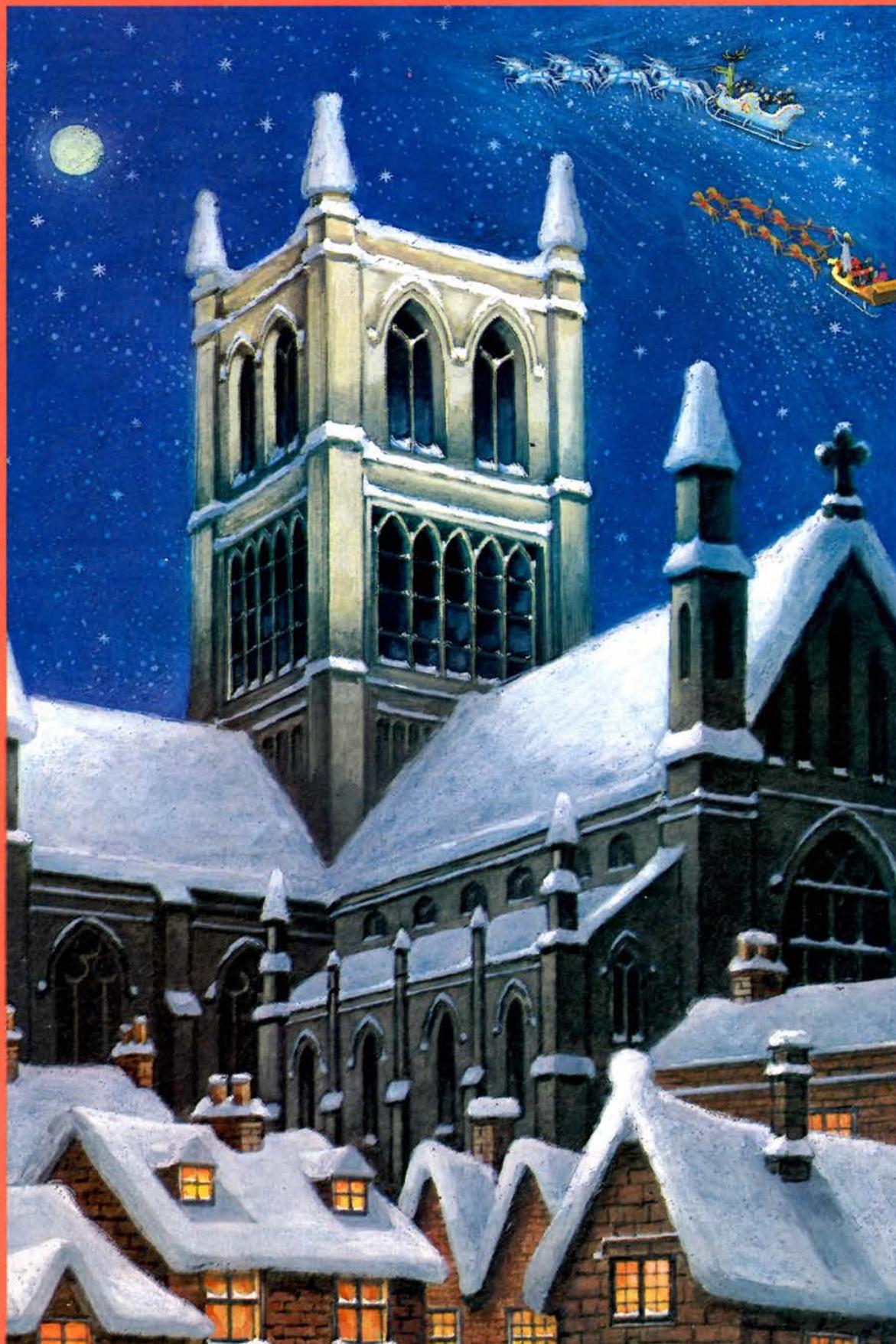


BOOKS FOR KEEPS

NOVEMBER 1984 No. 29 UK Price £1.00



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Cover Book

Through star filled skies on Christmas Eve Kay Harker, in a sleigh pulled by eight unicorns and driven by Herne the Hunter, returns in triumph to Tatchester.

The illustration on the cover of this issue of **BfK** is by Faith Jaques and is taken from **The Box of Delights**, a newly illustrated edition of John Masefield's classic children's book, abridged by Patricia Crampton and published by Heinemann, 0 434 95052 1, £7.95.

A paperback edition (without colour plates) is available from Fontana Lion (0 00 572415 9, £1.50).

We are grateful to Heinemann and Fontana for help in using this illustration.

Education never stops,



So when does it start?

jangle twang **jangle twang** slam bang
cluck baa  skip trip
sniff shout **John Burningham** wobble pop

John Burningham's First Words,
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EDITOR'S PAGE



This year instead of getting swamped by Christmas we decided to feature some other celebrations. Hence *Festive Seasons* (p24). And then we heard about *The Box of Delights* (p16) and began choosing books for our eleven pages of reviews. I ended up convinced that what we should be celebrating is the marvellous artists we have in children's books. John Burningham (Authorgraph p14) never ceases to amaze and delight; *Granpa* is very special (p4). So is Jan Pieńkowski's *Christmas*, the Christmas story with a text from the King James' bible. This must be one of the most beautifully designed books ever. The pages, decorated with flowers, plants and fruits, gleam with gold; among the stems small silhouette images echo the narrative in the larger pictures. The pictures are in the Central European fairy tale tradition which some may feel inappropriate; but for children it is arguably one way into wonder and the whole book is certainly nothing if not a celebration.

Delights on the Box

John Masfield was born, he states 'in or near Ledbury, on or nearly on the first of June 1878.' At twenty, starting as a writer in London, he had already been in the Merchant Navy for four years and worked in a carpet mill in New York. Poet Laureate, novelist, dramatist, essayist and storyteller, when he came to write for children it was to Herefordshire that he turned; to landscapes and places he had absorbed with all the intensity of childhood, and to a time when in his imaginative life 'stories of some kind were going on . . . whenever I was alone.'



The Midnight Folk, the first of his two classic fantasies has been described by Margery Fisher as 'one of the best and happiest books ever written for children . . . in it the poet, the storyteller and the child that was are come together.' *The Box of Delights* (which arose from some idle speculation about whether it would be possible to stop a cathedral service) is subtitled *When the Wolves were Running* and it is about good and evil.

Though acknowledged classics the stories are not well-known to children today. In 1943 *The Box of Delights* was serialised on radio. In 1961 the same adaptor and producer tackled *The Midnight Folk*. Will Paul Stone follow suit? (p16). On each occasion the books found new readers. If TV has the same effect those readers will find new versions neatly abridged by Patricia Crampton (p17).

A Triumphant Cover

Would John Masfield approve of television using his stories? He was deeply concerned to preserve, enrich and expand the art of storytelling; he was interested in how stories, dance, music and painting could come together. Somehow I don't think he would have scorned the electronic medium. I think he would certainly like Faith Jaques' illustrations for *The Box of Delights*, especially the one on our cover.



Faith Jaques' drawing from *The Box Delights*.

Faith Jaques is an illustrator of great distinction. Her black and white drawings illustrate stories by, among others, Leon Garfield, Gwen Grant, Phillipa Pearce, and are a model of their kind. She says, 'I regard myself as an interpretative illustrator: the last thing I want to do is impose myself too strongly on the text, which for me is sacrosanct.' At one time she claimed to find producing black and white drawings more demanding than a picture book; but when in 1979 she produced her own first picture book, *Tilly's House* it was acclaimed as an 'instant classic'.

Classic Centenary

This year marks the one hundredth anniversary of the birth of another author of classic children's books who began writing in the 30's (and one who has been illustrated by Faith Jaques). On the night of December 17th 1884 Alice Jane Taylor was born in the Derbyshire farmhouse that had been her family's home for generations. Later she described the event:

'So I was born in this wild storm, with deep snow on the ground and cattle shut in their houses and horses in the stable. I was bathed in spring water heated over the fire, and I was held up to the window to open my eyes and to look out over the fields at the dazzling whiteness and to look at the candles in their brass candlesticks alight to welcome me.'

It is, of course Alison Uttley who, like John Masfield, drew so much on her childhood in her writing. She grew up in Derbyshire, attended the village school leaving eventually to go to Manchester University where she took a degree in Physics. It was only years later when her husband died leaving her with a little son that she began to write. She died in 1976 at the age of ninety-one.

To mark her centenary Faber have published two new selections from her work. *Foxglove Tales*, stories for younger children, with delightful illustrations by Shirley Felts (0 571 13354 1, £4.95) and *Country World*, a selection from her autobiographical writings

with some of the original illustrations by C.J. Tunnicliffe, one of the greatest of all black and white illustrators (0 571 13328 2, £8.95). The quotation above is from *The Snow-baby* which is included in the book.

Seasonal Stories

Kathleen Lines' selection of Alison Uttley's tales, *Stories for Christmas* (Puffin) has been a seasonal standby for years. This year there are some new paperbacks to add to the collection. Gabrielle Vincent's *Merry Christmas Ernest and Celestine* (Picture Lion, 0 00 662382 4, £1.25) is a must for all under 7's; Steven Kroll and Tomie da Paola's *Santa's Crash-Bang Christmas* (Pocket Bears 0 907144 67 5, £1.50) introduces a clumsy, absent-minded Father Christmas — good for early readers; Rumer Godden's *The Fairy Doll* (Magnet, 0 416 45850 5, £1.25) is about four year-old Elizabeth and the Christmas tree fairy. If you are looking for a story to touch the imaginations of all ages then *The Magic Saddle* by Christobel Mattingly and Patricia Mullins (Hodder & Stoughton, 0 340 36421 1, £1.95) is the one.

It's a full-size picture book with beautifully evocative pictures and tells of Jonni who longed for a rocking horse for Christmas but whose parents could only afford one made of gingerbread. For the new year get James Stevenson's funny and heart-warming *The Night After Christmas* (Picture Lion, 0 00 662292 5, £1.25) about two toys who get thrown out to make room for new Christmas presents. And I must mention Jill Bennett's new compilation *The Christmas Book* with pictures by Peter Stevenson (Hippo, 0 590 70344 7, £1.75) — stories, poems, ideas, activities which will take you happily up to the end of term.

Have Book . . .

Christmas is traditionally a time for sharing stories. Jim Trelease has been spreading the read-aloud message this autumn and his *Read Aloud Handbook* (Puffin £2.50) makes interesting reading, even if his all American experience doesn't find a perfect match here. The 'Treasury' of recommended books (edited for this country by Jill Bennett) is right on target. One book not on the list because it has only just been published is *Woman in the Moon and other tales of forgotten heroines*, collected and retold by James Riordan and beautifully presented with illustrations by Angela Barrett (Hutchinson, 0 09 156760 2, £5.95) I suppose there's a chance it might never have been published if it hadn't been for *Books for Keeps*. In *BK 16*, writing about folk and fairy tales, Jim referred to his own unpublished collection of 'feminist' folk tales. Hutchinson contacted him and, behold two years later a beautiful book. Congratulations, Jim, it was worth waiting for and it's on the shortlist for the Emil award.

Happy celebrating (of whatever kind) to everyone, from all of us.

Pat

BOOKS FOR GIVING

Whether you give them away or choose them for yourselves we think these books all have that essential quality: staying power. They offer more than a passing pleasure and reveal more of themselves as you get to know them better.

PICTURE BOOKS

Granpa

John Burningham, Cape, 0 224 02279 2, £4.95

Only John Burningham could do so much so economically. In 32 pages he depicts a multi-layered relationship between an old man and his grandchild, suggests a whole life story for Granpa and shows a small girl reacting to death and bereavement. The whole is simultaneously very restrained and very rich, exceedingly complex and utterly simple. Except for three double spreads which have a special impact because of their difference, Burningham uses the conventions developed in *Mr Gumpy* and the 'Shirley' books. On the left hand page in two different type faces are words spoken by Granpa and the child; below them in monochrome are line drawings which by showing what the characters are thinking, remembering or imagining provide a commentary on the text and on the full colour right hand page.

John Burningham catches exactly the quality of the relationship, the sense of two separate worlds and a shared one with its own conventions and awarenesses. The feelings of bewilderment and awe that the fact of death arouses in children is caught exactly in a wordless double spread in which a small scrunched up child gazes thoughtfully across the gutter (where the pages are sewn) to the picture on the right hand page of Granpa's empty chair and table. In the next and last page — also without words — we see her running across the landscape pushing baby (brother? sister?) in a pram. Life as always goes on.

I could go on and on about this book. Get it, savour it and share it with individuals or very small groups. It will need tact and sensitivity but I'd dare bet there will be rich rewards.

Willy the Wimp

Anthony Browne, Julia MacRae, 0 86203 175 3, £4.95

Not such a richly layered book as *Gorilla* but beautifully and wittily drawn and with a delightful, thought-provoking twist in the tail. Willy the chimp is a wimp, the sort that apologises to the 'suburban gorillas' for having been beaten up by them. A combination of jogging, diet, aerobics, boxing, body building and weightlifting changes all that — or does it? One for the older age range I think if all the references are to be appreciated and enjoyed.

The Story of the Dancing Frog

Quentin Blake, Cape, 0 224 02152 4, £5.50

My equal first favourite with *Granpa*. A story within a story has Mum telling Jo 'another story about our family'. Aunt Gertrude, on the point of throwing herself in the river because her naval officer husband has been drowned at sea is stopped by the sight of a frog dancing on a lily pad. She takes it home and finds it dancing to the wind-up gramophone. Before long the frog is on the stage and Gertrude has a full-time job organising his career and accompanying him wherever he goes. Gertrude refuses marriage to an English lord, George (as the frog is known) becomes an international star and they finally retire together to the South of France. 'Was that a true story?' asks Jo. 'More or less,' says Mum. And it is the truth



From John Burningham's *Granpa*.



George rehearsing a new musical in New York, from *The Story of the Dancing Frog*.

BOOKS FOR KEEPING

in it which mum goes on to suggest to Jo that leaves him, and you, thinking.

A captivating story which while completely working for children (it's great for reading aloud and lends itself to 'performance') has in-built jokes for adults (George at the Folies Bergères, George with Isadora Duncan, the Russian Ballet and Fred Astaire, and lots of associations and references). The tone is just right and the drawings as free and expressive as ever. A winner.

In the Attic

Hiawyn Oram, ill. Satoshi Kitamura, Andersen Press, 0 86264 874 1, £4.95

Another voyage into the world of the imagination by the collaboration which produced the brilliant **Angry Arthur and Ned and the Joybaloo** (now in paperback from Sparrow, 0 09 936950 8, £1.75). In this book the central character narrates his own story, in simple text which begins 'I had a million toys and I was bored.' Resonant story and pictures, the sort that are returned to and re-explored again and again.

Panda and the Bunyips

Hamish Hamilton, 0 241 11344 X, £4.95

Cat and Canary

Andersen Press, 0 86264 075 X, £4.95

Two stories in words and pictures by Michael Foreman who is a master of both. Panda, on his third adventure, goes with his friend the winged lion to Australia where they meet the Bunyip and join him in another journey, this time to a rare and amazing reunion. Cat and Canary — also friends — live with their master in a New York apartment. When Cat is accidentally whisked skywards by a kite he and we are treated to a series of staggering visual experiences as Foreman shows us the landscape and buildings of snowy New York from some amazing angles. Lovely touches of humour in words and pictures in both books — just see the range of expressions on the faces of Panda and Cat.

Mabel's Story

Jenny Koralek, ill. John Lawrence, Patrick Hardy, 0 7444 0027 9, £5.50

In the evening of the hottest day for a hundred years Mabel reverses the usual pattern and tells Grandpa a story. The book's story is told in dialogue; Grandpa keeps interrupting with matter-of-fact questions as Mabel's story literally takes-off. John Lawrence's pictures take their cue from the text and together the two create a very believable fantasy.

Ayu and the Perfect Moon

David Cox, Bodley Head, 0 370 30533 7, £4.95

Another story within a story: in simple text Old Ayu tells three little girls in Bali about the first time she danced at the village festival on the night of the full moon. A beautifully designed book whose varied pictures give a fascinating insight into another culture.

Puffin

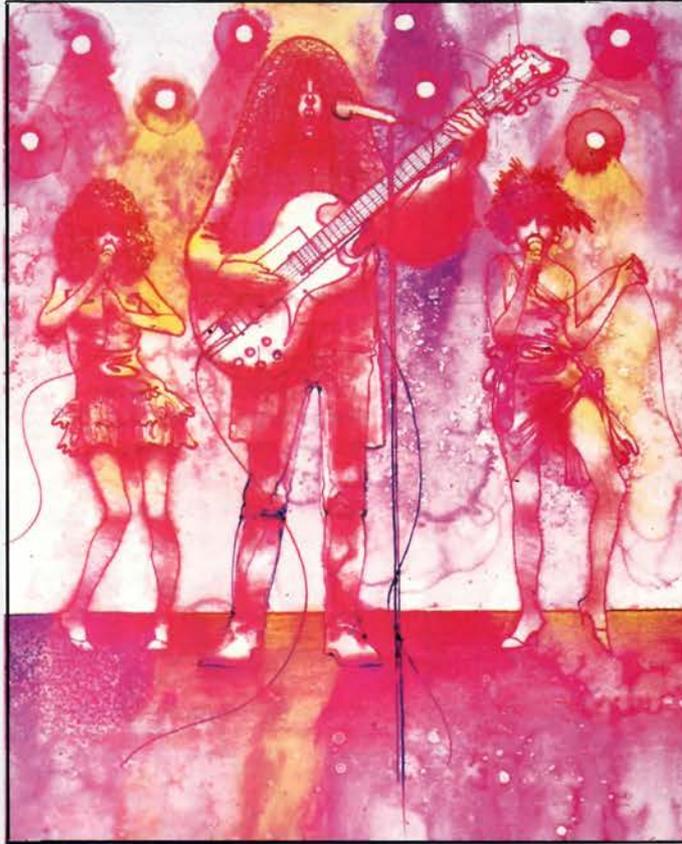
Deborah King, story by Naomi Lewis, Cape, 0 224 02088 9, £4.95

Deborah King's beautiful pictures (Remember **Rook?**) accurately and evocatively depict the varied aspects of a Puffin's life. Naomi Lewis' brief story-style text combines fact and feeling.

Sammy Streetsinger

Charles Keeping, Oxford, 0 19 279782 4, £4.95

The rise and fall and rise of Sammy, 'a simple soul' who goes from one-man-band in



From **Sammy Streetsinger**, illustration by Charles Keeping.

the subway to circus, to rock star, TV, video, films, to oblivion, and back to the subway and his friends. It is a classic Keeping morality tale — true happiness lies only in genuine human contact — told with dramatic and telling use of line and colour. Put it in secondary schools and see what they say.

STORIES

Winter Comes to Sheepfold Farm

Susan Williams, Gollancz, 0 575 03487 4, £4.95

The very best kind of 'faction' which like its two predecessors offers a realistic believable picture of farm and village life. Harvest supper, Hallowe'en, Bonfire Night and Christmas provide a backdrop for the routines and problems of rearing sheep. As before Susan Williams' informative and appealing line drawings raise the book from the very good into the special class. Juniors.

Star Time

Rachel Billington, Methuen, 0 416 46950 7, £5.95

Think of a latter day **Ballet Shoes** and you'll get some idea of the kind of book this is. Level-headed, plain-speaking Charlotte lands a part in a film; and so begins a fast-moving, amusing, reader-grabbing story stuffed with 'characters'. In the telling Rachel Billington manages to include a great deal about what goes on behind the camera — an interesting and instructive bonus in a book that is never less than accessible for the average 9—13 reader.

Changing Times

Tim Kennemore, Faber, 0 571 13285 5, £5.95

Told in Tim Kennemore's racy, distinctive style this is a daring exercise in time travel as

fifteen year-old Victoria goes back into her own childhood and finally forward into her own future. What she finds there gives her uncomfortable and challenging insights into her despised parents — particularly her mother — and herself. An exciting and thought-provoking read for 13+, always assuming anyone picks it up which is doubtful with that Pentagram cover. 'Brand image' may be a good thing but recently Faber novels have begun to look indistinguishable from each other and they are certainly no come-on for young readers.



The War Orphan

Rachel Anderson, Oxford, 0 19 271496 1, £6.95

A demanding, at times even difficult read which mingles and mixes the narratives of schoolboy Simon and Ha his adopted brother, a refugee from the Vietnam war. The details of Ha's story are shocking and moving and the examination of the morality of such situations and our part in them is determined and thorough. At the end Simon and the reader are left with the inescapable conclusion that we are all brothers, inevitably linked and responsible one for another. A novel that stays long in the mind.



PICK OF THE PAPERBACKS

Round and Round the Garden

Sarah Williams, ill. Ian Beck, Oxford, 0 19 272132 1, £2.50

A super-useful collection of finger plays and action rhymes with a discreet, easy-to-follow picture strip to show you how which doesn't in any way distract the eye of the young looker from the bold colourful pictures which illustrate the rhymes.

On the Way Home

Jill Murphy, Picturemacs, 0 333 37572 6, £1.95

The stories Claire tells her friends about how she got her bad knee involve flying saucers, crocodiles, giants, ghosts and the like. The version each person gets is vividly realised in pictures which show Claire being brave, inventive and assertive. Then she gets home and tells mum . . . Great stuff.

The Faber Book of Nursery Stories

Chosen by Barbara Ireson, ill. Shirley Hughes, Faber, 0 571 13278 2, £4.95

First paperback appearance of this classic collection which should be in every home, nursery and infant classroom. Exactly what's needed to introduce young listeners to a great variety of stories and styles of telling. All this and Shirley Hughes' delightful line drawings which appear throughout.

The Fairy Tale Treasury

Selected by Virginia Haviland, ill. Raymond Briggs, Picture Puffin, 0 14 050.103 7, £4.95

At last a reprint of this truly excellent volume. Thirty-two tales from many traditions illustrated in fine uninhibited style by Raymond Briggs. A delight — and once you have it, indispensable.

The New Golden Land Anthology

ed. Judith Elkin, Puffin, 0 14 03.1521 7, £2.95

First paperback edition for Judith Elkin's updating of James Reeves' famous anthology. A marvellous treasury for dipping into, for finding old favourites and new friends; a standby and a starting point.

Tale of a One-Way Street

Joan Aiken, pictures by Jan Pieńkowski, Puffin, 0 14 03.1700 7, £1.95

Eight original, modern tales by a storyteller whose imagination knows no bounds. Pieńkowski's distinctive silhouettes and exciting colour plates make this a very special book for younger children who will listen now and later read for themselves.

The BFG

Roald Dahl, ill. Quentin Blake, Puffin, 0 14 03.1597 7, £1.75

Just in case there is still anyone who doesn't know about this wild, funny, inventive, uninhibited adventure featuring one small girl (Sophie) one friendly giant (the BFG), several nasty child-eating giants, the Queen and a few others we are recommending it.

The Dark is Rising Sequence

Susan Cooper, Puffin, 0 14 03.1688 4, £4.95

The Earthsea Trilogy

Ursula Le Guin, Puffin, 0 14 03.1766 X, £4.95

Susan Cooper's five novels and Ursula Le Guin's three have each been bound up in a single volume. Large format, unabridged, very good value. An excellent present for lovers of fantasy, myth and legend who really like to submerge themselves in a story.

Books for this feature selected and reviewed by Pat Triggs.

POETRY

Hiawatha's Childhood

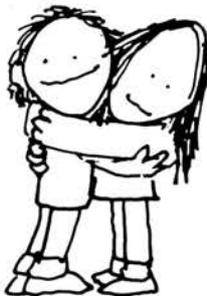
Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, ill. Errol Le Cain, Faber, 0 571 13286 3, £5.95

Errol Le Cain's richly decorated stylised pictures illustrate an extract from *The Song of Hiawatha*. Lovely to look at, it leaves the reader wanting more of the verse.

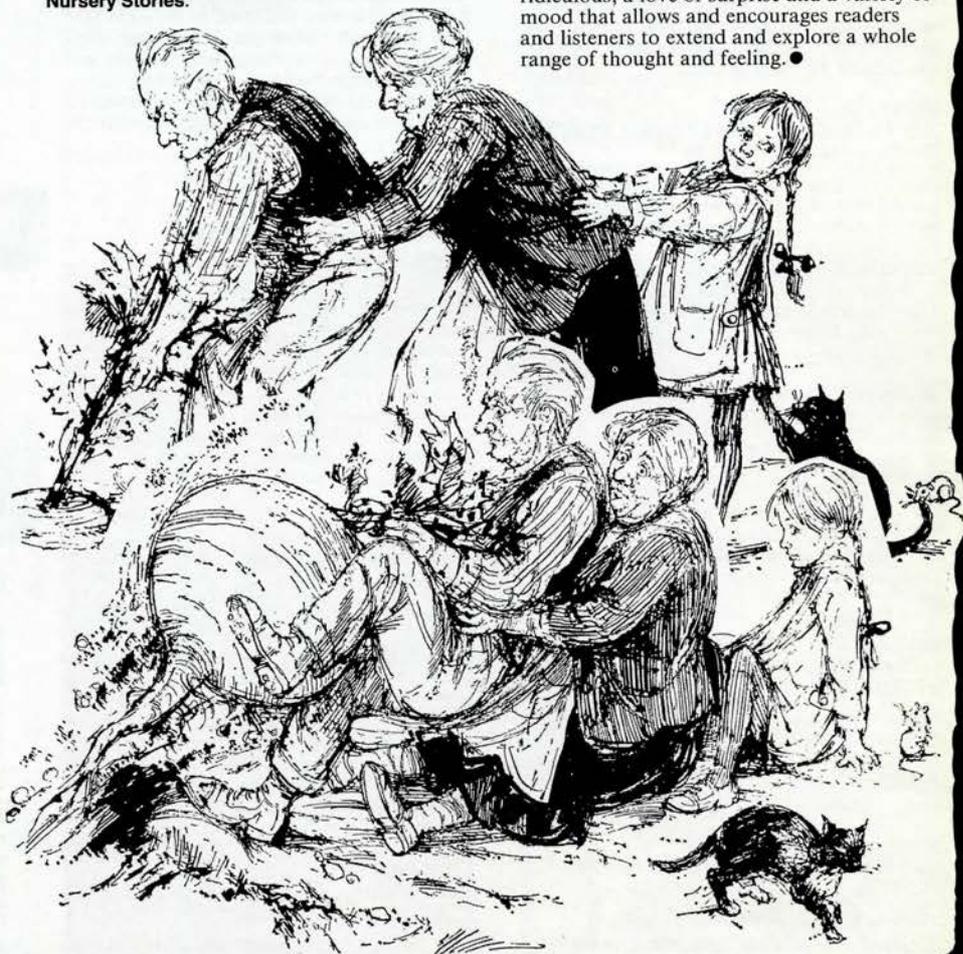
From *Where the Sidewalk Ends*.

HUG O' WAR

I will not play at tug o' war.
I'd rather play at hug o' war,
Where everyone hugs
Instead of tugs,
Where everyone giggles
And rolls on the rug,
Where everyone kisses,
And everyone grins,
And everyone cuddles,
And everyone wins.



Two Shirley Hughes' illustrations to 'The Tale of a Turnip' from *The Faber Book of Nursery Stories*.



Poems for Over 10 Year-Olds

Chosen by Kit Wright, ill. Michael Foreman, Viking Kestrel, 0 670 80048 1, £5.95

Another anthology to join the excellent (but equally clumsily named) *Poems for 7 Year-Olds and Under* chosen by Helen Nicoll (now in paperback, Puffin, 0 14 03.1489 X, £1.50). *Over 10's* is a more enterprising and varied selection than the rather disappointing *9 Year-Olds and Under* published earlier this year. Interesting groupings — Stopping by Woods, A Bunch of the Boys for example — and a useful mix of forms, styles and periods. Nice to see a good helping of narrative.

Where the Sidewalk Ends

Shel Silverstein, Cape, 0 224 02278 4, £6.50

Some poems in this American collection have been much anthologised — good therefore to have these poems and drawings published here at last. Shel Silverstein has been described as 'the modern successor to Edward Lear and Hilaire Belloc' and I'm not arguing. Certainly the association of pictures and poems, the characteristic American directness and humour and the range of absurdity his writing encompasses have a strong appeal for children. Spacious and enticing layout make the book especially accessible and attractive.

Nothingmas Day

Adrian Mitchell, ill. John Lawrence, Allison and Busby, 0 85031 532 8, £5.95

Another beautifully designed book — clear type, lots of white space and John Lawrence's woodcuts which are as imaginative and arresting as the poems. Adrian Mitchell knows from experience that children like poems about School Dinners (Secret Stew, Sick Pie) but he doesn't leave it there; the collection reveals a delight in the sound and shape of words, a sense of the ridiculous, a love of surprise and a variety of mood that allows and encourages readers and listeners to extend and explore a whole range of thought and feeling. ●

REVIEWS

Nursery/Infant

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.



Better Move on, Frog!
Ron Maris, Picture
Lions, 0 00 862266 6,
£1.25

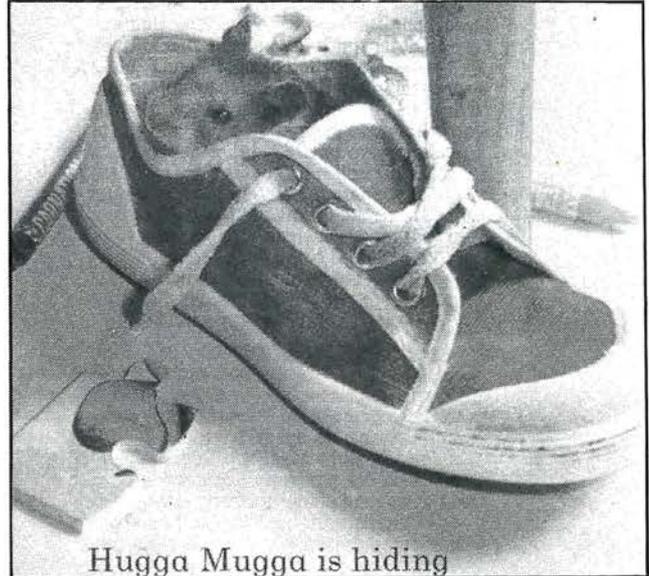
This was Ron Maris' first picture book and an exciting debut it was too. He, like his hero has moved on — to bigger and better things, I was going to say; but that would belittle this title, something I would not wish to do. Frog seems to have lots of holes to live in but he soon finds that they are already occupied by other animals: hence the oft repeated 'Better move on, Frog.' This repetition and the jolly pictures make the book one beginner readers can enjoy on their own. JB



An 'accident' from **The Baby's Catalogue**.

of this splendid book of the everyday doings of five families and their babies. Now here is an opportunity to add at least one more copy to the classroom shelves and for all parents with preschool children to buy their own copies of this Ahlberg masterpiece for the family collection. JB

Mog at the Zoo
Helen Nicoll and Jan
Pienkowski, Picture
Puffin, 0 14 050.431 1,
£1.50



Hugga Mugga is hiding

From **Hamster is Hiding**.

Mr Bear and the Robbers
Chizuko Kuratomi, ill
Kozo Kakimoto,
Macdonald, 0 356 11004
4, £1.95

Yet another story featuring the ever popular Mr Bear who, this time, in doing a good deed, unwittingly becomes a member of a gang of robbers. Fortunately though, everything turns out for the best thanks to our hero's gullibility. This paperback edition retains the high quality look and feel of the original hardback book and will appeal to most under sixes. JB

Mrs Vinegar
Simon Stern, Magnet,
0 416 49270 3, £1.50

The translation from hardcover to paperback sometimes alters the character of a book and Simon Stern's well-told and humorously illustrated version of this old story is not well served by the reduction that has been necessary to fit it into the Magnet series. Not only has much of the detail been lost, but the size of the print and indeed the book as a whole, makes it less appealing to the young reader. JB

Hamster is Hiding
0 416 48460 3

Kittens in the Kitchen
0 416 48430 1

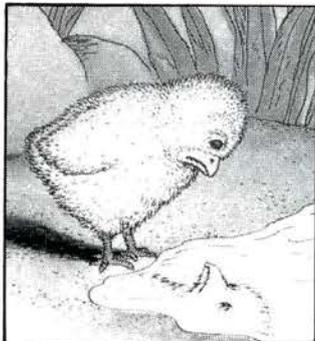
Puppy in the Park
0 416 48450 6

Goat in the Garden
0 416 48440 9
Helen Piers, Magnet,
£1.25 each

Excellent colour photographs, a cumulative text with memorable and in some cases, exciting words — 'Hugga Mugga', 'scrumpily', 'tangly', 'crunchy cabbage' — to get the tongue round, are the hallmarks of these four Snowball books. Their ingredients make them ideal for beginner readers of all ages and for sharing with the very young. JB

Hedgehog and Puppy Dog
Ruth Manning-Sanders,
ill James Hodgson,
Magnet, 0 416 46150 6,
£1.00

This accomplished storyteller recounts seventeen tales from many countries through the clever device of having two central characters, the scatterbrain Puppy Dog and the wiser Hedgehog. As always, there is a considerate tone to the telling, and the most enjoyable to the sixes I shared this with were **How Robin Redbreast Sang Before the King** (from Scotland) and **Tiger's Nut Tree** (from Africa). A good idea, which brings a diverse group of stories to an audience (middle to top infants) that's often hard to match up to. A very attractive edition, with appealing cover and illustrations. CM



The Chicken Book
Garth Williams, Picture
Lions, 0 00 662283 6,
£1.25

Garth Williams turned a popular counting rhyme into a game of hide-and-seek wherein five down-cast chicks search in vain for a meal. But the reader can see what the chicks cannot — that the tasty morsels they seek are there for the finding; and it is this and the known text which make the book such a winner. JB

The Baby's Catalogue
Janet & Allan Ahlberg,
Picture Puffin,
0 14 050.385 4, £1.50

I doubt whether there is any primary school — at least I sincerely hope there isn't — which hasn't a hardback copy



One of the best titles in the unfailingly popular series, this one has, in addition to the usual ingredients, some splendid words and alliteration to wrap the tongue around. Bound to charm all beginner readers! JB

Rub a Dub Dub
Alan Rogers, Granada,
0 246 12327 3, £2.95

There are over sixty nursery rhymes in this large format collection published to tie in with the ITV series of the same name. The book is illustrated in bright, garish colours and features the likes of Al E. Gator, Brian Lion, Buzz Tiger and the rest of the TV cast. The rhymes are clearly laid out in large well-spaced print: ideal for children's own reading as well as for sharing with the very young. It is a pity though, that the book has no index. JB

Infant/Junior



The Magic Doctor

Val Biro, Oxford
University Press,
0 19 272129 1, £2.50

When a poor boot maker visits the doctor to get some medicine for his wife and sees how easily the doctor earns his living, he decides to become a doctor too. Before long the magic Doctor, for so he is known, becomes rich and famous; but his reputation nearly results in his losing his head and he needs all his cunning and a great deal of luck to save himself. This lively tale, based on a traditional Hungarian story, is matched by the droll humour of Val Biro's illustrations. However, the telling could have been improved by rather more judicious editing of the text which in places does not read aloud well and will certainly present problems to some children tackling the book for themselves. JB

The Persistent Mouse

Joan Cass, ill Nina
Sowter, Hippo,
0 590 70312 9, £1.50

A picture book with a rather longer than average text, about the friendship between Mr Chisselwick and one Albert Henry, a mouse. Albert Henry's attentions are always getting Mr C. into trouble so he tries to get away from it all on a sea cruise, but to no avail. It is only when his devoted friend strikes up a holiday romance that Mr Chisselwick is left in peace — but not for long.

Nina Sowter's pictures, executed in crayon and brown ink are a delight and contain a wealth of detail to pore over. An excellent story for reading aloud or for more fluent readers to tackle for themselves. JB

There Is a Carrot in My Ear and Other Noodle Tales

retold by Alvin
Schwartz, ill Karen Ann
Weinhaus, Hippo,
0 590 70330 7, £1.50

Ideal for readers just taking off on their own is this collection of noodle tales which comes complete with a foreword: 'A noodle is a silly person./This book is about/a family of noodles/ and the silly things/they say and do.' The six tales are extended jokes of the kind that children love to tell. In each case the reader knows, either through the illustrations or from his or her own knowledge, just how silly the characters are, and herein lies the enormous appeal. A real laugh and groan out loud book: don't miss it! JB

The Straw Maid

Anita Lobel, Hippo
0 590 70308 0, £1.50

A neo-folk tale with peasant style illustrations and an easy-to-read text go to make up what is altogether a delightful book for new solo readers. The heroine of the tale is a poor little girl who outwits a gang of robbers and in so doing, reverses her family's fortunes. JB

The House Under the Stairs

Martin Waddell, ill
Maggie Ling, Magnet,
0 416 46170 0, £1.25

Delightful story for six to nines which makes light of a potentially difficult topic. When Peter's new baby sister arrives, nobody seems to have time for him . . . until Grandad shows him how to play the imaginative 'House Under the Stairs' game. Dragons, witches, robbers, pirates and, finally, a flurry of *real* kittens appear in this very special place.

Splendid scenes of family life and the bond between young boy and loving Grandad is beautifully drawn. CM

The Little Moon Theatre

Irene Haas,
0 907144 64 0

The Hairy Monster

H. Bichonnier, trans.
Adrian Sington, ill Pef,
0 907144 68 3,
Methuen/Moonlight
Pocket Bears, £1.50 each

Two more from this distinctive and always-interesting list. Haas' story, with miniature, delicate, pastel illustrations well-suited to the series'

format, is a wistfully-told 'story within a story'. A little travelling theatre makes people's wishes come true. The rhythm and movement is splendidly caught in the telling and a coherent, magical world is created. Rich characterisation, too: I can see this becoming a childhood favourite.

Bichonnier's very different tale, is splendidly illustrated by Pef to catch the quirky, eccentric nature of the Little Princess Lucy's being saved from the Hairy dragon by Prince Charming: she's a spirited little girl and deserves a better fate. I think the six-up will cotton on to the televised 'send up' of the traditional fairy tale genre. Well worth having in a classroom collection. The author and artist are highly popular in France: thanks to the imaginative editors for bringing worthwhile continental work to our shores. CM

The Tale of Fearsome Fritz

Jeanne Willis, ill
Margaret Chamberlain,
Arrow, 0 09 936300 3,
£1.60

Fritz, 'who scared his folks out of their wits' will be enjoyed by six to tens. You can guess what a commotion is caused when the mischievous boy goes to the zoo in his very realistic-looking gorilla suit: there's a bumper treat of mistaken identities! The text is witty in its quirkiness:

'Meanwhile, Fritz's mum was cross. Where Fritz was, she was at a loss.'

The pictures are light and bright: surreal in places. It's a superb combination of author and artist and one well worth stocking. CM

The Little Red Metro Gets Started

0 333 37036 8

For Sale

0 333 37034 1

Finds a Home

0 333 37033 3

Gets Cold Feet

0 333 37035 X

Avril Rowlands, ill Peter Dennis, Macmillan, 85p each

These stories make me think mischievously of the experiment in Russia in the 1920's when fairy tales were banned and the authorities licensed stories about rubber plantations and how combine harvesters were made! 'Make friends with the Little Red

Metro' is the invitation — and it's a display of Avril Rowlands' talent that, especially in 'Finds a Home', where there's some human interest, the stories don't jar as much as the anthropomorphism and limited scope of the material should make them.

My six to eight year old co-readers read them through once and laughed at the uneasy blend of fantasy and reality, but for the wrong reasons, I think. I don't think they'll match up to Leila Berg's Little Car stories. But I do know one classroom where eight year old car-fanatics have become absorbed in them . . . CM

The Friends' Racing Cart

Helme Heine,
0 907144 66 7



Get Along Old Trapper

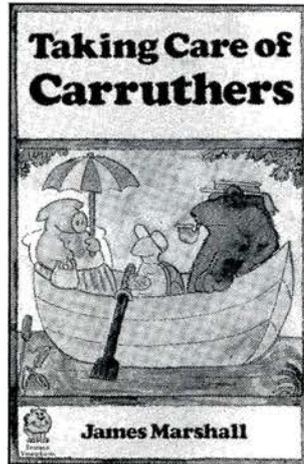
Stephen Gammell,
0 907144 65 9
Methuen/Moonlight
Pocket Bears, £1.50 each

Here are two new titles in the deservedly successful and now firmly established Pocket Bear series — a series which I find my seven and eight year old readers actively seek out from the classroom shelves. **The Friends' Racing Cart** is the author's second book to feature Fat Percy, Charlie Cockerel and Johnny Mouse, the inhabitants of Mud Pie Farm, whom we first met in **Friends**. When Johnny Mouse discovers an old cart and insists in riding it alone, he quickly finds himself in a heap of trouble; but thanks to his friends and their finds, he and the cart are soon fully restored. The delectable paintings are the strongest feature of this book.

Get Along Old Trapper will appeal to Wild West fans, in particular, older, less competent readers. Tracker Jack tells his own story about his map-making expedition through The Wild, using few words and typical cowboy style language — 'Howdy children', 'No siree', and 'son of a gun' for instance. Just how successful his expedition was can be judged from the final pages of the book on which we see the fruit of all his labours — the map. Gammell's paintings, particularly the landscape scenes, strongly evoke the loneliness and wildness of the desert setting. JB



Cook, from Murdo.



I always recommend the Young Lions list as a reliable starting point for teachers trying to live without reading schemes and 'individualise' their classroom reading.

Here, the high standard is maintained. The conventional theme of Murdo (a boy discovers and befriends a dragon) is distinguished by the style of the writing: first-person narrative draws the reader in from the first pages. There's sensitive lay-out of text and illustrations, humour and pace: my eight and nine year old boy readers (A Team addicts) enjoyed the spectacular helicopter rescue.

Carruthers will be enjoyed by sevens, or maybe sixes, to nines as a very different, and special, reading experience. On a miserable afternoon, three friends, Pig, Bear and Turtle pass the time by listening to stories which cleverly, delicately, involve themselves. A truly rich demonstration of the power of storytelling — see the way in which we see the teller make the story work. There's rich characterisation and atmosphere and some glorious humour. Startlingly simple but effective black and white prints make this a winner from an exciting American talent: don't miss it. CM

The Three Pigs
Tony Ross, Sparrow Books, 0 09 935460 8, £1.75

For those familiar with Tony Ross' treatment of traditional tales such as Little Red Riding Hood and Jack and the Beanstalk, this book will need no further recommendation. This particular updating sees

Ross as zany and outrageous as ever. Purists may wince but everyone else, and particularly older children (9+) will relish this hilarious romp. JB

Miss Know It All
Carol Beach York, Magnet, 0 416 46980 9, £1.25

A pretty, pretty book. Everyone is kind and loving except for Mr Not so Much and he is almost harmless. Miss Know It All arrives at The Good Day Orphanage for Girls. She can answer every question the little girls put to her except one. Now she must stay until the answer is discovered.

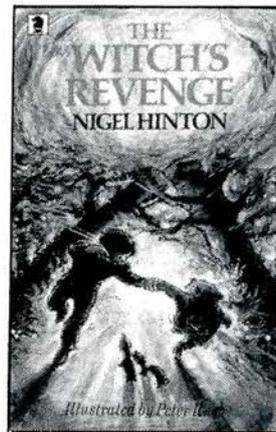
This is the first in a promised series which should please children of about seven years, almost certainly girls. It is a shortish story. The print is large, the language simple and the illustrations clear and amusing, if a little stereotyping. It is entertaining and totally undisturbing, a useful possibility as the first whole book a child might read. As such it would be a satisfying achievement. CL

Crazy Bear
Colin McNaughton, Piccolo, 0 330 28453 3, 95p

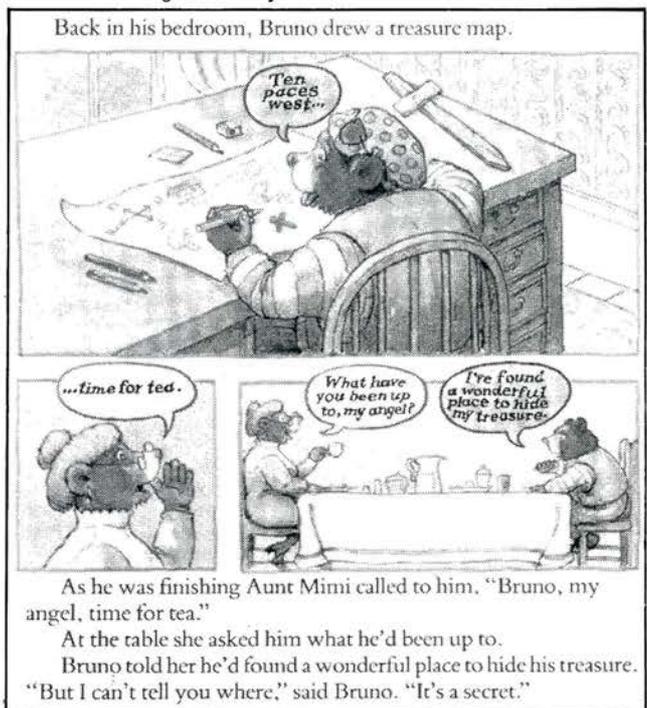
The second half of the Heinemann hardback of the same name, featuring Bruno — energetic and imaginative bear — in two stories, *Pirate Crazy* and *Rock and Roll Crazy*. Colin McNaughton's inspired blending of cartoon conventions, illustration and text has suffered a little from reduction in paperback; but the appeal of this delightful bear searching for sunken treasure which he himself has inadvertently sunk and organising his own Rock group should overcome that disadvantage for most readers. PT

The Witch's Revenge
Nigel Hinton, Knight 0 340 32104 0, £1.25

In *Beaver Towers* Philip helped the beavers, Mr Edgar and his grandson Baby B, in their struggle to save their island home from the plottings of the wicked witch Oyin. Now she wants her revenge the beavers and their friends need Philip's courage and quick wits to help them again as Oyin summons the forces of Earth, Air, Fire and Water to work her evil way. Twenty-three short, action-packed, suspense-filled chapters, nice touches of humour and very endearing characters (Oyin excepted, she's ultra evil) make this, like its predecessor, a sure-fire read aloud for lower juniors. PT



From Colin McNaughton's Crazy Bear.



As he was finishing Aunt Mimi called to him, "Bruno, my angel, time for tea."
At the table she asked him what he'd been up to.
Bruno told her he'd found a wonderful place to hide his treasure. "But I can't tell you where," said Bruno. "It's a secret."

Getting Rich with Jeremy James
David Henry Wilson, ill Patricia Drew, Piccolo, 0 330 28383 9, £1.25

Twelve stories of everyday events seen through the eyes of Jeremy James were enjoyed by some discriminating sixes and sevens. The arrival of a new car and his twin siblings' christening provide scope for J.J.'s witty observations.

There are some tellingly 'real' touches in the writing: the hero whispering too-loudly in church; his pompous little friend, Timothy. There's a timely, if twee, story called *The Strike*, too. The tone is unpatronising; the content entertaining, if undemanding. Read one or two aloud to top infants: enthusiasts will then want to read the stories themselves. CM

Shepherd's Pie
Dorothy Clark, Hippo, 0 590 70310 2, 70p

I often think that some of the best stories for younger children build upon the jokes that they tell and upon their innate love of 'playing' with words. Here, the fun's to be had from the knowledge that the giant's wife uses real cottages for cottage pie; genuine rocks for rock cakes! You can guess why the Shepherd's children get anxious . . .

A splendid story for middle infants to first year juniors. The author's cleverly integrated pictures help the text along for newly-independent readers. This appeared first in Julia MacRae's hardback *Blackbird* series, well worth investigating if you don't yet know it, and currently being extensively plundered for paperback editions. (See Puffins.) CM

Murdo
Margot Speight, ill Bill Belcher, 0 00 672447 7

Taking Care of Carruthers
James Marshall, 0 00 672341 1, Fontana Young Lions, £1.25 each

Junior/Middle

Beauty and the Beast
retold by Rosemary
Harris, ill Errol Le Cain,
Macmillan, Picturemac,
0 333 37144 5, £1.95

One can't help feeling that this elaborate book ought to be admired, yet somehow it is flatly disappointing.

Middle school testers rejected it as being neither scary nor magical. There was praise for Errol Le Cain's artistry. However I find this very heavy, lacking in adaption to the moods of the story. Each picture seems as static as the statues which Beauty's sisters become. The text is also elaborate but unchanging. There is no marked move towards the happy ending.

Perhaps it is, as I said, a book to be admired. I found little to enjoy. CL

**More Television
Adventures of Super
Gran**

Forrest Wilson, Puffin,
0 14 131764 3, £1.25

'... nice quiet days and Super Gran just didn't seem to go together.' Certainly they didn't but there is much laughter for the reader as Super Gran learns to drive, gets involved with a learner golfer, a magician and much else. All the time she is after the dastardly criminals, the Scunner and Tub. Each chapter is a story that stands alone. There are many funny lines. Not a book for a teacher to read aloud but I can imagine children sharing bits of the book with each other.

Super Gran goes down a bomb in the book shop. Her books move almost as fast as she does herself. Well worth stocking. CL

The Emma Dilemma
Catherine Sefton, ill Jill
Bennett, Magnet,
0 416 46800 4, £1.25

Snappy and enjoyable story from an under-rated writer who catches well both family banter and the moods of middle childhood. In lesser hands, the plot could jar, but the tale of how a girl discovers another 'duplicate' Emma, always at her side, leads to some lively havoc at school and home.

Nine to elevens will enjoy some of her lists: 'People I Am Going to Get'; 'Places I don't Want to Go' (School and school and school!). One of the best teacher-creations I've read in a long while appears in the shape of Miss Busy Bee Bodley. CM

Cosmos and the Five-a-side Cup

Peter Woodcock, Hippo,
0 590 703315, £1.00

A good idea for nine-eleven year old football fanatics, takes the simple notion of a group of soccer-crazy kids forming a five-a-side team to play in a local league. Realistically stepped out through the development of such an enterprise, it provides both fact and entertainment. A most unpretentious little book, Peter Woodcock's first, which will probably be ignored against the better-plugged efforts from larger publishing houses, but one which I would recommend most strongly. BB

Fantastic
Michael Denton,
Granada Dragon,
0 583 30634 9, £1.25

Chaotic nonsense loosely woven around a rusty warship, 'The Revenge of the Rhubarb', in which an assorted collection of lunatics set sail... or is it about Super Norbert (alias Butterfly Man) and the Sporrantots? It really isn't worth the effort of finding out; even the 'humour' is too kaleidoscopic and surreal for youngsters to stay with it for long. Some busy illustrations from Steve Smallman are worthy of a better vehicle, but even they can't save 'Fantastic' from sinking without trace. BB

Vlad the Drac Returns
Ann Jungman, Granada
Dragon,
0 583 30659 4, £1.25

Devotees will remember Vlad as the vegetarian vampire who imposed himself on the luckless Stones family. His trail of misadventures continues in this zany version of the vampire strikes back. Included are unique versions of a vampire Christmas carol, improvised drama in a hamburger bar, and assorted other catastrophes on Vlad's trail of woe. The first book was novel and witty, I think the ideas have dried up in this one. BB

Microfish
Robert Lee, Magnet,
0 416 47170 6, £1.25

Packed full of awful 'fishy' puns and jokes, this is the ideal book for any junior age youngster with the wit to take in the satire that packs each line. In brief, Rock Salmon is a private detective, Enzo Barracuda is a gangland chief, Vladimir Carpski is a chess grandmaster, and Igor Baluga is a plastic sturgeon. Boom, boom! Yes, there is a plot, but you don't really want me to go



into it, do you? Any way, the Fishfinger Mob are a bit touchy, and are bound to get their tentacles round me if they don't like the review. BB

The Finding of Stoby Binder

Graham Marks,
Granada
0 583 30696 9, £1.50

Tom's family move house and Tom finds a hobgoblin beneath the garden shed in the new garden. Lots of potential perhaps but a very disappointing book. Page after page of heavy, close print and just a few even heavier, illustrations that do not match the rather coy cover.

Tom's parents give much serious, very pedantic advice — about squatters, about stamp collecting and about the dangers of children being bored! Unfortunately their tone is matched in much of the text, which plods on relentlessly.

A nine year old's comment was that this book was 'too young and very boring.' Anyone younger could not cope with the text and it would take a brave adult to read it aloud. CL

Treehorn's Treasure
Florence Parry Heide,
Drawings by Edward
Gorey, Young Puffin,
0 14 13.1559 4, 95p

Happily, the presentation of this second Treehorn book matches the first, **The Shrinking of Treehorn**. The illustrative style has not changed, nor has the tone. Treehorn's parents also remain unchanged, totally oblivious to his demands for attention. 'Money doesn't grow on trees.' It would seem that it does but no adult pauses long enough to take in Treehorn's message; then it is too late.

The text is simple but business-like, reflecting the adult world that Treehorn is battling against. Indeed it is a

delightful parody of the way the two generations often deal with each other. The pictures are stylistically simple but contain tiny details which are a pleasure to discover. The blurb suggests that it is for 6—8 year olds. Many in that bracket might miss the subtleties. Middle school children found it hilarious. Treehorn's fans are surely ageless. CL

Please Mrs Butler
Allan Ahlberg, ill Fritz
Wegner, Puffin,
0 14 131494 6, £1.10

How fascinatingly familiar it all is. Teachers and children can share the hilarity and wit of **Please Mrs Butler** and possibly think of some more verses themselves. It is all there: the bullies, the nit nurse, the inevitable projects and those letters from mums which you are one day going to write a book about.



From **Please Mrs Butler**.

A book of verses, hardly serious or deep, which tells of schoolroom and schoolyard events with an eerie precision. There is a great deal to laugh about, lots to discuss, a book for every Primary schoolteacher's desk. Read a verse aloud everyday. The children will soon be choosing and reading them to you. CL

Mr Teago and the Magic Slippers
Imogen Chichester,
Puffin, 0 14 131584 5,
£1.25

The great aunts dispose of Mr Teago's delapidated slippers and he misses them greatly. The pair that Martha presents as a replacement on Mr Teago's birthday are hardly considered suitable. They look oddly as if they have been made from an oriental carpet and their curling toes and colourful patterning are not approved. There is even less approval when the slippers are found to transport a wearer to the ceiling. For the great aunts the slippers spell trouble, for Mr Teago and Martha there is

a positively magical summer ahead.

Young readers will enjoy this story on many different levels. There is much precise but comfortable detail — Martha's attic bedroom, Mr Teago's railway carriage home, Mrs McConkey's warm kitchen — but also hilarious adventure, anxiety and real magic. The mysterious ending leaves the story's characters and the reader with much to ponder upon. It is an excellent book for competent readers of 7+ and a good read aloud. All who tested it were reluctant to put it down. CL

Magnus Powermouse
Dick King-Smith,
Puffin, 0 1403.1602 7,
£1.25

The sixth baby in Madeleine Mouse's litter is so enormous that the other five have all 'snuffed it' by the morning. Food and sleep are all that Magnus requires. His obsessive need for these leads the family out of the winter warmth of a cottage to the pigsty where Magnus feeds on pills for fattening porkers.

The local cat loses his tail tip, the rodent catcher is at first bewildered and then beguiled, at times Magnus' parents are broken hearted. Magnus might desire only food and sleep but his life becomes highly eventful.

Dick King-Smith has written another very funny book. His

animals always remain very much animals. They do not affect human behaviour that might detract from their own natures. However each character is sharply defined in a plot that provides humour, nail-biting frustration and a satisfying ending.

Young middle school children and older struggling readers love Dick King-Smith. He is exceptionally popular in the bookshop and the library. Testers were positively excited by this addition to the collection. CL

Broomsticks and Beasticles

Barbara Sleight, ill John
Patience, Knight,
0 340 34841 0, £1.25

A splendid collection. Thirty-two stories and poems by various distinguished writers (de la Mare; Ben Jonson; James Reeves; Nesbit; Serrallier et al). The theme is magic and the supernatural. It is so full of riches that I've shared it since it came out in hardback (1981) with anyone who'd listen: juniors of all ages; middle school children; student teachers.

'Beasticles', the editor tells us in her collection, are 'any fantastic creature... that you will not find between the pages of learned books'. My review could too easily become a list of contents as I'm so enthusiastic about this one, but, to whet your appetite, there are many splendid

retellings by Ms Sleight, who sadly died two years ago, 'Double, double toil and trouble' from *Macbeth* (get juniors to base their own spells on that); T.H. White; Ogden Nash and, inspired inclusion, Robert Graves' *Welsh Incident*. Not to be missed. CM

My Favourite Book of Witches & Wizards

Gillian Osband,
Carousel, 0 552 52249 X,
£1.50

Another celebration of the 'witching season' in this collection of miscellany on the subject compiled by Gillian Osband. At least this one has the virtue of attempting to deal with varying aspects of the magical rites in a comprehensively entertaining manner, helped by Caroline McDonald-Paul's splendid illustrations.

There has also obviously been an effort to search out new material, especially in the folk tales from different countries, rather than haul out the tired old chestnuts that inevitably re-surface in this type of production. BB

Cadbury's Second Book of Children's Poetry

Beaver, 0 09 937320 3,
£1.50

In 1983, the Cadbury's National Exhibition of

Children's Art included poetry among its categories for the first time. Obviously, the response was encouraging, as here is Cadbury's publication of the winning entrants from the second year of the competition, 1984. Avoiding the subjective game of agreeing or disagreeing with the judges' commendations (I found page 111 brilliant in the sparseness of its descriptive narrative, yet it is not one of the poems the publisher's note directs us towards) there is the usual mixture of the good, the bad and the plain dreadful, here. Cadbury's are continuing the poetry competition for 1985 — closing date 23rd February. BB

I Din Do Nuttin And Other Poems

John Agard, Magnet,
0 416 49670 8, £1.25

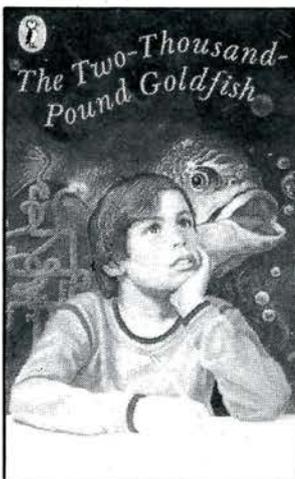
'Mother alligator's advice to her children' and 'If I could only take home a snowflake' are only two of the brightest gems from this superb collection of wry, amusing and gentle poems from Guyanese poet, John Agard. Child appeal exudes from the sensitively written material, which will be enjoyed by children of all nationalities. Did I feel the publisher's blurb was 'labelling' the book as suitable for one ethnic audience? Yes, I must confess I felt 'directed'. Let's get it clear, these poems are for everyone, and they're great! Start at the back with 'My Telly', if you want a starting point for discussion with children. BB

Middle/Secondary

The Two-Thousand Pound Goldfish

Betsy Byars, Puffin,
0 14 03.1607 8, £1.00

An irresistible opening chapter sets the tone for a book that is first division Betsy Byars. Warren's favourite pastime is inventing scripts for monster movies. (The Two Thousand Pound Goldfish, starring Bubbles an unwanted pet flushed down the toilet, grown huge on illegally dumped chemicals, now trapped in the sewers and demonstrating a penchant for ingesting ("Warren loved the word "ingest") human flesh, is his latest.) His other fantasies are about his mother — a political activist wanted by the FBI — who years ago left Warren and his sister with Gran and in the breaks between leafletting, stickering and bombing sometimes remembers to send a postcard. When Gran has a stroke will mum come back as Warren dreams? The ability to mix humour and seriousness with precise observation of character and situation and come out with a story that is both subtle and accessible is Betsy Byars' particular talent. Don't miss this one. PT



Witches' Brew

Zenka & Ian Woodward
Ed. Beaver
0 09 935360 1, £1.25

Do witches still have any attraction for youngsters today?

Are the eighties' generation too sophisticated in their demand for video horrors to appreciate the 'spookiness' of Hallowe'en? I doubt whether this collection of poems will stop the rot or induce many to

take up the editors' invitation to 'happy scary reading'. I found it difficult to determine at what age group the poems are aimed, with their alarming mix of Shakespeare, Coleridge, de la Mare, Herrick, diluted by a throw-away from Ted Hughes. Several 'Unknowns' further cloud the issue, with the help of some obscurantism from Dylan Thomas. The only relevant relief I could find came in the form of Kitching, Milligan and Roy Fuller, whose selected contributions are first class for young children. Puzzling. BB

Football Stories

Ed. Ian Woodward,
Carousel, 0 552 52222 8,
£1.25

There are eight stories in this collection of football stories. Apart from the sensitive *A section of the crowd*, contributed by Brian Glanville, the book represents a depressing mundanity in writing about a subject which involves and interests so many youngsters.

The cover blurb should provide adequate warning about what can be found

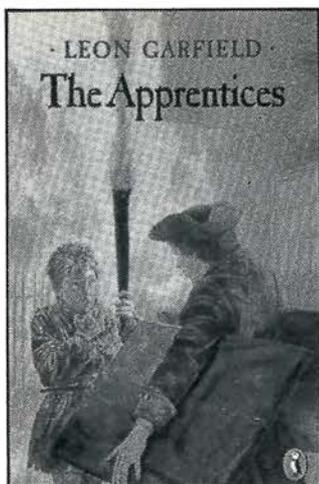
within. 'Explosive action, gritty toughness, foul play overcome by superhuman achievement. From kick-off to final whistle all the colour and real-life drama of eight thrilling struggles for a place and a win!' Sad isn't it; *Roy of the Rovers* was corny but at least it was honest. BB

Island of the Strangers

Catherine Sefton,
Magnet 0 416 46810 1,
£1.25

'If you're not with us, you're against us.'

If you don't go along with the crowd, then you quickly become an outcast, an isolate, yourself. Just because people are outsiders does not mean that they are enemies. From these limp clichés, Catherine Sefton has produced a rambling novel with a narrative embracing Poor Law Relief and shipwrecked Spanish witches in its convoluted strands. There is a sort-of ending eventually, the problem for most readers will be in persevering to get there. BB



The Apprentices
Leon Garfield, Puffin,
0 14 03.1595 0, £1.85

Space here cannot do justice to the seemingly daunting 315 pages of this collection of 12 previously published stories, one for each month of the year. Pupils will need to be encouraged to dip into these yarns of apprentice pawnbrokers, midwives, mirror makers, horse painters and their ilk, whose lives are revealed and mingled in striking variety against a backdrop of eighteenth century London. It is to be hoped that one encounter will lead to more and that sensitive types will catch not only the tales themselves but also the added dimensions of such tales as the first, where Possul must embody a deeper significance than just a lamplighter; or of *Moss and Blister* where the two ladies' hopes and ambitions at Christmastide embrace many of our own unfulfilled wishes at that season. DB

The Druid's Tune
O.R. Melling, Puffin
0 14 03.1778 3, £1.75

'There are no lone wanderers on the way to truth . . . we weave each other's tunes inextricably and forever.' So says the Druid who has transported Rose and Jim back to Iron Age Ireland where they become very accomodatingly



Detail from *The Druid's Tune* cover.

involved in the 'Cattle Raid of Cooley' waged between Queen Maeve of Connaught and super-hero Cuculann, star of Ireland's national epic. Fantasy and magic merge and mingle in a rather overlong tale; but echoes of the past struggles (all over the ownership of one white and one red bull, who fight to the death once they are together anyway!) inevitably point to the present. Rose says, 'It doesn't make apy sense. All because of a stupid brown bull and honour. It's disgusting.'

An acceptable tale but I don't envisage a wide readership. DB

The Karate Kid
B.B. Hiller, Knight,
0 340 37019 X, £1.50

A novelisation, rush-released to coincide with the London opening of the US film (same title). David Carradine cum teenage problems, very short chapters, fairly undemanding language, martial arts and dating — see the readers? Daniel and his mum move to California; he falls in love with Ali; he's beaten up by Johnny's gang whose karate school teaches 'The Way of the Fist — Strike first. Strike hard.' Elderly Mr Miyagi, maintenance man at the apartments, agrees to teach Daniel karate. His training involves hours of waxing, sanding, painting, swimming and frustration. Eventually, Daniel accepts Mr Miyagi's precepts — 'First learn stand, then learn fly. Nature's rules, Danielsan, not mine' — and understand that karate is about *not* fighting. As you'll guess, he meets Johnny in the championship final, with Ali,

Mr Miyagi and mum in the audience. Worth a look. You'll want it when the film hits your area and it could generate quite a bit of talk and writing with less willing readers. TD

The Ring in the Rough Stuff

Antonia Barber, Knight
0 340 35240 X, £1.50

Sprightly, well peopled with fleets of good-humoured characters and endowed with a high tide of coincidence, this busy yarn sweeps the lower Thames just after the onset of World War I.

Daniel Swann, a sorter on the rubbish dumps finds a ruby ring, which might eventually prove useful for an entry into the world of Thames Barges, for which he so longs, but involves him too in a sequence of adventures involving the querulous Batty Fred, muddies, a German submarine, jewel thieves, a gaggle of upper-crust dowagers, a white mouse and the adorable Dora at the Anchor and Hope.

A lengthy read for lower secondary. DB

Warriors of the Wasteland

Douglas Hill, Piccolo
0 330 284525, £1.25

Douglas Hill has a new resistance-fighter hero, now in his second adventure. Finn Ferral brawls with and resists his oppressors in an era beyond the holocaust when the earth, or what's left of it, is ruled by aliens, who send their slavers to capture the few remaining humans. These will then be utilised for barbaric experiments, aimed ultimately at reducing mankind to its monkey ancestors,

Ferral's quest is heroic, exciting and bloody, peopled by highly distinctive friends and foes. The busy, macho leather and thongs cover illustration predicts well the flavour of the contents. As a book for those, boys especially, whose reading

interest is flagging, this one should be a reviver and lead on to the others in the set. DB

Haunted Children
Alison Prince, Magnet
0 416 469701, £1.25

This is a good, straightforward sequence of nine short stories, which should make a welcome addition to any book collection. The variety of characters, the familiarity of the backgrounds and situations and the credible sense of the mysterious which is evoked, are all very much in its favour as a recommendable selection for upper junior/lower secondary readers.

The evil trick of the ancient Mr. Pope in *The Babysitter*, using his glass-eye to haunt young Nigel should cause shivers; and the strange case of Anthony and his dead brother *Timmy* should provoke speculation, whilst the good humoured *Bodger* will be bound to amuse and the lingering haunting by *Kirsty* will make one think twice about gas at the dentist's! DB

The Time of the Ghost
Diana Wynne Jones,
Beaver 0 09 9359502,
£1.50

This author has a great capacity for creating challenging fantasies but my stamina began to flag at the start of this novel, which seemed too mystifying to be engaging. I'm glad I persevered, but it will take a doughty youngster to be as forbearing.

'One of us must have got into Monigan's clutches in the future somehow, and come back to tell us now'. Four sisters and their friends become enmeshed in a past/present shuttle, which concerns their past invocation of a revengeful pagan goddess, and centres, in the present, on a dangerously ill girl, unsure of her own identity, who is fighting for life in a hospital bed . . . or could it be the life of one of her visitors? DB

Older Readers

The Darkangel
Meredith Ann Pierce,
Fontana Lions,
0 00 672444 2, £1.50

There is hyperbole on the back cover from L'Engle, Andre Norton and Lloyd Alexander for this blend of sf, fantasy, myth, romance and legend. Not my cup of metheglin these days but others may find it rich and spell-binding. It's set on the moon which has been peopled by humans (dome-people) with creatures and things from the realms of past and future bestiaries. Aerial, who wears a kirtle and spins, is

personal serf to Eoduin, who is stolen by a vampire/icarus (spawned by a lorelei) and turned into a wraith along with his other brides. Aerial gets to the vampire's castle, pets his gargoyles, journeys with the lyon/Leosol/Pendarclon to find the Starhorse/Equustel/Avarclon to defeat the vampire with help from the duarough (say it quickly) by means of a chalice-hoof bridal cup and adamantine dagger. The wraith brides become stars, the vampire becomes a handsome prince and . . . and . . . When does richness induce indigestion? The book isn't

very long; it has tension and pace; sexuality-occult tentacles, carefully composed magic of ideas and style; but I'm more inclined to belch than ask for another helping at the end of it. TD

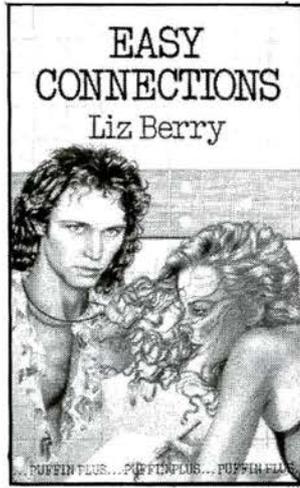
Star Trek III: The Search for Spock
Vonda N McIntyre,
Panther, 0 586 06442 7,
£1.95

They find him.

Easy Connections
Liz Berry, Puffin Plus
0 14 03.1652 3, £1.75

Cathy is a talented seventeen year-old art student. Much of the book is about the importance of her work and the growth of her talent, which is interesting. The rest is to do with her feelings of revulsion/fascination for Paul Devlin, a charismatic rock-star who rapes her, makes her pregnant and pursues her until, under overwhelming pressure from all sides, Cathy agrees to marry him. Her relationships with friends, family and a

fellow art student and their attitudes towards her are carefully explored. So are her feelings about herself — her work, her ambitions, the pregnancy, her needs and emotions. This is interesting too. I found the book compelling and I think older readers will. (There is explicit sex.) But I don't like the unreal, more-than-human aura surrounding Dev. He has a 'strange austere beauty', he's 'dangerous' and no-one seems able to resist his magnetism. Liz Berry keeps this pedal going all through the book and our interest in Cath's art and emotional life is subsumed in it. Sad for Cathy, that she's finally overpowered; sad for the reader to carry away stronger images of *his* larger-than-life persona than of *her* experiences. TD



High Pavement Blues
Bernard Ashley, Puffin Plus, 0 14 03.1659 0, £1.50

A novel of self-discovery. The Big Fellow walked out two years ago, 'like an unexpected death', leaving Kevin and his mother 'to wonder why we'd come second-best to his music.' She has coped for two years but is now unable to renew her market stall licence without his signature. Alfie Cox, the next stall-holder, harasses Kevin every Saturday. Missing his dad, worried about his mum, made miserable by Alfie, Kevin gives us his own account of events and feelings. He falls in love with a girl from a secure middle-class family — (Karen on the cover, Wendy in the text!) — which



opens up new problems as well as happiness for him. At her suggestion, he goes looking for the Big Fellow, to discover that the wonderful jazz trumpeter is now only a driver for the band. He brings his dad back to London but reconciliation proves impossible. However, Kevin ends by telling us: 'I didn't have a thing to prove to anyone now I'd proved it to myself. I'd answered my own question, and I was the only one who needed to know what that answer was.' This is a good book, solid, honest, bringing Kevin and his life very close. Buy it. TD

Reviewers in this issue



Jill Bennett is currently teaching in a Junior class in Middlesex. She is the compiler of **Learning to Read with Picture Books**.



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



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



Colin Mills is in the Division of Teaching Studies at Worcester College where he helps run a Diploma in Children's Literature.



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



Terry Downie is the English Editor at the Resources for Learning Development Unit in Avon.

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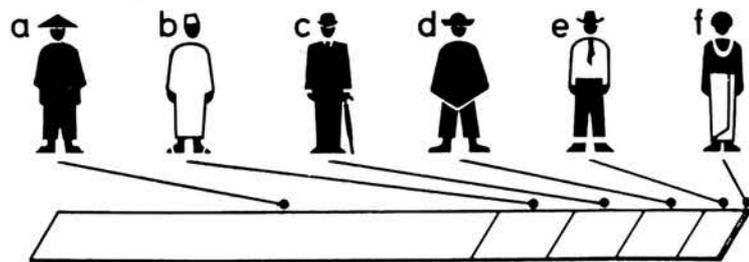
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Population distribution

Shown on the diagram below and listed right are 1984 population estimates for different regions. (Asia includes the USSR. Latin America is south from the USA.)

- a Asia 3041 million
- b Africa 530 million
- c Europe 490 million
- d Latin America 400 million
- e North America 258 million
- f Oceania 25 million



Longman

Authorgraph No. 29

John Burningham

John Burningham's status as one of the world's most popular and respected author-illustrators for children seems safe as houses — except that his own house, part of a tall Victorian terrace near Hampstead Heath, looks distinctly unsafe at present: its frontage is obscured by a forest of scaffolding. An apt image of its owner? It's a tempting connection to make since for all his two dozen titles in print, three million copies sold and two Kate Greenaway Medals won, John Burningham still refuses to take his Establishment as a fact. 'I'm one of those ungrateful people who having done something feels that's just history and asks what comes next or whether it can be done again . . . I suppose it's the neurosis of any author or artist that they can't remain inactive for very long because they feel insecure unless they're working.'

His own history includes a dazzling debut (*Borka: The Adventures of a Goose with No Feathers* brought medal number one) along with much praised illustrations for *The Wind in the Willows* as well as an assortment of successes such as the *Mr Gumpy* books, the classic *Come Away from the Water, Shirley* and the unforgettable *Would You Rather . . .*, all of them essential occupants of any bookshelf worthy of a child's second glance.

Yet John Burningham himself maintains he doesn't much like the process of book illustration and tries to 'avoid it in any way I can'. Also he feels 'to some degree the prisoner of my own success' and declares 'I'm not really very interested in children's books'.

Is all this just scaffolding — a sort of elevated platform designed to keep his occupation at a comfortable working distance? It's hard to believe otherwise considering he is, quite literally, married to the job. For John's basement studio isn't the only one in the house. Upstairs in the attic is another, set up for his wife Helen Oxenbury, an illustrator hardly less distinguished than he is. And even while insisting that 'there's nothing worse than a great sheet of white paper' and that starting on a new project is 'a bit like taking up exercises again — a sort of stumbling about with drawings' he can't seem to resist the activity. The conversation in which he advanced these claims was punctuated by the compulsive scratch-scratch-scratch of crayon on paper.

So what would he rather be doing? Almost anything, he suggests, providing it's sufficiently physical. 'It's not just seeing things but doing things as well that makes you understand.' High on his list of preferred pastimes comes work on his house which, already rivetting enough in all its upward and outward rambling, is becoming more fascinating still as a result of his additions to it. He's a confirmed snapper-up of other people's unconsidered trifles — sometimes, admittedly, pretty hefty trifles. His sitting-room is dominated by a floor-length tapestry and a wall-size Victorian copy of Rubens' *Romulus and Remus* while his garden offers an authentic Victorian greenhouse and a spectacular bell-tower salvaged from a church on the Finchley Road. Other features include an oak floor retrieved from storage in a Dorset cowshed, parquet from an old people's home and a legendary bathroom with fittings from



From
*Wind in the
Willows.*

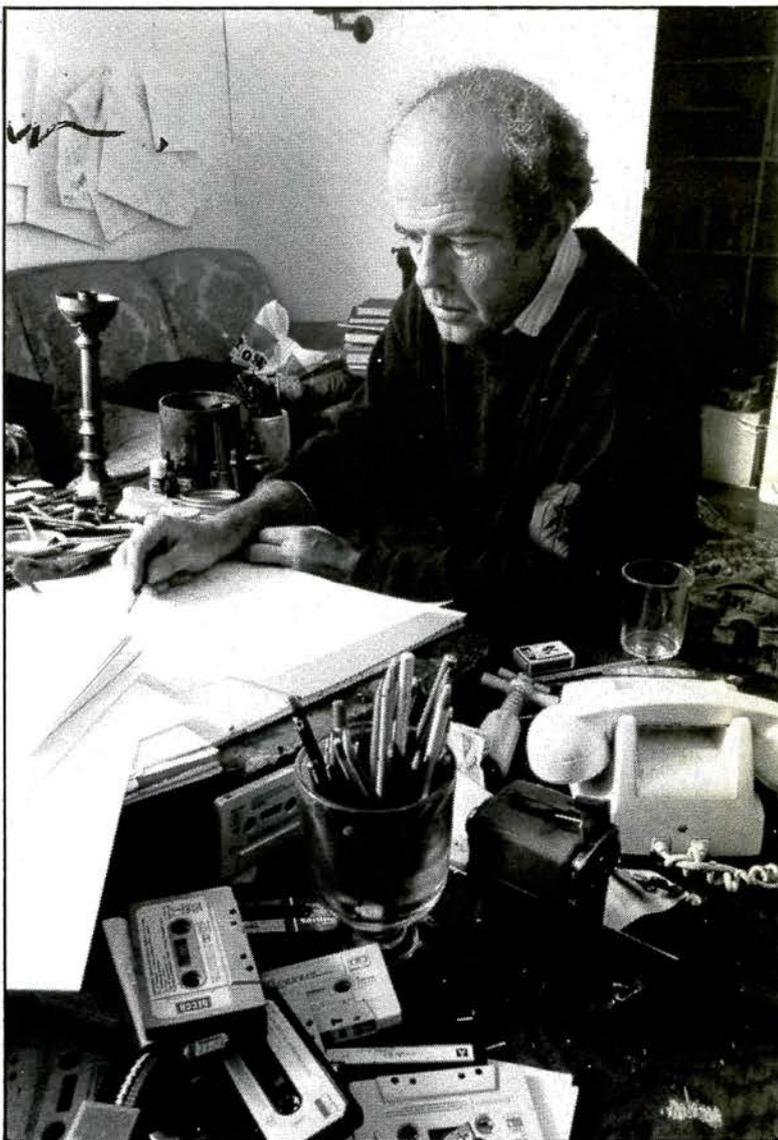
Roehampton, Virginia Water, Egham and the old Temple Fortune Odeon. John's instinct for what he wants is exercised as much on the demolition site as in the auction room.

As a preparation for his career, his early life suggests the same combination of the apparently haphazard tempered by a shrewd eye for what would matter in the long run. 'For ages I dreaded people asking me what I wanted to do because I had no idea of where I was going to go. I suppose I was always allowed to draw and my parents were always good about providing the bits and pieces . . . but it was school mostly. I went to lots of schools all over the place, about ten altogether, but the school where I eventually ended up was A.S. Neill's Summerhill where lessons were not, of course, compulsory. I did spend a lot more time in the artroom than many people would have been doing. I'm not even sure, looking back, that I did it particularly well — I was just fooling around with colour. So I left school at the age of seventeen with no notion about the future. What I *had* to do was military service. Since I'd already declared myself a conscientious objector I was given a series of alternative occupations such as forestry, agriculture, hospital work, social work, etc. so I spent two-and-a-half years doing these different things which involved quite a bit of travelling. While I was working on a farm I started going to evening classes at a neighbouring art school.' This, he's

convinced, was much more valuable than proceeding direct to full-time study. 'It's the difference between a tourist looking out of a plate-glass window at a view and somebody who's staying with a local family.'

Later, on the suggestion of a friend about to embark on a course at the Central School involving book illustration and graphic design, John got together a portfolio of work and was accepted for the same course. He completed the course by winning a scholarship that was conditional on his remaining freelance for at least a year — a life which took him to Israel, to London and to New York working on a variety of projects involving set designs, model-making, puppets for a film company, posters for London Transport, cartoons for magazines, television trailers and Christmas cards. Just about everything, in fact, *except* children's books. Once again it was the intervention of a friend which brought a change of direction. Why not offer the story and rough drawings of *Borka* to Jonathan Cape? He did. They said yes. And a partnership so far lasting twenty-one years was initiated with an instant success.

As simple as that? 'Pretty well . . . all my books are in print, though some, of course, sell better than others. One is extremely fortunate.' In John Burningham's case the good fortune has come about by way of editions in Afrikaans, Danish, Dutch, Finnish, French, German, Japanese,



Norwegian, Spanish, Swedish and Zulu. Not that the pictures need any such translation. The appeal of the Burningham style is international in the contrast it presents between a deliberately naïve and childlike draughtsmanship and a supremely sophisticated range of materials: crayons, charcoal and pastels, printers' ink, indian ink, cellulose and gouache. It's a style which emerged as fully-formed almost from the start though he'd claim that 'I'm more controlled now . . . there are fewer happy accidents. One must change. If you're trying to get movement in a child or animal which has been my concern recently with a lot of things I've been doing then there's no point in trying to get that and put in as many colours as one can in the background. It's about isolating what it is one's trying to do at the time. So much depends on the subject matter.' Is this why he prefers to provide his own text? 'I have no set rule about this — I'm just not usually given something I want to do.' An obvious exception here was *The Wind in the Willows*. Amazingly, he'd never read the book before nor did he know the famous E.H. Shepard illustrations which he made sure were blanked out of the edition he was given. 'Otherwise I'd have been far too conscious of his conception of Ratty and Mole. Very difficult characters, both of them — I was fiddling around for months trying to get them right when ideally I should have been finishing the book. I had to *know* them before I started drawing. I used to do very

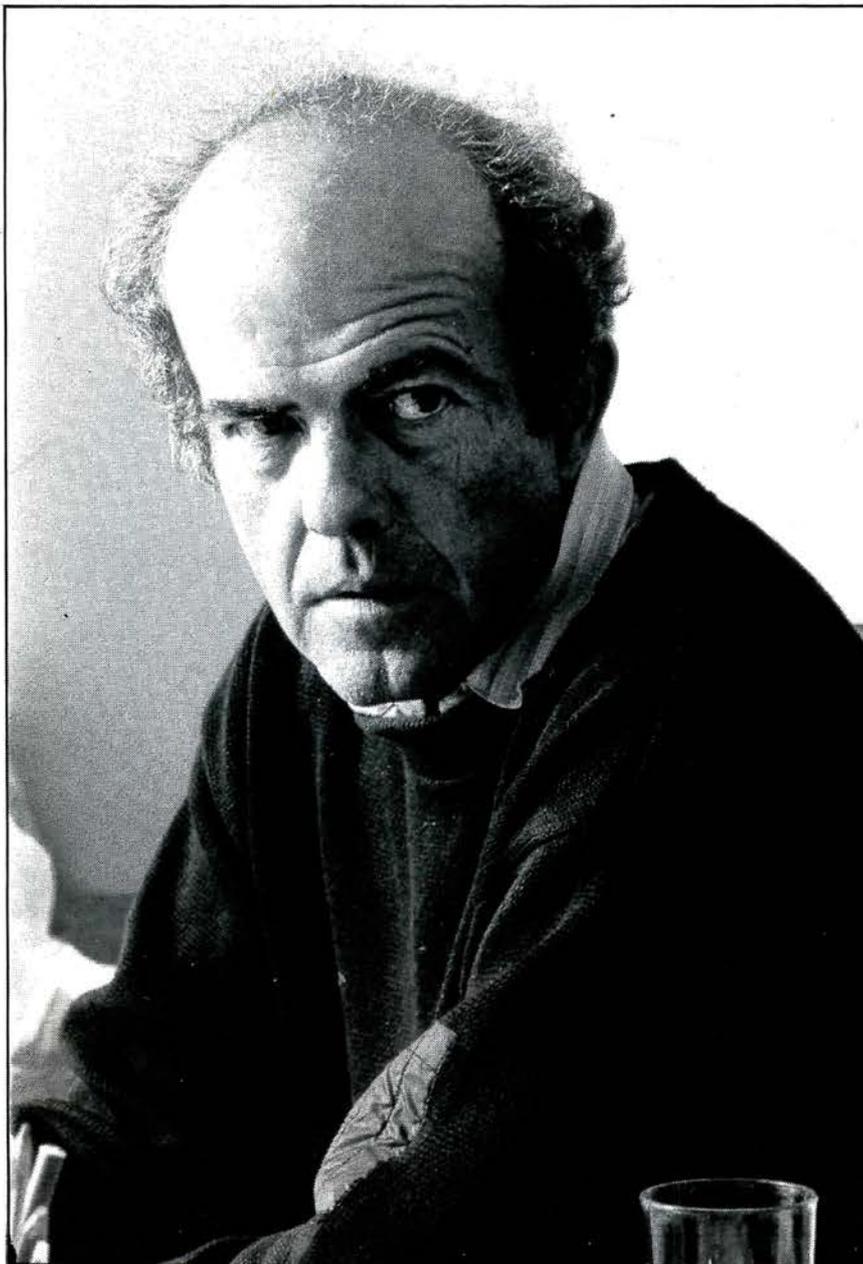
elaborate landscapes and then put very simple, crude people in them but now I tend to drop the background and concentrate on the characters.'

It's typical of him that he refuses to exploit his own success. *Mr Gumpy's Outing*, for example, a tale of a punting expedition written and drawn with superb deadpan humour, won him his second Kate Greenaway Medal and was followed by the equally popular *Mr Gumpy's Motor Car*. A whole series might have resulted but for his intense dislike of repeating himself. So we're still waiting for the third *Mr Gumpy* book. In the intervening decade or so we've been treated instead to the hilarious mismatch between fantasy and reality of his two *Shirley* books, another series that might have been. Only with his short books for beginning readers has he committed himself to a continuing format — *The Baby*, *The Blanket*, *The Dog*, etc. Here, too, though, he was swift to vary his approach. Soon words themselves became his subject matter and then numbers in two series for a new publisher, Walker Books. The latter books, *Number Play*, are especially ingenious and were especially challenging to undertake. 'I worked for three months on multiplication before I decided it was impossible.'

His latest book *Granpa* takes a new kind of risk. 'It's sad only because it introduces death. The relationship, which I think is very intriguing, between grandparents and

grandchildren reflects the fact that we no longer live in an environment which gives us time with our own children. When he's saying "we used to do this, that and the other" she's switched off but it doesn't matter because they're both muttering away — she's also going on about her own concerns. The book's based partly on observation and partly on my memories of my own grandfather.' Eventually, in a harrowing double-spread which depicts the child facing Granpa's empty chair, the relationship is broken — though the book closes with a wordless affirmation that life can't help perking up. 'I'm quite pleased with it as a book,' he says, 'but I've no idea how it's going to be received and what children are going to make of it. There's a hair's breadth difference between success and failure with this sort of thing.' Given the Burningham track record, the odds must be heavily on the former.

What, then, does the future hold for this reluctant chronicler of childhood whose ambition as an art student was to design covers for the *Saturday Evening Post*? Surrounded as he is by a family — Lucy, Bill and Emily — who have already provided both their parents with an abundance of home-grown data, can John Burningham possibly break away from more than two decades-worth of working pattern? He insists that he can. 'I want to try something else for a bit. Nothing to do with children's books.' And it's easy to believe him until he shows you out through the tangle of scaffolding. ●



Photographs by Richard Mewton.

The Books

- a selection
From Jonathan Cape
- ABC*, 0 224 60833 9, £5.95
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- and four other titles.

SOUND & VISION SPECIAL

THE BOX

"I prefer stories to be touched with beauty and strangeness; I like them to go on for a long time, in a river of narrative; and I like tributaries to come in upon the main stream, and exquisite bays and backwaters to open out, into all of which the mind can go exploring after one has learned the main stream."

So wrote John Masefield in 1944 and his description fits perfectly his two most famous stories for children, *The Midnight Folk* (1927) and its sequel *The Box of Delights* (1935).

In these free-wheeling chronicles of the adventures of schoolboy, Kay Harker, fantasy and reality, past and present, magic and mystery, history and legend, meet and mingle, and the age-old battle between dark and light is engaged. Generally acknowledged as 'classics' they may well be about to find a new wider audience as a result of the BBC TV six-part adaptation of *The Box of Delights* which begins on November 21st.

We talked to Paul Stone, Executive Producer of the series, about translating Masefield from page to screen.

Like many others Paul Stone missed out on *The Box of Delights* as a child. 'I encountered it first eight years ago. As soon as I read it I wanted to make it for television. It's an amazing and singular mixture of adventure story and poetic myth and the writing is packed with visual imagery. It seemed to me that television is uniquely able to translate those qualities from one medium to another and that if we could get it right it would be a service to the book and to us. I wanted to capture the sheer magic of the book in all senses.' It took five years of negotiation and planning before he could make a start. First of all the rights had to be secured from the Masefield Trust. 'At one point it was going to be made as a Hollywood feature film; but eventually we got the go-ahead, mainly, I think because they had faith in our integrity.'

It is the phenomenal technical advances that television has made in the last ten years in electronic effects and animation that have made this a possibility, technical advances which Paul Stone is quick to point out have in many cases been pioneered by the BBC. Kay's struggle against the evil Abner Brown (who in his 1935 form appears as Father Boddendale, principal of a training college for missionaries) take him flying through time and space; he shrinks to Tom Thumb size for, among other things, a hair-raising journey on a toy boat, encounters talking animals and amazing flying cars. 'It was an enormous challenge to our Special Effects department and was two years in the planning.' At the beginning Alan Seymour, who wrote the script, was in two minds about whether it was possible if he had to lose some of the most magical scenes. 'We said to him. "Don't leave anything out. Put in whatever you think we need and we'll find a way of doing it."'

It is, claims Paul Stone, a very faithful adaptation given the discipline imposed by six thirty minute episodes and the need to point up the narrative thread. It is faithful in other ways too.

Masefield set his stories in places he knew well as a child. Seekings, the house in Condicote where Kay lives with his guardian, Caroline Louisa, to which he is returning at the beginning of the story for the Christmas holidays after his first term away at school, is The Priory, Masefield's grandfather's house next to the church in Ledbury, where the Masefields came to live when John was six. Tatchester, the cathedral town, scene of Kay's triumphal return, is Hereford. Abner Brown's house is one Masefield 'found' deep in the Cotswolds, with a lake and a sluice.

The BBC searched exhaustively for matching locations. 'The house we used for Seekings is not the original but it bears a striking resemblance to it. We also filmed in Ledbury and the Cotswolds. The final scene we shot in Tewkesbury Abbey — it wasn't possible to use Hereford cathedral — with the full choir. It's magical.'

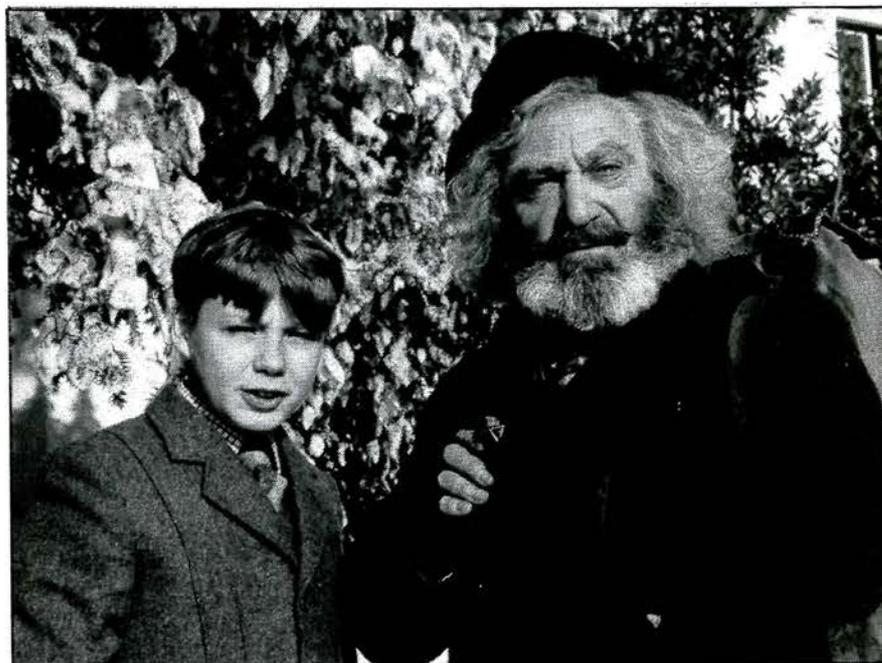
The story moves through cold, snowy landscapes, across dark wintry skies to the final glowing affirmation of the cathedral ablaze with light on Christmas Eve. In search of snow the crew and cast went to Scotland last January and got rather more

than they reckoned on. There were blizzards and temperatures well below zero. 'We just got Kay's pony through before the last road was closed. It was so cold the snow machine froze up and so did the propane gas for the log fires. We were marooned but magically the blizzard stopped and left us with a marvellous winter sky — just what we wanted.'

The TV version is set firmly in the book's original period, 1935, and according to Paul Stone, Devin Stanfield, the 12 year old boy selected to play 13 year old Kay Harker, has a 'look of a schoolboy from the thirties.' He also has 'a clear understanding of the story and the issues involved.'

No doubt the BBC's reputation for nostalgic period pieces and a strong cast which includes Patrick Troughton as Cole Hawlings, (the Punch and Judy Man who entrusts the mysterious Box to Kay) and Robert Stephens as evil Abner Brown will help to sell *The Box of Delights* abroad (the USA has already taken it) — very necessary if the BBC and its British co-producer Lella Productions are to recoup the one million plus pounds they have spent making it.

Paul Stone will be happy if when we watch the final episode on Christmas Eve we share a sense of the magic, the poetry and the many-layered appeal which drew him to the book in the first place.



Devin Stanfield as the young hero Kay Harker with Patrick Troughton as the magic Punch & Judy man, Cole Hawlings (BBC photograph).



Left: Faith Jaques illustration of 'Seekings' from *The Box of Delights*.

Right: Patrick Troughton as Cole Hawlings (BBC).

OF DELIGHTS

To coincide with the TV series Heinemann and Fontana are publishing **The Box of Delights** in a new abridged edition. Patricia Crampton who produced the new version writes about the task which she saw essentially as

CHOPPING NOT CHANGING

It's odd that in a childhood particularly rich in books Masefield's two great children's books, *The Midnight Folk* and *The Box of Delights* never reached me. It was my husband in our courting days who introduced me to *Midnight Folk* and I was left, as these things go, to read *Box of Delights* to myself. All this happened over 25 years ago, but they left an impression so strong that the request from Heinemann to abridge *The Box of Delights* was ridiculously exciting; no less so the later one from Fontana Lions to do the same kind of thing with *The Midnight Folk*.

The same *kind* of thing but, as far as working methods went, not the same thing. *Box of Delights* has always seemed to me the weaker, less unified book of the two; but with the exotic scenes Kay visits through the Box, and its wealth of characters it is a natural for a TV serial, and Alan Seymour, the scriptwriter, has clearly revelled in it. Given that my version was to be a 'tie-in' it was of the first importance to observe his selections and deletions and I followed closely the script which was supplied by Heinemann. Kay's meeting with Cole Hawlings, the bearer of the Box who in his 1935 incarnation appears as a Punch and Judy Man, must therefore be the nub of the opening scene at the station where Kay changes trains. Masefield's opening is more complicated with Kay mistaking two men (evil Abner's associates) for detectives. Later, on the train, they reappear as curates. The abridged version dispenses with the 'detectives' episode altogether and Kay's meeting with the 'curates' with its first hints of evil doings is sandwiched between his two encounters with Cole. I think this makes for a stronger opening chapter.

Equally it was Alan Seymour who gave me the confirmation I needed that the idiosyncratically Masefieldian vocabulary

could be retained. There are two examples — 'the crink' and 'rumpaged' — as early as the second page of the abridged Box. I was often grateful for this in the course of both books; it's quite easy to be discouraged from such practices these days but we really would be the poorer for the loss of 'scrobbling'. On the other hand it would have been wrong to introduce into the text anything that was not already there, even where the film script differed very slightly from the book. At one point in the film for instance, in King Arthur's camp, Arthur's sword comes into Kay's hand when the Wolves break through the defences. There is no such sword in the book, and none has appeared in the abridged version. However film and abridged book are very close indeed and I am quite sorry that the abridged version of *Midnight Folk* had to be brought out at the same time as *The Box*. What if the BBC decides to film *Midnight Folk* later on? The scriptwriter's selections and deletions are unlikely to coincide with mine! For both books the idea was to cut about 25,000 words, reducing the whole from 80,000 to 55,000. Because I had based the abridgement of *The Box* on the film script it turned out that my cutting had resulted in much more than a taking-up of slack (something that I think any modern editor would in any case have done with Masefield's two books before publication) and I was horrified, in what was intended as the semi-final version, to find myself some 15,000 words *short*. Continuity having been very carefully maintained while arriving at this version, with due regard for the balance of action, dialogue, and description (which had suffered the heaviest cuts in the earlier rounds) I crept back gingerly into my self-made maze of cuts and arrow signs, using a '2' in green to signify reinstated passages. The equivalent of about 45 pages in blocks of 2-7 lines, was restored to the amputated book.

Excisions came in three main varieties. First candidates for chopping were descriptions which, though full of charm, were quite irrelevant to the story, where Masefield was apparently musing over a scene or historical fragment attractive to himself; a good example is Kay's excursion into the Beast-Market and Tibb's Wharf in search of Cole. Then I tend to cut very long elaborations such as the list of Christmas party gifts: 'And then there were . . . most lovely . . . Then there were . . . And then . . . most splendid . . .' and over-explicit dialogue for instance Caroline Louisa's unnecessarily detailed explanation of her visit to London, cut from nine lines to three. I even got rid of the chauffeur, at first by name because Joe is also the name of one of the members of Abner's gang, and then bodily, because he turned out to be redundant as a character.

With *The Midnight Folk* I was on my own. Word counts and squiggled calculations resulted in this cryptic message to myself: '200 11 in 28pp.'. This seemed to allow me enough licence to make no cuts at all on a good many of the pages while keeping a general balance throughout the book, and in fact only a few additional changes had to be made on the final read-through of the abridgement, generally on the grounds that there was a little leeway for replacement of some funny passages. Sometimes though there is a sterner REPLACE in the margin when it has become clear that a phrase or an item deleted has a vital part to play later in the book.

There are more deletions in *Midnight Folk* than in *The Box* of single words which would jar today such as 'little' Kay or the 'Please' with which he begins so many of his sentences which are not requests! or the constantly recurring 'instantly'.

Will the books appeal to today's children?

Well, sailing ships and governesses were not much more familiar to 7-9 year olds in 1927, when *Midnight Folk* was first published, than they are now. But, more important, loneliness has not changed and that is the root of Kay Harker's magic world populated by the few people, animals and pictures he has around him in *Midnight Folk*. *The Box of Delights* is a different matter; Kay has his cousins (and his beloved guardian, in the background at least) which makes it more of a 'family adventure' sequel to the earlier book.

In *The Cool Web* Arthur Applebee reports a pleasant piece of dialogue with Jacqueline, aged 6.

Q: What story do you like?

Jacqueline: Peter Pan.

Q: Why do you like it?

Jacqueline: Because he's a nice story

Q: Why is he a nice story?

Jacqueline: Because he can fly.'

The Midnight Folk and *The Box of Delights* belong to that world, and its claim to children's affection is obviously as strong as ever. ●

The Box of Delights, John Masefield
abridged by Patricia Crampton, ill. Faith
Jaques, Heinemann, 0 434 95052 1, £7.95
Fontana Lions, 0 00 672415 9, £1.50

The Midnight Folk, John Masefield
abridged by Patricia Crampton,
Fontana Lions, 0 00 672416 7, £1.50



Faith Jaques illustration of the same characters.

Black and White and Read All Over

is a new series about children's books on Channel 4.

It's not your usual square-shaped book programme for kiddies so you won't be surprised to hear that the Brain Behind It is **Michael Rosen**.

He was a bit breathless in September but found the time and the typewriter to send us this despatch from Despatch.

Now read on

. . . halfway through rehearsals for *Black and White and Read all over*. I find myself running round and round the rehearsal room in an old brown warehouse coat yelling at someone called Bozo. There is a woman called Dona who is calling me things like *Wallybrains*, *Glumbum*, *Miserylegs* and *Birdbrain*. I keep lifting up a telephone and talking to someone called *Sadie* in the *Ice Cream Bar* and every now and then we lift up a cardboard box and say, 'We're going to the library now,' and we're supposed to disappear into the cardboard box. 'Who is responsible for this lunacy?' I ask myself.

The answer is, in part, me.

Some eighteen months ago, I suggested to Telekation, (the independent film company that made 'Everybody Here') that we could make a children's book programme — perhaps for Channel 4. Naomi Sargent, a commissioning editor at Channel 4 accepted the idea and we were away. The company took on researcher Billy McQueen, designer Andrew Franks and between us we came up with a format. This book programme would take place in the dispatch department of a big store. The boss, Mr Bozo does not want a children's bookshop in his store, but Mike and Dona do. So they start an illicit bookshop by putting books into the boxes going to people who 'shop from home'. They've told the children of the area all about it and they're coming in to see *Sadie* in the *Ice Cream bar* with videos and all sorts. There is a lift that comes down into the basement where Mike and Dona work and who knows who or what might come out of the lift?

The key question in many people's minds is, I guess, what books? and how did you choose them?

Here are some criteria: none of the books would contain things in it that are offensive to people on account of their culture, nationality, gender. That is to say I could not put my hand on my heart and recommend a joke book with racist jokes in; I could not recommend the brilliantly written '*BFG*' with its mad xenophobic abuse of people and countries all over the world. We would look for books that gave positive characterisation to a variety of cultures; we would look for books that showed that girls or women could do more than service boys and men; we would look for books that present non-fiction in a lively accessible way, most of the books would be paperbacks, we would include 'classics' as and where they came up to the other criteria. Ploughing through hundreds of books I found myself wondering about all sorts of things.

Why is it that in some science books the only people doing the experiments are white boys? Why do animal books say that the animal is 'he'? ('It', 'she and he' and 'they' being other possibilities). But then, with all these criteria satisfied you might have a deadly dull book? Yes, in some cases, no in others.

We've looked for books that are available to self-supporting readers of 7—11, books with humour and/or high quality illustration and/or an imaginative world that the child can enter and/or realistic, practical suggestions of things to do.

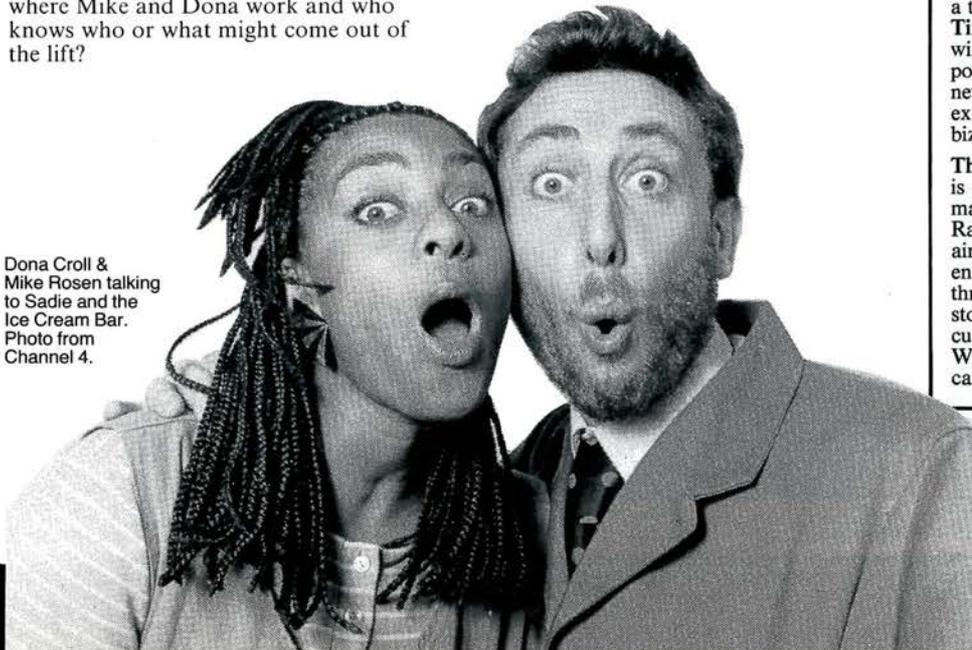
A word about the presenters: one of them is Dona Croll, an actress with a lot of stage experience, a lot of humour and verve and someone who has a lot of sympathy with the way we have chosen the books. And me. No comment. In the scripts that we have written, the two characters that we play, argue, shout at each other, break off into various fantasies and mad acts, break into 'rap' sessions and song. The result is something hectic, nutty, and slightly bizarre. I tell myself that there is no point in working in television unless you try out something new. I don't think children's books have been presented in this way before — in fact I don't think anything has been presented quite like this before. All you children's book lovers out there — do ask your children to watch? the very least the programme shows is that children's books are good fun and often useful. We would quite like to know what you and they think.

At the end of every programme we give an address to write to for a list of all the books and an entry form for a competition. The prizes are quite nice as well, book tokens, books and a chance to meet me (maybe not so nice!?) and Dona and go for a trip down the river. And who knows? you might meet the book monster as well. Who is the Book Monster? . . . ●

Mike Rosen has two new books out in the new year. *Hairy Tales and Nursery Crimes* (Deutsch) plays outrageous verbal variations on well-known tales and rhymes. 'Once upon a tyre', for instance, in *Jack and the Tinstalk*, Jack climbs out of his 'breadroom windbag', goes up the tinstalk and 'at the pop' finds 'a huge Car Sale.' Alan Baker, a new illustrative partner for Mike, provides an exact commentary with a series of splendidly bizarre black and white drawings.

That'd be Telling (Cambridge Educational) is a compilation with Joan Griffiths of material arising from the BBC Schools Radio programme of the same name. The aim, like that of the original programme is to encourage and develop spoken language through the sharing of jokes, riddles and stories from the oral tradition of different cultural communities — Caribbean, Irish, West African etc. There will be an audio cassette available to accompany the book.

Dona Croll & Mike Rosen talking to *Sadie* and the *Ice Cream Bar*. Photo from Channel 4.



Supergran

Forrest Wilson's *Supergran* first appeared in paperback in 1980 and earned instant success with millions of readers. It was a genuine 'children's choice' and word spread like the latest joke through schools and playgrounds with a rapidity and effectiveness which the book world would dearly love to copy if only it knew how.

Starting on Sunday January 6th (5.00 - 5.30) *Supergran's* amazing feats will be visible for 13 weeks in a series of new adventures specially written for Tyne Tees TV by Jenny McDade and Forrest Wilson. The advance publicity promises a 'spectacular all-film comic drama'. *Supergran* will again be using her amazing strength and super powers to thwart the evil scheming of The Scunner and his assorted side-kicks.

Spurning conventional animation, producer, Keith Richardson, and his team of directors have gone for special effects based on live action. They called in the stunt arranger who worked on *Superman* and the *Bond* films and a whole team of stunt men and women. Gudrun Ure, who plays *Supergran*, did some of the stunts herself, hanging from a helicopter and riding the North Sea waves on a motorised surf board.

Supergran lifts cars, pole vaults over buildings and engages in an apparently endless series of chases using weird and



wonderful forms of transport, some like The Skimmer, The Flycycle and the AGB (Anti-Gravity Belt) invented by Mr Black, the man whose magic ray machine turned Gran into *Supergran* in the first place.

With guest appearances by Billy Connolly (who also sings the title song), George Best, Geoff Capes, John Conteh, Spike Milligan, Lulu, and lots of others it looks like being popular Sunday viewing.

Puffin have two new collections of stories by Forrest Wilson, based on the series, which are ideal for young readers as well as dedicated older fans. ●

The TV Adventures of Supergran
0 14 03.1763 5

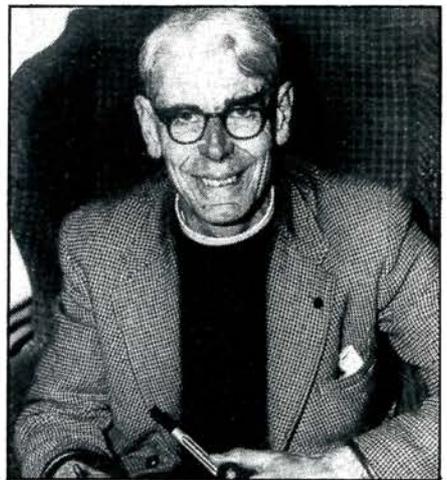
More TV Adventures of Supergran
0 14 03.1764 3. Both £1.25

The Reverend Awdry Railway Stories

The first of the Railway Stories was published in 1945 and it wasn't long before Thomas the Tank Engine and James the Red Engine, the Fat Controller and all the other characters were firmly established in the hearts of millions of small boys and not a few small girls. Many of those first enthusiasts are now parents and their equally enthusiastic parents are grandparents. No doubt they, along with a lot of new fans will be enjoying the animated films which are currently being shown nationally on ITV every Tuesday at 12.00 noon, with a repeat at 4.00 pm. The series, *Thomas the Tank Engine and Friends*, which began on

October 9th continues for 13 weeks.

In the past the stories have been read on radio by John Gielgud, and been used for Jackanory; but this is the first time the engines have appeared on film. (The reader this time is Ringo Starr.) All this, plus a wave of engine-covered pencil cases, duvet covers, jigsaws, pyjamas and other examples of the merchandiser's art which will soon be in the shops, comes just a year after the stories were literally given a new lease of life when Christopher Awdry, son of the Reverend, continued the series when his father had given up after 26 books, with the

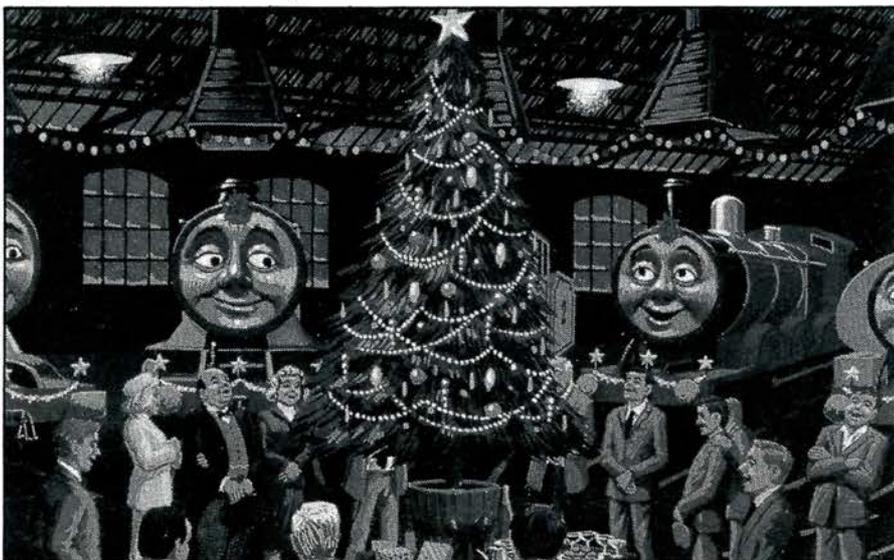


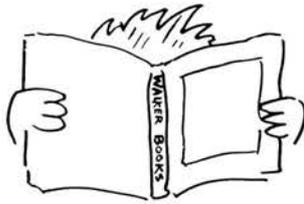
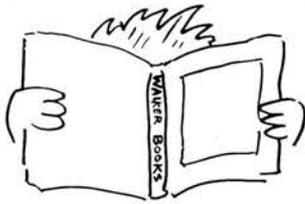
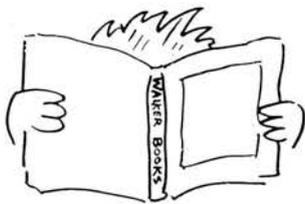
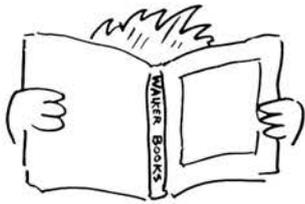
publication of *Really Useful Engines*. His second book *James and the Diesel Engine* came out in September.

The stories for the TV films are devised by Britt Allcroft and David Mitton but Mr. Awdry has taken the plot of one film and written a story, *Thomas's Christmas Party*, which Kaye and Ward have produced in a special large format with delightful pictures by Clive Spong. (He also did the illustrations for Christopher Awdry's stories and the eight pop-ups based on abridged versions of some of the original stories. It looks like being a best seller this Christmas. ●

Thomas's Christmas Party
0 7182 1650 4, £3.95

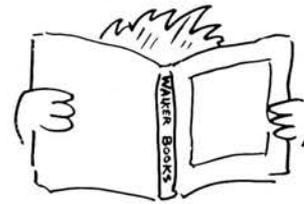
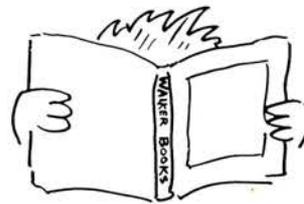
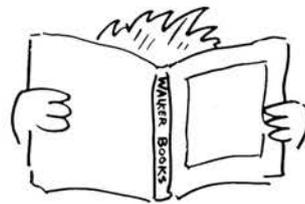
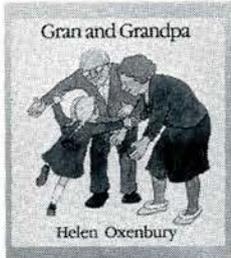
Two books each with two stories 'based on the TV series' which is 'based on the Railway stories by the Rev. W. Awdry' are available in Ladybird.





FIRST PICTURE BOOKS

Helen Oxenbury



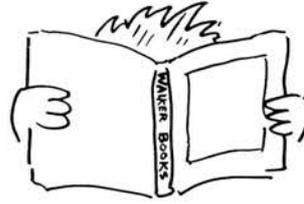
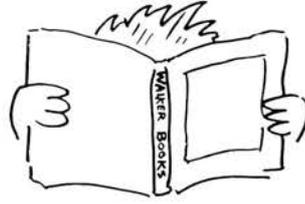
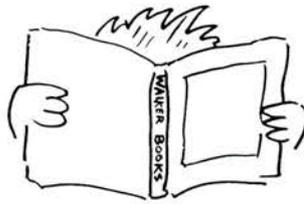
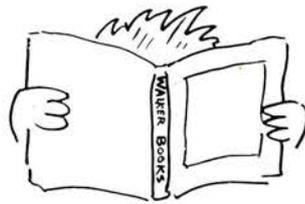
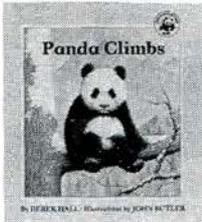
New titles
 Gran and Grandpa
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 The Visitor

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 The Check-up
 Playschool

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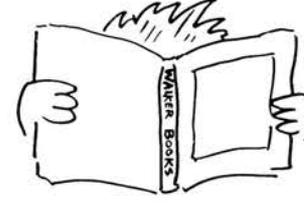
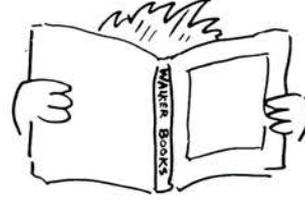
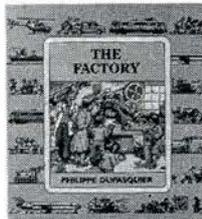
for GROWING UP Derek Hall and John Butler



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THAT'S LIFE

For young children the world is often a worryingly uncertain place. Here are seven picture books with plenty of space for sharing which could help them feel more at home with some aspects of everyday (and more especially every night) life.

101 Things to Do with a Baby

Jan Ormerod, Kestrel, 0 7226 5929 6, £4.95

In a relaxed and varied series of pictures Jan Ormerod shows how an older sister can welcome a new baby as part of the family. Everyday routines ('give him cereal . . . let him share your egg . . . better clean him up') warm and silly things ('Kiss his ear . . . blow on his tummy') baby hazards ('watch out for hair pulling . . . nose grabbing . . . dribbling . . . head banging') are all shown happening in a messy, lived-in home that shows every sign of having been hit by the new arrival. Dad is very much a part of the action. Reassuring and full of love.

Are You There, Bear?

Ron Maris, Julia MacRae, 0 86203 174 5, £4.95

Bear is hidden somewhere in the shadowy darkness of 'my room'. (The same room that appeared in *My Book*.) He could be several of the dim shapes revealed in 'wide shot' on the first spread; but as the circular torch beam moves in closer we see that shadows are not always what they seem. Gradually all the toys are found and join in the hunt until bear is discovered — reading *My Book*!

The book has the kind of deceptively simple design which is the result of a great deal of thoughtful, careful planning and execution. Lots of possibilities for talking, sharing and looking.

You Can't Catch Me!

John Prater, Bodley Head, 0 370 30594 9, £4.95

John Prater, like Ron Maris, is a relative newcomer to picture books who has in a very short time established a reputation for books for young children. This his third book is a slightly larger than life tale of what happens when Jack runs away from bath time. ('I hate baths!' said Jack.) It is full of fun and life and movement. As a bonus the text with its repeated refrain is carefully matched with the pictures to encourage prediction and assist new readers. Lots of mileage here right up the age-range to first year juniors.

An Evening at Alfie's

Shirley Hughes, Bodley Head, 0 370 30588 4, £4.95

The fourth, and (we are told) the last of this much-loved series. In this one Alfie and Annie Rose have a baby sitter (Mrs McNally's Maureen). Everything goes smoothly until Alfie hears a noise that makes it seem as if his favourite story — *Noah's Ark* — is coming true. "'It's raining on the landing.'" Alfie tells Maureen. What follows in words and pictures is a richly human and funny account of coping with a burst pipe. Alfie, involved, independent, resourceful and inventive is a model for any child in a similarly unpredictable situation. Shirley Hughes deserves a hug for getting it right yet again.

Three books about night-time fears:

One Night at a Time

Susan Hill, ill. Vanessa Julian-Ottie, Hamish Hamilton, 0 241 11229 X, £4.95

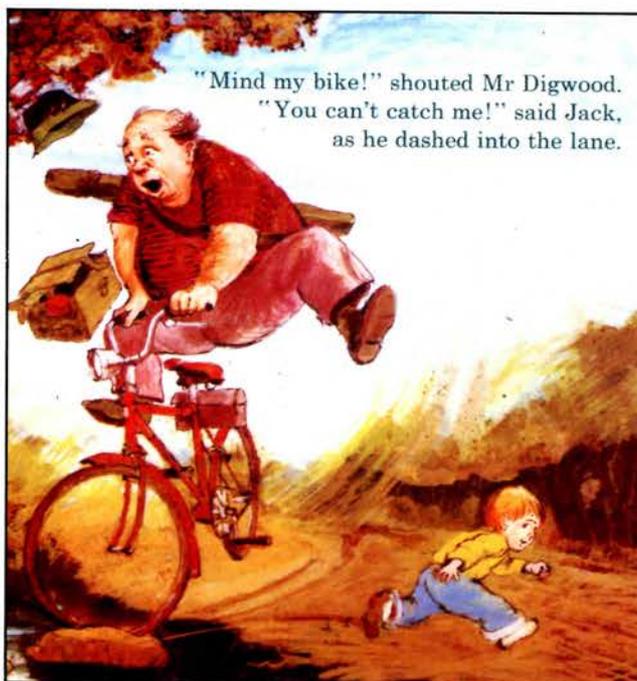
Novelist Susan Hill empathises exactly with childhood fears. For imaginative Tom pictures in books, cartoons on TV, the washing machine, shirts on the line, the neighbours' shears: all give him nightmares. But mum knows how to cope — one night at a time. An open, sensible book with pictures of recognisable (suburban) homes, gardens and public library, and a good line in frightened children and bad dreams.

After Dark

Louis Baum, ill. Susan Varley, Andersen Press, 0 86264 073 3, £4.95

Working (single parent?) mum puts small girl to bed and pops out to do some late night shopping. "'Pete's in the cellar, fixing his bike'" but that's not much consolation to a wakeful child.

The storyteller speaks directly to the child in the pictures — 'Mum will be back soon' — telling what Mum is doing and providing a running commentary on her daughter's activities — 'Why are you halfway down the stairs?'. When Mum returns she finds a small girl in nightie, with teddy bear, sitting on the front step and there is a joyful reunion — watched by Pete who has come up from the cellar. Susan Varley's pictures are full of atmosphere and feeling and there is a sense of real lives going on here.



"Mind my bike!" shouted Mr Digwood.
"You can't catch me!" said Jack,
as he dashed into the lane.

From *You Can't Catch Me!*

From *One Night at a Time*.



What's Under My Bed?

James Stevenson, Gollancz, 0 575 03509 9, £4.95

Grandpa's scary stories would have anyone believing in things under the bed. Fortunately he also knows how to restore the balance in favour of the rational world. As usual in Stevenson's Grandpa books this is by reminiscing about his own childhood. This time the moustache-wearing grandfather-child in the pictures is imagining more nasties than a classroom full of children could muster and having them explained away by his grandchildren. Wittily written and drawn it's a pleasure to share with children, most of whom quickly appreciate the jokes. ●

LIFELINE 3

Books for Sharing



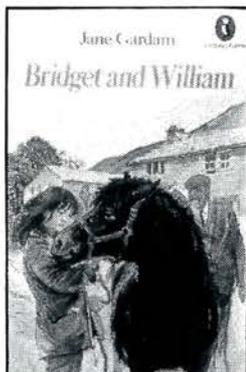
David Bennett

Books for Sharing is a list of books compiled for use as class readers in Primary and Secondary classrooms by *Joan Barker* and *David Bennett*. They are avid sharers of books with their classes and both convinced of the enormous benefits of reading together. Part One appeared in July

Here are suggestions for titles for the first half of next term along with ideas for follow-up reading and activities. We hope that readers will try out books wherever they are appropriate to their own school situation and will explore and experiment with some of the follow-up work, ideas for which are not intended to be comprehensive but more to give a flavour of what might be done to further excite and engage the readers who share the texts.



Joan Barker



LOWER JUNIORS

Horse from Bridget and William

Jane Gardam, Puffin, 0 14 03.1592 6, 95p

One of two stories about a child's love for a horse, first published separately in the Blackbird series (Julia MacRae Books). Although intended for the young reader tackling a longer read-alone *Horse* has a lot to offer as a book to share with a class.

Crossing a 200 year old white horse, cut out of the hillside is so much a part of Susan's journey to school from the hill farm above the village that she hardly notices it. Every day, though, she turns at the stile to wave to it. It isn't until old Mr Grandly points out that it is 'scarce there to wave at' that she sees that the outline is fading and *Horse* becoming overgrown. She tries to raise interest in saving *Horse* but it is only when its very existence is threatened that the village gets together to act.

More to Read *Bridget and William* (in the same volume)

Linda's Lie

Bernard Ashley, Julia MacRae Books,
0 86203 099 4, £2.95 and in *Dinner Ladies*
Don't Count, Puffin, 0 14 03.1593 4, 95p

The Dead Letter Box

Jan Mark, Puffin, 0 14 03.1619 1, 95p

Things to Do

1. 'To get to school she could run down the hill . . .' (p.55)
How do you come to school? Is there more than one way? Is one way quicker or more interesting? Draw a plan of your journey. Describe it in words. Can someone follow your directions?
2. Can you remember your first day at school? Was it the way you thought it would be?
3. 'Bairns and attachments. It was hoops and kites first. Followed by crashing dolly carts. Followed by scooters . . . Too much pleasure, that's what bairns get.' (p.66)
What are the playing seasons in our school? Mime all the activities you could do with 'the attachments'.
4. Susan sniffs the wood shavings in the wood carver's shop. (p.70)
What are your favourite smells? Make up a class poem about them.
5. Make a large class collage or painting of the crowd in the village square looking at *Horse*. (p.90)



MIDDLE JUNIORS

Revoluting Rhymes

Roald Dahl, ill. Quentin Blake, Puffin, 0 14 050.423 0, £1.50

No-one feels luke-warm about this book — you either love it or loathe it. Either way there is one thing certain, it is a hit in the classroom. It appeals to a very wide age-range but I have chosen middle juniors as the who will get the most enjoyment out of the fun Dahl has with six traditional tales. Each has a very clever twist; my particular favourite links up *Red Riding Hood* and the *Three Little Pigs*. Not great literature but a lot of fun and Quentin Blake's pictures complement and extend the text.

More to Read

Tony Ross's picture book versions of fairy tales, published by Andersen and Sparrow,
George's Marvellous Medicine,
Roald Dahl, Puffin, 06 14 03.1492 X, £1.25

A Pair of Sinners

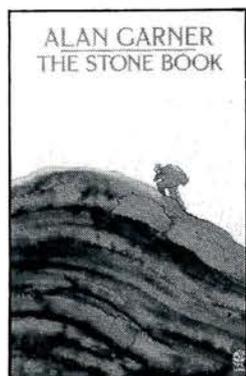
Allan Ahlberg and John Lawrence,
Granada, 0 246 11325 1, £3.25

The Tale of Thomas Mead

Pat Hutchins, Bodley Head, 0 370 30357 1,
£3.50

Things to Do

1. 'While darling little Cinderella Was locked up in a slimy cellar Where rats who wanted things to eat Began to nibble at her feet.' (p.5)
Tell this incident from the point of view of a Cinderella b) the rat. What if she wore nail varnish or had smelly feet?
2. 'He wrote to every magazine And said "I'm looking for a Queen."' (p.21)
Design the advertisement. Write letters to answer it. These to be read aloud (no names of course) and the queen selected by class vote.
3. 'Pigs are noble. . . Pigs are courteous.' (p.41)
Collect piggy sayings — pigs might fly, you're a pig. Try other animals — cats, dogs. Find out what the sayings mean.
4. Build model houses of straw, twigs and bricks. Gently test to destruction with a) 10 g weights b) huffing and puffing etc.
5. Write tombstone epitaphs for all the characters who meet their ends in the rhymes.



UPPER JUNIORS

The Stone Book

Alan Garner, Fontana Lions, 0 00 671600 8, 95p

Mary's stonemason father putting the finishing touches to the church steeple gives her a ride on the golden weathercock. As she spins round she wishes that she could read and have a prayer book to carry to chapel like the other girls. Her father takes her instead deep into the earth and shows her a secret handed down in the family for generations and she realises that what she has seen is of greater value than any book.

This is the first of the 'Stone Book Quartet'. Each book is rather like a very long chapter of a single book for, although complete in themselves, together they tell a linked story of four generations of a family of craftsmen. All four amply repay reading several times. Don't be put off by an apparent lack of action; comments from the children pay tribute to the excitement they arouse. After *The Stone Book I* read the other three to the class and let them work in groups on the book they like best.

More to Read

The rest of the quartet: *Granny Reardon* (0 00 671602 4, 75p) *The Aimer Gate* (0 00 671603 2, 75p) *Tom Fobble's Day* (0 00 671601, 95p) all published in Fontana Lions

Elidor, Alan Garner, Fontana Lions,
0 00 671674 1, £1.25

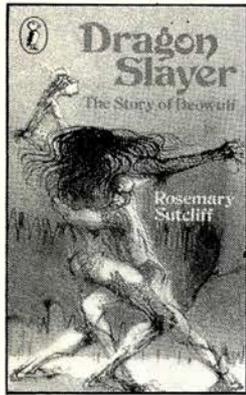
A Strong and Willing Girl, Dorothy Edwards,
Magnet, 0 416 24590 0, £1.25

Things to Do

1. Read to page 27. Where is the story set? What does the text tell us? Are the place names on a map? When is it set? Find the evidence. Who is in Mary's family?
2. Mary was afraid of the climb up the spire. (p.17)
What are we afraid of? 'The baggin cloth kept her mouth wet but it felt dry.' What happens when we feel afraid? Write a poem about being afraid.
3. 'A church was only a bit of stone round a lot of air.' Write a similar description for a school, a bird cage, an aquarium, a hospital.
4. 'You'll remember this day my girl for the rest of your life.' (p.24)
Plan a day you would remember for the rest of your life. Make a chart to show how you would spend it.
5. Make a rough plan of the area in the story to be added to as more information is revealed. Illustrate and people your plan. Start a family tree for the people in the story.

SECONDARY

Year 1



Dragon Slayer

Rosemary Sutcliff, Puffin, 0 14 03.0254 9, £1.00

This is the Beowulf story retold by one of our most skillful and adept historical writers. The reading needs to be as heroic as the theme, definitely a book for show-off, frustrated actor teachers who are prepared to swing from the lampshades if necessary in the cause of their storytelling art.

There are three distinct sections which could be spaced out throughout the half-term — Grendel, Grendel's Dam and the Fire-Drake and the amount of follow-up work that could ensue is infinite. The language and ideas are challenging but the story is so dramatic and heroic that I've yet to find a class that doesn't become immersed in it — most kids love a monster!

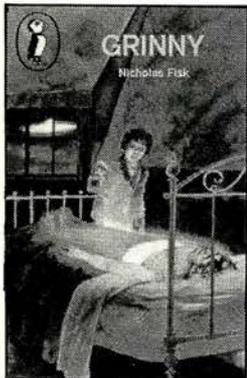
I do counsel deciding on how you're going to pronounce the names before you start and it is worth the effort to duplicate a "Who's who" which the class can have before them as you read, otherwise they can become fog-bound!

More to Read **Beowulf**, a version by Kevin Crossley-Holland, ill. by Charles Keeping, Oxford, 0 19 279770 0, £4.50

Worth acquiring both for comparison and contrast and for its evocative illustrations, perhaps best shown afterwards.

Things to Do

1. Cartoon-strip versions of action-packed episodes like the various fight sequences; an exercise that can be a kind of painless comprehension.
2. An English/Art collaboration might produce full sized portraits of the monsters or at least "Wanted" posters.
3. A discussion of the apt names devised for Grendel might be followed by the creation of the class's own monster, who terrorises your classroom with what results?
4. There has got to be drama. How about Beowulf — this was your life!
5. Collect together some of the details of everyday life at the time of Beowulf and use this to write a background commentary to accompany a new edition of the book.



YEAR 2

Grinny

Nicholas Fisk, Puffin, 0 14 03.0745 1, 95p

Time for a bit of Sci-Fi. Nicholas Fisk has plenty on offer in this department but G.A.E. better known as Great Aunt Emma, or Grinny, takes a lot of beating. She is the decidedly queer old party who fetches up, unheralded on the doorstep of the Carpenters and stays. Before long, Timothy, the boy whose diary this is, and his brattish sister become aware of the old girl's odd behaviour, which eventually points in only one direction — she is an alien!

Timothy's precocious charm and sharp sense of humour commends this book to readers at all levels and Grinny is so intriguingly sinister that she cannot fail to be a winner. The very macabre ending seldom fails to make a big impact and in addition there is effectiveness in the fact that such goings on take place in so domestic and familiar a setting.

More to Read There is a wealth of Sci-Fi Junior fiction worth introducing to the pupils. Particularly worth a mention are the **Galactic Warlord** (Piccolo, 0 0330 26186 X, £1.25) series by Douglas Hill and of course other titles by Nicholas Fisk himself.

Things to Do

1. How would Mr Carpenter tell his version of the "Muscle Beach Scene" to his wife? Write the script.
2. Your own story beginning "The day uncle Arthur arrived we welcomed him. But then ..."
3. Prediction exercise at February 10th ... "And if she isn't the real G.A.E., what the hell is she instead?"
4. Newspaper reports of U.F.O. sightings and strange visitors in your own local area.
5. Drama. "They will punish me" — Grinny is back on board. Stage her trial and punishment.



YEAR 3

Nobody's Family Is Going to Change

Louise Fitzhugh, Fontana Lions, 0 00 671351 3, £1.25

This Other Award winner is very relevant in its theme for this is the time of year when the pupils are usually in the throes of option choices. It examines very thoroughly parental expectation, a consciousness of self worth and the crucial responsibility of making decisions about one's future.

Emma, aged 13, is a mess, an obese shambles, but she has an analytical mind and she is very bright. Her brother Willie on the other hand is a fanatical dancer and, encouraged by black-sheep Uncle Dixie wants to join a summer stock company. None of this squares with their black middle-class father's conceptions of what his children should be. Willie should be a lawyer like him, and Emma? . . . Well, she's a girl!

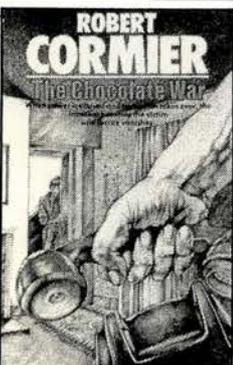
The story is humorously told with comic touches, like the white maid named Martha, and the pace is lively, especially when Emma joins the children's army. Less able pupils might not find it straightforward and would need a hand through it.

More to Read
Two novels by the same author:
Harriet the Spy
Fontana Lions, 0 00 672175 3, £1.25

The Long Secret
Fontana Lions, 0 00 672145 1, £1.25
A boy who wishes to be a ballet dancer is a central character in Jean Ure's **A Proper Little Nooryeff**, Puffin, 0 14 03.1614 0, £1.10

Things to Do

1. Some preliminary work on stereotyping would be helpful. A game can be devised matching nationalities with cards containing single images e.g. Australian — kangaroo, hats with corks, lager, koalas, Waltzing Matilda etc. Then making drawings of the final complete picture and discussing the erroneous nature of most stereotyping. This can be followed by explorations into old/young, boy/girl stereotyping, possibly involving careers teachers.
2. "... she was aware of the unfairness of being a child, the blindness of parents, how hard it all was". A good quote to provoke group discussion of where your pupils feel that they stand in all this.
3. Group drama using the situations that arise when The Army Committee member visit the houses of Helen Mason, Charles Tyson and Lois Babson. Use the reports on Jack, Mary Ann and Jimmy as models.
4. After the night of the great confrontation over Willie's job each person in the family makes an entry in their diary. Write those entries. (pp111—130).
5. Devise a chart to show the peaks and troughs of Emma's and Willie's emotions at specific times throughout the story.



YEARS 4/5

The Chocolate War

Robert Cormier, Fontana Lions, 0 00 671765 9, £1.50

This is likely to create a bit of a stir, not least amongst the staff. It's a very tough and uncompromising exposé of corruption and manipulation in which, as often in real life, the baddies win. Jerry Renault the steady, honest new boy in an American boys' public school is doomed as soon as he catches the eye of Archie Costello, the Machiavellian leader of the Mafia-like Vigils, who effectively control the school. When even the Staff enlist the aid of these thugs in a fund-raising event Jerry stands no chance

You need to be sure of your class and material before you attempt this but the themes that it forces them to face will more than repay your summoning up the courage to give it a try. A lively, aware class should thrive on it and learn from it.

More to Read Three other very tough books by Robert Cormier, all published by Fontana Lions.
I Am the Cheese
0 00 671766 7, £1.50

After the First Death
0 00 671705 5, £1.25
The Bumblebee Flies Anyway
0 00 672358 6, (out soon), in hardback from Gollancz, 0 575 03327 4, £5.75.-

Things to Do

1. Create Archie's secret handbook on bribery and corruption.
2. Try debating "Jerry — hero or victim?"
3. Two years after the events a T.V. documentary is made on "The Vigils" interviewing participants, victims and observers — create as classroom drama or else as a radio programme.
4. A discussion on the maxim "Do I dare disturb the Universe?". Then library research into characters that have tried e.g. Ghandi, William Wilberforce, Martin Luther King. Basically one is asking whether one can change systems that seem unfair and whether violence is a justified method for change, which ought to bring in Current Affairs.
5. If you are strong enough and the class can take it play out Chapter 6 in class and explore the ideas of solidarity against authority and the fairness of grading people and their achievements.

FESTIVE

Christmas is almost upon us. Santa Claus is already established in shops, and schools all over the country are gearing up for card-making, decorations, carols, nativity plays and other seasonal activities. A good moment in our multi-faith, multi-cultural country for all schools to draw attention to the festivals of other religions.

Whatever the faith, festivals have much in common: we celebrate the victory of good over evil, the hope of new beginnings, we give thanks, we commemorate. The patterns of celebrations are also similar: families and friends gather together, food is shared, gifts exchanged. And particular rituals often make the same symbolic use of candles and fire as dispellers of the dark.

To introduce children to those things that all share opens the way to an understanding and tolerance of difference. What better time for schools without an ethnic or cultural mix of pupils to depart from a single-minded pre-occupation with Christmas and explore how others celebrate their festive seasons.

Start here with this brief guide to the major festivals and some useful books for teachers and children.

Hindu Festivals

Diwali (October/November)

A 'festival of lights' which celebrates the return of Rama to his kingdom after rescuing his wife Sita from the evil Ravana. It marks a new year, a new beginning when Lakshmi, the goddess of prosperity, visits homes which are specially lit with lamps and candles to welcome her and celebrate the triumph of good over evil. It is perhaps the closest Hindu festival to Christmas: houses are cleaned, people gather together, wear new clothes, and enjoy feasting and exchanging presents.

Holi (February/March)

A spring harvest festival marked by visits, feasting, bonfires and fireworks. Much boisterous behaviour occurs, especially throwing coloured powders and water at people, to recall the games of Lord Krishna.

Dussehra (September/October)

Also celebrates the victory of Rama over Ravana. (In north India the story of the Ramayana is told in a series of elaborate plays.) Families get together to exchange gifts and there are processions and dancing.

Janam Ashtami (August)

The celebration of the birth of Lord Krishna. Midnight vigils are kept and sometimes there is an image of Krishna in a cradle. Gifts of sweets are placed in the cradle and also given away.

Sikh Festivals

Sikh festivals are mostly associated with the births and deaths of the ten Sikh gurus. All celebrations are marked by a continuous reading (by men and women) of the Guru Granth Sahib — the Sikh holy book which now stands in place of the guru — a special service and a ceremonial meal of food prepared in the gurdwara (the place of worship) and shared with everyone present. Sikh festivals reflect a strong sense of community.

The Birthday of Guru Nanak (November)

The commemoration of the birth, in April 1469, of the first Sikh guru is one of the most important festivals.

Sikhs also celebrate **Diwali** to commemorate the release from captivity of Guru Hargobind, the sixth guru, and his arrival at the golden temple of Amritsar. There are lights, prayers, fireworks and feasting.

Islamic Festivals

Eid-ul-Fitr (May/June)

The great Muslim family festival which marks the end of Ramadan, the month of fasting. It is a day of prayer but also for decorating homes, sending cards, exchanging greetings — 'Eid Mubarak' (Happy Eid) — family reunions, new clothes, presents for children and special meals.

Buddhist Festivals

Wesak (April/May)

To mark the anniversary of the birth, enlightenment and death of Buddha. Houses are decorated with lights and flowers, the statue of Buddha is garlanded, candles are lit, there are processions in the streets. People gather at home, presents are exchanged and gifts given to the poor.

Jewish Festivals

Chanukah (December)

The nearest Jewish celebration to Christmas. It marks the date in 165 BC when the temple in Jerusalem was reclaimed and the Jews could once more worship freely. It is also a festival of light — the ritual of lighting candles on the eight-branched menorah over the eight days commemorates the miracle whereby the Temple lamp was kept burning for eight days with oil sufficient for only one.

Decorations, gifts, parties and festive meals make it a very happy time.

Rosh Hashanah (September/October)

The New Year celebration. The ram's horn is blown to bring to mind the story of Abraham and Isaac. Greetings cards are sent and special food is prepared.

Pesach/Passover (March/April)

Commemorates the exodus of the children of Israel led by Moses. Families gather to carry out the very special rituals associated with this festival.

Yuan Tan/Chinese New Year Festival (January/February)

The religion of Chinese people can be based on Taoism, Confucianism, Buddhism, Communism or ancestor worship; but every year Chinese people all over the world celebrate this most important festival. Homes are cleaned, lamps and lanterns lighted, families re-united, debts paid and quarrels made up. Presents, parties and special food go along with processions in the streets to welcome the gods with music, noise, dragon dancing and fire-crackers.

The Books

Festivals and Celebrations (1981)

Rowland Purton, Basil Blackwell,
0 631 91570 2, £6.60
(214pp, no illustration)

Helpful and simply explained background information about different beliefs, and details of festivals and celebrations grouped thematically — New Starts, Harvest, Family Festivals etc. Also includes pagan customs and folklore. An excellent source book, usefully cross-referenced and indexed.

Festivals and Celebrations (1984)

Kathleen Elliott, Young Library,
0 946003 24 6, £4.95
(64pp col. and b&w ills.) Available
December.

Information on religious and non-religious festivals in Britain, the USA, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa. Shows how they are celebrated in the country of origin and also by immigrant groups in their adopted countries. Suggestions for activities, things to make and do. Good index and contents. Junior or Secondary. Useful reference for teachers.

Shap Calendar of Religious Festivals

compiled and edited by Clive A. Lawton,
published by CRE, distributed by Shap
Working Party, 7, Alderbrook Road,
Solihull, West Midlands, B91 1NH. Apply
direct for details of supply.

Lighting the candles for Diwali in Joan Soloman's
Sweet-Tooth Sunil.



SEASONS



Cover photograph from **Chanukah** by Lynne Scholefield in the **Living Festivals Series**.

An annual publication from the Shap Working Party on World Religions in Education which has become an invaluable source. Many religious celebrations are moveable feasts, calculated with reference to the movements of the sun and moon. Clive Lawton and his advisers produce an annotated calendar in which the festivals of twelve religions are recorded with their dates calculated (wherever possible) for the 17 months July – December.

A book, **Festivals in World Religions**, is promised from Shap in 1985.

- **The Living Festivals Series** (1982–84) Religious and Moral Education Press (Arnold Wheaton). Net and non-net editions. (30pp approx., full colour limp covers, b&w ills.)

Christmas (1982)

Antony Evans, 0 08 027869, 75p (non net); 0 08 027870 1, 90p (net)

Diwali (1983)

Howard Marsh, 0 08 027873 6, 75p; 0 08 027874 4, 90p

Guru Nanak's Birthday (1982)

Margaret Davidson, 0 08 027877 9, 75p; 0 08 027878 7, 90p

Passover (1982)

Lynne Scholefield, 0 08 027867 1, 75p; 0 08 027868 X, 90p

Ramadan and Id-ul-Fitr (1982)

Janis Hannaford, 0 08 027875 2, 75p; 0 08 027876 0, 90p

Chanukah (1983)

Lynne Scholefield, 0 08 029276 3, 80p; 0 08 029277 1, 95p

Chinese New Year (1984)

Anne Bancroft, 0 08 029278 X, 80p; 0 08 029279 8, 95p

Festivals of the Buddha (1984)

Anne Bancroft, 0 08 030610 1, 80p; 0 08 030611 X, 95p

Holi (1984)

Janis Hannaford, 0 08 029282 8, 80p; 0 08 029283 6, 95p

Short chapters give varied and interesting information about the festivals and their backgrounds. Suggestions for Things to Do, Information about books and other materials for teachers. No index. Intended for 9–16 age range. A good starting point for teachers too.

- **Families and Faiths series**

Religious and Moral Education Press (Arnold/Wheaton). Net and non-net editions. (100p approx. b&w ills. limp covers)

A Jewish Family in Britain (1983)

Vida Barnett, 0 08 027888 4, £1.90 (non-net); 0 08 027889 2, £2.50 (net)

A Muslim Family in Britain (1980)

Stephen W. Harrison & David Shepherd, 0 08 022884 4, £1.90; 0 08 022885 2, £2.50

Story-style account of the life-style, customs, beliefs of non-Christian families living in Britain. Very accessible and packed with fascinating information. Suggestions for further study, recipes, glossary, further sources of information.

Scheduled for next year titles featuring **A Sikh Family** (Spring) and **A Hindu Family** (Autumn). **A Christian Family in Britain** (Autumn) sets the Christian faith in a multi-cultural setting.

- **Beliefs and Believers series** (1982)

Wayland, £3.95. (64pp, hardcover, b&w ills.)

Buddhists and Buddhism

Martha Patrick, 0 85340 906 4

Hindus and Hinduism

Partha and Swasti Mitter, 0 85340 908 0

Sikhs and Sikhism

S. S. Kapoor, 0 85340 907 2

Spacious layout and lots of illustration make these accounts of world religions especially accessible for a wide age-range. Glossary. Index.

- **Religions of the World series**

Macdonald, £4.95 (45pp, lots of full colour ills.)

The Buddhist World (1984)

Anne Bancroft, 0 356 07524 9

Fifth in a useful series which sets out to explain religions and how they are practised. Also available **The Muslim World, The Hindu World, The Jewish World, The Christian World**

- **Gifts and Almonds (1980)**

Joan Solomon, 0 241 10422 X, £3.50

Sweet-Tooth Sunil (1984)

Joan Solomon, 0 241 11201 X, £3.95

Matza and Bitter Herbs (1984)

Clive Lawton, 0 241 11377 6, £3.95

Three in the very good Hamish Hamilton series which uses photographs and simple text to reflect life in multi-racial Britain. These three titles deal specifically with the festivals of Eid, Diwali and the Jewish Passover.

- **Arjuna's Family series,**

Bell and Hyman, £3.50. (26pp, col ills. by Lisa Kopper)

The Festival

Peter Bonnici, 0 7135 1458 2

Simply told stories of events in the life of a small boy in India. This one tells of a Hindu local festival of the temple which Arjuna takes part in when he visits his grandmother's village.

- **Festivals series,**

Wayland, £4.95 (48pp, colour photographs and ills.)

Christmas (1984)

0 05078 450 6

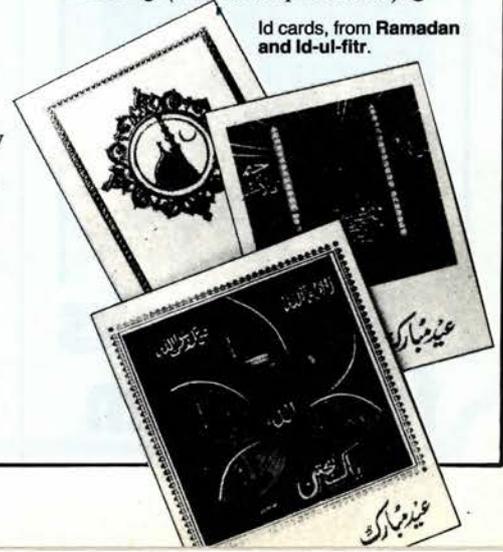
The first four books in this new series deal with Christian festivals.

Christmas links traditional customs with pagan festivals and shows how the festival is celebrated round the world. Intended for 9–13's but useable with younger children. Titles dealing with other religions scheduled for next year.

A new series **At Home and Abroad With**

Steve Hamilton, Macmillan Education. (49pp full colour and line ills.) due to be published in Spring 1985 will show British Muslim, Sikh and Hindu children. It also goes back one or two generations to show how and why their families migrated. Looks interesting. (Provisional price £3.50). ●

Id cards, from **Ramadan and Id-ul-Fitr**.





The Other Award

Now in its 10th year and an accepted, even looked for, feature of the Children's Book Year, you might wonder if **The Other Award** could be losing its alternative edge and settling into a more 'establishment' role. So while sending congratulations and wishing them Many Happy Returns it's good to report that Rosemary Stones and Andrew Mann, who inaugurated the award, and the members of the Other Award panel have managed to keep clear and even usefully refine the aims which originally inspired the award: 'to draw attention to progressive books of literary merit, and to give recognition to writers and illustrators who are taking positive steps to widen the literary experience of young people today.'

The award and those associated with it have had a considerable impact on children's publishing — something which must compensate for the ridicule and even abuse which sometimes comes their way. Long may they continue for there can be few involved with children and books who would disagree with this statement which accompanied the announcement of this year's commended books.

'More and more parents, teachers, librarians and illustrators are becoming dissatisfied with the narrow range of experience, attitudes, and information offered to children and young people in their literature overall. Too many of today's children's books continue to offer harmful stereotypes, or omit large areas of experience in their treatment of sex roles, race, class and culture, age and disability. Such stereotypes are socially divisive and psychologically damaging.

The concern of the Other Award is thus that there should be available to children in their literature overall, a wider and more accurate representation of human experience and situation, and above all that groups of people usually ignored, patronised or misrepresented in children's literature should have their rightful place in the books that children and young people read.'

This year the award panel commended four books, with the accompanying comments.

A new book written and illustrated by Charles Keeping **Sammy Streetsinger**

How does a one-man-band become a rich and famous rock star? Does success make him happy?

Some spectacular images tell us the answers in the sad-happy story of Sammy Streetsinger.

32 pages of full colour, laminated boards.

0 19 279782 4

£4.95



**oxford books
for children**



A Chair for my Mother

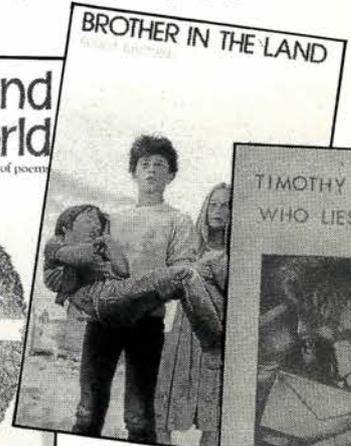
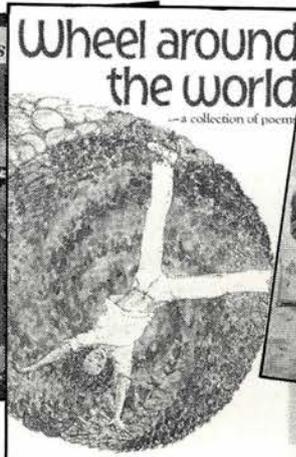
Vera B. Williams, Julia MacRae Books, 0 86203 140 0, £4.95

With vibrant impressionistic illustrations framed with decorative friezes this exceptional U.S. picture book tells how a small girl and her waitress mother slowly save up for a 'fat, soft armchair' so that Mama can 'take a load off (her) feet' when she gets home from work. Based on Vera B. Williams' memories of her own childhood during the poverty of the Depression years, this moving story conveys the gritty reality of hardship and overwork, but also the unquenchable human capacity for beauty and joy — in the longed-for armchair 'with roses all over it'. For under 6's.

Wheel Around the World

Compiled by Chris Searle, ill. Katinka Kew, Macdonald, 0 356 09213 5, £4.50

A progressive collection of poems which celebrates the universality of the human experience in countries around the world (*Children Cry, Family*) as well as looking at particular work situations (*The Factory Worker, Doon the Pit*) and particular communities (*Trouble in my Flats, Jamaica Market*). Several poems treat the role of women in different societies (*The Shearer's Wife, Lizzie*). The poets range from the internationally famous (Bertold Brecht, Victor Jara) to young poets of eight to eleven years old. Illustrated with fluid line drawings, this is an excellent poetry collection for eight to twelve year olds.



Brother in the Land

Robert Swindells, Oxford University Press, 0 19 271491 0, £5.95

The Northern town of Shipley escapes a direct hit when nuclear weapons strike every major British town. Among the dazed survivors are Danny and his seven year old brother — but what existence can there be in what is now a 'landscape of poisonous desolation'? With sober precision Robert Swindells incorporates the stark reality of devastation and death in this urgently written novel which raises fundamental questions for the teenage reader about the political systems that can engage in the 'arms race'.

Who Lies Inside

Timothy Ireland, Gay Men's Press, 0 907040 30 6, £2.95

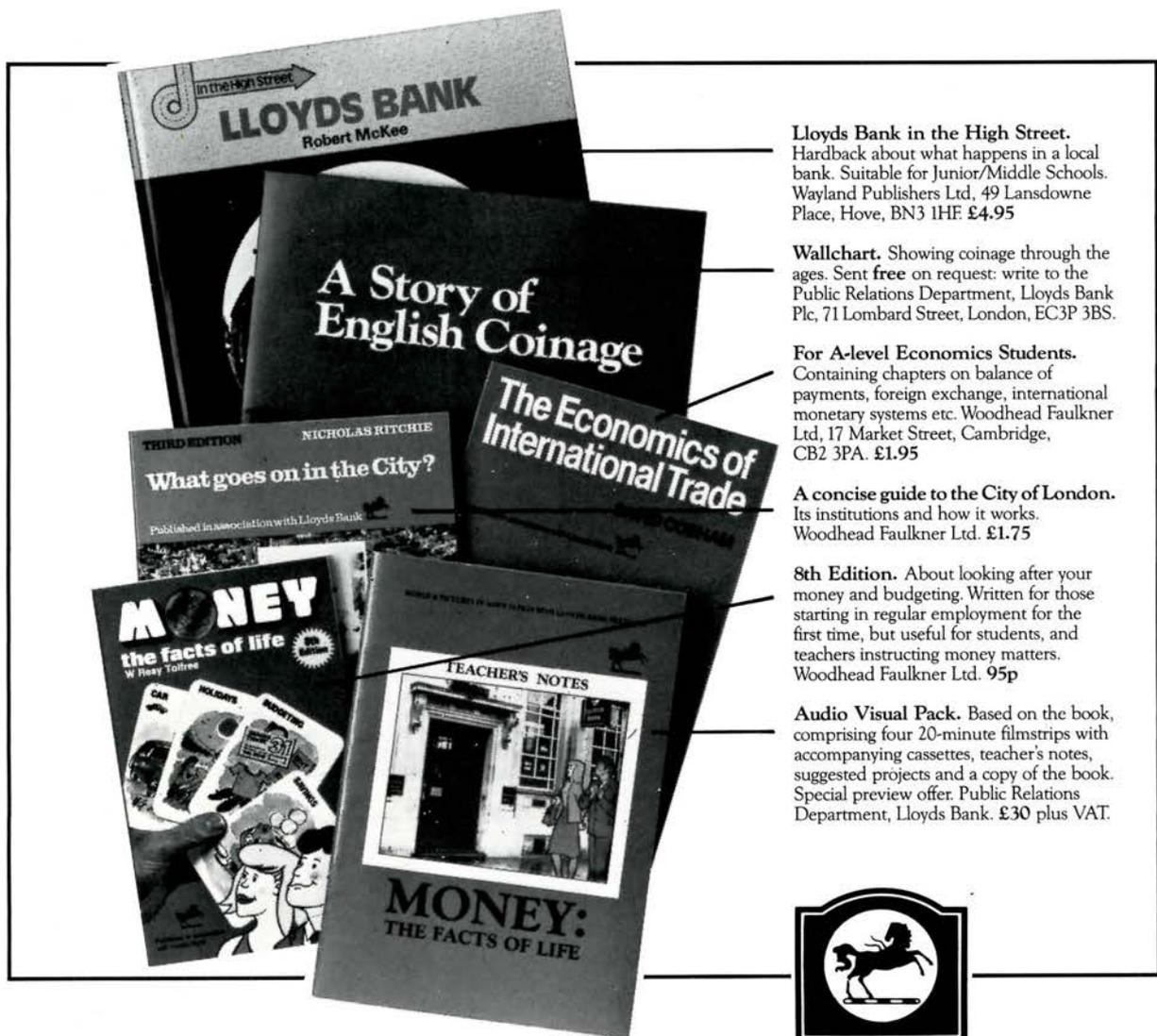
When sixth former Martin finds himself attracted to Gerald, one of the players in the visiting school rugby team, he is determined not to let 'the stranger that had wriggled under (his) skin' be seen. How Martin eventually finds the courage to defy friends' and parents' expectations and recognise his gayness is realistically told in this strong and sensitive novel for teenagers. ●

The **Other Award** is given annually for books published in the 12 months up to June 30th. It is not accompanied by a money or other prize. Comments, enquiries etc. c/o Children's Book Bulletin, 4 Aldebert Terrace, London SW8 1BN.

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



Lloyds Bank

VAT on Books?

Throughout the book trade concern is growing that the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Nigel Lawson, may be planning to impose Value Added Tax on books and periodicals, discontinuing the exemption which books have traditionally enjoyed — even during the second World War the government made a point of not imposing a 'tax on knowledge'. Rumour and speculation abound: tax will be at the standard rate (15%); a lower rate will be introduced (5%); tax will be limited to books, newspapers and periodicals considered to be 'for entertainment only'! (Think about it!). Whatever the truth, the implications of imposing *any* tax of this kind are far-reaching and profound. If book prices rise (as has been calculated) by 20% how will it affect publishers, booksellers, book buyers, and education in particular. Local Authorities can claim back VAT (so would probably choose to centralise book purchase — no more special trips to the bookshop with £10 from the PTA to spend); Universities cannot. If sales fall will publishing and bookselling become even more conservative and risk-averse? Will the 'small businesses' finally have to give up the struggle and let the big corporations take over? Will it eventually mean less choice for the book buyer?

Fears of the consequences are widespread and needless to say a vigorous campaign is being mounted to dissuade the government from such action. We will report progress in the January issue.

The Emil Short List

This is the third year of the Kurt Maschler/Emil Award founded in memory of Erich Kastner and Walter Trier. It is given to a children's book in which text and illustration are both excellent, each enhancing and balancing the other.

Elaine Moss, Fiona Waters and Frank Delaney, this year's judges have chosen a short list of five books from the 70 plus submitted.

They are:

The Story of the Dancing Frog, Quentin Blake, Cape, 0 224 02152 4, £5.50

Granpa, John Burningham, Cape, 0 224 02279 2, £4.95

Alice's Adventures in Wonderland, Lewis Carroll, ill. Justin Todd, Gollancz, 0 575 03263 4, £6.95

Christmas, Jan Pieńkowski, Heinemann, 0 434 95649 X, £5.95

The Woman in the Moon and other tales of forgotten heroines, James Riordan, ill. Angela Barrett, Hutchinson, 0 19 156760 2, £5.95

The winner who receives £1,000 and a bronze figure of Emil (from **Emil and the Detectives**, created by Kastner, first drawn by Trier and published in Germany by Kurt Maschler) will be announced on November 29th.

Sendak for Christmas.

A new opera with music by Oliver Knussen based on Maurice Sendak's **Higglety Pigglety Pop** is joining their previous collaboration **Where the Wild Things Are** in a double bill being performed this season by the Glyndebourne Touring Opera Company.

Even if the operas don't come your way there's plenty of Sendak available for at least one book to find a way into every Christmas stocking.

For the youngest and beginner readers choose, **Hector Protector** and **As I Went Over the Water** — two nursery rhymes (Picturemae, 0 333 37148 8, £1.95); for something a little different choose the **Nutshell Library** (Collins, 0 00 195551 9, £4.95) four perfect small-size books in a cardboard slipcase — including **Alligators all Around** and **Chicken Soup with Rice**; for all ages choose **Higglety Pigglety Pop** or **There Must be More to Life** (Puffin, 0 14 03.1692 2, £1.95). It's the



story of Jennie who had everything but wanted more. 'There must be more to life than having everything,' she declares and goes out into the world to find it. As with all Sendak words and pictures stir the imagination to plunge beneath the surface of the story where each reader makes his or her own discoveries. Like **The Wild Things**, not to be missed.

Also not to be missed but more for a family present than a stocking filler is **Nutcracker**, a new translation by Ralph Manheim of Hoffman's classic Christmas tale (Bodley Head, 0 370 30840 9, £12.50 until 31 Jan., thereafter £14.95) with 100 dazzling full colour illustrations by Sendak.



Beverly Mathias.

Books, Reading and the Handicapped Child

In the September issue of *Books for Keeps* we reported Margaret Marshall's involvement with the setting up of a National Library and Information Centre on Books and Reading and the Handicapped Child — a project which is being sponsored by the Enid Blyton Trust for children. The project has now appointed a Librarian and the job has gone to Beverly Mathias, well-known to many BfK readers as Children's Books Officer at the National Book League. Bev, though sad to be leaving the NBL, is clearly excited by the challenge of her new post and looking forward to setting up the new library, which everyone is hopeful will open as planned in the Spring of next year.

We will keep you in touch with progress.



Detail of cover of Pieńkowski's Christmas.

Ms Muffett Fights Back

A selection of non-sexist books made by Rosemary Stones from the Penguin list. It is thoroughly useful with an intelligent and careful introduction which puts the issue of sexism in children's books in context. Over 100 annotated entries (divided into books for under 6, 7-8, 8+ and 9-12+) are followed by 56 for Young Adults, from Penguin and Puffin Plus. In addition there are lists (without annotations) of Books by, for and about Women, and details of some useful sources of information.



All this FREE from Penguin Books, Bath Road, Harmondsworth, Middlesex, UB7 0DA.

Classics Alive

A play version of C.S. Lewis' **The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe** will be staged at the Westminster Theatre, London, in a special season for families and schools. The director, Richard H. Williams, already has successful productions of **The Jungle Book** and **Charlie and the Chocolate Factory** to his credit. Marty Flood, the American designer, who worked on the National Theatre's production of **Hiawatha** has the challenge of creating a Narnia that will be acceptable to a theatre full of readers who all know *exactly* what it looks like.

The first performance is scheduled for November 20th and a national tour is planned for early 1985.

The immensely successful Cosgrove Hall film version of **Wind in the Willows** is being repeated this month and Thames TV announce seven new episodes to be transmitted on Fridays (early evening) in November and December, with more in 1985.

Enthusiasts will find plenty of tie-ins — not counting Kenneth Grahame's original! — including a **Wind in the Willows Activity Book** from Deutsch (£1.95) and four new picture paperbacks from Thames/Magnet (1.25 each).