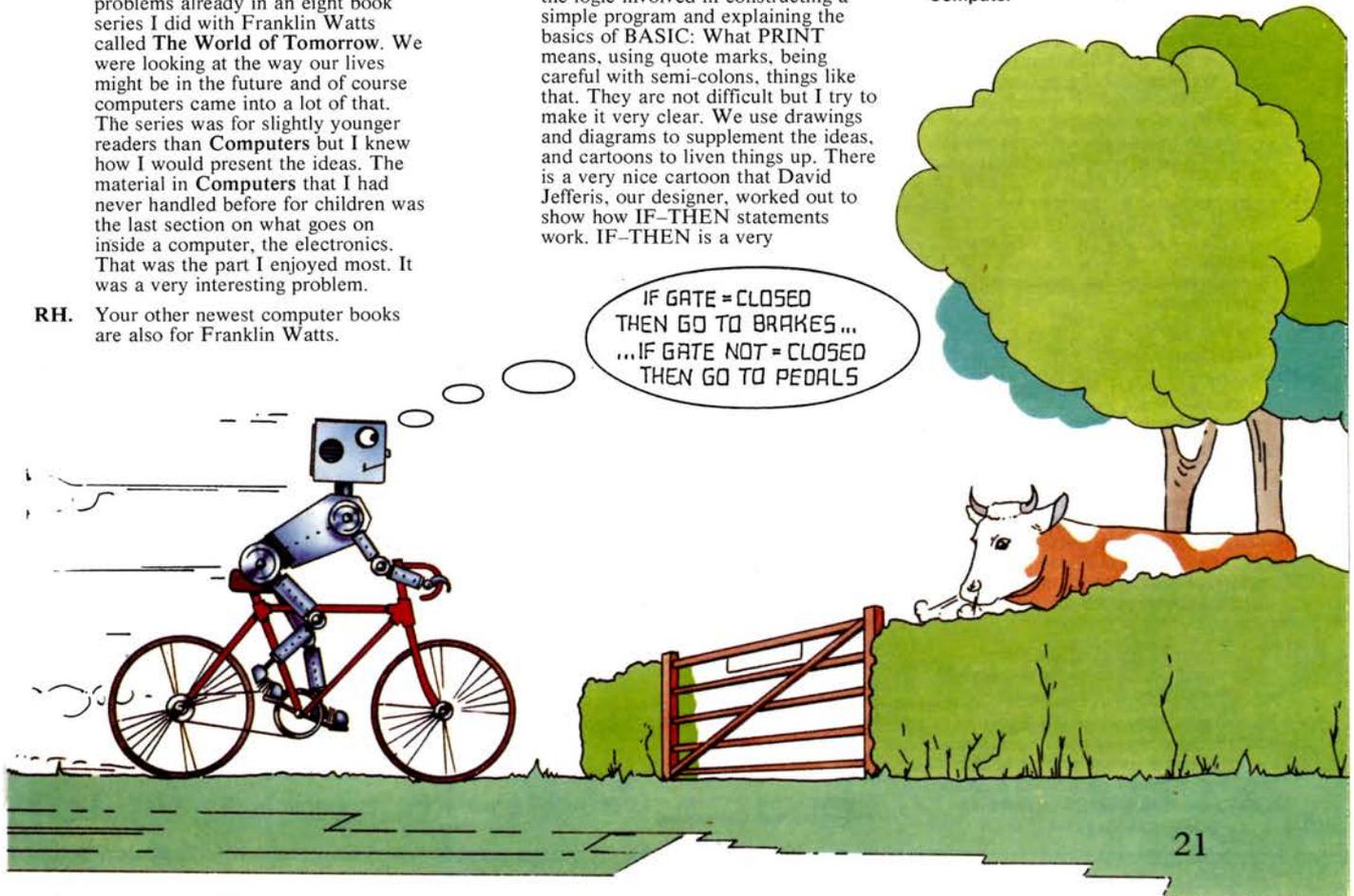
NA. The main problems are putting over the logic involved in constructing a simple program and explaining the basics of BASIC: What PRINT means, using quote marks, being careful with semi-colons, things like that. They are not difficult but I try to make it very clear. We use drawings and diagrams to supplement the ideas, and cartoons to liven things up. There is a very nice cartoon that David Jefferis, our designer, worked out to show how IF-THEN statements work. IF-THEN is a very

fundamental command in computer language and this cartoon of our robot cycling towards a bull behind a gate explains, with a humorous touch, exactly what happens. The logic is very apparent; you can apply it back in the program and see how it works.

RH. But the book is not only about explaining.

NA. Oh no, it's primarily an activity book, getting the readers involved in doing things on the computer. Involvement and entertainment are the best motivators to learning. I try to get that in any kind of writing for children. That goes for design too, just as much as writing. We try to make the layout and illustration in our books functional and good. With design and writing you can't just do it to please yourself as a great creative exercise, you have to start from the reader's point of view. *A First Look at Computers* (just published) is for 7-8 year olds. It's a basic information book about how computers work and what they can do. Some of the things in it are also in *The World of Tomorrow* series and *Computers* but we thought hard about what to include and particularly about the language and the design for younger children. That was difficult — trying to reduce things to very simple terms and get it right without over-simplifying.

Robot cartoon from Neil Ardley's *Using the Computer*



INFORMATION PLEASE INFORMATION PLEASE INFORMATION PLEASE

RH. Have you spent much time with children talking about computers and computer use?

NA. My daughter who is just 11 and her friends are starting to get into computers. She has been through the Sinclair and the BBC Computer with me, trying out my programs. Most children I've found take to computers like ducks to water. I think that's because there are simple rules and commands that they can learn easily by rote, and once they have got that they try it out and it works every time. You get magic results just from a few simple things.

RH. What about computers in schools?

NA. It all seems to be beginning and it's very exciting. I'm working on producing some educational software, and for the *Action Science* series we have liaised with the Teachers' Centre in Hounslow. Teachers are setting out to find what can be done, what is useful, what works in the classroom and what doesn't, and publishers are trying to find that out as well. There are simply a lot of different things around at the moment; everyone is trying to find a direction in which to go. I think computers have enormous potential in education. Working on how to use the interactive aspect of computers in teaching is fascinating.

RH. Tell me about some of the things you have been doing.

NA. To go with the *Action Science* series we are doing a set of programs on cassette to use with the BBC Computer. The software is really an extension of the book. For *Working with Water* for instance we have done a really good moving graphic program to show why things float. That's a difficult concept. There is a description in the book but the program makes it much easier to understand. Then there's a program about water resources which is an area we don't cover in the book. It's a decision-making program which makes the child the manager of a reservoir. You have to decide how to 'spend' your water: for making power to produce goods, to irrigate the crops, to use in homes? You have information about how much rain is likely to fall and what season it is; then you have to decide how and where to use it. If you do it well you amass millions of pounds! And then, of course, we have written programs for quizzes to test understanding.

RH. Do you see this as the way forward for computer books?

NA. Well it's certainly one way. For teaching science you need to do experiments to develop understanding; the computer can help the teacher take these experiments a bit further by simulations, extending in a way you couldn't in the classroom. I'd like to get into doing projects in which the book and the computer are much more interdependent even than that, using the book for what it does best and the computer for its interactive potential.

RH. Do you think we shall see these integrated packages being developed in the next two or three years?

NA. I would be very surprised if you didn't. Lots of publishers have gone overboard on computer user books. Putting computer user books together with information books to come up

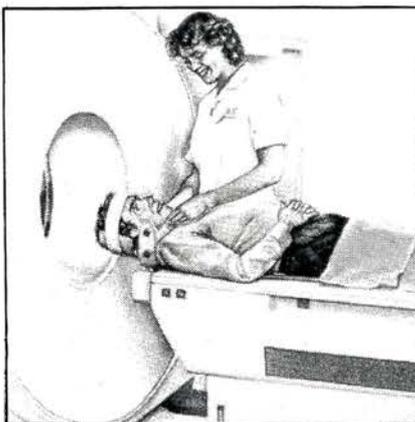
with something integrated seems a likely trend. When we talk about computers in schools it won't be totally learning how to programme. In fact that may not be a major part at all. People will be getting programs to learn from. We don't teach children how to print books, we teach them how to read and use them.

How much expertise that sort of development will need within the editorial office I don't know. I suspect quite a lot. I think we are going to have to have computer literate editors to work with authors and I don't suppose there are too many around at the moment. Sue Unstead, my editor at Franklin Watts, knows her way around a computer now. We've got our experience together, working on this project over the past couple of years, trying to find out what the computer can do.

RH. Maybe this is an impossible question but how do you see the place of the book in a computer age?

NA. At the moment the book is still a very easy way to obtain information. It is easy to flip backwards and forwards quite quickly. With home computers at present it's a little hard to do that. But I'm not convinced that that is going to remain so. As memory capacity increases and disc drives become more common instead of the cassettes we have now home computers will become far more flexible.

It's possible to create a set of well-written programs that would include everything that's in, say, my book *Computers*. But it wouldn't be the same and it wouldn't look anywhere near as good! Still, over the long term, maybe in not more than ten years, I would think that books will begin to disappear. Eventually, inevitably it's going to be far cheaper to produce something in electronic form than felling trees to get paper, having books printed, distributed and so on. It's quite possible that if you wanted you could have something book-size with a flat screen, liquid crystal display (but much more easy on the eye than the present ones) and you'd press a switch to turn the pages. The hardware is going to improve and develop along with the software and changes will come in line with what people want and what they can best use. And of course you'll be able to receive your flat screen book down the telephone line or over the air possibly. You won't have to go to the book shop to buy it, or even to the library.



A computerised brain scanner from *A First Look at Computers*

RH. The consequences of this computer revolution, this information revolution are potentially as powerful as those of the industrial revolution.

NA. It's bound to have huge cultural and social effects. Because it deals in information the book world is likely to see changes very soon. But it's impossible to predict exactly how it will go. I don't suppose when the industrial revolution started many people foresaw the great movement towards cities and the consequent social deprivation. Very soon we won't need printers, typists, eventually we probably won't need postmen and librarians. It's obviously going to be resisted, but it's there; it could happen. ●

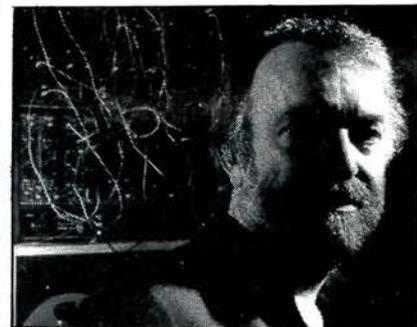


Photo by John Coles

Neil Ardley was born in Surrey in 1937, and took a degree in science at Bristol University. He worked briefly as a research chemist and patent assistant before becoming an editor for the international edition of *World Book Encyclopedia* from 1962 to 1966. There he learned the craft of publishing literally from A to Z. He then worked as a natural history editor at Hamlyn for two years before setting out as a freelance editor and author. He has since written more than fifty information books on science, natural history (particularly birds) and music, and contributed to many reference works.

Ardley has also been active as a composer, mainly in jazz and electronic music, and is known for the albums *Kaleidoscope of Rainbows* (1976) and *Harmony of the Spheres* (1979). He works in a small house in Bedford Park in London, but his home is in Derbyshire in the Peak District. His wife Bridget researches the questions for the television programme *Mastermind*, leaving the odd science question to her husband. They have one daughter, Jane, who is 11.

Book Information

Computers, Kingfisher Books, 0 86272 052 4, £4.95

The World of Tomorrow series, Franklin Watts, £4.25 each
Transport on Earth, 0 85166 905 0
Out into Space, 0 85166 906 9
Tomorrow's Home, 0 85166 931 X
School, Work and Play, 0 85166 932 8
Our Future Needs, 0 85166 949 2
Health and Medicine, 0 85166 951 4
Future War and Weapons, 0 85166 950 6
Fact and Fantasy, 0 85166 952 2

Action Science Series, Franklin Watts, £4.25 each
Working with Water, 0 86313 021 6 (Software package available)
Using the Computer, 0 86313 022 4, 0 86313 068 2, £1.95 (pb) (Software package available)
Hot and Cold, 0 86313 023 2
Sun and Light, 0 86313 024 0 (Eight more titles in preparation)

First Look at Computers, Franklin Watts, 0 86313 017 8, £3.25

SOUND & VISION

Johnny Jarvis is coming – at peak viewing time

Starting on November 17th at 9.25 on BBC – a new serial in six one hour episodes about three young school leavers: Johnny, the conformist, Alan, layabout and cynic, and Johnny's girl.

We are also promised a bent copper and a mystery. Puffin Plus have the tie-in, by Nigel Williams.



Cover photos by John Green, Radio Times BBC Television, from **Johnny Jarvis**

Doris, on Screen at last

The moment, long awaited at Piccolo who have had the books out for some time, has come. The adventures of Doris are now being nationally networked by ITV in five minute teatime slots. Piccolo is hoping that Doris appeal will be across a wide age-range; they have picture books and story books available for fans.

Hilary Hayton who conceived and produced the series is the creator of the Crystal Tipps and Alistair series shown on BBC in the early 70's. She says that Doris, a liberated but feminine feline, is based on her own pet moggie.

Merchandisers have an eye on Doris – there is already a jigsaw in the shops. Will she become a national institution like Postman Pat?



In Search of Dinosaurs

A new Granada series, **The Dinosaur Trail**, begins on September 30th and runs for seven weeks. It is networked nationally and presented by John Noakes. The consultant for the series is Beverly Halstead, author of **Terrible Claw**, the story of a carnivorous dinosaur (Collins, 0 00 140112 6, £3.95).

He will appear in every episode. The book was published to coincide with the start of the series.

Books on Radio

Janet Whitaker, of Inside Pages, has recently taken over production of **Living Language**, the main English series for 9 – 11 year olds, on BBC Schools radio. She writes to tell us about the new shape of the series. Each term starts with a magazine-style programme called Booktime, featuring books related to the theme of the following programmes. This is to help and encourage children with their own reading. Themes for the Autumn Term are **Nothing to be Afraid Of** and **Christmas**, starting on November 17th is a two-part dramatisation of Paul Theroux's London Snow with Irene Handl as Mrs Mutterance. Leon Garfield's **Fair's Fair** with Roy Kinnear as storyteller, ends the term. The Spring theme, **Animals in Danger**, includes a dramatisation of Nora Wilkinson's **The Snow House** and in the summer an adaption of Tim Kenmore's **The Fortunate Few** is part of a general look at sport.

Jack Holborn – perhaps

The West Germans have done a six hour adaption of Leon Garfield's adventure story. From the limited evidence of the stills it looks an action-packed affair. It is being dubbed into English and will be shown on ITV in twelve half hour episodes; but no one at the time of writing seems quite sure when. October?

Coming Shortly

Clive Donners' new film version of Dicken's **Oliver Twist**, with George C. Scott as Fagin and Tim Curry, Michael Hordern, Timothy West, Eileen Atkins and Cherie Lunghi in support. Princess Anne will be at the Royal Premiere on November 2nd. Penguin have the official tie-in edition.

A Doll's House Comes to Life

Rumer Godden's classic story, **The Doll's House**, has been filmed for Goldcrest as a television series. The story of the Plantagenets, the unbearable, haughty Marchpane (a very selfish china doll) and of dear Tottie, the peg doll who keeps everything going in the antique doll's house they all inhabit, has delighted children for years. Looking at the people involved in the production it seems in good hands. The series is designed by Peter Firmin, directed by Oliver Postgate, and produced by Kaye Webb. At the moment it is scheduled to be shown in November. Puffin have a new edition of the story, retitled **Tottie**. ●



Scenes from **Jack Holborn** courtesy of George & Associates/TV 60

K M Peyton

As a child Kathleen Peyton was obsessed by horses, and although unable to own one, she had an imaginary stable of 2,000 horses and ponies.

She started writing books about horses when she was nine, and has never stopped writing since. After leaving school, she attended Manchester Art School, where she met her husband, Michael. After much travelling they eventually settled in a derelict cottage on the Essex marshes where they worked at writing and drawing and had two daughters.

K M Peyton has published about thirty books, the latest of which, **Who, Sir? Me, Sir?**, is the humorous and engaging story about a boy entering a very difficult competition against the 'poshest school in the neighbourhood'.

Oxford books by K M Peyton

0 19 271459 7	Going Home	£3.50
0 19 271431 7	Flambards Omnibus	£6.50
0 19 271452 X	Flambards Divided	£5.95
0 19 277091 8	Fly-By-Night NOL	£1.80
0 19 271432 5	Marion's Angels	£3.95
0 19 277104 3	The Maplin Bird NOL	£2.25
0 19 271422 8	A Midsummer Night's Death	£3.95
0 19 271347 7	A Pattern of Roses	£3.25
0 19 277081 0	Pennington's Seventeenth Summer NOL	£1.80
0 19 277092 6	The Beethoven Medal NOL	£2.25
0 19 277103 5	Pennington's Heir NOL	£2.25
0 19 271409 0	Prove Yourself a Hero	£3.25
0 19 271391 4	The Right-Hand Man	£3.25
0 19 277096 9	The Plan for Birdmarsh NOL	£2.25
0 19 271372 8	The Team	£3.25
0 19 271206 3	Windfall	£4.50

In 1969 K M Peyton won the Carnegie Medal for **The Edge of the Cloud** and in 1970 the 'Guardian' award for the Flambards trilogy. The Flambards trilogy was televised by Yorkshire television and appeared in 1979. Films are now planned for **The Right-Hand Man** and **Pattern of Roses**.

Oxford Books
for Children

Lifeline Two

Judith Elkin continues her series on Multi-cultural Books and chooses

No. 5 Stories for the Middle/Secondary Years

Throughout this series of articles, I have stressed the need for children to grow up aware of the multi-cultural nature of society today. I have tried to offer some thoughts on books which might help children at various ages towards a real understanding of the complexities of British society and the need for tolerance and flexibility in coming to terms with its demands.

At a stage when older children are beginning to search for their own identity and the answers to many of the confusing issues confronting them books have a tremendously important part to play. If young adolescents are to grow up to be tolerant, aware individuals, they need novels which offer them some perspective on the multi-cultural society. I want books which help young people to be aware and proud of their own cultural backgrounds, as well as helping them to find their place in British society, books which show the significance and importance of other cultures and which prepare young people to live and play a positive role in a multi-cultural society, and, most importantly for this age group, books which recognise the existence of racism and prejudice and offer some hope for combating them in the future.



Judith Elkin

Stories for younger readers

The Village by the Sea, Anita Desai, Heinemann, 0 434 93436 4, £5.50

Winner of the Guardian Award for Children's Fiction 1982, this is a gently written and moving story about a family's survival in a small fishing village near Bombay. With Father permanently drunk on the local 'toddy' and Mother seriously ill (from undernourishment), it is the two eldest children, Lila, aged 13 and Hari, 12, who have to earn the money, keep house and take responsibility for their two young sisters. Eventually Hari goes to Bombay to get work. His positive attitude and resourcefulness help him to cope with his dreadful surroundings and finally he returns home full of hope for the family's future. A harrowing picture of extreme poverty but demonstrating the close family ties and relationships still possible in such extreme circumstances.

Playing It Right, Tony Drake, Collins, 0 00 184630 2, £5.95; Puffin, 0 14 03.1298 6, 80p

Half a Chance, Tony Drake, Collins, 0 00 184301 X, £5.50

Playing It Right is a realistic story set in a multi-racial junior school, capturing the rivalry and tensions amongst the boys in the newly formed cricket team. The relationships between the boys and the teachers are carefully observed and at times, very funny. The confrontation which occurs between the boys at Jenkins Street School and the middle-class (all white) Priory School is very amusing. The mixture of old-fashioned school story placed in a modern-day setting with the added dimension of race, is an interesting one.

Half a Chance lacks some of the freshness and impact of **Playing It Right**. Again the story has a school setting and a multi-cultural mix of

children but this is for slightly older children. The relationships between the four main characters who form a school pop group is quite nicely balanced with Shakes, the Black teenager being the naturally dominant one. The dialogue is punchy and realistic with a lot of everyday swearing.

Nobody's Family is Going to Change, Louise Fitzhugh, Gollancz, 0 575 02080 6, £4.95; Fontana Lions, 0 00 671351 3, £1.00; Macmillan Ed., 0 333 29450 5, £1.75

A compelling story about a Black American family whose Father is a lawyer. The two children, Emma, a fat 11 year old and Willie, a small 7 year old, are precocious and know exactly what they want: Emma to be a lawyer; Willie to be a dancer, completely the opposite to their Father's stereotyped ideas. The story is seen mainly through Emma's intelligent eyes as she looks at children's rights and non-sexist and women's lib. attitudes. How can she begin to affect her Father's chauvinistic reactions? Excellent characterisation in this often very funny and carefully observed book.

Philip Hall Likes Me, I Reckon Maybe, Bette Greene, Puffin, 0 14 03.0985 3, 85p

Get On Out of Here, Philip Hall, Bette Greene, Hamish Hamilton, 0 241 10881 0, £5.25

Two excellent novels set in rural Arkansas, U.S.A., and offering a splendid portrait of a small Black community. Fine characterisation of Beth who adores Philip Hall, the 'number one best in everything', or is he? Can Beth afford to show him that in fact she is the best? She does, as the first title progresses but at the beginning of the sequel, the now rather over-confident Beth is devastated to find that the Abner Brady Leadership Award has been given to Philip Hall instead of

her. She determines to demonstrate forcibly their mistaken thinking in making this award. It is only when she and her Pretty Pennies gang fail to beat Philip Hall's Tiger Hunters gang, that she sinks to the depths of despair and goes away to live with Grandma. The delightfully drawn Beth cannot be repressed for long. She learns a powerful lesson about egotism, and her friends, including Philip Hall, realise how much she means to them all. Both stories are refreshingly humorous, warm, realistic stories and very readable.

My Mate Shofiq, Jan Needle, Deutsch, 0 233 96987 X, £3.50; Fontana Lions, 0 00 671518 4, £1.00; Collins Cascades, 0 00 33005 6, £1.70

A realistic, violent, and thought-provoking story of working-class children in a multi-racial area of Lancashire. The book tackles the issues of racism and prejudice head-on but without sentimentality. Bernard finds himself rather reluctantly supporting Shofiq, a Pakistani boy born in Bradford, against the school bully. Slowly, despite being labelled 'Paki-lover', Bernard becomes friendly with Shofiq. This is a difficult book to use as the early chapters could easily be interpreted (wrongly) as reinforcing racist attitudes. Only well into the story is the underlying anti-racist drift made clear. As with all Jan Needle's books, there is much for children to think about and discuss.

Ganesh, Malcolm J. Bosse, Chatto, 0 7011 2621 3, £5.50

An interesting approach to helping children to understand the nature of the differences between cultures. 14-year-old Jeffrey was born and raised in

India, living the life of a poor Hindu. When his American parents die, he finds he no longer belongs to this Indian community and is sent to live with his Aunt in America. This device clearly demonstrates the great divide between the two cultures and the problems faced by a child belonging to both cultures. The descriptions of life in India, coping with life and death, and the sudden transfer to America are effectively related but the end of the story is less credible and generally fizzles out. It still contains some interesting discussion points.

Stories for older readers

The First of Midnight, Marjorie Darke, Penguin, 0 14 00.5370 0, £1.50

A Long Way to Go, Marjorie Darke, Kestrel, 0 7226 5485 5, £4.95; Puffin Plus, 0 14 03.1359 1, £1.25

Comeback, Marjorie Darke, Kestrel, 0 7226 5743 9, £5.50; Puffin Plus, 0 14 03.1405 9, £1.50 (December 1983)

A loosely connected trilogy which begins at the end of the eighteenth century and finishes in the present day. **The First of Midnight** is a powerful novel revolving around the slave trade in Bristol. It provides an interesting contrast between the life of a Black slave, **Midnight** and an orphan wench, **Jess**, showing how both are treated as almost worthless chattels. The main characters in **A Long Way to Go**, set during the first World War, are **Luke** and **Bella**, the great grandchildren of **Midnight** and **Jess**. Both are well-drawn, individual characters, proud of their African slave origins. The story lacks some of the emotional impact and depth of feeling of **The First of Midnight** but provides an interesting portrait of the pressures on **Luke** as a conscientious objector. **Comeback** is set in the present day and revolves around the competitive world of gymnastics. The central character, **Gail** was abandoned as a baby and is torn between her desire to trace her parents (could she possibly be related to **Midnight** and **Jess**?) and to concentrate on the rigours of intensive gymnastic training. Again strong characterisation and a powerful story.

The Friends, Rosa Guy, Gollancz, 0 575 01839 9, £5.95; Puffin, 0 14 03.0933 0, £1.25; Macmillan Ed., 0 333 29514 5, £1.75

Edith Jackson, Rosa Guy, Gollancz, 0 575 02607 3, £5.95

Ruby, Rosa Guy, Gollancz, 0 575 03052 6, £5.50

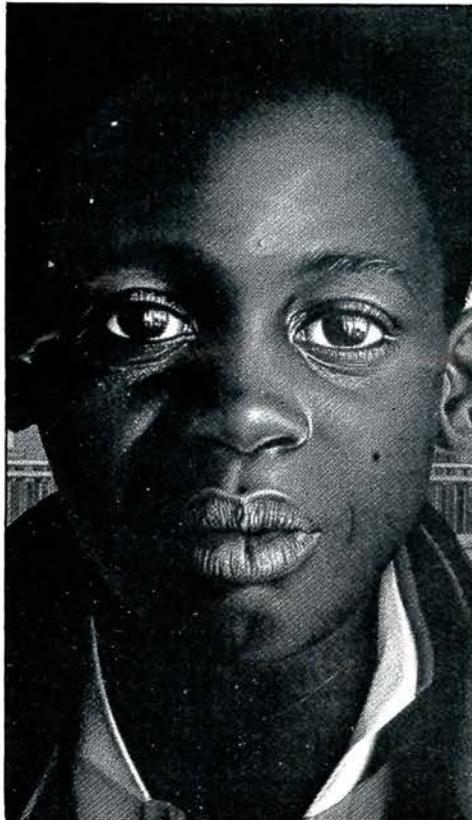
The Disappearance, Rosa Guy, Gollancz, 0 575 02804 1, £5.95

Rosa Guy has established herself as a writer able to portray with great sympathy and sensitivity the Black American experience, with her stories based mainly in Harlem. The first three titles form a loosely connected trilogy.

In **The Friends**, **Phyllissia Cathy**, a 14-year-old West Indian girl comes to live in Harlem where her Father works. She is mocked for her accent and background

by the other kids in school but is befriended by the unprepossessing **Edith**. It is through her contact with **Edith** and the growing awareness of the responsibilities she takes for her family and the awful poverty in which they live, that **Phyllissia** comes to terms with her domineering father and her mother's death. The story is continued in **Edith Jackson**, a deeply moving story which looks at the role the now 17-year-old **Edith** takes as surrogate parent and the frightful pressures she faces. **Ruby** concentrates on **Phyllissia's** elder sister **Ruby**, unsure of herself, bored and desperately lonely until she meets fellow classmate **Daphne** and forms a deep and intimate relationship with her. Sympathetically written but less heartrending than the earlier two titles.

The Disappearance is a brutal, disturbingly realistic story of contemporary American society which contrasts the squalor of downtown Harlem with the outwardly cosy Brooklyn environment. This is a dramatic thriller for older teenagers with a chilling ending.



Detail from cover of *Delroy is Here*

Delroy is Here, Rhodri Jones, Dent, 0 460 06138 0, £5.95

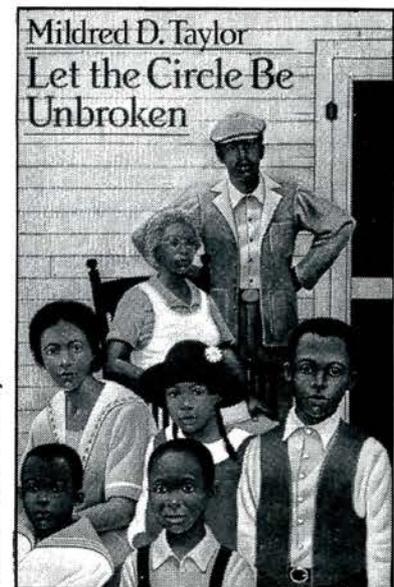
A dramatic first novel by a London headmaster, which reflects the uncertainty and rebelliousness felt by many teenagers. **Delroy is Black**, an intelligent, misdirected, high-spirited Black teenager, often in trouble at school and, consequently, frequently at home too. The story traces his confusions about rebelling or conforming at school; the unfairness of being picked upon by certain teachers because he's Black contrasted with the care and concern shown to him by his form teacher and, to a certain extent, by his headmaster. Goaded by a particularly vindictive and racist teacher, **Delroy's** violent temper gets the better of him and what had looked like a promising

future is almost certainly condemned to failure. The writer shows a real understanding of Black teenagers and a commitment to demonstrate the existence of prejudice in the school situation, but there are times when the story is obviously written by an 'outsider' rather than from within the Black community and certain parts of the story seem forced and lack conviction. Again there is much to talk about.

Piggy in the Middle, Jan Needle, Deutsch, 0 233 97481 4, £3.95

A hard-hitting, uncompromising story about the police and their conduct during an investigation into the murder of a Muslim. The story is seen through the eyes of a police cadet who has always wanted to be in the police force but finds her feelings and loyalties confused and torn when she is involved in the vexed world of police brutality, prejudice and violence and finds herself in the diametrically opposite position to boyfriend **David**, a liberal local newspaper reporter. Disturbing, thought-provoking, this is a book which questions attitudes about race and law and order from all sides. Again lots of food for discussion here.

Roll of Thunder, Hear My Cry, Mildred D. Taylor, Gollancz, 0 575 02384 8, £6.50; Puffin, 0 14 03.1129 7, £1.35



Let the Circle Be Unbroken, Gollancz, 0 575 03084 4, £6.50

Two extremely powerful novels set in Mississippi, at the height of the Depression and charting the story of a Black family's fight to maintain its integrity and pride against all the forces of a racist society. The characters of the whole family are richly portrayed, especially **Cassie**, a self-willed, independent 9 year old. The close family relationship is set against a background of night riders, burnings and blatant injustice. The two books depict **Cassie's** hopes and fears as they develop from childhood innocence to awareness, to bitterness and disillusionment. These are demanding, lengthy books but extremely rewarding for the persistent reader and with many pertinent messages to today's teenagers. ●

May we recommend . . .

The second in our new series featuring writers and books we think you might like to know better.

Pat Thompson introduces **ROBERT SWINDELLS**

Robert Swindells is a writer who deserves our attention — not least because he writes very good books which children like to read. His range is wide — from infant to teenager — and his subject matter and approach varied; facts which have perhaps kept him from the critical attention he merits. He writes well and can grip the reader from the start; but there is more to it than that. Children not only like his books, they often become very involved in them, something which stems from an emotional dimension within the stories, a concern for the fate of the characters, or an issue raised. Robert Swindells often attempts things which would make others hesitate. He is a daring writer and brings a degree of commitment to his books which, quite simply, makes it worthwhile reading them.

For younger children, there are four picture books about Norah, a stalwart heroine in bunches who gets things done. We have here a very positive female character who appeals to small boys as well as the girls and all four books read aloud well.

For early independent reading, **Dragons Live Forever** is again about liberation. The despicable Back family are selling baby dragons as fire lighters, so Nikki and Sajida bravely engineer the dragons' escape. The risks they take are rewarded by the sight of the dragon family flying into the distance in a shower of sapphire and emerald sparks, safely on their way home.

A favourite early reader is **The Ice Palace**. This is a tale of love and faithfulness simply but touchingly told. Ivan sets out to rescue his brother from the wicked Starjik in a country where 'summer is pale and short as a celandine; winter long and cold as an icicle'. It is full of traditional elements and as in folk tales, love conquers all. Struggling readers do not give up with this book. The emotional power of the ideas and the language carry them through.

The Weather Clerk can be successfully used to support a project for it involves a class outing which depends on good weather. Anna experiences all kinds of climatic conditions as the Weather Clerk tries to keep her at bay.

Robert Swindells also writes well for the middle age range. His versatility shows strongly in his collections of short stories. **The Wheaton Book of Science Fiction Stories** contains examples which range from hot modern technology to time tales which recall H.G. Wells. **The Moonpath and Other Stories** have animals at the centre of realistic stories, a ghost story and suspense stories with a twist in the tail. The title story is a natural partner to Charles Causley's moving poem 'My mother saw a dancing bear'. There are images of violence and retribution, chilling and sombre moments, as well as humour, both in situations and the turn of a phrase.

This striking versatility continues in his longer novels. At the younger end of the middle age range, readers will enjoy **World eater**, a science fiction story which keeps the boy firmly in the centre, providing a point of reference while world shattering events take place all around. There is a grand opening,

then the story proceeds in a series of short chapters with cliff-hanging endings and a variety of incidents and backgrounds. It is particularly suitable for children who read in short bursts and need new incidents to support their interest.

When **Darkness Comes** was Robert Swindells' first book, published in 1973. Re-reading it, it is clear that the power of his writing was present from the beginning. It is a strongly written story of primitive people living the isolated lives of forest hunters. There is plenty of excitement and tension as the small band splits into two warring factions, so that they are weakened when they discover that there are others, more powerful, in the forest. With their arrival, the reader realises that the story is going to take an unexpected turn. The end is surprising but explanatory and should on no account be read first!



In this book, we see man as part of a social group, something which is present in most of Robert Swindells' writing. The individual is important but cannot change the course of events alone. He must work with others. It is so in **A Candle in the Dark**, set in a nineteenth-century mining community. Jimmy is taken from the Union Workhouse to work in the mine. We are made painfully aware of the crushing physical burden imposed on these young workers. Robert Swindells based his story on the Reports of the Royal Commission on child labour and Jimmy and Joe were real people. Although they did not have all the adventures of the book, it is true that only Joe survived, broken and bent, to give his evidence, some of which is now transmitted to children today through the story. We can tell children of these facts, but perhaps they understand them most when they are made to feel by experiencing them through the characters.

It is no surprise after reading these powerful novels to find that Robert Swindells' new book also deals with a subject of importance in a manner which grips and provokes. **Brother in the Land** opens in a northern landscape on the eve of a major nuclear strike. The central character survives and describes the events which follow. The book has all the fascination of the 'post holocaust' fantasy but here is no bleak but safely distanced science fiction story. It is real. Should it happen, it would surely be rather like this.

Danny is left with the responsibility of a young brother when his mother dies in the rubble and his father is taken away, accused of hoarding food. He can join one of two communities. The official one is directed from a fortified stronghold. For them, surviving means a ruthless organisation of the remaining resources. An alternative community struggles to build a new life on more humanitarian grounds. Danny takes little Ben there and hope grows with the new crops. The turning point comes when at last a butterfly is seen again — only to be proved a mutant. There can be no return to normality after such an event. The time comes when Danny must tenderly lay his brother in the land and face the short future as best he can.

This is a book for the middle and upper school, rich in implications, discussion points and arguments. It is a big subject but thoroughly accessible through its excellent characterisation, good story telling and short, eventful chapters. Nor is it a depressing book. Paradoxically, this is due to its reality. It makes the issue urgent rather than defeating. Although it seems that there will be no survivors, it is not a book without hope. The hope seems to lie between the author and his readers. To know that such a thing is possible may make it less likely. Robert Swindells believes that children must be told the truth. Without that, then there really would be no hope. And this is the truth as he sees it. He always writes with a commitment to his subject which he quite deliberately wishes to transmit to the reader, though always within the framework of a good story, well told.

The author's skill as a story teller makes his books an easy read in one sense. They are often as compelling and accessible as an adventure story. The subject matter, however, is never facile and by the time the reader has finished the books for older children, he or she may have thought a little, even grown a little. That must be one definition of a good children's book.

And if you want proof of his power as a story teller, or need to bring 4B to heel, read them his short story 'Moths' from **The Methuen Book of Strange Tales**. They, and possibly you, will never feel the same about moths again. ●

Book Information

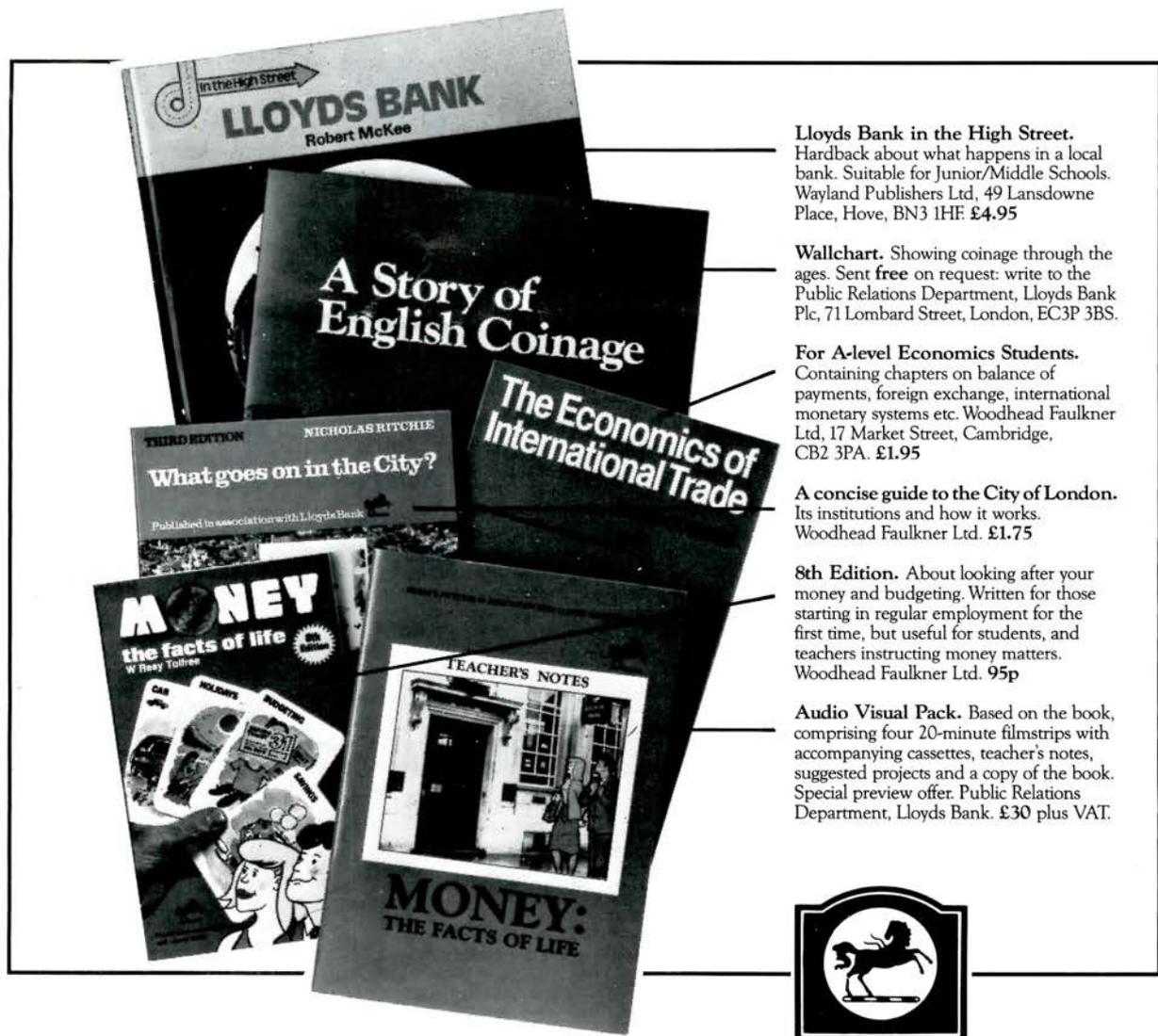
Norah's Ark, Wheaton, 0 08 024177 8, £3.95
Norah's Shark, Wheaton, 0 08 024178 6, £3.95
Norah and the Whale, Wheaton, 0 08 024980 0, £3.95
Norah to the Rescue, Wheaton, 0 08 024980 0, £3.95
Dragons Live Forever, Hodder & Stoughton, 0 340 22769 9, £2.50
The Ice Palace, Fontana Lion, 0 00 671699 7, 75p
The Weather Clerk, Hodder & Stoughton, 0 340 23904 2, £4.95; Knight, 0 340 34619 1, £1.50
The Wheaton Book of Science Fiction Stories, Wheaton, 0 08 026425 5, £3.95
The Moonpath and other Stories, Wheaton, 0 08 022903 4, £3.50
World eater, Knight, 0 340 32889 4, £1.10
When Darkness Comes, Hodder & Stoughton, 0 340 17506 0, £4.95
A Candle in the Dark, Knight, 0 340 32098 2, £1.25
Brother in the Land, O.U.P., 0 19 271491 0, £5.95
The Methuen Book of Strange Tales, ed. Jean Russell, Methuen, 0 416 88350 8, £4.50; Magnet, 0 416 21190 9, £1.00
Voyage to Valhalla, Heinemann Ed., Windmill series, 0 435 12217 7, £1.40

Pat Thompson is a librarian at Nene College and past chairman of the Federation of Children's Book Groups.

You can't know too much about money!

*That's why Lloyds Bank helps to
produce these publications*

Money is our business, so as part of a continuing programme of educational sponsorship, Lloyds Bank is pleased to be associated with the various publications shown here... books, wallcharts and audio-visual. Available from bookshops or direct from the publishers.



Lloyds Bank in the High Street.

Hardback about what happens in a local bank. Suitable for Junior/Middle Schools. Wayland Publishers Ltd, 49 Lansdowne Place, Hove, BN3 1HF. £4.95

Wallchart. Showing coinage through the ages. Sent free on request: write to the Public Relations Department, Lloyds Bank Plc, 71 Lombard Street, London, EC3P 3BS.

For A-level Economics Students.

Containing chapters on balance of payments, foreign exchange, international monetary systems etc. Woodhead Faulkner Ltd, 17 Market Street, Cambridge, CB2 3PA. £1.95

A concise guide to the City of London.

Its institutions and how it works. Woodhead Faulkner Ltd. £1.75

8th Edition. About looking after your money and budgeting. Written for those starting in regular employment for the first time, but useful for students, and teachers instructing money matters. Woodhead Faulkner Ltd. 95p

Audio Visual Pack. Based on the book, comprising four 20-minute filmstrips with accompanying cassettes, teacher's notes, suggested projects and a copy of the book. Special preview offer. Public Relations Department, Lloyds Bank. £30 plus VAT.



Lloyds Bank

BOOKS FOR KEEPS NEWS



Change Round at Penguin—New Editor for Puffin

Tony Lacy who followed Kaye Webb as chief editor of Puffin in 1979 changed jobs at the beginning of September and became editorial director of Allen Lane (the Penguin hardback imprint). Into his shoes stepped Liz Attenborough moving from being chief editor at Kestrel.

In his four years at Puffin Tony Lacy introduced new series like Puffin Plus — a fresh attempt after the ill-fated Peacocks, to identify books for 'Older Readers' — and Puffin Classics. He's been particularly good at reflecting the mood of the moment by rushing out books like the best-selling *You Can Do the Cube*, and snapping up the Dungeons and Dragons spin-off, *The Warlock of Firetop Mountain* series — do-it-yourself fantasy game adventures which now have a huge following.

Liz Attenborough with six years at Kestrel, preceded by a year with Piccolo and five years at Heinemann, is well-experienced in children's books. She intends to continue as an innovator and, we hear, she already has ideas for developing picture books for babies, and taking a fresh look at the rather neglected Young Puffin list.

The Other Award: 1983

The Other Award, inaugurated in 1975, is given for 'progressive books of literary merit'. It seeks "to draw attention to important new writing and illustration for children, and to recognise writers and illustrators who are taking positive steps to widen the literary experience of young people today".

Books commended this year are:

Everybody Here compiled by Michael Rosen; Bodley Head, (hbk) 0 370 30944 8, £3.95. An exuberant collection of stories, facts, photographs, recipes and games that reflects and celebrates the cultural and ethnic diversity of Britain today — from Caribbean to Turkish Cypriot. A compelling panorama of the variety and depth of British society. Appealingly accessible to very young readers.

Nowhere to Play by Karusa, ill. Monika Doppert, trans. by Judith Elkin; A & C Black (hbk) 0 7136 2236 9, £3.95. Based on a true incident in a Venezuelan shanty town, this picture story book for younger readers tells how the children and the adults join together to campaign for a place to play, and then build it themselves. An exciting multi-ethnic and non-sexist story of the present-day Third World with direct parallels to similar play campaigns in Britain.

Will of Iron by Gerard Melia; Longman 'Knockouts' (pbk) 0 582 20036 9, 95p. The early life of Will Thorne, the founder of the General and Municipal Workers' Union, has inspired this sensitively written play which traces the struggle of Thorne and his fellow workers to overcome the hardship and poverty of their condition and take steps to organise themselves into a Union for the unskilled. For older readers, this dramatic play can be read or performed.

Talking in Whispers by James Watson; Gollancz, 0 575 03272 3, £5.95. Set in Chile, this tensely written novel for older readers draws on the tragic events of the last decade. **Talking in Whispers** depicts and discusses the political realities of this military dictatorship and pays homage to the courage of those who continue to confront and struggle against the repressive regime.

Changes at Bookworm

Bookworm, the paperback mail order book club for children aged 5–12, was launched by Heffers, the booksellers of Cambridge, and E.J. Arnold of Leeds, in partnership in September 1975, and has members in 7,000 schools. The club is now solely owned by Heffers, who will continue the selection of books as they have always done and now also undertake the

NBL attacked over plans for CBY replacement

The decision of Julia MacRae Books to cease publication of the *Children's Books of the Year* catalogue meant that the National Book League had to consider the future of the exhibition.

Some years ago now the NBL began to change the image of CBY. Visits from authors and illustrators, storytimes, competitions, drawing corners, and other activities for children, books displayed on stands disguised as castles, space rockets and the like, turned the exhibition from a sober array of books to a jolly, child-centred event with, it was hoped, appeal to 'ordinary' parents and (since the NBL's move to Wandsworth) the local community. This year's exhibition was the 13th, and the third since Barbara Sherrard-Smith took over as selector from Elaine Moss.

In reassessing the situation the NBL has decided to return to sobriety with an exhibition for adults based on the *Signal Review*, edited by Nancy Chambers, which appeared for the first time earlier this year. In addition there will be a thematic 'jamboree for kids' held during the summer in association with Wandsworth Libraries.

The announcement of these plans has raised quite a storm. Brian Alderson (of the *Times*) Stephanie Nettell (of the *Guardian*) Robert Leeson and Rosemary Stones wrote to *The Bookseller* in July criticising the NBL for 'the arbitrary way in which the National Book League has shuffled off its responsibilities' for the exhibition and complaining about the lack of public discussion about the future of this major event. They asked the NBL to reveal who was consulted and what alternatives were considered in coming to what they call a 'hasty decision'.

In reply Martyn Goff, director of the NBL, claims, 'We tried every means of continuing it in its present form'. They could find no publisher willing to take over the catalogue. Mr Goff did not reveal whether, as an Arts Council funded body, the NBL had considered publishing the catalogue itself as a non profit-making project. (The newest NBL booklist *We All Live Here* has 111 annotated titles on 34 pages and sells for £1.50; *The Signal Review*, with 349 titles and 84 pages, this year cost £3.95).

The Signal Review, said Mr Goff, was selected as the best basis for the exhibition from 'several alternatives'. Comment in the reviews, he added, 'is geographically and professionally wide... selections are made by a team of unpaid teachers and librarians nationwide. This also includes such names as Judy Taylor, Elaine Moss, Peggy Heeks and Margaret Meek... In international terms it would be harder to find a stronger team.' The NBL already has a well-established relationship with *Signal* via the *Signal* Bookguides which it sells and uses as the basis for touring exhibitions. The attractions of extending the connection are evident.

The first *Signal Review*, published earlier this year, was idiosyncratic and interesting. (Being the basis of the annual NBL exhibition will probably help to assure its future — a happy outcome.) But it lacks the coherence of a single selector's vision, something which made CBY such a useful and useable tool. No doubt its new status as *the* annual exhibition will affect both the form and the nature of the Review. We shall watch what happens with interest.

More Moves in Publishing

Publishers continue to play musical chairs.

Just as Collins was busy sorting out and absorbing Granada, news came that Hamlyn Paperbacks had been sold to Arrow Books Ltd (a paperback division of Hutchinson). Granada Dragons will continue under that name but for a limited period only. (Granada having decided to move out of publishing doesn't want its name left on books.) Arrow will continue to publish Beavers — the Hamlyn children's paperback imprint — at least for the next two years. Sparrow (Arrow's children's imprint) has been doing some enterprising publishing recently, particularly in picture books; it will be interesting to watch what happens to the Beaver list in new surroundings.

On the first of January next year another name joins the game — Piccadilly Press, a new independent company. The Press however isn't quite as new as its name. With Brenda Gardner as editor it is really a new incarnation for Pepper Press, an imprint which has had its problems since it was set up in 1979 by E. J. Arnold. Less than two years later, with a list 22 titles strong, Pepper, threatened with closure, was bought by Evans. This year Evans sold Pepper along with the rest of its UK publishing operation to Bell and Hyman. Brenda Gardner did not move with her list. Now with new backers and some of the Pepper titles which she has arranged to take back from Bell and Hyman she plans to develop Piccadilly Press along Pepper lines.

Bell and Hyman, with Pepper, Evans, and its own titles, now has over 200 children's titles under its umbrella and has plans for developing a strong list: Bell and Hyman's Children's Books.

distribution of books from Cambridge.

For details write to: John Welch,

The Bookworm Club, Heffers Booksellers, 20 Trinity Street, Cambridge CB2 3NG.

