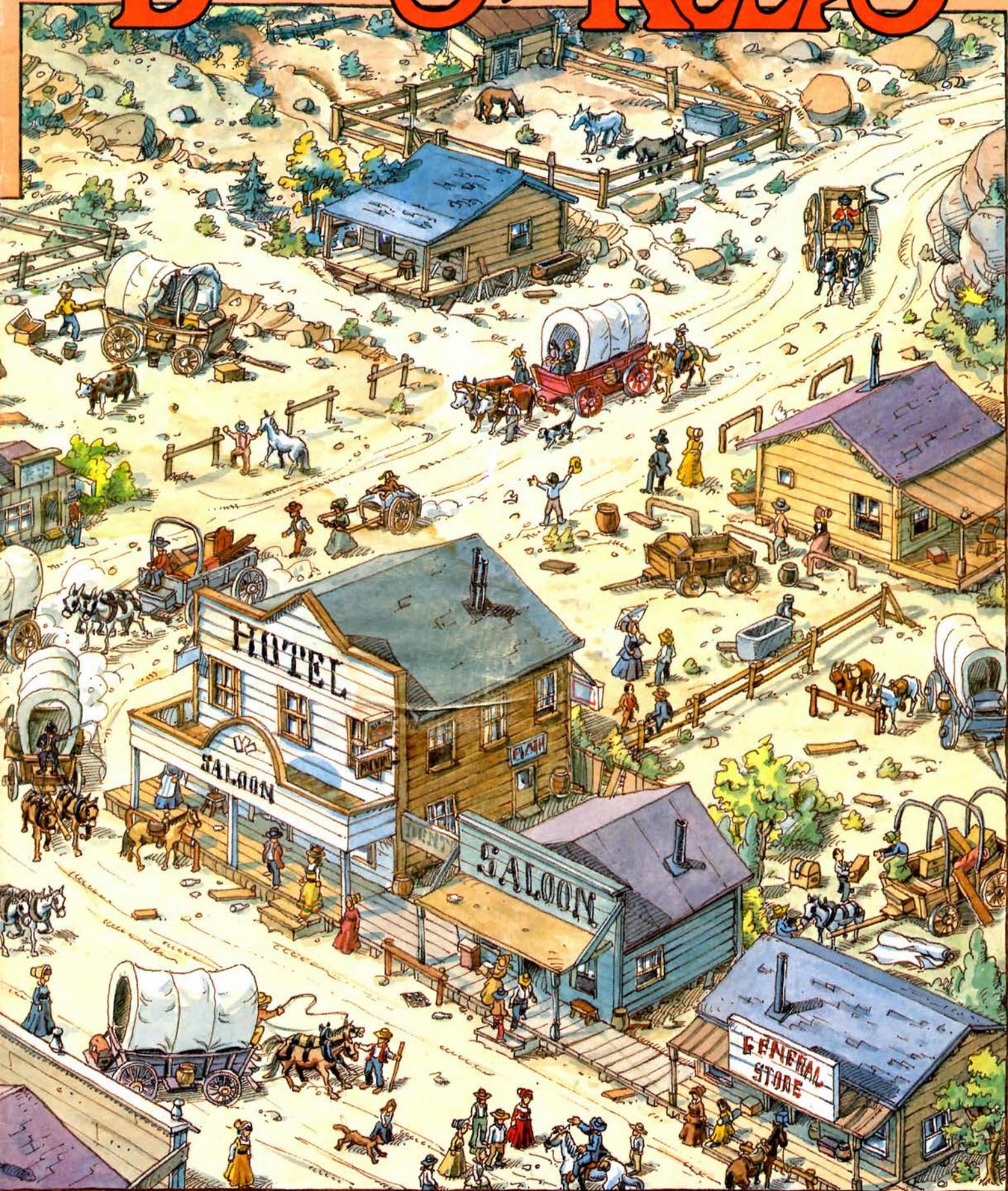


BOOKS FOR KEEPS



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BOOKS FOR KEEPS

— the magazine of the School Bookshop Association

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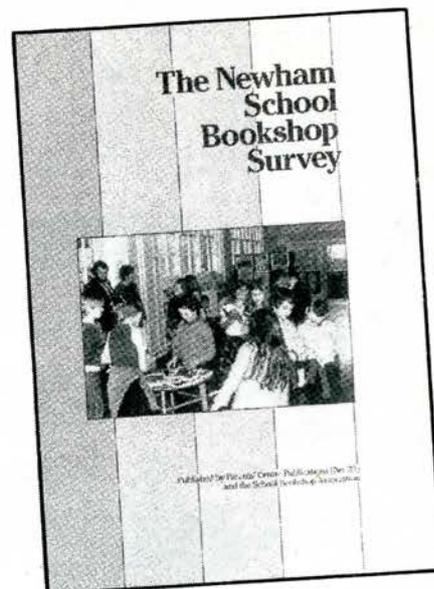
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Cover Book

On our cover this issue we feature a double page spread from **Going West** by Martin Waddell and Philippe Dupasquier. (Andersen, 0 86264 052 0, £4.95). We are very grateful to Andersen for help in using this illustration.



The first time a survey has been undertaken of all school bookshops in a single LEA, in this case the East End London borough of Newham. Essential reading for all those interested or involved in school bookshops. Price £1.25. Published January 1984.

SBA Services and Publications

Posterpacks

Publishers' posters (about 15 per pack) divided into primary and secondary, for enlivening school bookshops, book fairs, book corners, etc.

DIY School Bookshop Unit Plans

Professionally designed plans for a DIY lockable, mobile school bookshop display unit.

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Insurance for stocks of books held by school bookshops, arranged by the SBA through Commercial Union. Apply for further details.

Bookbank Savings Cards

Paperback book covers with special fill-in grid printed on the back for school bookshops operating savings schemes.

To order any of these items, please use the enclosed order form or phone our Dial-an-Order number: 01-852 4953.

Badges

Metal badges, usually from publishers. Apply for further details.

How to Set Up and Run a School Bookshop

The SBA handbook of practical advice and information on every aspect of running a school bookshop. Price £1.50. Published March 1981.

The Newham School Bookshop Survey

The first time a survey has been undertaken of all school bookshops in a single LEA, in this case the East End London borough of Newham. Essential reading for all those interested or involved in school bookshops. Price £1.25. Published January 1984.

Penguin Paper Bags – a bit of authenticity

- New large format Penguin paper bags designed to take almost all large picture book sizes. 10" x 12" with 1½" gusset.
- Standard size Penguin paper bags.

EDITOR'S PAGE



Well, here it is at last: 1984, coming in on a flood of reference, reappraisal and rip-off (Big Brother T shirts are on their way) of George Orwell's 'prophetic' book. How should BfK mark the arrival of this singularly literary year? In the bleak world of Orwell's *Airstrip One* novels are written by machines attended by workers with oily hands and spanners. The microchip reality of our 1984 is cleaner and less spanner-based but there is much debate about the future of the book. An appropriate moment, we thought, in our voyage around the World of Children's Books to land at NBL island and ask Martyn Goff to give us his view of where we stand. Martyn, as Director of the National Book League and Chairman of the School Bookshop Association, is an ideal person to offer a perspective to take us into the future beyond 1984.

The Nearer View

Meanwhile – crystal gazing apart – what has the book world in store for 1984? More determined attempts to sell books by inviting us to join in treasure hunts and competitions are on the way. *Masquerade* has already had its imitators. This year Cape and Kit Williams (the author/artist of *Masquerade*) have joined forces again in *The New Kit Williams*. The gimmick is in the title. Only one copy of this story of Ambrose the bee-keeper is titled; that lies sealed up appropriately in a marquetry bee-box, guarded by a pure gold queen bee. Clues to the title are hidden in the pages of the book with its sixteen paintings. In 1985, a year and a day after publication (in May) Kit Williams will break the seal and the box and bee will go to the reader who has correctly identified the title.

Seems designed to keep people safe at home this time rather than digging up the countryside. It's Hamlyn who are encouraging us to do that. Starting this month and going through to Easter they announce a million pound promotion 'to get the whole country egg-cited'. Twelve golden eggs, 'each worth in excess of £10,000' have been buried around the country. Clues to the treasure's whereabouts are to be found in *Conundrum*, a picture book of twelve regional tales on the golden goose theme, written by Don Shaw and illustrated by Nick Price. The difference between this book and *Masquerade* is that *Conundrum* appears to have been a co-operative effort between the publishers, Cadbury's and Garrard the jewellers (who made the eggs). Both firms will be heavily involved in the advertising and promotion and the book is sub-titled, on the cover, *The Cadbury's creme egg mystery*. Last year we had the *Cadbury's First Book of Children's Poetry* (a Beaver/Hamlyn publication linked with the long-standing Cadbury's National Exhibition of Children's Art which last year for the first time included a poetry section); this 'creme egg book' seems to be taking sponsorship a stage further. Is it a predictor of future trends? Shall we be seeing more co-operative ventures between publishers and producers of child-directed products? Beanz Meanz Bookz? Five solve the Potato Crisps Mystery?

So many things now come sponsored, should books be an exception? Is there a 'special relationship' to be maintained between children and books or is that a pre-1984 idea? What do you think?

Involving Kids

More conventional is the Children's Britain Competition 1984 being run by the Map and Guide Group of the Book Marketing Council in conjunction with John Craven. Children, in three age-groups up to 16, are asked either to draw a map or write a guide of any area in Britain they know well. Prizes

include holiday trips abroad and in this country, atlases, maps and guides. It's hoped schools will be involved. (Details from Sue Kerpner, BMC, 19 Bedford Square, London WC1B 3HJ.) And a new venture, in this country at least, is Readathon '84, sponsored by Books for Students to 'encourage children to read more and learn to love reading' and 'to support and raise funds for Mencap'. The idea is to have as many children as possible (250,000 it is hoped) involved in a sponsored read-in during the week May 28th-June 4th. (Details from Books for Students, 58-64 Berrington Road, Leamington Spa.) In the USA the National Multiple Sclerosis Society organised its first Readathon in 1974. That scheme too aims to raise funds and get kids reading. In ten years they claim that more than 12 million 6-12 year olds have been involved in the project. With widespread support and Brian Rix, David Bellamy, Sir Harry Secombe and Roald Dahl among its patrons the British Readathon looks to be off to a good start.

From Beaver to Kestrel

1984 brings changes for Sally Floyer who has just been appointed the new chief editor at Kestrel. Sally started the Beaver list at Hamlyn eight years ago and has been steadily developing its particular character. When we spoke to her about her new job she was at the mercy of some mixed emotions. 'I'm very excited about Kestrel. What a list to inherit! But I couldn't say I am glad to be leaving Beaver.' She is keen to face the challenges of a hardback list 'although my influence won't really be seen until 1985', and has a special interest in picture books. (Not surprising as Sally has two daughters (7 and 5) and two-year-old twin sons.) Caroline Sheldon at Hutchinson will now have charge of both Beaver and Sparrow lists; but, Sally stresses, 'Beaver will definitely keep its separate identity.'

New Lifelines

Judith Elkin's very successful Lifeline Two on multicultural books came to an end in our last issue. Things are constantly moving and changing in this area and Judith is at present working on a series of Books for Keeps Guides which will extend and expand on her series of articles. One recent development has come out of Jennie Ingham's project on reading materials for an urban multicultural community. Traditional stories collected from the people of Haringey, Enfield and Barnet are being developed for publication and the first, *The Tiger and the Woodpecker*, is available this month. (£1 inc. p and p from Jennie at Middlesex Polytechnic Multicultural Study Centre, All Saints, White Hart Lane, London N17 8HR.) The story is a traditional fable, told by an Asian mother and illustrated by an English mother from the same locality. It is available in Bengali, Gujarati, Hindi, Punjabi and Urdu, each with English. Subsequent books are being offered directly to commercial publishers and Jennie tells us there is a lot of interest in the material.

At BfK we are developing our third Lifeline series which starts in July. The idea this time is to focus specifically on books to work with in the classroom. Helping us are Joan Barker and David Bennett, experienced teachers in primary and secondary schools in Nottinghamshire. When last heard from, David was recovering from a four day Great Reading Rumbustification Book Fair. Margaret Mahy – our Authorgraph this issue, page 12 – couldn't manage to be present as the Rumbustiauthor or Rumbustiwriter (roles very adequately filled by Michael Hardcastle and Gwen Grant) but she did send 'messages and musings' which all added to the Rumbustifun. We've been

hearing a lot about your marvellously inventive ideas for book fairs and the March BfK will include a **How to** feature packed with ideas and practical hints, the result of all this generous sharing. So if you want something to get you started on a book fair, big or small . . . Watch this Space.

Cover Story

Have Cowboys and Indians had their day as the basis for child-grabbing project work? Not by a long chalk if reactions to last year's BBC's *Watch . . . Indians* were anything to go by; I saw Infant and lower Junior classrooms going wild about the American West. If there really is life in the old subject yet where are the books to sustain it? We asked publishers to send us anything they thought relevant and passed it all on to Mary Pearce and her class of top juniors as the basis for our third Information Please feature. Mary is the teacher librarian in her school so was able to test the material across the age range.

Among the books that came to us was *Going West* with pictures by Philippe Dupasquier and story by Martin Waddell. We liked it so much we decided to feature it on our cover, and subsequent tests have confirmed our feelings about it. Not only did it capture the interest and attention of Mary's juniors, it completely took over the imaginative life of three and a half year old Robin Hill here at BfK. The adventures of Ma, Pa, Kate, Peter, Louisa, Big Chokey, Mr and Mrs Sullivan and Mr Ridger (all to be spotted on our cover as they get ready to leave town) in detailed pictures and simple text are rich and rewarding reading. A useful book for the classroom and one which we hope will prove W. H. Smith (who wouldn't take it) wrong when they told Klaus Flugge, 'no-one is interested in Cowboys and Indians any more.'



Philippe Dupasquier is a young Swiss artist who now lives in England with his French wife and young son, Timothy. His first picture book for Andersen Press was *The Great Green Mouse Disaster*, a wordless book based on an idea by Martin Waddell who called it a 'smash-bang-crash-story, very much a Martin Waddell idea.' Very different, he meant, from a Catherine Sefton idea. Catherine Sefton is Martin Waddell's other identity, created when he wrote *In a Blue Velvet Dress*, a story very different from the thrillers he'd become known for. 'Catherine writes ghostly, gentle, suspense stories, very carefully built up and plotted. Martin is reserved for mad excitement and very direct writing.'

Going West has plenty of that. A good book, we think, to start the year. Let's hope 1984 has lots of good, non-machine written books in store.

A very happy new year from all at BfK.

Pat



The World of Children's Books

From National Book League Island
Martyn Goff considers the future
for books and reading.

1984 – The Managed Culture

Is 1984 a watershed year marking a real change for Western society? Or is it simply a myth created by one book and showing, in a single, simple stroke, the power of a book to affect that society? I believe it to be both, with the latter being part of the cause of the former.

The range, influence and effect of the Orwellian non-book society needed – yes, a book to announce it. Nearly forty years later Dr Christopher Evans, in *The Mighty Micro*, foresaw the beginning of the end of the book within ten years from the date on which he was writing. Half that period has now gone by, yet *more* books than ever are being sold and borrowed.

All this might lead us to hear a cry of 'Wolf!'. Unfortunately it is not as simple as that. There is a threat to the book as we know it and a very real one at that. The new technology, from television through computer to home video, has been rumbling off-stage for so long that some people had begun to think that the threats were overstated. Then, suddenly, we are deluged by it. Harmless shops like W. H. Smith confront us with home computers and all the accessory gadgets, children dashing past their large and varied book displays to reach the toys and gadgets inviting their attention. Sunday paper colour supplements have whole pages and, sometimes, several pages at a time, extolling the cheapness or brilliance or usefulness of this or that computer system.

The threat, too, is very real. No one of us would deny the usefulness of the computer to a dozen facets of our lives any more than we would advocate pounding pecan nuts by the hour when the 'Magimix' will produce the paste in seconds. But there are darker sides than this. The new technology has cost multi-millions to develop. Some of it has needed consortia even of international corporations to make the research, tests and final products. Gigantic investments made, such producers are not going to stand around asking questions about the good of society or children. They are going to fight ruthlessly to secure what they consider a fair return on their capital invested. If this means seducing children from books, denying them the glorious heritage that the rest of us have had, so much the worse. They are in business, not welfare.

This means that efforts to sell the new technology, to make people feel they can't be without it, above all to make children feel this (see IBM's current adverts for selling computers which cheekily tell the parent: 'Your child will explain it to you') will be relentless.

Before I go on to say why I think this would be a near-catastrophe for the post-1984 society, may I enter a quick caveat? I am not claiming that computers are evil or their makers and sellers likewise. I am not saying they are an unmitigated disaster for mankind or for children. They have their excellences and their uses, many of which will enhance our lives. What I am saying is that *if their use is at the cost of reading books*, then this would have very serious consequences for our society; consequences we should not lightly risk.

I am making large claims, so let us start to see if we can justify them. In her introduction to the recently published Bedford Papers: *Open Moves*, Margaret Meek writes:

It is widely taken for granted, and recent studies confirm, that children who have had experience of books and

stories read to them are likely to make a good start in learning to read and in school life generally.

In itself that would make a very good reason for promoting the cause of the book and resisting any trend to buck its use brought about by the technological revolution. But this is just a start. Quite apart from a child's need to succeed at school is his or her need to develop as a whole human being. Such development depends greatly on the effortless assimilation of race memories and totems, an assimilation that depends very largely on myth (and fairy tale). Leon Garfield and Edward Blishen summed it up in *The God Beneath the Sea*:

The human experience brought to mind by myth and fairy tale extends beyond the situation described by psychologists and anthropologists. It is conscious as well as unconscious, and civilised as well as primitive.

Neither 'Coronation Street' nor 'Crossroads' will supply the elements of emotional development that is indicated in this quote. We shall pay a heavy price in the future if we deprive children of their share in the telling and reading of these myths, a price which no fluency at the computer console will lessen.

As the book has developed over years, the book, that is, as against just print, it has exhibited and caused to exhibit a number of factors which may indicate that it has its own totem values, the stressing of which can only run counter to the mood of the wholesale embracing of the new technology. As a package it induces its own reverence.

Of course people do deface books, turn down corners, spill coffee on them, underline their words and the like. But there is an overall feeling that this particular package has something sacrosanct about it. People are reluctant to throw books away; the burning of books is seen as a decisive political act even if thousands more copies of the same books are available elsewhere. Books are, in short, very collectable and highly valued once collected, quite regardless of their financial worth. Children, too, who are natural collectors, like to collect books once fired with the idea; and will cling to them long after collections of butterflies or stamps, postcards or posters have ceased to mean very much. This truth about the book as a package is a valuable one to those of us who believe in it: most people hooked on the habit never lose it.

The book is not collectable without reason. It is cheap. Before a thousand brickbats are hurled in my direction, stop and think: it really is! Just think in terms of entertainment, knowledge and convenience what the expenditure of a pound will produce. Pit it against almost anything else in terms of entertainment or consumption and the value holds. It is marvellously portable and can be taken anywhere including places where much of the new technology is inadmissible (eg aeroplanes); and it is extremely flexible. You can flick backwards and forwards to establish a meaning or piece of knowledge at a rate that would make a tape recorder giddy!

The book is private. We live in a world where noise daily intrudes on our thinking and working, not to mention our sleep. One television set, one radio or hi-fi, and 100 or 500 people's attention and concentration can be destroyed. 500 people reading different books even in the same space will not trespass on each other for a second. In an overcrowded world this is no small advantage.

Now if only my arguments in favour of the book are 50% right – no – 25%, then it is vital that we get these reasons



across to the young and those responsible for their upbringing. Now this is not so difficult a task as many make it out to be. Computers and video may be exciting, but for most the excitement wears off quickly. Books produce a wholly different and deeper excitement, a commitment and experience that not only lasts but tends to grow of its own accord. Watch a child being told a story; watch a child reading a story and this becomes self-evident.

So we must bring to our task of *educating* the child in the excellences of the book every weapon and wile we can lay our hands on. Magazines like **Books for Keeps** inform those promoting the book to the child, make that promotion more sure, more authoritative, even more easy. Likewise, parental example is a major force: seeing parents read books, hearing them read books, watching them unselfconsciously *enjoying* books is worth a hundred computer demonstrations. Exhibitions and book fairs, competitions based on books, talks and readings of and about books – all these constantly and enthusiastically promoted will ensure that whatever else 1984 marks it will not be the start of the end of the book.

The child needs the book because society needs the book. It does not matter how many machines and gadgets an office possesses, at the end of the day the success of that office will be ruled by the success of human communication between those operating it. That communication depends on words and words are more easily learnt, weighed and assimilated by book reading than any other way.

The American historian Barbara Tuchman emphasised that above all we can use the book at our own pace:

The essential nature of television is that its programme is designed not for self-expression but to sell something

other than itself to the greatest number of viewers. Books, being self-selected by the consumer, can keep pace with his growing maturity in age and taste, whereas the media on the whole must remain at a level that its programmers believe palatable to the widest possible audience . . . Books by their heterogeneity can never represent a managed culture, whereas the airwaves by their nature and control by licensing might. The book remains the carrier of civilisation, the voice of the individual, the 'refreshment of the magic page'.

1984 was a positive statement of the terrifying danger of a 'managed culture'. We need the book to oppose that danger. We owe it to the young to make sure that the truth of this message becomes their own. ●

Martyn Goff OBE FRSA has been Director of the National Book League since 1970. His many activities include writing, reviewing, bookselling and membership of a host of panels, councils and committees (including the SBA) which give him a unique view of all sides of the world of books. He is an accomplished and enthusiastic campaigner for books and reading, well-known and respected in this country and internationally.

The NBL exists 'to promote and publicise the unique and valuable qualities of the book . . . to remind the man and woman and child in the street of the joys and satisfactions of the book.' It does so by housing reference and special collections of books, providing a book information service, offering touring exhibitions, publications and lectures, administering awards and supporting the promotional efforts of other organisations. The Children's Book Centre is responsible for all the NBL's activities in that area. The NBL has a Scottish office in Glasgow run by Mary Baxter MBE, one of two Deputy Directors, and a local branch (the first, it hopes, of many) in Ipswich.

Full details of all NBL activities available on request from Book House, 45 East Hill, London SW18 2QZ, 01 870 9055/8.

REVIEWS

Nursery/Infants

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.



Bath scene from **Moonlight**

Moonlight
Jan Ormerod, Picture Puffin, 0 14 050.372 2, £1.25

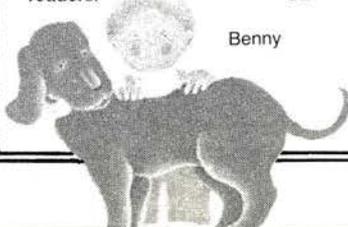
I found this rather a disappointing sequel to the outstanding **Sunshine**. The book takes us through the domestic routine of a small girl and her parents from teatime, through bedtime and beyond. The sequence of wordless pictures is in my experience a little confusing to some young readers at least, and lacks the animation and pace of the first book. The quality of the illustrations gives the impression that the artist dashed them off in some haste. However, there are still too few wordless books available and it would be a pity to ignore this sequel which is merely good because its predecessor was outstanding.

JB

Benny Bakes a Cake
Eve Rice, Picture Lions, 0 00 662089 2, £1.25

Benny's fourth birthday is nearly spoilt when the dog, Ralph, demolishes the birthday cake Benny and Mum had spent all day making. But luckily Dad comes to the rescue and brings home a replacement. With its present tense telling, just two or three lines of text per page, and full colour stipple illustrations a pleasant domestic drama for preschoolers or beginner readers.

JB

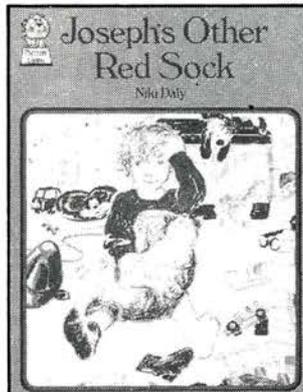


Joseph's Other Red Sock

Niki Daly, Picture Lions, 0 00 662052 3, £1.25

Joseph's search for his missing sock turns first into a game of hide and seek and then leads to unexpected encounters with a terrible monster that bears an uncanny resemblance to a pile of bedclothes. A really cleverly crafted story in both words — mostly dialogue — and pictures and a plausible explanation as to why a small boy's bedroom should get so untidy. Young readers or listeners will find plenty to interest them in the illustrations which are crowded with clothes, toys and other possessions though I must admit I found the colours both bilious and rather washed-out and a disappointment compared with the same artist's work in **Maybe it's a Tiger**.

JB



The Knight and the Dragon

Tomie de Paola, Magnet, 0 416 46250 2, £1.50

Tomie de Paola must be one of the most prolific and consistent artists for young children: his illustrative style is instantly recognisable and humour, compassion and a moral sense are the hallmarks of most of his work. In this tale about 'a knight who had never fought a dragon and a dragon who had never fought a knight' humour is the mainstay as we follow both parties' training and preparation for a fight told almost entirely in pictures. The battle proves a disaster for both but their skills in metalwork and fire-breathing are finally put to use for their mutual benefit.

JB

The Cat on the Dovrefell

ill. Tomie de Paola, Magnet, 0 416 46240 5, £1.50

Reviewers in this issue



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



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



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.



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



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

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

An old Norwegian tale telling how a traveller and his bear spent the night before Christmas in the cottage of Halvor and his family and manage to outwit the pack of rampaging trolls who descended on the cottage every Christmas Eve. A splendid visual interpretation full of vigour and humour, and a book to enjoy at the festive season and throughout the year too. However, I do wish that both this book and **The Knight and the Dragon** could have been rather larger; in both instances the paperback is much reduced.

JB



Tales of Oliver Pig
0 00 672220 2

More Tales of Oliver Pig
0 00 672221 0

Jean Van Leeuwen, ill. Arnold Lobel, Young Fontana Lions, £1.00 each

Two collections of brief tales featuring Oliver and his family, first published as Bodley Beginners: they are full of

delightful domestic detail: "Grandmother likes to read in bed," said Mother . . . "Grandmother can read my monster book," . . . "And she can hug my elephant when she goes to sleep." was Oliver's response. It's good to see these books in paperback since they have proved firm favourites with young learner readers though I do not find the covers particularly attractive even with their full colour. Nevertheless, make sure that copies are in every infant classroom.

JB

Billy Bear's Year
0 7232 2184 2

The Bears' Supermarket
0 7232 3181 8

School for Bears
0 7232 3182 6

Mitzi Bear's Birthday
0 7232 3185 0

The Bears' Wedding
0 7232 3186 9
by Sara Ball, Warne,
45p each

Another batch of 'Little Bear Books' starring Mitzi, Danny and others in the Ursine tribe: I still haven't quite worked out who is related to whom but as before, the pictures — on alternate pages — depict suitably friendly, cuddly characters. Various episodes

are related as indicated by the titles and the texts have more vigour than the previous books. They should be popular with young learner readers: good value too. JB

Market Mouse
0 582 39249 7

Playing Soldiers
0 582 39253 5

Felix the Cat
0 582 39251 9

Maxine's Piano
0 582 39250 0

Dressing Up
0 582 39252 7

Fluff and Puff
0 582 39254 3
Longman, 50p each

Although all the 'You and Me' books are based on the BBC series for the under fives, the

quality of both text and illustrations of these brief tales is variable. The strongest in my view are **Market Mouse** and **Felix the Cat**: in the former, a timid mouse has a nasty surprise when she ventures forth one night, whilst Felix, a molly-coddled moggy, achieves his desired measure of independence and diet of fish by swapping places with Fenella from the fish and chip shop, in the latter. Both these titles claim to help the young listener in 'recognising and practising' a letter sound but happily this aspect of the books is unobtrusive. JB

Bedtime for Frances
ill. Garth Williams,
0 590 70278 5

A Baby Sister for Frances
ill. Lillian Hoban,
0 590 70276 9

A Birthday for Frances
ill. Lillian Hoban,
0 590 70279 3

Best Friends for Frances
ill. Lillian Hoban,
0 590 70277 7
All by Russell Hoban,
Hippo, £1.25 each

Since her first arrival in this country 20 years ago Frances has been in and out of print in paperback with Faber and Puffin. Now, after a too-long absence she is back, this time with Hippo, and a new generation of children can delight in sharing experiences of insomnia, new babies, younger sisters, uncooperative friends with this lovable and very human young badger. Funny and observant; essential reading for families. PT

Infant/Junior

The Mischievous Martens
0 416 25610 4

Lotta Leaves Home
0 416 27430 7
Astrid Lindgren, Magnet,
95p each

Lotta, a spirited five year old is perhaps the Swedish equivalent of **My Naughty Little Sister** and her misdemeanours have long been the delight of many children in my experience. Now that the paperback rights have reverted to Methuen the stories are again available in two paperback volumes rather than the combined Puffin edition; these editions with their larger, better spaced type should make them more accessible to those readers who are just taking off on their own. Read them aloud to those who can't yet manage them on their own; in fact I'd recommend having copies in any primary classroom. JB

The Hedgehog who Rolled Uphill
Donald Bisset, Magnet,
0 416 28560 0, £1.10

Six-ups like the distinctive whimsy and the fey touches of this writer. Seventeen snappy pieces here: some of them sustained stories; some little episodes. The author's own pictures are always integral. I like his trick of letting the young reader in on the making up of the book: (read "Beginning Bit" and "Where Stories Live" to top infants and talk about what writers do?). Bisset's always helping, coaxing, adding to the enjoyment ("Dear Readers . . . the next chapter is the last one in me") Lovely, literary fun. CM

Diana and her Rhinoceros
Edward Ardizzone,
Magnet, 0 416 45260 4,
£1.50

Stylish Ardizzone story about a little girl who 'adopts' a rhino reminds us again that few recognised so soon what other artists now know: picture books have such potential for exploring the imaginative 'secondary' worlds of children.

The pleasure for six to nines will lie in the possibility of exploring the exotic from a cosy, homely setting. My mixed-age infants were fascinated by the contrasts between the light, bright water colours and the black - white, subdued shadings - and the ways in which these both helped the story along. Let's put the young of the eighties in touch with a true artist who never sells them short. CM

Littlenose the Joker
John Grant, B.B.C./
Knight, 0 340 34865 8,
£1.25

Another enjoyable set of stories around the Neanderthal boy, his friends, family and foes. The characters are



Madame Bronovskaja from **The Hedgehog Who Rolled Uphill**.

Right, Mr Effingham - Jones in a terrible state, from **Diana and her Rhinoceros**.



superbly rounded and I think that Grant's special gift is in giving the pre-historic setting both a spirit of fun and serious, considerate attention.

His plots never slacken and the ingenuity of Littlenose, Two Eyes and company is boundless. It's already a firmly-established favourite and the five tales here will read aloud well and be in demand in the bookshop. CM

A Box for Benny
Leila Berg, ill. Jillian Willett, Magnet,
0 416 45350 3, £1.25

This story is twenty-five years old, yet in its freshness and immediacy it ranks with anything being produced for five to nines today.

It's a story about wishing and wanting and the disappointment and sense of time-passing that all that brings. Benny only gains a longed-for shoe box by a series of clever swaps. We meet a rich collection of characters, some central, some on the edges of the plot. Like the best children's poems, or playground chants, it's cyclical, a story which grows, unfolds, reverberates. I've shared it for weeks with as many children as I could. Berg's writing is (a word I use carefully) *loving* towards her children, the adults and the urban setting. The Lowry-like cover is a delight in itself. Do try it. CM

A Box for Benny

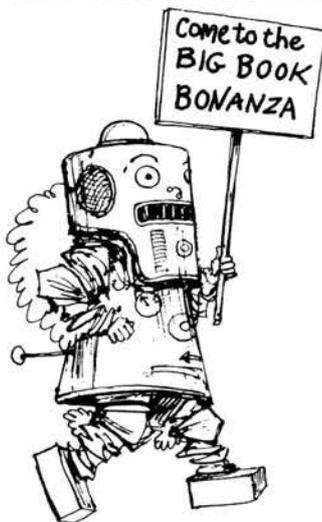


Helter-Skelter Stories for six-year olds

selected by Pamela Oldfield, Knight Books,
0 340 33787 7, £1.25

Represented in this collection of short stories and poems are the likes of Paul Biegel, James Reeves, Ted Hughes, Michael Rosen, Ruth Ainsworth, Eleanor Farjeon, Causley and McGough as well as the compiler herself. Much of the material has a wider appeal than the title would indicate but I fear many potential (older) readers will not pick up a book labelled 'for six year olds' though it is a useful collection for teachers of children of that age. It is an interesting idea to give short introductions about the authors so that children can appreciate that they are real people though how many six-year old readers will cope with this themselves I am not too sure. JB

Junior/Middle



Charlie Moon and the Big Bonanza Bust up

Shirley Hughes.
Fontana Young Lions,
0 00 672160 5, £1.25

Just as Shirley Hughes' marvellous pictures have long been integral to her stories (and those of other authors), so, in her tales, clever accessible plots are folded up with generous ideas.

The plot here is lively, absorbing. Charlie and his friends track down a cunning art faker. It's all set against the backcloth of a book bonanza — and one feels the writer knows these well. The uninhibited reading, drawing and enjoyment is real, as is the odious T.V. personality ('Kids under foot don't help, do they?') and the Lady Illustrator who bears a strong resemblance to...

Witty, compassionate fun. The young juniors I read it with didn't miss the point of the storyteller's moving message in the last pages.

CM

Ben on Cole's Hill
T. R. Burch, ill. Susan Neale, Granada (Dragon),
0 583 30615 2, £1.25

A young boy eaves-drops on a terrorist plot to kill an eminent Bishop. Chilly, wintry landscapes add to the plot's tensions and to the isolation of the protagonist and his sisters. Parents are conveniently absent, which enables some realistic sounding sibling banter.

The writer involves nine-ups quickly and takes them along with ease — the touch is sure enough to have handled a few more twists and surprises I feel.

CM

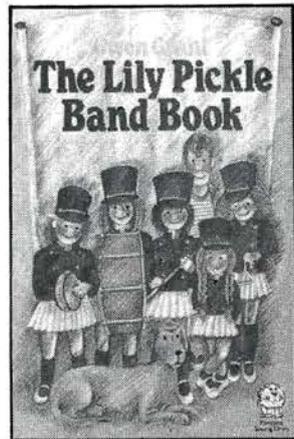
The Catsitter Mystery

Carol Adorjan, ill. Beth and Joe Krush, Granada (Dragon),
0 583 30619 5, £1.25

A sensitive and put-upon child is befriended by the eccentric and elderly couple next door. She minds their cat whilst they're on holiday — and senses a mystery and danger about the house. The plot is uncomplicated, yet the twist at the end of the book is a surprise. I'm now more conscious than I was of how a 'mystery' story can be the first 'challenging' read for seven to eevens.

The early chapters here are eerie, unsettling of our expectations: the third year juniors I read this with tuned into the writer's ideas about empty rooms and private places. Atmospheric writing by a writer from whom I'd like to hear more.

CM



The Lily Pickle Band Book

Gwen Grant, ill. Margaret Chamberlain, Fontana Young Lions,
0 00 672081 1, £1.25

As riotous an assembly of characters as ever filled a book! Gwen Grant's perceptive, worldly-wise narrator implicates her readers in a world of action, squabbles, falling in, falling out, harmony, discord and highly-charged fun.

Her gift is such that we laugh with as well as at her characters. We feel part of the community, with Poison Ivy, Mavis the Mandrake, Elvis and the Dead Beats. In **Private, Keep Out and Knock and Wait**, the humour was sharper, the irony deeper, more suited to secondary readers. Here, middle to top juniors, too, can enjoy the camaraderie, 'reading as being in on the joke' with one of our most enjoyable storytellers.

CM

The Animals Nobody Wanted

Elisabeth Beresford, Magnet, 0 416 44640
£1.25

Elisabeth Beresford's children are often indignant and impulsive, just sufficiently so to stir up similar feelings in her readers. Paul and Rosa, fighting for animals and birds caught in oil slicks are no exception. If anything, some testers felt disappointment that the tales of rescue didn't go on and on.

Short, efficient sentences, simple, meaningful vocabulary make all Elisabeth Beresford's books accessible to competent readers in the eight plus range. This one is no exception.

CL

The Mouse Butcher
Dick King-Smith, Puffin,
0 14 13 1457 1, 95p

The humans have mysteriously disappeared from the town and the cats they have left behind have donned the personalities of their previous masters, creating a town community of their own. Cleverly Dick King-Smith has created caricatures in the crafty butcher's cat, the knowledgeable 'Giglamps' from the doctor's surgery and the pedigree Persian colonel's family from the estate on the hill. I could not help feeling that there was something seedy and distasteful about this story, apt perhaps in the dying town. I also found the escapades of Tom Plug the butcher's cat and his fellow felines decidedly gruesome.

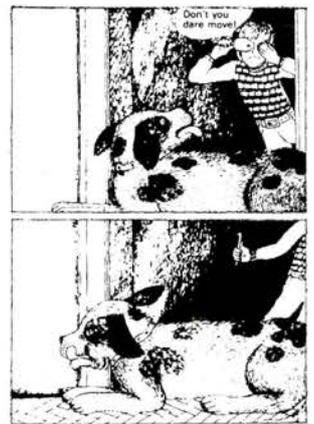
Dick King-Smith knows his children, however, and testers found it exciting from beginning to end. The gruesome elements were hugely admired and there were even comments that the cover was not gruesome enough.

Not for the squeamish but sure to be popular across the middle school range.

CL

Lollipop
Christine Nostlinger, Beaver, 0 600 20707 2,
£1.00

Christine Nostlinger's best-known book **Conrad** the factory made boy is certainly a fast mover within the library stock and I shall be very happy to add a copy of **Lollipop**. The style is reminiscent of Astrid Lindgren — matter of fact, brisk. As with Astrid Lindgren's heroes and heroines, Lollipop's escapades bring to life the seemingly unimportant but very real frustrations of childhood. How he hates his name (Victor Emmanuel), longs for a proper friend, fights with his sister!



Each chapter is a story in itself so for younger children it is a satisfying book to tackle in short spurts. For the same reason it is an excellent book to have on the classroom shelf for reading aloud.

Accompanying line drawings by Angelika Kaufman emphasise the touching absurdity of Lollipop's life. Some are in comic strip form to illustrate a conversation Lollipop has with himself or others. (He is prone to conversations with himself!) A delightful collection of anecdotes for any Primary School child and perfect for children just into whole books.

CL

Arabel's Raven
Joan Aiken, ill. Quentin Blake, BBC/Knight,
0 340 33024 4, £1.25

A welcome return for Arabel Jones' 'great awful bird'. Aiken takes readers into a gloriously understated world of finely-tuned, wry (never fey) humour. Her London ('from Nutmeg Hill to Canon's Green') is a wonderfully quirky, original setting.

The bird who causes the maximum havoc to the adults and officialdom needs no recommendation from me for the seven to tens who'll read this. My hope is that they find, later, the author's even finer work.

For once, I find Blake's pictures too solid and ribald for the essentially ironic life of the story. But that won't deter the lucky readers who'll get to this.

CM

Hare and Badger Go to Town
Naomi Lewis and Tony Ross, Methuen Moonlight (Pocket Bears), 0 907144 39 X,
£1.50

'Serious' issues are easy to mishandle. But when artist and author share an insight about the poetic 'wholeness' of a book, the result can be striking. Here, Hare and Badger move

in a dream-like quest, from the country where aeroplanes full of chemicals are changing landscapes. All the animals they meet on their journey, quite brilliantly evoked by Ross, are suffering: the town they reach is Orwellian.

The artist's humour and the writer's style combine to *show* rather than *tell* that the theme is an important and timely one. I'll read this to juniors along with extracts from *Wind in the Willows* and *Dream Days* — to show them the things a children's book can say.

The Pocket Bears are sturdy: the list promising.

CM

Ask Oliver

Terrance Dicks, Knight,
0 340 32883 5, 95p

Racy, if hackneyed, plot concerning intrepid gang and missing Sultan's diamond is helped by a clever 'slowing down' where readers are invited to guess at solutions ('The best clues are on Pages 10 and 36. Hint: Think hard about insurance').

It's not subtle, but I welcome anything that tries to help the eight year olds who've been readers of *Where's Spot* to see the continuity between that kind of active reading and what my eleven year old Alan Garner readers do. Mr. Dicks' plots, like T.V. narrative, emphasise fast action. Knight have an interesting paperback list (see Richard Potts' *Tod's Owl*) but, on behalf of the same eight year olds who I suspect will find this book first, I wish someone would tell them about line breaks, text layout and squashed pages.

CM

The Magic Doll and other stories

Naomi Lewis, ill.
Harold Jones, Magnet,
0 416 44110 6, £1.50

Originally published as *The Silent Playmate*, this collection reflects the compiler's concern for the links between children's



imaginative play and their reading. There are some special discoveries in the stories — all about dolls and playthings — including *Memories of a London Doll*, dating from the 1840's; a fine Ruth Ainsworth: a retelling of a Hans Christian Andersen.

The introductions (by Miss Lewis) are miniature masterpieces in that they convey to the young her unrivalled sensitivity to the texture of the stories. I wish we had more models of ways in which the 'surprise and triumph' of stories could be talked about so generously to children.

There's a sense of magic in the collection: dolls become owners and rocking horses want to escape and fly. Children's toys may now be very different from the days in which most of these stories were first told — but the magic still holds. All ages.

CM

Billy Bunter of Greyfriars School

Frank Richards,
Granada,
0 583 30524 5, £1.25

Although it is interesting to see these new editions of Frank Richards' Bunter classics (edited by Kay King), I am dubious as to their reception or indeed relevance to children in the 1980's. The era of boarding school stories, with their male dominated mateyness and super japes, perpetrated by

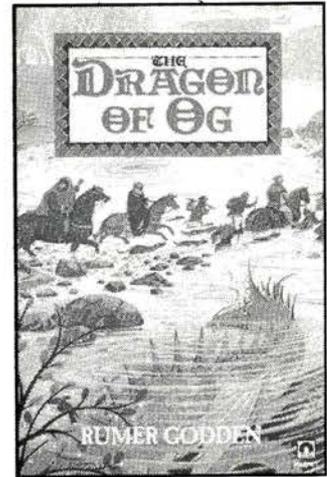
such cads as The Bounder, is as outdated as the 'oh lor, crikey' slang which pervades it. I regret that Harry Wharton, Bob Cherry and friends have had their day and their resurrection is an embarrassment, literally in the case of the colonial attitude emanating from the patronising statements put in the mouth of the unfortunate Hurree Jamset Ram Singh. BB

Seaview

Chris Barlas, BBC/
Knight Books,
0 340 34495 4, £1.25

Based on the BBC Television Drama series 'Seaview'. If children have seen the series, they might be attracted to read this unremarkable tale about life in a Blackpool 'boarding house'. Otherwise I can't see many readers being tempted far past the first few pages. There are occasional amusing incidents and the odd isolated scrap of humorous dialogue, but these are as severely rationed as the early post war years, to which the characters and the storyline seem to belong. In fact, the book is about as pacy as a worn-out donkey trudging the Golden Mile and shows about the same amount of zest for life.

BB

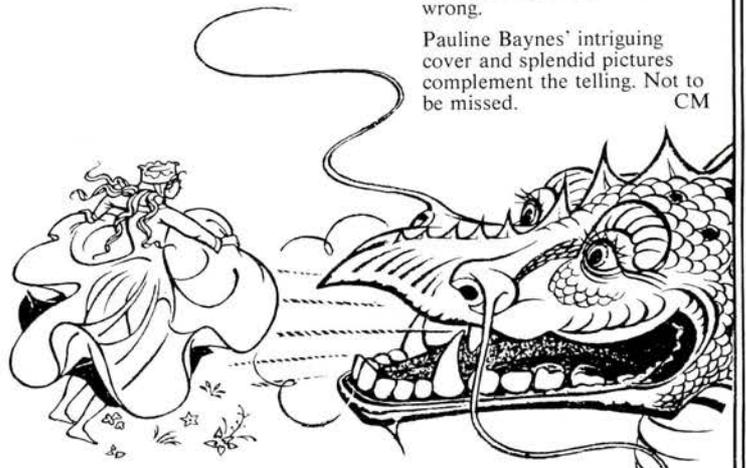


The Dragon of Og

Rumer Godden, ill.
Pauline Baynes, Magnet,
0 416 45060 1, £1.25

This beautiful retelling of a Scottish legend has vigour, imagination, poetry and pace in abundance. Read aloud, slowly, the descriptions of the Dragon, (or of Matilda walking between the cherry trees and the river) to any primary school class and you'll be showing them the ways in which a gifted narrator finds a form to match the feelings to be communicated. The dialogue is particularly fine: spare, colloquial, poetic; in the dialect, she puts not a foot wrong.

Pauline Baynes' intriguing cover and splendid pictures complement the telling. Not to be missed. CM



Middle/Secondary

The Mustang Machine

Chris Powling, Knight,
0 340 32202 6, £1.25

'But if you'd captured it and tamed it would the Mustang Machine really have belonged to you?' Would it really ever belong to anyone? As soon as Mr. Amos tells Becca of the mysterious bike its potential existence haunts her and its real appearance takes over in the preparations for the annual bike-race contest.

A touch of mystery and magic but short, sharp sentences, the perfect read aloud. Adventure, slang, rough-house. It is all

packed in. The Mustang is a highly successful story at many levels. A must for the library and for eager shoppers of both sexes in the Middle School bookshop.

CL

War Horse

Michael Morpurgo,
Magnet,
0 416 29600 9, £1.25

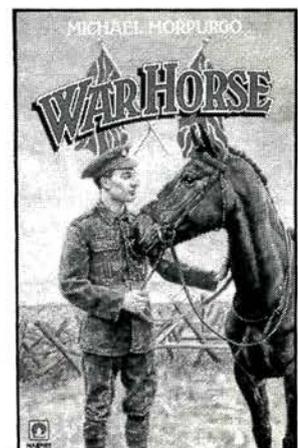
War horse, Joey, tells his story in the first person as did *Black Beauty*. The reader meets Joey as a colt bought by a drunken farmer, learns of his early years with the farmer's son, Albert, of his purchase by the army, his time

as a war horse and his eventual return to Albert and home.

The first person narrative makes for an easy style but linguistically it is a quite difficult book to tackle — for able ten plus readers at least. My tester was disappointed when this was the book I gave her but was then reluctant to return it to me. 'A boy's book' she thought at first and certainly the cover might suggest that. But for all lovers of history, horses and adventure it is an enthralling and touching story.

There is potential also for reading aloud.

CL



Jenny and the Syndicate

Harriet Martyn, Hippo,
0 590 702049 1, £1.25

Thumbs down as far as I am concerned to Hippo and to Jenny and her syndicate. This is the first in a promised series. Make space among the Enid Blytons, Antonia Forests, Ann Digbys etc.

The theme is very familiar. Elder sister is Headgirl, younger Jenny is a new girl. Ariel is quite determined to be expelled. Miss Strickland is oh, so firm but oh, so nice! Girl testers liked it. 'Easy to pick up and put down', said one!

There is really not much to say except that it is predictable, obvious, a mish-mash of much that has come before. I find it difficult to believe that many girls of today dream of boarding school, being ill in the 'san', climbing daring heights from classroom windows. The publishers obviously know otherwise.

CL

Fox's Feud

Colin Dann, Sparrow,
0 09 932260 9, £1.25

There is a dignity and quietude about the animals of Farthing Wood that causes devoted readers to take them to their hearts for ever. This is the third in Colin Dann's series and his fans find each one a delightful surprise. Each adventure ends so satisfyingly that another is hardly expected.

When Vixen gives birth to four cubs the whole community is moved to a quiet joy. When one of the four is killed the same community moves determinedly towards revenge. Old Scarface, ancient enemy, is the jealous killer. He is to die also but not without the warning that he is not the last of his line.

Perhaps there are too many clichés, both in the animal talk and in the portrayals of behaviour and scenery. That may be so, but they are presented with an earnestness and conviction that provides a deeply satisfying experience for readers of such animal fables. Sure to be sought after in bookshop and library.

CL

Black Diamonds

James Houston, Puffin,
0 14 03.1633 7, £1.50

Surviving some ponderous dialogue, **Black Diamonds** is an extremely readable adventure story for upper Juniors. Continuing the Arctic gold exploration theme of the earlier book, **Frozen Fire**, this sequel maintains the same high level of dramatic content and excitement, which should hold the attention of most adventure-conscious youngsters. Set in the cold wastes of north Hudson Bay, Houston's descriptive passages convey the wildness of the area and the savagery of its weather, crucial influences on the action. The author's own quirky illustrations enhance the story while in no way demanding precedence. A good twist in the tale too in the nature of the 'strike' for treasure when it is found. Recommended.

BB

People Might Hear You

Robin Klein, Puffin,
0 14 03.1594 2, £1.25

After initial teething problems in the early pages over the level and style of the girl's dialogue, Robin Klein has succeeded in weaving a tightly dramatic tale around Frances and her life with the strange Tyrell family. The innocent title line is shown to have far more significance than a simple code of household etiquette and the other 'rules' of the regimented family's life hide their own secrets too. So well does Klein succeed that in the final traumatic chapter you feel for the girl in her panic and desperation and are emotionally involved in the terror of her flight to freedom.

BB

The Isis Pedlar

Monica Hughes, Magnet,
0 416 44650 7, £1.25

The **Isis Pedlar** is great fun. Wittily written, pacy and not taking itself at all seriously, it manages to convey the excitement of a genuine space adventure, while liberally spicing the action with humour.

'Adder at bay' from
Fox's Feud.

I mean, what can you do after a first line like: "'The Luck of the Irish' burst out of hyperspace like a squeezed grape seed." Abundant fused modules, control panels and computerised hyperdrives to keep junior boffins content through the book's all too short one hundred and twenty pages. If this one is enjoyed, there are two other titles to complete the Isis trilogy.

BB

The Boundary Riders

Joan Phipson, Puffin,
0 14 03.0226 3, £1.50

Life on an Australian sheep farm as presented in **The Boundary Riders** sounds a bundle of laughs. Jane, Bobby and Vincent are unbelievable, in every sense, and the story chugs along through its one hundred and fifty nine and a half pages at a ponderous pace. Betty Greenhatch is to be congratulated on her cover illustration, as it at least warns prospective readers what to expect, a 'still' life of the Famous Five meeting Zane Grey, with dingo in foreground. Heady stuff! 'The fascination of this book lies as much in the characters of the children themselves and the vivid description of life in the Australian bush as in the hair-raising adventures they enjoy there', says the cover blurb. Now I understand! They've bound the wrong book inside the cover.

BB

Master of the Grove
0 14 03.1386 9

The Hunting of Shadroth
0 14 03.1678 7

Forbidden Paths of Thual
0 14 03.1231 5
All by Victor Kelleher,
Puffin, £1.25 each

Boy hero in an indistinct, yet ancient-sounding age embarks on a quest for the impossible and en-route develops his own understanding of the mysteries of his existence and by herculean perseverance overcomes the dark forces ranged against him and his kind, thereby ensuring the triumph of good over evil.

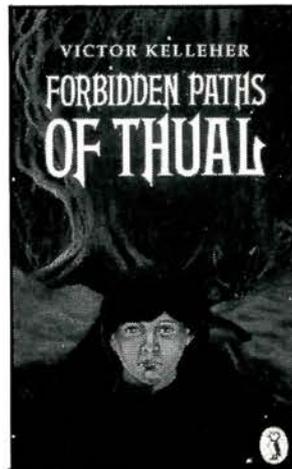
The **Master of the Grove**, the Australian Children's Book winner for 1983 tells the fairly complex tale of Derin, who, accompanied by a misanthropic seeming witch and an eerie raven blunders across a wide landscape attempting to comprehend the mysterious forces that are working against the peace and for the powers of Evil, personified in Krol, the usurping Master of the Grove. The plot moves briskly and eventfully requiring quite considerable concentration to grasp its twists, turns and intricacies.

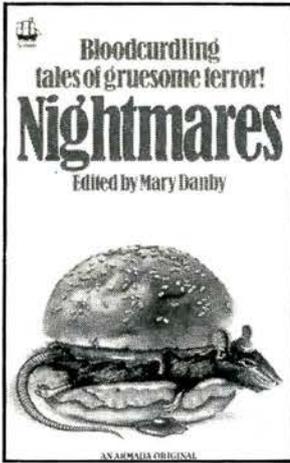
In **The Hunting of Shadroth** the hero is Tal, this time facing a less tangible adversary, the Shadroth, a black, wraith-like mist out for revenge since the theft of a magic token from its cave by the clan's young, headstrong chieftain. On this occasion the boy's animal companion is a Feln, a giant lion, and his girl assistant is the chieftain's sister. The odds are stacked against Tal from the onset and problems that he must solve often overwhelming, but triumph he does and virtue, plus a dash of his own supernatural gift, brings its reward.

Forbidden Paths of Thual is as competently, fluently written as the others and involves Quen, who must save his village from the hideously deformed Mollag by attempting the impossible and seeking the dangerously powerful Eye of Desire, employing it to destroy the enemy. This time his animal familiars are a fox and a bear and the last chapter reward is to become a woodsman in the very forest where he adventured so notably.

All of these books are attractively packaged and likely to appeal to fantasy loving lower-mid secondary pupils. Probably those already switched on to Susan Cooper or selected Diana Wynne-Jones.

DB





15th Armada Ghost Book

0 00 692222 8

Nightmares

0 00 692103 5

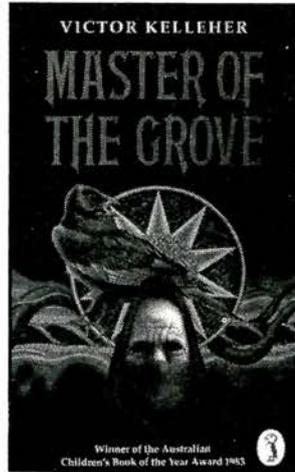
Both ed. Mary Danby, Armada, 95p each

'Ghost stories are a load of tripe, and the kids that read them are a lot of twits — and if you don't like that you can do the other thing' — an ironic kind of remark from the storyteller in Alan W. Lear's contribution to the 15th Ghost Book. If he's right then I guess that over half the child population are twits, who will no doubt welcome yet another in this now familiar format and range of material. Contributors here include Jan Mark and Alison Prince amongst less familiar names.

Nightmares might as easily be Armada Ghost 16 since they have four storytellers in common and the format and content is virtually identical. I was drawn to Rosemary Timperley's *The Hat* in this one, the build up of suspense and its resolution was especially well handled.

Low marks for organisation in both books. Why ever is it that phrases from the text that apply to the illustrations are not always on the opposite page? However, *Nightmares* does redeem itself by the gruesome cover of a rat in a sesame bun ladled with ketchup. I put a poster-sized copy near the school serving hatch — nothing like impact!!

DB



Don't Forget Our Sundae Date

John Harvey, Hippo, 0 590 70248 3, £1.25

Spawned from a stable not a biro's length from *Sweet Dreams* etc. this particular confection concerns Lesley Hollister, an English naive, who goes to The Big Apple to live with father — now romantically involved with his secretary of course — has an upper and downer with the school bitch, and is inclined towards class reject, Max Melling, who eventually pulls round and, since he hopes to be a vet and is moonlighting in a pet shop, sends her a parrot to deliver the message about the planned Sunday date in an ice-cream parlour.

On the whole it is much as one might expect but you must admit that the parrot is new!!

DB

Walking Shadows

Terry Deary, Longmans Knockouts,

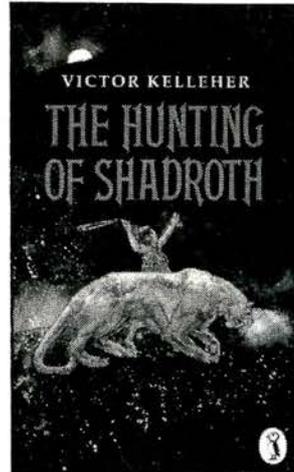
0 582 20504 2, £1.00

Another thumbs-down for cover design. Do publishers ever research reader reaction to book jackets? Experience tells me that Magritte-like covers are certain death for books intended for young readers.

Anyway, there are two supernatural tales here, the first inventively playing with the idea of mirror worlds, a bit long-winded to start, but basically entertaining, and the second, rather more mundane, exploring the boy being the

exerted upon her by her family, friends and the Force itself.

This is one of Needle's more journalistic 'Issue' novels, where at times the sensation clouds the theme. The writer's questioning concern about the role of Law and Order in our society and its relationship to racial minorities is perhaps too pointedly and passionately underlined so that rather than working for the story it works in opposition because the negative attitudes that are



ghost of his own great-grandfather idea. The language and style is straightforward and contemporary as one might expect from Knockouts, but the ideas take a little more mind-bending if they are to be absorbed.

DB

Voyage into Danger

Roderic Jeffries, Beaver, 0 600 20691 2, £1.00

Written to a formula that mirrors a previous offering, *The Missing Man*, this time the youth is Paul, who gets mixed up with marine insurance frauds, principally by virtue of the fact that he was floating about in a stranded boat off Mallorca in the path of a fraudulent ship high-tailing it to Lebanon. The police get involved and he gets kidnapped and at the last minute rescued . . . I hope I haven't spoilt the ending for you!!

"A dramatic and exciting thriller for older readers", I'd be surprised to see said readers getting past the cover which features what one supposes is a boy, but who looks more like a six year-old girl!

DB

From Schoolboy to Superstar

Patrick Barclay, Puffin, 0 14 03.1668 X, £1.25

'Guardian' football correspondent, Patrick Barclay, uses the life stories of several modern 'stars' of the game to investigate a theme which obsesses thousands of soccer-crazy youngsters. Very

described overshadow anything that is positive. A novel which has a place for older readers but best read before recommending.

DB

The Vandal

Ann Schlee, Magnet, 0 416 28640 2, £1.50

From the author of *Ask Me No Questions* a very different novel which is a Guardian Award Winner. This is an intelligent, futuristic tale which suggests that mankind's deep-seated sympathies with the rhythms of the seasons and with the accompanying pagan ritual can never be suppressed effectively. The future of the

readable, carefully assembled, and a cautious reminder to all young hopefuls that abundant skill and enthusiasm is not everything. The aspirants far exceed the number of places available in professional teams, and Barclay throws in tales of the disappointed, to balance the success stories of such as Sammy Lee and Steve Coppell. A simple yet sound four point plan for the better development of the teenage player is propounded by John Cartwright (former England youth coach) in a concise introduction. A responsible book which deserves to be read and absorbed by all those in the position of encouraging youngsters to think of making football a career.

BB

The Stirrup and the Ground

Anne Knowles, Granada, 0 583 30591 1, £1.25

A catalogue of false modesty and high motives! There is something almost obsequious about the author's intention as the story of Cathy and Mark is related. Cathy has moved with her parents to an ancient house in the forest. Her parents must never know that she dreaded the move but has remained uncomplaining for their sake. She is reluctant to befriend the boy in a wheelchair next door. Mark taunts her for her reluctance but she copes so very nobly. Later she takes on another handicapped child so that Mark can have the horse Fiona is no longer able to ride (Oh, but she does in the end!). There is a thread running through the book which has promise. As occupation for his sedentary days Mark researches and retells on tape the story of Cathy's new home, the ancient house of the beemaster. Had this idea which one child described as 'the highbrow bit' been made more of then there might have been a story worth telling. As it is another tester's reaction — 'sickly' must be more appropriate. Try *Pinballs* by Betsy Byars or *Friendship of Equals* by Gina Wilson if you want a gutsy story about handicap. *The Stirrup and the Ground* is decidedly mawkish. I do not recommend it.

CL

book is one where the past is considered painful enough to destroy within hours of it having been experienced. People lead ultra-hygienic lives and are controlled by the ritual of the *Drink*, which in actuality reduces them to the level of the zombies, the danger of which all but a very few can fully appreciate and attempt to rebel against. Such a one is Paul, the vandal, whose principal felony is to give way to an appreciation of the passing of the seasons and to try to grow a real tree.

An intriguing, often chilling read for older, more thoughtful young people.

DB

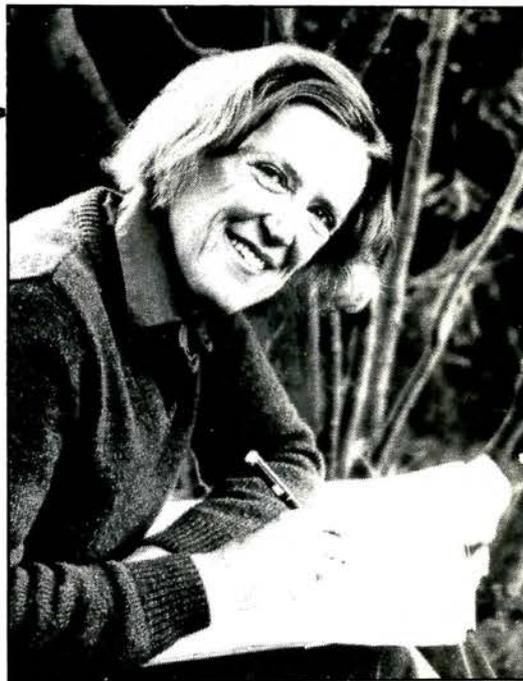
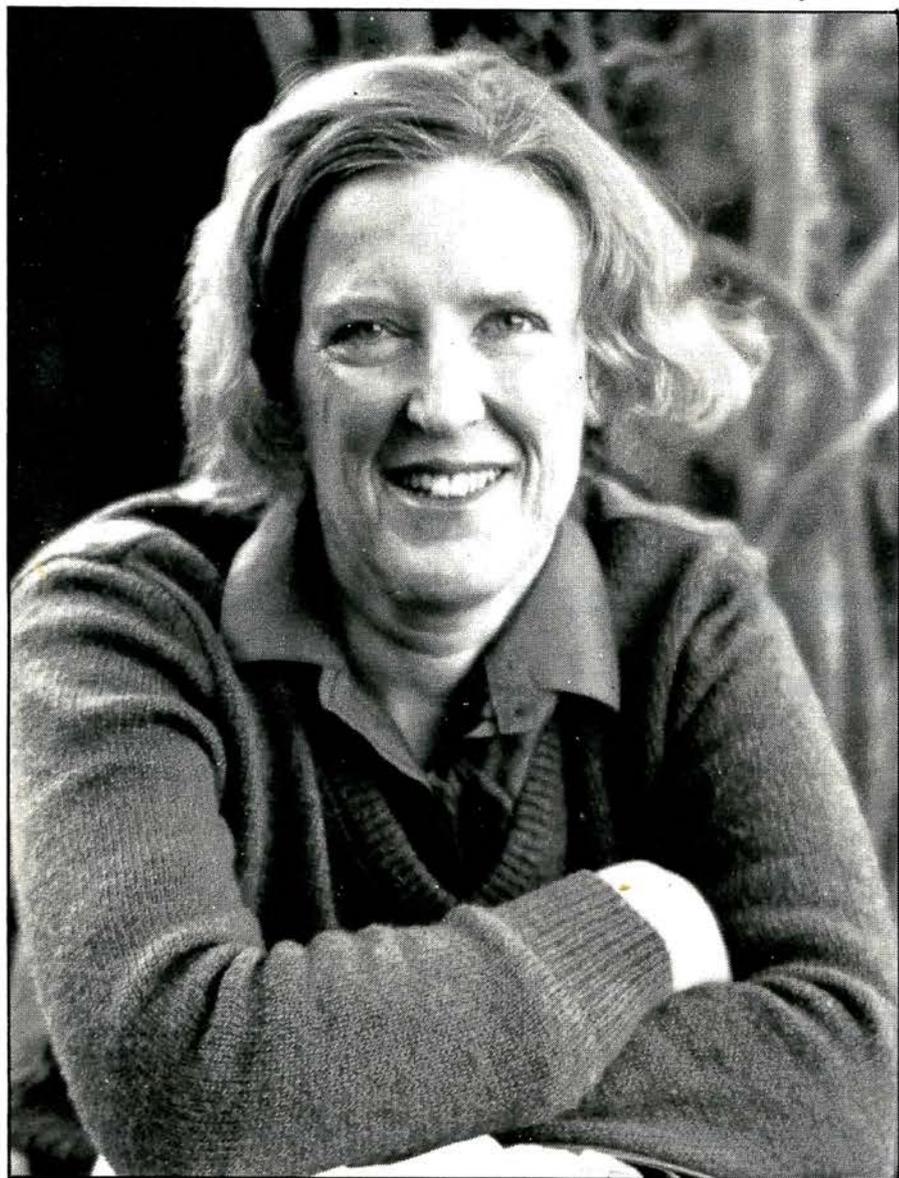
Older Readers

Piggy in the Middle
Jan Needle, Fontana,
0 00 672139 7, £1.50

When Sandra Patterson joins the Police Force she expects some flack but as events surrounding the death of an Asian increase in importance in the public conscience so her position becomes more and more untenable, especially with her journalist boy friend Dave, until she is unable to cope with the various pressures

Authorgraph No. 24

Margaret Mahy

likely to get; and *The Great Piratical Rumbustification* — a wonderful spoof that's a sure-fire winner with all youngsters old enough to get the measure of a babysitter. Not that they're likely to resist the charms of Mr Orpheus Clinker:

'He wore a long, green coat and had a polka-dot handkerchief tied around his head. He had one leg, wooden, and one arm, tin. He wore a patch over his left eye. It did seem that there was quite a lot of him missing, but what was left was more than enough. You certainly would not recognise him as a babysitter. Indeed it was plain to the most shortsighted landlubber . . . that Orpheus Clinker was a pirate.' In the case of Mr Clinker, to name only one splendid Mahy character, it's hard to agree with his creator that no matter how well she writes a book it's never as good as the idea she had in the first place — 'with the translation of the idea on to a page, it somehow loses energy.' Really? Then the energy of Margaret Mahy herself must be a sight to behold as she works off any looming writer's block: 'I go for a walk around the edge of Lyttleton harbour where I live and I talk aloud because often when I'm writing and certainly when I'm reading, I do hear the story as a voice speaking . . . and what I try to do then is take the voice out of my head and put it in the outside world and hear what the words sound like. And so I walk around the coast talking to myself, watching carefully ahead to see if anyone's coming because I don't wish to seem too bizarre.' Much the same method was used by William Wordsworth, you may recall, though the nineteenth-century poet of the Lake District cuts a very different figure from this twentieth-century children's author of Governor's Bay, near Christchurch. Or does he? For a start, she too admits to being something of a recluse — and her home, with its large garden, umpteen cats and thousands of books doesn't seem so very unlike Dove Cottage, at least in terms of atmosphere. One big difference, though, is that Margaret Mahy takes herself much less seriously. As a solo parent with daughters Penny (22) and Bridget (18) she has her sharpest critics living on the premises. Bridget especially 'makes various comments — she feels obliged to be critical having read so many times how honest children are! For instance, of the next book I wrote she said "the beginning's too much like *The Haunting*"

As a writer, and as a person, Margaret Mahy isn't easy to categorise. She both loves and resists her New Zealandness; she wards off all attempts to turn her into a moralist yet fiercely defends the significance of the craft she practices; she's a fantasist who claims 'I always write about real life'; she has a zest and flair that can bring her a bullseye where many other authors don't even recognise there's a target . . . and at the same time she can't offer any guarantees that a new book of hers won't misfire completely. In short, she's a writer who takes risks, who's always changing, always capable of growth.

But then, the last person to be impressed by the writing of Margaret Mahy is Margaret Mahy herself. 'I always start writing a story with a lot of optimism; that this time I have a really good idea. Then towards the end I start to lose confidence. The minute I had posted *The Haunting* I thought it was dreadful. Then they wrote and said they liked it so I thought it must be good after

all.' Certainly it was good enough for the British Library Association who awarded it the 1983 Carnegie Medal. Yet so inventive and unpredictable is this New-Zealand-based, internationally-known author that at least two other books have a claim to being her best: *The Boy Who Was Followed Home*, which gave illustrator Steven Kellogg as perfect a picture-book text as he's ever

and in actual fact this is what the editor said too . . . I'm very influenced by what people say.' Yet it's not surprising she was tempted to repeat her successful formula in **The Haunting**. Naomi Lewis pointed out that 'a generous humour tempers the eerie thrills of this ingenious (plentifully quotable) story', while in **The Times Literary Supplement**, Sarah Hayes commented 'strange pictures of the mind invade with terrible clarity the ordinary geography of daily life. And the warmth and closeness that underlie the vigorous family dialogues bear no trace of sentimentality.' Who would've expected such a triumph from her first attempt at a full-length novel for older children? Well, any admirer of Margaret Mahy's possibly. In a couple of dozen books she'd already testified to her conviction that 'a fairy tale is often the truest way of talking about real life . . . that humour has a more spiritual function than people are prepared to admit.'

She was born in Whakatane, a country town in New Zealand, in 1936, where she lived till she was almost eighteen as one of a family of five. Her father was a specialist in bridge-building. 'I write the kind of book that reflects the European middle-class family I came from,' she says, 'for years I could not conceal that my natural writing landscape was not Whakatane and the Bay of Plenty, which I love dearly, but another mongrel country where the Wild West and forests of wolves and lions melted into each other.' In fact she'd still recommend **The Adventures of Tom Sawyer** and **Treasure Island** as books to grow up with 're-reading them over and over again.' Her own first stories were written 'from the time I was seven onwards . . . in a spirit of implacable plagiarism because, reading widely as I did, I rapidly came to feel that everything worthwhile had already been written. I do believe now that the games I acted out, talking aloud as I did so, were the *real* stories I was inventing.' Later she went to University in the cities of Auckland and Christchurch, qualified as a librarian and held various appointments, all concerned with children's library work. She's still a frequent visitor to schools and libraries when she's apt to don a green wig, describing herself as 'a bit of an exhibitionist with nothing to exhibit.'

Echoing her own two daughters' interests, her first books were written for a very young age-group and were published in the *School Journal*. Her big break came in 1968 when Helen Hoke Watts, of the New York publishing house Franklin Watts, read **A Lion in the Meadow**:

*'The little boy said,
"Mother there is a lion in the meadow."*

*The Mother said,
"Nonsense little boy."*

*The little boy said,
"Mother, there is a big yellow lion in the meadow."*

*The Mother said,
"Nonsense, little boy."*

*The little boy said,
"Mother, there is a big, roaring, yellow, whiskery lion in the meadow . . ."*

And so on. On the strength of 26 lines in all, Margaret Mahy (pronounced Mah-hee, by the way) was offered a contract covering all the work she had produced in the previous fifteen years, as well as a sizable cheque against royalties. This meant the immediate scheduling of eight picture books, most of them still in print. Mahy texts have been illustrated by Jenny Williams, Helen Oxenbury, Jan Brychta, Brian Froud, Quentin Blake, Shirley Hughes, Steven Kellogg . . . though if she were an illustrator she'd like 'to be Edward Gorey who said that all his books are about real life, and I believe him.' But then, real life for Margaret Mahy includes 'more emotional and intuitive components than is commonly acknowledged' and the relationship between her books and reality has always been negotiable. Take the latest one to be published in Britain, **The**

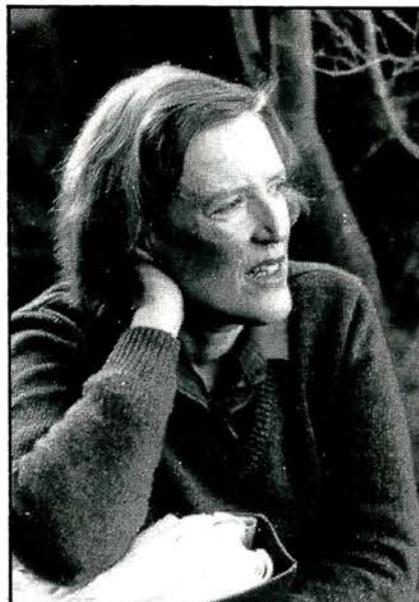
Pirates' Mixed-Up Voyage:

'The pirate captain charged forward and slashed at Mrs Hatchett but she, with tremendous skill and a sword of razor sharpness, parried his lunge, and cut through his thick leather belt so that his trousers fell down. He dropped his sword and seized at them desperately, then stepped on to one half of the banana and shot across the room, winding up in a dusty corner with the classroom wastepaper basket.'

Hardly suggestive of Long John Silver, you may think, or even of Orpheus Clinker. For her model here she went to *The Goon Show*, *Monty Python* and *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* which she listened to on tape 'over and over again while I did the dishes. There's something about the pace that I liked and I suppose what I was trying to do was to make that pace indigenous to myself in some way.' The result is a riotous and anarchic knockabout comedy which seems guaranteed to grate on the nerves of anyone beguiled by **The Haunting** . . . among adults, that is. Children, as Margaret Mahy well knows, tend to be more catholic, and flexible, in their tastes. 'In books, as with love, we are always astonished at other people's choices.'

So how — when not pacing the seashore or listening to the radio for inspiration — does she set about the *job* of being a writer? 'I think if you're writing to earn a living you can't leave it to the chance of a particular frame of mind . . . you've got to keep words and ideas moving.' Thus she makes an early start each morning in her den which has books and files overflowing on the floor and is dominated by a huge electric typewriter. This has an electronic attachment which allows technology to cut down some of the time used in editing. The first draft of her books, though, is always written in longhand in total isolation — apart from her favourite, a large black cat called Fletcher who lies asleep in a basket on her bed in the corner. One advantage she does have is a very clear idea of what she's about. Her books don't, for example, make moral points 'perhaps because I am not as sure about these as other people. I try to tell an exciting story, something which children enjoy reading. For older children I try to suggest the world is not a rigidly defined place, that they can allow their imaginations to move and have a lot of freedom . . . children who are most articulate and deal most enthusiastically and capably with language are those exposed to a lot of conversation in the home, or who have had stories read to them. They have an expectation that they will be able to use and enjoy language.' Hence her deliberate use of complicated words, sometimes for their sound, sometimes because the story makes their meaning clear. How many other writers for young children would call a character Mrs Discombobulous — and let context explain the word's meaning? Not that this prolific enchanter of children is by any means satisfied with her previous work. 'Many of my books I don't like at all now.' Nor is she satisfied with herself. 'I am becoming less and less capable of giving a simple answer to anything, and try to justify this by maintaining that there are no simple answers, and there may not even be any real answers, only points where people agree not to argue.' For all her uncertainties, however, she's careful to preserve the twinkle in her eye and sums herself up with the declaration that 'I am forty-six, untidy with things (not people) and entertained all the time. I am slowly disintegrating but I don't mind, and would quite like to turn into a tree some day, but not immediately.'

Even at her jokiest and most slapstick, as with **The Pirates' Mixed-Up Voyage**, Margaret Mahy insists her theme is 'the infinite retreat of ideal life . . . that as you catch up with it, it's turned into something different.' In one respect for sure she does have a resemblance to the Wordsworth of



The Prelude: her constant attempt to 'negotiate the interface of my current state of being an adult and the state of childhood which everybody shares'. But the instant she says this she laughs. ●

The Books

(all published by Dent unless otherwise indicated).

The Boy Who Was Followed Home
ill. Steven Kellogg, 0 460 06723 0, £4.95

The Wind Between the Stars
ill. Brian Froud, 0 460 06661 7, £4.95

The Great Piratical Rumbustification and The Librarian and the Robbers
ill. Quentin Blake, 0 460 06871 7, £5.50;
Young Puffin, 0 14 03.1261 7, 95p

The Great Millionaire Kidnap
ill. Jan Brychta, 0 460 06693 5, £4.50

A Lion in the Meadow
ill. Jenny Williams, Picture Puffin,
0 14 050.043 X, £1.10

A Lion in the Meadow and Five Other Favourites
0 460 06722 2, £4.50

The Chewing-Gum Rescue
ill. Jan Ormerod, 0 460 06084 8, £5.50

The First Margaret Mahy Story Book
ill. Shirley Hughes, 0 460 05856 8, £5.95

The Third Margaret Mahy Story Book
ill. Shirley Hughes, 0 460 06625 0, £5.95

Raging Robots and Unruly Uncles
ill. Peter Stevenson, 0 460 06073 2, £4.95

The Pirates' Mixed-Up Voyage
ill. Margaret Chamberlain, 0 460 06132 1, £5.95

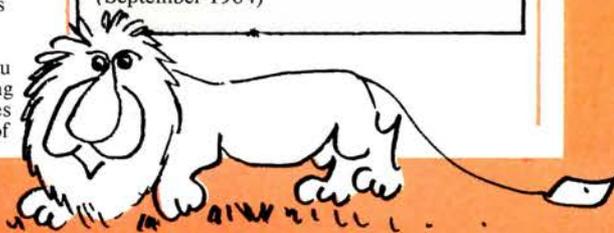
The Haunting
0 460 06097 X, £5.95
Magnet, 0 416 48420 4, £1.25 approx.
(Spring 1984)

The Changeover: A Supernatural Romance
0 460 06153 4, £5.95 (June 1984)

Leaf Magic and Five Other Favourites
0 460 06151 8, £4.95 (June 1984)

The Witch in the Cherry Tree
ill. Jenny Williams, 0 460 05884 3, £4.95
(July 1984)

The Birthday Burglar and The Very Wicked Headmistress
0 460 06158 5, £5.95 approx.
(September 1984)



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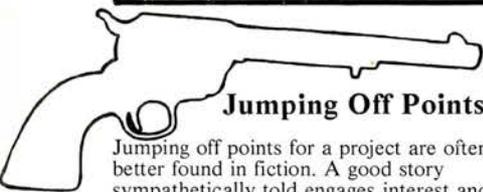
THE AMERICAN WEST

Have Cowboys and Indians had their day? Is there life in the old topic yet? If so where are the books to sustain it?

We asked publishers to send us anything they thought was relevant passed it all on to **Mary Pearce** and waited to see what she and her class of top juniors came up with.

Were you a fan of Hopalong Cassidy, the Cisco Kid and the Lone Ranger? Did your toy box include a cap gun, leather holster and sheriff's tin star? Well, that puts you well into the pre-Galactic age of Star Wars and ET.

Cowboys and Indians were once the popular culture of childhood and imaginations were fired by stories and films of baddies and goodies fighting it out at high noon, uttering clichés like, 'the only good Indian is a dead Indian.' With the arrival of the Space Age the heroes became vinyl-clad supermen charging across the prairies of the universe confronting alien mutants with laser guns instead of six shooters. However, to judge from recent reactions, the glamour of the American West is not entirely lost on today's children and for the Galactic War-weary teacher could be the basis for an exciting project with primary and lower secondary classes. I found it an excellent way to explore and perhaps explode myths: to discover more about the settlers and their pioneering spirit, to investigate the culture and history of the Indians who lost their land, to find out how the West was really won.



Jumping Off Points

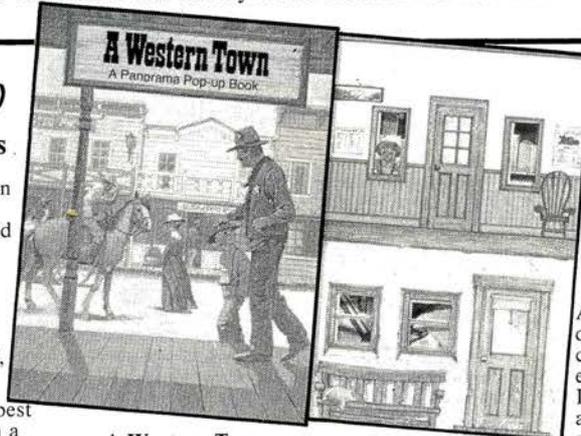
Jumping off points for a project are often better found in fiction. A good story sympathetically told engages interest and stimulates curiosity. These two books provide just such a launching pad.

Going West

Martin Waddell/Philippe Dupasquier, Andersen Press (1983), 0 86264 052 0, £4.95

An excellent talking and sharing book, best used perhaps in the primary school with a small group. In lively action-packed pictures the story is told of a family of settlers setting off on a wagon train, facing the dangers and hazards of Indian attacks, appalling weather, suffering sickness and death, eventually finding 'home' and building a log house. It has all the elements of a great film epic, with the reader as cameraman shooting panoramic views of the western town or the desert trail, zooming in for a close-up. Double page picture spreads lead the reader through the action, giving 'information' which makes it possible to predict the next turn in the adventure. As the wagon train winds its way across the rock strewn desert only the reader is aware of the lone Indian scout stalking them from the bluff. Each busy picture or close-up inset is full of interest and authentic detail, providing many starting points for discussion and further research.

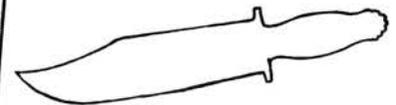
The text is young Kate's diary. The sentences are short, to the point, a simple commentary on the pictures. This makes for easy reading and is a useful model for imitation. (Older children may need to be persuaded that a simple text doesn't necessarily mean a 'baby' book!)



A Western Town

A Panorama Pop-up Book
Ill. Marvin Boggs and Borge Svennson, Text
Kenneth Ulyatt, Kestrel (1983),
0 7226 5797 8, £3.95

This ingenious book opens out to form a street scene of a Western town. The cut out interiors show a general store, the sheriff's office, the Telegraph office and the Livery Stable; when tabs are pulled the blacksmith shoes his horse, and a boy and girl play hide and seek behind some barrels. An excellent basis for improvised drama which is often a marvellous way to start a project which involves people. Through role-playing children are challenged to find out more about their characters: what they would have worn, where they lived, the reasons for their behaviour. This scene provides setting and characters. On display it becomes an intriguing feature in a book corner, a starting point for discussion and a useful catalyst and reference point for imaginative storytelling and writing.



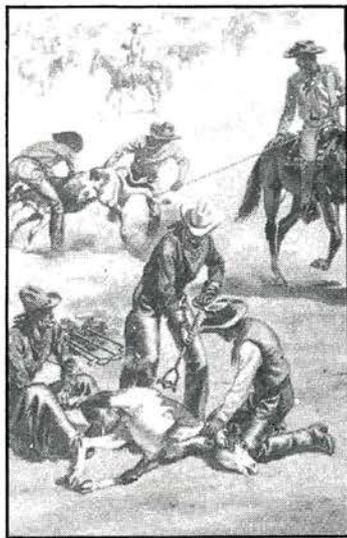
Finding Information

A project on the American West could develop in several ways according to the children's and teacher's interest and enthusiasm. Settlers, pioneers, cowboys, Indians, bandits and outlaws are all subjects about which more information might be needed. From this collection of in-print books there is not one which could be used by average primary children for fully independent research and investigation. Older, more skilled book users and readers should find them manageable; but for younger children they would have to be interpreted and mediated by the teacher. There is a yawning gap in the market for non-fiction titles written by experts and enthusiasts which are useable by children at infant and junior levels. Faced with problems the independent researcher resorts to mindless copying of whatever he or she finds nearest to a likely looking picture or word. And why in indexes is there so much capitalisation and a predominance of proper nouns over more generalised terms? It makes them much less easy to use effectively.

With that as an overall reservation, what have these books to offer?

Border drawings
from **Where the
Buffaloes Begin**.





Branding, from *The Story of the Cowboy*.

The Story of the Indians of the Western Plains

0 7214 0339 5

The Story of the Cowboy

0 7214 0332 8

The Battle of Little Big Horn, Custer's Last Stand

0 7214 0434 0

Frank Humphris, Ladybird (1976), 60p each

Do not be misled into thinking that because these are Ladybird books they are going to be simple; the language of the text is quite difficult in all three. Useful reference for teachers, although the historical information in the Indian book is unfortunately not in chronological order. Children found it difficult to follow the events of Custer's last stand with so many unfamiliar names and the need to interpret a sophisticated map. Nevertheless these are undeniably value for money if only for the pictures which in the Cowboy and Indian books are a good source of information. Many teachers might feel that at 60p they could afford to remove the pictures and use them mounted with simple captions as a resource pack.

The American West

Robin May, Macmillan Colour Library (1982), 0 333 32864 7, £4.50

This has to be the star of the show. This very (over?) large colourful book attracts immediate attention and is good for showing

to groups and putting on display. Its size though does have its drawbacks: put this on the average primary school desk and 'there's no room for us to work, Miss!' However, size apart (the best place to read this is on the floor) this book is a very rich source of information and, using pictures, maps, photographs and original and contemporary artists' work, it covers very well all the areas of this subject.

The size of the book allows for a spacious layout. The quality of the paper means that the colour reproduction is exceptional. The main text is clear and well-spaced (although still too difficult for any but the best readers). The text of the captions is a little easier. All in all an attractive and useful book eagerly welcomed by children of a wide age range.



Indian versus Calvalryman, painting by Charles Schreyvogel from *The American West*.

When the West was Wild

Robert J. Hoare, A & C Black (1977), 0 7316 1619 9, £3.95

Never judge a sausage by its skin. The cover is dull and looks very dated yet this is a goldmine of information full of enthralling black and white contemporary photographs and authentic sources. It would be particularly useful and interesting to upper junior and lower secondary groups looking for the 'reality' of the American West. The index has too many proper nouns but the main text is very readable either in sections or as a continuous 'story'.



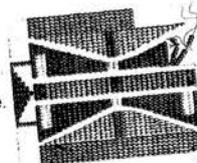
Geronimo, from *When the West was Wild*.

Indians of the Crow Tribe

André Chesneau, Macdonald, Living History series (1980), 0 356 06753 X, £3.25

André Chesneau is clearly an expert in his field; the text is packed with factual information and conveys the true richness of Indian culture. A very good reference for teachers and for children in the upper end of the age range. It includes a glossary, a list of main historical events and there is a helpful index using generalised terms. The intricate and careful illustrations convey the creative and decorative skills of the American Indians in arts such as beadwork and painting, which could be adapted for classroom art and craft work.

If only information of this quality could be presented in an accessible way for younger researchers.



Beadwork, from Indians of the Crow Tribe.

Indians

Macdonald, Topic Book series (1980), 0 356 06277 5, £2.25

By comparison with the previous book this appears to have been written not by an informed enthusiast but by a committee (of teachers?) which has produced the proverbial camel.

The contents include a ragbag collection of games, folk stories, a rather dubious playlet and some craft ideas. The latter — for a Thunderbird mobile and a parfleche (an Indian carrier bag) — may be helpful to the teacher but the rest is a spurious red herring for a child. Information is condescendingly communicated in the dramatic present and the simplistic, crude style of illustration conveys an impression of the Indians as wild savages. A classic example of what happens when a publisher sets out to produce a book for younger children with no idea of what their real information needs are.

Indians of the North American Plains

Virginia Luling, Macdonald, Surviving Peoples series (1978), 0 356 05950 2, £2.25

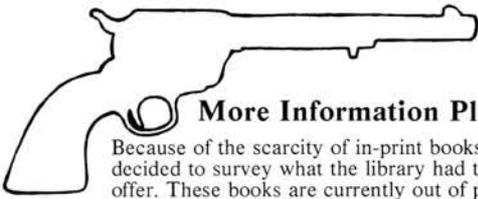
Each double page spread reviews a different aspect of American Indian Life, past and present, and covers quite a wide span using maps, photographs, diagrams and illustrations. The text is conveniently sub-headed and this makes an otherwise difficult text more accessible at least to upper juniors especially if they are directed to particular sections by the teacher. A useful tool.

Wounded Knee

Dee Brown, Fontana Lions (1979), 0 00 671341 6, 90p

This is an important book for those wishing to pursue this subject. Adapted for children from Dee Brown's best selling *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee*, this is an abridged history of the American Indian. It is a teacher's or interested secondary child's reference, giving an account of events from the point of view of the Indians. Authentic photographs offer a genuine perspective on Indian chiefs and their people which is far from the fantasy figures of Hollywood or the spaghetti western.

INFORMATION PLEASE INFORMATION PLEASE INFORMATION PLEASE INFORM



More Information Please

Because of the scarcity of in-print books we decided to survey what the library had to offer. These books are currently out of print but worth looking for in the library.

North American Indians
Robin May, Macmillan Fact Finders

By the author of the large-format *The American West* (you'll recognise many of the same pictures). The text is large and bold but still spiked with technical words. However this is the nearest we come to a book suitable for lower juniors.

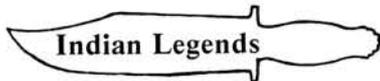
Growing Up with Red Indians
Anne Palmer, Wayland (1978), (STOP PRESS: Now back in print, 0 85340 545 X, £3.95)

Overland to the West
Pat Hodgson, Wayland (1978), An Eye-Witness History Book

Both these are set out under broad chapter headings and in each title sub-headings are neatly packaged beside authentic pictures. They literally give a little information about a lot, so would be good for limited investigation or as a starting point. For real development other sources are needed. Both include a useful glossary of new words.

A Closer Look at : Plains Indians
Christopher Davis, Hamish Hamilton (1977)

Another well-illustrated and well presented book. The size of print and the level of the language make it difficult for independent research but there are some intriguing snippets of information not to be found elsewhere which would add interest and colour to the investigation.



Indian Legends

Traditional Tales to enrich or extend the topic.

Where the Buffaloes Begin
Olaf Baker, Warne (1982),
0 7232 6195 4, £4.95

A tremendous picture book for upper junior or lower secondary which might well be overlooked because of its monochrome cover. Open it and read it and you are in for a delightful experience. It is the haunting tale of a small, courageous Indian boy and a mighty herd of buffalo. The poetic language and powerfully moving black and white drawings reflect feelings of strength and reverence and arouse empathy. Fact and legend mingle and we learn that Indians were just as afraid of other merciless warrior tribes as they were of the domination and interference of the white man. Lots of potential.

The Legend of the Bluebonnet
Tomie de Paola, Methuen (1983),
0 416 45340 6, £5.50

This book also has the power to move. This time it is the sacrifice of an Indian girl that saves her people. The Bluebonnet is the state flower of Texas and there is an interesting author's note about the origins of the legend. The stylised pictures exactly suit this simple tale and the expanse of the page gives a sense of the prairie and the sky.



She-Who-Is-Alone and her doll, from *The Legend of the Bluebonnet*.

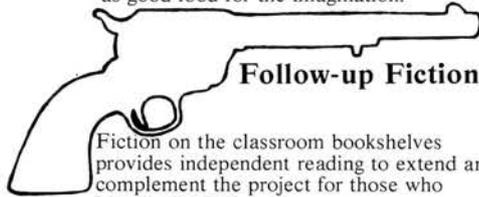
Coyote and the Trickster
Gail Robinson and Douglas Hill, Piccolo,
0 330 26263 7, 95p

A very useful collection of Indian legends cheaply available to the teacher. For younger children use as source material and find your own way of re-telling.

The Girl who Loved Wild Horses
0 333 32176 6

The Gift of the Sacred Dog
0 333 35165 7
Paul Goble, Picturemacs, £1.95 each

Beautiful, intricate pictures fill the pages of these picture story books done in the style of the Plains Indians of the late nineteenth century. The stories, conceptually quite sophisticated, are about the respect and amity between man and animals in the Indian world. Interesting background material for the factual aspects of the project as well as good food for the imagination.



Follow-up Fiction

Fiction on the classroom bookshelves provides independent reading to extend and complement the project for those who become hooked.

Little House on the Prairie
Laura Ingalls Wilder, Methuen,
0 416 07140 6, £4.50
Puffin, 0 14 03.0204 2, £1.10

All the Little House series would be relevant but this one especially so. The family leave the Big Woods and go west to start life again in Indian territory. The presence of the Indians is menacing and extracts read aloud could lead to discussion of the rights of the Indians versus the settlers.

Children on the Oregon Trail
A. Rutgers van der Loeff, Puffin,
0 14 03.0172 0, £1.25

Another story of a pioneering family heading west in their covered wagon. Good follow up to *Going West* for the older reader, 9+.

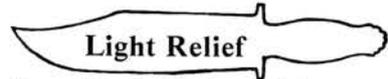
The Yearling
Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings, Piccolo,
0 330 24761 1, £1.50

334 pages make this a book only for the most dedicated readers. Jody a lonely boy whose family are settlers in the Florida scrublands, brings up a fawn as a pet. Together the boy and the animal grow up in a tough uncompromising world. The tragic conclusion brought a tear to my eye.

An abridged version would be a useful addition to junior booklists. (I discovered on test that it was possible to skip ten or twelve pages without losing the sense of the story.) Less cosy than the Ingalls Wilder stories; the hunts here are dangerous, unexpected and exciting. (This along with a boy hero may explain why the book is more acceptable to boys.) Throughout one is aware of the harshness of the settlers' life and the independent and resilient spirit of the people. Short episodes and extracts provide interesting background for the class when read aloud.



Detail from cover of *The Yearling*.



Light Relief

For reading aloud or leaving lying around.

Son of a Gun
Janet and Allan Ahlberg, Heinemann
(1979), 0 439 92502 0, £3.50

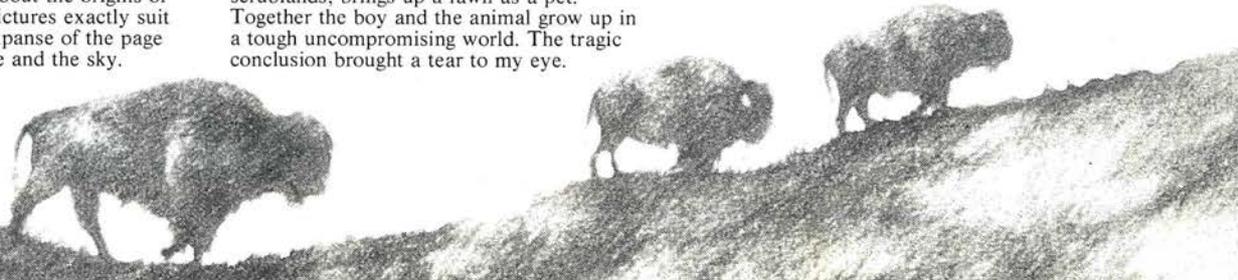
A very amusing almost farcical romp through all the clichés of the film and TV Western; it turns every convention on its head. Just thinking of it still makes me chuckle. Funniest for those already familiar with all those conventions so check first — or leave it to the end of the project. It is written in American cowboy drawl so brush up your accent. Quality Ahlberg.

Custard Kid
Terry Deary, A & C Black (1982),
0 7136 1829 9, £3.50

Easily dismissed as inconsequential, especially at the price; but children enjoyed the knockabout slapstick humour. It was seized upon by those 'taking off' with reading and recommended and exchanged with enthusiasm. The Western setting is hardly central to the story but your project might provide an excuse for drawing attention to it — and similar others like Alan Coren's very funny *Buffalo Arthur*.

Crazy Bear
Colin McNaughton, Heinemann,
(1983), 0 434 94992 2, £4.95

After all the serious business this is sheer joy and if you met and loved Bruno the Bear in *Football Crazy* you will be delighted with his cowboy fantasy (one of four in this book). Colin McNaughton makes fun of the film Western conventions and all my book testers from 4 to 11, and some considerably older, were engrossed in the comic-strip style and the pages of exploding onomatopoeia. Great fun, as indeed the whole project should be. ●



The Man Behind the Books

—Klaus Flugge

In the children's book world there are a few people everyone likes to keep an eye on. Willing to take risks, outspoken, with a clear vision of what children's publishing should be, they challenge, provoke, arouse admiration, respect, surprise and controversy. One such person is Klaus Flugge, the man behind Andersen Press.

It is now just seven years since he founded Andersen Press. Of the current position he says, 'We are now doing well enough to publish books that are not successful. I will always go on publishing books that are not successful.' He means it seriously and his German accent seems to emphasise the earnestness of the statement. That is not to suggest there is no twinkle in the Flugge makeup. There most certainly is. He uses words like 'original' 'imagination', 'creative' and 'exciting' as often as many publishers talk about print runs, prices, margins and paperback rights. It is the spark of imagination that has fired his publishing and gives him the conviction to publish books that are 'unique and different' whether interpreting a fairy tale or telling a new story.

Born in Hamburg in 1934, apprenticed to a bookshop and sent to Book Trade School in Leipzig, he emigrated to America at the age of 23 as an East German refugee who spoke only German and Russian, knew no-one but felt that America was 'a most exciting country'. After a variety of jobs, a period hitch-hiking, and two years as an American GI, he was offered a job working as a Personal Assistant to Lew Schwartz, owner of Abelard-Schuman publishing in New York. After only a year and a half Schwartz suggested he go to Europe to build up the very small list they had there. So, in 1961, he came to London, 'not knowing what to expect, young, full of complexes, a stranger in Great Britain.' He found it difficult. In America he was one of a large immigrant population. Not so here. He was also discovering how very little he knew about publishing. 'I had no experience. I thought I could publish mid-Atlantic editions, that books would be equally accepted on both sides of the Atlantic.' He had to learn fast, publishing fiction, poetry, books on garden architecture and some children's books. By the time Schwartz died and Abelard-Schuman was bought by Blackie he had acquired a more international outlook and 'a strong belief in co-productions, particularly in the field of picture books, which need international support'.

Blackie were 'distinguished, old, traditional', but his 'ultimate goal' was always to have his own publishing company. By 1975 'I knew that if I could get the right organisation to give me support in terms of sales, distribution, publicity, I was ready to start my own company. By that time I was a very committed children's publisher; I felt most confident.'

With a strong presence in the market place, thirteen reps, agencies abroad and a small children's list, Hutchinson seemed an ideal publisher to approach. His idea was well received and an arrangement made whereby Hutchinson have shares in the new company and use Klaus as a consultant; he uses their premises, their catalogue and distribution. In the autumn of 1976 Andersen Press published its first four books. Why the name Andersen? 'Well it's easier to spell and pronounce than Flugge and, of course, the name of Hans Christian deserves to be honoured. (I shouldn't say that should I. He may not be being honoured!)' For Klaus Flugge, Andersen was an 'original writer who contributed more to children's books, internationally speaking, than anyone else.'

The association with Hutchinson has provided a great strength. 'I needed that strength. A lot of the people I publish have become close personal friends and I must be able to stand up and say to them, "I'm giving you as good a deal as you can get from anybody else." Otherwise I couldn't look them in the eye. People tell me business and friendship don't mix, but with one exception people who have stayed with me over the years have remained friends. That's marvellous and shows I'm doing the right job for them.' Klaus Flugge was the first to publish David McKee (currently re-illustrating his first book *Two Can Toucan* — published by Abelard — for Andersen), Ruth Brown, Joan Aiken, Roy Brown. He brought the stories of Christine Nostlinger to this country from Austria. In 1983, with a total staff of three, Andersen published 26 books. He is still fascinated and involved with the 'very creative process of putting words and pictures together' in picture books, and with finding and publishing good stories for children. The Andersen Young Readers Library is now well established as a place to look for reliably readable, well told stories for difficult to match middle juniors. Regular contributors to the Andersen list include Ralph Steadman, David McKee, Tony Ross, Leo Lionni, Naomi Lewis, Philip Curtis and more. 'If I take on someone else now it's got to be a new talent, someone with something really different to offer. I am in a position to say that now, which is marvellous.'

In 1976 Tony Ross was a new artist who came to the new press with his portfolio. Klaus saw him as 'a major new talent' and *Goldilocks* became

one of Andersen's first books. Here was an artist whose style was unconventional, very unlike what is traditionally thought of as children's illustration. His pictures for a book like *The Enchanted Pig* don't soften any of the more gruesome or explicit parts of the tale. Klaus is convinced that children can take this, just as 'they don't need a straight story; they don't need things explained. They love to be mystified and to discover; and they are a lot more intelligent than some parents or teachers give them credit for.'

Ross was the first of many. 'Britain is full of talented artists and writers. I would rather create my own books than buy them in from abroad.' There are one or two exceptions to this Flugge rule, like Janosch, whose *Trip to Panama* is, he believes, 'one of the perfect modern classics in the picture book field . . . irresistible to old and young alike; as endearing as Shepard — but remember Janosch writes the story as well.' Andersen books sell well abroad. But the British public it seems does not react well to foreign names. 'People are not so much conservative as just a bit insular.' The resistance is such that a foreign name might sell one third less than a British name.

One of the most successful of Andersen's books is *The Tiger Who Lost His Stripes*, a 'perfect story' written by Anthony Paul and illustrated by Michael Foreman which has sold almost 100,000 copies worldwide and just been published in paperback by Sparrow. The association with Sparrow via Hutchinson is fortuitous for book buyers who get high quality, sewn paperbacks, (often printed from original Andersen film or plates) which are excellent value. In general Klaus doesn't worry much about selling paperback rights. 'Paperback editors come to me if they are interested in something.' But he is aware of paperbacks as competition. 'With cuts in public spending and the fact that both adults and children seem to find paperbacks more appealing than hardbacks as well as cheaper I'm surprised we are selling anything! I expected our sales to drop but instead they seem to be increasing steadily.'

Klaus Flugge likes the sense that Andersen is now 'on the map'; but his attitude towards success is ambivalent. He is not interested in 'jumping on bandwagons' to get it or keep it; more in putting his faith in artists he 'believes in', a kind of acute artistic integrity whereby he almost suspends commercial judgement if the key elements of 'freshness, originality and excitement' are present. Of course he hopes that others will see this potential too, and that his risks pay off in commercial terms. But books like the Waddell/Dupasquier *Great Green Mouse Disaster* and Tomie de Paola's *The Hunter and the Animals* which he has great faith in 'haven't sold as well as they should.'

Recently David McKee's *I Hate My Teddy Bear* was attacked by critics as 'difficult', 'surreal' and 'indulgent'. How does he react to this? 'Sometimes you simply have to do a book. If you believe in an artist you respect his feelings on the matter and believe in what he is doing. Having a special closeness with the artist helps you to understand him, see his point of view. I'm enthusiastic about this book; but it's the sort of book adults find difficult to accept and comprehend for children; children don't have that problem, they take what they find. It has sold well abroad.' Another comment on the conservative attitude to children's books of most British adults? Perhaps the progress of *Not Now Bernard* (another David McKee/Andersen book originally greeted — like Sendak's *Wild Things* — with adult outcry) towards the status of a modern picture book 'classic' is a sign that we get there in the end.

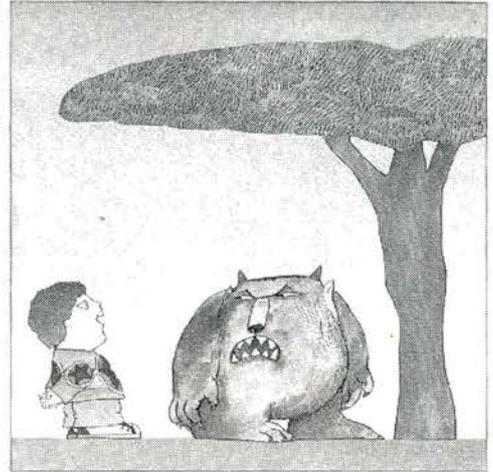
The success of an equally challenging book, *Angry Arthur*, in this country (7,500 copies sold since May 1982) is encouraging and



...and just some of the books.



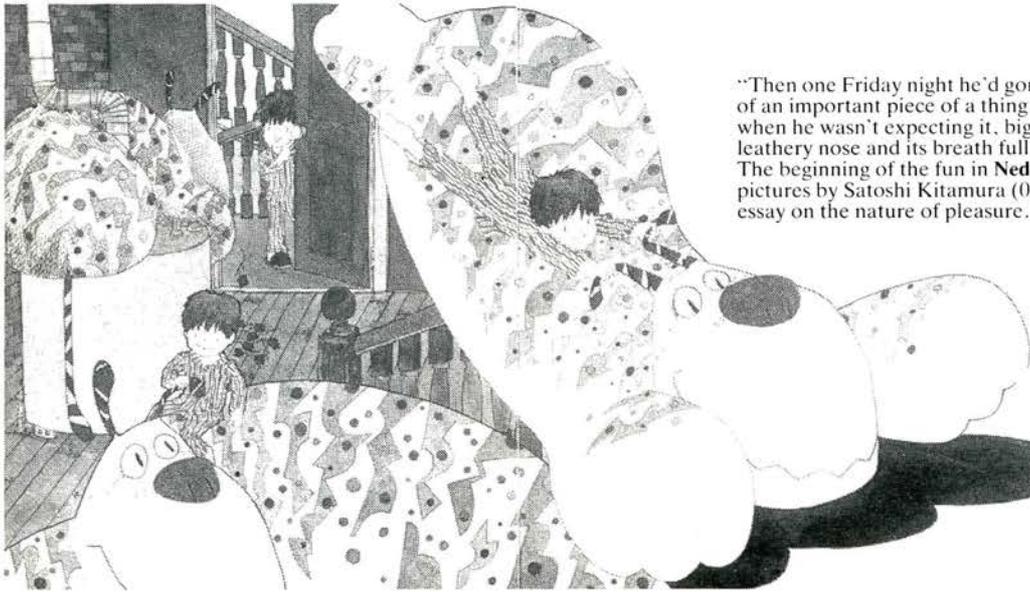
"Hello, monster."
Bernard meets the monster and gets eaten up in David McKee's **Not Now Bernard** (0 905478 71 1, £3.50).
Serious fun at the expense of busily indifferent parents.



"Don't know why we visit great-aunt May," grumbled father bear. "She can't hear a word we say, and she just sits there knitting."
"Never mind dear," soothed mother bear. "She never liked you anyway. Come and have your porridge."
The three bears come home and find a blue-jeaned Goldilocks in Tony Ross's updated **Goldilocks and the Three Bears**, the very first Andersen book (0 905478 00 2, £3.95).



"If you don't know your way," said Little Bear, "the first thing you need is a signpost."
And he made a signpost out of the crate.
Little Bear, Little Tiger and the indispensable stripy tiger duck in Janosch's **The Trip to Panama** (0 905478 33 9, £3.95).



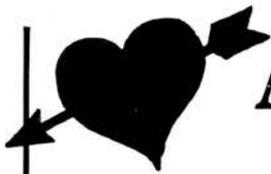
"Then one Friday night he'd gone to the airing cupboard in search of an important piece of a thing he was making and there it was, when he wasn't expecting it, big and beautiful with a funny leathery nose and its breath full of paper roses".
The beginning of the fun in **Ned and the Joybaloo**, Hiawyn Oram, pictures by Satoshi Kitamura (0 86764 048 2, £4.50) a magical essay on the nature of pleasure.

particularly sweet for a publisher who sometimes sees himself battling against adults who 'simply want a straight story to read at bedtime.' Andersen books thrive on being pored over, talked about and shared. Author Hiawyn Oram brought the story of **Angry Arthur** to Andersen and in what he calls a 'fantastic example of creative publishing' Klaus Flugge gave it to a young Japanese illustrator, Satoshi Kitamura, because he thought it would 'strike a chord.' Kitamura, on the verge of going back to Japan, fed up with hawking his portfolio around publishing houses and angry with the reaction to his work here, produced the amazing illustrations which won this year's Mother Goose Award for the most promising artist newcomer to picture books.

Generosity of spirit, a far-reaching vision and conviction drives Klaus Flugge to push out the boundaries of picture book publishing at a time when most are cautiously testing the waters or producing novelty books. He is one of only a clutch of publishers (he cites Gollancz, Bodley Head, Cape and Julia MacRae as examples) who are attempting to publish books which are even vaguely 'experimental'. And, he says 'small is beautiful', the only way to be truly creative, to remain intimately involved in the publishing process. 'I don't want to be a manager. I want to be involved in every aspect; that's what gives you the satisfaction, makes you make more of an effort to get it right.'

Of course the future of the book worries him. But what concerns him more is that the most important function of a book, to be the focus of communication between adult and child which can 'introduce the child into some of the mysteries of life' is being eroded because adults don't make time for sharing. 'The book involves the imagination more than anything else. That is what will make it last. It is more necessary than ever, with TV and video, to be drawn into books as if by magic. You don't need non-fiction books you know. Non-fiction you can have on video. You don't even need the **Human Body Pop-Up** because you can show these things much better on TV... Fiction has the unique ability to make contact with the imagination at its deepest level.'

It is heartening to hear someone talking of the magic of books, especially when there is a basic common sense rooted in the adventurous pioneering spirit. And the future for Andersen Press? 'Good books! New books! Exciting books!' It's like a patch of blue sky appearing among the greyness and gloom of most publishers' forecasts. Klaus Flugge is doing for publishing what he says the picture book should do for the child. Like a conscientious parent he is taking time and care to ensure that as essential and neglected a thing as the imagination is nurtured so that a child can 'switch over to a different world', and that that world is a fresh and original and exciting one, not merely full of clichés and the classics of a previous generation. ●



Affairs of the Heart ... CONTINUED

Last July we looked at current teenage romance series. Here **Keith Barker** takes up the topic and invites us to consider

TABOO AND SHIBBOLETH

All of a sudden Fran couldn't think. Her lips just automatically went to Paul's, and her arms went around him. His kiss coursed through her like hot fudge running through her veins — slow and warm and sweet and good.

(Thinking of You, Sweet Dreams)

Pat Triggs's timely dissection of the recent romance series for teenagers in the July **Books for Keeps** is a reminder of the vagaries of publishing for young adults. It seems only yesterday that publishers were busy congratulating themselves on presenting every possible taboo in teenage fiction while teachers and librarians were eager to show they were stocking this material, admittedly in limited quantities and with a timid eye on the ogre-like personage of the parent. Today, however, with the conservative backlash in America and the proliferation of groups like the Moral Majority, as the sanitised version of the teenage novel becomes more popular, it is claimed that the wheel has turned full circle. But has it: how far, in fact, did that wheel actually go round?

Probably the best way to answer that question is to consider a situation in which you, as a teacher or a librarian, were asked to recommend a dozen books, with a totally sexual relationship involving either a heterosexual or homosexual young couple, which treat this relationship in a frank and honest way, as much adult fiction does. I know that I would find it difficult to find even half a dozen books which perform this function, at least of those books published in Britain. And yet, and yet . . . of the twenty thousand letters received by the **Woman's Own** agony aunt each year, a quarter are from teenagers. Where can these young people read about their problems reflected in fiction? Certainly not in the **Sweet Dreams**-type series with their 'hot fudge' mentality.

So who is to blame for this situation? Some publishers have an exemplary track record in publishing taboo-breaking teenage material: many others do not. It is an interesting situation, for instance, when an author changes publishers for books of this type. K.M. Peyton's **Dear Fred** is published by Bodley Head and not by Oxford University Press (and is also published as an adult novel when it appears in paperback). Dobson publishes David Rees' **In the Tent** (its only indication of a physical homosexual relationship being the sentence 'his body on top of him') but not **The Milkman's On His Way** which Rees wrote because, he claims, he is

not so old that I have forgotten my own confused, frightened, unhappy, homosexual adolescence. The development of oneself as a sexual being, emotionally and physically, is a major preoccupation — probably THE major preoccupation — of the teenage years. Novels which pretend that this is not so are an insult to everybody.

And when publishers do produce controversial material, there seem to be double standards at work. You can write about a taboo subject but never, never include anything as sordid as details. There are techniques of avoiding details, techniques which were abandoned by adult fiction as long ago as **Peyton Place**. There is the technique of the sex act taking place before

the novel opens or between chapters (e.g. **Mia**) or the famous Barbara Cartland technique of three dots (**Goodnight, Prof. Love**). If you *must* describe the act, do it in as oblique a way as possible, as, for instance, Zindel does in **The Girl Who Wanted A Boy**:

As his lips touched hers, she knew why she had been born. The last picture in her mind before she fell so totally into his body was that of a great proud lion, a shouting ringmaster. And then came the prancing white horses as the circus came to town.

If you do describe the act, you must ensure that you show the consequences, preferably as dire as possible: for example, abortion either by a professional (Zindel again, in **My Darling, My Hamburger**) or with gin and a hot bath (**It's My Life**). Thus is didacticism still present. When will the teenage book be produced which shows a young couple having a happy satisfying sexual relationship, without the threat of catastrophe?

And if such an object were ever produced, who would buy it? Teachers certainly do not have a good record of recommending material likely to break any barriers. In a recent book, Pat Wynne-Jones gleefully recounts what happened to Julius Lester's **Basketball Game** (a book she describes as 'malicious' and 'salacious'):

This was recently considered as a CSE text by a London school, but dropped by consensus of staff opinion, though it remains in stock available for the youngsters to read.

I have a suspicion that a proportion of teachers are, in fact, delighted that the **Sweet Dreams**-type book is back in favour. Certainly books like **Fifteen** and **A Very Long Way From Anywhere Else** have always been highly regarded and recommended by teachers, far more, in fact, than they have deserved.

These two books have also found favour with librarians. American surveys, such as those by Marjorie Fiske and by Woods and Perry-Holmes, have shown that librarians are not innocent parties in rejecting controversial material. There is no reason why British children's librarians should be any different from their American counterparts. Search the public library shelves for copies of Judy Blume's **Forever** or Aidan Chambers' **Dance On My Grave**: can you find any? Bobby Pickering, a gay teacher in London has said

most school libraries have yet to confront the fact that all reference to the existence of the gay community is being rigorously suppressed.

So where are youngsters turning to gain this information? Perhaps as Anne Simpson suggests (July, **Books for Keeps**), to pornography, (particularly boys) or even to video nasties. The result of this is an undemourishment of teenage books, a reliance on the safe, cosy subject which is

likely to sell. Young adults will see books as more and more remote from their lives. Do we really want only those books in which the most dramatic event in a young girl's life is being invited to the school prom and the most sensual event is 'like hot fudge'? ●

We will be returning to this topic in Books for Keeps later this year. Write and tell us what you think.



From the cover of **It's My Life**.

Keith Barker is Assistant Librarian at Westhill College, Birmingham

Better Love Stories



What to offer as an alternative to romantic pulp fiction? You sent us your suggestions; we did some research ourselves.

Susannah Hill is putting it all together in a list which will be available soon.

Meanwhile here is a short selection to be going on with.

My Darling Villain

Lynne Reid Banks, Bodley Head (1977)
0 370 11034 X, £3.50. Star (pbk) (1978)
0 352 30269 0, £1.35

Well recommended for its wide appeal (in spite of being strongly middle-class and involving specifically Jewish feelings). Relationships — desirable and otherwise — feelings about love and sex, as well as considerations of other teenage pressures are all realistically described in a complex and sensitive way.

David and Dorothea

Ingeborg Bayer and Hans Georg Noack, Macmillan Topliners (1979),
0 333 26177 1, 85p

One night spent at an international airport while Dorothea waits for her flight and David tries to decide whether to run away or not, is the total length of time that this relationship between two strangers has to develop. Love, feelings about contemporaries and sex, as well as the usual adolescent problems with parents, home and what to do with life are all explored as the couple get to know each other.

The reader needs to be able to cope with action carried mainly in dialogue.

Forever

Judy Blume, Gollancz (1976),
0 575 02144 6, £4.95. Star (pbk) (1978),
0 352 30271 2, £1.25

A realistic description of a teenage love affair that involves explicit descriptions of love-making. Falling in love leads to falling out of love as Michael and Kath grow up a little and change. The criticisms frequently levelled at Judy Blume's style apply here; but this is the most accessible of the few books that deal with sexual relationships in an open way and it is much read and discussed, where it is available.

Breaktime

Aidan Chambers, Bodley Head (1978),
0 370 30122 6, £4.25

A compelling story written as by an adolescent boy exploring ideas about love, sex, family, self and art. It includes a realistic, original and touching description of a first love-making. Sadly the demands the writer makes on the reader mean that it will probably appeal only to the more able. For them it is a book with much to offer.

Dance on My Grave

Aidan Chambers, Bodley Head (1982),
0 370 30366 0, £4.25

A sensitive account of a homosexual relationship. The emotions as well as the physical involvement are delicately handled and problems with the heterosexual world and feelings about death are also explored. A shame, but once again only accessible to the more able reader.

Summer of My German Soldier

Bette Greene, Puffin (1977),
0 14 03.0985 3, £1.50

The love unwanted Patsy feels for an escaped German prisoner is strong enough for her to risk great danger and unhappiness to hide him till he can escape. A tender story which deals with war, prejudice, parental affection — or the lack of it — as well as depicting a poignant relationship between a young girl and a much older man.

What About It, Sharon?

John Harvey, Puffin Plus (1982),
0 14 03.1375 3, £1.10

Sharon's parents don't seem to understand their daughter. She feels rejected at home and at school and is particularly vulnerable after being dropped by Mick who prefers the bitchy Debbie. More an after-the-love-affair story than a tale of developing affections. Well worth reading.

Gentlehands

M. E. Kerr, Heinemann Ed. (1982),
0 0435 12266 5, £1.75

Buddy is socially out of his depth but is enjoying his relationship with the sophisticate, Skye. The fact that his grandfather is being investigated for his part in wartime atrocities with the SS adds a dimension to the story that lifts the adolescent with all his obsessions, complexes and worries into another, more adult, way of seeing things.

It's My Life

Robert Leeson, Collins (1980),
0 00 184248 X, Fontana Lions (1981),
0 00 671783 7, £1

When mum leaves without warning it falls to Jan to run the home, look after her younger brother as well as do her exams and try to enjoy some aspects of life. There are no fantasies in this book. Pete puts in an appearance as a boyfriend as long as he can choose how things go, and once he's had his way he's off, leaving Jan to cope with a possible pregnancy. The ending offers no easy solutions. Jan with her developing strength and understanding is a welcome change from pulp heroines and the book is extremely popular for its realism.

Basketball Game

Julius Lester, Puffin Plus (1983),
0 14 03.1421 0, 85p

A short poignant tale of a friendship between a young, black American boy and his white neighbour, stopped by local prejudice before it can even be called love. Sensitive and subtle explorations of friendship, sex and love written from the point of view of a youngster who doesn't yet know what 'it' is.

A Proper Little Nooreyeff

Jean Ure, Bodley Head (1982),
0 370 30470 5, £3.50. Puffin Plus (1983),
0 14 03.1614 0, £1.10

Young man accidentally discovers a talent for ballet and is dragooned into using it and strikes up a relationship with a richer girl from a totally different background to his own. Appeal across a limited range; but some excellent touches of humour ready to be enjoyed.

Nobody's Perfect

Jacqueline Wilson, Oxford (1982),
0 19 271463 5, £5.95. Fontana Lions
(1983), 0 00 672159 1, £1.25

Every girl should go out with a boy who is older, wiser and good-looking. Sandra, however meets a younger, poorer and definitely unhandsome male, and finds a friend. The relationship proves to be more rewarding than that with any other blind date. Will she succumb to teenage pressures or will she appreciate him for himself?

Breaking Up

Frank Willmott, Collins (1983),
0 00 184144 4, £5.95. Fontana Lions
(1983), 0 00 672107 9, £1.25

A 15 year old Australian boy records in diary form the year his parents' marriage breaks up. It deserves a place here for its description of the other side of love. The family — liberal school-teacher, child-centred, 'open' relationships — offers a view of another life style for appraisal by the reader.

Johnny Jarvis

Nigel Williams, Puffin Plus (1983),
0 14 03.1650 7, £1.50

This bleak, chaotic world of unemployed school leavers is far from the fantasies of most teenagers. In it is a realistic triangle that is all kinds of love and no love at all. The relationships between Johnny, Alan and Stella, through sex, pregnancy and young parenthood are compellingly described. The storyline also includes a corrupt policeman, underworld crime and pop music. This is a description of the land of no hopers and the end is uncompromisingly down beat. 240 pages call for a fair bit of reading stamina; but the TV experience may help. ●



Illustration from the cover of **Breaking Up**

SOUND & VISION

Flicks . . . from Thames

Thursday, January 5th sees the first of a new thirteen week series, *Flicks*, based on picture books. The programmes are ten minutes long and will go out twice on the same day — 12.00–12.10 and 4.00–4.10. Each features a different story and is aimed, says Thames, at the five-year-old age group.

Flicks is the result of an association between Thames and Weston Woods of America whose animated films of books are the basis of the series. Morton Schindel, founder of Weston Woods, is delighted at the opportunities which the series opens up for introducing another generation of young children to some classic picture books. Weston Woods is currently planning a series of half hour book programmes for public TV in the States. 'We want to use TV and video as we have been using film and other audio-visual media to lead children back to books.' (Weston Woods has bought *The Snowman*, the beautiful, animated film of Raymond Briggs' marvellous book and is making it available on video.) His only regret is that a few of the books featured in *Flicks* are either currently out of print or have not been published in this country. He is also faintly bemused by the apparent slowness of publishers and booksellers to capitalise on the series. 'If you use TV to create a desire you *must* have the books available to satisfy it.'

Librarians and teachers — traditionally quicker and more eager to respond than most booksellers — will no doubt be doing their best to ensure that *The Snowy Day* and *Peter's Chair* (Ezra Jack Keats), *Rosie's Walk and Changes*, *Changes* (Pat Hutchins), *Harold and the Purple Crayon* and *Harold's Fairy Tales* (Crockett Johnson), *Moon Man* and *The Three Robbers* (Tomi Ungerer), *The Magic Pasta Pot* and *Charlie Needs a Cloak* (Tomie de Paola) and *The Happy Owls* (Celestino Piatti), are on hand at the right time.



Christopher Lillicrap, courtesy of Thames Television

At the time of writing we haven't been able to get a look at *Flicks* — although we can thoroughly recommend Weston Woods films. Morton Schindel told us he was delighted with Christopher Lillicrap, the actor Thames have chosen to present the series. 'He's nicely low-key and allows the books to speak for themselves.' If the programmes aren't too aggressively addressed to the younger viewer there should be good potential with these books for the 7–9's who could just catch it after school. Or what about lunchtime viewing?

The producer, Charles Warren, has another thirteen programmes in the pipeline and hopes eventually to build the series into 52 episodes — all with films from Weston Woods. He would like to have bought and promoted home-grown films, but the quality simply didn't compare!



Marchpane, Apple, Mr Plantagenet, Tottie & Birdie, photo by Catherine Ashmore.

Tottie

Rumer Godden's *The Doll's House* arrives on TV.

'Rumer Godden always wanted to try out the possibility of putting a murder in a children's book. With *Birdie* being burned up in the candle in *The Doll's House* she thought she'd brought it off! the words are Kaye Webb's — famous retired editor of Puffin — talking to us about her latest enterprise, producing a film version of *The Doll's House* for Goldcrest Films.

As reported in *BfK* last September, the series (5 x 15 min episodes) has been sold to the BBC and the latest news is that it will start in the second week of February.

There are powerful themes at work in this story and a real sense of evil at work. Kaye Webb thinks that Oliver Postgate, the director, has not lost this. The moment when Apple's celluloid mother, Birdie, sacrifices her life to save him from the candle flame where he has been lured by the beautiful, proud and thoroughly evil Marchpane, remains the dramatic climax of the film. Tottie, the little wooden peg doll, selfless and brave, is still the moral centre of the story.

Peter Firmin, Oliver Postgate's collaborator on, among others, *The Pogles*, *Bagpuss*, *The Clangers*, *Ivor the Engine*, created the doll figures which were used in the animated film. The humans — the little girls who own the strangely assorted 'family' of dolls — are shown in a series of still photographs. Voices are provided by Una Stubbs, Anna Calder-Marshall, Olwen Griffiths and Oliver Postgate; and there's a song by David Heneker, sung by Una Stubbs.

'There are very few stories about dolls with such fully developed personalities' says Kay. 'Rumer Godden wanted people to care for their dolls, to feel when they passed them lying on the floor that they had feelings about life, about their environment.'

If caring about your doll's feelings is part of learning empathy for other people *The Doll's House* and (we hope) *Tottie* provide plenty to think and feel about.

In the steps of Jim lad

Jack Holborn, Leon Garfield's vivid and exciting tale of piracy, shipwreck, murder and mystery is reissued (Puffin, 0 14 03.0318 9, £1.50) with a tie-in cover. The film — a West German production — dubbed into English — will be shown in twelve thirty minute weekly episodes, starting on Sunday, January 15th at 4.30. It originates from TVS and will go out simultaneously on all TV networks.

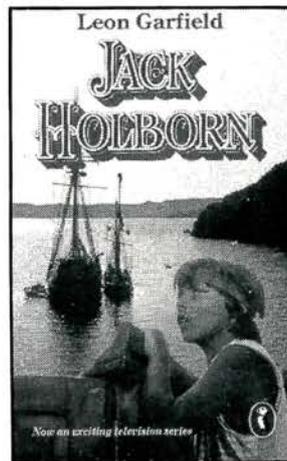
Moonfleet, J. Meade Falkner's classic story of smuggling and adventure will be available next month from BBC/Knight (0 340 34846 1, £1.50) with a tie-in cover to coincide with the first episode on February 21st of a BBC TV adaptation which will run until the end of March.

Tucker, again . . . and again

The previous series of *Tucker's Luck* will be repeated on BBC 2 in nine weekly episodes, starting 10th January. A new series begins on BBC 2 on March 13th. Which looks like 18 uninterrupted weeks of *Tucker* for his fans.

Emma and Grandpa

Two books by Joy Whitty based on her new television series about a small girl and her grandfather are published by Longman in February. The first programme in the series is scheduled to be shown on January 4th on all ITV networks; the first book, *January, February, March* relates the time Emma (borrowed from her Mum) spends with Grandpa in his country cottage and the things they get up to in the first three months of the year. A blend of information and story which



David Daker as Elzevir Block & Adam Godley as John Trenchard from *Moonfleet* BBC Enterprises.

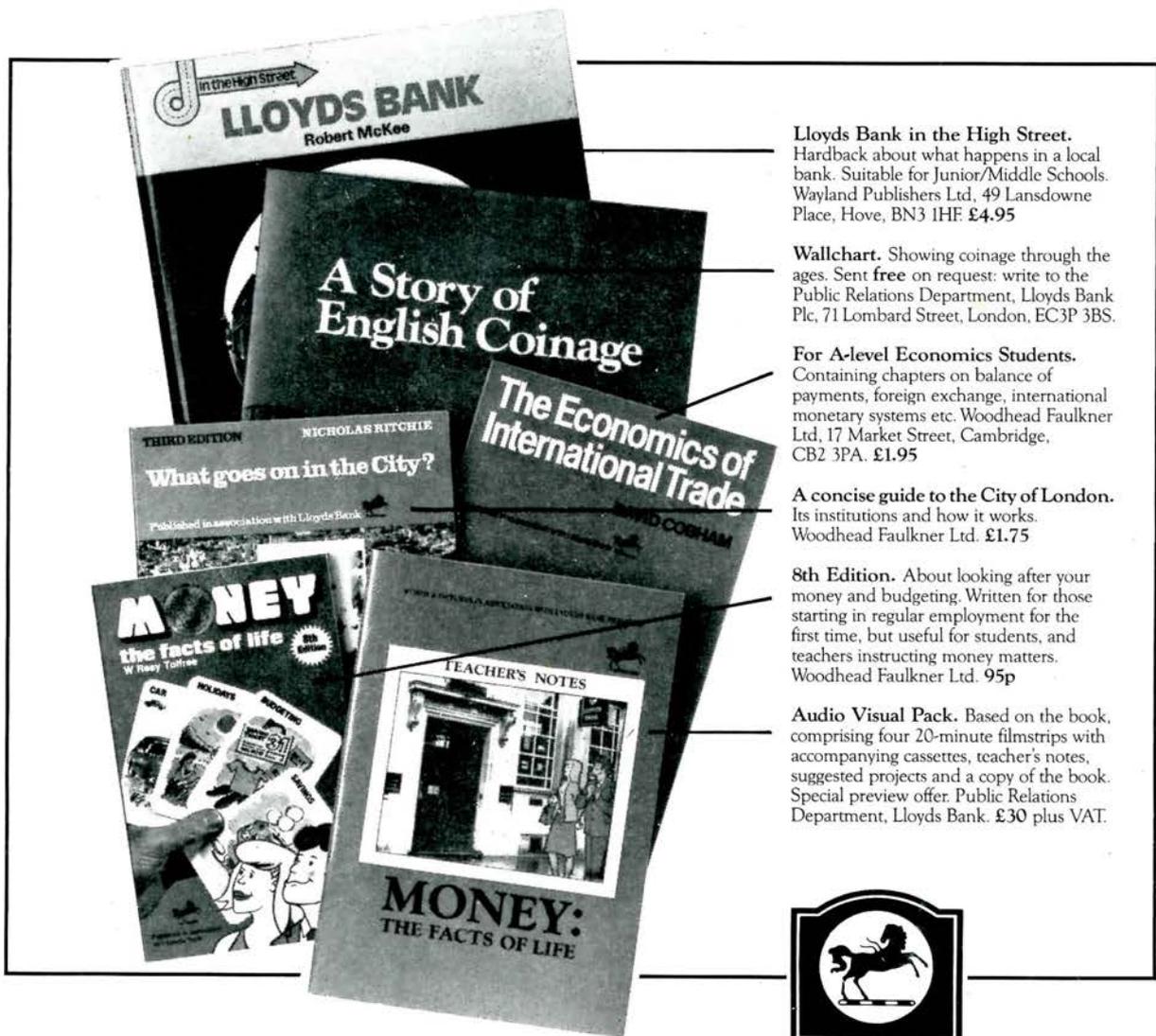


continues in April, May, June. The books cost £3.95 each and the rest of the year follows in two more books in July. ●

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